

L to R Bill San Hamel, Robin Smith Independent Film Maker and Bill Plante CBS News. Bill and Robin were our guest speakers thanks to Bill San Hamel.

Bill Plante now the CBS White house correspondent spoke of his background that he was in Vietnam four times. Plante joined CBS News in June 1964 as a New York-based reporter/assignment editor and served as a correspondent in the Chicago bureau (1966-76). During that time, he served two of his four tours of duty in Vietnam, reporting on the bombing strikes over North Vietnam, the Vietnamization and pacification programs in the south and the fall of the governments in Vietnam and Cambodia. Plante also covered the civil rights movement in Mississippi and Alabama, including Dr. Martin Luther King's historic march from Selma to Montgomery.

Plante was moved to Washington D.C. in 1980 and has been a CBS News White House correspondent during the administrations of Ronald Reagan (beginning in 1981), Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

After speaking briefly of his career with CBS he mentioned that his wife had a far more interesting story to share here is some excerpts' from it.

RETURN TO VIETNAM

A Personal Journey of Family Closure

By Robin Smith

We were asleep when the telegram arrived. My mother, in her bathrobe and slippers, opened the door. Two marines in uniform, feeling out of place in Athens, Ohio, stood nervously on our front porch. Mom's face must have betrayed her deepest fear. The colonel, my father's friend, rushed in.

"Jane, he's only missing!"

Words filled with hope, to comfort a wife too young to be a

widow.

"I remember going out into the kitchen and falling down on my knees," mom told me years later. "And praying. Please, God, let him be alive!"

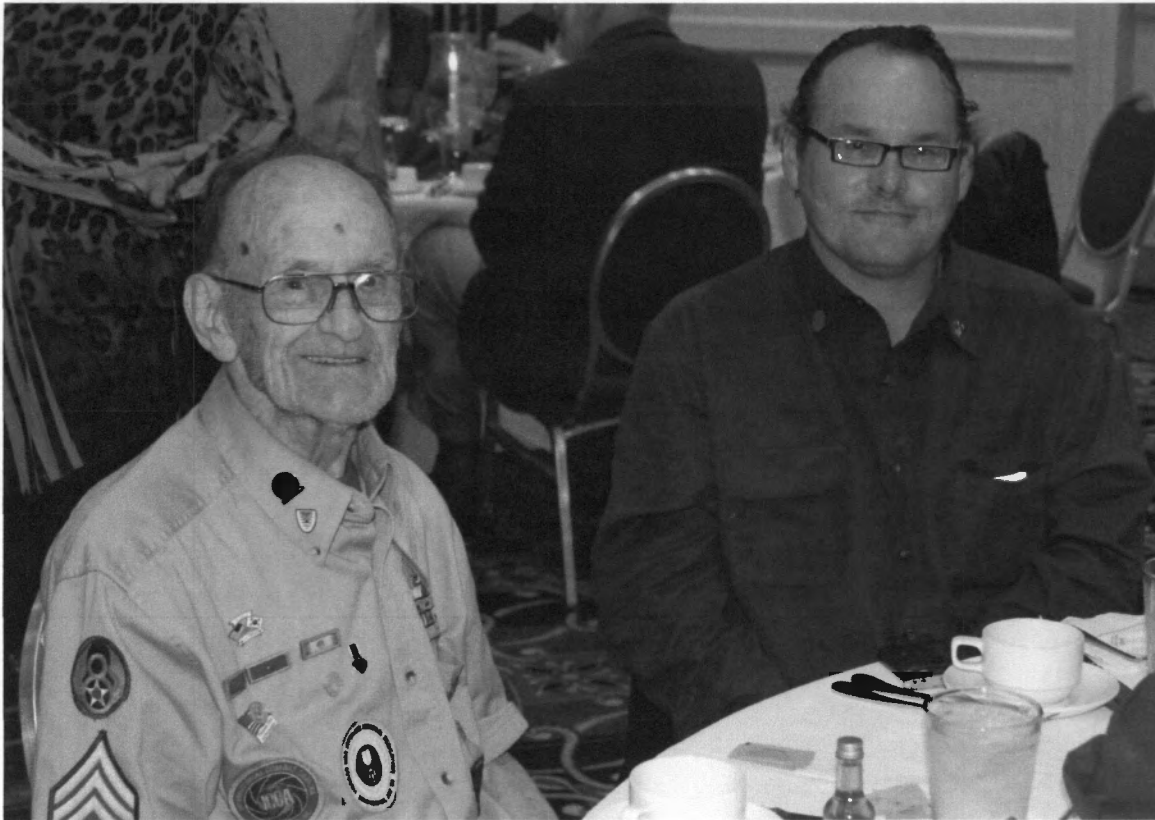
It has been almost twenty-seven years since my father became one of America's Missing In Action in Southeast Asia. I was a freshman in college when daddy - Lt. Colonel Robert Norman Smith, Annapolis grad, fearless fighter pilot - left for a thirteen month tour in Vietnam. He volunteered to go. Combat duty was mandatory for a gung-ho career officer determined to be the first aviator selected Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Sometime around noon on August 19, 1969, a lifetime of dreams was put on hold.

The telegram didn't tell us much about what happened that day. It said he took off from Danang on a "routine" flight, escorting a photo reconnaissance mission north of the DMZ. Our best guess was that his F-4 jet was shot down by enemy fire, but there were no concrete facts or information to support this assumption. All we knew is that my dad had disappeared - vanished without a trace.

Since my family first learned of these discoveries in 1992, I have wanted to go to Phu Thuy and talk to the same eye witnesses who shared their stories with the investigators. As an MIA daughter, I am acutely aware that I carry heavy baggage. My family's quest for information is tangled up in an emotional national debate that has linked "progress" on resolving the fates of missing Americans with normalization of relations with Vietnam. I resolved to go not only as a family member, but as a producer, I would document the journey - and whatever the outcome, share it with a national audience.

On April 2, 1995, my husband, Bill Plante, a CBS News crew and I landed in Hanoi and for two weeks relived the story that was in



Rupy and his son John



**Bob Smith Tom Mintier Ted Acheson and John Gilroy
The Official DASPO Tennis Team**

the official reports. We visited Hoa Lao prison, the "Hanoi Hilton," which held hundreds of American POWs and is for many a symbol of torture and pain. For me, it was always a vessel of hope - the place my father could have been had he survived the crash.

For the entire story go to.....

http://www.swansonphotography.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=10



Robins fathers mangled Annapolis ring

Not a dry eye in the room when Robin spoke.....Bill and Robin wouldn't leave our event until we had finished our missing man tribute. Bill and Robin have many demands on their time but it was so good of them to make time for DASPO.



Joseph T. Primeau

From Joe's Wife Char

To Joe's family and friends,

Just got into Joe's e-mail to send this message to you. Joe has had a tough time with cancer. He had two years of chemo and radiation and lots of reflection of past, present, and worry for the future. Finally, he is traveling forward to a new place. As he was told by Father Ray, he will be traveling with God's and our love so he is ready.

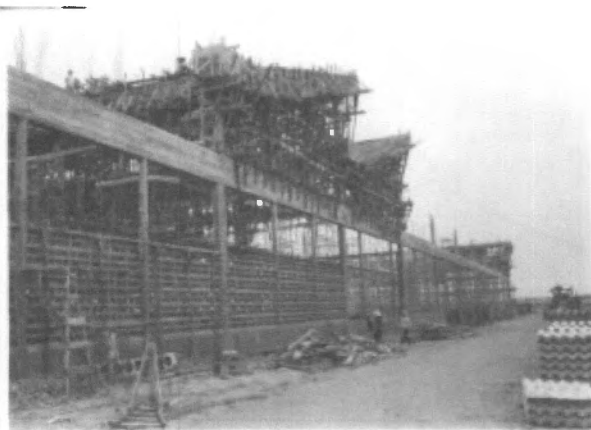
Meanwhile, there are still lots to be done. Thankfully, I have Kristian with me to help. We will remain at our home at 1807 8th Avenue, SW, Decatur, Alabama, 35601. Joe and I moved into this place on his birthday, 2009. He was so happy chugging around on his John Deere lawn mower. When the John Deere folks sent his Owners hat, he was like a kid again, so filled with joy.

He liked to sit out on the back patio, drinking his sweet tea and watching us putter in the garden. Kristian was preparing the garden beds yesterday, when he dashed in to tell me to get my

camera. Our rose bushes by the camper had a single red bud blooming amongst a five leaf grouping. Roselawn Cemetary is where he will be in Decatur. It seems like this was a blessing that we chose the right place close to home. Joe loved his home. Our landscape person told us roses normally bloom in groupings of three leaves. We like to think it was a message of love from our Joe. He knew how much I love roses. God willing we will have many warm days to enjoy in this area home. Meanwhile, this newest journey is just beginning.

A sympathy card has been sent to the family and a donation has been made in Joes name to the Vietnam Archive Rein Yoho Scholarship fund at TTU.

500,000 Items in the Virtual Vietnam Archive



The first item added to the Virtual Vietnam Archive in 2001, a photograph from the Douglas Pike Collection of a factory under construction in the Bien Hoa Industrial complex northeast of Saigon

The Virtual Vietnam Archive has celebrated a number of milestones this fall, including the addition of our 500,000 item this week. The Virtual Archive became available to researchers ten years ago this month with just a few thousand items, mostly photographs and documents. Now the online archive contains over 3.3 million pages of material, including 330,000 documents, 130,000 images, 900 oral history

interviews, and thousands of moving images, audio recordings, maps, and more. In that ten year period, the Virtual Archive has been searched over 10,000,000 times and more than 3 million items have been downloaded. The 500,000 item, a newspaper article titled "Faint Hope for US Airmen Still Missing in Indochina" from the Garnett Bell Collection, was digitized by student assistant Brooke Boysaw.

Reaching half-a-million items in our digital collections is a great accomplishment for our project that couldn't have been completed without the over 100 full time staff and part time student employees who have worked on this project since 2001. Without all of their great contributions, this project would not be the success it has been.

The Virtual Vietnam Archive project continues to digitize new materials, adding about 15,000 new pages each month from a variety of collections, including still images, individual donor's collections, the CDEC Collection and, starting this month, the Cong Bao. We look forward to continuing this project for years to come.

DASPO Reunion Group Financial Report for 2009-2011

This Financial Report was given at the DC Reunion. It covered the period since the last.

Reunion on 10-1-09. We began that reunion with a balance of \$2405.11. Our deposits during the 2 year period from the yearly DASPO dues and additional contributions were \$1675. The checks written for DASPO expenses during the period were \$3Si7.3S. Our balance at the end of this period was \$563.06.

FYI: This DASPO account has no overhead. administrative costs or credit union costs. Each check has to be signed by two of DASPO's elected officers (eg. Reunion president, vice-president, treasurer) and the primary expenses are for the hosting & updating of our web site,

newsletter, memorials to deceased DASPO Reunion Group members-generally sent to our Rein/Yoho Endowment in their memory-and recently for a wreath for our DASPO Combat Photographers' Association which we laid at the changing of the guard at the Tomb for the Unknown Soldier and wreaths for Rick Rein and Kermit Yoho which, as part of a ceremony to honor their memory. we laid at the Vietnam Wall. For those who would like to send payment for their DASPO dues/contributions. please send to: John Gilroy, 474 North 2nd Street. Kalamazoo. MI 49009. Please make check out to DASPO-John Gilroy. The credit union requires the treasurer's name to be on the check for deposit. Thank you to all who have supported our DASPO Reunion Group.

And an enormous thank you to the Acheson's for planning and executing another very rewarding and memorable reunion, to the Hansen's for the great inside access to the National Archives, the Air and Space Museum, etc., to Eric Long for his extensive photographic coverage of our activities, to the San Hamel's for arranging our world famous guest speakers from the journalistic and documentary fields as well as all others who contributed to this wonderful experience. There were lots of hugs, kisses, a few tears and a deeper sense of camaraderie among our DASPO brothers and sisters and our military.

Dear Ted and John:

I hope all is going well. I was working with our development office recently and am following up with you on the status of the DASPO endowment. First, I am very pleased to tell you that the endowment has reached a total of \$15,366.99. The current spendable income generated from the endowment is \$3,701.05. We are currently reviewing all of the DASPO Collection materials and determining the best way to use this spendable income to support the mission of the endowment, "to be used for expenses incurred in preserving the Department of the Army Special Photographic Office material." We are considering the use of these funds to hire a part-time student assistant whose sole focus will be processing and digitizing DASPO collection materials. While the current spendable amount is not enough to cover a salary for a year, we will use other funds from the Vietnam Center to augment them so we can keep that person working for at least one year. Once we have a firm plan in place, I will be back in touch with another update. Until then, please let me know if you have any questions.

I hope the reunion is a great success! I am sorry we cannot join you this year. Please pass along our warmest regards to everyone there.

Best regards,

Steve

Stephen Maxner, Ph.D.

Director

The Vietnam Center and Archive

The Vietnam Center and Archive

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Believe it or not it's time for annual \$25.00 dues. Some of us have paid their dues for three to four years. To those individuals we thank you but for most of us we need to get our \$25.00 in again for 2008. Our dues cover mailings, hosting costs and computer updates. Please send your donations made out to:
John Gilroy/DASPO
474 N. 2nd. St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49009

What DASPO member is this behind the Camera





06 22 11
It looks like a tryout for Pulp Fiction P.S. they really aren't twins

This year's attendance for the DASPO dinner

Mr. Chuck Abbott

Mrs. Chuck Abbott (Dottie)

Ms. Ashley Acheson

Mr. Ted Acheson

Mrs. Ted Acheson (Cynthia)

Mr. Greg Adams

Mrs. Greg Adams (Patty)

Mr. Duke Austin

Mr. Stewart Barbee

Mrs. Stewart Barbee (Melinda)

Mr. Al Batungbacal

Mr. Steve Blake

Mrs. Steve Blake (Dottie)

Mr. Harry Breedlove

Mr. Ken Bridgham

Mrs. Ken Bridgham (ET)

Mr. Paul VonHerbulis

Mrs. Paul VonHerbulis (Pamela)

Mr. Carl Conn

**Mrs. Carl Conn
(Lois)**

Mr. Earl Dawson

Mrs. Earl Dawson (Karen)

Mr. Clyde Delk

**Mrs. Clyde Delk
(Nancy)**

Mr. Jim Egan

Mr. Peter Friend

**Mrs. Peter Friend
(Vicki)**

**Mr. Robert Gaylord
BG retired**

Mr. John Gilroy

Mrs. John Gilroy (Donna)

Mr. Brian Grigsby

Mrs. Brian Grigsby (Susan)

Mr. John Glunt

**Mrs. John Glunt
(Jeri)**

Mr. Carl Hansen

Mrs. Carl Hansen (Jinger)

Mr. Talmadge B Harbison

Mrs. Talmadge B. Harbison (Nancy)

MS. Ashley Hendriks

Mr. Don Jellema

Mr. Bob Lafoon

Mr. Logan McMinn

Mr. Tom Mintier

Mrs. Tom Mintier (Saowalak)

Mr. Paul Moulton

Mr. Burt Peterson

Mrs. Burt Peterson (Linda)

Mr. Rupy Ruplenas

Mr. John Ruplenas

Mr. Bill San Hamel

Mrs. Bill San Hamel (Bonny)

Mr. Bob Smith

Mr. Duke Smith

Mrs. Duke Smith (Sharon)

Mr. Lee Swain

**Mrs. Lee Swain
(Ann)**

Mr. Ed Walsh

**Mrs. Ed Walsh
(Marilynn)**

Mr. Richard Welsh

**Mrs. Richard Welch
(Catherine)**

Mr. Paul VonHerbulis

Mrs. Paul VonHerbulis (Pamela)

Mr. Bill Plante

Ms. Robin Smith



**Breakfast at the hotel front row LtoR Paul Moulton Cindy Acheson
Ted Acheson Bob Smith
Dottie and Chuck Abbott**



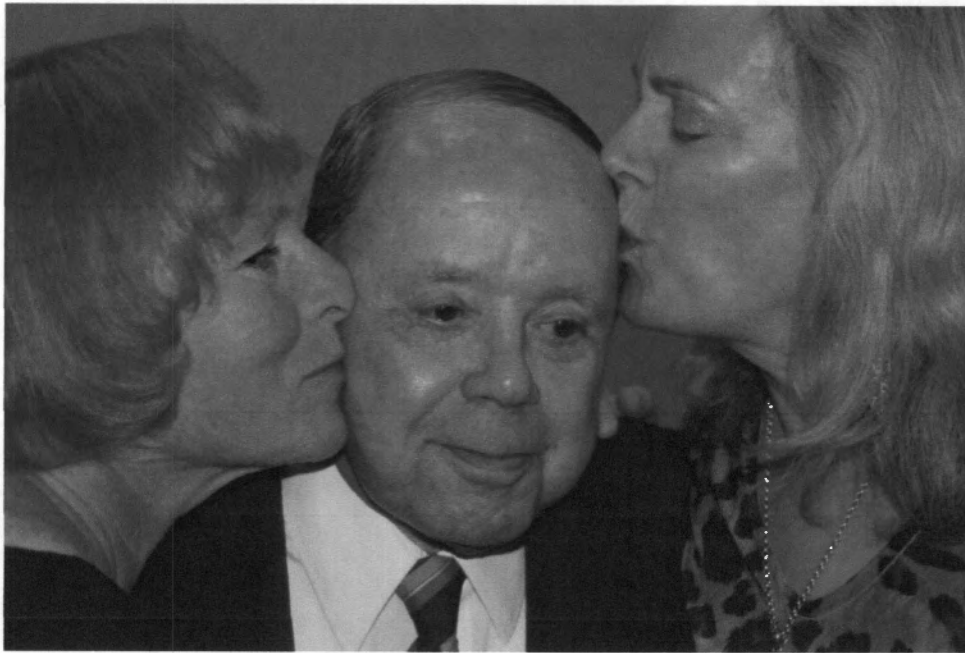
**L to R John Gilroy, Donna Gilroy 1st row
Paul Moulton and Cindy Acheson 2nd row Patty Adams standing**



L to R Clyde Delk Nancy Delk Lois Conn and Carl Conn



L to R Logan McMinn Lee Swain Ann Swain Greg Abbott



And.....Marylin Washl plus Susan Grigsby



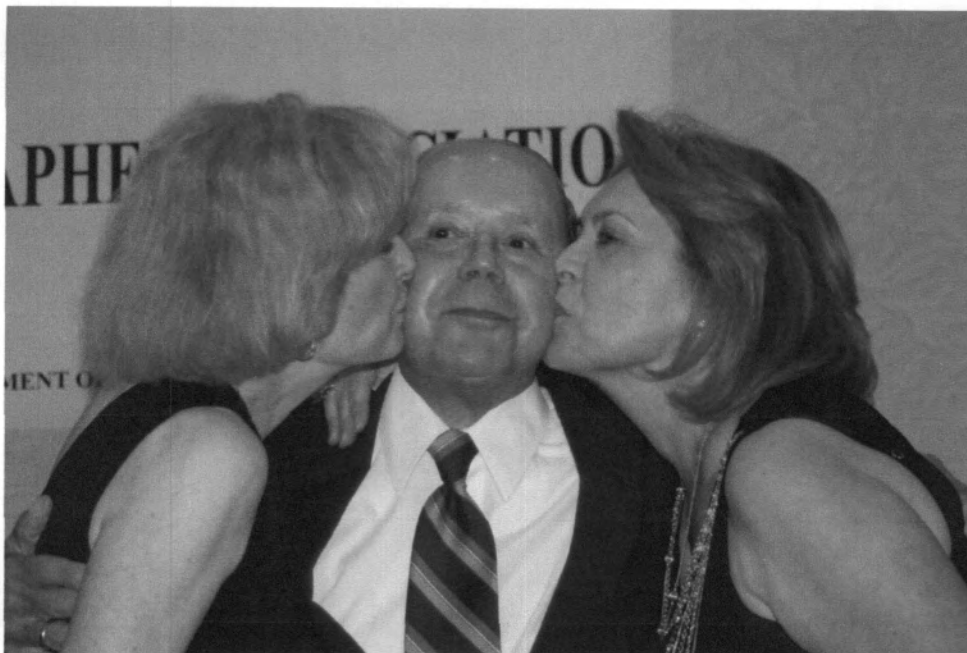
Rupy's 93rd Birthday Cake



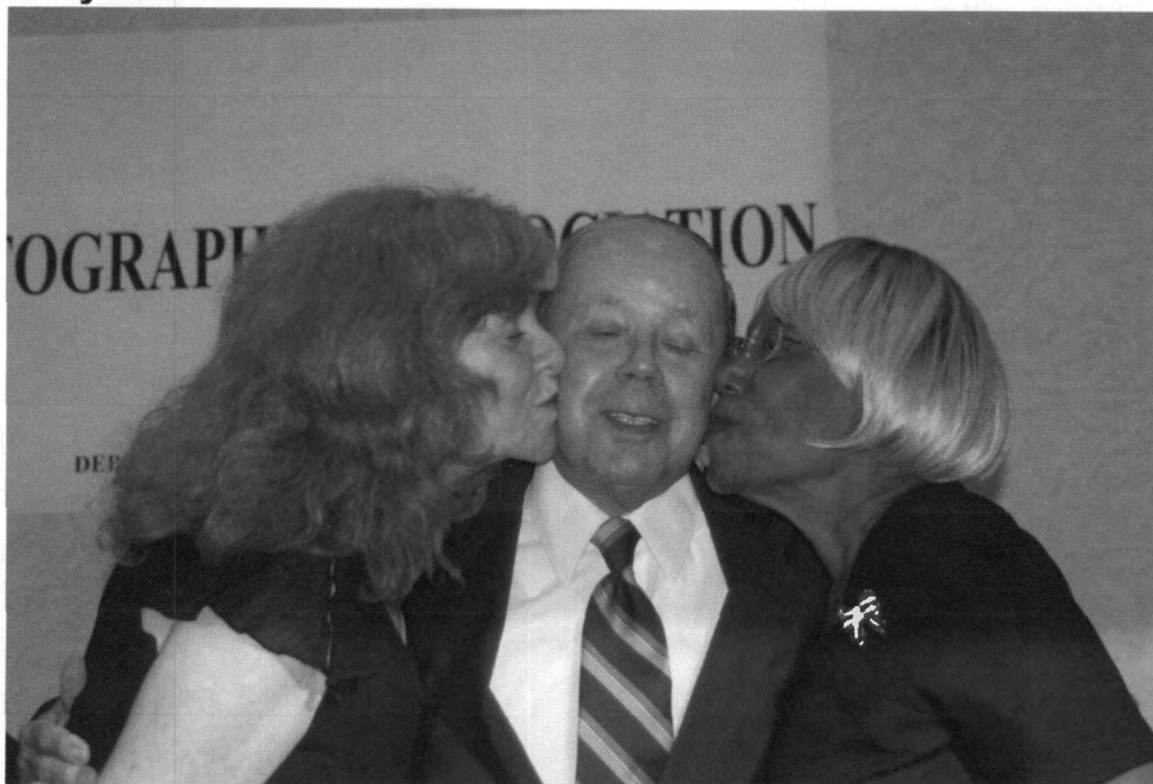
Et and Ken Bridgham



Lee and Ann Swain Steve and Dottie Blake, the Blakes also provided each of us with a bottle of Maple syrup from the forest's of New Hampshire



John Glunt just got his traditional DASPO smooch by Dona Gilroy and Cindy Acheson



More from Melinda Barbee and Ann Swain



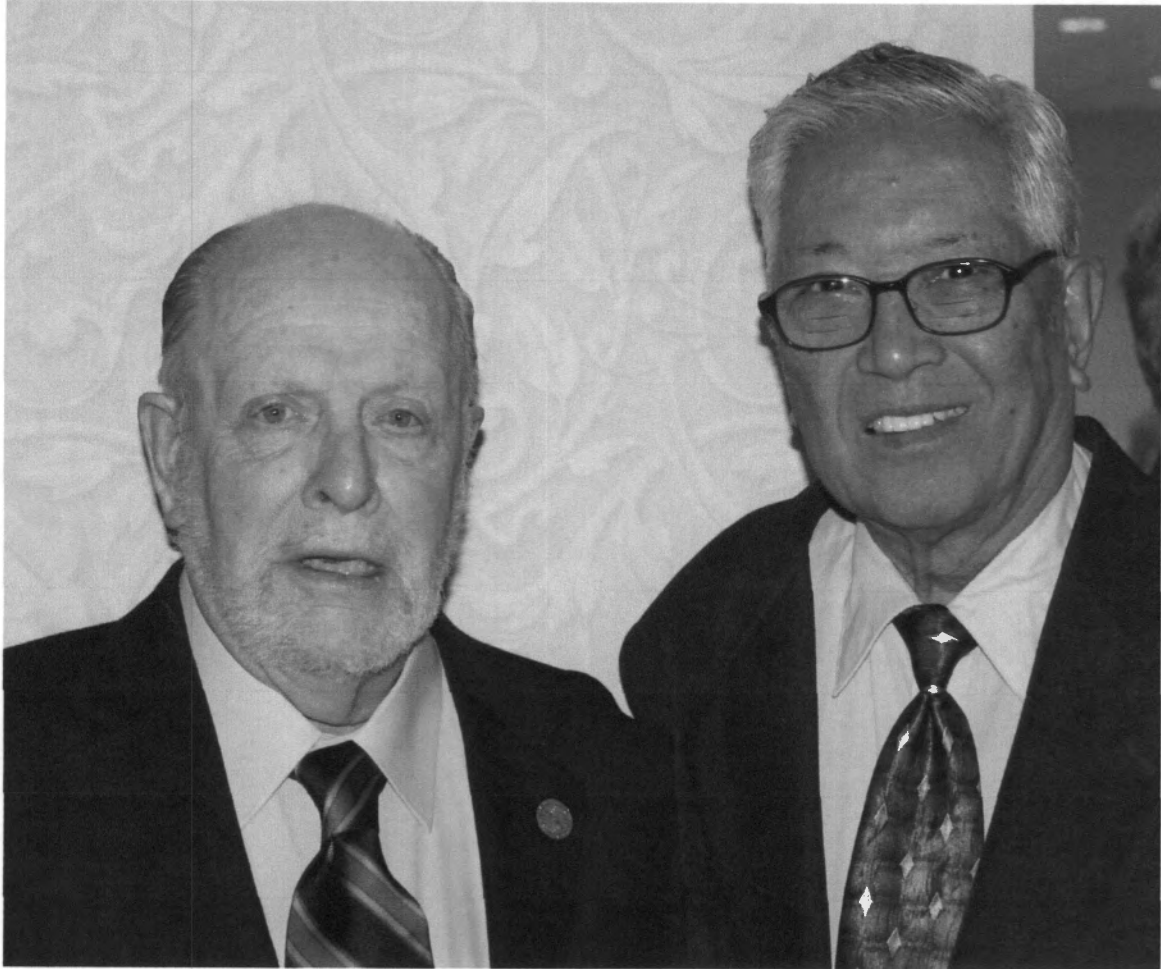
Earl and Karen Dawson Marylyn and Ed Walsh



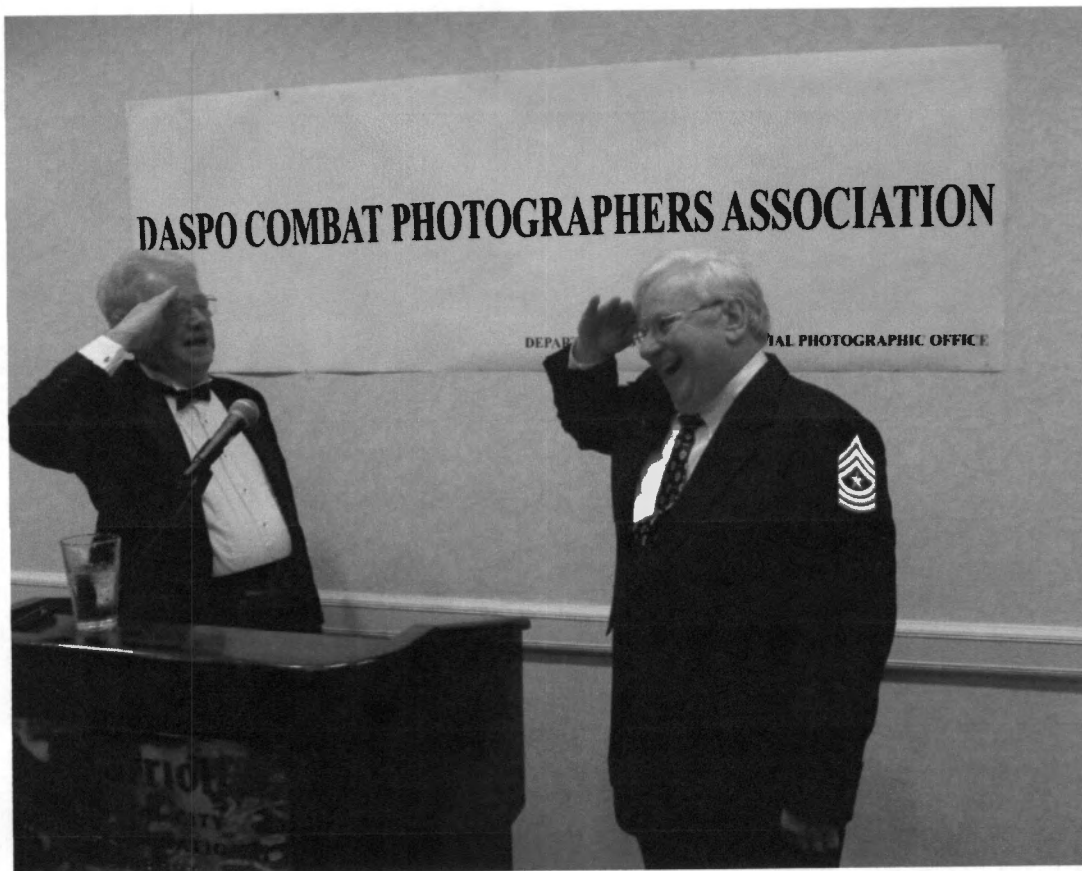
Bill Duke Paul Bat and Peter



L to R Jim Eagan, Rupy and Harry Breedlove

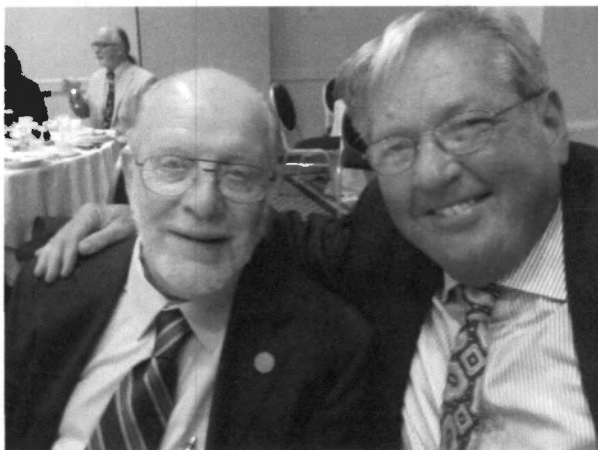


Paul and Bat



Ted refusing re-enlistment from Chuck plus others... even with bribes (SGT Major) and back pay. The Re-enlistment Board Chuck Stu John and Logan

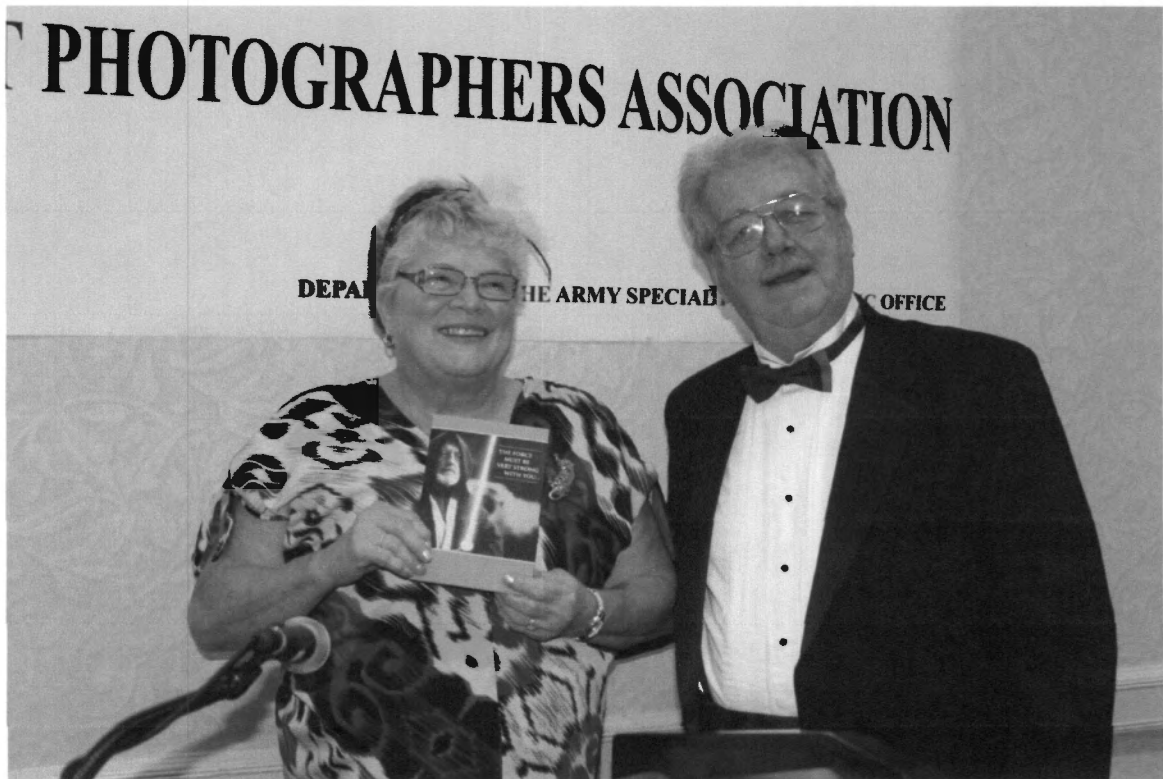




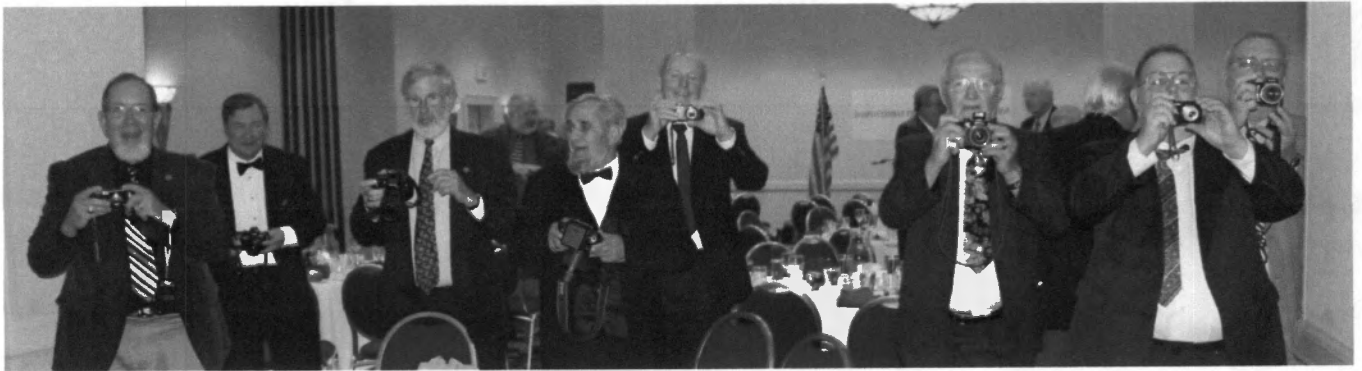
Paul Moulton and Jim Egan



Ted Acheson and Burt Peterson having fun at diner



Dottie and Chuck show off card from the group



Once a photographer always a photographer



The DASPO Ladies showing Legg



Duke Austin and Rupy



**Chuck and Dottie's renewal of wedding vows officiated by Clyde Delk.
Chuck and Dottie met at a DASPO OJT outing in Honolulu 1969**



Actually this is the second year the Swain Family has met up with Dottie and Steve. They all love lobster.



Now that's a deal and this ad came out of a New Hampshire newspaper that Steve Blake sent me, his words were eat your heart out Ted

Cindy and I had a tremendous time at the last reunion and it was great to be with a group of people that helped shape your life. When we filmed some of the significant battles or documented

men that were held captive in Korea and Vietnam, filmed conferences with world leaders, I certainly didn't at the time understand the historical nature. I look back at a very small unit and what DASPO accomplished; all I can say is that I was fortunate to be a part of it. I truly believe that our unit evaded the Army's command, no one really knew of our existence and what we accomplished.

Please someone come forward and guide DASPO Combat Photographer's Association. We still have work to be done. If you're interested call Me, John Gilroy Stu Barbee or Chuck Abbott and we will help. I suggested to John we need to get a short military bio on all that served in DASPO and add that on our web site. There is still work to do but it's some else's turn to step up and continue.

**Your new SGT Major
Ted**

Status of our DASPO Endowment in memory of Rick Rein and Kermit Yoho We are at a decision point with our endowment that many of you have been so generous to help build. Our contributions over the years now amount to \$11,665.94. The current spendable income in this amount is \$3,701.05, for an endowment total of \$15,666.99.

The director of The Vietnam Center and Archive at Texas Tech University, Steven Maxner, /Ph.D., is recommending a plan to archive all of the DASPO materials that we have sent His plan is to use this spendable amount to allow the hiring of a part-time student assistant whose sole focus will be the processing and digitizing the DASPO collection materials. This person would be employed for at least one year, with additional funds being added by The Vietnam Center to create this position.

Please give me your feedback, if you like or dislike this plan to John Gilroy, DASPO treasurer, email at johngilroyphotography@charter.net

If you want to donate your DASPO collection to the TTU Vietnam Center make sure you request a DVD of the material you send in and use the above address. DASPO has almost 6,000 items in the Vietnam archives at TTU. The DASPO exhibit at TTU has wowed the visitors that have seen it.

Send your collection to: Steve Maxner, PhD, Director Vietnam Center