



**4TH PSYOP GROUP**  
VIETNAM  
PANAMA GRENADA KUWAIT

# "MINDBENDERS" NEWSLETTER



Newsletter of the 4th PSYOP Group  
Vietnam Veterans' Association

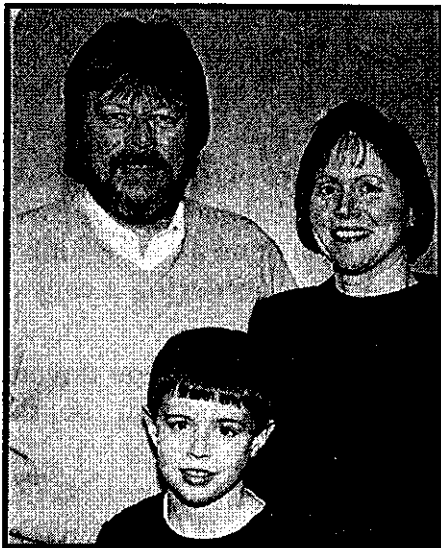
Volume 6, Number 2

Spring 1993

Dear Fellow "Mindbenders" (and hopefully future "Mindbenders"),

I greet you this way because I want to share what my membership in this reunion Association has meant to me. Primarily, it has allowed me wonderful, renewed friendships from many years ago. It has also enabled me to meet other "PSYOPers" who have become new and dear friends simply because we shared a common experience -- no matter what time or place. Our link is that somewhere and sometime we were in Vietnam while serving with the 4th PSYOP Group.

Many of us made promises to stay in touch. I, for one, did not keep that promise. I regretted this for a long time. Then, in the summer of 1987, I got a letter from Duane Yaeger. I could not put his name with a face, but his name sounded familiar. I have to admit that making that first call to Duane was tough. I didn't know what to expect. Part of me wanted nothing to do with my time in Vietnam. I was at a turning point in my own life. I had gone full circle through a lot of different angles after returning from Vietnam. Although some of these angles are very personal, I feel I must share these with any potential, maybe hesitant, members. I drifted from job to job, state to state, back in the service; and then marriage, divorce, and confusion. I had blamed a lot of my problems on Vietnam, so you might understand my apprehension after hearing from Duane.



President Jack O'Neil with his wife Cindy and their son Sean.

I could not have been more wrong. From the very beginning, there were no "war stories" or telling of tall tales . . . just friendships. Duane and I started talking once a week on the phone and, as they say, "the rest is history." The following year, 1988, brought the "mini-reunion" that really got this whole Association started. The bearhug from Chad Spawr still gives me "flashbacks" -- only kidding

Chad. Ron Copeland and his wife opened their home to us and fed us like kings and a queen, as my wife Cindy had joined me (and us) for the "mini-reunion".

After '88, we decided to try to find as many of our friends as we could from Vietnam and ask them to join us. Many have joined our Association since then . . . and many others have not.

Let me say this to those who have not joined our Association. We are not a veteran's organization such as the VFW or DAV. Although these are good

organizations, we differ in that we concentrate primarily on reuniting friendships. This mission has allowed us to find and bring together many old friends during the past five years. It has truly been a wonderful experience for all involved. Yet, I realize that there are those who, for one reason or another, may never join us. That is your business, and I certainly respect any man's right to say no. All I ask is that you allow us to come into your life once a year, through this *Newsletter*, with new stories of renewed friendships and special moments.

For me, some very special (and, yes, *emotional*) times have happened since joining the Association (Duane, Chad, etc.). In addition, during this past year, I have also been fortunate to meet and become close to John Lynch's family (KIA 6/13/69). This friendship has allowed a unique joining of two Associations. I also belong to a Harley Owner's Group ("H.O.G.") who are sponsors of MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association). During one of my many visits at our June 1992 Reunion with Mary Alice Nice, John Lynch's sister, she told me about her youngest nephew, Sean, who was born in 1992 with Muscular Dystrophy.

I took this information home with me and shared it with my fellow "bikers". They took it upon themselves to "adopt" Sean as a life-time poster child and to support and love, not only him, but his family as well. And this all happened because I picked up the phone and called Duane in 1987. I feel that my life has become so much more rewarding and fulfilled; and it all started with "Mindbenders".

I could go on and on . . . from all of the above, to our Baltimore/Washington Reunion in June '92; to my wife, Cindy, and I visiting Al and Bobbie Forgacz at their Long Beach, Long Island home in September; to taking part in Reunion '92 (the Tenth Anniversary of the dedication of "The Wall"), including my honor to be among the five of our Association members invited to read the names of those inscribed on "The Wall"; it has truly been a ride that I have enjoyed.

I have just finished watching a wonderful video put together by Rik Hofmann that highlights our Reunion during June 1992. Rik has also added footage to cover some of our Association activities since that point. I believe he has done an exceptional job to document what our Association is all about (information about ordering a copy of this video can be found within this Newsletter).

In closing, I invite all past members to rejoin our group. I also encourage anyone thinking about joining for the first time to do so. Spend the \$15.00 for one year. As the saying goes, "Try it, you might like it." *I hope so!*

To all, please remember our POW and MIA's. I hope to hear from many more 6th PSYOP Bn members, and from any of you who have served in, or with, the 4th PSYOP Group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jack O'Neil". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

President,

4th PSYOP Group "Mindbenders"

## Bits and Pieces:

**About this Newsletter edition:** Very special thanks are sent to David Elias, owner and operator of *Ameriscribe Data Resources, Inc.*, 4A Gill Street, Woburn, MA 01801, for providing the photocopy of our *Winter Newsletter* and for professionally printing this edition. Dave is a H.O.G. member with Jack O'Neil and offered his services to our Association. Thank you, Dave!

Secondly, the warning to pay dues or not receive this edition was placed in the *Winter Newsletter* prior to the decision to make this issue the annual full mailing edition. Therefore, every contact with a mailing address will receive a copy of this issue. However, 1993 dues must be paid in order for you to receive the next *Newsletter*.

**Thank you:** To Irving Barker for sending a copy of an article regarding the history of PSYOPs that was published in the *Special Warfare Bulletin* published by the JFK Special Warfare School. Hopefully, we will be able to include excerpts from the article in future *Newsletters*.

**Congratulations:** To Rod and Carolyn Fritz on the birth of a baby girl.

**Reunion:** Ben Rogers (6th BN Team Leader), in Boston on business, met for a quick 90 minute chat with Jack O'Neil (Ben's Team Member) recently.

**Canton, Ohio Mini-Reunion:** The following note from Al and Bobbie Forgacz should follow Duane's report on page nine, but . . .

*We traveled to Canton, Ohio, Gary Conley's home town to meet with Gary, his wife Linda, Duane Yaeger, and Frank and Hazel Coburn. What we experienced in Ohio those four days was laughter, friendship, lots of snow, and a promise to see each other again in St. Louis in 1994. Gary, Linda, and daughter Heather were marvelous hosts. We never expected to be caught in "The Storm of the Century" blizzard, but it didn't dampen our spirits or our fun.*

*To sum up the weekend, we would have to say . . . WET, WHITE, WINDY, AND WONDERFUL!!!!*

## Financial Report

(01/01/93 - 03/12/93)

### INCOME

DUES 465.00

TOTALS: 465.00

BALANCE FORWARDED - JAN. 1, 1993: 1474.90

BALANCE ON HAND - MAR. 12, 1993: 1682.38

### EXPENSES

TELEPHONE 137.69

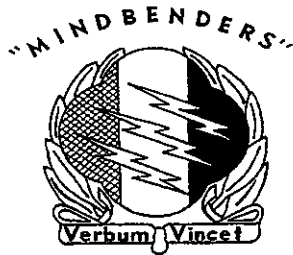
POSTAGE 101.83

RETURNED CHECK/FEE 18.00

257.52

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Christenson, Treasurer



**4TH PSYOP GROUP**  
**VIETNAM**  
PANAMA GRENADA KUWAIT

**4TH PSYOP GROUP**  
**VIETNAM VETERANS' ASSOCIATION**  
**"MINDBENDERS" OFFICERS ROSTER**  
**1992-1994**

**PRESIDENT** -- Jack O'Neil (6th BN)  
(88 Pinehurst Ave.; Methuen, MA 01844 (508-687-1323)

**VICE PRESIDENT** -- Rod Fritz (6th BN)  
(4220-D Society Park Court, Harrisburg, PA 17109 (717-545-5870)

**VICE PRESIDENT** -- Duane Yaeger (6th BN)  
(238 Cottonwood Drive; Mt. Vernon IL 62864 (618-242-3647)

**TRUSTEE** -- Dave Rogers (6th BN)  
(801 Pocahontas Trail; Georgetown, KY 40324 (502-863-4870)

**TRUSTEE** -- Chad Spawr (6th BN)  
(8306 West Holly Road; Mequon, WI 53092 (414-242-7817)

**TREASURER** -- Chris Christenson (4th GP)  
(8000 Springfield Village Drive; Springfield, VA 22152 (703-569-6903)

**SECRETARY** -- Dick Holzheimer (8th BN)  
(3158 Kinross Circle; Herndon, VA 22071 (703-834-5653)

**Newsletter Editor** -- Dave Schultz (245th/8th BN)  
(P. O. Box 624, Mattituck, NY 11952 (516-298-9340)

**Roster Officer** -- Rik Hofmann (Old 6th/Pre 4th GP)  
(5 Van Dyck Drive; Wilmington, Del. 19809 (302-762-5629)

**Locator** -- Duane Yaeger\*

**Veterans Affairs** -- Duane Yaeger\*

**Agent Orange Liaison** -- Wayne Wardwell (7th BN)  
(1318 Kelly Town Road; Mansfield, PA 16933 (717-662-3363)

**Public Information Officer** -- Rod Fritz\*

**Historian/Memorabilia** -- Tom Brandt (246th Co/Pre 4th GP)  
(1307 Robin Drive; Carolstream, IL 60188 (708-837-7955)

**Design Artist** -- Tom Brandt\*

**1994 Reunion Chairman** -- Duane "Meet Me In St. Louis" Yaeger\*

*\*Please see prior listing for address and telephone number.*

## ROSTER OFFICER'S YEAR-END REPORT

This has really been a great year in terms of both organization activity and identifying and finding old friends. Our Master Alpha and Accounted For rosters have changed as follows:

	1 Jan 1992	1 Jan 1993	Net +/-
Master Alpha Roster	2,047	2,963	+ 916
Accounted For	212	309	+ 97

**Total on Master Roster**      **2963**  
 Friends & Allies                      185

**Total Accounted For**              **309**

Including:

KIA	13
Deceased since DEROS	11
Next of Kin	8

**Identified by Unit:**

1st Psyop Det. (Prov)	22
26th Det.	23
305th Det.	1

19th Co.	40
244th Co.	89
245th Co.	45
246th Co.	57

6th Bn. (Bragg Roster)	60
6th Bn. (RVN)	422
7th Bn.	484
8th Bn.	560
10th Bn.	365

HHC	608
7th PSYOP Group	18

Unit Unknown	49
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Count includes "Old Timers":

Original 6th Bn. before Change to 4th Gp.	422
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Much of the credit for the significant additions to the Accounted For" and Alpha Master files goes to all those who've sent in copies of orders, unit publications, rosters, personal remembrances and other documents. Keep 'em coming. They're a great help.

We do have a quite a few copies of the Observer, the Octagon, and Credibilis, but we're still missing quite a few. Please check your files and send copies of anything you've got. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



## Locator Report

By  
Duane Yaeger



Because this particular issue is going out to all those we have located over the last five years as well as the regular membership, I would like to remind all of you that our locator service is here for all of you to use. We now have a contact list of over 300 people and recent information on over 500 more.

What I would like to recommend to all of you is that you drop Rik Hofmann a line with a self-addressed stamped envelope requesting a copy of your particular unit locator roster. If you have someone in particular you are looking for, Rik will check the Alpha Log to see if that person has been located. If that person has not yet been found he, or I, will look through our lead information for that particular person. If we find we have information on that person we will move his/her name to the top of the lead list for immediate location attempts.

Since the last *Newsletter* issue we have added another 11 people to our general roster. Those newly found are: Charles Carnevale (10th Bn); John Opager (305th PSYOPS); Owen Norvig (7th Bn); Tony Cullen (7th Bn); Dennis Blom (HHC); Richard Broderick (7th Bn); Norm Dieffenbach (7th Bn); John Graupensperger (6th); Donald Hodges (26th Det.; HHC); Thomas F. King (26th Det.; HHC); Siler McCarty (19th Co); Dan Minamide (7th Bn); Al Rifkin (26th Det.; HHC); James B. Willson (26th Det.; HHC); Jack Gilbert (6th Bn); and John Walsh (HHC).

Recent new members include: Tony Cullen, Norm Dieffenbach, Ed Dulka (7th Bn), John Graupensperger, John Richards (10th Bn), and James B. Wilson. Associate Members include: Darrel and Louise Shelmon (Aunt and Uncle to Michal Merkel); Mary Alice and John Nice (sister of John Lynch); and Mr. and Mrs. Ned Lynch (brother of John Lynch).

Editor's Note: A number of the above new contacts and members just missed inclusion in the last *Newsletter*. Great effort has been made to bring this listing up-to-date. Please advise the *Newsletter* Editor of any omissions or errors you may note prior to the next issue deadline. Thank you!

## **I'M NOT A JOINER...**

By  
Rik Hofmann, Roster Officer

I'm not a joiner.

The big name military organizations don't move me. Don't belong to the VFW, the Legion, or the VVA. Not that there's anything wrong with them, they're just not for me.

Like most of us, my job keeps me more than busy, plus the American dream of two cars, a dog and a mortgage. The only green berets I've been around for a long time are the ones my wife and daughters wear when we're all off at some Girl Scout weekend.

But I jumped at a chance to rejoin the Mindbenders. For military reasons? Hell no! To find the friends I had when I was in the military.

Let's face it. The only reason we ever get involved with any organization is because there's some sort of pay off for us. Some kind of reward. The reward for me has been finding some of the guys who were so much a part of my life back then, and catching up on the last quarter century.

So I paid the 15 bucks.

Got a lot more than I bargained for.

Pardon the personal references, but here's an example of how it worked for me. Probably worked the same way for just about everybody else in the Association.

Got a call the other day from my old friend Roger Steffens. We go back to Saigon in '67. Roger was on the East Coast on business and wondered if we could get together. Nothing particularly unusual about the call, except that it wouldn't have happened without this Association.

I'd been looking for Roger for 25 years. Checked the last known addresses. No luck. But when I got a "Found Man" roster I found Alan Clobridge's name on it. Alan, Roger and I all served together.

Everybody knows something that can lead us to someone else. Alan thought Roger was out in California, maybe still working as an actor. Found Roger through the Screen Actor's Guild and got together with him last February in New York.

Did we talk about old times? Sure. A little. But more than that we wanted to know about each other's lives, wives, kids, and careers **today**. The long ago shared experience was important, but the man, the friend was more important.

## Networking!

Found Tom King in Boston, Jim Willson in California and Don Hodges in Atlanta because Mike Stoeckert, of Long Island, happened to have some old DEROS orders. Thanks to a piece of Tom's memory we found our old CO, Arlo DeSpain, in Utah. So far we've reassembled about half of the old 26th Detachment that went over on the boat together in '66. Also talked with contemporaries Ham Salley and Bill Forgey of the old original 6th Bn.

In all cases we talked a bit of memory and a lot of today.

But while I might have come in looking for old friends, I really didn't expect the strength of the new friendships.

As I told my 12 year old daughter who accompanied me to last year's reunion, I never met a group of people more ready to be old friends. I was particularly impressed with the openness, the acceptance, the lack of ego.

Old ranks meant nothing, current position meant nothing. Just a group of men



*Rik Hofmann (right) and Max LeQuang during the June 1992 "Mindbenders" Reunion*

who shared the very special experience of trying to save lives and to make living more worthwhile in the chaos of war -- who honor and respect each other for sharing that role.

Friendships were automatic. Not that distant familiarity that often passes for friendship, but real go-out-of-your-way-for-someone-else, down-to-the-bone friendships. I was surprised.

A year ago I didn't know the names O'Neil, Schultz, Spawr, Yaeger, Forgacz, Kelly, Fritz, Connely, Wojcik or LeQuang -- just to name a very few. Now it's a joy to talk with them on the phone, and I can't wait for the next reunion in St. Louis.

Tell you what . . . I'm not a joiner. But I do value the friendships I made in 'Nam and I value the friendship and companionship of the good men I've come to know in the Mindbenders.

I'm not a joiner, but I recognize a good return on investment. \$15 per year to the Mindbenders is the best investment any old Psy-Opper will ever make.

## Veterans Affairs

By  
Duane Yaeger

In our last *Newsletter* I reported that the Jesse Carroll disability case was continuing to be a frustration. Around mid-February I received the latest reply from Department of the Army, Environmental Service Group. At first glance I felt as if we had not gotten what we had hoped for. Yet, after further investigation, we probably do have all we could have hoped for from E.S.G. We have copies of the daily journal of the 11th Armored Cavalry for May 10, 1969 showing A/5/7 of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry (which was under operational control of the 11th Cavalry) being in contact with enemy personnel who had fired four or five RPG's -- one of which struck a tank. There was also a medevac from that area of incident.



*Veterans Affairs Officer  
Duane Yaeger*

Because daily journals were not complete in context, we believe that (since this matches our time period and scenario) it would be up to the Court of Veterans Appeals to disapprove this evidence as well as the statement of the incident made by Jack O'Neil.

We are now writing once again to the St. Louis Records Center for information. This time we will be sending along more concise situation information. In addition, this request will be submitted by Illinois Congressman Glenn Poshard.

In regards to family attempts to gain the Purple Heart for John Lynch, who was killed in Vietnam, nothing is really happening on this issue due to holidays and vacations. Jack and Mary Alice Nice will keep me posted as to any developments.



## *In Memoriam*

By  
Duane Yaeger

In late July of 1980 I arrived in Denver, Colorado to begin preparations for the first official reunion of the 4th Psychological Operations Group. That evening, after settling in, I drifted down to the lounge to unwind with a couple of drinks and a chance opportunity to run into any of the other "early birds."

While I stood around admiring the lovely ladies of Denver, a waitress brought me a drink that I had not ordered. As could be expected, I asked the waitress where the drink had come from. She pointed out a grayish-white headed man, probably in his early sixties, and I proceeded over to thank him.

As it turned out, I had met up with Kirk Cunningham, the supply sergeant for the 6th PSYOP Bn when I arrived in country. The first reunion in Denver had been accomplished. Kirk was one of the nine Gold Charter Members of the Association who donated \$100 each at the formation reunion to get the "show" off the ground. Over the next few years I had the opportunity to have several nice conversations with Kirk.

Kirk began having some serious health problems about two years ago and this past January 16th Kirk suffered a severe heart attack. He battled like the fighting man he was until the 7th of February when his body could no longer hold the line.

Kirk was a retired NCO who had become active in a medical logistical unit (I am not sure whether it was Reserve or National Guard) and had become a full colonel prior to his passing.

I received a letter after that first reunion from Kirk telling me how he had shed tears over the experience in Denver. I was also told by someone who worked for him in Vietnam that he made sure everyone knew that he was a "Brown Shoe Soldier."

Well, in closing, I shall only say that we all know Kirk to have been a great friend, honorable soldier, and a devoted husband and father. We shall also shed a few tears over our loss and the joyful experience of having known him. Our loss is God's gain.



*Kirk Cunningham  
(Reunion Photo)*

## *Remembering Our Brothers Lost In Vietnam*

The primary purpose for holding the third "Mindbenders" Reunion in Baltimore last June was to honor our 4th PSYOP Group brothers who were lost in Vietnam by placing wreaths before their names at "The Wall." Perhaps, as you pause to remember Kurt Cunningham, you may wish to also say a prayer for: John A. Bianco, Jr. (7th Bn, B Co; KIA 17 Dec 68); Jeremiah June (7th Bn; KIA 19 May 69); Gary Taylor (7th Bn; KIA 13 Jun 69); Pedro Cruz (19th Co, Original 6th Bn; KIA 22 May 67); John Martin (244th

Co, Original 6th Bn; KIA Oct 67); John Lynch (6th Bn; KIA 15 Jun 69); Darel Sills (246th Co, Original 6th Bn; KIA 13 Oct 66); William Gearing (7th Bn; KIA 19 May 69); Michal Merkel (8th Bn, Pleiku Radio Station; KIA 24 March 68); John Miller (6th Bn; KIA 24 Aug 68); James Pastore (KIA 9 Apr 70); and Roger Terwilliger (6th Bn; KIA 13 Oct 66).

## Blizzard '93 Mini-Reunion

By  
Duane Yaeger

A mini-reunion was held in Canton, Ohio the weekend of March 13, 1993. Blizzard Reunion '93 brought together Gary Conley, Al Forgacz, and Duane Yaeger



Hall of Fame survivors of Blizzard '93 Mini-Reunion include (from left): Frank Coburn, Gary Conley, Al Forgacz, and Duane Yaeger. This photo was a next day "retake" after their blizzard visit. The first picture was a bit snowy. No, they did not spend the night!

with Frank Coburn of Ivanhoe, California. Gary, Al, and Duane had not seen Frank in 23 years and the small gathering gave all four a chance to spend many snowed-in hours reminiscing about times past. Considering the blizzard, much of the time was also spent doing what they did "best" in Vietnam -- having a few drinks and playing Spades.

With Canton sitting on the fringe of the "biggest winter storm in a century," most activities planned for the weekend were scrapped. Yet a trip was made to the NFL Hall of Fame (during the storm) where all four suddenly began to act the ages they were when they were in Vietnam.

The whole weekend was one laugh after another, to include calls to Jack O'Neil in Methuen, MA and Dick Winner in Auburn, ME to inquire "how the weather was?"

The weather altered arrivals, departures, and returns home, but it did not affect the reunion of the four. If anything, it gave the whole weekend a character all its own as everyone, including Gary's six year old daughter, Heather, jumped head over heels into all of the fun.

Linda Conley, Bobby Forgacz, and Hazel Coburn probably learned more about their husbands than they had ever known. In some cases they may have learned more than they wanted to know.

In any case, all returned home safely and committed themselves to being in St. Louis next year for the "Mindbenders IV", "Meet Me In St. Louis" Reunion.

## Thoughts On Membership

By

*Chad Spawr, Trustee*

When I ordered my copy of the 1992 Mindbenders Reunion video, I could never have imagined what I would find. Rik Hoffman is a very talented guy, but I simply had no idea . . . . I've now watched it three times (as of this writing), and am so moved at what we have done and the people we have assembled that words simply can't describe the feelings. The video, however, helps me understand more fundamentally why Mindbenders is so important for me. It brings back all the emotion of the Reunions we attended, and the good things we have done. It reminds me what wonderful people we are.

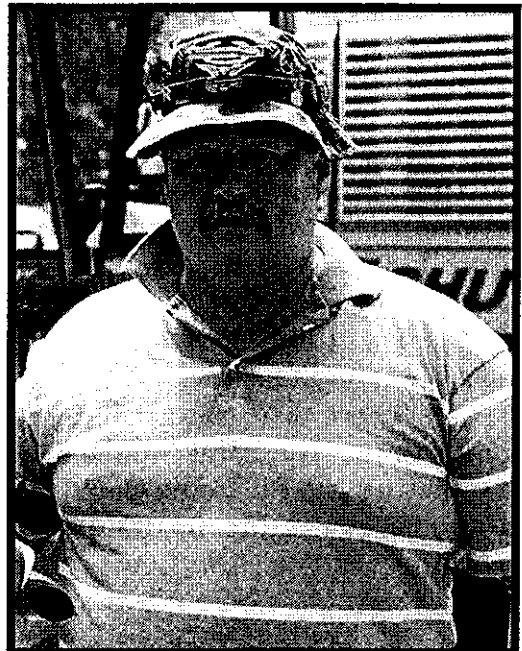
When I came home from Vietnam in the summer of 1969, my entire life had changed. I had changed after two tours in 'Nam. Neither I nor my friends were the same, and we went our separate ways. I wasn't the 20 year old naive kid who went off to war. By the time I came home, I was tired, and felt old. If not for Ron Copeland, a fellow 6th Battalion Mindbender, I would have had no friends.

I felt old and tired until I met with Duane, Ron, Jack, and Dick at the Wall in March 1988. Together, we formed the nucleus of today's Mindbenders. It is one of the most important moments of my life. Other veterans' organizations held nothing for me -- I've lived enough war stories and seen enough chest-beating to last two lifetimes. Mindbenders has been different. We don't tell war stories. We don't need to.

One of the greatest honors of my life was standing on the platform at the Wall last November, reading the names of 80 Americans who died in that war. To be one of 5 Mindbenders to read, to be one of fewer than 1,000 people invited to read, to be one of the 3.5 million who served in Vietnam, was a tremendous honor. It's all on the tape, and as I watch it, I still feel the pride, the pain, and the sense of loss. I want to cry sometimes, I want to cheer, I want to say a prayer, it was that moving. I was there as a Mindbender, and damn proud of that.

We were special then, and even though more than 20 years have intervened, we're special now. The Reunion video is ample proof of just how special, and how committed we have become to each other. The Reunion last summer, and the 10th Anniversary Reunion at the Wall are all evidence of just how special we are. Officer or enlisted, we are a damn fine group of men. Young men once again.

Thanks Rik, thanks Jack, thanks Duane, thanks to all the guys who have given me back a piece of the youth I lost so long ago. Thanks for being friends and family.



Chad Spawr preparing to board the bus to The Wall in June '93

## "Mindbenders IV" -- 1994

"Meet Me In St. Louis"

by Duane Yaeger

Our next reunion, which is scheduled to be the weekend of July 4, 1994, will be held in St. Louis, Missouri. In this quarter's report I would like to mention some points of interest for the women particularly, as well as some nice restaurants and night spots.

There are two very nice shopping malls located relatively close to the airport where we hope to have our hotel. Northwest Plaza shopping mall is located within four miles of the airport and Westport Plaza is located within eight miles. These two malls are very large facilities with many various boutiques, restaurants, and department stores. Westport Plaza also has many other great activities located in the same general area. One of the nationally acclaimed Funny Bone Comedy Clubs is located at Westport Plaza.

One of the more unique shopping malls in the midwest is Union Station Shopping Mall. This is the former Union Station Railroad Terminal which has been highly renovated and now stands as an interesting tourist site as well.

There are many fine dining locations in the St. Louis area. All types of cuisine are available including Vietnamese, Chinese, Italian, and German. There are also some very fine seafood restaurants and steak houses. One particular steak house, Ruth's Chris Steak House, is known to serve a four pound steak for that awe-inspiring eater. This order might just keep Fojo Riordan busy a while.

I will maintain a list of these restaurants and their locations (as well as night spots) for your inspection at the reunion.

There are several good theaters, dinner theaters, and comedy clubs in the St. Louis area. If anyone would like to enjoy some of these venues, I would recommend contacting the St. Louis Convention and Visitors Commission (10 S. Broadway, Suite 1000, St. Louis, Mo. 63102; 800-888-FUN-1) or the St. Louis Visitors Center (308 Washington Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63102) for possible reservations and schedules in early 1994.

St. Louis is very spread out, but it is not difficult to get around to other parts of the city from the northwest county area where the airport is located. However, I would advise carrying a St. Louis map.

I do want to remind all of you that the St. Louis Veiled Prophet Fair will be going on that week on the riverfront with nightly fireworks displays rivaling any in the country. The St. Louis Riverfront also has several good restaurants and clubs. The light rail system should be in place by the summer of 1994 making trips to the downtown area from the airport very easy.

I would also like to remind everyone that our reunions are not just for members. Anyone, and everyone, who served with the 4th PSYOP Group (or related units) in Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf, stateside, etc. is welcome to attend.

Coming in the next issue will be golf information and possible hotel selection(s).

## A Second "Tour"

By  
Rick Sinding

[The following unabridged letter was received this past fall from Rick Sinding following his then recent visit to Vietnam. Although the first portion was published in the last *Newsletter*, we decided to share the entire letter with everyone on the general roster. We send special thanks to Rick for sharing his descriptive observations with us. -- Editor]

I appreciated receiving a copy of the most recent "Mindbenders *Newsletter*," although it mistakenly identified me as having served in the 6th Bn (I was actually in the 8th Bn, before transferring to HHC in Saigon about two-thirds of the way through my tour in 1969). I particularly enjoyed seeing pictures and catching up on the lives of Don Fieler and Joe Wojcik, first baseman and pitcher respectively for the 8th PSYOP Bn "Doves" softball team that tore up the Nha Trang league until Wojcik, who probably possessed the finest fastball in PSYOP history, DEROSed and we proceeded to lose all the rest of our games!

What prompts me to write is the fact that I have just returned from a second "tour" of Vietnam -- this one voluntary -- and I thought some PSYOPers might be interested in how much (or how little) things have changed since our earlier time there. My wife, Arlene, and I spent two weeks "in country" -- a week in Ho Chi Minh City (which everyone still calls Saigon), and roughly two days each in Nha Trang, DaNang-Hue, and Hanoi. The experience was remarkable; the countryside is every bit as beautiful as I remembered it, and Saigon is actually a much more liveable city than it was 23 years ago -- in large measure because there is considerably less motor vehicle traffic than there used to be and it is not nearly so overcrowded with refugees. Of course the "Saigon Tea" bars are all gone, as are the massage parlors, the Indian tailor shops, and, sadly, the Plaza Hotel (now a school, and very run-down), so the commercial side of city life is vibrant and the general pace of life a lot slower than I remember it.

As for Cruz Compound . . . well, it is still there, though barely recognizable. To the left as you enter, where, if memory serves, the motor pool and printing presses used to be, there is now a vast, cavernous warehouse with some scrap metal strewn about and a few people with blowtorches doing some welding. There is also, believe it or not, a single printing press, which looks very much like 1960's vintage, still in operation, churning out advertising material for a local store. Several of the quonset huts which used to house our offices are still standing, though they are badly rusted and have been partitioned off into individual rooms in which large numbers of people now live. The hootch where I remember spending most of my time editing *Credibilis* copy has been divided up into about four housing units, inhabited by at least 20 people. It was rainy season when we were there, so large puddles of water prevented us from exploring as far back into the compound as we might have liked. The front courtyard, where we used to have morning formations, is now a recreation area with a volleyball net, and I found a large group of young men playing a variation of volleyball with a soccer ball, using their feet and heads rather than their hands to volley the ball back and forth over the net. It did not look as if these guys spent very much time doing

much of anything besides playing this game and hanging around. The women appear to do virtually all the work. There is a small bakery in operation on the compound, and there are numerous pigs and chickens that roam around at will. There is also an old jeep, in rather decent running order, parked inside the compound. I wonder if it was Colonel Katagiri's. Altogether, the compound gives the appearance of being a small neighborhood, with some cottage industry, a little commerce, some subsistence farming, and a substantial population of squatters who have moved in, recycled everything they could get their hands on and turned what used to be an American military headquarters into a typical Vietnamese slum.

I was stationed in Saigon for only four months (I spent the first eight in Nha Trang), so my memory for the names of streets, BEQs and other landmarks of bygone days is not great. I did a lot of prowling around Tran Hung Dao (yes, #62 is still there, though I could not pinpoint the famous Roger Steffens/Jack Martin apartment with the mural that glowed in blacklight), Pham Ngu Lao (Cruz Compound was at #16, a couple of familiar-looking BEQs, now converted to very cheap and apparently rather sleazy hotels, are in the same block across the street), Bui Vien and other neighborhood streets. The Hung Dao Theatre is gone, though the cyclo drivers still hang around the corner where it used to be. (To the best of my knowledge, they no longer sell "Park Lane" cigarettes.) Mimi's is gone. Life goes on.

Downtown, the Rex BOQ is now a very good hotel (we stayed there, for the equivalent of \$70 a night . . . a bargain compared to the "Floating Hotel," an Australian monstrosity docked in the Saigon River at the foot of Tu Do Street -- now called Dong Khoi -- charging \$200 a night, and the Caravelle and Continental, both charging more the \$100); the opera house-turned National Assembly has not changed one bit, except it is now the city theater; the little park in front of it now sports a clock where the hideous statue of the two soldiers used to stand; around the corner, in the square in front of the City Hall (which also hasn't changed one bit) there is now a statue of a very benign looking Ho Chi Minh holding a child -- on Saturdays and Sundays, people still dress up their kids and promenade around the square until all hours of the night; the Ben Thanh market at the traffic circle where Tran Hung Dao meets Le Loi is thriving with commerce which, according to the vendors, has all resumed within the last two years because of the Hanoi government's policy of *doi moi*, more or less the Vietnamese equivalent of perestroika. A certain amount of capitalism is returning; where the bars along Tu Do used to be, there are now laquerware and jewelry and handicraft shops, and a number of stalls selling old Zippo lighters with "Pleiku 1970 - 4th Infantry Division - I fucking love the Army and the Army loves fucking me" and other such remembrances prominently displayed. The old USIS building has been converted into an "Exhibition House of Aggressive War Crimes," offering rather vivid and graphic testimony to the horrors of war. The Givral Cafe across the street from the Continental hasn't changed at all; even some of the waiters are the same, and they still serve great French bread. 33 Beer has become 333 Export, and still tastes like formaldehyde. I could go on and on.

Nha Trang . . . Camp McDermott is gone, leveled, kaput, no trace of it. I was told that it was systematically dismantled, all of the building materials recycled and used elsewhere to build houses and factories. The Buddha is still there, high atop Lang Son

pagoda overlooking all of Nha Trang, still a spectacular view. The monastery on the north end of the city has been closed by the government, and is now used as some sort of training camp -- though who trains there, and for what purpose, is not revealed. The Cham temples, of course, have not changed in several hundred years, but they seem to be better maintained, and the whole setting seems much more tranquil, than I remembered it. The beach is still broad and white and sandy, with locals selling everything from cigarettes and beer to fresh squid and spring rolls, and it's still hot as hell but somehow it's more tolerable when you're on vacation in shorts and T-shirts rather than on duty in fatigues.

One major observation: THE SMELL is gone! I don't know why . . . there is still a hell of a lot of *nuoc mam* around, but it doesn't permeate the air the way it used to, or stick in your nostrils or penetrate your clothing. I think maybe it's because THE SMELL was really some sinister synthetic compound of *nuoc mam* and *pho* and printers' ink and factory emissions and napalm and marijuana and jeep exhaust fumes and bargirls' perfume and all the other toxicants and intoxicants that mingled so irritatingly while we were there, and now most of those ingredients are gone and you really can breathe the air, which, as you can well imagine, lends a quality of unreality to the entire experience of being in Vietnam again.

I've done some writing about my return visit: An op-ed piece in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* about the U.S. trade embargo, another for *The New York Times* (I haven't heard yet whether it will be published) on dioxin and Agent Orange, and a couple of speculation pieces that may or may not be picked up by any number of magazines and/or newspapers to which I'm considering submitting them. I'll be happy to share copies with anyone who's interested. I've also put together a slide show which, if the opportunity allows, I'll bring with me to St. Louis in 1994. I am not much for veterans' activism; I don't really care much for most veterans' groups, as I generally do not share weither their political views or their organizational agendas, and, like Groucho Marx, I am inclined not to join any clubs that would have me as a member. But I have some very fond, non-military memories of Vietnam, and of friends I made in PSYOP, and I look forward to sharing some of them as the opportunities arise.

If you find any of what I've written useful for the next edition of the "Mindbenders Newsletter," please feel free to use it. I've spent the last three years serving as a politically appointed bureaucrat (Assistant Commissioner for Policy & Planning of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and Energy) after more than 20 years as a journalist, so I have reveled in doing some real, meaningful writing in the few weeks since returning home . . . it's very therapeutic. With any luck, it will -- like Vietnam -- stay in my blood.

Keep us the good work with the *Newsletter*. I'll try to pass along some names and addresses as I track down a few long lost friends.

Sincerely,

Rick Sinding

## REUNION VIDEO AVAILABLE



Rik Hofmann has finished producing the reunion video taken by Jack and Bob O'Neil and others. He has added footage from the 10th Anniversary at "The Wall", as well as some still shots of the reunion. The final version is available for \$10.00 to all "Mindbenders" who have paid their 1993 dues. To receive your copy, send a check payable to Rik Hofmann (5 Van Dyck Dr.; Wilmington, Del. 19809).

## Summer Newsletter

The Summer edition of the *Newsletter* should be mailed in August and will include continued Reunion '94 information about St. Louis from Duane Yaeger as well as updates on all Association activities. **The Summer Newsletter will be mailed only to those who have paid their 1993 dues.**

Please have all reports, *Newsletter* contributions, etc. to Dave Schultz by July 10, 1993.

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## Important Phone Numbers for "Mindbenders" & Families

### "Mindbenders" Hot Lines:

Chaplain Bill Mark	(617) 275-7500 (work)
	(617) 527-2365 (home)
Duane Yaeger	(618) 242-3647
Jack O'Neil	(508) 687-1323



### "Mindbenders" Newsletter Editor:

Dave Schultz (516) 298-9340  
P.O. Box 624, Mattituck, New York 11952

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"MINDBENDERS"



4TH PSYOP GROUP  
VIETNAM  
PANAMA GRENADA KUWAIT

# "MINDBENDERS" MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(Please Print)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

PSYOP UNIT(S) SERVED (Bn & Co; Field Team; etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

VIETNAM SERVICE DATES: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBERSHIP: NEW RENEWAL

Membership dues are \$15.00 annually (\$10.00 after July 1). Please make your check payable to "Mindbenders". All enrollments (\$15.00) received after November 1 will be applied to the following year's dues.

Please mail this completed form and your enrollment check to:

*Rik Hofmann  
5 Van Dyck Drive  
Wilmington, DE 19809*

Anahelm CA 92802  
1669 S. Inez Way  
Harmond M. SALLEY

Methuen, MA 01844  
88 Pinehurst Avenue  
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