



# VP68 Hawk's Nest

Volume No. 3

VP68-Alumni Association

April 2000

## YOUR SHIPMATES SAY: "COME JOIN US MAY 6th FOR THE ANNUAL SPRING FLING IT'S A GREAT TIME!"

We're doing it again. Starting the spring off right! Come and join us. Bring your family, meet old friends, have a burger, a dog, a beer and just enjoy the day. Muster is 1200 at the Beach House, Naval Air Station, Patuxent River, Md. Cost is \$3.00 for members and their families, \$5.00 for non-members and their families. What a deal! Accommodations are available at a variety of local places, the old "Belvedere" Day's Inn - 301-329-7466, the Hampton Inn, 301-863-3200 or the Holiday Inn, Solomon's Island, 410-326-6311.



## IT'S THE PLACE TO BE! GET YOUR TICKETS NOW! NOV. 03-05 2000

As you may know we are celebrating our 30th anniversary and all former Blackhawk's are cordially invited to celebrate with us. Reservations for the banquet room and a block of rooms have been made at the Colony South Hotel, which is a 5 minute drive from the back gate of Andrews, AFB.

Our Co-Chairs for the reunion are **Lew Johnson** and **Harry Lee Smith** and they have a great weekend planned for everyone.

Scheduled Events: Friday night social, a brief Saturday morning Alumni Association business meeting with election of officers, dinner/dance on Saturday evening and a breakfast buffet on Sunday morning.

A hospitality suite will be set up and we've got some 'gedunk' to give away, and some for you to buy!!!! **SO IT'S TIME TO ACT.** Get your tickets now. See the attached 2000 Activities Registration Form, go to our web site [www.vp68.org](http://www.vp68.org) or call one of the officers to register.

## Awards, Retirements, Advancements Commissionings, etc.

Congratulations to these former blackhawks for their advancement to Senior Chief Petty Officer: **YNCS Kathy Wright, AKCS Kellie Gofus, AMCS Howard Raymon, AZCS Mike Leimkuhler.**

**CDR Jon Bayless** was selected for Capt last year, a former VP66 CO, he is now the CO of a Battle Group Staff Unit at RESCEN Forest Park, Illinois (Chicago) The Unit supports the IKE Battle Group Staff in Norfolk.

**AT1 Mike McSweeney**, currently stationed at VP92, was selected as one of the 5 finalist for Naval Reserve Sailor of the Year 1999. He follows in the steps of his friend and mentor **ATC Rob McQuellin** who was selected for the same honor two years ago. Although these young men were at new commands. We know they 'cut' their teeth in W/C 210 at VP68 and we're really proud of them.

**AVCM Jacque LaValle**, VP92, CMC reenlisted for the last time on April 1, 2000 at the Navy Memorial. No it's not a joke. **Capt (Sel) Kevin Sinnett** did the honors. In attendance were his



wife Chris, several of his children and grandchildren, plus some good friends, including: **John LeNard**, AFCM, Ret., **Paul Randolph**, AWCS Ret., **Corneilus Stripling**, ATCS Ret., **Joe Odenthal**, CWO4 Ret., **John McDermott**, AWCS, drilling at NAVAIR, and **Carrie Blazek**, AVCM, drilling at VP66.



## OTHER ALUMNI NEWS

**Capt Ray Miller** (former 68 CO) is drilling with ACOM Unit in Norfolk. He is also the Detroit ALPA Union Pilot Chairman.

**Capt Jeff Lemons** just spent 2 weeks filling in for the CO of Kelvick, Iceland.

**Russ Plunkett, CDR, Ret.** retired from the Government on 7 December 1999 and received his first direct deposit on 4 January 2000. He wanted to let us know: "The system actually works. I went out with 30yrs, 3mos, and 13 days. NOL and Cleveland have their act together." He is currently working part time for Semcor supporting PMA-276, on AH-1 upgrades.

## OTTO REPORT - OR WONDER WHAT GIRASSOL'S IS SERVING TONIGHT?

The following is submitted by OTTO member **Lew Johnson**. Edited for brevity, just a little, by the newsletter staff. OTTO, by the way stands for, Old Timer's Travel Organization.

It was a lonely afternoon in mid Feb. I was lounging around my office thinking about what I

could do to keep from working. All of a sudden, 'there rose such a clatter, that I looked at my computer to see what was the matter' (plagiarism). It was from WEST BY-GAWD VA. Blackhawk shipmate **Rex (Lake)**. He said he was having trouble sleeping, and his 'shrink' **Vic (Kraft)** said he was suffering from a classic symptom of Mateus/cheese' low light! That made perfect sense to me.

Two weeks later I found myself with Rex, **Becky Connick** and our psychiatrist, Vic, thundering down the runway at ADW heading out for LPLA (Lajes, Azores). My god, I love this crap.

**ITINERARY: BI-MONTHLY MEDI-VAC FLIGHT ADW/LPLA (RON) /LPLA/ KEF/ ADW Depart Friday, 2200L / Return Sunday approximately 1600L.**

1900L Muster and check in thru the AF SpaceA at ADW. 2000L call of 30 seats available, 13 souls including 'OTTO' answer the call. We left on time with our box lunches (\$3) and medical patients in tow. Louisiest B/L I've ever had! ETA LPLA 0720L, 5.3 hrs. enroute plus 4 time zones.

LPLA 0730L, Arrived Saturday morning, flight uneventful. Passed immigration, caught wheels up to billeting. One person at the desk, two crews and OTTO checking in.

1000L LAJES: Partly cloudy/60deg.F/winds 15 knots. The plan: go to room (\$20), freshen up, meet in 30 min. Everyone took a quick shower and changed clothes to freshen up. I freshened up with two Sagres out of the Frig. You see I couldn't drink beer and shower at the same time w/o getting water in my beer. Dana Law taught me years ago, "It's all a matter of priorities, Johnson." I listened; I learned. Thanks Dana.

1030L. On to the Plaza in Praia. Cab (\$6). Walked up to the Casa Victoria, did some shopping. Continued up the street, toward "The Crook's" old place. Stopped at the little cafe/bar one block up from "Casa." Had 24 quick beers, and a huge load of bread and cheese. Boy, can Master Chief Becky dump 'dem Sagres down. She reminded me of a "black shoe" sailor. Continued up the street to "Fast Eddie's," said hello to Eddie, did some shopping. That guy hasn't changed a whit. Continued on to the top of the hill, and one



of the local markets. Bought a load of cheese. It is almost impossible to find balls of "Monte Brazil." (That's the cheese we used to get at the Portuguese commissary on the base). Back down the hill to the local open air produce market. Bought some more cheese. Back to "Fast Eddie's" more shopping. Continued down to the Plaza and on down to the joint across from where the "Chicken House" use to be. It has a veranda out back that over looks Praia Bay (great view). We all got a huge Sagres draught and another load of bread and cheese (1100 scoots - \$5.50).

1630L. Back to the plaza. What next ?? Maybe a little early for dinner at Girassol's, but we weren't sure how much longer we could last with M/Chief Becky continuously pouring alcoholic beverages down us. Boy, can that broad drink. Talked to a cab driver. He said Girassol's has a bar in case it's a little early for dinner. Sounded good to us. Steve Black taught me years ago, "It's all a matter of priorities, Johnson. If you're going to drink all day/night before flying, make sure you have something in your stomach to launch into your box lunch." I listened; I learned. Thanks Steve. On to Girassol's (\$6). The Cab driver talked the owner into serving us early. The bar was loaded with locals. We were the only people in the dinning room.



1730L.  
DINNER: Bread & cheese appetizers, four Steaks-Portuguese, 6 bottles of Mateus Rose, one ice

cream desert (9800 scoots/\$50).

1930L Saturday night. Cab back to the club (\$11). A few beers to cap the night off. Everyone is dragging. I don't know about the others, but I hadn't slept since Thursday night. RI Smith taught me years ago, "It's all a matter of priorities, Johnson. If you are going to party all night(S), keep charging until the curtain comes down. Don't nod off or the party is over." I listened; I learned. Thanks Bob.

2130L Hit the rack, I haven't been in the rack at 2130 since I was 8 years old.

0300L Sunday morning. There was a bang on my door; it was M/C Becky, got up. Checked out; called wheels. Went to terminal.

0400L Checked into LAJES SpaceA. 0430L call of 30 seats available, 11 souls including 'OTTO' answered the call.

0600L LAJES: Partly cloudy/56 deg. F/winds 5-10 kts. EST time-enroute: 4.5 hrs. plus 1.5 hrs. on deck in Kef to pick up patients.

Arrived Kef on time. KEF: Snowing (horizontally) / 22 deg. F / winds 50 knots gusts to 60. We loaded into a bus. I visually surveyed the conditions. To my untrained eye it appeared the ceiling was about 100 ft. with visibility instantly changing between 1/8 and 1/4 mile. We wondered how we got in considering we didn't have a NAVY flight station driving. Before we left the A/C the WX changed to a "white out." It quickly sub-sided and before we reached the terminal the sun broke thru a hole, but it was still snowing. The sun quickly disappeared. Snow was piled up (plowed) 18 to 20 ft. in spots. After our 1.5 hrs. on the deck, we reboarded the A/C. Then we had to wait 1.5 hrs. to be de-iced. An ATA American Trans-Air (DC10 ?? / L1011 ??) contract flight came in while we were on the deck, probably headed for BWI or Norva, and they had priority on the de-ice. To hell with the sick people. Right? For 0.5 hr. we had heat. Then they secured the APU, and we went cold turkey (I emphasis COLD). "Off we roared into the wild WHITE yonder" (plagiarism).

T/O 1100L ADW. EST time-enroute: 6.3 hrs. ETA ADW 1720L. Flight uneventful. Arrived ADW on time. The whole plane passed thru Customs in about 5 mins.

AS PORKY PIG SAYS, "THA,THA,THAT'S ALL, FOLKS." EXCEPT ..... Frank Kearney taught me years ago, "It's all a matter of priorities, Johnson. But, if my "Shrink" suggested flying for 16.5 hrs. to get 11 hrs. of liberty; I would get another "shrink." Hell Commander, the shrink went with us. One thing is for sure Rex slept Sun. night after his 4 hr. drive back to WEST BY-GAWD.

KEEP 'UM FLYING !!! Lew

**MORE STORIES AT THE  
SPRING FLING 6 MAY 00**



## President's Corner

The excitement is starting to build, the alumni association and the chairpersons for the coming events have been meeting. The *Spring Fling* Plans are finalized and the final plans for *Reunion 2000* are nearing completion. You will find reservation forms for both enclosed in this month's newsletter. A Couple of quick points, if you have not paid your annual dues for 2000 (\$10.00) and are not a life member, this will be your last newsletter. Please mail your check to Jim Rozycki ASAP or we will be forced to drop you from the mailing list. Our by-laws state that anyone not paid by April must be deleted from the membership rolls. Your association needs your participation, especially with the events coming up this year. I assure you, being a member will be worth the \$10.00. Note, if there are two \*\* next to your name, our records show you haven't paid as of March 17, 2000, if you have since, thanks.

Our web site <http://www.vp68.org/> is up and running. If you have any ideas or material you would like to see added, please provide it to one of the association officers. As the reunion approaches, we are still in need of current addresses for non-member alumni. Please check those old Christmas Card lists and forward any addresses you might have. The officers and chairpersons want to contact as many former alumni as we can. The committee has done an incredible job of finding a great place, having a plan of activities over the three days and we want to include as many of the alumni as possible. Please pass the word! With the Spring Fling just a little over a month away, start making plans, see the web site for details and places to stay. We look forward to seeing everyone in May and can hardly wait until November. The *Election Committee* is hard at work once again, we need to elect a slate of officers for the next two years to be voted on at the business meeting in November. If you would like to run for office, please contact or e-mail the secretary. We need interested alumni to serve for January 2001-December 2002 term.

<http://www.vp68.org>

## NEW ADDRESS

Our Secretary has a new address Kathy Wright, 4773 W. Braddock Rd., Apt 204, Alexandria, VA 22311, email : [wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com), work phone: 703-917-2953.

## SEND US YOUR NEWS!

Thanks for all the news! Keep it coming. Carrie Blazek, 108 Denver Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or email me at: [mcblaze@erols.com](mailto:mcblaze@erols.com)



Carrie Blazek, C. Stripling, John LeNard, John McDermott, Joe Odenthal and Paul Randolph visit the Naval Reserve Relief at the Navy Memorial after attending Jacque LaValle's reenlistment.

## WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE??

President – Dick Fickling – [p3css1@aol.com](mailto:p3css1@aol.com)

Vice Pres. – Paul Randolph - [Paul\\_J@email.msn.com](mailto:Paul_J@email.msn.com)

Treasure – Jim Rozycki - [Rozyckijim@aol.com](mailto:Rozyckijim@aol.com)

Secretary - Kathy Wright - [wright\\_kathleen@bah.com](mailto:wright_kathleen@bah.com)

Historian – Ed Stanfield - [estanfield@opf.com](mailto:estanfield@opf.com)

## “TRADER JON” NAVAL AVIATOR LEGEND PASSES ON

Martin Weissman, aka, Trader Jon the proprietor of the famed Naval Aviator hangout Trader Jon's for nearly half a century, died Friday 18, 2000 in Pensacola, FL. The little bar with that amazing collection of aviation memorabilia was a beacon for aviators of all stripes and a uniquely common experience for everyone who wears the wings of gold.

[REUNION 2000 03-05 NOV 00](#)