



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

December 2004

Wooley Addresses ACA at Soundside

REUNION COMMENTS

By Dick Geron

The Air Commando Association held its annual reunion in Fort Walton Beach during 7-10 October. This was the 60th year of the founding of the Air Commandos during WWII.

We had approximately 230 people at the reunion. This number is down from approximately 325 we usually have. There are several different theories as to why attendance fell off. Perhaps it was because of the bad weather as hurricane Ivan passed through the area a week or so before. Maybe the reunion format is getting stale. Maybe we are getting older. No, it can't be that!

Planning will start soon for reunion 2005. The Soundside Club at Hurlburt has been reserved for the Saturday night banquet. The

Quality Inn Motel is available. Hospitality Suite and Country Store, Friday Golf, Friday evening Fish Fry with Ray Brown, Saturday morning Business Meeting followed by something not yet selected, Banquet, Sunday Memorial Services at Hurlburt Air Park followed by BBQ, Auction and close.

Sound familiar? Staring to sound traditional? That still leaves us wondering why we had about 100 people less this year. We never get much objective input from the members about the reunion and its events. Let us know what you like and want. We are open to ideas.

I wish to thank all those who put in so much work to make the reunion the success each year. Among the many were the same



Lieutenant General Michael W. Wooley,
AFSOC Commander

regulars: Pete Bowman, Hap Lutz, Joyce and David Harrington, Jim Boney, Bob White, Charlie Jones, Ray Bourque, Jerry Broadway, Gen. Second, Jim Ifland, Gene Rossel, Sam Sambogna, Gen. Aderholt, Bob Trainor, Master of Ceremonies Bill Campbell, and Fred Platt. High fives to Bobby Dixon, Robbye Binkley, David

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Felix L. "Sam" Sambogna President, ACA

Felix L. "Sam" Sambogna, a lifetime member of the ACA, began his service with special operations units when he reported to Hurlburt Field for AT-28 training in 1966. He then served as an AT-28 pilot in the 606th Air Commando Squadron, Nakon Phanom, Thailand, under the command of Colonel Aderholt. Other special operations unit assignments included flying the A-37 at England AFB and Hurlburt Field; staff officer at SOF Headquarters,

Eglin AFB; Special Operations Liaison Officer, Vietnam; and OV-10 Squadron Commander and Deputy Base Commander at Hurlburt. Sam retired in 1982, as a L/Col with 29 years of service, 15 years in special operations units. Since May 2001, Sam has been an ACA Director on the ACA Executive Board. His most significant special operations accomplishment was beating Colonel "Road Runner" Thomas in tennis.

A Eulogy for Heroic Fighter Ace



BRIG. GEN. BEN Harold. KING,
COMMANDO COMMANDER.

By Bob Gleason

On the morning of Oct. 7, 2004 Gen. King pulled aside his hospital oxygen mask and calmly spoke these words to the attending nurse. Today I am going to die, and that is exactly what he did.

Thus, released from the surly bonds of earth one of the most remarkable warriors of the sky that our generation, (and several subsequent generations), had ever known began his last journey. Gen. King died as he had lived, retaining as much control over his destiny as was humanly possible.

In writing this final tribute to

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Jim Boney, *Editor*
Jim Yealy, *Asst Editor*
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Jimmy Ifland, *Photographer*

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Editorial Comments

FORT CHEAT

By Col. David Hackworth, USA Ret.

The bedrock of the U.S. Army is honor. From the day they raise their right hands, Army officer cadets from every commissioning source - West Point, ROTC, Officer Candidate School, etc. - have drilled into their little green heads: "I won't lie, cheat, steal or tolerate others that do."

This code remains sacred as long as those who've taken it wear a soldier's suit.

The reason is simple: When a lieutenant says he's cleared an enemy position, or a colonel signs his name to a readiness report, or a general says, "Mission accomplished," lives depend upon that testimony being dead accurate.

If you had violated any of the

above in the old Army, it was. "Strike One, you're out!" But this isn't true anymore. At least, not at the U.S. Army's Artillery School at Fort Sill, OK - where cheaters and liars are allowed to graduate and join active-duty units either on their way to some distant killing field or already in combat.

Even though students are required to sign an honor sheet prior to starting the course, at least 11 fledgling lieutenants have been caught cheating or plagiarizing on exams during the past year alone. In nearly every instance, these miscreants have been permitted to graduate with little more than a slap on the wrist.

The honor sheet is the contract between the school and the student regarding academic honesty and defines cheating as "any attempt to receive or give unauthorized assistance from written or printed aids, from any person, or from another student's graded paper. And no student who has completed an examination will give information to anyone who has yet to take the same or different version of the examination."

An artillery lieutenant is the guy who directs cannon fire that thumps down in front of infantry soldiers. He's the guy in the battery who ensures that the guns are laid properly and that the ugly hot metal gets on the right target. If he doesn't know his trade cold, grunts die.

But while cheating at Fort Sill allows the unqualified to pass through one of the toughest, most exacting and important basic officer courses in the U.S. Army, cheating is only the tip of the iceberg. During the past year, more than 20% of the basic-officer students have flunked the course, only to be recycled until they pass.

There's plenty of evidence suggesting that some slackers might have failed the course on purpose to avoid duty in Iraq. And student

officers with reading and math skills below the 7th grade level have been allowed to recycle multiple times before being force-fed to their units - even though an artillery officer who can't do math is like a fireman that's allergic to smoke.

Back when I went through the battery officer's artillery course, you passed every subject with flying colors or you were soon selling encyclopedias, but it isn't that way anymore.

Only a few of Fort Sill's cheaters and dummies have been released from active duty, and then after committing serious criminal offenses - AWOL, adultery. Theft, drugs, packing unauthorized heat, lying to superior officers and attacking superior officers. And most of these bums actually received an honorable discharge.

A sergeant friend who's been at Sill almost since its Indian fighting days says, "The vast majority of the young men I see who come through the course are fine and will perform their duty damn well, but a bunch are getting through who have no business being fire-direction officers, fire-support officers or platoon leaders. I wouldn't want to be the parent of anyone who's either under the leadership of these individuals or supported by their artillery units."

The questions that need answering are: Why have the once high standards of Fort Sill's Artillery School been dragged in the mud? And who's responsible?

The old Sarge says, "The local Army chain of command from the colonel to the general have had nearly two years of reports from us instructors regarding this mess, and they've done nothing but duck their responsibility. The only thing that'll make the brass either officially accept the fact that they graduate cheats, thugs and dolts - or take corrective action - is reading about themselves in your column."

My pleasure Sarge.

Reunion

from front page

Lunnen, and "Pipeline" Will Elledge.

Also all the good people from Hurlburt - L/Gen Wooley, AFSOC Commander; Col. Mannon, 16th SOW Commander, L/Col. Alvarez, 6th SOS Commander, and all their respective staffs. We got 110% from them.

'Til we meet again - ANY TIME ANY PLACE!

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King

from front page

Gen. King it is difficult to select any single stage of his life as typical of the whole. For each was a nonpareil in its own way.

To this writer, and to many of the readers of the ACA publication, Gen. King is best known for the leadership and example he displayed in the formation, training, and deployment of the 4400 Combat Crew Training Squadron, (CCTS). The 4400 CCTS (A innocuous designation for what in reality was a covert USAF combat unit), was the revival of the famous WW II Air Commando Group which fought with unsurpassed fame and success in the jungles of the CBI Theatre under the inspiring leadership Col. Phil Cochran and John Allison. Their exploits were enshrined in the long running comic strip Terry and the Pirates authored by Milton Caniff.

Gen. King, (then Col.) was personally selected to command this reconstituted composite Air Commando unit by USAF Chief of Staff Gen. LeMay. He chose well. At five AM on a day in early 1961 Gen. King (Who at the time was a Col.) was roused out of bed at Hurlburt Field by a phone call from the USAF Command Center and told to report immediately to the Command Center on Eglin AFB. When he arrived the duty officer put through a call to USAF headquarters and handed King the phone. He was then talking to LeMay. The conversation was brief. LeMay asked King a few personal and professional questions, then asked him if he would volunteer to lead a group of selected USAF personnel who may be required to fight in a foreign country out of uniform. Col. King replied that he would. LeMay then said that he would be contacted by his staff shortly. Thus, King

became the first commander of the post WW II Air Commando's, as the 4400th was later designated. Gen. LeMay was always considered an excellent judge of character. In this case he had plenty of evidence regarding Col. King's inspiring brand of leadership upon which to base his selection. This however was not the beginning of this officer's illustrious career. For that we must go back to WW II.

General King was born in Oklahoma in 1919. He graduated from a USAF Flying School in 1942 from where he launched his remarkable career. His first combat tour came during the height of the Second World War. He was assigned to the Pacific Theater flying P-38's. In the ensuing months Ben King shot down three enemy Mitsubishi Zeros fighters. Aerial victories in war do not come without risk, and Kings, were no excep-



tion. Toward the end of his Pacific tour King was also shot down 400 miles deep in enemy-held territory.

After ditching, he spent seven days in a one-man dinghy all the while paddling toward an island 40 miles away. Incidentally, this was

one of the first, if not the first successful ditching of a P-38. That aircraft had the reputation of converting to a submarine the moment its belly touched water. When he reached the island, he joined six other evading American pilots who had been previously shot down. The island was occupied by about 100 Japanese soldiers who searched day and night for the Americans. After about three months King and three of the other Americans took off by boat in the direction of U.S. held territory. After paddling some 70 miles they were picked up at night by a Navy PBY Catalina flying boat.

After completing his Pacific tour, King was assigned to a training unit in the States. However, stateside duty was not for this aerial warrior. He immediately volunteered for another P-38 unit that was scheduled to leave for England, and he arrived there in early 1944.

Ben completed his 100-mission tour in P-38's and further volunteered for a third combat tour. He was transferred to the North American P-51 outfit. A short time later he became the Commander of the 368th Fighter Squadron. It was on this tour that he shot down four additional enemy aircraft. In this case they were, two German Messerschmitt 109s and two Focke-Wolf 190s. Thus, King joined the exalted ranks of American fighter aces. It is significant that all his seven aerial victories were against enemy fighters and not the more easily downed transport or bomber aircraft. He was also credited with several enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground.

Eventually, King was returned to the States and assigned to one of the early North American F-86



Saber squadrons. While he was ferrying the last of these newly assigned aircraft to his home station in Maryland the Korean War broke out. King immediately contacted a friend in the Pentagon and requested a transfer to Korea. Two days later he was on his way. However, what he thought was an en route stop in Japan turned out to be his next duty assignment. A very unhappy USAF Major was retained in Japan as the Commander of a fighter interceptor squadron. The other two squadrons of that group had already left for the war in Korea, and the remaining squadron had to remain in Japan for air defense protection.

When King protested this diversion to his Commander he was told that as soon as he had established four Ground-Controlled Interceptor (GCI) sites protecting Tokyo and had made the system operationally ready he would be released for combat in Korea. This took just three months, and true to his word, his superior arranged for his reassignment to another squadron scheduled for Korea. In the meantime, King was slipping in and out of Japan at every opportunity, and going over to Korea to fly combat missions in P-51's belonging to the other two squadrons from his parent group. This bootleg combat operation netted him more than

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King

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40 missions. After arriving in Korea, King became the Commander of the 8th Fighter Squadron where he flew additional 226 combat missions in the Lockheed F-80 Shooting Star.

After returning from the Korean War, Ben King eventually ended up at Hurlburt Field as Director of the Joint BOMARC Test Staff. It was in that position than Col. King demonstrated his outside the cockpit leadership by leading his team to improve the launch reliability of the BOMARC from about 10 percent up to 82 percent.

He was serving in this capacity when he received the early morning call from the Chief-of-Staff-USAF. Ben King was given virtually no guidance for this assignment. No T/A, no aircraft assigned, no training directives, no specific mission. All he was assigned were a few unused barracks at Hurlburt and about 150 men spread all over the USAF. Men who had also volunteered for the same type of duty that he did. In many respects King's job was more Herculean than that given to Phil Cochran and John Allison by Gen. Hap Arnold during WW II.. At least they were operating in a wartime environment when short cuts and expedience were the order of the day.

King on the other hand was faced with all the problems that Cochran had but had to solve them within a very structured and sometimes rigid peacetime environment. He was simply told to form, equip and train a WW II type composite unit and be ready to deploy it to someplace unknown in about six months time. He had to identify the type aircraft, locate the bone yards where they may be stored and start recovery, set up a training program, establish supply procedures and

perform a host of other tasks associated with the formation of a unit of this type. But he did it and the unit deployed its first detachment to Mali Africa in about four months. Shortly thereafter Gen. King led the first US tactical unit into Vietnam.

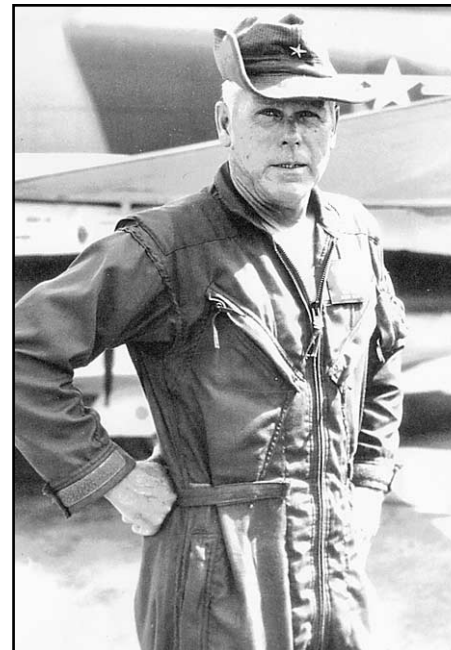
As the lone tactical US commander in the middle of an existing war in a foreign nation Ben King faced a host of new problems. Command channels, (except messages to LeMay via CIA back channel), did not exist. Rules of engagement were nebulous at best. Coordination of our activities with local Army, (ARVN) and Air Force (VNAF) commanders had to be established. All of these functions and others are normally the tasks of layers and layers of higher headquarters clear up to and including to Supreme Commanders. Rarely if ever were these functions made the responsibility of a lone commander of a small tactical unit in a foreign battlefield. The only guidance that King received was a directive from the US Embassy not to allow his people to leave the base at Bien Hoa because we were not suppose to be there in the first place. Nevertheless King slowly crawled out of the hole in which he was placed and in a remarkable short period of time his unit was providing significant assistance to the war effort.

When Col. King returned from Vietnam he found a blossoming USAF counterinsurgency effort well under way at Hurlburt. The Squadron was increased to a wing. a Special Warfare Center was created. A General officer was assigned and a Combat Applications Group was established. King was assigned as commander of the latter. This move away from the cockpit and the fighting troops was

not his cup of tea and like a moth attracted by a flame he soon gravitated back towards the war zone.

This time he was assigned to Bangkok Thailand as the head of the Advisory Research Agency operating under the office of the Secretary of Defense. From this vantage point General King made frequent sojourns to Vietnam where he flew an additional 100+ combat missions in the T-29 and C47 aircraft of friendly Air Commando units as well as the F-100.

Gen. Kings terminal assignment was in the USAF Office of Flying Safety at Norton AFB. as Chief of the Fighter Division. This of course required more trips to Vietnam and more combat missions. In this case he was on a crusade to have the fighter pilots accept and use the newly developed



NOMAX fire resistant flying suit. The fighter pilots were resisting wearing this suit because it was so hot in the tropically environment. He succeeded as usual through both example and forceful leadership. As a results many pilots survived crashes that would otherwise cost them their lives. This is another case of Ben King leaving his long

lasting fingerprints on every assignment he ever had and leaving each significantly better than he found it.

Oct. 19, 2004 dawned in Florence Oregon as an overcast day. A gathering of Gen. King's relatives and friends were assembled at the small local airport to attend a memorial service arraigned by Rennie Kirk the airport manager, and to pay their last respect to this noble warrior of the skies. At precisely 9:25 a flight of four F-15's from the ANG Squadron at Klamath Falls suddenly appeared from the East and flew directly over the assembled group at an altitude of a few hundred feet. They made a 360 degree turn and approached the field a second time. This time when they were directly over the field the odd man in the V formation pulled up and executed a vertical slow roll as he disappeared into the overcast. A more perfect tribute could not have been rendered to Ben King even if he had been leading the formation himself. In spirit he was.

Following this, his wife Maxine and their two surviving children, his daughter Alicia, and his son Carl, proceeded to a cliff overlooking the ocean and commended his ashes to the winds-- and to his God.

This great American patriot and military leader was a quiet and modest man, and one who did not receive the full acclamation that he had earned. He gained some notoriety however among those who knew him best when he was induced into the Oklahoma Air and Space Museum Hall of Fame in 1955. An honor shared with other giants of American aviation including Wiley Post, Col. James Jabara, the leading Korea War Ace and oth-

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Membership News

In Memory of:

Lewis O. Brabham, Jr
September 2004

Francis X. De Fonce
November 2004

Ronald H. Jackson
September 2002

BGen Benjamin King
October 2004

Edwin H. Shuman
August 2002

Clarence G. Weishar
October 2004

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Charles W. Ashbraugh
Ray Brown
William B. Carruthers
Clifford E. 'Skip' Day
Gerald W. Flynn
Calvin R. Fyler
Peter M. Green
Joel M. Hokkanen
Tony Holland
Jesse B. Laing
Terrence L. Maroste
Willard J. Martin
Lloyd W. 'Mitch' Mitchell
J. G. R. 'Rich' Roddey
Charles R. Thompson
Joseph E. Vigil
Belva D. 'BD' Walker
Gardner W. Wilcox
William J. Wonderlin
John T. Wotring, Jr

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Billy J. Brown
John J. Duffy
Daniel P. Hickey
Gary James Lee
Christine Lukasik
O. G. Mannon

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Eric Bowman
Jeff Hokett
Mark D. Kindurys
G. Dale Rosser
Franklin L. Wimberly

LOST MEMBERS

Norman A. Bild
Beverly Cieminecki
Daniel A. d'Erico
Heather Renee French
Grace Frick
Ron Plunkett

FOUND MEMBERS

Lawrence A. Neal
7014 E Golflinks Rd #156
Tucson, AZ 85730

Charles A. Williamson
3501 W Ox Rd
Fairfax, VA 22033

ON THE MOVE

John C. Armstrong
191 Sara Bush Ct
O'Fallon, IL 62269

Beverly Barnes
8355 106 St SE
Bismark, ND 58504

Ouida Barrineau
4900 SE 102 Pl #105
Bellevue, FL 34420

James W. Beam
12586 Mollylea Rd
Baton Rouge, LA 70815

Harrt W. Biller
1152 Hostler Rd
Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

Michael G. Brennan
14317 SW Teal Blvd #B
Beaverton, OR 97008

Gary Carlson
5622 E Sheffield Ln
Colbert, WA 99005

Gen Duane H Cassidy
214 Glen Haven Dr
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Aaron Combs
2236 Soundings Ct
Greenacres, FL 33413

MGen Richard J. Comer
7115 S Boundry Blvd
McDill AFB, FL 33621

Carol Murdock Fields
23707 Red Eagle
San Antonio, TX 78258

Charles W. Goodson
100 Keystone Dr
Anderson, SC 29621

Joe B. Grimes
2651 W Broadway #6 102
Tucson, AZ 85745

Michael D. Grubbs
4412 Wiregrass Cir
Valdosta, GA 31605

Michael E. Haas
900 S Meadows Pkwy #322
Reno, NV 89521

Floyd W. Hampton
771 Torsa De Mar Ave
Henderson, NV 89015

James Handlin
PO Box 620720
Las Vegas, NV 89162

Mary Ann Harrison
4743 2 St
Lubbock, TX 79416

Ned 'Crash' Helm
1341 John White Rd
Defuniak Springs, FL 32435

Yong Khue Her
11706 Spring Dr
Northglenn, CO 80233
Gen Paul V. Hester
301 Julian Ave
Honolulu, HI 96818

Charles F. Hicks
18323 Fable Dr
Boyd, MD 20841

Edwin 'Ned' Holster
132 Forest Manor Dr
Sanford, NC 27332

Brian Johnson
1693 Village Pkwy
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563

BGen Lyle M. Koenig, Jr
7712 Carriage Homes Dr #10
Orlando, FL 32819

Sai Pao Kong
2248 Mackenzie Way
Yuba City, CA 95991

Nou Ying Kue
10227 Sorenstam Dr
Sacramento, CA 95829

David G. Larson
1251 Moorings Dr
La Crosse, WI 54803

Chong Chua Lor
76 Skyline Blvd
Oroville, CA 95966

Rob Lutz
A6-081 Konohiki St #3643
Kaneohe, HI 96744

George D. McNamara
Bermuda Palms #94
HC20 Box 75
Earp, COA 92242

Grant B. McNaughton
23751 Timberline Way
Terachapi, CA 93561

Robert C. Metsker
401 Juniper St
Destin, FL 32541

Albert G. Mongeau
7726 Navarre Pkwy #28
Navarre, FL 32566

Gwen Calloway Moore
HC 67 Box 640
Clayton, ID 83227

Membership

from page 5

- | | |
|--|---|
| Charles M. Parks
2187 Sandy Ridge Dr SW
Supply, NC 28462 | MGen William A. Studer
5309 Bayshore Blvd
Tampa, FL 33611 |
| Preston Plous
1124 Sunnyhill Ct
Seaside, CA 93955 | Charles P. Tappero
9010 Hackamore Dr
Scottsdale, AZ 85255 |
| Donald G. Prether
11 Spring Ridge Dr
Debary, FL 32713 | Blake T. Thomson
508 Circle Dr N
Wilburton, OK 74578 |
| Juan J. Provencio
5724 Beaumont Pl
El Paso, TX 79912 | Peter C. Vang
5786 Victoria Way
Merced, CA 95340 |
| Joe F. Reynolds
1018 Fordham Dr
Sun City Center, FL 33573 | Dennis W. Vanidestine
70 Fairways
Bangor, ME 04401 |
| Brett W. Scholten
PO Box 340453
San Antonio, TX 78234 | Marie West
2400 Crystal Cove
Destin, FL 32550 |
| Prescott N. Shinn
65 Virginia St #A
Satellite Bch, FL 32937 | Ted Wojtusik
114 Spielman Hwy
Burlington, CT 06013 |
| Guy E. Smith
4301 Timothy Dr
Merritt Island, FL 32953 | James Wolfram
2800 Quebec St NW #955
Washington DC 20008 |
| Catherine Stanford-Bond
3676 Robinson Vail Rd
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3454 Sharon Rd #1
North Pole, AK 99705 |
| Jean Stiegemeier
500 E 77 St #3324
New York, NY 10021 | Emily Yang
10182 Nick Way
Elk Grove, CA 95757 |
| Dr John W. Stanton
1935 Lester Ave
Las Cruces, NM 88001 | Goodrich F. Yang
1655 W 85 Ave #208
Denver, CO 80260 |

Efforts Remembered

Dear Ray (Bourque),
Wishing you and all of the veterans a Merry Christmas. Thanks again for all you do to remember these great men and women at this wonderful time of the year. God Bless You and God Bless America!
Ariel Seafoods & Krebs Family
PO Box 5041
Destin, FL 32540-5041

Ed Note: Ray has been a true taskmaster in all his endeavors, especially so where the Destin American Legion, the Air Commando Association, and veterans are concerned. His skills and volunteerism are legendary.

Christine Lukasik Becomes ACA Life Member

By Hap Lutz

One of the highlights of this years reunion banquet events was the presentation of ACA Associate Life Membership to lovely USAFA Cadet Christine Lukasik. Christine is the daughter of Mrs. Charlene Murphy and Associate ACA member and USAFA graduate Mark Lukasik. She was sponsored by her grandparents, Robby and Dee Roberson.

Christine's grandfather was Captain Bernard F. "Bernie" Lukasik, featured in the April 1966 issue of Airman's Magazine as "The Pilot Who Wouldn't Quit." Many of you from the Vietnam era may well remember "Bernie." Past President Dick Geron and Howie Pierson, presenters of the award and attending narrative certainly did, as did yours truly.

This special event all came about by Christine's desire to carry on the "Commando Family Tradition." (She wants to fly helicopters after graduation and pilot training.) And Robby and Dee were certainly hep to it. Thus they contacted "Heinie," and asked him to sign a letter Dee had crafted to the USAFA Commandant, L/Gen. John



Rosa. Her letter requested that Christine be excused from class and other duties over the Columbus Day weekend to receive her membership. It also overviewed Captain Lukasik's sterling Air Force career and the receipt of the Air Force Cross, the day before his shoot down in Vietnam. It also revealed "Heinie's" stint as 1st Air Commando Wing Commander and Dee's 12 year history as 1st Air Commando Wing Commander's Secretary. General Rosa could hardly say no...and he didn't.

Here is Captain Lukasiks' poignant story:

See **CHRISTINE** pg. 11

King

from page 4

ers. He was formally introduced at the induction dinner by Gen. John L. Piotrowski, Vice Chief of Staff of the USAF. Pete was one of those young captain volunteers who served under Col. King when he first formed the old 4400 CCTS.

To me a simple statement sums it all up. Ben King defended his country by flying in combat in every war that it was engaged in during his 30 plus years of military duty and he flew this combat while serving in every rank from 2nd Lt.. through Brig. General. (He had the awards and decorations to prove it.) I know of no other Air Force officer living or dead who can claim such a distinction. His footprints will remain forever in the sands of military aviation.

Letters to the Editor

DEAR JIM

VETERAN'S REVENGE

Years ago, a fatigue-clad, long-haired hippie-come-lately named John Kerry slouched insolently before Congress, doing his best to build a left-wing base for his political future.

Kerry claimed he had witnessed atrocities in Vietnam and bragged about casting off his self-initiated medals in a fit of revulsion over his fellow serviceman's inhuman conduct. More than 5 million American's served in that war, but Kerry gave few specifics. Nor did he offer any names. He simply smeared us all with his self serving testimony.

Decades later, the heroic senator decided to run for president. He seemed a shoo-in.

Surprisingly, things did not go well. Democratic pundits and left-wing journalists wrung their hands at the unexpected turn of events. How could this happen? A number of theories were advanced, but apparently everyone overlooked an obvious factor - disgruntled Vietnam veterans.

Democrat or Republican, Kerry had smeared us all. In the end, we got our revenge in the voting booth, marking our ballots for George W. Bush and denying Kerry his life-long quest.

Jack Harvey (L-2862)
587 Redhill Road
Ponce de Leon, FL 33455

DEAR AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

I would like to say thanks for the scholarship you presented me. Words can not truly describe my sincere appreciation. I have always had the utmost respect and admiration for Air Commandos and the Association.

My dad, Mike Reynolds, is always telling me stories about the heroes in this great Association. He has always been so proud of his relationship with the Air Commando Association. I am beginning to see why he is so proud of Commandos, and I just hope some day that I will be a contributing member of the Air Commando Association.

In the near future, I hope to get a visit to the Air Commando

Association building and look at all the history my dad has told me about. Maybe he will invite me to the annual Air Commando Association meeting and banquet.

Again, thank you so much for the scholarship. I will certainly try to live up to the expectations of the Air Commando Association. I am working on my degree in International Conflict Analysis, with hopes of either working for the CIA or the United States Air Force.

Very Respectfully
Travis Michael Reynolds
105 Timberlea Drive
Warner Robbins, GA 31088

The following is a note to Bud Britain from Senior Editor William J. Tobin of the Anchorage Times:

BUD,

Thanks very much for the copy of the Air Commando Association newsletter. I was honored to see my column reprinted in that issue.

I found the entire newsletter fascinating, as a matter of fact!
Bill Tobin
2130 Lord Baranof Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517

DEAR FRIENDS,

Our family has so many people to thank. Our lives have certainly been in great turmoil this past year.

So many of you have supported us in so many, many ways. Phone calls, visits, cards and letters have again reminded us of the support and love of our Commando family: John and Kitty Connors, Hap and Shirley Lutz, Lou Schindler, Heinie, and many others. Not a week goes by without a call or note from one of you.

Mark Lukasik wrote Geno a beautiful letter and I'd like to tell

you a few lines of his letter. I do not have his permission - sorry Mark!

He writes about many Commandos by name. He goes on to say...."Your spirits have always remained with me. In countless ways each of you have positively influenced me, channeling that same Air Commando Can Do attitude that my father had. In short, I know that behind those loving eyes and firm handshakes has always been the generation of my father. Geno, for all of this, I am grateful. You remain in my thoughts and prayers."

What a tribute to Commandos!

Most of all I want to thank John Connors for the sensitive and informative article he wrote in the last newsletter. He has been a wonderful friend to Geno.

The kids, Teri, Lisa, and Geno and I spent Father's Day weekend with him. I go over a couple times a month and talk to him on the phone every few days. He thinks he is on active duty on an Air Force Base and recently told me he was going to request a PCS there. That saddened me, but at the same time, he knew he was where he was supposed to be.
God Bless All.

Shirley Valentine
381 Santa Rosa Blvd. #C-203
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

Ed Note: Christmas is the perfect time to send Geno a card of joy and happiness with your personal caring note. His address is printed for that purpose:

Geno Valentine - Patient 41G-2
Gulf Coast Veterans Health
Care System
200 E. Beach Blvd.
Gulfport, MS 39507

See **LETTERS** pg. 10

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Hap's Comments

By now you have all seen the devastation on television that the four hurricanes visited upon our beautiful state. It has been a nightmare of death and destruction, especially in Florida, and all along the eastern seaboard too. Ivan was our unwelcome guest, and those of you that came to the reunion saw first hand the fury reaped on us up here in the panhandle. Boats and debris littered along highway 98, Okaloosa Island virtually wiped out, highway 98 from Ft. Walton to Destin gone (one way traffic was hastily restored), and on and on. Many of our commandos living on the sound experienced major damage and are just now getting back to some semblance of order. "Heinie's" holdings alone suffered over \$500,000 worth of impairments. Our ACA Board of Directors acted and voted a sizable donation to the American Red Cross to assist in reclaiming property loss and damage in Northwest Florida.

Our "Jungle Jim" Commander,

B/General Ben King passed away. His obituary is published elsewhere in this edition, but I want to share this tidbit of information gleaned from the e-mail Robert Downs received from Bob Gleason in the event it is otherwise missed:

"He died as he had lived, in complete control of and full awareness of his fate. The word I received from a member of the hospital staff was that he declared to those present that today he was going to die, and he did."

The reunion, shepherded by Dick Geron, was a huge success, especially in view of the beforehand ravages of hurricane Ivan. The Quality Inn and Sound Side suffered some damage, but those responsible got the venues up and running before zero hour.

Ray Bourque, along with pre-eminent Fish Fryer Ernie Macks, put together another classic Friday night fish fry. They were mightily helped in the trenches by Doug Blair, Mike Sheehan, Fred Nowak, Fred & Barbara Sanders,

Marguerite Gibson, Joanne Bourque, Lori & Larry Caison, Willie & Brenda Hall, Roger & Dorothy Klair, and yours truly. Compliments still abound about the superb quality of the fish and all the sides.

Dave Lunnen arrived a bit early from Winsted, CT, so I conscripted him to assist Dick Geron at the bar as Bob Trainor, his usual sidekick, lost his dad just before the reunion start. Bobby Dixon pinch hit also.

Our reunion numbers were dramatically down from previous years. Ivan probably heavily influenced that too. More breathing room at the banquet a positive. Although it was our 60th Air Commando anniversary, the only World War II Commando I saw in attendance was our own Carlous "Chris" Christian.

After much deliberation, Jim "Chili" Wills flew in from California. Hadn't shared his pleasant company for awhile. Had a regrets note from Bob and Aiko Pickett; medical glitches. Also regrets from perennial attendees Jim and Carynn Alberts. His sister wedded. And we had several cancellations for various reasons. On a happy note, President Sambogna has reserved the Sound Side for next year, so be there or be square.

Our beautiful AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION sign and several of our outside mercury lamps were knocked cockeyed during the storm. Roger Klair put together a team of workers that included Willie Hall, "Bud" Gonzalez, Juan Bazan, Robert Downs, Bob White, Clyde Howard, and me for "light lifting." All went very well, but some jerk, probably from the bar next door, decided to punch a hole in the sign on Halloween night. A pox on the SOB. If we can't piece it together properly, it'll require

replacing.

For you in the local area, I'm putting our Christmas Social together. It will be at Mr. "Ts" Two Trees Restaurant on 12 December from 1300 'til 1700. Cost will be \$10 per person, which will cover heavy hors d' oeuvres. Libations will be at your expense. I'm again asking that you bring a non-perishable food item or two to replenish the stock at the Ft. Walton Beach Sharing & Caring office. I had the opportunity to take last years bounty there and they were overwhelmed by our generosity. (You'll receive a reminder flyer later.)

Shirley (Mishap) will be receiving a right knee replacement sometime in January provided her other doctor agrees that all other systems are go. My presence in the office will be very limited as she goes through the attending post-operative therapy. You that have sustained this operation are well aware of the initial limitations induced. I'll be back in the medical business, at least temporarily.

In my last commentary I told you of our trip to Thailand; Dee and Robby Roberson, Dakota and Lori Lutz, Robbye Binkley and yours truly. I told you of staying at Dave and Liam Spurling's palatial home and of their wonderful hospitality. (She was unavailable due the death of her mother.)

Well, death struck again. Only this time it was Dave's lovely wife Liam.

We had just returned from Madison, TN, escaping hurricane Ivan's fury, when we got a call from Dave in Hua Hin, Thailand, telling us of the shocking news. Our hearts go out to you Dave as you regroup without your dear Liam.

Until again, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all.

Hap

"THROUGH THE EYES OF A COMMANDO"

By Hap Lutz

Several months ago 16th Special Operations Wing Commander O.G. Mannon (ACA L-3949) tasked the Hurlburt Field Company Grade Officers Council to develop a series of lectures to be given by living Air Commandos, with the above title, which portrayed the history and legacy of Air Commandos from inception until now. Captain Keyra Reyes of Air Force Special Operations Command volunteered to perform this service. Once structured, these series of lectures would be presented to those special operators now serving at "The Tip of the Spear."

Colonel Mannon also touched base with past ACA president Dick Geron for assistance in developing this initiative. I asked President Geron if I could be the ACA representative for the association in obtaining speakers and providing ancillary services. He readily agreed.

Accordingly, Captain Reyes visited our building for a "look see" and briefing by President Geron, Dr. Charlie Jones, and myself. We spent about two hours overviewing our future roles in these auspicious

See **EYES** pg. 9

Eyes

from page 7

events and identifying the needs thereof.

The first of these lecture series was presented on 28 October at 1830 hours in the base theater. Major General retired John Alison and retired Senior Master Sergeant Carlous "Chris" Christian were the presenters. Their subject was. "The 1st Air Commando Group in the China, Burma, India Theater of Operations." 16th Special Operations Wing Commander O.G. Mannon was the moderator.

Readers, I cannot adequately tell you how overwhelmingly successful this first of the scheduled series went. There were about 300 attendees, including about 12 of us from the association. We were all absolutely spellbound about the historical events these two marvelous people shared with us.

General Alison spoke first and told us how he and Colonel Phil Cochran were tapped by General Hap Arnold to form a clandestine group of volunteers for duty in difficult circumstances, in austere conditions, and under almost insurmountable problem areas. It is a poignant story of unheralded bravery by all who participated. Most assuredly that of General Alison who survived two shoot downs.

And Sergeant "Chris" Christian, a chosen volunteer, followed with his harrowing exploits during his tenure with the 1st Air Commando Group. This included crash landing in a glider into the 18th Imperial Japanese Army Headquarters. It took him some 55 days to E&E back to friendly lines after first attempting to swim across a river with a wounded Gurkha on his back. "Chris" made it, but the wounded Gurkha asked "Chris" to tell his wife he loved her and disappeared into the raging waters. "Chris" also spoke of his stint

with Merrills Marauders and duty under British General Orde Wingate.

It was a thrilling evening for all. Colonel Mannon moderated superbly. Captain Reyes greeted the arrivals and artifacts from our building were displayed for everyone to enjoy and ponder.

Our down the road speakers will include L/Gen Manor, Dr. Charlie Jones, John Grove, Jerry Klingaman, M/Gen Comer, Gary Weikel, Bill Patterson, Jimmy Bates, Wayne Fisk, Bernie Frakes, M/Gen Secord and B/Gen "Heinie" Aderholt next up in January.

SEEKING INFORMATION

Buddy Bowden contacted me prior to the reunion in the fond hope that those attending could enlighten USMC Gunnery Sergeant Delroy Tingley with information about his father, LeRoy Lester Tingley, AKA Roy or "Buddy." I dutifully sought information from those attending the reunion, but no one came forward. I then told Buddy Bowden that I would go to our newsletter asking our membership for information. So readers, I'll here with paraphrase Del's letter to Buddy Bowden and if you know him, please contact his son: GySgt Delroy Tingley, 106 Lake Village Blvd., Slidell, LA 70461. E-mail: deltingley@hotmail.com.

"I felt guilty after dad died because I really never knew him. Over the years the more I think about what little I did know of the man my father was the more I want to know. When I came to visit you in Tennessee on the 4th of July this year, we had a chance to talk about your experiences and look at old photos of Laos. I knew my father had served there and even have some old photos. They are photos of people we never really talked about in places he never discussed.

I guess he didn't want to think about it and I was too young to care. But that old nagging feeling came back after our long talks and I want to learn more about the man my father was and the things he did. I've sent you the photos that I have and told you as much as I know about when and where Dad was in Laos.

I would deeply appreciate it if you could find anyone who may have served with or knew my father while he was stationed in S.E. Asia. I don't know exactly what I want know or what exactly I'm looking for. I just know that I feel there is

more to know and find."

There you have it folks. I believe this appeal concerns those of us that were assigned to Waterpumps 1 thru 6 or Project 404. If you have even bits of information about Del's dad please contact him.

Hap

PS: Most of the news articles contained in the packet Buddy sent me are concerning Vientiane and Long Tieng. This may help establish which Lima Site Mr. Tingley was assigned to. And they are dated in the early 70's.

ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

STUDENT'S SOCIAL SECURITY # _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ AGE: _____

COLLEGE: _____

ADDRESS OF COLLEGE: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

MEMBER'S NAME: _____

MEMBER'S # _____

Rules: The number and amount of the scholarship(s) will be determined annually by the Board of Directors. The Scholarship(s) will be awarded annually in May. The Board of Directors will randomly select the winner(s) from the eligible candidates submitted by the membership.

Scholarship eligibility criteria are as follows: The Candidate must be the child (natural, adopted, or step), grandchild, or great grandchild of a member in good standing of this Association. The candidate must be accepted to or enrolled in an accredited college or university and be less than 24 years of age at the end of May. Candidates may not be a member of this association, on active duty, attending a Service Academy, or on full scholarship to a college or university.

Note: There will be four \$1000 scholarships drawn on May 28, 2005 by members of the ACA Board of Directors.

Letters

from page 7

DEAR HAP

I hope everyone there is doing well, Connie and I are enjoying the golden years, somewhat less than gratifying, but that is the way things are, sometime a full bucket and sometime half full, we should be grateful for what we can get.

There was an air show at a local airport in Nampa, ID on July 09, 2004, one of the hits of the show as Col. Bernie Fisher getting into the right seat of an A-1E and making a flight, his two sons were along for the ride. When Col. Fisher landed I asked him about his feeling, Col Fisher said it was like going home, his sons told me he took the controls during the flight and seemed to be right at home.

This was a great honor for me personally, to see a medal of honor recipient get back in the cockpit and fly the great airplane.

I am enclosing photographs of this event, and I hope all Air Commandos will appreciate how great this was for the continuing history of the Air Commando Organization.

With sincere best wishes,
Joe Coleman
220 N. Owyhee Street
Boise, ID 837806

DEAR HAP

Please accept my apology for this long, long delay in answering your letter of 3 June. My mother died earlier in the year and I was in Washington, D.C. (Bethesda, MD) tending to her affairs for much of this time. At any rate, it was very good to get your letter and the enclosed picture of me and Stan Monnie and Bob Daken.

Bob was a Peace Corps guy and worked for Pop Buell. He spent some days at LS36 and was very much an important part of the big picture. His lady friend was the

daughter of Sukarno; when he was deposed in 1965, Bob immediately left Laos and went to Indonesia to retrieve her. I could be wrong, but believe he was successful, that they married and are living somewhere in northern Virginia. I was given this info decades ago.

Some questions:

I haven't seen nor heard of Stan Monnie since 1965. What happened to him?

What were one of my favorite couples, Dee and Robby, doing in Thailand? Vacation? Robby was a prince of a guy and Dee was - still is - my favorite redhead. (I still remember the night the Top Secret safe wouldn't close and she and I took turns sitting on it one long, long night at headquarters.)

How's #1 Commando faring? You may know that without his help, I would have never made it to pilot training. What a great guy, what a great leader.

I don't recall Les Strouse or MacAlan Thompson. Were they in the ACW? I don't know how Les ended up with a picture of us at LS36 (I think), but tell him I said thanks.

I thoroughly enjoy every issue of the Commando newspaper, Hap, and am so appreciative of the time and effort you and your comrades put into producing such and interesting and newsworthy paper each and every edition.

Linda and I are off to Oregon and Canada on Monday, for about three weeks. We'll be visiting with son John (now a police captain in Oregon) and his wife and five kids (four daughters, one son) in Oregon for a week, then take a rental car on up into Canada.

Daughter Terri Lyn (born in Mary Esther) and her husband and five kids (all boys) live here in College Station. Needless to say, our involvement with grandkids is

how we spend most of our time. Can you imagine: we had two kids and now have ten grandkids.

Take care, Hap. My best to you and yours and, of course, Heinie Aderholt.

Jack Teague
4742 Stagecoach Road
College Station, TX 77845-8584
My e-mail: jteague@txcyber.com

DEAR JACK,

Your letter came at an excellent time. Commando #1 just happened to be in the office when I opened it. He was here for a last minute pre-reunion briefing. We are going forward in spite of Charlie, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne. Our venues, although somewhat damaged, will be ready by "go time."

I made a copy of your letter for General Aderholt and he intends to contact you at some point. His holdings have sustained some \$500,000 in damages and he's currently working with adjusters trying to get back in business. His e-mail address: heinieac@gnt.net.

Stan Monnie deceased some 10 years ago. I got this information from daughter Kim, a friend of my daughters. I do not know the circumstances of his demise.

I also called Dee and Robby and read your letter to them. They were delighted that you thought of them. Their e-mail address is: hwbta@aol.com. They are coming to this reunion and bringing daughter Charlene and her daughter Christine Lukasik. Christine is being made an Honorary AC Member. Her grandfather was one of the first Air Commando KIA's in SVN during the early 60's. She attends the USAFA and got special permission to attend via Commando #1's request.

Les Strouse is a former ACer

that went with Air America. MacAlan Thompson was Air America also. I knew them both during my six stints in Laos. Les seemed to know you quite well.

All for now Jack. Thank you so much for your letter. You made a lot of people happy! My condolences on the loss of your Mother. Always a painful event.

Best always,
Hap

FOR OUR READERS:

Looking for anyone that might know Donald Mac Parson. Don was a T46270 Weapons Maintenance Technician / T46350 Weapons Mechanic Apparently Don was stationed at Udorn AB, Thailand working on T-28's on two different occasions; 1968 & 1972. He may have also worked in Vietnam around Kin-Tuk (spelling?), with guys named "Wop," "Mouse," "Bull," and "Hood." Suspect he was working with some Special Forces or CAS guys while working in Vietnam also.

Don is in failing health and has memory problems. If you know Don, please contact him at:
3116 E.
College Street,
Hobbs, NM 88240

ACA NEWSLETTER,

You guys earn kudos again. And, well deserved I might add.

Bud Britain
19445 Upper Skyline Drive
Eagle River, AK 99577

DEAR BROTHER COMMANDOS,

I'm writing to hopefully find fellow Commandos assigned to the

See **LETTERS** pg. 18

Hall of Fame Inductees



COLONEL ROLAND K. McCOSKRIE

Colonel Roland K. McCoskrie distinguished himself in the service of his country for over 31 years. His key special operations assignments included 56th Special Operations Wing commander, Special Operations School Commander, Chief of Staff and then Vice-Commander of Air Force Special Operation Forces. His 11 years of foreign service included 4 years as Air Attaché in Thailand. After retirement he remained totally dedicated to the air commandos and served as a Director, Vice-President, President of the ACA and editor of the Newsletter. He also became totally involved with the Threshold Foundation, the humanitarian arm of the ACA. He served as task force commander for the highly successful medical team deployments to Guatemala. Because of his efforts and dedication, the Threshold Foundation was named in memory of him. His love of the Air Force and his administrative/leadership skills and humanitarian efforts all contributed to the defense of our nation and promoted the image of special operations.

Christine

from page 6

US Air Force Capt. Bernard F. Lukasik was the number two man in a flight of three T-28 attack aircraft headed for a strike against a heavy concentration of Viet Cong troops. Each plane had a Vietnamese observer in the rear seat.

Arriving over their general target area in the afternoon, the trio spotted the smoke that marked their exact bombing point. A slow-flying forward air controller had identified the target and directed them to start their attack.

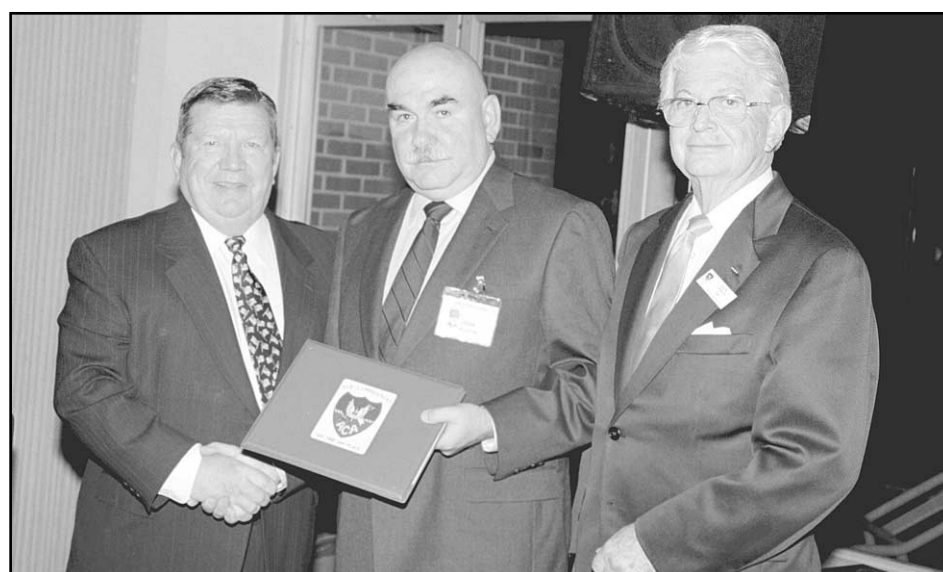
The flight dropped their exter-

nal load of bombs and then began a strafing run on the heavy enemy gun emplacements.

On the fourth pass, the leader of the flight received a direct hit in his aircraft fuel cell. As he pulled up off target he noticed that the fuel pressure gauge had dropped from 600 to 200 pounds of pressure. Smoke started to fill the cockpit.

Informing the other two pilots of his situation, he turned toward his home base. Suddenly his Vietnamese observer began to point excitedly to the right wing

See **CHRISTINE** pg. 17



JOHN L. PLASTER

Major Plaster, USA (retired) distinguished himself while assigned to a USAF unit as a Covey FAC "Rider." At the time of this assignment he was a staff sergeant in the Green Berets having already served two tours in hazardous operations with MACV SOG. Sgt. Plaster brought to his Covey assignment an uncanny knowledge of the combat area. He flew over 350 combat missions in the right seat of the O-2 or the back seat of the OV-10. He has authored several books on special operations and is recognized as an expert on sniping and SWAT team operations. He continues to lecture at the USAF Special Operations University.

WAYNE G. NORRAD *(No photo available)*

CMSgt Norrad distinguished himself in 30 years of service in the USAF. Chief Norrad moved up through every level of enlisted ranks always seeking more responsibility. Initially trained as Weapons Specialist, he crossed trained to the Combat Control career field and became a driving force in advancing the capabilities of combat controllers in special operations. Demonstrating remarkable leadership he not only planned operations but also participated in daring combat operations in Vietnam, Cambodia, Panama, and operations Desert Shield and Dessert Storm. In recognition of his extraordinary skills, CMSgt Norrad was selected as Command Chief Master Sergeant for Special Operations Command.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

If you pay annually, please remit your 2005 dues (\$20.00) per this notice and save Pete from sending you a costly reminder. You may wish to consider lifetime membership (\$150.00) and do away with troubling and costly dues.


Remit to: Air Commando Association
P.O. Box 7
Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

Air Commando Association (ACA) 60th Annual Reunion

Thursday 7 Oct 2004

The Quality Inn Hospitality Room in Fort Walton Beach Florida opened in the afternoon for registration for the ACA Reunion. Pete Bowman was all organized to take our money which he eagerly did. Dick Geron was behind the bar to soothe the dry throats of all who made it across Florida's "Ivan" the Terrible Hurricane destruction and damage which lined the roads from Pensacola to our beloved FWB. Members trickled in for the rest of the day and eventually found the hospitality suite. Joyce Harrington had the country store open and offered a variety of ACA memorabilia. An addition to the store this year was military book sales which were donated by the AU library which sent their surplus and old AF history books which were a real bargain. Heinie Aderholt and Fred Platt were missing from the bar room scene. Don Maxwell didn't show up even though several beautiful women asked about his presence. Fred had no excuse but Heinie was busy taking care of his property, which was severely damaged by Ivan the Terrible. Chili Wills showed up to stir up conversation, with both politically debates and old war stories. The Spooky troops established

President Bush sent us a greeting for the Air Commando's 60th Anniversary and reunion. The letter, from the Executive Office of the President, Office of Presidential Messages, was dated 7 October 2004 and reads as follows:




THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
October 7, 2004

I send greetings to those gathered in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, for the Air Commando Association reunion.

As the United States engages in a global war against terrorism, we look to our veterans as examples of courage, dedication, and sacrifice. The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen who have fought for America have helped to secure our Nation, liberate people around the world from threats of tyranny and terror, and advance the cause of freedom worldwide. Throughout history, these brave men and women have answered the call of duty and risked their lives to protect their fellow citizens. These patriots continue to inspire new generations.

I join all Americans in expressing our gratitude for your abiding patriotism and selfless service in defense of our Nation. Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a reunion filled with renewed friendships and shared memories.



their territory in a good shooting range of the bar. They were still fighting the war when the last foot-step was heard leaving the bar. Nick Emigholz of Intelligence fame and wild travels in Latin America showed up from a long journey in a van leaving Seattle Washington 30 days before. This was his first reunion and he is trying to find his old friend Sam Osuna from Panama days. I wanted the report of his trip with Jim Wright they made in the badlands of Peru and Bolivia where they were caught in a gun battle at a train station between the Communists and the locals. He also had a great time in staying in 39 cents a night hotels in the backwoods of Peru. The bar closed about 2400 hours with Jim Roper (author of "Quoth the Raven" and "Aardvarks & Rangers--" www.PublishAmerica.com, email JRoper3531@aol.com), Spookys, Bill Brown, Dick Geron and myself returning to our newly refurbished hotel rooms. The Quality Inn offered some real nice facilities for the price and in stumbling distance of the bar.

Friday 8 October

Only 11 players showed up for the annual ACA Golf tournament. Jim Boney was really disappointed but understood Ivan's discouragement of members from attending the reunion. The poor weather didn't help either. Due to the poor showing it was decided to cancel the golf tournament. He will make the 2005 tournament a sure thing. Most visitors to Heinie's store and office were disappointed of not seeing him but as Rose said he was all over the area solving his property problems by damage done by Ivan. The day was slow with the rain; overcast and major activity of multiple crews cleaning up FWB from Ivan's furry. The Hospitality Suite and Joyce's country store were kept busy by free spending members. Hap Lutz and his crew outdid themselves with the fish fry. The food was absolutely delicious. The fish fry was held under the awning over the entrance of the Quality Inn (entrance to old Hospitality Suite as well as the current one). The old HOJO motel is now divided into two hotels-Roadway Inn and Quality Inn. Roadway has the half which had the registration desk in the past and the Quality Inn has the other half which includes the old and current hospitality suite. The Roadway Inn kept the balconies on the rooms and the Quality Inn removed all the balconies during their remodeling.

The Quality Inn was remodeled, repainted and was very nice as well as having a first class TV system with 70-80 stations. Heinie and Fred Platt showed up to liven up the hospitality suite. Jan Sanborn was there and her house was damaged by Ivan. Harry Bishop came from North Carolina to enjoy the festivities and was wondering why his email on the B-26 cameras was found by a friend on the Internet. I told him I had put it on the ACA Home

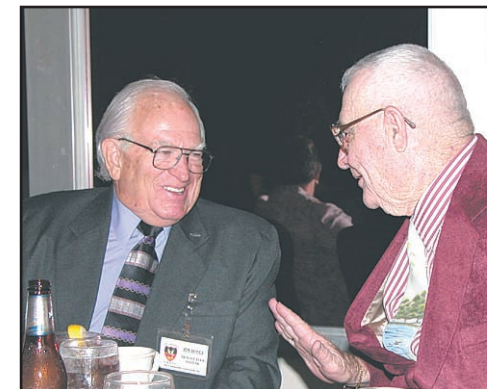
Page because of its historical value. Big Bill Brown stepped up to the bar and we all had an interesting discussion with Bill on C-119, AC-119, C-130, C-47 and Vietnam. He had more time in the C-119 than any active duty pilot. The only thing that was missing for Bill and me was Belinda Green who was invited to the reunion who is a big political figure in KY and who was involved with both of us in Australia and the B-17C Memorial which her uncle died in the crash. Jim Roper gave us his opinion why the F-111 was the greatest fighter airplane around. He spent a lot of time in the aircraft. Ed Douglas said he helped push Heinie out of perfectly good aircraft-never knew Heinie was a jumper. Ed has been busy with the TTU Vietnam/Oral History, email: vaoralhistory@ttu.edu and telephone 806-742-9010, Fax 0496, and wants to invite them next year to gather our unwritten history from our warriors. In the meantime anyone who would like to contribute to his oral history can call or email them their history. John Plaster, author of SOG and a former USA SF warrior, showed up for the reunion. Lt Gen Tex Brown (Sept 20 Aviation Week under Who's Where States; USAF LtGen (ret) Richard E. Tex Brown has been named VP-Air Force programs for the Anteon International Corp, Fairfax, VA. He was acting assistant Air Force vice chief of staff) made his acquaintance at the bar. Jim Boney and Jim Yealy and their wives were with them at the hospitality suite. Sugie and Charlie Jones were there also even though they are still recovering from the loss of their house during the hurricane. Paul and Sue Marschalk, fresh from Tennessee, were there and as usual Paul came with his great sense of humor. Sue is related to BG Ben King. Jimmy Ifland had his camera capturing all of us in our glory at the hospitality room. Dick Secord attended and he is still working on his company which I own a few shares.

Saturday 9 October 2004

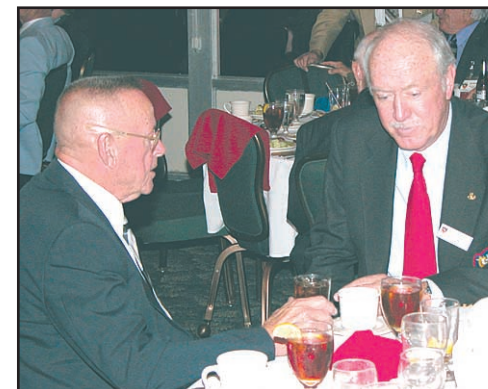
A large group attended the 0900 general membership/business meeting at the Quality Inn Hospitality room. See article on Minutes of the General Membership Meeting elsewhere in this edition. The business meeting and elections were held and finished in a record time, just an hour of our time so that those of us who wanted to attend the 6th SOS briefing at Hurlburt could attend. Thanks to Dick Geron we were out of the meeting so that we could hear an exiting briefing. The USAF sent, what appeared as, new buses from Hurlburt to pick us up at 10:30 sharp. The buses were AF blue and white and were quite a change from our old blue school buses in the past. We arrived at the 6th SOS squadron facilities and went right into their briefing room which was a first class auditorium nothing of which we had 40 years

ACA 60th Annual Reunion Fish Fry

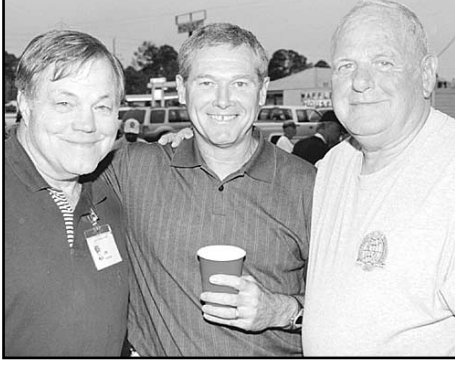




Relatives of the late Colonel Roland "Mac" McCoskrie traveled from around the country to be in attendance when "Mac" was inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame.



ACA 60th Annual Reunion Bar-B-Que



Reunion

from page 12

ago at Hurlburt. What a difference time and a little money do for our special warriors. The theatre seats and stage was a delight to see after what the Jungle Jim was given to brief the troops and guests.

Lt Col John Alvarez, the squadron Operations Officer and soon to



become commander, was the briefer. LtC Alvarez has a unique background for this assignment. He first flew for the Navy but after an accident lost part of his leg. He left the Navy and was able to get into the AF with a mechanical leg. LtC Alvarez gave us an excellent briefing on the 6th SOS mission and their unique equipment. They lease Russian AN-2, AN-26, AN-32 cargo aircraft, MI-6 and MI-16 helicopters and a C-47 which has turbo props and modified for the 21 century. Their mission is to provide assistance to countries in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East who fly these aircraft. They have used a concept from the USA Special Forces using an A & B team. They do this with a 109 person squadron. Their concept appeared similar to our old MTT training teams with different aircraft, mod-

ified team concept and a little more sophistication for the modern world. All of the Russian aircraft are maintained and supported by a leasing company. Fred Platt at the bar laid claim to getting the turbo prop C-47 from the DEA who had captured it from drug runners and they were looking for a home for it. Fred recommended it be given to AFSOC.

They then gave us a tour of the two aircraft which was still on base-a turbo prop C-47 and a Huey. The Huey had a wire cutter mounted above and below the cockpit to cut any wires which they may encounter in their missions. The turboprop C-47 was a grand improvement over our Jungle Jim SC-47. The inside of the aircraft was insulated, had an air conditioner, the paratrooper seats had padded backs and seats, the pilot seats were changed to give more room than before-even Earthquake McGoon would have been proud of, turbo prop engines and they had mirrors on their wings so that the pilot could check his landing wheels and the engines. When we left the flight line they even had electrical operated gates-none of this pushing some old rusty gate that weighed a ton. What luxury! After returning to the hospitality room at the Quality Inn it was filled with members. There was cheer all around and tipping of the last glass since 1600 hours was approaching for the march to the rooms for dressing for the banquet at the Soundside Club (old Hurlburt Officer Club) at 1800 hours.

Dick Geron opened the banquet at 1900 hours after the cocktail hours. Charlie Jones led us in prayer followed by a pledge of allegiance. After a delicious meal we then proceeded with the night festivities. All the dignitaries were introduced (Lt Gen Wooley, Lt Gen "Tex" Brown, Maj Gen Secord, BG Aderholt). Felix "Sam" Sambogna was introduced as our new president and our MC, Bill Campbell, was introduced. Howie Pierson made some comments and told us his father "Pop" lived to 103 + years-shows you what young women and good drinks will do to your life. Dick Secord introduced three new members who were induct-

ed into the ACA Hall of Fame. They were:

1. CMSgt Wayne G. Norad
2. Col Roland K. McCoskrie
3. John Plaster- first Army Special Forces to be inducted into the HOF. See Hall of Fame article on pg. 11.

Twenty of our members, who were involved with humanitarian work and the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation (MTF), were introduced to receive a humanitarian award. BG Heinie Aderholt was recognized as the driving force for this effort. Col McCoskrie's widow was introduced which the McCoskrie Threshold Fund is named after. See names and article on pg. 20.

Lt General Michael Wooley, the new AFSOC Commander, was introduced as our guest speaker. His speech was a slide show of updating how AFSOC was organized and outside of the 6th SOS it is a two plane unit with H-53 helicopters and AC-130. He concluded his speech with a statement that we were all heroes regardless what we did in the war.

The Banquet was concluded with Les Brown playing until late thirty for those who wanted to dance the rest of the night and who could still take it.

10 October Sunday 2004

It was a bad weather day with threat of coast line flooding in New Orleans. This caused members to leave early and later finding that New Orleans was not being flooded. The 1200 Memorial service was held in the 6th SOS auditorium because of the weather. A BBQ was held under the Quality Inn drive through porch. The Air commando Auction was held and was a success. Mary Vaden (Col. Joe's widow) purchased the Steel Ball. Thanks Mary. The reunion ended at 1600 hours and most people left for home except the diehards in the hospitality room.

About 225 people attended this year and low attendance was primarily due to weather and the hurricane which really chewed up Fort Walton Beach.

Gene Rossel

Christine

from page 11

which was now in flames. The flight leader signaled that everything was under control; however, when he opened the canopy to clear the cockpit of smoke, his observer, mistaking his motives, bailed out.

Captain Lukasik was now in command of the emergency. He followed his flight leader until the crippled aircraft had safely crash-landed and the pilot was clear of the burning aircraft.

Returning to the bailout area, he located the Vietnamese Air Force observer who had landed unhurt, but was now in danger from communist insurgents who were making their way toward him.

Unhesitatingly and without regard for his own personal safety, Captain Lukasik began making low strafing passes against the advancing enemy who were now only 30 yards from the downed Vietnamese airman.

After a number of these passes, his ammunition was expended. To make up for this lack of ammunition,

and to keep the enemy troops pinned down, he started flying low levels to simulate strafing passes. On each of these low-level passes his aircraft was hit by rifle fire, but Lukasik continued to shield the downed observer until two more T-28s arrived in response to his emergency radio message.

Only after Captain Lukasik was satisfied that the safety of the downed man was assured did he leave the battle area and return to his home base.

His incredible performance in saving another airman's life, plus his other exploits against the enemy, won for Capt. Bernard F. Lukasik his nation's second highest award for heroism, the Air Force Cross.

A tragic conclusion to this story was written on his very next combat mission the following day when Captain Lukasik was killed while participating in another strike against the Viet Cong.

Letters

from page 10

19th ACS during 10-21-64 to 10-21-65 at Ton Son Nhut Air Base, South Vietnam.

I worked on the two engine Cessna U3A. I would also go out on the UC-130 to kick flares when things got heavy.

My main job was maintaining the U3A and flying to all the bases to "get the word out" to all the troops.

I remember some of the guys; John Frost and a commando named Cantrell, but can't remember the others. Would appreciate very much hearing from anyone assigned to the 19th ACS during that era.

Lawrence A. Neal
7014 E. Golfinks Road
Tuscon, AZ 85730

JIM AND JIMMY,

Sending this snapshot along to verify that "Heinie" did indeed go to Oshkosh Airventure 2004 last August. He was the only Air Commando we saw there, but of course if only one, he was the best one.

Couldn't believe it; Marty and I were on break from our volunteer duties as tram driver and conductor (I had to follow her orders and directions; pretty heady stuff for an Air Commando bride. She's still not over having all that power.)

when across the loading area I saw someone that looked vaguely like "Heinie." I took another squint and started running because it was "Heinie." We hugged and laughed and were equally astounded to see each other. He was on his way back to his hotel. I got the air show management to four-wheel him out to the big bus and that was the last we thought we would see of him.

Not so. He seemed to be everywhere for the next few days. The enclosed picture is us under the wing of the Helio he chugged up in from FWB. Probably the slowest trip made by any visitor. Most "home builds" and a lot of cars made better time than the Shady Lady. Not that it mattered, as I've never seen as laid back and enjoying himself. (Must have been the distance from the store.)

Jimmy, could you enhance this photo as you deem necessary?

I'm sorry to hear about your recent medical problems. I've taken a hit or two myself, but as soon as they get my machine (ICD) in proper tune, I'm good to go 'till battery replacement. Hopefully, the battery will outlast me.

Our best wishes to all of you and your loved ones for the upcoming holidays.

Marty and Kit Carson (L-0006)
6807 Lakes Edgeway
Mineral, VA 23117

DEAR MR. BONEY

On August 14, 2004, I donated an Escape Flag to the Confederate Air Museum in Mesa, AZ.

The donation was made courtesy of Brigadier General Aderholt and the Air Commando Association.

Enclosed is a thank you letter addressed to you and the ACA from the Arizona Wing of the CAF.

Several months ago, Col. Jay Norton, another ACA member, and I met an eight year old boy, Sean Mulvey. Sean loves the military and undoubtedly will become a Special Ops Commander when he gets out of school. Although he is only in the second grade at this time, he is military through and through.

I invited Sean to accompany me when I made the presentation to the CAF Museum. It made his day!

Sean was invited back to the

CAF wing open house in November of this year.

I have two favors to ask of you. Can you run an article in the ACA paper including Sean's photo reference the presentation? Second, can you get Heinie to send Sean an autographed copy of Commando One? I'll be more than happy to pay for the book postage.

Thank you in advance for your help.

By the way, it doesn't look like I will be attending the reunion this year after all. My sister is getting married; therefore, duty calls!

Thanks again for your help.

Jim Alberts
13015 N. Joan D'Arc
Phoenix AZ 85032

Ed. Note: - Mission Accomplished - General Aderholt autographed book was forwarded. I'm sure Sean will be a most appreciative 8 year old boy.



Volunteers Receive ACA Humanitarian Award

The ACA Board instituted a humanitarian award program to recognize volunteers who give of their time, energy, and often personal resources to help the needy in many parts of the world through the ACA and MTF. Twenty of these volunteers were selected for the Air Commando Humanitarian Award, and presentations were made at the 2004 reunion banquet. Other nominees will be considered each year. This year's selectees are:

BG Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt. The driving force behind the ACA and the MTF. He initiated the humanitarian aid to the needy in many parts of the world. Has made significant monetary contributions and provided the use of his business warehouse and equipment. The real founder of the MTF.

John W. Grove. Became involved in the MTF in 1988, and he has been a "one-man show". Totally dedicated to the task of obtaining and shipping all kinds of supplies to the needy in many parts of the world, he has established the many contacts necessary for the operation. Is a tireless worker who has keeps the effort alive. Utilizes his own truck and trailer for many pickups and shipments, often at his own expense.

Doris Eaton. A tireless worker who has spent untold hours sorting and packing goods for shipment. She worked many days in all kinds of weather in the ACA "hangar" and rental storage units. Always a joy to work with and one who never expects a return for her efforts.

Jody Duncan. She became acquainted with the air commandos while living in Laos when her father was with Air America. Back in the states she became a licensed paramedic and volunteered for the MTF medical team deployed to Guatemala in 1984. She was extremely successful as a team member until 1988 when she was seriously wounded while flying in an army helicopter. She went

through many surgeries and treatments. She still wears a leg brace but "gets along fine." She was awarded the "Order of Monja Blanca (White Orchard)" by the Guatemalan Government - the highest award to be presented to civilians.

Lester T. "Les" Hansen. He was a key player in the Guatemala med-

ical team program. He handled the many problems involved with housing, feeding, safe areas, arranging village visits, military protocol, and many other administration functions. Without his ability to speak the native language in dealing with those in charge, the Guatemala mission would not have been successful.



L to R: Gaylord Hall, Ken Poole, Roger Klair, John Grove, Jim Boney, Jo Bailey, Heinie Aderholt, Charles "Mac" McDaniels, and Hap Lutz.

ical team program. He handled the many problems involved with housing, feeding, safe areas, arranging village visits, military protocol, and many other administration functions. Without his ability to speak the native language in dealing with those in charge, the Guatemala mission would not have been successful.

James D. Boney. Traveled to Colorado to pick up donated vehicle that was shipped to Guatemala for the medical team use. Served in Guatemala as liaison & "shade-tree" medic assisting with ancillary medical duties. I.e. arrange transportation to get our medical teams & supplies to our clinics in remote mountain areas. Transportation would vary somewhere between a dump truck and an airplane, what ever the Guatemalan Air Force or the private sector could provide. This was prior to Les Hansen's PCS to Guatemala.

Jo Bailey. As a registered nurse she

had all the tools necessary for the austere medical work in Guatemala. Because of her professional skills and pleasant personality she added a defining dimension to the medical effort in Guatemala.

Gaylord L. Hall. He performed as treasurer and submitted the required tax forms. He was instrumental in obtaining the MTF tax-

free status as a 501c(3) organization. Was dedicated to the MTF mission.

Rose Dykes. As a registered nurse she provided valuable assistance to the needy in Guatemala. Beyond her willingness to go "Any Time, Any Place", she brought TLC and a bedside manner only her years of experience and service could provide.

Eulice Shelly. As owner of the Allied Moving and Shipping Company, he has provided extraordinary assistance to the MTF. He has authorized on many occasions the use, free of charge, of a van and driver to deliver supplies to the needy. In addition, he provides considerable storage space in old vans on his company lot.

Kenneth H. Poole. As a key representative at Hurlburt Field, Colonel Poole has assisted in arranging military airlift transportation principally to Panama and Honduras. In

addition, on many occasions he and family members have sorted and packed supplies for shipment. He is a willing and cheerful supporter of the MTF humanitarian efforts.

Richard P. Geron. Was president of the Threshold Foundation in 1988 and instrumental in a successful fund drive. Helped in the necessary and burdensome task of obtaining tax-exempt status for the Foundation. Has served as treasurer for many years.

Robert H. White. He is deeply committed to all aspects of the mission of the MTF. He constantly picks up supplies in the local area and delivers them to the needy in the local area and also to a school in Alabama. He sorts, packs, and helps in any way for all other shipments. He is a tireless worker who donates an extraordinary amount of time to this effort. He uses his own truck for much of his efforts.

Roland "Hap" Lutz Jr. When the humanitarian effort was initiated, there were no funds available. Hap completed a fund drive and within three months raised over \$27,000. Hap has been involved with humanitarian efforts for many years as a military civic action team member and as a supporter of the MTF from its very beginning. As an active duty MSgt he was

Humanitarian

from page 19

assigned to World Medical Relief Organization (WMRO) in Detroit, MI as requested by Vice-President Hubert Humphrey. His contact with the WMRO has been valuable. In addition he has helped with packing and shipping on many of the projects.

Roland K. McCoskrie. Was total-

ly dedicated to the humanitarian effort as one of the early driving forces. Participated in the medical teams deployed to Guatemala. Helped establish the Threshold Foundation and suggested the title - Threshold, the beginning point. Because of his efforts the 501c(3) organization was named after him when he passed away; hence, the

McCoskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF). His family continues to support the MTF with significant financial contributions.

Charles E. "Mac" McDaniels. Mac has been serving as the Chairman of the Philanthropy Committee for several years. He has served as contact person between the ACA/MTF and all veterans and fraternal organizations in almost all humanitarian projects including Operation Help for NC, tornado relief for Tuscaloosa, AL, and assistance for Tuskegee Veterans Hospital. He arranged the initial contact with A & A Transfer Company (Mr. Shelley) - an arrangement that is still ongoing. He also was involved with collecting funds from veterans' organizations for the Montagnards. Mac was awarded the American Legion Humanitarian Award for his involvement with the above-mentioned projects.

Roger L. Klair. A tireless worker who continuously responds to requests for help in sorting, packing, and loading for numerous shipments. Roger has spends many hours preparing bicycles and other

items for packing and is an expert at loading the huge vans or cube containers. It would be difficult to ship many loads without the great effort of Roger.

David W. Freeman. David is a totally dependable worker who responds to the numerous requests for sorting, loading, and preparing items for shipment. He is a tireless worker who independently works in the warehouse many hours to ensure the timely shipment of the items to the needy in many parts of the world.

Asa M. Stackhouse. Asa volunteers and is always available to work in the warehouse under difficult temperature conditions to sort, pack, and load items for shipment. He is totally dedicated to the MTF humanitarian mission.

Clyde Howard. Clyde is another tireless worker who responds to every call for assistance. He is an expert in loading the huge vans and cube containers. In addition, because of his contacts with the Hurlburt Special Tactics folks, he is able to recruit young, strong helpers for the large loading tasks.

COUNTRY STORE ITEMS AVAILABLE	
ZAP Patch	\$3.00
Original Air Commando Gp Patch.....	\$3.00
Project 404 Coin.....	\$10.00
ACA Bumper Sticker.....	\$2.00
ACA Challenge Coins (Bronze).....	\$5.00
50th Commemorative Coin (Bronze).....	\$5.00
ACA Ball Cap(Navy, royal& lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red)ACA logo or lettering.....	\$9.00
ACA Lapel Pin	\$4.00
ACA Cloth Patch	\$3.00
ACA "AIR COMMANDO" Cloth Tab	\$3.00
ACA Decal (4"x 5").....	2/\$1.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (L,XL)	\$10.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL).....	\$12.00
ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, ACA logo or lettering)	\$15.00
ACA Golf Shirt (white, red, royal blue-waffle weave w/ pocket.....	\$15.00
Air Commando Bush Hat (M,L,XL)	\$20.00
Straw Hat.....	\$10.00
**50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24")	5/\$1.00
Jane Fonda Poster (black & white) 11x14	\$3.00
ACA License Plate	\$10.00
Jackets - (M to XXL-tan, Navy, black, royal blue).....	\$35.00
Jackets - XXL (2 yellow/black windbreakers).....	\$25.00
POW/MIA Decals.....	\$2.00
POW/MIA Patches.....	\$3.50
ACA 50th and 55th Reunion Videos (Various films of various events. Costs include S&H.).....	\$5.00
Hat Bands (black, wine, royal blue)	\$5.00
Printed Plastic License Plate Holders	\$4.00
Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo)	\$8.00

ORDER FORM

ACA, Post Office Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price

Sub Total

20% Shipping & Handling

Add \$2.50 for a mail tube

Grand Total

Please understand that we do not accept credit cards or cash through the mail.

SOME AVIATION COMMENTS

Sent in by an old Navy pilot: You would really have to dig to get this kind of ringside seat to history.

1. The first German serviceman killed in WW II was killed by the Japanese (China, 1937), the first American killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940), the highest ranking American killed was Lt. Gen. Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps...So much for allies and enemies.
2. The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and give a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. (His benefits were later restored by an act of Congress.)
3. At the time of Pearl Harbor the top US Navy command was CINCUS (pronounced "sink us"), the shoulder patch of US Army's 45th Infantry Division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named "Amerika." All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
4. More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine

See **AVIATION** pg. 23

Burma Tested Resolve of Air Commandos

By MLADEN RUDMAN,
Northwest Florida Daily News
Staff Writer

BLUEWATER BAY - He fought with distinction in a place that seldom gets more than a mention in history books.

The China-Burma-India theater of World War II often saw American and British troops fighting side by side, and retired Senior Master Sergeant Carlous L. Christian was in the thick of it.

Christian and more than 500 other troops unknowingly became America's first air commandos in mid-1943 when they volunteered for a classified mission dubbed "Project CA281," the invasion of Burma.

After receiving additional training and arriving in India, Christian found himself aboard a towed glider on March 5, 1944.

It was part of an airborne armada, including 37 gliders, heading some 150 miles behind enemy lines to establish a landing strip that

would support a much larger invasion.

The C-47 pulling Christian's glider and another one took a pounding as it flew at night over dense jungle.

"They shot up the aircraft and they had to cut us loose," the retired airman said. "There were 22 of us in the glider but only five survived."

Christian and the others crashed on a Japanese base. Pursued by enemy soldiers, the five had to swim across the Chindwin River to elude capture.

"We had nothing," Christian added. "No packs, no rifles."

The survivors found their way to friendly troops and Christian went on to fight against soldiers he described as very capable.

Air commandos--the name given to Americans in Burma by a British general--stayed in the theater until nearly war's end.

Christian was there 16 months without ever getting leave to see his home or his bride, Doris.

With training as a mechanic, truck driver, and sharpshooter, the youngster from Eustis was a valuable asset. He earned the Bronze Star in the theater and the respect of his fellow soldiers.

Air Commandos in the jungles of Burma fought alongside British troops or soldiers from British colonies. Also among the allies fighting Japan were the fearsome Gurkhas.

The Americans had at their disposal an assortment of aircraft. There were small observation airplanes, some flown by enlisted pilots, GC-4A gliders and B-25 bombers.

Air commandos also were the first to use a new contraption called a helicopter in war.

Though the Japanese proved to be formidable foes, fighting in southern Asia posed other challenges. Leeches, insects and snakes were abundant.

"I got malaria six or seven different times," Christian continued. "I had sandfly fever. I had bubonic



Carlous L. Christian escaped capture after his glider plane crashed on a Japanese base.

plague. Oh, hell, there was another type of fever I had.

But he persevered.

After the war, Christian was haunted by nightmares.

In them he dreamed about getting shot at. The nightmares were rooted in experience because the Bluewater Bay octogenarian had a close encounter with three Japanese soldiers who tried mightily to kill him.

Despite the tough fighting in Burma, Christian stayed in the Army Air Corps--barring a one-month long separation shortly after the war--and the Air Force for 31 years.

His World War unit, the 1st Air Commando Group, was disbanded in 1948.

When it reformed as the 1st Air Commando Wing at Hurlburt Field in 1963, Christian once again volunteered to be an Air Force special operations airman.

He then went on to earn his second Bronze Star for service during the Vietnam conflict.

"It's just part of me. I was just part of it," said Christian about being an air commando.

HOME ON THE RANGE

Two of our own have excelled on the rifle range and have achieved national acclaim. Bill Walter, one of our ACA Hall of Fame members and the AFSOC guru on weapons and ammo just retired, but before doing so, he did the near impossible. At the National Rifle Association National Championships recently, he shot a record in the Palma match. He borrowed a .308 caliber rifle and shot the 800, 900, and 1000 yard course to win the individual trophy. Bill is a member of the 12 person Air Force team and has participated in match shoots for most of his 30 year career.

The amazing part of the shoot is that it is with iron sights and all

shooters use the 155 grains, .308 (7.62mm) rifle. He broke the record by one bulls-eye on the last shot.

Bill said, "The bulls eye at 1000 yards looks like the head of a pin, but you know the eye will naturally center it."

The perfect score on the course is 450 and Bill scored 449, not bad for the first time he has attempted this Palma course. He did hit the bulls-eye 20 times in this match, which is a record.

Rebecca Corder, the lovely wife of ACA member Wayne Corder, was equally as impressive on the course in Pella, Iowa. She was shooting a customized .284 caliber (6.5mm) wild cat round on the 1000 yard bench rest competition.

The ammo was designed by Wayne and is called Corderized round. She shot a fantastic 4.2 inch group at the 1000 yard target and is recognized as, "Best by a Long Shot," and was the best in that competition.

"Becca" is, and should be very proud, since she has just taken up shooting in the past few years. Her calm on the range is evidenced by the super score. I am sure Wayne stays on the straight and narrow in recognition of her skill. Wise man that Wayne.

To both of these commandos, congratulations and good shooting.

*John Grove
1 Lakeside Court
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548-5111*

MINUTES AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING - 9 OCTOBER 2004

1. The annual General Membership Meeting of the Air Commando Association, convened at the Quality Inn meeting room, Ft. Walton Beach, Florida, was called to order at 0900 by President Dick Geron. In addition to approximately one hundred or so Association members, key ACA members included President Dick Geron, Directors Sam Sambogna, Mac McDaniels, Joe Harris, Bob White, Gordo Scott, Jerry Rhein, Dave Harrington, Executive Secretary Pete Bowman; Country Store Manager Joyce Harrington; Editor Jim Boney; National Publicity Director Gene Rossel; Hall of Fame Chairman Gen. Dick Secord; Past Presidents Gen. Heinie Aderholt, John Connors, Hap Lutz, Bill Brown, Chuck Keeler, and Charlie Jones. C. Jones served as Recording Secretary. The agenda, published and issued before the meeting, appears as Attachment One.

2. Upon request of President Geron, Chaplain Charlie Jones led an invocation prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Geron requested consideration for approval of Minutes of General Membership Meeting of 2003. The minutes were published in the ACA Newsletter. Motion from the floor for approval. Motion carried with no dissent.

4. President Geron's remarks briefly addressed the ACA finances. He told the members of the vacancy in the office of Treasurer, and the significant need for one.

5. Geron reminded the members of the Memorial Ceremony, and in view of predicted bad weather,

announced a decision would later be made for location of an inside ceremony, probably at the Hurlburt's 20th or the 9th SOS. He reminded the members of the planned Barbeque, and briefed the members of Newsletter matters. He stated the December Newsletter should be printed as scheduled. President Geron recognized Commando Carlous Christian, one of the original Air Commandos of WWII. The Reunion celebrates the 60th Anniversary of Air Commandos. Past President Hap Lutz announced a special program conducted at Hurlburt to have a series of "living history" presentations at Hurlburt. The first of the series was presented on 28 October, and featured Commandos Carlos Christian and General Allison. The second in the series will be at a future date, likely January, 2005.

6. Threshold representative John Grove briefed the members on recent activities. He told of relationships and work of U.S. military humanitarian programs. He presented statistics of recent past work and shipments. Grove told of work on agreements and the efforts to assist in Honduras. He noted the great difficulty in dealing with Haiti, even for humanitarian work. He briefed on the "Save our Children" program, and the growing, favorable relationship and help of the Hurlburt's 16 Special Operations Wing. Grove told of the cancellation of a planned Thailand program. He told of the constant need for money. Grove briefed on the Air Force program called "Airmen's Attic" established to assist lower grade airmen, and praised Director Bob White's work on this. John also spoke about the recent relationship with the combined Federal Campaign. He was

praised for his passionate work with the humanitarian programs.

7. President Geron advised the Association that the recent Hurricane Ivan damaged several of the Vietnam era Commando aircraft in the Airpark. Col. Mannon, the current 16th SOW Commander contacted the ACA for help from the Vietnam generation of Commando aircraft mechanics. Geron stated that the response by several ACAers was immediate. He recognized Commandos Lamar Doster, Joe Harris, Gaylord Hall, Joe Snodgrass, Sam Sedoni, Ray Borque, and Willie Knight.

8. The ACA Scholarships were discussed. Geron mentioned several possibilities for changes in amounts. Past President Bill Brown motioned the scholarships remain the same. John Grove seconded. Under discussion, Past President Lutz suggested the option that some of the funds be provided to the Red Cross. ACA widow Marilyn Jones observed that some Red Cross high ranking staffers draw very high salaries. After other discussion the question was called. The motion carried with one dissent.

9. President Geron asked Executive Secretary Pete Bowman to manage the elections. Geron noted the persistent problem of "too few" candidates for ACA openings. Grove asked from the floor that Dennis Barnett be added to the ballot. C. Jones asked that any candidate or supporter be allowed brief time for comments. Geron named the candidates and positions. Sam Sambogna was nominated for President. Motion made and seconded that nominations for President be closed. Motion car-

ried. Sam Sambogna was lone candidate for President. Past President Robert Downs was nominated for Treasurer. He was the lone candidate for this office. The four nominees for three Directors' positions were Dennis Barnett, Dave Harrington, Ted Saunders, and John Connors. Ballots were handed out by Bowman, and secret balloting began.

10. Past President Lutz praised and thanked those who help the Reunion each year, particularly the fish fry volunteers.

11. General Ben King was recognized, and soundly applauded. He was the first Commander when the Air Commandos were "reborn" in the early sixties. National Publicity Director Gene Rossel told of Gen. King's feats. Rossel also briefed on the annual "Planes of Fame" event annually scheduled in California. Paul Marshalk briefed the members on the work and organization of the "DFC Society." He urged members to join. Paul stated the ACA is rich in DFC awardees. Dick Geron described the "Project 404" reunion.

12. President Geron briefed on the tour of the 6th SOS, and the transportation bus schedule. He recognized Commander, Lt. Col. John Alvarez, and there was a round of applause. Geron announced that Gen. Cardenas, the scheduled banquet speaker, could not attend due to illness. Lt. Gen. Wooley, AFSOC Commander, will be the banquet speaker.

13. Executive Secretary Pete Bowman announced the ballots had been counted. Upon request of President Geron, Bowman

Membership

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announced the following results:

Sam Sambogna, President; Robert Downs, Treasurer; John Connors, Dave Harrington and Ted Sanders as Directors.

14. In closing remarks, President asked the ACAers to join him in recognition and praise to Hap Lutz and Pete Bowman for devoted, consistent, and vital work for the ACA. There was a solid round of applause.

15. Past President Bill Brown motioned adjournment. Director Bob White seconded. Motion passed.

16. Meeting adjourned at 1015 hours.

Attest:

Sam Sambogna, President
Charlie Jones,
Recording Secretary

Aviation

from page 20

Corps. While completing the required 30 missions (I believe in Europe the original mission total was 25, later raised to 35) your chance of being killed was 71%.

5. Generally speaking there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.

6. It was common practice on fighter planes to load every 5th round with a tracer round to aid in aiming. This was a mistake. Tracers had different ballistics so (at long range) if your tracers were hitting the target, 80% of your rounds were missing. Worse yet, tracers instantly told your enemy he was under fire and from which direction. Worst of all was the practice of loading a string of tracers at the end of the belt to tell you that you were out of ammo. This was definitely not something you wanted to tell the enemy. Units that stopped using tracers saw their success rate nearly double and their loss rate go down.

7. When allied armies reached the Rhine the first thing men did was pee in it. This was pretty universal from the lowest private to Winston Churchill (who made a big show of it) and Gen. Patton (who had himself photographed in the act.)

8. Among the first "Germans" captured at Normandy were several Koreans. They had been forced to fight for the Japanese Army until they were captured by the Russians and forced to fight for the Russian Army until they were captured by the Germans and forced to fight for the German Army until they were captured by the US Army.



Save The Montagnard People, Inc.

The Montagnard bracelet, a prestigious symbol of friendship and respect, was given to U.S. Army Special Forces soldiers ("Green Berets") and others during the Vietnam War.

John Wayne received his bracelet in Vietnam from a Montagnard Strike Force led by a U.S. Special Forces A-Team. "Duke" never took it off and now wears it eternally.

Only two of the 3,000 Montagnard refugees in the U.S. possessed the ancient free-hand engraving skills that adorn our bracelets. In 1994 the most elderly of the two had a stroke so there's only one left. We have not been able to find any in Vietnam who survived the post war years.

The \$40 Bronze bracelet pictured above promotes our Longhouse Project which, except for the 1.5" stamp, bears the traditional hand markings.

To order a bracelet, please visit our web site: www.montagnards.org

or call Sgt Major (ret) Jack Clemens, Treasurer & Bracelet Program Manager at (910) 428-9888 from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern Time.
Mail to: STMP, Inc., PO Box 844, Star, NC 27356.



The Montagnard Bracelet
aka
The "John Wayne" Bracelet

Authentic Blood Chits

Genuine USAF issue Blood Chits are available. To obtain a Korean War Blood Chit, all you have to do is recruit a new member. If that is too hard for you to handle, it will cost you \$15.95 to purchase one of these authentic 1951 Korean War issue Blood Chits.

There are three varieties of Blood Chits available. The Korean War vintage was issued in 1951. The S.E. Asia vintage was issued in 1963 and costs \$29.95. The East European and Middle Eastern vintage was issued in 1951 and costs \$49.95.

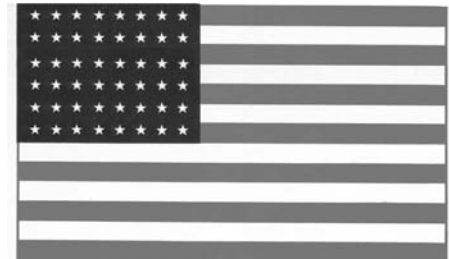
These authentic Blood Chits are ideal for framing. Your satisfaction is guaranteed or your money back.

To order a Blood Chit, write to the following address:

Blood Chit
25 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE
Ft. Walton Beach, FL32548

or call (850) 243-0442 and ask for Rose.

If you are recruiting a new member, make sure you indicate on the application that you recruited the new member so that Pete can give



you credit for your Korean War Blood Chit. Get busy today so you can get your chit together!

Official Korean War Blood Chit
1951 issue from survival kits

McCaskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

MTF, Busy as Ever

The volunteers of your MTF have been busy folks in the past few months. We have sent several 40 foot container loads of supplies to Honduras, have help locally at the Airman's Attic and prepared several more loads for shipment. It is great to have new volunteers work the missions. Jerry Gilbert and Buck Watson are two ol' helicopter crew dogs who have come to the rescue (pun) in recent weeks. Good to have them around to do some heavy lifting. Dave Freeman and Karen Kramer have also been great when it comes to sortin, packin, and liftin. The work of the MTF only happens when we have great volunteers.

Other great Air Commando volunteers are Juan Bazan, Michael Sheehan, Jim Connors, and Bill Walter. They are always available at a moments notice and have help on many occasions. They are sure good to have on the crew when the heavy lifting starts. Lets not forget the active duty force; with out the energetic, strong, positive attitude folks from several squadrons at Hurlburt Field we could never load the containers or even prepare the loads. Letters of appreciation have been sent to all the active folks.

The usual suspects show up for all of our loads and have helped for years. Roger Klair, Clyde Howard, and Bob White can be counted on to help anytime.

One other great volunteer is Jeannie Krzan. Without her accurate paperwork and help during loading we could never get the paperwork straight. The truckers require an accurate load inventory and they need it as soon as we close the door. She makes it happen. One of the great things your ACA

does is the humanitarian mission. The only reason it has been so successful for so many decades is the volunteers and donations. We need both and appreciate all the members who help.

REPORT FROM HONDURAS

We receive many thank-you messages and E-mails from Honduras about the programs that we support. The last one was from Gillian Mealer who works with Pronino and Bless the Children in El Progreso Honduras. She and George Mealer have been on the receiving end of our many shipments, which amount to about 1 per month and involves 10 to 15 tons per load. She writes:

"Just a little note to all involved in sending these containers, to say on behalf of Pronino and Bless the Children, thanks you all very much for the hard work. The following is a short list of where some of these items go. The public hospitals and clinics in the region, including San Pedro, Toyos, Yoro, Sulaco and Ceiba receive many of the items. Many of the hospital beds and wheel chairs are also donated to poorer private individuals in need. Pronino, an organization for the support of the street children, also benefits from these shipments by using the bicycles, stoves, and refrigerators among other things.

Thank you for all the hard work, it is truly appreciated."
Gillian

The past two loads, and maybe the next load that will arrive just before Christmas, included lots of toys and food items that are in very short supply. George has asked for them to brighten the days for the children in his area. The MTF has

asked for a seat on a Honduras bound Hurlburt C-130. We hope to have an Air Commando member account of this program for you in the next newsletter.

To all the Commandos who donate time and money, the local folks work very hard to insure best bang for your bucks in humanitarian support mission. Our volunteers care enough to send the very best.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Your ACA and MTF need help! We need a list of available folks and the type of work you can and wish to do. Work may include: office, yard, building, library, memorabilia, airpark, sorting and packing and shipping. Please respond to the flyer included in the local newsletters if you can help. We will maintain a list of volunteers and call when we need help.

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION KEEPS SPECIAL OPERATIONS HISTORY ALIVE

The Air Commando Association (ACA) was formed during the Vietnam War by Air Force personnel. Membership into the ACA is open to all Air Force active-duty, Reserve, retirees and Air Force National Guard service members who served in Special Operations units, as well as spouses of deceased eligible members. In addition to active membership, the ACA also provides the community

a living history museum dedicated to Air Commandos.

In keeping with their long-held tradition to keep the Commando Heritage alive, the Air Commando Association has provided their guidance and support to many historical events in the local and military community.

The most recent event was "Through the Eyes of a Commando," a living lecture history series designed to instill pride in the Special Operations community and awareness of the sacrifices made by Air Commandos throughout history. For this event, the ACA has provided the history lecture series with display items and speakers for upcoming events, such as retired Brig. Gen. Harry "Heinie" Aderholt.

In addition to supporting local events that promote Commando history, the ACA also provides scholarships and supports the McCaskrie-Threshold Foundation, which provides humanitarian assistance to those countries where Air Commandos have served.

For more information on applying for membership, call the ACA at 581-0099.

THAILAND MISSION

The MTF had a great plan to help our friends in North East Thailand. It was coordinated with TLC and SOCPAC. We were going to buy school items in country and distribute them with the US military troops. But the exercise Cobra Gold 04 has changed and our participation is now not feasible. They are now just exercising as a CPX and no troops will be available to help in distribution. Maybe next year!

Rossel Report

DEAR JIM,

Air Medals for the Australian RAAF 35th Squadron. Need anyone who served in the 315ACG, 315ACG and 315ALW who worked with the Royal Australian Air Force Transport Flight-35th Squadron who served integrated with the 315 (Wing) and flew Caribous. We are trying to get Air Medals for the aircrew who were prevented from getting them in Vietnam because of the Australian Government policy at the time but who have changed it within the last 10 years. I need USAF people who served with the RAAF and can testify to what they did. Email aircommando1@earthlink.net.

Looking for AC-119 gunship that saved his butt.

Shadow 21

Hello there. I am Charles E. Helms, Jr. I was a crewchief/doorunner on a scout (Loach) helicopter in Vietnam 1968-1969. I was shot twice and medevaced out. I stayed in and retired. I am now in touch with a retired US Army LTC Sam H. Asbury, III and I am trying to help him locate a pilot that flew AC 130 gunships or it could have been any of the earlier model gunships named Spooky or "Puff the Magic Dragon". There was a particular incident on 11 April 1970. Then Lt Asbury was the assistant team leader. On that night he called for support and the only thing he knows for sure was that the pilot's call sign was Shadow 21. He thought that the gunship came from Saigon or Tan Son Nhut. The activity was the overrun of the Regional Force ARVN outpost at Ap Phu Long located on highway one a few miles north of Phan Thiet City and LZ Betty in the lower province of II Corps, Binh Thuan. He indicated that whatever munitions were used left a very large crater. His mission here is to locate and thank "Shadow 21". Several members of his team were wounded and most received medals for that action. I have contacted the 16th SOW/HO and they researched all they had and could not find any action by that group on that night. They have referred me to you. I have found that the 17th SOS/14 SOW out of Nha Trang was using an AC-119G Shadow gunship. I am US Army as is LTC Asbury so our effort to try and muddle through Air Force records leaves much to be desired. I would very much appreciate any assistance in locating this pilot. Charlie Helms
email: scouthelms@alltel.net

Will put this in the ACA Newsletter. Is there any Shadow remember this incident on 11 April 1970?

Iraq Casualty Stats

Gene,

We used to talk occasionally when I worked for Lockheed in Ontario. I've since retired but still live in California.

I read the latest issue of the Commando newsletter and wanted to say thanks for reporting the statistics on casualties of the Iraq war. A lot of people make assumptions and then the assumptions are repeated as facts. I was interested in referring to them and wondered what the source of the information is; do you have a

website address or other reference I could use?

Also, please add me to the email list: Selberg, Ron JJ 1961-1964. Nav, SC-47, 123, U-10, B-26

rrselberg@earthlink.net

Ron Selberg

Will send it to you when I can locate it again.

Good run down on the Purple Heart award.

While on the subject of Purple Hearts. To this day I still take a certain amount of pride in refusing the Purple Heart. When I was shot down on 10 Sep 63 and subsequently examined by the flight surgeon he began to ask me questions as he filled out the Purple Heart form. I told him that even though it was a harrowing few minutes and the outcome in question up to the very end; I did not deserve a Purple Heart. He pointed to several small cuts and abrasions and said that I more than qualified. I still declined! My feelings were then and are today; the Purple Heart is for substantial, serious combat wounds. He looked at me, put the forms away and said, "Good for you!"

End of story. Tom Schornak, schornakt@comcast.net.

Common Myths About The Purple Heart Medal

This is an appropriate article because of this years debate on the issue.

The PH medal can be awarded to anyone who is hurt in a war zone. Not true. The PH medal can legally be authorized to only three groups of personnel:

One, those wounded or injured as a direct result of hostile enemy action.

Second, those wounded or injured as a direct result of friendly fire (FF). (Broadly speaking, FF occurs only during a hostile encounter or initiative with, or in response to, an enemy when someone on your side mistakes you for the enemy.) Or when injured by your own non-projectile weapon (bayonet, sword, blunt instrument, etc.) or projectile weapons fire (bullet, explosive device, etc) while engaging, responding to or attacking an enemy.

And third, POWs injured or wounded as a result of individually directed conflict or punishment with their captor in violation of any article of the Geneva Convention Rules of Warfare Concerning the Treatment of Prisoners of War whether or not the captor's government is a signatory to the Convention.

PSP History

Something all veterans knew about who served in SEA. This from the WWII archives at Buffalo. Edu.

Marston Matting was developed in/about 1938/1939. Officially it was called PSP (Perforated Steel Plated). It derived its nickname "Marston Matting" from Marston Georgia where the first airstrip was built using it.

It appears that, at least historically, they are correctly "Marston Mats".

From what I have found it appears that they were manufactured in 1940/1941 by the "Milcor Steel Co." of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Rossel

from page 25

I have found one reference to a Maj. Paul Meyers, who formed the 126th Observation Sqn. in 1940 at General Billy Mitchell Field. (Milwaukee, WI). The Sqn flew old O-47B to the Louisiana/Carolina war maneuvers to photograph the maneuvers, and to TEST the Marston Mats.

Young Eagles

The Sunday 31 October 2004 Parade Magazine had an article about the Young Eagles program entitled Come Fly With Me by Jamail Larkin. Young Eagles is about seasoned pilots helping young kids get interested in flying by giving them a chance to take a ride in an aircraft. These pilots donate their time and money to give kids the opportunity to experience what flying is all about. The Young Eagles also help kids find a pilot near where they live to experience flight. Jamail Larkins became a pilot through this program and soloed at 14 but had to go to Canada to do it. In the US you have to be 16 to solo but there is no age limit to fly an aircraft. In Canada they do not have the same age limits for flying as in the US. To find out more about the Young Eagles program send your child or the neighborhood kid who is always bothering you about tales of flying to the web at www.youngeagles.com to find a pilot in the area who'll take a kids up for a free flight. Jamial Larkins is a spokesman for Young Eagles, is junior at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Florida and his web site is at www.jamail-larkins.com. You can also request him to speak at your school on the program.

The Living History Project: Veteran's Stories

Veterans' Stories is a part of Military.com's Living History Project, which is committed to telling the history of our men and women in uniform by preserving their own stories and photos. Every week, our readers send us stories, letters, and photos about their wartime (and peacetime) military experiences. Your service to our country made history -- share it with current and future generations. Send your letters, stories and images using our handy online submission tool or write to:

Veterans' Stories, Military.com, 799 Market Street, Suite 700, San Francisco, CA 94103

Please include in all correspondence your permission to reprint the letters or information you send us. Or visit our

Replacement Military Medal and Certificate Recognition Program.

The currently authorized list of replacement military medals and/or display recognition's are provided at the URL listed below. An acquisition regulation requires that military-issued documentation accompany replacement medal and display recognition requests. www.amervets.com/replacement

Silver " Combat Aircrew Wings"

The enlisted air crewmen of Navy VO-67, the Ghost Squadron,

will be awarded the silver "Combat Aircrew Wings" in a special ceremony at their 2005 reunion banquet in San Diego, CA. The VO-67 squadron was deployed to NKP in 1967-68 to implant sensors along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The squadron lost 3 aircraft and 20 brave crewmen in a very short time. Only two other Naval squadrons were awarded these special wings during the Vietnam War. You folks who are not familiar with VO-67 can access there web site at www.VO-67.org

Bob Reynolds, CrklMoon@aol.com. Plankowner - Navy VO-67 Squadron VO-67

Capt Charles A. Boatwright

I was aboard the AC-47 that this man was the Aircraft Commander in 67 when it went down. Am contacting his son to be of any possible help that I can.

Not sure of any glass nose B-26s at Hurlburt, but I do know that a Recon Nose was made for the K Model and a Camera Rig was made for the Bomb Bay. They were supposed to send one to the Congo to recce in 64 but I do not think it ever made the trip.

Am trying to contact Billy Lynch who surfaced in your last info in the last Newsletter, We had a couple missions in the FC-47s with the .30 Calibers in Aug of 65.

You are really stirring the memories; Keep up the good work... Doug dblair@gnt.net

676 MOVED

Just got my copy of ACA Newsletter today. I was reading in the Rossel Report about Jim Sizemore jr. and his attempt to find out more info on his Dad. While checking his web site I saw in a caption under a picture that Tom Wickstrom flew 676 back to the states. The caption says that it is in the R & D hangers at WPAFB. That was where it was the last time I was there, but went there this summer and 676 have now been moved into the Main Museum in the "Vietnam Era" gallery. It is now proudly displayed with the other war horses it served with.

Quite an impressive site. Just thought I'd let you know that the plane has been moved to a better place and looks really good, and you might want to pass the info along to the other Nimrods you might know, since some may not have the opportunity to visit the museum regularly. By the way, EXCELLENT reading in the ACA Newsletter.

Randy Ryman, rryman@shentel.net, Project Big Eagle, NKP 66, A-26A #676

56thMedical personnel who saved Richard Benson.

I landed an RF4-C at NKP on the 16th Sept 1969 (barrier engagement) with a serious chest wound. Members of the 56th sent me the bullet lodged in the fuel control panel on a plaque. I would like to contact the Dr., medic, Helio crew that took me and my nav back to Udorn, rescue personnel, chaplain or anyone who might remember the event. Richard Benson, WGP125@aol.com

See **ROSSEL** pg. 27

Rossel

from page 26

"GEORGE R LATTIN"

This is my new email: glattin@prodigy.net.

Doug Hudgens dkhudgens@sbcglobal.net.

No, it was an A-1J, tail #065. I heard a rumor that it was assigned to the 602d SOS, even though he was 22d. But since he was Sandy wing on the Wolf 06 SAR, I can see how he was in another squadrons A/C.

Doug-- According to "Vietnam Air Losses" by Chris Hobson", dtd 2001, page 200 says that Maj Edward Monore Hudgens, your father, was flying a A-1J tail number 52-142065 belonged to the 602 SOS, 56 SOF, NKP. Doug call Maj Bill Palank in Northern Calif Tel 916-961-9618 who was a Sandy and who was at NKP at the time.

Anyone who knew Maj Hudgens please contact his son Doug who is looking for information on his father.

ROBERT P. CHRISTIANSEN, Homosassa, FL, bobanmary@earthlink.net. Former Major, USAF. Continuously assigned to A-1 operational or training squadrons from 2 Jan 1966 to 31 March 1972. Pilot with Tropic Moon I at NKP and Bien Hoa 1968.

HONORS INFORMATION

The below honors information is from our heritage web page www.hurlburt.af.mil/heritage/guide/#HON (as recorded by the AF Historical Research Agency www.au.af.mil/au/afhra/wwwroot/rso/wings_groups_pages/0016sow.php). The 1 ACW did not receive the Presidential Unit Citation. MSgt Michalke

Honors

Service Streamer - World War II

Campaign Streamers

American Theater - World War II - India - Burma - Central Burma

Southwest Asia - Defense of Saudi Arabia, 1990-1991

Liberation and Defense of Kuwait, 1991

Southwest Asia Cease Fire, 1991

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers - Grenada, 1983

Panama, 1989-1990

Joint Meritorious Unit Award - JUST CAUSE DESERT STORM

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation - Burma & India, 25 Mar - 20 May 44

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

With Valor Device 1 May 82 - 30 Apr 84 1 Jun 97 - 31 May 99

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award

Jul 63 - Jun 65

1 Jul 69 - 15 Apr 71

1 Jan 76 - 31 Mar 77

15 Jul 79 - 15 May 80

16 May 80 - 30 Apr 82

1 May 85 - 30 Apr 87

1 May 88 - 30 Apr 90

16 Apr 92 - 15 Apr 94

1 Jun 95 - 31 May 97

1 Jul 99 - 30 June 01

1 Jul 01 - 30 Jun 03

REPLACEMENT CARD

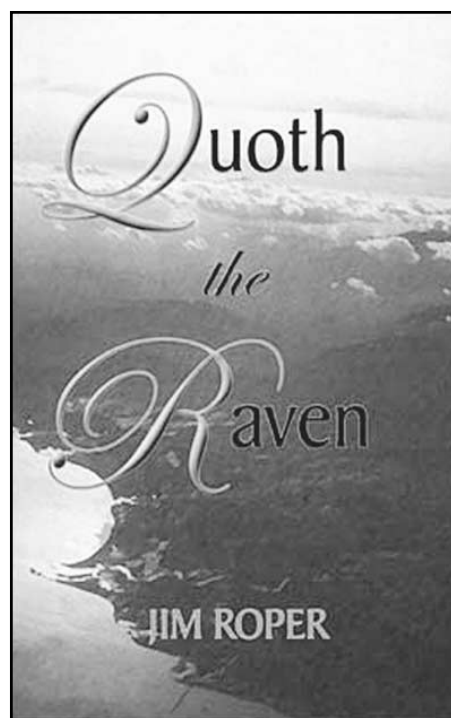
I am Ed Davenport. A life Member of ACA. My card was recently destroyed and I would like a replacement. Who should I contact (phone or e-mail) to get a replacement card? Thanks

Ed Davenport, 148 Wooded Way, Louisville, KY, 40229-6020

email: air1ekd@ups.com

Air Force Served 1974 - 1995 20thSOS

Call Pete Bowman at 850-581-0099. By the way how did you get an ACA ID? I never got one and I am a life member-Gene Rossel



Quoth the Raven

By Jim Roper

A no-nonsense memoir of Covey nights over the Trail and Raven days around Luang Prabang. This great read can be purchased on the internet at www.PublishAmerica.com or phone 877-333-7422.

If you want a signed copy of his book, you can call Jim Roper at 703-250-6233 or email him at jroper3531@aol.com. You can write him at 11200 Robert Carter Road, Fairfax Station, VA 22039. The book sells for \$18.95 plus \$2.85 S&H.

Maj Gen Don Shepperd,
USAF (ret)

recently announced the publication of "Misty", a collection of personal accounts of the Misty FAC missions flown in Vietnam using the F-100.

E-mail him at: shepdonald@aol.com or call (520) 299-5710.

First Person Stories of the F-100 Misty Fast FACs in the Vietnam War

Bud Day, Bill Douglass, Glenn Jones, Gary Tompkins, Bill Mayberry, Dick Meyer, Barney Dalton, Maurice McHugh, Chuck Turner, Jack Harris, Paul Magill, Bob Blocher, Kipp Kippenhan, Sam Boyd, Keith Heiniger, Dick Cunningham, Bob Cramer, George Pinney, Nape Miller, Bob Porter, P.J. White, Charlie Neal, Jere Wallace, Jim Mack, Joney Jones, Sib Sibson, Gene Mooney, Ray Wellington, Guy Gruters, Mick Greene, Jim Fiorelli, Ed Risinger, Hog Piner, Don Shepperd, Don Jones, B.Willy Williams, Bill Williams, Whispering Smith, Elmer Slavey, Dick Rutan, Charlie Summers, Stopcock Mamlock, Howard Williams, Lanny Lancaster, P.K. Robinson, Mike McElhanon, Don Kilgus, Frank Swartz, George Hanks, Wells Jackson, John Overlock, Chuck Shaheen, Dick Durant, Steve Andor, David Jenny, Ted Powell, Bud Bacon, Jim Perry, Don Harlan, Roy Bridges, Frank Kimball, Whitey Thompson, Doug Weidman, Robert Lynch, Bob Fitzsimmons, Kelly Irving, Rosie Detwiler, Bones Kretz, Jerry Edwards, Bob Konopka, Chris Kellum, Roger Rice, Clyde Selter, Norris Hanks, Stanton Smith, Chuck Holden, Bryan, Donald Bullet Bob, Winkelman, Gregg, Parker, Matt Masuret, Al, Cass Cassaro, Richard Hepworth, Roger Winblade, Ron Hussion, Jim Sue, Jerry Walhout, John Grathwol, Amie Clarke, Bill Wallace, John Bole, Fogleman, Jerry Veach, Tony McPeak, Rowland Stanley, Bruce Brown, Bob Wilson, James Osgood, Ron Standerfer, Gib Ahl, Jim Nugent, Mike Cummings, Andy Christensen, Dave Skilling, Jack Dickey, Lee Goutley, Rufus Edwards, Kraze Kroese, Michael Martin, Scotty Dotson, Robert Seabury, Vic Macomber, George Buchkowski, John Hammar, Wayne Chaffler, Norm Lutz, T.K. Egan, Saint Hallman, Devil Muller, Gerry Van Riper, Robert Putz, Dennis Campbell, Bill Teske, Mario Perado, Michael Stone, Gabe Gabel, Pat Carroll, Gary Nophsker, Lamont Cranston, Jim Crason, Dick Rice, Jack Clapper, Rich Reitan, Josh Merrill, Troy Morris, Larry Whitford, Robby Robinson, Harry Scott, George Lapham, John Nystrom, Jerry Ryder, Dick Robbins, Dan Brown, Hank Buttelmann, Jack Doub, Lynn Farnsworth, Robert Armstrong, Paul Tackabury, Dave Thomson, Vince Catolica, J.P. Richards, Moose Millard, Jim Davies, Dave Robb, David Samuel, Ray Lee, Tom Tapman, Ted Hascall, Dean Echenberg, Robert Gordan, Ray Bevinino, John Haligan, Roger Van Dyken, Cal Kunz, Bob Guido, Jim Titus,



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December 2004

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

I am proud to be elected as the 17th president of our association, even though no one ran against me. Not a good sign of democracy in



action! I will do my best to carry on in the tradition that has been set by my many predecessors and do all I can to ensure we stay as a viable and healthy association.

Robert Downs who served for two terms as president deserves so much credit for all he has done for the ACA. In addition to serving as president, he and his company constructed our great building, he served as treasurer when we could not get a volunteer, and has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to do so many things. Robert is dedicated to this association and now has agreed to serve as treasure in spite of his busy schedule. We need Robert as an active member.

Thanks to Jerry Rhein for his tour as a Board member. Jerry took time from his busy schedule with the Sheriff's Department to be a Board member.

One disappointment is the fact

that it is so difficult to get volunteers to serve on the Board or committees. We have a wealth of talent in our area. I understand that many of our retirees do not want the extra commitment at this stage of our lives, and that is understandable. However, just a few hours of involvement with other air commandos to run this association can be fun.

Reunion 2004 was a super event. Although less folks attended than in some of the recent years, the atmosphere was great. Commandos were happy, hungry, and full of fun. Dick Geron did a great job in managing the reunion with the help of many volunteers. Dick will cover details of the reunion in his column. There are so many volunteers who went above and beyond to make the reunion a success. It is difficult to mention all who helped, and I am sure VP Dick Geron will acknowledged most helpers, but want to say one big thank you and express how proud I am to work with volunteers who make things happen. Pete and Hap for the management and administration; Jim Boney for setting up the golf event; Ray Bourque and team for the great fish fry; Dick Geron for a well run business meeting and bar management; Lt Col Alvarez and staff for their hospitality and presentation in the 6th SOS; Lt Gen Wooley, Maj Gen Secord, Bill Campbell, and others for their role in a successful banquet; Charlie Jones, Col Mannon,

Chaplain Schaick and Phyllis Hasty for the terrific, inspiring memorial service; Broadway and team for the wonderful BBQ; Joyce Harrington and the County Store; Jim Ifland and Fred Nowak for taking so many pictures; and Fred Platt for his entertaining performance as auctioneer. There are too many other volunteers to mention, but all are so appreciated. It takes a great team effort to make it happen, and we did it again. Thanks, thanks...

There were two very special additional events this year that I must mention. Col McCoskrie was inducted into the Hall of Fame - a long overdue acknowledgement. His wife, Mary Lou McCoskrie, and 16 other family members attended the reunion as another great tribute to the Colonel. The entire family is a delight and their spirit and interest in our association was a welcomed addition to the reunion. Also, Christine Lukasik attended the reunion and was inducted as an associate life member of the ACA. Christine is in her last year at the AF Academy and intends to become a helicopter pilot. Her paternal grandfather, Captain Lukasik was lost early on in the VN conflict while flying an AT-28. He was awarded the Air Force Cross and a street on Hurlburt Field is named after him. Christine's mother, Charlene, and her maternal grandparents, Dee and Robby Roberson, longtime ACA members, attended the reunion and



Christmas Wishes

are so proud of Christine. So are we!

One of the great rewards from being associated with the ACA is to watch and, at times, participate in the great work done by the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation. I hope all our readers note the articles by John Grove and Bob White, two stalwarts in the MTF, as they explain what humanitarian tasks are on going. I am always amazed at the generosity of so many of our members, and some nonmembers, who continue to send in donations. Since the September 04 Newsletter was published, we have received over \$7,000 dollars. As we have mentioned so many times, these funds cover storage and shipping costs. To help the needy in many parts of the world is a true tribute to the commando spirit that has endured so long. Thanks again.

In subsequent columns, I will write about our goals for the next two years. We welcome comments on how to better serve the membership. Hope all of you have another great year.

Cheers, Sam