

VINH LONG OUTLAWS NEWSLETTER

VINH LONG OUTLAWS ASSOCIATION
(VLOA)

April - June
Second Quarter 2008

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COMMENTS FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Hi Brothers and Friends,

It isn't too late to get your registration for the R2K+8 reunion to our treasurer, Charles Bouton. Currently, we have registered about 2/3 of the number who attended R2K+6 at Pigeon Forge. This year's reunion, R2K+8, is being held at the Sheraton Inn, Harrisburg/Hershey, Pennsylvania. Erline and I have scheduled a very busy time with visits to Gettysburg and Lancaster, PA. I am sure you will find it very entertaining as well as being able to see those brothers with whom you served in 1964 - 1965. We have had a most wonderful gathering at each of the previous reunions and I am sure this one will be no exception. If you know of anyone who has not registered and wants to attend, tell them it's time to enroll. August 1 is the latest you can pay the full amount and be guaranteed a hotel room and seats on the buses used to travel to Gettysburg and Lancaster. Please use the registration form included in this newsletter. Don't forget to order your shirts by using the shirt ordering form.

We will also have a book sale/trade for those paperbacks which you have finished reading. The proceeds will be used to support the Fisher Houses.

Since this edition will be the last one before the reunion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be your Director the past two years. Also, I thank the Steering Committee members for their guidance and support.

Charles Bouton's address is :
2013 SW Providence Place
Port St. Lucie, FL 34593
e-mail: cbouton@hotmail.com

See you at the reunion!

Joe Clelan

VINH LONG OUTLAWS ASSOCIATION
 Round UP 2008 (R2K8)
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
 September 11-15, 2008

All reservations to be made through VLOA. Hotel cannot accept reservations for Round Up R2K8.

Please complete this form and mail check to Charles Bouton at the address below.

Registration fees include: Four nights hotel accommodations - 2 group breakfasts- Round Up Welcome-Back Buffet - Guided Tours in Gettysburg - Dinner and Lunch in Gettysburg - Admission to one (Jennie Wade House or Soldiers Museum) - Battlefield Theatre Show - Lancaster Lunch - British Invasion Show - Farewell Dinner - all local transportation - all taxes, gratuities and amenities!!

Name: _____ (1) Name for Badge

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Spouse/Guest Name: _____ (2) Name for Badge

Do you have any special needs? _____

# of Persons Per room (Please check one)	Price per person	Total cost based on # of people in a room	Smoking/non-smoking rooms- mark S or NS	Handicapped Accessible rooms-check if needed
1	\$800.00 per person	\$800.00		
2	\$550.00 per person	\$1100.00		
3	add \$300	\$1400.00		
4	add \$300	\$1700.00		
no room cost	\$300 per person	\$	N/A	N/A

Early Arrival/Late Departure Reunion Hotel Nights

Will Arrive ___ Days Early @ \$125.00 per night

Will Stay ___ Days Later @ \$125.00 per night

Total Due: (Includes Reunion Fees plus early arrival/late stays) \$ _____

Round Up Choices: Please mark with number of people (1-4).

Gettysburg Day: Jennie Wade House _____ or the Soldiers Museum _____

Golf at Dauphins Highlands _____ Bass Pro Shop _____ Hershey Chocolate World _____ Antique Auto Museum _____

Farewell Dinner: Chicken Saltimbocca _____ Pan Seared Atlantic Salmon _____

Golf Shirt Sizes: M ___ L ___ XL ___ XXL ___

Arrival Mode: I will be ___ driving or ___ flying to the reunion (Please indicate this for our planning.)

I will have an item to place in the Silent Auction: ___ yes ___ no.

Payment: 50% deposit is due to Charles Bouton, No Later then May 1, 2008. Remaining 50% is due to Charles no later then August 2008.

Cancellation/Refund Policy: Individual Cancellations must be made 10 days prior to arrival. No refunds will be made prior to the reunion. Full refund will be made if notification received earlier then 10 days prior to arrival. Partial refund will be made if notification received later then 10 days prior to arrival.

Please mail form and make checks out to: VLOA and mail to Charles Bouton 2013 SW Providence Place, Port St. Lucie, Florida

THE FUTURE OF VLOA AND REUNIONS

Or

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

By 2010 we will be approaching our SIXTH biennial reunion. 1) Branson 2) San Antonio 3) Ft. Rucker 4) Pigeon Forge 5) Hershey 6) 2010.

The focus of the concept for reunions and VLOA has been on any of those who were assigned or attached to the Outlaws from 8/64 to 9/65. At the inception of the VLOA concept a roster was compiled of 500+ names of those known who served anytime during that period (Master Roster), of which some 250 were located and contacted (Confirmed Roster). The confirmed roster has been the basis for newsletter mail outs, and the well from which VLOA membership has sprung. VLOA membership now totals 74 (lifetime, annual, associate and honorary) approximately 29.6% of the confirmed roster. Admittedly, VLOA efforts to continue the search for others remaining on the master roster, not already located and contacted has been, at best very limited. Some new accessions to the confirmed roster are credited to the VLOA web page, members or from other sources.

With 2010 VLOA may possibly be approaching a crossroads. That being to actively and aggressively to search for the approximately 250 Outlaws not yet found and located to increase VLOA membership and potential for additional reunion participation. Without such and efforts, current VLOA membership and reunion participation may remain status quo with few exceptions. That situation continuing portends the potential for diminishing membership and reunion participation in later out years, and perhaps the fading of VLOA altogether as we now know it. We all recognize as time moves on, many factors impact on that situation: age, health, priorities, family, employment, etc.

With the above said, there are several options that VLOA may want to consider:

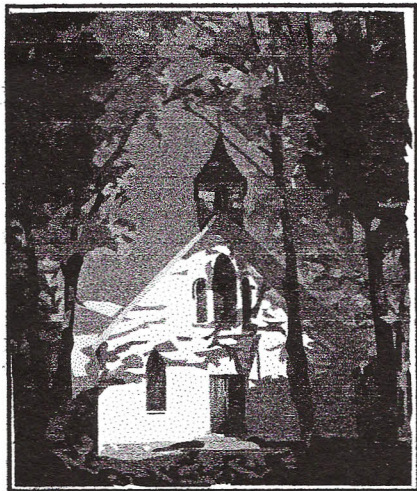
- 1) Remain status quo
- 2) Expand potential membership and reunion participation with aggressive search for others on the master roster (8/64 - 9/65) not already found and contacted

OR

- 3) Expand VLOA membership to include others after 9/65

Your comments, ideas and thoughts for Hershey 2008?

Contributed by: Al Iller



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"The Back Pew"

From our VPOA Chaplain: John Doyle

The waiting Game

Too many of us go through life playing the waiting game. Right now, I'm waiting to win the Florida Lottery. I imagine I'll still be waiting the day I die. It just seems like I, and I'll bet, you, have always been waiting for something in our lives. First we couldn't wait to be a teen-ager. When we got there, we couldn't wait to get a driver's license. And on and on.

At the risk of sounding sexist, I think most girls couldn't wait for their first date. Then it was to be asked to the prom. I will not even mention that first kiss.

As we aged, we waited to find the perfect mate and get married. Then we waited for the birth of our first child.

Oh well, you get the picture. The waiting game is also often used to put off doing things. Example: Your wife wants you to run to the store for milk. You tell her "I will go in just a few minutes, I'm waiting to see who wins the spitting contest!"

I think you get the picture. But there is someone you can wait on with a clear conscience:

"But those that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31 (KJV)

Remember, God acts in His time, not ours. Don't rush or get impatient about life's little decisions. Pray and wait upon the Lord. He will tell you yes, no, or not now.

FUTURE VLOA REUNIONS FACE CHALLENGES

Forty four years ago, the name "Outlaws" was selected as the radio call-sign for the newly-formed helicopter company that had just deployed from Fort Benning, GA to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam. Almost immediately upon arrival in Vinh Long, some members of the original group were transferred to other in-country units to ensure a balanced unit rotation at the end of the one-year tour of duty. Other personnel were infused into the "Outlaws" to fill the vacancies. This same procedure was followed in the maintenance support unit (RoadRunners), the signal support unit, and other support units attached to the Outlaw unit. By the end of our first year in Vietnam, more than 500 soldier names were included on duty rosters of those collective Outlaw units, now known as the Vinh Long Outlaws (VLOA).

The name "Outlaws" endured for the remainder of the Vietnam conflict although the numerical designation of the original 62d Aviation Company ultimately morphed to become the 175th Aviation Company. However, the people who served in the 175th Outlaws have never formed a cohesive group such as the VLOA. They are essentially two separate "email" organizations who hold separate mini-reunions for a few hours in conjunction with the national conventions of the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association (VHPA) or Vietnam Helicopter Crew Members Associations (VHCMA). If you don't belong to one of those groups, you have no opportunity to "belong" to a group such as our VLOA.

For ten years our original (first-year) Vinh Long Outlaws have enjoyed a delightfully unique bonding. There are a number of reasons why the VLOA continues to thrive: 1) We have a structured, formal, year-round "Association"; 2) We renew our friendships every two years at our VLOA reunions; 3) There is no distinction between former ranks of our members which brings our entire original unit together; 4) We publish a quarterly Newsletter to keep our members informed; 5) Numerous individual contacts have been reestablished between members which, in many cases, would not have happened if it were not for the VLOA organization itself. I know of no other company-size Vietnam helicopter unit that has established the total cohesiveness and camaraderie such as we have with our VLOA.

As Al Iller vividly points out in an article elsewhere in this Newsletter, our VLOA group, as we have known it for the past decade, is now at a crossroads. Read Al's article for a good analysis of what could be facing the VLOA.

It appears that attendance at the Hershey Roundup this year will be somewhat lower than in previous years. Conflicting dates with family activities is one reason. Costs of driving or flying are up from previous years. A few previous attendees may have lost interest.

But, an overriding, and compelling reason for not attending this year appears to be because of age-related health issues. All other reasons for not attending can be overcome with some planning and a little personal sacrifice, but we can't ignore the fact that we're all now 44 years older than our Vinh Long days, and many of us just can't make it to the reunion anymore. Nothing is more certain than the fact that, at some point in the future, we will be a "Last Man" organization. We were a small organization to begin with and, with our limited window of Outlaw Vietnam service (August '64 – September '65) as the criteria for primary membership, we will certainly face diminishing reunion attendance in future years.

I recently reviewed a couple articles I wrote for the first, NEW, Outlaw Newsletter back in 1999 where I emphasized that the 2000 Branson reunion would be the "one and only" reunion that the Vinh Long Outlaws would ever have. When we planned that reunion, there was no intention of doing it again. On the other hand, there was also no thought that the 120+ Outlaws and friends who came to that first reunion would almost demand that more reunions be held! So we did, and we have now been having VLOA reunions for nearly a decade. What a great bunch of people we have in this VLOA organization!

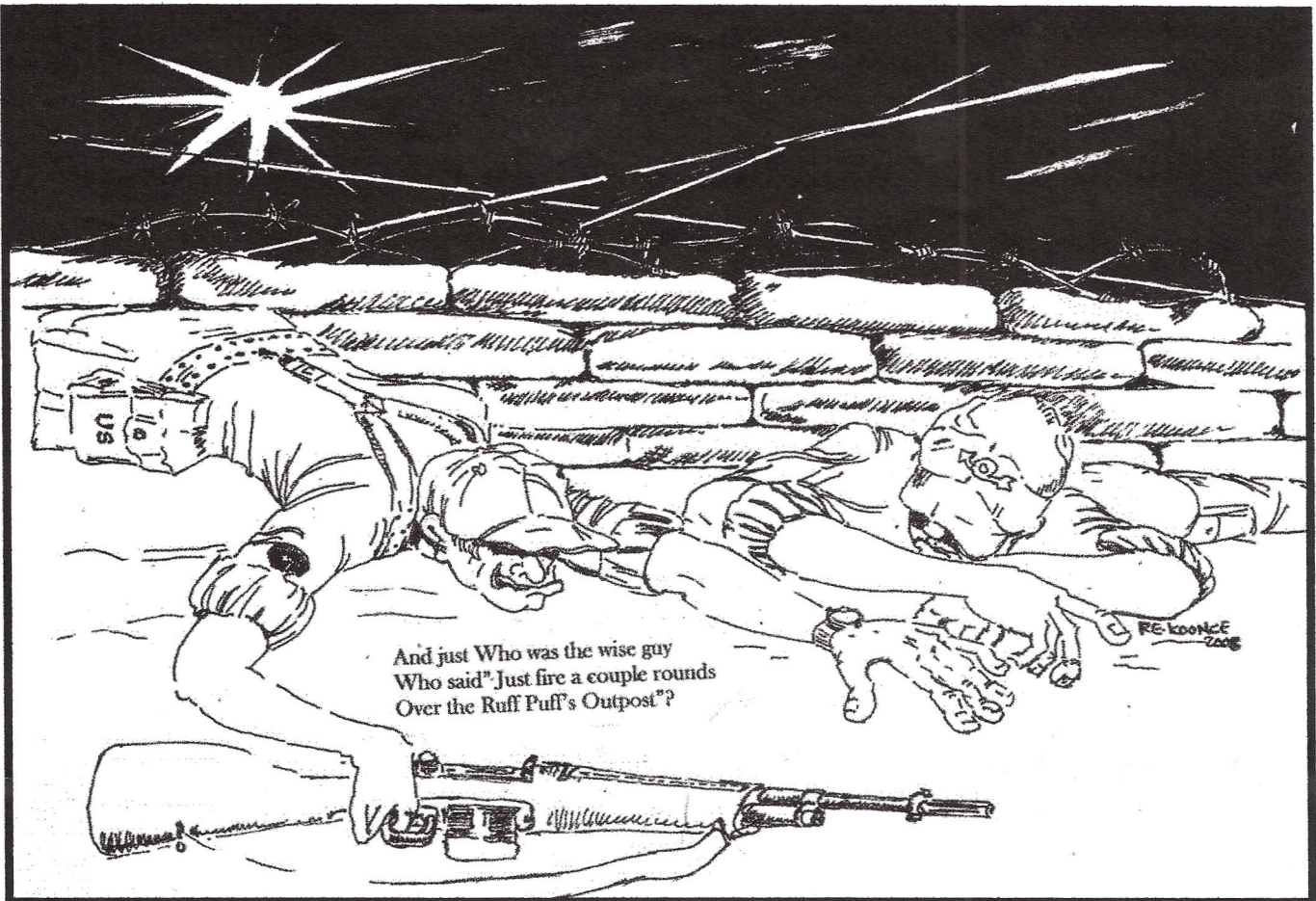
So, with all that as the background, here are a few challenges for all of you:

First, let me make one more appeal to those of you who might still be "on the fence" about coming to Hershey for R2K8. If there's any way possible that you can come to the Hershey reunion, DO IT ! You won't regret it. It's possible that this could be the last VLOA reunion. There's still time to register for Hershey. **DO IT !**

Second, after reading Al Iller's article, be prepared to discuss, at the General Membership Meeting, some alternatives toward continuing the VLOA organization. This discussion could be crucial to the future of VLOA as we know it.

(continued on page 6)

KOMICS BY KOONCE



(continued from Page 5)

Third, I don't intend to let the VLOA fade away as long as I'm around to help keep it alive. So, I'll throw out a challenge to all of you "young" guys. . . . although I'm one of the oldest of those original Outlaws, I intend to be that "Last Man". But, you'll have to come to any future reunions to claim that honor for yourself.

Lastly, let's keep our organization alive and viable. Come to the reunion. Be a part of the bonding that now goes back 44 years! See you in Hershey ???!!!

Contributed by: Tom Anderson

VLOA REUNIONS

AN APPROACH FOR MEMBERSHIP CONSIDERATION

Past VLOA reunions have essentially been planned, organized and executed by individual volunteers willing to accept the responsibility. This was accomplished in full coordination and approval by the VLOA Steering Committee. Volunteers, in most cases were either at or near the selected reunion site locations. However, there have been situations where the volunteer planner was some distance from the reunion site and occasional travel was made to effect required on site coordination. In most cases, volunteers relied on professional tour/convention/reunion agent planners to assemble a package of accommodations, meals, events, transportation and various venues available based on detailed and specific VLOA reunion requirements. The VLOA volunteer reunion planner then recommended to the Steering Committee for their final approval the package which best met our reunion requirements. A large percentage of the required coordination and negotiation with these agents was done at 'arms length' by telephone, internet Email, FAX and when necessary mail. Although desirable to have VLOA planner(s) at or near the reunion site, it is not absolutely necessary. Working with these agents has proven highly satisfactory and efficient as evidenced by the successful VLOA reunions held to date. Additionally, use of agents significantly reduced the demand for personal time, effort and expense for the VLOA volunteers. Otherwise, an extraordinary amount of time would have been required to individually select, negotiate and coordinate separately with many different entities offering potential reunion accommodations, meals, transportation, venues and services.

Moreover, while previous reunion coordinators have willingly volunteered to take on the very time consuming task, it will become increasingly more difficult, in future years, for the Steering Committee to identify and convince more VLOA members to accept the responsibility for hosting and coordinating future reunions.

Successful reunions require an enormous amount of coordination, energy, commitment, organizational and communications skills. While the VLOA has shown itself to have people with these attributes, and we don't like to admit it, age has to be considered a factor in the consideration of those who have the skills necessary to put on a successful reunion. Professional event planners do this for a living, have the resources to devote full time to the task, and are not constrained by the aging factor.

There are many professional tour/convention/reunion agent planners/organizers nationally, regionally or locally oriented with offices throughout the U.S. Many, who are regional or local also offer nation wide these services through affiliated or cooperative agreements with others. Although many offer a full range of tour, convention, and reunion services some specialize in coordinating events only for certain groups (e.g. high school, college, government, social, religious, military, etc. etc.). The advantages of VLOA employing such an agent/planner for future VLOA reunions are as follows:

- 1) Eliminates total reliance and burden on VLOA volunteer(s) for reunion site selection, planning, coordination and execution.
- 2) Provides opportunity for initiation of planning for the next reunion by the Steering Committee immediately at the conclusion of the last.
- 3) Provides for a wider selection of potential future reunion sites by VLOA membership.
- 4) Insures professional quality reunion planning, coordination and organization by selected agent planner.
- 5) Process requires full involvement of VLOA Steering Committee as originally envisioned.
- 6) In the event a situation of a withdrawal of the designated Steering Committee member(s) as primary reunion coordinator(s) would facilitate transfer of this responsibility to another Steering Committee member(s) with minimum interruption to the reunion planning process.

This approach is presented in this newsletter for the VLOA membership in preparation for a presentation during the biennial business meeting at Hershey Roundup R2K+8 for your consideration and discussion on VLOA employing an experienced professional agent planner for our future reunions. The presentation will include a general overview of the services normally offered by professional tour/convention/reunion agent planners.

(Contributed by Tom Anderson and Al Iller)

Silent Auction

In the last VLOA Newsletter, we asked that you please contact us by June 30 and let us know what you will contribute to the VLOA Silent Auction if you plan to do so, along with a description of the item(s). As of this date (07/03/08), we have heard from only six contributors. We must have this information as soon as possible (and not later than July 31) to consolidate the information and prepare the display materials. We will appreciate your cooperation.

Thanks,

Olen and Mary Thornton

3603 Gawaine Court

Annandale, VA 22003-1311

Email:olenandmary@cox.net

Home phone: 703-698-0548

Turkey Hunting in Texas With Ernie and Frank



Frank Estes and Ernie Isbell are shown with the results of a recent Spring Rio Grande turkey hunt in Ernie's home town of Paducah, Texas. Frank is a renowned turkey hunter with many years experience hunting the crafty and elusive birds. He is very active in the Alabama Wild Turkey Federation and hunting turkeys is his favorite pastime, or at least one of them. Ernie Isbell says that when he was growing up in this part of Texas there were not any turkeys. Now there are literally thousands of them. This bird was the first turkey Ernie had ever killed and now he is hooked on hunting what was almost the national symbol (Benjamin Franklin was said to have favored the turkey over the eagle as our national bird.)

Now that Frank has been to this part of Texas he and Ann are invited to come this Fall or next Spring to enjoy some of Ernie and Linda's true Texas hospitality. For that matter Ernie invites all who are interested to come see the wonders of Paducah, Texas where the turkeys are plentiful (not meaning the local populous) as are the drinks and wonderful stories at the Isbell's second home. You 'all come on out and stay a while.

(contributed by: Linda Isbell)

R2K8 ROUNDUP SHIRTS

The shirt for this year's Roundup will be the exact same high quality as at the last reunion in a light gray solid color with the VLOA patch embroidered on it.

Cost for each shirt is \$25.00. You may pre-order your shirt (s) on the form below. All shirt orders will be delivered upon Registration in Hershey. Additional shirts will also be available for sale the reunion.

R2K8 ROUNDUP SHIRT ORDER FORM
QUANTITY DESIRED BY SIZE

**** MEN'S SHIRT SIZES****

	XS	S	M	L	XL	2XL	3XL	4XL	TOTAL #	COST
QTY	30-32	34-36	38-40	42 - 44	46-48	50-52	54-55	57-58	_____	_____

**** LADIES' SHIRT SIZES****

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	1X	2XL	TOTAL #	COST
QTY	4	6/8	10/12	14/16	18	20	18-20W	22-24W	_____	_____

For delivery of shirt orders at the reunion, please indicate name(s) below:

Name: _____ Size _____
Name: _____ Size _____
Name: _____ Size _____
Name: _____ Size _____

ALL PRE-PAYMENT ORDERS MUST BE IN BY JUNE 15, 2008

SEND SHIRT ORDERS FORM WITH CHECK OR MONEY ORDER MADE PAYABLE TO: VLOA

C/O William Hensinger
203 Stanley Drive
Palmyra, PA 17078
717 832-0556