



Shotgun Blasts

Volume 3, Issue 2

February 2011

Chaplain's Corner

God is Love or Love is God?

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

⁶He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8 NIV)

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. (1 John 4: 7-9 NIV)

Remember the Hippies? They tried to make a god out of love. Didn't work, did it? Basically, they made a mess. Humans do that when they try to morph that which God has provided, put into our world, and caused to become incarnate in our midst when they seek to change the conditions of it into something which they can control, use and manipulate. What those folks always seem to wind up with is a petty and poor perversion of the

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Chaplain's Corner by Ned Moore
- 1 Delta Birddog Reunion
- 3 Dates to Remember
- 4 Ramblings by Ed Willer
- 6 Something for the Ladies in Our Lives
- 7 Reminiscences by John Theiler

2011 Delta Birddog Reunion



Assuming that you are reading this on the first day of February 2011 I am sure that you are aware that there are only 255 days remaining until we kick off this year's Delta Birddog Reunion in the Alamo City, San Antonio, Texas. Sounds like it is a long way off and if we were sitting in Soc Trang or some other spot in South Vietnam awaiting our DEROS I would agree but with the accelerated speed of time at our ages we all know that it really is not that far off. We all know the old saying, "Time flies when you're having fun" but let's face it, time is moving at hyper speed as we begin to age.

There are a few changes that we need to make to the original planned activities due to a scheduling conflict that our friends at the IBDA had but there is no change to the dates for the reunion, we are firm for 13 – 16 October. Instead of a fly-in at Cannon Field on Saturday we will join with our Air Force counterparts from the Ravens at the airport in New Braunfels for a joint fly-in on Friday with the Birddogs of the IBDA being joined by some folks with T-28s and an O-2. We are still working out details regarding rides in the various aircraft and what costs may be involved but it might just turn out to be a fun day.

We will still kick off the Reunion on Thursday at noon with the registration desk and the Hospitality Suite opening up. Thursday evening we will have the welcome reception with some light snacks, a cash bar and meet and greet time.

continued on page 3

real thing.

As mentioned before, "Love" has several facets – some feelings, some thoughts, some sensuality, some practicality, and some altruistic motivations – but in the final analysis one must determine: Is it selfless or self-serving?

My point is this, that if it does not give glory (credit) to the Creator of Love – it will ultimately be shown to be counterfeit. If it does not work toward the ends to which The Creator intended, it will be shown to be a perversion, a sham, a farce, an exercise in selfishness.

There are many behaviors and forms of expression for the term - "Love".

As stated, in English, we have but one word as opposed to the Koine (New Testament) Greek with nine. This does put us at a bit of a disadvantage on the one hand, but offers us opportunities for exploration, on the other.

The bottom line, as I understand it, is that the pure forms of love are focused on giving not getting.

Someone has said, in a different forum, Love cannot wait to give and lust cannot wait to get. For our society, lust is most frequently referred in the context of sex. Not going there – not my purpose here. Granted, one can lust after stuff: tools, books, cars, airplanes (just had to put that in there) houses, bank accounts – the list is just endless. And, it further shows the idolatrous focus of "Getting".

Also, there needs to be a clarification regarding the differences in getting vs. receiving. If you stop and think, "getting" is a seeking after, while receiving is not. Getting produces greed. Receiving, in the right way, produces gratitude. Gratitude can produce both praise and commitment. Commitment can produce creative relationship(s). Creative relationships can produce God-focused, God-centered productive giving lives.

We have received the Love of God, and all that can and does mean for us, not because we sought it, but because God initiated the gift. Yes,

The Bible says that Love is a Fruit of the Spirit – but it is also a gift – much like a seed is given, but then must be nurtured if it is to grow into its full being. Not so much a paradox as it is a dichotomy. Or maybe it is more like a handshake – God's Hand touching, holding yours.

Love is god – no. Some people try to isolate a characteristic of love, and make it thus - FAIL!

One of the most important characteristics of God's Nature is Love – "Αγαπε" -- the giving kind; the does-not-require-anyone-to-do-something-first kind; the kind that says, "...God is Love..." (1 John 4:7-9) and from that flows all the rest – of God.

We cannot out-give God. But, we can allow God to make our love more like His.

How is yours?

Ned



Our Condolences

To

Hank and Irene Collins

In the loss of their son

Richard

On

January 24, 2011

Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

DATES TO REMEMBER

NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY

FEBRUARY 1, 2011

GROUNDHOG DAY

FEBRUARY 2, 2011

SUPERBOWL XLV

FEBRUARY 6, 2011

ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

FEBRUARY 14, 2011

DAYTONA 500

FEBRUARY 20, 2011

PRESIDENTS DAY

FEBRUARY 21, 2011

GEORGE WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

FEBRUARY 22, 1732



MILITARY MILESTONES

FEBRUARY 1, 2003 SHUTTLE COLUMBIA DISINTEGRATES UPON REENTRY

FEBRUARY 12, 1955 PRESIDENT EISENHOWER SENDS MILITARY ADVISORS TO SOUTH VIETNAM

FEBRUARY 12, 1973 FIRST AMERICAN POWs RELEASED FROM NORTH VIETNAMESE CUSTODY

FEBRUARY 22, 1967 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE CONDUCTS THE FIRST AND ONLY MASS PARACHUTE JUMP OF THE VIETNAM WAR

FEBRUARY 23, 1945 MARINES CAPTURE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SURIBACHI ON IWO JIMA

On Friday we will have an optional trip to the New Braunfels airport to meet up with the Ravens and the IBDA folks or open time for you to visit San Antonio, Fort Sam Houston, golf or whatever you wish to do. When we return from New Braunfels we will plan on the unit breakdown meetings and some more socializing prior to a pizza or Mexican food night together.

Saturday will be another open day during which there will be some organized trips to the Alamo and to the Mexican market for those that like to shop as well as time for you to take advantage of strolling on San Antonio's Riverwalk or taking a cruise on the San Antonio river. There will also be time to visit some of the many small museums that are located in the city or to spend the day on the Mission Trail. Just about anything you might want to do, even if it is only to sit by the pool at the hotel.

Saturday evening is still reserved for our banquet and we are considering the idea of a dinner and dance for those of you that are still young enough to sway around the dance floor with your ladies. I do need some input from you geezers on this so send me an e-mail at Shotgun-8A@hotmail.com with comments. Any and all of you should be at least a little prepared to speak at the dinner, you are all talented and we want to know what you did and are doing.

As always, Sunday morning we will conduct our Memorial Service and, as in the past it will be done in a somber, appropriate manner. I would ask that each of you review the Honor Flight list on the web site and if you know of a comrade-in-arms that is not on the list please pass the their information on to Don Modica, Ned Moore or me and we will see that they are included in the service.

Once again a copy of the reunion registration form is included as the last page of the *Shotgun Blasts*. Please take the time to fill it out and mail it to Tim Brinkerhoff so that we can get things better organized. We want this reunion to be one of the best and it will be an effort for all of us.

Don Smith
Shotgun 8A
Reunion Coordinator

Ramblings

We had a houseboy, a maid, and...

By Ed Willer, Shotgun 13 July '65 – Jul '66

I was assigned to Rach Gia (“rock jaw”) for two months in the spring of 1965. Rach Gia was a pretty fishing town on the Gulf of Siam. The official airport for Rach Gia outside of town was unsecured (no guards), so we used a secure landing strip at the edge of town that had the main road bisecting the strip right through the middle. One end was right at the beach of the Gulf of Siam. The “White Mice” would stop traffic for us when we were taking off and landing. About a dozen officers, including three pilots (one Air Force) lived in an old mansion and we even had “French” chefs. We had a houseboy, a maid, and a full-time barmaid. I personally thought the fulltime barmaid was a bit much. Many evenings we sent the houseboy downtown for an order of stone crabs. A big platter cost us a dollar. Being a pilot means you work out of a relatively fixed facility and as a result, as the Navy called it, we had “three squares and clean sheets.” It certainly beat my vision of sleeping in a foxhole! After I left, one of the officers was sitting on the throne, which unfortunately happened to collapse under his weight. The broken porcelain cut the back of his thigh and required stitches. We called it the VC toilet.

Norm Svarrer was the regularly assigned pilot at Rach Gia. I went out to help him. He was a bachelor and had an intense hatred for communists (or anyone close to being communist). I intentionally took my role on a professional basis so I didn't have to spend too much time worrying when the ARVN broke and ran which they did from time to time. Like the current conflict in the Middle East, the Americans fought harder than the natives. I guess we had watched too many John Wayne movies. It seems to me when “we” have on the uniforms and “they” have on civilian clothes “we're” in a world of trouble. The civilian clothes always seem to win. Robert McNamara has said as much. I considered myself a professional soldier doing what my government told me to do. I did not have any illusions about saving the world. I'm sure there must have been acts of heroism on the part of the Vietnamese troops, but I never witnessed any. The “PF” (Popular Force) troops were particularly

useless. They lived in the strategic hamlets scattered throughout the Delta and had the reputation of working for the VC at night and us during daylight. Actually they were just pawns of both sides trying to get by. My opinion is that most “civilians” caught up in this and current conflicts don't care who or what their government is, they just want to be left alone so they can get on with their lives and raise their families. Is the Pareto Principle (the “80-20 rule”) alive and well in war? I would estimate that the 20% who cared were split between friend and foe and the 80% could care less and just wanted to be left alone.

One of the Vietnamese Army observers that flew with me a lot told me one day that the “Vietnamese think Ho Chi Minh was same same your country's Patrick Henry.” I became a little more suspicious of the support for our side when I heard that. No wonder they broke and ran. The VC seemed to have more “fire in the belly” for their cause. Well, enough philosophy.

Anyway, Norm received the Distinguished Flying Cross and was nominated for two more that were downgraded to Air Medals with a “V”. A witness told me about the DFC deal. It was a big battalion size ambush by the VC on the local ARVNs. Norm adjusted artillery, etc. After Norm fired his four 2.75 inch rockets (with high explosive heads – like a 105 shell), he and his observer expended all of their personal ammo (M-16s and 45s) by shooting out of the windows at the VC at low altitude. After he ran out of ammo, he was seen “low leveling” over the rice paddies trying to hit VC in the head with his landing gear! Norm was laid back and a normal sort of guy on the ground, but in the Bird Dog, he was intense, to say the least (mad man?). Evidently he couldn't get enough so he extended his tour for 6 months. One reason I am compelled to share this with you is that I have not been able to find anybody in the record book that was as “highly decorated” as Norm. I am convinced he was one of the most decorated Bird Dog pilots of the Vietnam War. Somebody show me another one! I'm proud to have served with him.

Norm had a great looking snoop on his L-19 door. He scrounged up an extra door, so anytime he went to the Company Headquarters at Soc Trang, he would swap out the door for a plain

one. He was afraid the Old Man would make him take it off.



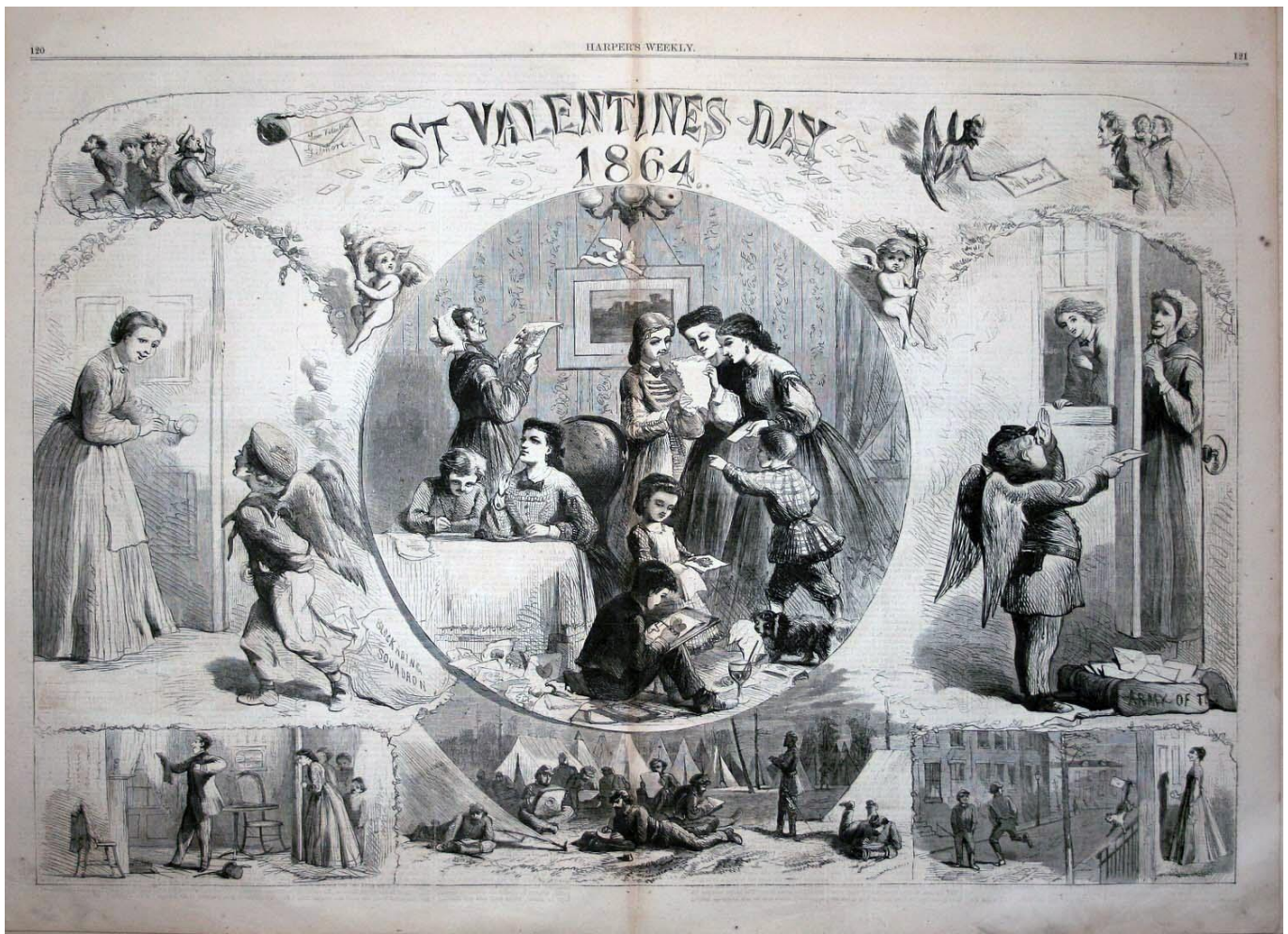
It was special working with Norm. A real hero in my book. He had morphed into a warrior, that category of man who loves the thrill of the hunt and facing his enemy. I talked to Norm recently. He did extend in Rach Gia for 6 months and then went on to a career in the Army (Special Forces, etc). You can check the Company record for others who served heroically and received medals. I was not one of them. I tried to do my job and keep my head down. I considered myself more of an aviator than a warrior. I also had a great deal of admiration for the chopper pilots going into hot "LZ's (landing zones) and particularly the "Dust Off" crews (med evac).

Rach Gia was in the Ken Giang Province and was extremely 'hot' (VC-wise). In fact, it was there that I took my only hits during my 12 months stay. I was low leveling (we were suppose to stay above 1,000 – 1,200 feet which was out of effective range of small arms), and he "saw me before I saw him", so to speak. My plane got caught in a spray of automatic fire. Douglas McArthur said once "anyone who thinks the pen is mightier than the sword has never seen automatic weapons fire." I agree. I was so low that the first round came through the top of my left wing tip (my left wing was down in a turn) and two more came through the left cockpit window between my Vietnamese observer and me. There was an electrical wire that went to the flap motor, and one of the rounds cut that in two. As a Birddog pilot knows, the flap motor is right behind the pilot's head. A little too close for comfort. I have memory of a white flash, which was the Plexiglas window

exploding. When that happened I was pushing on the throttle as hard as I could. There's no "thinking" at a time like that, just reactions based on your training and instincts. The mechanics always gave the pilots a souvenir when they could, and I received the left window with the two bullet holes in it. I brought it home, cut it down and used it to frame my military patches and wings. As I've said, I was doing something I was not supposed to do which is how you can get hurt before your time in combat. I was very lucky that day, but then I've always considered myself lucky. I've cut it close more than once. However, the Plexiglas with the bullet holes is a great souvenir. The "right stuff code" required that you take a hit at least once or someone might think you were a little "yellow". There is a lot of testosterone floating around in the air when you have a bunch of twenty somethings walking around in flak jackets with a 45 strapped on their hip. I was glad to get my "hit" out of the way with no harm done. Not wanting to push my luck, I was much more cautious after that incident. The story had a happy ending because no one was hurt. Evidently, my ARVN observer was not amused because I never saw him again! Winston Churchill once said, "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at with no results." He got that one right! I have often thought that the 'extreme vacations' that are popular today are for men who never served in the military. I've also noted with interest that at antique aircraft shows I've attended I've never met a "war bird" owner who was a former military pilot. We got our excitement out of the way early on.

Ed





For Those Lovely Ladies In Our Lives

This is an incredible illustration of Valentine's Day from an original 1864 Civil War newspaper. The leaf shows various traditions of the Valentine's celebration in the Civil War. An angelic figure is shown delivering a bag of valentines from soldiers at war to the women they love back home. At the bottom, men can be seen writing to their sweethearts. In the center image women and children are shown preparing valentine cards for their husbands and fathers, who are off at war.

You've Touched My Heart

You've given me a reason
For smiling once again,
You've filled my life with peaceful dreams
And you've become my closest friend.

You've shared your heartfelt secrets
And your trust you've given me,
You showed me how to feel again
To laugh, and love and see.

If life should end tomorrow
And from this world I should part,
I shall be forever young
For you have touched my heart.

Author unknown



REMINISCENSES – Part VI

"Good-by, Vietnam"

By John L. Theiler

The last few months of my "Tour" passed uneventfully. I was busy with my work at the 16th Medical Dispensary. However, I wasn't about to forget where I was and the circumstances under which I served.

At times, I could feel ever-so-faint pounding through my shoes as I stood on the pharmacy floor. I just surmised B-52's or other planes were dropping bombs, tons of bombs, off in the distance. Then on occasions, I'd watch parades of flag-draped caskets passing the dispensary on the way to the airfield to be sent back home. Probably by way of a military mortuary in Hawaii.

Evidence of the war got even closer when filled body bags were brought into our dispensary to be X-rayed. That was most unsettling to me. I believe it was experiences such as those that caused me to seek some relief at the NCO-EM Club after work hours. There, before supper, I'd empty a few cans of beer. The frosty, foamy brew was readily available and cheap @ 15¢ a can. And we had our choice of many brands: Vietnamese, Japanese, & Filipino, as well as American.

I sampled them all, but usually settled on Budweiser or Schlitz. After supper, I'd return to the club and drink more. I recall, at times, having a beer in my bunk as I drifted off to sleep at night. The discipline was lax in that regard. Quickly, I was developing a daily habit. I facetiously blamed it on the less-than-drinkable water in Tan Son Nhut. A brownish sediment would precipitate to the bottom of a glass of the fluid. We didn't want to speculate on what that substance was. For clean drinking water the Army shipped in bottled water w/dispensers. But I still enjoyed quaffing beer, and it relaxed me.

In late July, '65 I received orders to rotate back to the United States for discharge. You'd think I'd be jumping up and down with glee, but I took it in stride. I was seemingly depressed. Didn't I want

to go back home? I very much enjoyed the work in "my" pharmacy, albeit in a combat zone, and it was coming to an end. I felt my job was important, and that made me feel important. And at that point in time I had little to return to in Pittsburgh.

I actually thought about extending my time in Vietnam. Maybe I'd enlist for three years for Pharmacy, get a bonus, and go to Germany. Well, as things transpired, my brother Bob in Pittsburgh intervened (Destiny once again?). He met a fellow at Carnegie Institute of Technology (now CMU); with whom I went to high school. Ed, by name, was employed in the Dept. of Physics where soon a position would open. Bob wrote to me in Tan Son Nhut and told of the opportunity. Physics research lab, huh? I wasn't sure about taking the job and thought it over.

Well, my days in Vietnam dwindled down, and September rolled around. Another Pharmacy Specialist arrived to take my place. Okay, I'd leave as ordered. Some belongings I was able to send home ahead of me. I believe it was about the 21st of Sept. that I packed my personal baggage, said good-bye to the dispensary personnel and was chauffeured by Jeep to the airfield. I was booked for a flight to Clark AFB in the Philippines.

I had mixed emotions. Yes, I was leaving Vietnam behind, however, my thoughts, in part, were about those servicemen still on the ground back there. And there would be more coming. Guilt that I was "getting away"? But why? My work was finished. I served 11 months, 3 weeks in that war zone. I did what was asked of me; I did my duty. And so, after a steak dinner at Clark, it was on to Hawaii on a Continental Golden Jet.

I awoke from an onboard nap at around 2 AM, quite surprised to see the sun shining. Well, of course, we were flying east; I'd have to reset my watch. But no time to see the islands.

From the 50th state it was to the Oakland Army Transfer Station in California to get "mustered out".

I would be discharged one month earlier than the full 2 yrs. required of a draftee. Thanks, Uncle Sam. I served him and he was nice to me. But the Army wasn't quite finished with me yet.

Before I left the Oakland facility, someone had the audacity to give me, and several other assembled men, a re-up talk. He must have been kidding. I, for one, didn't want to hear it, and doubt those other fellows were interested in joining up again. I think I heard boos and hisses. For me, it was by taxicab to San Francisco International Airport and a plane back to Home, Sweet Home. Be it ever so humble...

EPILOGUE

I never really escaped Vietnam completely. Dreams and memories over these 45 years have reminded me of my experiences over there. But I feel that I was one of the fortunate ones. And what an adventure - the adventure of my young life.



The Long and the Short of Maintenance

'65 - '66



Jack Northridge, Shotgun 8
Don Smith, Shotgun 8A

Contact *Shotgun Blasts*

E-mail: ShotgunBlasts@live.com

Telephone: 281-973-9805

Snail Mail: Don Smith
17815 Yellow Birch Trail
Humble, TX 77346



A Special Thanks

Our comrade-in-arms, David Cook, Shotgun 49A asked me to convey a special thanks to all of the Shotguns that joined in prayer for him when he suffered severe heart problems in mid January.

Dave, who was critically wounded in November 1965 believes that the prayers by his comrades contributed to his rapid recovery. He also has found a new friend in Fritz Gunther who lives close to Dave and took the time to visit him in the hospital.

Guys, this is what it is all about, helping each other as we can.

You can send Dave an encouraging message at: davidcook@aol.com .

Let's Not Forget!



Our friend at the IBDA have been supporting us in our reunion efforts for several years now and we should support them by becoming members of this organization that is dedicated to preserving the history of the finest little War Bird ever built. The annual dues are \$30.00 and they publish a fine informational news letter each month and send it via e-mail.

You can find a membership application at the web site www.ibdaweb.com .

Go for it!

Links

Just a few links to other sites that may be of interest to you.

74th RAC www.aloft74th.org

183rd RAC www.183seahorse.org

184th RAC www.184rac.com

199th RAC www.SwampFox199thRAC.com

219th RAC www.219headhunters.com

220th RAC www.catkillers.org

And, let's not forget our friends at Corky's, George Cook.

www.corkysstudiographics.com



A couple of FACs on patrol.

2011 Delta Birddog Reunion

13 – 16 October, 2011

Registration Form

NAME (Last, First)	
STREET ADDRESS	
CITY, STATE, ZIP	
HOME PHONE	
WORK PHONE	
CELL PHONE	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	
CALL SIGN OR DUTY POSITION (i.e. Clerk)	<i>(Please indicate if Swamp Fox, Shotgun or Both)</i>
GUEST	
GUEST	
Sorry, I am unable to attend the Reunion, but please keep me on the mailing list.	

ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
REGISTRATION FEE (Includes Reception, Banquet, Airfield Cook- out, etc.)	\$150.00 PER PERSON		

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have any special needs let us know when you register so that we can plan.

Activities such as golf and tours to local attractions are being planned to fill free time. These will be announced on the Web Sites and in separate information e-mails as the reunion approaches

Please make your check payable to Delta Birddog Reunion and mail it with this form to:

Mr. Tim Brinkerhoff
28 Meriden Avenue
Meriden, CT 06451