

Welcome to another Newsletter. There has been a ton of things going on since the last, so I'll use that for an excuse and just jump right in.

April 18, 19 and 20, 2008, a "Not So Dirty Anymore Dozen" Dawgs gathered in Kansas City for our first Mid-West Mini Reunion. We were blessed to have ten of our sweeties with us, so the size of our group numbered twenty-two. Sadly, as Glenn and Peggy Marlowe were exiting the plane, Peggy twisted her knee badly. They were not able to join us Friday and departed early Saturday to return home to see her doctor. The rest of us missed them dearly. The group began arriving noon Friday and on into the afternoon and evening. We congregated in Troy and Jill's room. We sat on the couch, coffee table, chairs, bed, beer coolers and the floor. We told stories, drank beer, Seed brought Acadama, tried to remember if some of the stories being told were true and thoroughly enjoyed each others comradeship. Later we convoyed to a local bar-b-que spot and had a fantastic group meal. Then we ventured back to Troy and Jill's room to finish off the evening. Troy and Jill, thank you for your hospitality!

Saturday we toured some of the surrounding sites, and at 2:00 P M gathered in one of the hotel's meeting rooms. A few must have had a touch of "bar-b-que sauce flu" and were not able to join the site-seeing tour, but by 2:00 all had revived. The room was again lined with coolers and snacks. We had CD/DVDs of old pictures and the Las Vegas Reunion running continually. Nancy Mink supplied a dice game, "Left, Right and Center". We had to move a couple of tables together to handle the interest in losing quarters. Linda Sullivan was the big winner. Do you remember that Sully and Linda also won the raffle at the Las Vegas Reunion for a three day, two night stay at the Imperial Palace? Linda said they may be using that in June, so Sullivan's, let us know if you multiplied your Mid-West Mini winnings on your return trip to the Imperial Palace. A good time was had, but the main event was the reacquainting and renewing of old friendships. For those who have not been fortunate enough to attend a gathering yet, make plans to make the next one. You will not regret it! Saturday evening we again group meal'ed at a fine steak house, then back to the meeting room to continue our main event.

Some departed late Saturday night. Some left early Sunday. The rest of us met for breakfast and departed through out the day Sunday. Below is a group picture of the gang.



April, 2008. Overland Park (Kansas City), Kansas

Front, left to right: Dave Bethard, Terry Hermann, Troy Powell, Stan Freymuth, Frank (Shiek) Shemek, Linda Sullivan, Bill (Pinky) Mink, Bob (Tex) Summerlin.

Rear, left to right: Jill (Troy's friend), Annette Hermann, Takeko Bethard, Linda Freymuth, Sharon (Seed's friend), Ric (Seed) Caraway, Nancy Mink, Bob (Miller) Farr, Carol Farr, Danny Johnson, Jim (Sully) Sullivan, Evelyn Shemek. Not present for photo, Glenn & Peggy Marlowe. Sorry Jill and Sharon. you told me your last name, my feeble old brain did not retain it.

Following are some e-mail comments of the Mid-West Mini.

Seed Caraway said: "I have several pics on my camera. Should I send them to Pinky or Dave? (Maybe to the post office and they will post them in the lobby)

Had a wonderful time guys. Even better than I thought. Sharon really liked you all too. I wasn't sure how she would react to this bunch of people that I had already spent maybe too much time talking about. Now she can attach a face to the names.

On Sunday I really did not want to go home. The feelings I was having were like when I was a teen-ager and about to go back to school after a summer vacation.

Hope to see ALL of you soon. We must stay in touch!!

OLD cheese....OLD scotch...OLD friends. In a society that always wants new, and bigger, and better, I have found that some things get better with age!"

Pinky Mink said: "Gals and Guys, Nancy and I had a wonderful time at the reunion. It was so nice to see every one of you wonderful folks and get a chance to converse with you all.

I am so sorry that Peggy Marlowe injured her knee and was forced to leave early. We wish her a swift recovery. I posted the group photo under the category "08 Mini Reunion" on the web site."

Dan Johnson said: "Morning Gang...glad to say I survived the 15-1/2 hour drive back to NC...hope everyone else got home safely as well...believe me, the drive there and back cured me of my desire to drive and see the countryside...really enjoyed seeing everyone, the addition of Tex and Seed was really special...the more we get together, the more special the family becomes to me after all these years...I hope you will put my phone number in your contacts list and you ever need a friend or are in trouble, you know one who lives in NC...be well and I can't wait to see you all again soon..."

Seed Caraway answered: "Thanks Dan. It WAS so good to see everyone, but you gals and guys that come from so far away really impressed me. It was only a three hour drive for me so no big deal. Dawgs are different!!!"

Miller (Bob) and Carol Farr said: "We had a wonderful time with all of you. Glad we got to meet the Dawgs and ladies that didn't get to Vegas. On our way from the airport after leaving Dave and Keko I was soooooo ready to turn back around and have some more fun with all of you. LADIES, we really need to stay in touch with each other, I know we can have some fun on the internet just like our Dawgs do. I would like all of you Dawgs to pass my email on to the "Ladies"

Dawgs” PLEASE. I’m looking forward to hearing from you ladies. I got my Evelyn fix this weekend. I love her accent and was able to spend more time with you ladies than was available in Vegas. This time it was more personal and less time restrictive. Please understand that I am not complaining about Vegas. I had a great time there too. But this gathering together was much more intimate.

Anyway, Ladies please write and remember we had agreed in Vegas to put together a little story on how we met our men. Now is a good time to get this off the ground before our next reunion. Please email me a little story on your meeting. Make it happy, sad (with great results) or what ever. I will keep them all and we can share it down the line. Here is my email address: bcfarr1@yahoo.com

To one and all; we had a wonderful time this weekend and Bob and I are looking forward to the next reunion in 2009 (before).”

Dave and Takeko Bethard said: “Ditto that comment from the Bethards. We just got home, less one bag that (apparently) wanted to stay in KC longer!!

T and I had a wonderful time with all—we’re looking forward to the next one—soon...”

Terry and Annette Herman said: “I’m happy to report that I spoke to Glenn yesterday prior to leaving the airport at KC. He said that Peggy had had her knee X-rayed, and the x-rays were negative. They are going to have an MRI today, so we wish her the best. She was resting comfortably when I spoke with him.

Thanks for sharing a lot of awfully good memories. Both Annette and I enjoyed ourselves immensely.”

Bob (Tex) Summerlin said: “Y’all are good people and it was great to see you after these many years! And good to meet the I met for the first time. Thanks for your friendship and God bless!”

Frank (Shiek) and Evelyn Shemek said: “What a nice weekend – Evelyn and I really enjoyed it (but it was too short, again). Hope you all made it home without any hassles—we made it back in under three hours. Till the next time!”

Troy Powell and Jill said: “Jill and I have just about recovered from the monstrous drive (two days and seventeen – one hour hours) and the harrowing earthquake. We drove a day and a half to visit a day and a half and then drove another day and a half to get back. We spent the night in Tupelo, Mississippi on the return and Elvis says hi.

We had a great time! Meeting, greeting and shootin’ the shit with all you reprobates was a blast. Have no idea how your love women-folk can put up with you guys for as long as they have.

For you new guys (that’d be Seed and Tex), it’s about damn time you showed up. Hell’s bells boys, we talked about the both of you so damn much in Vegas you HAD to make KC just to shut us up. Thanks for coming guys, it was a sincere pleasure to see ya’ll once again. I hope you can make the next gathering.

For the rest of you beer guzzling, Japan lovin’ miscreants, it’s ALWAYS a delight to visit with you and discuss the finer points of living and working in The Land of The Rising Sun.

Jill and I had a great time. You’re a great group of folks. Thank you, thank you, thank you!”

A bit of explanation may be needed to understand the following volley of e-mails: The story came up at the Midwest Mini how unnatural and totally uncouth it was for Pinky to put catsup on his chow hall scrambled eggs in Japan, per Tex. It was not just dialogue; sometimes they would go outside and fight about it!

Seed said: “Tex, I forgot to mention in my other post. Several of us had brunch at Denny’s on Sunday before we left. We guess who I sat by and guess what he put on those damn scrambled eggs!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Can you believe it, some things never change. There wasn’t a fight though.”

Tex answered: “I thought I had corrected him enough that he would change, but some people never grow up! Now if I had been there I would have ‘whipped his ass.’

Pinky replied: “Actually the Seed man is making up stories. I tried salsa and really enjoyed it. I still prefer catsup however and if you had been with us I would have mixed catsup into your eggs and made you clean your plate before you left the table!”

Tex answered: “That’s the Pinky I remember, uncouth, a bully, mean as shit. Always treated me like a dog!”

So that was the Mid-West Mini to the best of my memory. However, I can only REPORT the happenings. You will have to attend one to FEEL it!

In addition to the Mid-West Mini, there have been a few Micro Mini-s too. In March, Jim Sullivan had a job in St. Louis that lasted a few days. One evening we went out for dinner and a couple of brews. We had a fine time visiting and catching up on what has happened since the Las Vegas gathering. I certainly do not expect anyone to believe it, but my sweetie, Linda, actually suggested the restaurant choice. Jim and I, being dutiful husbands who always strive to please our wives, agreed with her choice. Linda even took the following photo. I do remember that Jim was smiling before Linda said “say cheese.”



Dave writes: “I had a wonderful, evening long mini-gathering with Wayne Kelley on June 05, 2008. Wayne was attending military (Army) postal conference at the Double Tree Hotel in Orlando. I went over and we spent the whole evening reconnecting and remembering. We consumed more beers than either of us had for some time—but our conversation and the vivid memories we shared more than kept us energized and reasonably sober. Trust me; there were NO moments of awkward silence!

We remembered many fun events from our Hakata years—we laughed a lot—and we discussed our lives, careers and families. This was, as ALL of our reunion related gatherings have been, a very powerful, wonderful, special event.

Below is a picture our waitress took. This time Wayne forgot his camera, but Dawg Flight saved the day!!



Dave Bethard & Wayne Kelley
June, 2008. Orlando, Florida

As always—it was a fun and special night that was over too quickly.

Again, later in June, Dave writes: “Tom and Connie Thaxter notified us about their pending trip to Florida--asking if mini gathering could be arranged for Sunday evening with Ed Stallings, my wife Takeko, and I.

Of course, we were chomping at the bit to get together. It’s the first time the 3 ex-Dawgs have been together since 1970, at the first time my wife and I had met Connie. Tom and Ed had spent some time together in New York following our A Force tours, and Tom and I met-up at the Dawg Reunion in Ft. Wayne, Indiana in 1974. This was the first time the 5 of us had the pleasure of each others company--and it was a pleasure.

We enjoyed some Gyoza and Japanese food and spirits at the Daisen Restaurant in Merritt Island, Florida. We told a few stories--mostly truths, however, there might have been a slight bit of elaboration or down-right fact-manipulation overheard. But we all promised to keep in touch and to do this again--soon.

You ALL are invited to Florida anytime--I’m sure Ed and Troy and I--and others--would love to host or coordinate a mini gathering”.



June 22, 2008. Merritt Island, Florida
Ed Stallings. Tom and Connie Thaxter, Takeko and Dave Bethard

A couple of more micro-mini’s, not documented by pictures, were: Seed Caraway and Linda & Stan Freymuth at the fishin’ trailer at Bennett Spring, Lebanon, Missouri on Memorial weekend. Home-made ice cream, old room-mate stories

Mid-West Mini memories, rain and general BS was the agenda. Then again on Fathers Day weekend, same place, Lin and I had the distinct pleasure of meeting Seed's two wonderful daughters, Ashley and Rachel. They were accompanied by Seed's sweetie, Sharon. What a neat group he travels with! This time, Seed brought, what must have been, fifteen pounds of smoked ribs: agenda-visit, eat, enjoy the guests, eat, watch it rain and eat. Those are great week-end get-a-way made fantastic by the comradeship of my ex-roomie. There can never be too many of them.

Those are minis and micro minis. What a pleasure they are. If anyone else is having minis, let me know and they can be included in the upcoming newsletters. Or maybe you would like to attend one? They are not a big production planned event; just "I'm going to be in the area, let's get together."

A newsletter would not be complete without an update on the Dawg's health. A short time after the 2008 Vegas Reunion, **Marshall Gregory** went for a PSA test and found he has prostate cancer. It had metastasized to his bones and he is undergoing ongoing treatment. I talked to Marshall a week or so ago. He is in good spirits and back to work. He has a bone density infusion monthly and a "shot in the butt" monthly to kill the cancer. If all goes as planned, he will have surgery on his spine in September to remove a lesion. Marshall is well versed on cancer and is open to talk about it. I may be well to give him a call. "Everyone our age should have a yearly PSA test. I had one when I was 49 and now when I am 60. It can be cured if caught soon enough. Girls, you are more prone to colon cancer than your hubbies. Get checked! If you were subjected to Agent Orange, get checked for bladder cancer! The doctor told me I had 3 to 15 years. I told him I would take the 15."

Miller (Bob) Farr underwent triple by-pass surgery in early 2008. Miller says: "Thank you Dawgs for your thoughts and prayers. I am doing well. I made the Vegas reunion before surgery and the Midwest Mini after, and I am going to be at the 2009 reunion and any other I hear about in between. The doctor said I could have an occasional beer, so I'm having one now."

Roger Miller was not able to attend the Vegas reunion. He had triple by-pass surgery in early November, 2007. Later, in March, 2008 he had surgery on both legs. "The leg surgery was worse than the open heart. I'm doing okay now. I talk to Les Snyder every February 12, the anniversary date of our Air Force enlistment. I'm looking forward to the 2009 bash."

Since the April Mid-West Mini, **Troy Powell** and **Dickie Miller** have both lost their mothers. Both were well up in the year but that does not make the loss any less of a hole in their lives. Troy, Dickie and families, we are sorry for your loss and we will all remember you in our thoughts and prayers.

In preparation of this newsletter I also called **Fred Brelsford** to get an update on his health. What needs to be said cannot be said better than this note that **Dave Bethard sent to Fred's wife, Lee:**

"Lee, I'm so sorry that you had to contact me today about Fred's death this past February 27th, 2008. I also understand why it was so hard to pick up the phone and make the call--I'm so sorry we weren't able to better reestablish with him prior to his passing. Fred was liked and considered a friend by everyone who knew him in Japan, and probably since then. In those days, I was very skilled at the Japanese language, and his communication ability helped him and his friends find new ways to enjoy the nightlife, the customs, and the country of Japan.

I've copied the other organizers with this e-mail to help get the word out about his death. Bill Mink will also update our web site to reflect Fred's passing. I spoke with Stan after talking with you tonight. He and I discussed your interest in attending at least some part of a future Dawg Flight reunion—as a way to reconnect with that part of Fred's life, a part that you have told me that you really don't know too much about. Stan and I both feel that you will be welcomed, and that you'll find an immediate bond with both the Dawgs and their wives. The ladies have already been staying in touch with each other between functions—so you certainly make some new friends quickly. We'll begin keeping you in touch about our activities and plans—reading the

newsletters is a great way to learn more, Remember, most of our wives never met until the September reunion in Las Vegas—b if you look at the photos on our web site—they act like kids who have known one another for their whole lives. Such is th family we bring---

Bottom line, we'd love to have you at any of our future events. The best way to learn and to keep in touch is to visit o web site: <http://www.6918thhakata.com>. There is a lot of content on the site—lots of photos from the gang while serving Japan—and lots of the countryside and culture. You'll also find tributes to our deceased members and fallen heroes—alor with numerous photos and slide shows. It's a good way to privately get acquainted with us. Many of the pictures have o names on them—so you can also begin associating the faces and names. Since most of us still look like we did 40 yea ago, that won't be too difficult!!

You're in our thoughts and prayers today and everyday. As I said—each of us would love to hear from you—anytime.

Lee—please keep in touch. I'll be looking forward to more contact with you both by phone and e-mail soon. As I said—you're invited to contact me anytime if I can help you or if you just need to talk with a friend. Dave.”

Some things are fun to write about, and some are not. As life is, we hope we can keep a good balance. On Memorial D: I received a group of e-mails that were just too good not to pass on:

Father Dennis Edward O'Brien: “It is the soldier, not the reporter who has given us the freedom of the press. It is th soldier, not the poet, who has given us the freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who gives us th freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped l the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag.” (Thanks Troy)

Troy Powell writes: “I'm honored to have served with you in the United States Air Force in Japan forty plus years ago I'm very pleased to have found you again at this late stage of my life. I particularly want to thank Dave, Pinky and St: for making that possible. Have a safe Memorial Day.”

Shiek writes: “Thanks Troy, and back at you. These last twelve months have had a lot more meaning since we have be able to communicate and visit each other. On this Memorial Day, remember.”

Dave Bethard writes: “Thanks to Troy and all for all you did and still do. Outfits like ours may or may not be routine—but ours WAS special, and continues to be that. God Bless America and those who protect her.”

Dan Johnson writes: Back at 'cha, my Brother. Each time I look at the DVD at the gatherings or at home, I am constant amazed that we were ever that young...I know myself in those days was waffled between stupid, arrogant, and sometim just plain mean spirited...when I went to Vietnam I never expected to make it home, and when I did, I spent a lot of yea on the edge of wild and insane, then many years feeling pretty lost and alone...then, one day out of the blue came the c: from Pinky...since that time I have begun to feel a part of something again, reconnected to a powerful and influential p: of my youth that I have come to treasure...more importantly, I have a peace I have not known in many, many years...as tl years continue to pass, I know those times as moments truly special in our lives and wish I could have lived them mo fully, but grateful for having them at all...I want to thank each and every one of you for being part of my life, and lo forward to seeing you again very soon...we stood, sometimes very shaky, but we stood when the Country was goin nuts...we did our job and there is great honor in that...”

Bob Summerlin writes: “You were, and still are, a good man, Danny.”

Johnny Veatch writes: “Hello to all, I was a very frightened 18 year child when I arrived in Japan. I had never been awa

from home and I was literally scared to death. I will always be grateful for the 'Dawg Flight' guys who looked after me and helped me to grow-up. We all knew that we belonged together and nothing was going to happen to anyone in our group without facing the terror of the whole gang. No one was better than any other member in our group. We were always one unit looking after each other. We all knew what it means when we say we were brothers, because we were close as any brothers could be. I am so very proud that I had the opportunity to meet and live with the very best!!

I am saddened that I was not able to attend the recent reunions, but my eyes still fill with tears when I see all those photos of my friends, especially the before and after photos. Everyone matured into outstanding men!!!

Thank each of you for helping a very frightened young kid grow up...I will forever be grateful to each of you! Johnny V.
.”

To that I can only say, I too am very proud to have served our Country with the caliber of men that you are. I salute you.

And while on the Memorial Day theme: **Valdor (Les) Haglund writes:** “Hi Everyone, Not sure that I know all of you but as a former “Able Flighter” from the 6918th (Mar 69-71), I thought you might be interested in a little news from our family’s front.

My wife and I were this past weekend guests of the Americans Veterans Center in Washington DC for their annual National Memorial Day Parade. Our daughter Kristen (Miss America 2008) was in the parade sharing with ‘wounded vets and was one of the Grand Marshals along with actor Gary Sinise & Joe Montega. It was a wonderful event and we had the distinct honor of meeting 3-Congressional Medal of Honor winners (and Mickie Rooney).

I’ve attached a picture of my daughter Kirsten and I with Lt. Jack Stultz, Commander of the US Army Reserve Command. Besides my active duty Air Force days, I also was in the Army Reserve for 9 years and got out shortly after the 1st Gulf War in 1991 (Major, O-4).

My best to all of you and hope that this finds you well... Valdor (Les) Haglund.”



Les, what an honor! You should be rightfully proud.

Proud grandparent’s category:



Alan Benjamin Guerard. May 8, 2008. 8# 6oz. 1' 9" tall.

Congratulations proud grandpa and grandma, Bill and Kathy!

So, what's going on with the 2009 reunion? The ground work is in place. I have a letter ready to present to our potential hosts that asks for all the things we need, based on the 2007 gathering. The question is, who should they be delivered to? The consensus at Vegas was to have the next one in San Antonio. To date, I know of no one who has volunteered to do the work there. From our Vegas experience, though it went extremely smooth, is that whoever heads it up should live in that city. The hassle of not knowing what the site looks like, how interested the establishment is to meet our requests and a whole pot full of other decisions are made much easier if the organizer can communicate person to person with the salesperson. With that being said and with the calendar pages flipping quickly, it is time to move. If we do not hear anything from you Texas dudes by July 20, I am going to begin working St Louis in earnest. The time frame will again be sometime in the third quarter. So if you want to do it or if you do not want to come to St. Louis, take one step forward, quickly. We already have a treasurer, we already have someone to write the program for the banquet, we already have two co-emcees for the banquet, we already have the web site for communication, we already have a bunch of folks who want to come, so a lot of your work is done IF YOU WANT TO DO IT!

The next "needs some work" agenda is: The 6918th Hakata "found" roster now has 17 Able Flight members, 9 Baker Flight, 28 Charlie Flight, 103 Dawg Flight and 7 Headquarters members. Carl Aegler just sent us a list of 54 (mostly) Charlie Flight names (thank you Carl) from their 1997 reunion efforts. Many of that 54 are on the 28 above mentioned, but the list is from 1997 and needs some work to verify the accuracy of the information. What is needed is a team from each Flight to organize your Flight as Pinky, Dave, Troy and I have done for Dawg. We'll bring a wealth of information on proven "how to", and freely offering you that help. But it HAS to be you leading the way, because you know your Flight and the Dawg organizers already have their hands full, i.e. Pinky being the webmaster, ECT. Give one of your co-Flighters a call to see if he will give you a hand with your Flight reunion organization. Of course, you are all welcome and encouraged to attend the 2009 reunion, but I cannot put into words the emotion there is when each old friend walks into the room at the reunion. It is up to you to find them perhaps with a bit of help. The more you can locate and contact, the more memorable your reunion experience will be!

You've seen the Vegas Reunion mentioned, many times, of the before and after DVD that Dave Bethard made for us. It is two-disc that we are selling for twenty dollars. If you were at Hakata, the memories this DVD will revive is priceless. Proceed to the Dawg Flight Reunion Fund. Let Dave know if you want one. All of us who have one know you NEED ONE!

Now I know why we thought the newsletter should be done on a six-week time frame. It has been nearly twelve weeks since the last one, and this has become a novel instead of a newsletter because of all of the news to pass on. I'll do better on the next one. Hakata Dudes, it's been a pleasure again. Stay tuned to the web site. If you have something you'd like said in the next one send me some verbiage/pics and you'll see it right here. Take care and be safe.