

VINH LONG OUTLAWS NEWS

VINH LONG OUTLAWS ASSOCIATION
(VLOA)

October - December
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A Few Personal Thoughts.

These days seem to be the shorter days of my life. I fill up the little seven-compartment boxes of morning-and-evening pills every Sunday afternoon but, somehow, it seems that it takes only about 2 or 3 days before I'm filling them again! What happened to the other 4 or 5 days ???

I read more books now than I did when I was in a working life. Books bring back both great memories and mild frustrations when I read about things I always wanted to see or do and I realize I probably won't get there.

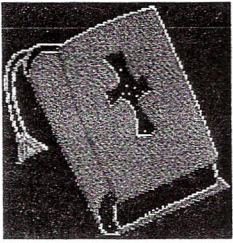
I'm comfortable knowing that Pat and I will probably run out before our money does - so we won't have to board with one of the kids.

I look at pictures in scrapbooks more often now than I did when I was collecting those pictures and putting them in what were once soft and clear plastic-covered pages. Now those pages tend to stick together when I open them. Many of those pictures are those we took together in Vinh Long in 1964-65. I took some; others were traded with friends who shared the same daily activities I did back then.

I get to thinking about those faces in the pictures and how proud we were of each other. How much we depended on each other, regardless of our rank or station at that time.

We were aviators, mechanics, crew chiefs, gunners, armament specialists, drivers and cooks. We found ourselves together in that isolated little airstrip near Vinh Long, Viet Nam that no one in the states had ever heard of. We didn't make any headlines. We participated in operations throughout the Mekong Delta, from Saigon to the U-Minh forests south of Cau Mau and from Rach Gia near Cambodia to the South China Sea.

(continued on page 6)



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

"The Back Pew"

From our VLOA Chaplain: John Doyle

The Back Pew

Now that we are well started on 2007, I have some questions about 2006 for you:

On Thanksgiving, did you really stop long enough to give thanks to God from whom all Blessings flow? What? You had nothing to be thankful for? You've got to be kidding! You're still here; maybe not in the shape you would like to be in, but you are here. Or how about this? You have friends that love you - well OK, tolerate you. Enjoy a good joke? Then be thankful that at your advanced age (see, that was a joke), you can still laugh. One more thing to be thankful for: God loves you in spite of yourself.

At Christmas time, did you remember to include Christ in your festivities? I know, I know. December 25th is not the birthday of our Lord, but it is the day that has been set aside to celebrate His birth. Christmas without Christ is like cake without frosting.

Now, how about New Years? Did you make a bunch of silly resolutions you know you won't keep, or did you say, "I'm not going to make any resolutions I know I won't keep?" What! You can't think of any? How about my giving you a jumpstart? What if you resolved to:

Love your neighbor.

Be kind to all you meet.

Stop to smell the bacon frying in the morning.

And this final one: Try to be as good to God as He is to you.

God Bless and Happy New Year.

John

The following was sent to us by Bob Michalic. He thinks the song was written by Lee J. Williams, that is who he got the copy from in 65/66.

MAVERICK GUNS
(To the tune of Sink the Bismark)

Verse I:

In the year of 1964 the Mavericks came to life
The gun ships of the Delta soon feared both day and night
They never liked the killings but never turned one down
For they knew that this was their job so they cut them to the ground

Verse II:

The horn would blow and men would run to put ships in the air
For somewhere in the jungle came signals of despair
The Mavericks had to get there to cover for the crash
Soon rotor blades were slapping and rocket heads would flash

Verse III:

They covered slicks from Soctrang, from Bienhoa and Saigon
In battles short but gruesome, they passed up not a one
There never was a mission could make them turn and run
Their punch was hard, their bite was deep, to some it seemed like fun

Verse IV:

Some nights with parties going strong the horn would interfere
Drunks would run and stumble and throw up all their beer
They couldn't see but made it to their ships and showed no fear
For they knew the air would sober them, their heads would soon be clear

Verse V:

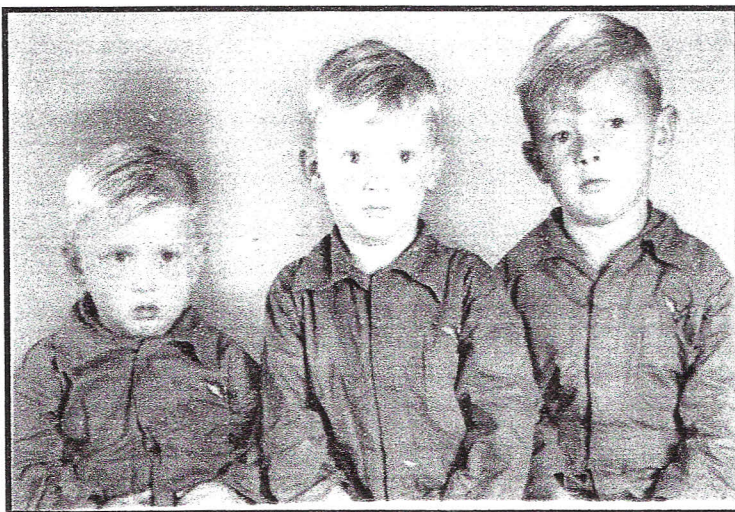
They flew to Cam Ranh Bay to help the airborne in distress
And ended up in An Khe with all their very best
Some new men took their first hits but held their heads up high
For they knew they'd make good Mavericks and be proud each time they'd fly

HAS YOUR ADDRESS OR ZIP CODE CHANGED?

It is very important to keep your mailing status up to date if you wish to continue receiving the VLOA Newsletter. If you know someone who has moved recently and not filed a change of address please have them contact us so we can resume sending the newsletter to them. We can be contacted by phone: 850-482-5605 or email: myranell@digitalex.com or by the return address on the newsletter.

Al & Nell Moist

“KOMICS BY KOONCE”



Can anyone identify our Mystery Person this time? We are looking at the little boy in the middle. Notice they are all wearing some type of Air Corps Wing.

You will find the answer at the bottom of page 6... no fair "peeking" before guessing.

"I remember it well...."

Even though almost 42 years have passed, there are still memories of individuals and events that linger from our days in Nam. Not all of them were things we may want to recall, but some were fun.

In early 1965, we were still getting gunners from the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii. If I recall, they would be with us for 90 days, then go back to Hawaii. I remember one gunner above all others. He was an older buck sergeant, and like most of us, was not one to refuse a cold beer.

The thing that made him unusual, was that he believed that helicopters were going to do him in. He didn't really want to fly as a gunner, he just wanted some combat time for his promotion board packet. He was convinced that even a short flight was tempting fate.

One day we had a mission out of the dirt strip in My Tho. On one of the sorties to cover a Battalion of ARVNS, we took a round through the tail rotor driveshaft. I found it on a walk around after it sounded like the aircraft had received a hit. By the way, did I mention I have a warped sense of humor? No? Oh well, I do. The gunner stood beside me as I opened the shaft cover, which had a tell tail hole right through it. By now, my gunner had turned a ghostly white. He wanted to know, "What are we going to do?" I gave him a response he really didn't want to hear. "Well, old buddy, it's nothing short of a miracle we made it back here. That thing can come apart at any moment, the chopper will go into an uncontrollable spin, and we will probably crash and burn." He retreated to the side of the dirt runway without another word.

After the pilots and I inspected the damage, we determined it was safe to fly back to Vinh Long. I called my gunner, who was still white as new-fallen snow, and told him to "get ready to go". He looked at me, and I fully expected him to pass out at any moment. "Is it safe to fly? ", he wanted to know. I told him that I really doubted we would make it to Vinh Long. At this news his knees literally started to get weak. "My guess is that we will probably end up in the Mekong River, if we make it that far," I told him. I honestly thought he was going to dessert right there and then. However, our gunners were pretty nice to have around when the chips were down, and he was no exception. He did his job, then climbed aboard, strapped himself in, closed his eyes, started to shake, and prayed all the way to Vinh Long.

By the way, did I tell you I also had a mean streak?

JD

A Few Personal Thoughts (continued from page 1)

We fought the war of the 60s that the country read about in newspapers but couldn't relate to because most couldn't even find Viet Nam on a map. We didn't look for glory or require medals to prove how good we were. We were called and we went to war. Some of our people didn't return.

When we returned, some of us took off the uniform to find careers elsewhere. We became fire-fighters, engineers, police officers, clergymen, bankers, pilots, doctors, carpenters, teachers and nearly every profession you can imagine. Some of us continued to proudly wear the uniform until that career ran its course.

Today, many of us are retired after a lifetime of family responsibilities and career challenges. And while we fill our days doing things we thought we never had time to do, we still find ways to be productive in our lives, both for self-fulfillment and to make the lives of others around us a little easier.

The thing we had in common back in 1964-65, we still have in common today. We were there, together, in Viet Nam, and we were friends and young soldiers. Today we're still friends, but old soldiers. And, to get together again, we have this great little organization that we call the Vinh Long Outlaws. We keep up with each other; we feel the happiness of each other's successes and the pain of each other's setbacks and losses.

I find it doesn't take much to make me tear-up when talking about those old friends. How many times have I tried to make a "toast" at dinner about something that is so meaningful to me, or relate a story about one of those old friends, only to find I have to stop talking and sit down before I can finish the words I wanted to say. Some one else always finds something to say right away to break the silence, but I think they know how deeply I feel about those old friends.

It's a lot easier to say these things to myself, then put them on paper. I don't have to try to verbalize these thoughts, I can just write them. I've said it many times, how proud I am to have been a part of that original Viet Nam Outlaws group. So, that's what I did today. I said it again, only in writing. . . . and I still tear-up thinking of how much that bunch of people still means to me.

Submitted by Tom Anderson

ATTENTION:

Dues are due in January. The address of our new Treasurer is:

**Charles Bouton
2013 S.W. Providence Pl.
Port St. Lucie, FL 34953
PH: 772-345-3553**

Please send your dues to him if you have not already paid for 2007.

The boy in the middle is Jack Lane, Christmas, 1942, age three. Notice they're wearing flight suits and (probably) Army Air Corps wings.

(looks like he was destined to become an aviator)

Lifetime Membership is now available to our members. The price is \$100...contact the Treasurer for more information.

Current Lifetime Members are:

**Bob Michalic
Leon Osterland
Robert Sharp
Paul L. Martin
David Longhofer
David Logan**

(Bob Michalic was the first at the Roundup to step up and become a Lifetime Member)

Now what would be a newsletter without a little bit of humor?

GRAND KID'S INSTRUCTIONS ON LIFE

- Never trust a dog to watch your food.
- When you want something expensive, ask your grandparents.
- Never smart off to a teacher whose eyes and ears are twitching.
- Wear a hat when feeding seagulls.
- Sleep in your clothes so you'll be dressed in the morning.
- Never try to hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- Don't flush the john when your dad's in the shower.
- Never ask for anything that costs more than five dollars when your parents are doing taxes.
- Never bug a pregnant mom.
- Don't ever be too full for dessert.
- When your dad is mad and asks you, "Do I look stupid"? Don't answer him.
- Never tell your mom her diet's not working.
- Don't pick on your sister when she's holding a baseball bat.
- When you get a bad grade in school, show it to your mom when she's on the phone.
- Never try to baptize a cat.
- Never do pranks at a police station.
- Beware of cafeteria food when it looks like it is moving.
- Never tell your little brother that you are not going to do what your mom told you to do.
- Remember you're never too old to hold your father's hand.
- Listen to your brain. It has lots of information.
- Stay away from prunes.
- Never dare you little brother to paint the family car.

HOW TO STAY YOUNG

- Throw out nonessential numbers. This includes age, weight and height. Let the doctor worry about them. That is why you pay him/her.
- Keep only cheerful friends. The grouches pull you down.
- Keep learning. Learn more about the computer, crafts, gardening, whatever.
- Never let the brain idle. "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."
- Enjoy the simple things.
- Laugh often, long and loud. Laugh until you gasp for breath. The tears happen.
- Endure, grieve, and move on. The only person who is with us our entire life, is ourselves. Be **ALIVE** while you are alive.
- Surround yourself with what you love, whether it's family, pets, keepsakes, music, plants, hobbies, whatever. Your home is your refuge.
- Cherish your health: If it is good, preserve it. If it is unstable, improve it. If it is beyond what you can improve, get help.
- Don't take guilt trips.
- Take a trip to the mall, to the next country, to a foreign country, but **NOT** to where the guilt is....
- Tell the people you love that you love them, at every opportunity.
- And Always Remember:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that **take** our breath away.
- "Old Age Is Not For Sissies."