

18TH AND 54TH AVIATION COMPANY OTTERNEST ASSOCIATION

2016 Reunion Meeting Minutes / September 24, 2016 / Arlington VA

- Group did **Pledge of Allegiance**
- **General Discussion** by Executive Members –
 - Discussed Agent Orange – **Ron Haugen** stated that it is important to sign-up for VA benefits because Agent Orange can affect our children up to 7 – 8 generations. Jeff Bic - suggested strongly that all unit members make sure they are on the **VA's Agent Orange Registry**.
- Ron gave the **Treasury Report** – As of 2015's Banquet the amount in the 18/54thAvn. Association's bank account was \$14,258.23. Zero checks have been written since then, so the balance remains at \$14,258.23.
- Discussed **Website** (Jeff Bic):
 - There is a link to Photo Albums. There are 9 different Photo Albums: Otters of VN, VN Locations, Us&Them-18th, Us&Them-54th, and each year's Reunion photo album since 2012.
 - The Albums & Slideshows are not really on our website. They are in 'Google Photos' in the 'Cloud' and are linked to our site (so we should never lose them).
 - If you give or send Jeff 'Bic' photos, please provide information about the photos – year, location, names - if you remember any of the guys in the shots, etc.
- **Old Business** – Regarding the 54th/18th Aviation Company (Jeff Bic):
 - Currently our Roster shows 2,188 men were in the 18th & 54th in Vietnam over the 10yrs in country. We found approximately 550 as of this year. Currently, we are in contact with 310.
 - It is difficult to keep track of people as we get older because we get new homes, new phones, new emails, and the Assoc. is the last to know. So, any help locating unit members would be helpful.
- Nominated new **Assoc. Committee Members** /
 - President – Ron Haugen
 - Vice President – Jack Ritchie
 - Treasurer – Tom Fetsch
 - Secretary – Gene Brockman
 - Website / Communications – Jeff 'Bic'
 - Newsletter – James Sullivan – he requested the group give him suggestions, stories & pictures of 2016 Reunion
 - Chaplain – Wayne Jones
 - Vice Chaplain – Peter Cranford
 - Sargent at Arms - Doug 'Nick' Nicholson

All were approved by the Attendees of the business meeting.
- **Tom Fetsch** discussed **2017 Reunion**:
 - Tom has been in touch with AFRI (Armed Forces Reunion Inc)
 - It was voted on that the next reunion will be in Bloomington, Minnesota (MSP)
 - The Hotel will be the Hilton near the airport - Cost \$109 and includes breakfast and free parking
 - We will have access to a hospitality suite & a banquet room

- Suggestion was made to start on Wednesday rather than Thursday / to be considered.
- Average temps 70s in day and 60s at nights
- Possible things to do:
 - Free transportation to the Mall of America
 - Light rail to downtown St. Paul
 - Mississippi Cruise
 - History Center
 - Black Hawk group
 - Vietnam Memorial
 - Fort Snelling
 - Minneapolis Zoo
 - See start of Fall colors
- It was suggested by the members of the Executive Board that the **2018 Reunion** be near or on the West Coast > Like Lake Tahoe or San Diego, CA or Las Vegas – Colorado Springs & Denver Co was mentioned.
 - There are people on the West Coast that may attend (Jeff Bic)
- **Lindsey Perkins** - recommended that we recruit more people from the 54th Avn Co. There are only roughly 6 to 8 currently. When recruiting people from the 54th it should be stated that the 2017th Reunion is in honor of Major **Val Hoey**, the founder (1st C.O.) of the 54th in VN.
 - The Executive Committee and Members attending approved this idea.
 - Jeff Bic - When looking for new people try to go to www.pipl.com
- **George DeSerres** - discussed the 2016 Vietnam Tour he lead – He has flyers if anyone is interested in going in Feb. 2017. He suggested talking to Wayne Jones Jr or Joanna & Pete Cranford about the trip – they went with George this year.
- **Larry Podany** - from Andover, MN has created metal Otter Cut-Out sign. They are up for sale around \$35-40 each. He has 600 different colors.
- **Wayne Jones Jr** - discussed the Vietnam Memorial website 'Wall of Faces'. The Wall of Faces effort aims to put a face to the more than 58,000 names inscribed on 'The Wall' in Washington, D.C. To date, over 48,000 photos have been collected. Fewer than 10,000 photos are still missing. Jeff Bic – Stated that he has put a photo from the Wall of Faces on our '**In-Memoriam**' Page on our website - for those in the 18/54th, but not all KIA or MIA have photos posted.
- **Henry 'Al' Wilson** - stated that there are many people that know about us because they go on Facebook. JeffBic – Suggested that members can join Facebook quite easily without revealing too much personal info which would allow them to have access to our 18 & 54th '**GROUP**' Facebook page (which is a join by Approval only site).

No other business was called for and the meeting was adjourned

Minutes were taken and submitted by **Margaret 'Mini-Bic' Bickerton**

September 24, 2016

