



# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE

2004

### HURLBURT-BASED AIR COMMANDOS HELPED LAUNCH IRAQ INVASION

By **BILL KACZOR**  
Associated Press Writer

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. The AC-130U Spooky gunship banked to the left and started its deadly orbit over a petroleum complex critical to transferring oil from pipelines to tankers. Smoke, flame and hot metal belched from the plane's 105mm Howitzer and two smaller guns.

That was a year ago this week as the invasion of Iraq began, but the secretive Air Force Special Operations Command only now is disclosing details of the roles that gunship crews and other air commandos played on the night of March 20, 2003.

The Hurlburt based Spooky's mission was to clear enemy ground forces so helicopters could safely land Navy SEALs and British Marine commandos. Their objective was to capture the manifold and metering station at the southern tip of the Al Faw peninsula before it

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### SIXTY YEARS

By **DICK GERON**  
ACA Vice president

This year's ACA Reunion will celebrate the 60th year of the founding of the Air Commandos in the China, Burma, India Theater during WW II.

We are attempting to contact these WWII Air Commandos in hope that many will join with us and be a part of ACA REUNION 2004.

The Reunion for 2004 will follow in general the traditions which have been established by previous reunions. These traditions include a return to the Hurlburt Soundside Club (ex-Hurlburt Officer's Club) for the Saturday night Banquet. This return to tradition is due to the timely work by Pete Bowman who took a check from ACA for a \$500 deposit to the Club at the first moment they would accept it for our reservation.

Hotel reservations and Hospitality Suite are again at the newly remodeled Quality Inn (ex-Howard Johnson) on Hwy 98 in FWB.

Dear Mr. Downs,

Thank you and the Air Commandos for sharing your precious time with my friends in the Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association and me.

We were shocked and saddened by the death of Larry "Sandy" Sanborn and offer our condolences on his untimely passing.

The discussion of the mis-

### REUNION 2004 RETURNS TO HURLBURT SOUNDSTIDE CLUB



The Hurlburt Soundside Club (the O'Club) will host the ACA banquet in 2004

Reunion registration, Friday evening Fish Fry by "Raging Cajun" Ray Bourque with his volunteers and Hap Lutz's able assistance, Saturday morning Business Meeting, and Jerry Broadway's BBQ Sunday afternoon special will all take place poolside at "Our Hotel" if blessed with good weather.

Ray Brown and his Band will be playing at the Friday Fish Fry and again Saturday night at the Banquet.

Plan on coming to the reunion; but make your reservations early and rest up to have a good time with your old buddies! We are all looking forward to seeing you at the October Reunion.

### AIR FORCE PUBLIC AFFAIRS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

sions, airplanes, people and history of the Air Commandos is precisely the reason we bring our annual meetings to different bases around the country each year. There are so many different things happening in our Air Force and for us to remain relevant speakers on behalf of the Air Force it is imperative we stay in touch. You and all the members of the Air Commando team did a wonderful job doing just that for us. Last week I

had lunch with the military reporter from the San Antonio Express-News and an extended telephone conversation with the San Antonio Bureau chief for the Air Force Times and was able to discuss weapons technology and applications developments as a result of our visit. This is immediate application of what we learned from your members. All the members of

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# EDITORIAL COMMENTS

## ZELL MILLER, U. S. SENATOR FROM GEORGIA

By ROBERT DOWNS,  
ACA President

Regardless of your religious beliefs, your party affiliation, or your opinions of judges, the following speech by Senator Zell Miller from Georgia is profound and has information and meaning that is important to each and every citizen of the United States.

I had little interest in and no particular liking of Zell Miller when he was the Governor of Georgia.

However, as a US Senator the man has gotten my attention and gained my utmost respect, because he has the moral courage to stand up and take the high ground as a Democrat spokesman.

It is most unusual and totally out of character for a politician to so visibly and boldly "let-it-all-hang-out" by standing and blatantly telling his own Party that they are wrong, totally wrong...

Senator Miller, though a Democrat, told his party members that he emphatically supports President Bush because the President is taking us in the right direction in the war on terrorism.

Not only has Senator Zell Miller told the Democratic Party Leadership that they are leading our great nation in the wrong direction; he has forthrightly told them that they are so wrong in their ways that he will stand and cast his vote for President George W. Bush in the upcoming election.

I would hope that Senator Miller can be convinced to run again for the Democrat Senatorial seat for Georgia. I do believe that the people of Georgia would support and reelect him as their Senator. The Democratic Party as a whole has lost its way, integrity and moral principles. The "Good Guys" in the Democrat Party have been overcome by the "Folks from the Far Side";

and, I mean folks who are really way on the "Far Side"....!

If the Democrats had a grain of smarts, they would select Zell Miller to run for President. Now that would bring about the presidential race of the century. That would be a race that a person could sink his teeth into....!

It is time to change and add sanity to our government...! The Republican Party is by no means made up of a bunch of intellectuals giants either; they badly need a good "whack-up-the-side-of-their-heads" to jar them back into reality. They are definitely not helping our situation; ...they are timid and afraid to speak out; have gone spend crazy, also.

In fact, each and every member of Congress should be out there explaining to the American people that we are in a struggle for survival, and we must pull together. Why, half of the American people do not realize that we are in a "WAR" for the survival of our civilization!

Senator Zell Miller's speech is lengthy; but do read it through to the end, ...it will be well worth your time!!!

February 12, 2004

U.S. Senator Zell Miller, D-GA Floor Statement on 'Deficit of Decency' in America -- Prepared Remarks for Delivery on the Senate Floor

"The Old Testament prophet Amos was a sheep herder who lived back in the Judean hills, away from the larger cities of Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Compared to the intellectual urbanites like Isaiah and Jeremiah, he was just an unsophisticated country hick.

"But Amos had a unique grasp of political and social issues and his poetic literary skill was among the best of all the prophets. That familiar quote of Martin Luther

King, Jr. about 'Justice will rush down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream' are Amos's words.

"Amos was the first to propose the concept of a universal God and not just some tribal deity. He also wrote that God demanded moral purity, not rituals and sacrifices. This blunt speaking moral conscience of his time warns in Chapter 8, verse 11 of The Book of Amos, as if he were speaking to us today:

That 'the days will come, sayeth the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the Lord.

'And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east. They shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.'

"A famine in the land'. Has anyone more accurately described the situation we face in America today? 'A famine of hearing the words of the Lord.'

"But some will say, Amos was just an Old Testament prophet - a minor one at that - who lived 700 years before Christ. That is true, so how about one of the most influential historians of modern times?

"Arnold Toynbee who wrote the acclaimed 12 volume "A Study of History," once declared, 'Of the 22 civilizations that have appeared

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# ALUMNI

## from front page

our association are similarly engaged in telling the story of our Air Force and now have even more topics to share with the public and the news media.

None of this goes together easily, but your teams of pros made it come off seamlessly. Our thanks to all for their great leadership and service to our wonderful country you give and the example you set. Please pass my personal thanks to Dick Secord for standing under a dripping AC-130 to talk to us, and to "Heinie" Aderholt, Jerry Rhein, Felix Sambogna, and Ken Lengfield for wandering around the airplanes and talking to the folks on the busses making this a truly memorable weekend for us; the rain did not dampen our spirit nor their enthusiasm.

If I, or the Air Force Public Affairs Alumni Association, may be of assistance to you at any time in the future, please let us know.

Sincerely,  
David E. Smith  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

## President's Note:

*David, it was indeed a pleasure for our Air Commando experts to discuss Special Operations missions and capabilities with each of you. Sandy Sanborn's last mission on this earth was enjoying time doing one of the things he did best, explaining Special Ops aircraft capabilities, missions and tactics to dedicated folks like you.*

*I'll pass your kind compliments on to General "Heinie" Aderholt, General Dick Secord, Jerry Rhein, Felix Sambogna, Jerry Klingaman, and Ken Lengfield.*

*You know, I detected a gleam of excitement come into the eyes and smiles come over the faces of our ol' Warriors as they relived exciting ex-*

*periences with you guys.*

*The rain only added reality to the arena; it was as though they thought, if only for a moment, they were back in combat; ...fighting for this great country of ours...!*

*Bill Campbell, a very special thanks to you for getting us involved with your people...!*

★★★

# HURLBURT

## from front page

could be sabotaged and spew oil into the Persian Gulf.

"If they blew that facility up, it was going to pour about 18 Exxon Valdezes worth of oil into the gulf every day," said Maj. Bill Holt, the gunship's pilot.

The AC-130U's 14-member crew helped prevent that ecological and economic disaster while dodging gunfire and missiles during the eight-hour mission. Before landing at daybreak, Holt's crew also sank a metal-hulled warship, something no Air Force plane had done in combat since World War II.

His and other gunships are part of Hurlburt's 16th Special Operations Wing that also flies transport planes and helicopters.

The wing has seen heavy action in Iraq and Afghanistan, including infiltrating special forces troops and using airborne tankers to refuel helicopters deep in hostile territory. The 16th had no casualties in Iraq but lost five air commandos - a nickname for Air Force Special Operations personnel - in Afghanistan. Three died in a helicopter crash last year and two when a cargo plane went down in 2002.

Most of the 16th's 7,000 men and women have been deployed about two-thirds of each year since Sept. 11, 2001, said Col. O.G. Mannon, the wing's commander.

That has stressed their families and training schedules, but morale has held up well and the air commandos have accepted the deploy-

ments as normal duty, said Mannon, 50, of Durham, N.C.

"Our people continue to want to defend our country in somebody else's backyard instead of ours," Mannon said.

Holt, 35, of Alamogordo, N.M., returned to Hurlburt in June, went back to Iraq in December and came home again last month. He will get a respite in May with a transfer to Corpus Christi, Texas, where he will train Navy pilots, but the husband and father of two young sons wants to return to Special Operations when that three-year tour is over.

"I don't want to slight anyone else because everyone gives a great effort and does their part for the overall goal, but it was nice to be on the tip of the spear," Holt said.

Many other Hurlburt airmen were on that tip a year ago in Iraq. MH-53 Pave Low helicopters from the 16th flew Navy SEALs to the metering station after Holt's Spooky pounded enemy positions for 17 minutes.

Helicopters shuttled troops for the next hour or so while the lumbering, four-engine turboprop gunship and A-10 Warthog jets attacked other targets in the area. The Iraqis fired back with artillery and heat-seeking missiles. There were some close calls, but the gunship sustained no hits.

"I've had much closer," said Holt, also a veteran of Kosovo and Afghanistan, where a missile passed his plane by about 75 feet and anti-aircraft gunfire was so close it lit up his cockpit.

The gunship crew used the plane's infrared sensors to detect Iraqi soldiers and vehicles.

"Almost like kicking an ant pile, things started popping up," said Capt. Terry Sears, 35, of Pensacola, the plane's navigator.

The crew kept in constant contact with the ground troops and sometimes fired warning shots.

"If the vehicles or targets would move away from the facility,

that would be fine," Holt said. "We'd let them go. If they continued coming toward the facility, then we continued to engage them."

A second gunship took over while Holt refueled from an airborne tanker. His plane then was assigned to attack a 90-ton Iraqi patrol boat off the Al Faw peninsula. The vessel may have been laying mines and could have posed a threat to coalition helicopters with its 40mm and 20mm guns and rocket launcher.

Iraqi sailors tried unsuccessfully to hide the 110-foot patrol boat by coming alongside a derelict oil tanker, sunk on a sandbar during the Iran-Iraq War.

The AC-130U dispatched the patrol boat in less than three minutes with 40mm and 105mm gunfire. It's crew had abandoned the vessel, climbing aboard the tanker or swimming to a nearby island, before the gunship opened up.

"They were completely a sitting duck," Holt said. "The center of the ship blew apart. It sank stern-first."

Holt's crew provided close air support and flew armed reconnaissance until the Iraqi military crumbled, but nothing equaled that first mission. Half of the crew members received Distinguished Flying Crosses and the others were awarded Air Medals for that flight.

While Holt flew the plane, the rest of the crew identified targets, kept in radio contact with ground troops, fired the guns, spotted anti-aircraft fire and directed defensive maneuvers. The gunners also quickly fixed two major gun malfunctions.

"There was no one just sitting around," Holt said. "Every single member of that crew did something very significant to make that mission happen."

## Submitted by:

*Jumping Joe Kittinger* -  
ACOLJOEADV@aol.com

★★★

# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

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See **MEMBERSHIP** pg. 5

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THE SOLDIER GIVES

*From a sermon by John Hagee of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio:*

I want you to close your eyes and picture in your mind the soldier at Valley Forge, as he holds his musket in his bloody hands. He stands barefoot in the snow, starved from lack of food, wounded from months of battle and emotionally scarred from the eternity away from his family surrounded by nothing but death and carnage of war. He stands though, with fire in his eyes and victory on his breath. He looks at us now in anger and disgust and tells us this...

I gave you a birthright of freedom born in the Constitution and now your children graduate too illiterate to read it.

I fought in the snow barefoot to give you the freedom to vote and you stay at home because it rains!

I left my family destitute to give you the freedom of speech and you remain silent on critical issues, because it might be bad for business.

I orphaned my children to give you a government to serve you and it has stolen democracy from the people.

It's the soldier, not the reporter who gives you the freedom of the press.

It's the soldier, not the poet who gives you the freedom of speech.

It's the soldier, not the campus organizer who allows you to demonstrate.

It's the soldier, who salutes the flag, serves the flag, whose coffin is draped with the flag that allows the protester to burn the flag!!!

"Lord, hold our troops in your loving hands. Protect them as they protect us. Bless them and their families for the selfless acts they perform for us in our time of need. Amen."

When you read this, please stop for a moment and say a prayer for our U.S. forces in Iraq, and all

around the world.

This can be very powerful.... Of all the gifts you could give a U.S. Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, or Coast Guardsman, prayer is the very best one.....!

*Submitted by: Bill Keeler - ACA #0069*

★★★

MEMBERSHIP

*from pg 4*

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★★★

# MILLER

from pg 2

in history, 19 of them collapsed when they reached the moral state America is in today.'

"Toynbee died in 1975, before seeing the worst that as yet to come. Yes, Arnold Toynbee saw the famine. The 'famine of hearing the words of the Lord.' Whether it is removing a display of the Ten Commandments from a Courthouse or the Nativity Scene from a city square. Whether it is eliminating prayer in schools or eliminating 'under God' in the Pledge of Allegiance. Whether it is making a mockery of the sacred institution of marriage between a man and woman or, yes, telecasting around the world made-in-the-USA filth masquerading as entertainment.

"The Culture of Far Left America was displayed in a startling way during the Super Bowl's now infamous half-time show. A show brought to us courtesy of Value-Les Moonves and the pagan temple of Viacom-Babylon.

"I asked the question yesterday, how many of you have ever run over a skunk with your car? I have many times and I can tell you, the stink stays around for a long time. You can take the car through a car wash and it's still there. So the scent of this event will long linger in the nostrils of America.

"I'm not talking just about an exposed mammary gland with a pull-tab attached to it. Really no one should have been too surprised at that. Wouldn't one expect a bumping, humping, trashy routine entitled 'I'm going to get you naked' to end that way.

"Does any responsible adult ever listen to the words of this rap-crap? I'd quote you some of it, but the Sergeant of Arms would throw me out of here, as well he should. And then there was that prancing, dancing, strutting, rutting guy evidently suffering from jock itch because he kept yelling and grabbing

his crotch. But then, maybe there's a crotch grabbing culture I'm unaware of.

"But as bad as all this was, the thing that yanked my chain the hardest was seeing that ignoramus with his pointed head stuck up through a hole he had cut in the flag of the United States of America, screaming about having 'a bottle of scotch and watching lots of crotch.' Think about that.

"This is the same flag that we pledge allegiance to. This is the flag that is draped over coffins of dead young uniformed warriors killed while protecting Kid Crock's bony butt. He should be tarred and feathered, and ridden out of this country on a rail. Talk about a good reality show, there's one for you.

"The desire and will of this Congress to meaningfully do anything about any of these so-called social issues is non-existent and embarrassingly disgraceful. The American people are waiting and growing impatient with us. They want something done.

"I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of S.J. Res. 26 along with Senator Allard and others, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to marriage. And S.1558, the Liberties Restoration Act, which declares religious liberty rights in several ways, including the Pledge of Allegiance and the display of the Ten Commandments. And today I join Senator Shelby and others with the Constitution Restoration Act of 2004 that limits the jurisdiction of federal courts in certain ways.

"In doing so, I stand shoulder to shoulder not only with my Senate co-sponsors and Chief Justice Roy Moore of Alabama but, more importantly, with our Founding Fathers in the conception of religious liberty and the terribly wrong direction our modern judiciary has taken us in.

Everyone today seems to think that the U.S. Constitution ex-

pressly provides for separation of church and state. Ask any ten people if that's not so. And I'll bet you most of them will say 'Well, sure.' And some will point out, 'it's in the First Amendment.'

"Wrong! Read it! It says, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Where is the word 'separate'? Where are the words 'church' or 'state.'

"They are not there. Never have been. Never intended to be. Read the Congressional Records during that four-month period in 1789 when the amendment was being framed in Congress. Clearly their intent was to prohibit a single denomination in exclusion of all others, whether it was Anglican or Catholic or some other.

"I highly recommend a great book entitled Original Intent by David Barton. It really gets into how the actual members of Congress, who drafted the First Amendment, expected basic Biblical principles and values to be present throughout public life and society, not separate from it.

"It was Alexander Hamilton who pointed out that 'judges should be bound down by strict rules and precedents, which serve to define and point out their duty.' Bound down! That is exactly what is needed to be done. There was not a single precedent cited when school prayer was struck down in 1962.

"These judges who legislate instead of adjudicate, do it without being responsible to one single solitary voter for their actions. Among the signers of the Declaration of Independence was a brilliant young physician from Pennsylvania named Benjamin Rush.

"When Rush was elected to that First Continental Congress, his close friend Benjamin Franklin told him 'We need you. . . we have a great task before us, assigned to us by Providence.' Today, 228 years later

there is still a great task before us assigned to us by Providence. Our Founding Fathers did not shirk their duty and we can do no less.

"By the way, Benjamin Rush was once asked a question that has long interested this Senator from Georgia in particular. Dr. Rush was asked, are you a democrat or an aristocrat? And the good doctor answered, 'I am neither'. 'I am a Christocrat. I believe He, alone, who created and redeemed man is qualified to govern him.' That reply of Benjamin Rush is just as true today in the year of our Lord 2004 as it was in the year of our Lord 1776.

"So, if I am asked why - with all the pressing problems this nation faces today - why am I pushing these social issues and taking the Senate's valuable time? I will answer: Because, it is of the highest importance. Yes, there's a deficit to be concerned about in this country, a deficit of decency.

"So, as the sand empties through my hourglass at warp speed - and with my time running out in this Senate and on this earth, I feel compelled to speak out. For I truly believe that at times like this, silence is not golden. It is yellow."

<http://miller.senate.gov>

★★★

## BATTLEFIELD COMMISSION

**The National Order of Battlefield Commissions** is trying to locate all men, WWII, Korea and Viet-Nam, who, on the field of battle against an armed enemy, received a commission from enlisted or Warrant status to commission status. It may be you or someone you know.

Contact J. Angler in St. Augustine, FL, by phone at (904) 471-7695 or email [jnbc@msn.com](mailto:jnbc@msn.com). For more details, please visit: [www.battlefieldcommissions.org](http://www.battlefieldcommissions.org)

★★★



# HAP'S COMMENTS

By HAP LUTZ

In order to meet Editor Boney's deadline, I'm writing this a bit early as I'm again heading for Thailand. Along with Robby and Dee Roberson, Robbye Binkley, and Dakota and Lori Lutz, we are going to Bangkok, Hua Hin, Chiang Mai, and Chiang Rai. We depart on the 2nd of May and return on the 15th. The trip is focused on newly weds Dakota and Lori and the rest of us are going as guides. It is a college graduation/wedding Thai Trip.

Dave and Liam Spurling have invited us to spend two days with them in Hua Hin in their new digs. Their former home was gorgeous and I'm anxious to find out how they could have possibly improved on it. Dave is going to meet us at the airport and take us to the Ambassador Hotel...my other home in Thailand during previous trips. We are also getting together with MacAlan Thompson, Les Strouse, and "Specter Joe" for a mini Air Commando Reunion.

As you know by now, Bill Conklin passed away in Novato, California. I wasn't able to write much about his passing as the last newsletter was just going to press at the time.

Gene Rossel and I teamed up and sent a floral arrangement. Our venerable Howie Pierson also lives in Novato, California and I was able to touch base with him regarding Bill's demise. From all my reports, Howie delivered a stirring eulogy as only he can.

Along with Gene Rossel, Charlie Jones, Chuck Keeler, Joe Orr, Bill Brown, and some 120 others, I was with Bill in Bien Hoa during 1962. I flew many flare missions with him and several evac missions. We became quite bonded friends as a result.

Those of you that knew Bill

Conklin knew of his willingness, patriotism, and "Can Do" spirit and attitude. He seldom missed a reunion and only missed the last one due to his ultimate fatal illness. My sincerest condolence to Gloria and other family members.

ACA Member and author Warren Trest, Air Commando One, among many other books and histories, sent me a personal copy of his latest endeavor, Missing in Paradise. It is his first fictional mystery and from all accounts, a thriller from the getgo. Warren also sent Wings of Denial, a history that he co-authored with Donald Dodd. It is an account of the Alabama Air National Guard's role at the Bay of Pigs. Author retired Colonel Mike Haas scribed "...a superb account of one of the darkest tragedies of the Cold War era...describes in chilling detail the bloody impact of JFK's personal intervention..."

I plan to read my copy of Missing in Paradise on my way to Thailand. For you others interested in reading Warren's latest, check your local bookstore or go online and seek them out. If you have read Warren's Air Commando One, I know you will not be disappointed!

We are making a change on our newsletter masthead. Where "ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED" appeared will now be "SERVICE CHANGE REQUESTED." The reason for this is economy. You were assured that your newsletter would be forwarded under the first instance. But if you didn't submit a forwarding address, the article was returned to us and we were required to pay 1st class postage for it. Under the second instance, we will receive a change of address at the rate of \$0.70, but your newsletter will not be forwarded. We will no longer have to pay the high price of returned articles. The bottom line is: Send us your new forwarding address immediately... if you know it!

Just talked to "Chris" Christian and he is scheduled for another

melanoma surgery and angioplasty next week. "Chris" somehow maintains a very high degree of humor and pleasantness in spite of his many ongoing disabilities.

"Cajun" Ray Bourque, Roger Klair, "Chris," John Christian, "Heinie," and I are all having lunch together this Thursday. Except for "Heinie" and John, we've all had current surgeries. It should be a most interesting get-together because the 60th year of Air Commandos is upcoming!

★★★

## GENO VALENTINE UPDATE

By JOHN CONNORS, L#0070

I have some sad news to report. Our past president and master of ceremonies extraordinaire, Geno Valentine, is now living in the Veterans Home in Gulfport, Mississippi diagnosed with both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.

He was admitted on 6 November 2003, and I had a chance to visit him on 17 April for about an hour and a half. Although he recognized me and looked better than the last time I saw him, he is wheel chair bound and needs a lot of assistance getting around.

The friendly staff enjoy him and commented on his great sense of humor, so that was good news. Still, it was not easy seeing a robust jovial, long-time friend like Geno so afflicted with these mind and body robbing afflictions, with no known medical cure that I'm aware of. President Reagan's long journey immediately came to mind. We had a nice conversation, part fact and part fantasy, mostly about the ACA and its members.

The Veterans Home is in Gulfport, Miss, about 11 miles west of the Casino Magic in Biloxi. It is on the north side of highway 90. Geno is in Building 41G and I'm sure he would love to see you at reunion time, especially if you are going to visit the Biloxi Casinos. If unable to visit, please send him a card, His address is:

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

*Please keep this special Com-  
mando in your thoughts and  
prayers.*

★★★

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4556 for personal service.**

# LETTERS

**DEAR BOB CHAMBERS,**

I noticed your request in the Military Officers April publication for information on Tom Deken.

I knew Tom from his work in Special Operations, he flew a combat tour in Vietnam in 1963, spent some time in R&D developing special weapons for insurgency operations and also had several more tours in Southeast Asia all involving classified missions.

Tom lived down the street from me in Ft. Walton Beach Fl. and he was one of the finest officers I ever met. He passed away a number of years ago from what I believe was a brain tumor. I have sent an info copy of this message to Col. Bob Downs who is President of the Air Commando Association, should you desire more information contact him and he may be able to find someone who knew Tom better than I did.

Joe Holden  
aceusaf@earthlink.net  
127 Sandalwood Drive  
Kissimmee, FL 34743-8127

**Many Thanks Joe,**

I appreciate your email and am saddened to hear Tom is no longer with us mortals. He was a very dear friend even though I lost touch with him many years ago. Once a good friend, always a good friend regardless of geography, distance, or time.

We were both in Class 57G, same barracks building at San Antonio, room mates at Graham Air Base in Marianna, FL and same barracks building in Del Rio. Basically the same flight/academic schedule all the way through flight training. He was one heck of a guy and I regret not being able to track him down and have a few "brewskies" and reminisce before the final separation. In flight training, I started calling him as "Sir George" rather than Tom. He

was a very courteous gentleman, the term "Sir George" was given to him on a "double date" while we were at Graham Air Base in early 1956. It was used for the remainder of our flight training.

Tom was a damned good pilot---had to be or you didn't get those coveted "all weather day/night/instrument jet fighter pilot wings". The instructors at Laughlin in the latter part of 1956 were pretty tough. The final check pilots (formation and instrument) were very very tough. Most were ex F80/ F-84 straight wing jocks that were P.O.'d at being stuck in ATC and wanted to make sure you earned and deserved those wings and the commission, if you were a cadet.

Last time I saw Tom was while he was flying F-86's in Oklahoma. In late 1962, after I returned from an isolated Middle East assignment, a mutual friend and class mate said he had gone into "Special Ops" and was in Florida. I was at Moody AFB at the time. One time I passed through Eglin, tried to contact him and he was TDY, so we never connected. I never had the pleasure of meeting Vera, his wife.

I had an email response from Bill Powers which gave me more information. Since you sent an info copy of your email message to Col Downs, I have included him as an info copy of this email.

A salute to all you "Special Ops" and Air Commando gentlemen and ladies. You did and are still doing well! "Anytime, Anyplace" says it all!

Although I have not had a chance to visit the Armament Museum and the Air Commando room, I am going to do that while passing through the Eglin area this summer.

Thanks again for sending me the info and Best Regards,

Bob Chambers  
Bob@dolphintek.com  
6171 S. 70th Ave.  
Tulsa, OK 74133

**COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN** - Okaloosa – Walton Counties #0191

Mr. Richard Geron  
McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 67  
Mary Esther, FL 32569-0067

Dear Dick,

Congratulations!! On behalf of the Local Federal Coordinating Committee (LFCC), the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation has been approved for participation in our 2004 campaign. After reviewing the numerous humanitarian missions that your fine troops accomplished, it is a true privilege to have you on board.

We are planning to have another agency fair in September at Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field kick-offs, so please call me if you plan to participate.

We have raised over a million dollars in each of the last three years, and let's make this year's CFC another banner year.

Sincerely,  
Ken Winzeler, CFC Director  
Okaloosa – Walton Co's CFC  
112 Tupelo Avenue  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548  
(850) 243-0315 Fax (850) 243-6625  
E-mail cfchq@yahoo.com

**DEAR ACA,**

Thanks for sending the Special Operations Warrior Foundation solicitation with my dues reminder. This is definitely a very worthwhile charity project.

Its purpose is to "provide children of the Special Operations Forces the college Education their fallen parents would have wanted for them".

I only wish we had something like this program in force back during the Vietnam era. I remember one fateful day in particular, that was 24 June 1965, when the two A-I E's collided on Eglin Range during training. Four pilots were killed. They

left, I believe, twelve children behind them. One of the pilots (Maj. Robinson) lived in the same duplex as my bride of two months (Carol) and me. He had two small children. Carol and I often wonder what became of them. It was our first experience with death of a fellow Commando with a family; still hurts.

In any event keep sending the solicitation flyers with the dues reminders. And, keep up the good work.

Bobby Bieber — ACA #105  
9909 Bellevue  
Kansas City, MO 64114

*Ed. Note: Thanks Bobby. These children need our assistance.*

**DEAR HAP,**

Thanks for the call regarding the passing of my "Hero and Friend", Col Bulldog/Wild Bill Bethea.

He had an extraordinary Warrior Spirit, with a rough two-fisted, hands-on leadership style; but still he was always fair and just.

Even though he was the senior US military Officer (my Commander) at Bien Hoa, '64 – '65, whenever the "Shit-Hit-The-Fan", he was easy to find. Not in the Command Post, or a Bunker; but, out in the thick of Bombs, Mortars, Bullets, Fire & Smoke. I mean like elbow to elbow with the rest of us "Grunts". He wasn't just our Air Commando Boss; he was one-of-us! And, we loved and respected him for it.

Col Bethea's passing has wounded my heart.

Marty Jester  
1530 SW 187th Street  
Miami, FL 33157

**DEAR PETE,**

Bit late this year. Had mail sent up to Boston; and before I could

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# LETTERS

from pg 8

attend to it, I returned to Hawaii. Air Commando correspondence is the first in order of responsibilities.

The last ACA Newsletter was exceptional and the photography was 'TOP OF THE LINE'.

Recognizing some of the finest in the Air Commando community (while we still can) is clearly a mark of wisdom.

Congratulations on a job WELL DONE...!

Aloha,  
Doc Kenyon  
P.O. Box 3253  
Honolulu, HI 96801-3253

**DEAR ROBERT,**

Kudos to Jim Boney, Jim Yealy, and Rip Kirby for another great paper.

I really liked the article about Sam Wilson. One of the finest guys I've had the pleasure of knowing.

A real supporter of the Air Commandos way back when that was not a real popular thing to do in the DC area.

Bill Keeler - bkeeler041@cox.net  
313 Monahan Drive  
Ft Walton Bch., FL 32547

*Ed. Note: Bill thanks, we need all the kind words we can get.*

**DEAR ROBERT,**

Thank you for continuing to send us e-mail. I enjoy reading things from Don's friends. Did you know that Don (Randle) passed away last April? His obituary was in the Air Force Times. I miss him more than anyone can imagine.

Your mail makes me feel part of him. I never had the pleasure to meet you - can you send me a little history on how you know Don?

My daughter is writing this

for me - my English writing isn't that great!

Take care,  
Viet Randle

**Viet,**

*I'll gladly keep you in the loop. And, yes we Air Commandos knew that Don had passed away.*

*I wasn't sure how you would take me continuing to send e-mails to Don's e-mail address. Don was special to all of us, and you being his wife have to be equally a very special person because Don was always very picky in choosing his friends.*

*Thanks so much for staying in touch. And, please don't worry about the English; we will work past that. It is no big thing.*

*Write often, we enjoy hearing from old friends and their love ones. By the way, you still receive the Air Commando Newsletter; don't you? Joe Holden, Al Shinkle, I and many others remember Don well and wish you and your family the "BEST"...!*

**Respectfully,  
Robert Downs**

**DEAR EDITOR,**

I think the following letter from Ed Laughary should be in the June Newsletter. This is a great tribute to a very Great Guy.

Felix "Sam" Sambogna  
ACA Board Member and MTF Secretary

*Ed. Note: Ed Laughary, a lifetime member of the ACA, sent the following Easter greeting to General Aderholt along with a nice donation to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation. Ed put into words what most of us think of BG "Heinie."*

**ACCOLADES FOR BG  
"HEINIE" ADERHOLT**

Easter Sunday, 2004

Dear General Aderholt,

Just a quick note to express my heartfelt "thanks" for your genuine friendship these past 40+ years. My first opportunity to serve with you was on Operation Swift Strike III in 1963. As a fairly new Captain, recalled during the Suez crisis, I could hardly believe the level of respect and trust you had for your junior officers. Not before or afterwards did I find that trait in a field grade officer. You earned that star long before, and should have retired with at least two additional ones.

My warmest wishes for you this Easter day - as God continues to bless us! My dad whom you met about 5 years ago there in your office is almost 98 (Sept) and speaks of you now and then. He lived alone till end of Feb, and now lives with my sis/family in St. Pete to have care 24/7, although he is still quite mobile. His big wish is to make it to the reunion with me in Oct!! He wants to see you and meet some of my ol' associates.

By the way - I devour the Newsletter upon receipt and find myself up to the wee hours finishing every article-!

God Bless you my Air Commando friend.

Respectfully,

Ed Laughary - L0632  
7650 East Sandia Circle  
Mesa, AZ 85207-1962

P.S. A check enclosed for Mac's Foundation

**HOWDY ROBERT,**

I wanted to share my thoughts with you on this, the 35th anniversary, of the day they almost got me in the night skies over Laos.

It was a normal 5 hour mission with 3 hours over the target on the Trails in Laos. It was dark and the enemy AAA was no more than usual. We always got somewhere

around 800 to 1,000 rounds of various sizes of AAA fired at us in a 3 hr. period.

Suddenly our rear scanner called, "AAA 9 o'clock." Not much you can do when you are banking left in the firing circle and the call is from 9 o'clock.

This means you are flying right into the stuff.

The 37 mm AAA looks very much like a beer can that is red hot coming at you in threes and fours. If it is moving, then you are OK. If it seems to be standing still, then you are going to get hit.

We got hit in the right elevator at the rear of the plane. They nearly missed us. A very lucky hit.

We felt the plane vibrate and shudder when the round hit us. We regained control and asked for a heading to RTB (return to base).

Over the interphone we verified that everyone aboard was OK and the aircraft was manageable with some careful stick and throttle control. We proceeded back to the base arriving in about 45 minutes. The landing was uneventful and lots of sighs of relief were heard from all of the crew. We had 14 souls on board that night and they all were truly thankful we had been so lucky.

The hit was about 18 inches to the right of the main hydraulic boost package located in the tail of the aircraft. About 6 weeks later, another AC-130 got hit 18 inches to the left of our hit directly onto the boost package. It dumped all their hydraulic fluid.

They couldn't lower their gear or flaps; they had no nose wheel steering after landing. The pilot directed all of his crew to bail out except for his co-pilot, the Flight Engineer and one Navigator. The other eleven jumped out over Thailand off the end of the runway.

Since they had no hydraulic fluid, the Flight Engineer went to the cargo compartment and hand cranked the gear down. He accom-

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# LETTERS

from pg 9

plished that and then took a seat in the back in the right side scanner's seat. That position was not stressed for a crash landing.

When the airplane touched down, it began to veer right and it went off the runway. With no steering, the pilot was helpless. The tip of the right wing contacted the F-4 barrier house removing the wing & spilling petrol, which caught fire. The entire plane was consumed by flame to include a fire truck that got too close to the fuselage of the damaged plane.

One man was killed when the AAA hit the aircraft and our Flight Engineer was killed when the wing hit the barrier house. He was thrown forward into the bulkhead and was killed. The two pilots and the Navigator ran out the rear of the plane safely.

All of us on our AC-130 on the night of 27 Mar. '69 felt very lucky that our hit was to the right of the hydraulic boost package. Thus, today is the 35th anniversary of that memorable mission when we survived an enemy AAA hit.

The attachment shows my wide smile and the size of the hole made by that 37 mm round. I'll never forget that one particular flight. Very memorable.

Take care and FLY SAFE!!!  
Cheers - - -

Charlie Spicka GunshipII@aol.com  
Ubong, Thailand '68-'69 DEAR

**CHARLIE,**

*Great story, Charlie! This is the type story we are interested in publishing in the Newsletter. Need more interesting stories like this from the Gunship folks to increase our readership and to round-out the Newsletter.*

*For your information, we are attempting to get each Air Commando Unit to start submitting ar-*

*ticles for our Newsletter. The articles don't have to be pilot oriented or flying stories; ...just articles of interest to our readers. Maintenance, Gun Plumbers, and Supply folks do it too, you know. And, they had a great time making our operations successful. Couldn't have fought the war without their support...!*

**Robert Downs- President**

*"When once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with eyes turned skyward. For there you have been, and there you long to return."*

*(Leonardo Da Vinci)*

**TO THE EDITOR**

I'd like to place an ad in the next issue of the ACA newsletter as follows:

**THIS IS AN UNSOLICITED ENDORSEMENT**

We recently sold a home in the FWB area and were fortunate to have had a Tampa realtor refer us to a Miss Shelley Elley of Pelican Properties on Racetrack Road in Ft. Walton. Would you believe that Shelley sold the house (in record time) for \$15,000 MORE than we thought we could get?!

If you're in the market to buy or sell, we wholeheartedly recommend that you contact Shelley. Her phone number is: 850-621-7180.

Please let me know how much for the ad. Thanks!!

Robby & Dee Roberson  
ACA Member #H004  
649 Timber Pond Drive  
Brandon, FL 33510-2936

**Ed. Note:** *As many of you will recall, Dee was the Wing Commander's secretary for many a year. Dee was very special to us because she had so much to do with organizing and structuring the Air Commandos. I recall that she sure*

*kept our "butts" out of an awful lot of trouble. Additionally, Dee was best known for her "Can Do Attitude and Free Spirit".*

*There will be no charge Dee; without people like you and Robbie, Special Operations would not have advanced to where it is today.*

**COLONEL NEUPHET**

Robert,

I have been meaning to respond to you about Col. Neuphet, GM 18 Commander. I probably knew him better and spent more time with him than any of the other of the Regional or GM Commanders. My delay in responding is that I have a couple of photos that were taken together but after all these years I simply can't find them.

Yes, Col Neuphet was very focused on what he was doing. But, when in Savannakhet together we used to go to the kick-boxing matches, sat on the front row, of course.

He built a runway for me to use for the Lao Cessna U-17 I used and also for the O-1. Of course everyone knew that Col Neuphet and Gen Ma were very close and he almost always responded to Ma's requests. In return, GM 18 was very well supported by the RLAF.

One time, part of GM 18 was moving from one location to another and we were on the only road in fairly woody terrain and Col. Neuphet was in the lead vehicle. I suggested to his aid that it might be better for the Commander to not be in that position due to the possibility of land mines. The next morning I noticed he had either an armored vehicle or a tank with troops in the lead.

Until I got an aircraft, we used to mark targets for both the RLAF and US aircraft by using WP artillery. I never thought much of that procedure as I could never verify precisely the target nor the results; but it did wonders for the troops moral to see lots and lots of aircraft

pounding the area where the artillery shells were landing. Had to make sure the a/c attacks came from the correct direction to insure they didn't fly through the ground fire.

We did a hell of a lot better after Ma gave me the Cessna and even better yet when Pappy Pettigrew and the Ambassador got the O-1's for my use.

In addition to rockets for marking, we used to put 15 or 20 hand grenades in glasses, pull the pins, and then when we found a target, carefully, very carefully, throw them out one to three at a time. By the way, Lt Sangat was the RLAF officer that flew with me. I knew his family and we used to ride around SVK on his motorbike.

We got shot up pretty good on an attack down south one day and Sangat got hit in the leg. Nothing real serious but Gen Ma was concerned. What ever happened to Sangat? Any idea?

I'd stay with Neuphet sometimes for weeks at a time, maybe going back to SVK for a day occasionally. I lived with GM 18, ate with GM 18 and got to know many of them very well.

After going south and working with other units, I believed that 18 was the best trained and certainly the best disciplined unit in the area.

One hell of a war wasn't it! To this day I feel that we should have done more and just think what we could have done if we'd had the communications capabilities then that exists today.

Roy Dalton

**ROY - GREAT STORY!** *I'll send copy of this e-mail to Prayoon, Chant, Sery, Concy, Souvanratanna, and others. I'll bet that one or more of these guys can tell us what became of Lt Sangat (the RLAF officer that flew with you).*

*I also believe that they can come-up with good pictures of Col Neuphet.*

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# LETTERS

from pg 10

*How about writing an article about Col Neuphet and we will publish it in the ACA Newsletter?*

*Several of the Lao pilots who are members of the Air Commando Association will enjoy reading about him. They may be able to add more background information about Col Neuphet.*

*I'm sure wish that I had taken more pictures and recorded what was happening at the time I was in Laos. The Lao had some real fighters who were tough as nails. Col Neuphet was defiantly one tough hombre.*

*With better communications these guys would have been awesome to go against. Most people could never imagine the conditions under which these guys lived and fought.*

**Robert Downs- President**

**Email to Col Phimpavong Concy**

Do you recall what became of Lt Sangat? I am enclosing an e-mail which I received from Roy Dalton.

Robert Downs

**HI BOB,**

Wish you and fellows comandos had a wonderful weekend.

Very happy to give you the answer of Lt Sangat, he was one of the most dangerous Intel for the PL while serving in the RLAf and was the one who led the manifestations in the Lao Air Force during the mid 1975 and become famous in the PL administration after that....and he was not the only one; we have a lots of that kinds....you understand what I mean..ok...

Concy  
Col Phimpavong Concy

**ROBERT,**

Happened on these photos. Top to bottom.

1. With Neuphet on one of his tanks in GM 18.

2. Some captured items we reviewed.

3. With Lt Sangat pointing out a few holes in our aircraft.

Photos taken 13 Apr 66 after a mission 2 miles south of Ban Lao Ngam. Sangat got shrapnel in his leg and I got some cuts on my face from flying plexiglass.

As you know, the Ambassador was so hung on us taking unnecessary risks we didn't report it for fear of being grounded.

Hey, that's life,

Roy Dalton

**Ed. Note:** Sorry, Roy's pictures were not printable quality.

**HUNTING THE JACKAL**

We've been waiting for "this" for quite awhile and in just a few weeks, 15 June, you'll be able to read a fabulous book written by the "real deal" in Special Forces lore.....CSM Billy Waugh. This is a book you won't want to miss and will be available at all the best bookstores - Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble, Borders, Powell's, etc.

I'm very proud to be considered his friend and highly recommend the book.

Adrian Silva (D-6625)  
Special Forces Association  
Chapter 75 - Vice President  
E-mail: sf1967@wintutors.com  
Website: www.sfachapter75.org

**Hunting the Jackal**

*A Special Forces and CIA Ground Soldier's Fifty-Year Career Hunting America's Enemies by Billy Waugh and Tim Keown*

Billy Waugh is a Special Forces and CIA legend, and in Hunt-

ing the Jackal he allows unprecedented access to the shadowy but vital world he has inhabited for more than fifty years.

From deep inside the suffocating jungles of Southeast Asia to the fetid streets of Khartoum to the freezing high desert of Afghanistan, Waugh chronicles U.S. Special Operations through the extraordinary experiences of his singular life. He has worked in more than sixty countries, hiding in the darkest shadows and most desolate corners to fight those who plot America's demise. Waugh made his mark in places few want to consider and fewer still would choose to inhabit. In remarkable detail he recounts his participation in some of the most important events in American Special Operations history, including his own pivotal role in the previously untold story of the CIA's involvement in the capture of the infamous Carlos the Jackal.

Waugh's work in helping the CIA bring down Carlos the Jackal provides a riveting and suspenseful account of the loneliness and adrenaline common to real-life espionage. He provides a point-by-point breakdown of the indefatigable work necessary to detain the world's first celebrity terrorist.

No synopsis can adequately describe Waugh's experiences. He spent seven and a half years in Vietnam, many of them behind enemy lines as part of SOG, a top secret group of elite commandos. He was tailed by Usama bin Laden's unfriendly bodyguards while jogging through the streets of Khartoum, Sudan, at 3 A.M. And, at the age of seventy-two, he marched through the frozen high plains of Afghanistan as one of a select number of CIA operatives who hit the ground as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Waugh came face-to-face with bin Laden in Khartoum in 1991 and again in 1992 as one of the first CIA operatives assigned to watch the al Qaeda leader. Waugh describes his

daily surveillance routine with clear-eyed precision. Without fanfare, fear, or chance of detection, he could have killed the 9/11 mastermind on the dirty streets of Khartoum had he been given the authority to do so.

No man is more qualified to chronicle America's fight against its enemies - from communism to terrorism - over the past half-century. In *Hunting the Jackal*, Billy Waugh has emerged from the shadows and folds of history to write a memoir of an extraordinary life for extraordinary times.

**Ed. Note:** A must read book....!

★★★

**NEVADA SENATOR  
WANTS FORMER CIA  
AIRLINE EMPLOYEES  
TO GET BENEFITS**

*Summary of the original AP report in the Las Vegas Review-Journal*

For 20 years, Las Vegas Ward Reimer only suspected he was working for the CIA. The Taiwan-based airline that had hired him as a mechanic was a cover for the CIA from the 1950s until American troops pulled out of Vietnam in 1975. Reimer's bosses at Air America Inc. never disclosed the truth to him or to many of the hundreds of employees who serviced planes and flew missions over China, Korea, Laos and Vietnam during the era.

When the CIA shuttered Air America in 1975, they were unable to seek government benefits. Almost 30 years later, Reimer and others are asking Congress to grant them federal benefits, as is done for employees of other corporations owned by the U.S. government.

At their request, Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., introduced legislation Thursday that would make the mechanics, the crew members, the pilots and the widows of Air America eligible for federal retirement benefits.

See **CIA** pg. 13

# A MEMORIAL DAY MESSAGE

By KALE DANBERG,  
Brooklyn Park, MN

"Tell them, tell them when you get home, that I gave all my tomorrows so they could have today!"

Those are the words on a tombstone, far across the Pacific, of someone who gave up his life for our future. Were those words uttered so that those of us who are left could just enjoy our lives without "getting involved" or were they written to remind us that the work of freedom and liberty is never done?

Were those words written to suggest to us that it is not our job nor our responsibility to keep alive what they fought and died for or were they written to remind us that we were given the opportunity of life so that we would continue to defend, and keep alive the memory of what they gave their last full measure for?

Let us here today, tonight, tomorrow, next months and next year remember these gallant defenders of our freedom. Most were not heroes as defined by the most hallowed Medal of Honor nor even as defined by the Silver or Bronze Star. But they were ALL HEROES. Yes, they were heroes because, without hesitation they fought for our country when they were asked to defend her.

Most didn't die throwing themselves on a hand grenade, charging a bunker or manning a machine gun until their ammunition was gone. Most didn't die diving their airplane into an enemy ship or marching in the infamous Bataan Death March, but they are heroes because they fought when asked to fight. They left their families, friends and good times behind and went to fight for our freedom without hesitation.

Some never even fired their weapons because they were killed before they ever reached the beach; but they were heroes because they were there, ready to fight for America - for family, flag and country.

Most were scared to death as they prepared to meet, the enemy. Their stomachs were turned upside down and they prayed to God and wished they were with their moms, dads or sweethearts rather than being where they were.

But they were where they were fighting an enemy that was threatening their right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They were fighting an enemy because they believed in America, they loved Her flag and they wanted to protect American's right to worship as they chose. They were there without hesitation, fighting for what they believed in and dying for what they believed in so you and I could live the way we chose in a free country.

But they did not die so that we would stop fighting for what they believed and died for. They fought and died knowing that we, the living, would go on fighting for that same freedom, that same country, that same flag and for that same right to worship as we choose.

Abraham Lincoln, at Gettysburg, said: "...It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us - that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."

It is for us, the living, to go on defending what they died for. It is for us, the living, not to allow history to forget what they gave up all their tomorrows for. It is for us, the living, to expect to get a bit uncomfortable as we continue to tell the

truth even as the vocal minorities try to silence us.

Good enough is not good enough! When we open our mouths but once and we're told we shouldn't say that, we must not say we tried, good enough! Good enough is not good enough.

If, when we attacked Guadalcanal, and when we landed at Salerno, we found that "they" were going to fight back, we continued to fight because we knew our cause was right!

When Americans rode in the landing craft before storming the beaches at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Sicily, Anzio, Normandy, Peleliu, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Inchon, and many other places we never heard of before and when they fought in North Africa, the Philippines, Italy, France, Bastogne, Germany, Korea, and Viet Nam, most were scared to death. But that did not stop them from attacking America's enemies bravely and without hesitation. They fought, and many died, but they did not give up because someone shot back at them.

They did not die so that we could become complacent; nor did they die so that when we, the living, reached a single obstacle, we should quit. They died knowing that we would go on defending their actions, defending history and defending what they gave up all their tomorrows for.

If WE don't remember; if WE don't defend what they fought and died for and what we fought for, who will remember? Who will care?

Revisionists are attempting to change history. At the Smithsonian they sought to tell of our supposed atrocities to our past enemies. America's Ambassador to Japan apologized to the Japanese for us without getting any apology, or even an acknowledgement of their wrong doing. Peter Jennings had an hour-long TV special demonstrating our injustices and he expressed disappointment that the Smithsonian was

prevented from displaying all the photographs of the results of our bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He expressed disappointment that veterans blocked the truth from being known. And, until many Minnesota veterans and Asian Americans protested, a mass Requiem Hiroshima, was to be played for the dead, caused by America and Americans, of the bombing of Hiroshima without describing the events and atrocities committed that led up to our having to drop the bomb.

Today, we are even prevented from protecting our flag by the minority and a few in Washington, D.C., even though most Americans proclaim that burning our flag is not what they consider free speech. How many of us who fought for our flag and our country remember the feeling as old Glory was being raised over a piece of land we fought for, and many died for? How many remember seeing or hearing about our valiant warriors, who were fighting on Iwo Jima, as they stood and cheered when they saw the flag being raised over Mt. Suribachi?

Today, our flag is not present in many classrooms across this nation and, if it is, there is no Pledge of Allegiance. Today, even many of America's houses of worship do not fly Old Glory! Is it any wonder why America and Americans have changed so drastically?

Who in the future will even remember what our veterans did? Who will remember our sacrifices? Take a walk down the street today and ask people important questions about WWII, Korea and even Viet-Nam. How many correct answers do you think you'll receive? How many won't even answer at all and how many will say, "All I know is at the end of WWII we shouldn't have dropped the bomb!" or "We were wrong to drop the bomb!"

Who would we blame for this? The veterans and the veterans'

See **MEMORIAL** pg. 13



# FLAK TRAP ON THE PDJ

By KARL POLIFKA

The NVA had quite a few PT-76 tanks in the PDJ area although they never seemed to use them to any great effect when I was at Long Tieng in 1969. The PT-76 wasn't much of a tank with a 76mm main gun and one-inch armor, but the friendlies didn't have armor so it was a real threat to them. Tanks, however, were a big deal to 7th Air Force. The NVA knew that tanks were high on the Air Force agenda and could be used to lure the unsuspecting into unfortunate situations.

Late on the afternoon of 20 April 1969 I came across a PT-76 on a road in the west central PDJ. It hadn't been there earlier in the day and it was just sitting there far from any friendly troops or possible objective -- no activity, no movement, no nothing. It was possible that someone had decided to take a tank for a drive in daylight and had an engine breakdown -- the NVA had done goofier things. On the other hand, the situation smelled funny. The weather in the immediate area had a thin broken deck at about 2000 feet. Workable for fast movers but better for slow movers like the T-28DA-team operating out of Moun Soui that day. What a great opportunity for Bobby Downs and his intrepid A-team!

I called Moun Soui on VHF and described the situation to Bobby. He seemed mildly interested until I said that "... this kind of looks like it might be a flak trap ...". I didn't know that VHF could transmit the sound of laughter so well. I thought Bobby was going to choke from laughing. He finally got out something between laughs, I think it was a question regarding my mental capacity. Fine, if you're going to be like that I'll take my business elsewhere!

CRICKET sent me NEWARK, a couple of Thuds that were down to 20mm -- which would be

perfect. I climbed above the thin cloud layer, made the rendezvous, and briefed the target including the possible flak trap. I dropped through a hole and rolled in to mark. That's when the flak trap came true. Just as I fired a WP something kicked the rudder hard. I looked just to the west and could see the muzzle flash of a 37mm that had, not so cleverly, been parked in some vegetation on the east side of a low hill. They couldn't fire to the west.

NEWARK made a few quick strafe passes that clearly hit the PT-76 but there was no fire or other sign of destruction. Did the bad guys tow a derelict tank out there to see who bit on it? A few minutes later, at 1726, I worked HATCHET, another set of Thuds, on the 37mm. I didn't need to mark the gun since they made themselves obvious by continuing to fire. HATCHET came in from the west and both dumped their Mk 82 load on the gun and then covered the area with CBU 24 to get any troops in the area.

Bobby Downs and I still laugh about the opportunity he let the A-team miss.

**Robert's comments:** *The above is Karl's version of the story, and I'm sure that he is going to stick with it.*

*Actually, Karl has toned his version of the story down considerably. When he called me at Moun Soui and explained the layout, what he had in mind and gave me the details, ... there were some strong expletives like "Crazier than Hell", "Dumb Ass", "SOB", "Sh-T Head" and more that went back and forth over the radios stating that it had every appearance of being a FLAK-TRAP. No way was the "A" Team going into that setup.*

*As I recall, Karl's feelings were really hurt bad and his nose was plenty bent way out of shape because of my lack of interest in supporting him and his new found target.*

*Later, we were both glad that we had not sent the T-28's to destroy the tank. Initially, the "A" Team was also very unhappy with me when they heard that they missed an opportunity to destroy a tank, ... a tank target was a rarity for them.*

*We were all fortunate that a real disaster was averted. The setup was just too darn good to be true!*

*It wasn't that I was all that smart, it was just one of those very uncomfortable deep down gut feeling that tells you...NO, DON'T DO IT!*

★★★

## CIA

from pg 11

"We'd just like to get a little for ourselves. There's only 500 of us left," said John Condon of Las Vegas, who was an Air America flight engineer for 11 years. "It would be nice and help some people that really need it."

Reid said his bill would guarantee benefits to all employees of Air America and its subsidiaries and not limit payments only to those who went on to other government jobs.

"These are American heroes, many of whom were killed in action while flying dangerous missions for the CIA," Reid said in a statement. "They deserve to be recognized as such and at a minimum receive the same benefits that other federal employees receive."

William Merrigan, a Defense Department lawyer who was Air America's counsel from 1962 to 1975, said congressional action is needed because the courts and the government have denied appeals from the airline's former employees.

Reid's office did not have a cost estimate for the proposal. Merrigan predicted the cost would be minimal, given the small number of workers employed by the airline.

Submitted by: Peter Kessler

★★★

## MEMORIAL from pg 12

organizations who would discourage their members from being involved in defending what they gave their lives for would be to blame. All of us who won't take the time to write, speak or call their representatives will be to blame.

And if, when we're again called to duty - this time to guard the streets of Heaven - we look down and find that no one wants to defend our nation, that no one wants to follow our flag and even the monuments to defenders past are being torn down, we will hang our heads in shame and ask "Why?" Why did we allow ourselves to not defend what we did and what they died for?

In closing, let's remember again what Abraham Lincoln said: "...that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain," and what President John E. Kennedy said in his famous inauguration speech - "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" and last of all remember that gravestone far across the Pacific which states: "Tell them I gave all my tomorrows so they could have today!"

Let's remember all of our heroes in cemeteries all across America and all over the world. Let's remember that they gave all their tomorrows so that we could have today. Thank you and God bless.

★★★



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# FINAL FLIGHT PLANS

## LARRY "SANDY" SANBORN

August 16, 1943 - April 30, 2004



Mrs. Jan Sanborn receives the flag in honor of loving husband Larry Sanborn at his memorial service at the Hurlburt Air park. Sandy was a board member of the Air Commando Association and president of the Raven Association. His friendship, loyalty, and boundless energy will be greatly missed. Nevermore, Sandy, nevermore.

### LARRY "SANDY" SANBORN

Born 8/16/43 in Belleville, Kansas. Attended AF Academy '61-'65. Attended pilot training at Vance AFB graduating in Aug '66. From there he was sent to Spangdahlem AB, Germany flying the F-4. June of '68 he went to Holloman AFB, NM, the 7th TAC Ftr Sq. In Sep '69, he was stationed at Chu Lai Vietnam. June 14 '70, he was sent to Laos and stayed until Aug '71.

He then taught at the AF Academy and attended University of Denver where he received a masters degree in EE. In '72, Larry spent three years working on his Ph.D. at Georgia Tech. He received another master of science degree in June '77. From there he returned to Peterson Field in CO. His next assignment was to Los Angeles AFS, CA. He worked on very classified advanced

space technology. The Pentagon was his last AF assignment. While there he worked for NRO under Pete Aldrich, Sec. of the AF.

After determining he was not on the promotion list for general, he decided to make some money and retired as a Col. from the USAF May '89. He continued his work with satellites at TRW. He was a project manager for many systems and expanded his knowledge base in management functions. He retired from TRW in June 2001. In August he moved to Navarre and Feb 2004 moved into the house in Ft. Walton Beach.

Larry received many awards and decorations including the Legion of Merit, DFC with 2 OLC, Defense Meritorious service medal, Air Medal with 23 OLCs, and the AFC in addition to many other unit citations and awards. In civilian work he received a yearly bonus

earned for outstanding work and many outstanding employee awards.

After retirement, he was very active with the Raven Association and elected President. He sought out the Air Commando Association and volunteered on many projects including the back breaking load-outs of MTF containers. He was elected to the ACA Board of Directors last year. His positive focus and spirit will be sorely missed by all of the Air Commandos and Ravens. He was ready to help anytime, anyplace.

*Fred Platt*

### ORVIN T. "COPE" COPLAND

"Cope" Copeland passed away recently following a losing battle to cancer. Larry Caison, Ray Bourque, Fred Sanders, and I traveled to Headland, Alabama to attend his services and pay our deepest respects.

Fred Sanders participated in the services by presenting a most eloquent and stirring eulogy.

"Cope" was an Air Commando patriot and warrior without peer. His passing leaves yet another dark emptiness to our heritage and history.

I join all Air Commandos in extending our sincerest condolences to his brave wife Anise and all other family members.

*Hap Lutz*

### JACK WESTFALL

Jack Westfall was a great fighter pilot, absolutely fearless and with great ability to find targets at night. He was always ready to fly, anytime and in marginal weather.

I flew with him on many occasions, and he was one of the best pilots I ever flew with.

After he left the outfit, I vis-

ited with him in Okinawa and he was still trying to return to combat. Jack was a real asset to the 56 ACW and to the USAF.

I kept in touch with him until a few years before his death. I will always treasure his friendship and dedication to his country.

My dear friend Jack, I and many Commandos will miss you, but never forget you.

So long old friend and God Bless You.

*Heinie Aderholt*

### RUSSEL B. KNOEBEL

USAF Col. (Retired) Russell P. Knoebel, awarded a Silver Star and Purple Heart, along with other medals, for his bravery and actions in Vietnam died after a short illness on 5 March 04 and his ashes were interned at a memorial service at Fort Sam National Cemetery.

As a fighter pilot, Knoebel saw action in both the Korean and Vietnam wars. It was during his second tour in the Vietnam War that although seriously wounded, he showed his concern for the safety of others.

Flying solo in the A-37 fighter, Knoebel was seriously wounded in the leg during a bombing attack on the enemy. Breaking off the attack, he was diverted to the nearest suitable airstrip. Although he had difficulty in controlling and stopping the aircraft on a short Army airfield he was diverted to, he was successful and was taken to their field medical facility. While on the operating table, he was advised this aircraft had attracted quite a crowd. Hundreds of people were surrounding the aircraft and examining it.

Knoebel suddenly realized the danger all those people were in. "Does anyone on this base camp know how to safety the bombs still

**See FINAL FLIGHT pg. 15**



# FINAL FLIGHT

from pg 14

on the aircraft or the gun on it?" he excitedly questioned. If one of the armed bombs on it exploded or the gun capable of firing 6,000 rounds a minute started firing, it would be a major disaster.

No one there could de-arm the aircraft; so on a stretcher and while suffering the excruciating pain of the wound, they carried him back to the aircraft so he could safety the bombs and the gun. Such was his concern for others.

As one of the younger pilots who flew on his wing said, "He was a good Flight CO, a great Pilot, and a true friend. He took us younger kids under his wing and taught us the right way to get in [to an enemy target], do an outstanding job, and then get out safely."

Following Vietnam, Russ was assigned to Headquarters, PACAF, then later became a squadron commander at Webb AFB, Texas, followed by an assignment to ATC Headquarters at Randolph AFB. He retired in San Antonio and helped start the A-37 'Reunion' Association, an organization that welcomes "Anyone who flew, worked on, worked with, or has a high admiration for the great little fighter." (The A-37 flew more combat missions in Vietnam than any other fighter.)

Later, he and his wife, Lisa, moved to Spring Branch, Texas.

Ollie Maier

## ROBERT FULTON

The United States Military and Central intelligence Agency suffered the loss of one of its most talented inventors. I have known Bob Fulton for more than 40 years and I am aware of his many contributions to the defense of our country.

Robert Fulton was a patriot, inventor, great photography and aviator and made many contributions

to the defense and welfare of this country.

He was the first man to ride a motorcycle around the world. He developed the Fulton Recovery System and made other assists to the United States Military and the CIA. He was a great pilot and flew his own plane for many, many years. He served his country in many ways.

God Bless you my friend. You will be missed by all of us.

Harry C. Aderholt

## BURIAL HONORS PLANNED FOR FATHER OF SPECIAL FORCES

One of the Army's legendary fighters and father of the Army's Special Forces died Thursday at the age of 101 in Dana Point.

Retired Army Col. Aaron Bank will be buried Monday afternoon at Riverside National Cemetery with full military honors attended by hundreds of former and current Green Berets, as well as other military dignitaries.

Col. Bank was one of 93 original men from the Office of Strategic Services who parachuted into France, Belgium and Holland to conduct covert warfare against the Nazis before the invasion of Normandy in 1944.

He trained for a mission to capture top Nazi officers. Bank was discharged from the OSS after the war and returned to the Army Counter Intelligence Corps.

A veteran of Korea, Col. Bank began work on developing the Special Forces in 1951, then assumed command of the 10th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, N.C. There, he perfected training small A-teams of 12 people to parachute into enemy territory and to organize indigenous fighters to battle the enemy.

Marlowe Churchill

The Press-Enterprise - (909) 567-2407 or  
mchurchill@pe.com

★★★

# A FALLEN SOLDIER RETURNS HOME

Submitted by: SANDY SANBORN

*A true story! This is about one of our soldiers who died in Iraq and lived in Boonville, NY. It is sad.*

It is a great story. The letter was written by Senior Investigator Jack Graham of the New York State Police to fellow members of the NY State Police and to the Syracuse Police who, on April 17, 2003, participated in a hastily planned ceremonial escort for a soldier killed in Iraq. Feel free to pass this on. These are the kinds of stories that make us proud to be an American.

The abbreviation "SP", means "State Police", and it refers to a station. For instance, SP Loudonville, NY. The letter follows:

On Thursday, April 17, 2003 you participated in an escort detail for GREGORY P. HUXLEY JR who was killed in action in Iraq on April 6, 2003. On behalf of the entire Huxley family and from me, personally, I want to say "Thank you very much." Your professionalism, dedication and sincerity meant so much to the Huxley family, that words cannot describe their feelings at this time.

What most did not know was that the US Army had promised the family members that they would be taken to Dover, Delaware to be present when their son arrived from Iraq and there would be a full military ceremony in Dover for GREGORY. Unfortunately, there was a communication problem and they were not present during that ceremony.

Then they were informed that the body of their son was being flown to Syracuse and that the funeral director could pick up the "fallen soldier" at the cargo area of the airport and that somebody would help them remove the casket from the cardboard shipping container for transport to Boonville, NY.

The funeral director felt that unacceptable for a nineteen year old young man that gave his life for this country and for the freedom of so many others. As a family friend he contacted me to see if anything could be done. We now had six hours before GREGORY arrived in Syracuse.

Phone calls were made to SP North Syracuse and SGT Nick Harmatiuk took over from there. What you participated in and observed the rest of that day was truly an outstanding display of what this agency can do in very short time.

What happened was just visually and emotionally overwhelming. The procession left SP North Syracuse led by eight Syracuse PD motorcycles, followed by the hearse, four cars with family members and followed by ten State Police and Syracuse PD cars. How ironic it was that when the procession was traveling parallel to the runway, the plane carrying GREGORY landed next to it. We were able to enter the plane's cargo area and remove the shipping crate from the casket and drape the American flag over the casket. When the casket traveled down the conveyor belt, fifteen New York State Troopers and the same amount of Syracuse Policemen lined the path to the awaiting hearse - all at attention. A hand salute was executed as six State Troopers proudly bore the flag draped coffin to the hearse. After a short prayer, the family was given some time to welcome their son home.

The entire airport was so quiet. I looked up at the concourse windows and saw a hundred or more people. They were all standing, watching, with their hands over their hearts, saluting a young man that they did not know. Somehow they

See **SOLDIER** pg. 16

# SOLDIER

from pg 15

learned that a fallen soldier had come home and they wanted to honor his sacrifice.

The casket was then placed in the hearse and the procession left the airport in the same fashion as we arrived, only this time with a young hero that our hearts will never forget.

The motorcade was escorted to the thruway entrance by the Syracuse Police Department's motorcycles. All traffic was stopped for the procession and we headed east towards Boonville. After getting off the thruway, we found that every intersection that the procession encountered was controlled by State Troopers, allowing us a safe, unimpeded passage. At each intersection, the State Trooper stood at attention, saluting the fallen soldier and his family, giving him and his family the respect that they deserved. How emotional that was to see and now to reflect on.

When entering the Village of Boonville, the main street was decorated with an infinite number of

American Flags and yellow ribbons. As we approached the center of town, all of the church bells began to peal at once recognizing and saluting Gregory's arrival. Hundreds of people holding American flags lined the street, some with their hand over their heart and some weeping for GREGORY for what he sacrificed, for us and his country. As we drove by the village park, the National Anthem was being played, for GREGORY, and I think, for all of us.

At the funeral home, eight veterans lifted the casket out of the hearse and into the home with the family. GREGORY had returned home. GREGORY'S family said to me later that the images I have just described will always be etched in their hearts, forever. But the one memory that will always be there first, was of the State Troopers at the airport, standing at attention, saluting, with tears running down their cheeks for their son, a fallen soldier. A hero whom those Troopers never personally knew.

Our jobs take many different avenues in life. We hope that during our day or shift that we have made a difference, a positive contribution.

On this occasion you did just that. An entire family knows that you cared to do your very best to honor their son. Their words and expressions told me just that. We made a difference yesterday, and we did it well.

The rewards we receive for details like this one do not come from anywhere but from the heart. Take pride in what you accomplished, because it was distinct and without equal in this Trooper's eye. I have had so many good things happen since I have been a State Trooper, but in those twenty four years, I have

never been more proud of the New York State Police as I was yesterday - A fallen soldier, a hero, a son, a brother has finally come home, in grand deserving style, thanks to all of you.

★★★

"All men dream: but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act their dreams with open eyes, to make it possible.

*T.E Lawrence, "The Seven Pillars of Wisdom"*

## AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION OFFICIAL 2004 BALLOT

**1. PROXY BALLOT (MARK HERE FOR PROXY DESIGNATION OR VOTE BELOW. DO NOT MARK THE PROXY BALLOT SECTION IF YOU ARE VOTING BELOW. MARKING BOTH PLACES WILL INVALIDATE YOUR BALLOT)**

☐ I give my Proxy for all my votes to: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. PRESIDENT (VOTE FOR ONE)**

☐ FELIX "SAM" SAMBOGNA

☐ Write in \_\_\_\_\_

**3. TREASURER (VOTE FOR ONE)**

☐ ROBERT DOWNS

☐ Write in \_\_\_\_\_

**4. BOARD (VOTE FOR THREE)**

☐ JOHN CONNORS

☐ DAVE HARRINGTON

☐ TED SAUNDERS

☐ Write in \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Write in \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Write in \_\_\_\_\_

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# McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF) Inc., the all-volunteer non-profit humanitarian arm of the Air Commando Association, is to provide aid and assistance locally and worldwide to those in need. The aid may be in the form of medical teams/ supplies, identified specific needs, or bulk shipping of general humanitarian items such as clothing, school and medical equipment, furniture, and food.

The MTF primary objective is to provide equipment and supplies in support of U.S. Military Humanitarian Assistance Programs (HAP) and nation building efforts, thus projecting U.S. forces in the best possible light.

When a military partnership is not available, the MTF will provide humanitarian aid representing the United States of America through other non-profit organizations.

## MTF SUPPORTS OUR TROOPS HERE AT HOME

The Airman's Attic Program is a spin-off from the old Family Services Loan Locker Program. Most bases worldwide have a place where needy service members can go and obtain donated household items. Locally, eligible personnel are E-5's and below. Needs of all ranks are considered on a case by case basis. The Attic's are staffed by volunteers.

To receive assistance, the member must provide a signed Referenced Request Form from his or her 1st Sergeant. Assistance is provided on a first come - first served basis. Wish Lists are maintained for items needed, but not on hand.

The program is extremely popular, very effective and a great morale booster for all concerned.

Now-a-days all ranks can move into base housing, but the ma-

jority of the younger troops don't have much in the way of household furnishings to move in with.

We have supported the Hurlburt Attic for some time. Eglin's Attic just opened in a newly upgraded 5000 sq ft renovated facility and we stocked them with TV's, pot & pans, baby stuff, bedding, furniture, and table ware.

Both Attics give us items they can't use, including adult civilian clothing. We pickup these items weekly and ship them where needed.

We have made a good and lasting impression within the Active Air Force Community. With your active support, we plan to continue with this important mission.

Items always in need are: Baby Clothes; Baby Beds; Baby Cribs; Strollers; Toys; Youth Beds; Bedroom Furniture Bedding; Clothes Washers and Dryers; Living & Dining Room Furniture; Kitchen Appliances; Pots & Pans; TV's; VCR's; etc.

**NOTE:** *Just about anything that could be used in setting-up a home.*

Do keep us in mind when you are upgrading your homes, cleaning out closets, purchasing new clothing because your children have out grown theirs. There is always someone who desperately needs those items you no longer use.

You can drop items at the ACA Building on Hwy 98 any work-day morning between 9 AM and 12 AM. Or you can call Bob White to arrange pickup (Cell phone 850 585-4623 / Home 850 581-0661).

As Command Chief Eddie Alicca, 16th SOW wrote to us recently, ... "What a wonderful way to continue to serve".

**MTF Airman's Attic Coordinator - Bob White**

## MTF EFFORTS RECOGNIZED

Jeremiah Denton, RADM, USN (Ret) is the Director of TRANSFORM (Transportation for the Relief of Mankind). John Grove, MTF VP, coordinates with TRANSFORM representatives to acquire transportation for the shipments the MTF sends to Honduras and Guatemala. The article below, taken from the recent TRANSFORM Newsletter, recognizes the great effort and accomplishments of John and the volunteers of the MTF.

*MTF Secretary - Felix "Sam" Sambogna*

## AFTER ACTION REPORT: HAITI - 15 APRIL 2004

The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation Inc and the Air Commandos, in conjunction with the Admiral Jeremiah Denton Foundation (Transform), the Okaloosa County School District, U.S. Southern Command (SouthCom) and many volunteers completed one of the best short notice support missions to date. Sixteen days from notification to shipping two, 20 foot, Sea-Land containers.

The MTF was notified on 30 March by Audra Murray of Admiral Denton's Foundation that SouthCom was in the process of a Humanitarian Assistance Mission at four schools in the area of Port au Prince, Haiti. They needed school supplies and equipment. They were looking to ship out in mid April. The ACA/MTF volunteers were called and the heavy lifting began the next day.

The Okaloosa School District board and Tommy Kranz, had authorized the donation of desks and chairs. To date the donations offered are for 2000 student desks and 2000 plastic stacking chairs. The Principal of Walker Elementary School,

Ms Williams, had lots of excess/ out of date texts books. We had other books in storage from last year's donations from Florosa and Niceville Schools. Audra determined that these books would be used in Haiti. Other items the ACA/ MTF had in storage and Haiti's needs were a perfect match. The containers were ordered, loaded and shipped and the mission was a total success. Our recent purchase of a forklift was a much needed addition to our operation, it worked great for loading the large, one ton, boxes into the container.

The cost to our MTF was just lots of labor, all the dollar costs were picked up by SouthCom through Admiral Denton's Foundation. This is the second large shipment this year that has been paid for by the United States Government/ Admiral Denton's foundation. What a great working partnership. More good missions are expected in the near future, Ecuador and another Honduras mission are planned.

## THE LOAD:

20,000 lbs (approx) 8 large plywood crates, and 72 smaller boxes and crates consisting of the following:

Student desks, 264; Stacking Chairs, 297; Folding & other chairs, 45; Small boxes of books, 46; Large crates of books, 6; Display boards, 4; File cabinets, 4; Teacher desk and chair, 1 set; Step stool, 1; Bags and containers of sheets, towels and clothing to fill all the spaces in the container.

## THE VOLUNTEERS:

### *Shipping arrangements:*

Audra Murray, Dave Gallardo, and Mark Millard.

### *Packing:*

Doris Eaton, John Grove, Tim Mursch, Teddy Mursch, Ken Poole,

*See MTF pg. 18*

# MTF

from pg 17

Dave Freeman, Bob White, Roger Klair, Sam Sambogna, Clyde Howard, and Walter Heidmous.

## Loading SeaLand Containers:

Roger Klair, Clyde Howard, Dave Freeman, Doris Eaton, and Bob White.

## HONDRUS / GUATEMALA FIELD TRIP

*McCaskrie Threshold Foundation Mission, 28 Jan 2004*

The McCaskrie Threshold Foundation completed a large shipment of school items for Honduras and Guatemala that we reported on in the last newsletter. Now we have a first hand account of the results from Audra Murray of the Admiral Jeremiah Denton Foundation. She had traveled to Central America to get a prospective of our combined efforts and see what the future needs may be. She filed an electronic report from down south, which I quote:

From: AudraAM@aol.com  
Sent: Sunday, April 18, 2004 3:00 PM

To: john.grove@hurlburt.af.mil;  
Craig.tate@soc.mil

Cc: TRANSFF1@aol.com

Subject: Honduras and Guatemala

Good afternoon!

I just want to touch base with you and all of your humanitarian compadres up there on the Honduras and Guatemala school items for the new schools down here.

Mainly, I want to confirm that all of the crates are here, both Honduras and Guatemala. The crates are safely stored on the Task Force Base Camp, which is secured because it is with all of the other military equipment that is shipped down.

In Honduras, we talked with the Civil Affairs attached to the Task Force, who drove us from site to site.

He will oversee the coordination for delivery to the individual schools and coordinate with the necessary logistics folks with the TF. This has been confirmed with the Task Force EXO, too, whom I know from previous projects.

Will share photos when I get back but just wanted to let you know that your work is greatly appreciated down here and the kids desperately need what is in those crates from Northwest Florida.

THANKS AGAIN and More Later,

Audra Murray

P.S. The Air Commandos of McCaskrie Threshold Foundation do make a difference in the world and as you all know, for democratic governments to flourish, they must first have an educated population. We also promote the good will of the United States of America by having our military do the donations to the needy.

## THANKS, JOE ROBINSON

Recently, Joe Robinson, lifetime member of the ACA, sent the following note with a check of \$200

for the McCaskrie Threshold Foundation. It takes a lot of cans to cash in for \$200 – what a great effort! Folks like Joe who continue to support the MTF enable the Foundation to help the needy in many parts of the world. Although the MTF pays no salaries, there are expenses associated with storing and shipping the goods.

Thanks to Joe and many others the MTF humanitarian effort continues.

*MTF Secretary - Felix "Sam" Sambogna*

## HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA

Special emphasis goes to our many friends in Northwest Florida such as Mr. John Grove of the Air Commando Association and McCaskrie Threshold Foundation. His dedication to humanitarian aid projects and his ability to "round up troops" is just amazing.

We are so appreciative of you as well as the countless others over there in Fort Walton Beach, Florida who worked so hard! They recently obtained 1,000 school desks from the Okaloosa County School Board and

agreed to sponsor the schools in Guatemala and Honduras that are to be built soon.

The incredibly hard work of the Air Commando Association volunteers remarkably led to over 700 school desks fitting into one truck. They worked hard and long for several days washing, dismantling, sorting, stacking, packing, crating, loading, etc. all the desks for this shipment.

TRANSFORM scheduled the shipping of these items and paid for the shipment to support the U.S. Southern Command humanitarian programs.

Don Gaetz, the Superintendent of the Okaloosa County School Board confirmed his support and sent his regards to "Senator Denton", letting us know that he has been a long time fan of Senator Denton which dates back years.

The BIG truck (a specially built, larger-than-life truck) was loaded and on its way to delivery to the port due to the Great Work of Moreland Trucking!

The Air Commando Association has provided the manpower behind this project; we are so thankful of this partnership.

There are over 4,000 more desks in storage...we look forward to working together in the future !!!

Audra Murray  
TRANSFORM

## Ed. Note:

Taco Sanchez located hordes (thousands) of school desks which had been stashed away in Okaloosa County storage facilities for ages. He and John Grove spent weeks and months badgering the Okaloosa County School Board to release these desks for schools in undeveloped countries. The County agreed to release several thousand school desks and in doing so, freed-up valuable County storage facilities for other purposes. Thank you Taco and John...!

See MTF pg. 19

*To all at MTF:*

*Thanks to all the rednecks that litter these N.Ga hills + highways. Over the last year or so. We been able to collect \$200.00 in cans, when I cashed them in for the MTF.*

*Good luck guys, keep up the outstanding work.*

*anytime  
anyplace.  
Joe Robinson  
L-2843*



**MTF**

from pg 18

Then the down and dirty hard grungy work begun...! A bunch of tired ol' Air Commando Warriors worked their bums off for weeks on end cleaning, breaking down and crating hundreds of desks located at the ol' Carver Hill School facility in Crestview. Needing more desks, they transported hundreds of desks from the ol' Holt School to Carver Hill for cleaning, crating and to later be loaded into large sea going shipping containers. This was by no means an easy task, I can assure you. The likes of grumbling, cursing, bitching, and griping the civilized world has never heard before. But, in the end these ol' geezers got the job done; ...fatigued, high blood pressure, bad backs, sore muscles, cramps, verbal abuse, and all; they each hung together till the job was completed. If they had been in a Combat Zone, several Purple Hearts would most surely have been awarded.

Our champions on this venture were Felix "Sam" Sambogna, Larry "Sandy" Sanborn, Bob White, Clyde Howard, Dave Freeman, Eddy Howard. Doris Eaton (John's Mother), Asa Stackhouse, Roger Klair, and of course mean ol' John Grove was always hovering around chewing butt and griping all the time. How you guys manage to put-up with mean ol' John, I'll never know!

Thanks to each of you guys for the bright smiles your efforts have put on many a kid's face when the results of your efforts were delivered to their schools. You have given these children hope which is so lacking in many poor backward countries of this world! We owe each and every one of you, and even more important, our Nation and the world are deeply indebted to you guys!

Hopefully these little tykes you have helped will grow and mature into future responsible leaders

of their countries.

**DEAR JOHN LETTER**

To John, the Air Commando Association, its members, and the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation.

On behalf of the school children in Guatemala and Honduras who will incredibly benefit from your supply of school desks and educational equipment, THANK YOU.

I can assure you that all the school children we visited in both Honduras and Guatemala are in great need of these supplies ..., especially those who are in schools with dirt floors, no running water, no electricity, (such as the small ones pictured on the front of this card..., the Nances Duices School alone along the rough, remote mountain roads in Jutiapa, Guatemala).

The need of these schools and your impact to make a difference exceeds words. Your support will last for years to come in the areas.

Thank you,  
Audra Murray  
Transform Transportation Coordinator

★★★

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**ROSSEL REPORT**

There is a steady news reporting where high schools and college are not permitting military recruiting on campus to recruit people for the future military. There was a letter to the editor in the Daily Bulletin Newspaper, Ontario, CA on 18 May 2004 entitled "Recruiters No Threat at School Career Day" which was really good and it follows:

"I recently wrote my youngest son, who is stationed in the Air Force in Japan, some very basic questions on his decision to join the military at the age of 18, without our knowledge or consent.

He replied, "Mom, I woke up one day, looked in the mirror and didn't like the person I was becoming. I asked myself a lot of questions and decided I needed someone outside the family to help me change my direction in life. After talking with a recruiter, I was convinced joining the Air Force was what I wanted to do. If I had to do it all over again, I would do it in a heartbeat."

"The majority of the people who choose the military as a career are good and decent people. They are intelligent, they are proud; they respect the democracy and the freedom this country was founded on. Men and women serving the branches of the United States military represent our country. They need our prayers and our support as much as we need theirs."

*Sent from his mother in Claremont, CA, a liberal and privileged community in southern California. This is very heartening to hear with all the bad publicity the military has recently been receiving.*

**Gene Rossel**

### EASON'S HANGER HURLBURT FIELD, FL

The black hangar at Hurlburt, as we originally called it, was named Eason's Hangar for one of four Det

6 of the 1st ACW Project Farm Gate pilots who was killed with three other in crashes of two T-28s on 19 Nov 1964 on a mountaintop near Da Nang, Vietnam.

I received an email requesting information of what happened to Gus Albrecht and Bob Eason on the 40th anniversary of their crash in Vietnam. Lot of our members knew about Eason's hangar particularly since he was an Aircraft Maintenance Officer. Gus was famous for his university and professional exploits as a football quarterback and with Bob Schneidenbach AF football days in Japan. One pilot who went to UPT training with Gus said that when they went to town they wanted to be with Gus-an imposing guy.

I heard about their accident and particularly about Gus at least once a year and more at the ACA reunion.

John Kerr, an O-2 FAC pilot and a classmate of Gus in pilot training, asked for information on Gus's accident. My first search was the Internet and there is nothing there except the names and some short data from on them on one site. I then started to check all my Air Commando literature and could find nothing except the days they died in the old 1964 SAWC booklet. This was followed by email and telephone calls to Bob Schneidenbach, Tom Schornak, Bill Cox, Hap Lutz, the ACA, AFSOC, Maxwell etc.

The following is information I gathered from ACA members, SAWC and 2nd AD history and from the book "Aircraft Losses in Vietnam" by Hobson. There were some contradictory stories but from folklore, AF history and people that were in Water Pump the following is what I could come up with which will be put on the ACA home page:

On 19 November 1964 two T-28s (tail number 57-7870 which crashed at Scott AFB in 1957 and repaired

**See ROSSEL pg. 22**



# ACA 2004 REUNION



## 2004 Ticket Order Form

This ticket order form and more details about the menu are available at [www.aircommando.net](http://www.aircommando.net)

**Register early and get a 10% discount. Don't pay more at the door...REGISTER EARLY!**

2004 Reunion Ticket Order Form	Ticket Price*	Nbr of Tickets	Total Cost**
*NOTE: Advance Purchase Pricing. After 10/1/04, add 10% to ticket prices.			
Reunion Package (includes all meals)	\$50.00	_____	_____
Friday Golf Tournament	\$45.00	_____	_____
Friday Fish Fry ONLY	\$10.00	_____	_____
Saturday Banquet ONLY	\$30.00	_____	_____
Sunday BBQ ONLY	\$10.00	_____	_____
ACA Widow Package*	N/C	_____	-0-

\*Widows of ACA members may attend all the functions of the reunion at no charge.

**\*\*NOTE: After 10/1/04, Reunion Grand Total package is \$55, Banquet is \$33, & Fish Fry and BBQ are \$11 each. No change to golf price.**

**Please Note: The Fish Fry and BBQ will be held at the Rodeway Inn-Quality Inn (old HoJo's/Soundside) hotel complex on Miracle Strip Parkway in FWB. The HOF Banquet on Saturday will be held at the Hurlburt Soundside Club at Hurlburt Field. The Fish Fry will start at 4:00PM on Friday. The BBQ will start around 1:15PM on Sunday.**

Indicate status: ☐ ACA Member ☐ ACA Widow ☐ Separate Guest Registration

For separate guests, please list host name on separate piece of paper and attach.

The above order is for ☐ myself, ☐ my spouse, and \_\_\_\_\_ (# of) guests

Please list host and guest names on separate piece of paper and attach

**Important: Banquet seating is strictly limited to 320 people by the base fire marshal. Get your tickets early!**

FOR GOLFERS: My handicap is \_\_\_\_\_.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ ACA # \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I will be staying at: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### Banquet Meal Selection:

- ☐ Prime Rib
- ☐ Chicken Wellington
- ☐ Grilled Amberjack

SPECIAL RESERVATION REQUEST: If possible, please seat me with members of

\_\_\_\_\_ (print group name)

SPECIAL BANQUET NEEDS REQUEST: Please indicate if you need assistance with:

\_\_\_\_\_ Wheelchair \_\_\_\_\_ Seating near an exit door across from the rest rooms

\_\_\_\_\_ Early Seating \_\_\_\_\_ Special Dietary Requirements (Please call us)

## Buy Your Tickets Early!

The 2004 banquet will feature table service with a choice of three entrees, prime rib, chicken, or amberjack. Please mark your ticket order with your choice.

The banquet facility has a strict seating policy enforced by the base fire marshal. The maximum number of guest seats is 320...no squeeze-in seats for last minute space-A hopefuls. Please buy your tickets early. An accurate, early head count for planning purposes is very helpful. Thanks.

The good news is that there is plenty of space for fish fry and BBQ attendance, so bring a friend and set a spell. The agenda has lots of free time built into the schedule.

Access to the base is still tightly controlled. Don't forget your ID card. If you are driving a rental car, you will be required to park at the front gate and get a base pass for the vehicle. For those without an ID card who wish to enter the base, everyone must have a picture ID and a sponsoring party who will act as their escort.

At Hurlburt, when you enter the gate area, the guard will check your ID and ask you if everything is secure. He means "has your car been in your possession all day?" The answer is yes unless you want your car searched.

For those visiting Hurlburt, an event pass is available for vehicles without a sticker. Everyone must have a picture ID. Check at the registration desk about the vehicle pass for use on Sunday if needed.







# ACA 2004 REUNION



## Directions to The ACA 2003 Reunion

Refer to the approach plate on the left side. From the Hurlburt Field front gate intersection on Air Commando Boulevard (Hwy 98), head due east through Mary Esther for 4.5 miles. Upon entering the city limits of Fort Walton Beach, the speed limit drops to 35MPH and you will need to be in the right hand lane as you are on final approach to the hotel complex. You will pass Liza Jackson Park on your right. This is your final approach fix. Transition to visual and sight the Waffle House at your one o'clock. Sight the Quality Inn at your 2:30 and the Rodeway Inn at your 12:30. Cross check gear down and locked as you pass the Red Lobster at your three o'clock. You are cleared for landing at the hotel for which your reservation was granted.



## Schedule of events - October 7-10, 2004

### Thursday, October 7

- 1600 - Hospitality Suite open at the Quality Inn
- 1600-2000 - Early registration and check-in

### Friday, October 8

- 1000-1600 - Registration at the Quality Inn in FWB
- 1200-??? - Hospitality Suite open at the Quality Inn
- 0845-0945 - Golf Tournament registration
  - Hurlburt Gator Lakes Course
- 1000 - Golf Tournament shotgun start
- 1430 - Golf Tournament ends
  - Awards ceremony in clubhouse
- 1600-??? - Fish Fry at the Quality Inn in FWB
  - Poolside musical entertainment
  - Dancing on the deck
  - Libations served and stories embellished

### Saturday, October 9

- 0900-1030 - Annual Business Meeting
  - Conference Room, Quality Inn
- Air Commando Seminar to follow Business Mtg
- 1200-??? - Hospitality Suite open at the Quality Inn
- 1800-1900 - Hurlburt Soundside Club - Cocktail hour
- 1845-1855 - Early entry for assisted seating
- 1855-1900 - Doors Open to Banquet Hall - general seating
- 1900-2130 - Hurlburt Soundside Club - ACA Banquet
  - Hall of Fame Presentation Ceremony
  - Guest Speaker - TBA
  - Awards presentations
- 2130-??? - Dance band after dinner

### Sunday, October 10

- 1200-1300 - Memorial Service at Hurlburt Field Air Park
- 1300-1630 - BBQ at the Quality Inn in FWB
- 1430-1530 - Commando Auction in Hospitality Suite
- 1630 - Reunion ends

## MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY

The Quality Inn serves as headquarters for Reunion 2004. The Rodeway Inn is the overflow hotel. Room rates are \$55 for both hotels, first come, first served. **Call 850-275-0300 to make your reservation.** We have 136 rooms reserved until September 15, after that, no guarantees, so make your reservation early!



## The 60th Anniversary of Air Commandos

*Were you there???*

**60 years ago** - WWII Air Commandos formed, CBI

**41 years ago** - June 1963, The 1stACG was converted to the 1st Air Commando Wing.

**36 years ago** - July 8, 1968, the 1st ACW was redesignated the 1st Special Operations Wing.

**21 years ago** - May 1, 1983 - Operation BAT begins. Hurlburt Field air commandos from the 20th SOS provided rotary wing support for the South Florida Drug Task Force.

**21 years ago** - October 22, 1983 - Operation Urgent Fury. Gunships and Combat Talons from Hurlburt Field were used in the rescue of Americans from Grenada.

**11 years ago** - 1993 - Operation Continue Hope, Pave Hawks flew hazardous search-and-rescue missions to assist starving citizens enduring a bloody civil war in Ethiopia. Again, air commandos went in harm's way and paid a price, losing gunship "Jockey 14."



# ROSSEL

from pg 19

and tail number unknown on 2nd T-28) took off from Udorn AB Thailand to fly to Da Nang AB, Vietnam. Capt George Henry Albrecht and 1st Lt Paul Hudson were flying in 57-7870 and Major Otis Gordon and Capt Edwin Raymond Eason were flying the other T-28. The purpose of the trip was varied depending on who you talked to. One story was that they went to Da Nang on a fact-finding trip to investigate replacing the T-28 at Udorn with A-1-Chris Hobson "Vietnam Air Losses" page 12.

Another story was the T-28s went for maintenance and another was that they were going to bring back two more T-28s-the reasons for the four pilots. The SAWC, 2ndAD, and USAF History Office did not give a reason for the flight but did say that the 1st ACW did not begin writing histories until 1966 and due to the sensitivity of Water Pump that not much data was preserved.

They were flying in weather and when they failed to arrive at Da Nang AB, their destination, they were declared missing in action between Udorn AB and Da Nang AB on 19 Nov 1964. The wreckagees of the T-28s were discovered by air on a mountain top near Da Nang. Helicopters trying to get to the crash site ran into severe resistance and a ground force moved up to the 5000 foot mountain 30 miles west of Da Nang where the planes had crashed some 200 feet from the top, about 300 feet apart. On 2nd January 1965 they were able to recover the bodies of Maj Gordon and Ray Eason. The second crash site was found but the team had to return on 3rd January to the crash site where they discovered that the second T-28 appeared to be changed and rescue operations were discontinued. On 29 January 1965 the remains of Capt Albrecht and Lt Hudson were recovered. At first the

accident was classified as aircraft accidents, however, subsequent information now reveals these incidents as due to hostile accident.

In AF History papers I have there is a 1965 written note that the two T-28s were shot down the same day according to Hap Lutz, ACA. The aircraft crashes were changed to combat losses and Capt Eason got the Distinguished Flying Cross and Capt Albrecht was awarded the Silver Star.

## ***Tom Schornak sent the following information:***

"Gus Albrecht was one of my very best buddies and even now only a short time goes by before something crosses my mind and makes me think of him. He was married and I believe two children at the time. Gus had played college football, then later with the Cleveland Browns & Canadian leagues. He was a great friendly, easy going guy. Just under six foot, about 200 lbs and as solid as you imagine. His daily workout schedule would make the average fitness nut pale in comparison. He and I made several parachute jumps together as we were also forward air controllers and it is this and the T-28 flying when we became good friends.

I knew Len Hudson from his T-28 check-out at Hurlburt. I did not know the other two officers very well. Lots more stories here, but let me tell you what I recall about the loss.

The records I have most likely came from both official and un-official sources.

19 Nov 64-Eason, Edwin R. Capt, 850th Fld Maint Sq; TDY to Det 6, South Vietnam

19 Nov 64-Hudson, Leonard P. 1Lt, 4410th Combat Crew Tng Sq South Vietnam; TDY to Det 6  
19 Nov 64-Albrecht, George H., Capt, 4410th Combat Crew Tng Sq

South Vietnam; TDY to Det 6

19 Nov 64-Gordon, Otis, Jr., Maj, 4410th Combat Crew Tng Sq South Vietnam

The flight of two departed Thailand and was flying to Da Nang. My belief is that Albrecht and Hudson were in one T-28 and Gordon and Eason in the other. It was only a couple hours flight time.

That day the weather was not very good at Da Nang. More of an overcast rather than restrictions to visibility on the ground. Radar and radio aids were either new, not there yet, unreliable or inoperative on any certain day.

There was an unofficial low frequency beacon on a mountain west of Da Nang which was low, low powered and unreliable (more on this later).

The standard procedure was to fly well past Da Nang out, over the ocean for several minutes and then make a let down through the overcast. When you were VFR over the water or saw the mountain fly VFR to Da Nang. Apparently, there was radio communication with the T-28's indicating this was their intention. They were never heard from again!

Some months later on that small spit of land on the mountain just west of Da Nang, a ground party discovered wreckage of two T-28's.

Subsequent investigation of the site determined that they were in formation when they hit the mountain. The conclusion at the time, in the heat of the ongoing war, was they either did not fly out far enough before starting the letdown and in the process hit the mountain or did make the letdown and then flew into rain which was restricting visibility and then flew into the mountain. Sad story, Huh?

One more footnote to the saga of our buddies. Gus and Schneidenbach were also very good friends and played Canadian football

together. Perhaps Schneidenbach could fill in more details. Jim Boggs, another buddy was over there at the time as was Gochnauer and Joe Holden. They may recall some other details surrounding the loss.

Another recollection is that Pat Doyle and I escorted Gus to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**Best Regards,  
Tom Schornak**

**P.S.** - regarding the Mountain and let down: I have the WAC chart I used back in 1963.

Here is information taken from my map. The Mountain west of Da Nang, is named Presqu'Ile De Son Tra. In some 5 kilometers of length it rises from 1148 ft. to its highest point at 2400 ft. There was a very 'un-reliable' low frequency beacon at the highest point of the mountain with a frequency of 248 kc. It maybe even has been placed there by the army or marines for their choppers.

The emergency weather let down for the T-28's I have written on the chart was to fly over the beacon, turn to heading of 154 degrees and make a tear drop letdown in descending turn to 352 degrees until you make visual contact the water or the mountain and then proceed VFR to Da Nang some ten kilometers away.

## **THE PASSION CONTINUES**

An anti-war statement by a person kicked out of Brazil and spent some time in jail in the US for his anti war stand.

I am deeply disgusted by what I perceive as "feigned innocence" and denial by both military and civilian personnel regarding those tortured in Iraq and elsewhere. 36 years ago, I and my associate, both missionary priests in Brazil were taken late one night from our

**See ROSSEL pg. 23**



# ROSSEL

from pg 22

church by military police, thrown into prison and accused of being Communists. The accusations were absurd. We were being a voice in defense of the voiceless.

After our fifth day in prison my colleague began clamping his hands over his ears and vigorously shaking his head back and forth in an effort to muffle the screams of those being tortured 24-7 as they say today.

One of the torturers came to us bragging that he received his training in torture methods at the International Police Academy located in Washington, D.C. That training center has moved several times since then and is currently located at Fort Benning in Columbus, GA. where thousands of Latin-American military continue to receive training. The discovery of torture manuals at the base reddened many military faces and prompted quick denials and promises of adding a couple of classes on human rights. Media attention was scant.

Seeing the clean-cut looking military and civilian personnel on the news these days about torture brings back painful memories of an angry General who came to the two of us demanding to know why we were not "good" priests. He said that in his frequent visits to Washington he would recognize a priest by his cassock, follow him and go to Mass. His words were scarcely audible drowned-out by the screams next door.

Many people throughout the world hate us for what they know and for what many of us refuse to see or believe. Meanwhile the passion continues 24-7 as other Pilates rushes to wash their hands of any responsibility.

**Father Darrell Rupiper,**  
**OMI**  
drupiper2000@hotmail.com

*Darrell was a classmate of mine and a good friend and thought his comments were appropriate from someone who has been there, seen that. His last time in prison in Illinois was for 9 months and at this point he decided he seen enough of the inside in prison. His fellow intimates didn't understand why he knew so much about scriptures in Bible study until he left in his cassock. He was imprisoned in Brazil and four times in the US. He belongs to the same order as Fr Luke Brouhard of Laos fame.*

## VIETNAMESE STUDENTS

Vietnamese students at Cal State Fullerton University are up in arms because the school plans to fly the flag from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam with 79 other flags representing the homelands of the University students at the graduation ceremonies on 29 & 30 May, 2004.

The Vietnamese students are agreeable to this if the University flies the old South Vietnamese yellow and red flag. It hasn't been resolved yet but this is a big issue where Vietnamese live in California. It recently became common knowledge that Vietnamese-American businesses in Little Saigon, CA were bringing visitors to the city for business discussions.

The North Vietnamese wanted to ride through Little Saigon in a parade of cars flying their flag and the residents demanded that this not be allowed. With the show of dissent and the potential of some real old fashion protesting as well as the potential of disorder the city government decided to cancel this visible visit.

The Vietnamese students are threatening to walk out if the old Vietnamese flag is not flown. The commencement ceremonies will be honoring more than 8,000 students over the two days and some 40,000 family members and friends will be attending.

## P-51 RESCUE in WWII

We all remember when Bernie Fisher rescued Jump Myers after his A-1 was shot down in the Ashau Valley. The obit for a Riverside, CA newspaper on 21 May listed a Colonel Royce W. "Deac" Priest USAF retired who died on 18 May 2004. The paper listed him as one of the few remaining Fighter Aces and that he received the DSC for landing his P-51 under enemy fire in occupied France to rescue his squadron commander Capt Bert Marshall who had been shot down.

It must been a snug fit for both of them in getting out of there in a P-51.

## 315th AIR COMMANDO GROUP

Many of you probably never heard of the 315th Air Commando Group which was activated in Vietnam from March 65 to 8 March 66. It was a C-130 outfit which had the Australian Vietnam Flight of C-4 Caribous attached to it for trash hauling around Vietnam. There were three Commanders during this period and they were Cols Thomas B. Kennedy, David T. Fleming and George L. Hannah, Jr.

I needed to contact them for decoration we are working on for the Australian Vietnam Flight. I just received a letter from AFPC and both Col Kennedy and Hannah have died in 99 & 02. Col Fleming is alive and in Melbourne, FL and he contacted me on 21 May. He is willing to help the Australians.

Col Fleming was in SAWC and the 605th ACS Panama.

**PAUL W. KING**  
605th ACS Panama,  
KingsPC@aol.com.

He served with the 605ACS from 65-67.

*I also served in the 605 ACS from 63-66.*

## CHARLIE TALIAFERRO

NAS Lemoore (CA),  
www.kitchentablegang.org,  
vets@kitchentablegang.org.

Great website. Thanks to all of you ACA members!

## BAKER

PO Box 926  
Lowell, Arkansas 72745,  
usafresqteam@yahoo.com.

To a military wife. I got up this morning not knowing what I would find on the web but knew it was a gut feeling I would find something that would hit home with me. I am a Vietnam Vet and have put my poor wife through hell the first three years of our marriage. She has stayed by my side all these years and I love her with all my heart.

During the times I would wake up in the middle of the night from having frightful dreams she would make them all go away with her caring and understanding. I still look back to the dark years of my live during the times hell was present and all I have to do is to look at my beautiful wife and see what I have now is far more than I deserve.

The woman beside the vet of any war is the only thing that keeps him in tune with now, but will always remember the past in a different light.

May God bless all the women in the lives of the Vets past and present. I know God has blessed me with the one I have. We have now been married for over 30 years and I love her more than the first time I met her.

Sorry I sometimes get carried away but I hope you will understand how I have made it this far in my life. Thanks!

*I think you reached the status of most of us on how important the other half of the family is too a military family.*

See **ROSSEL** pg. 24

# ROSSEL

from pg 23

## DON JOHNSON

djohnson@aircraftxray.com.

I was stationed in Panama Canal Zone with the 605th Air Commandos as a support with munitions and weapons (bb stacker) at Howard AFB from 1963 to 1966. Looking for any of my old buddies. Sure had some good times.

*I was stationed with the 605ACS from 1963-1966. I am sure others will see this and will contact you.*

## WALTER THRASHER

SFC, Panama City, Florida,  
skyman82000@yahoo.com.

Very nice to know about this site. I served in Udorn and NKP 1967 and 1968, then onward to Cholon in 1969. Looking for anyone that may have been there at the same time. I re-visited NKP in 1969.

*With this in the ACA Newsletter, you will hear from some of your buddies.*

## MINDY MOON

mindymoon9@cs.com.

I was watching a presentation of the First Air Commandos on War Stories; hosted by Oliver North. I wanted to explore more, and that I did! Your site was most informative and I thank you.

*Ollie North had a great show of the Air Commandos and now he needs to do one from the Vietnam era to the present.*

## FRED GILLETTE

Augusta, Michigan,  
fgillette@tds.net.

C-123 & UC-123 engineer '67 & 68.

## DENNIS R. ARNOLD

Mesquite Texas,

Served with the 1st Air Commando Wing out of England AFB in Alexander LA in 1966 and 1967.

Also in 1968 at Hurlburt Field then 1969 and 1970 in Vietnam. Glad to have found this site.

## DOUG SANFORD

Skandia, MI,  
dsanford@tds.net.

It's about time we organize a 603rd ACS A-26 reunion. Ed and Moose if you read this, what do you think? It would be awesome to get the crew chiefs together!!

*Great idea-will put this in the ACA Newsletter.*

## WALTER J. JARSKI, JR.

2902 Alpine Dr.  
Erie, Pa. 16506,  
krjarski@aol.com.

Just dropped in while looking for ACA membership information.

*The membership information is being sent to you.*

## BURT ALKIS

balkis2002@hotmail.com.

Hi, I'm From TURKEY and I'm ret. enlisted person Turkish Armed Forces. I'm Collector SF badges and I'm Looking for US collectors. Your page is good.

*Will put this in the ACA Newsletter.*

## S. VAUGHN "SOL" BINZER

Lexington, KY,  
vaughnbinzer@aol.com.

Seeking after-action reports/operation summaries of Air Commando squadrons for book on battles of Duc Co and Plei Me SF camps, Aug & Oct 65.

*Will put this in the ACA Newsletter.*

## SAM "ELVIS" WEBB

Fort Bragg,  
talon1elvis@hotmail.com.

ACES (RO for us old folks) came to AFSOC in 1992. Started in Shadows and went to Talons in 95. Became Command SME for Airborne Comm issues on assignment to 18 FLTS in 96. Moved to JSOC

in Jan 2001. Retiring 1 July 04.

*Thanks for the email. I will be sending you membership information.*

## NOEL VANREED

Kooskia Idaho,  
xmas1@camasnet.com.

I am looking for any information leading to a Carol Ray Anderson who was born in Iowa. Please contact me with any information.

*Thanks for the email. I will put this into the ACA Newsletter.*

## JAMES P. HYLAND

Fort Collins, CO,  
patrickhyland@hotmail.com.

Member of 606th S.O.S., 1969-1970. I'm looking for history of the 606th and patches, whereabouts of unit members from that time, pictures, etc. for The Candlesticks.

*Will try and get this for you.*

## DAVE HUSHER, ACA #3651

Siloam Springs, AR,  
dhusher@tcainternet.com.

Does anyone have a copy of TDY orders from the old days, (62-63) with my name on them? They could include orders to Det2A in early 62 (2nd rotation) or either of two, 6 mo. tours to then Det3 in Panama. I would love a copy of any TDY order that said, "Items 1 through (if I remember right) 23 on reverse apply)! If so, would appreciate an e-mail. I was an A1C in the Ground Comm Shop at the time.

*Will send what I have.*

## BILL UHL,

rv6@atlantic.net

I was with Jollies at Udorn 65, 66. Are any more tours being planned to Thailand?

*Watch for trips listed in the ACA Newsletter.*

**Ed. Note:** The travel agency that arranged the last SEA tour is listed on [www.aircommando.net](http://www.aircommando.net). They offer a variety of tours for veterans.

## EG ADAMS,

Pilatus Porter,  
egadams@sbcglobal.net.

I recall a famous incident [as weren't they all] concerning a flight where a village chief was onboard the Porter which was to drop some rice at the village, then proceed to the strip to land - the reason being that the strip was away from the village a bit and the drop would save a long walk with a heavy load of rice.

When the Porter came over the village and popped the drop doors, not only did the rice drop, but also the village chief, who was sitting on top of the rice bags. There was much consternation as to the impact this might have on our relations with the village, but all was well when a message arrived back in VTE thanking Air America for delivering the body of the chief the village believing he had died elsewhere and we brought his body back.

*Thanks. Enjoyed the story.*

## STEVE HENDERSON,

s.r.henderson@earthlink.net.

My father was A1C/laterSSG Robert D. Henderson. He was an original member of the Jungle Jim program DET 2 Bien Hoa 1961. I would like to hear from any of members from that detachment. Thank you. I visit your site very often. Great Job! Not an ACA member, but would like to be.

*Will put this in the ACA Newsletter and if anyone knew your father you will be hearing from them.*

## JACK PATE,

oneeyedjack47@sbcglobal.net.

I was an AC-47 gunner. Binh Thuy RVN Feb 68---Jan 69.

## RONALD R. AZARCON,

Carmichael, CA,  
razarcon@sbcglobal.net.

B-26 Nav & Admin Off,  
1ACS Bien Hoa 8/63 - 4/64.

See **ROSSEL** pg. 25



# ROSSEL

from pg 24

## MICHAEL D. LINDHORST,

Fort Walton Beach,  
mdlindy@aol.com.

I'm a lost member, how do I renew?

*Call Pete Bowman at (850) 581-0099, he will give you the info.*

## THOMAS F. FLYNN III,

Wallingford CT,  
tff3@snet.net.

I'm interested in researching my father's efforts during WWII. He flew an L-5 in the 1st Air commando Group in the CBI. He passed away several years ago and I'm interested in archiving the photos he took of Burma and India in 1944-45.

*Will put this in the ACA Newsletter and we may get you some info.*

## GEORGE LATTIN,

glattin@wireweb.net.

T-28 Loss - 6/12/67 – North VN.

Gene, any chance you have any info on the T-28 loss below in North Vietnam on 12 July 1967, other than what is on the POW Network?

Capt. Jack Dove and LtCol. Boyd Squire were the crew of a 606th T-28D aircraft lost while conducting an armed, night reconnaissance mission over Quang Binh Province North Vietnam, July 12, 1967. Jack Dove was assigned to the 497th TFG.

*This excerpt from the Vietnam Air Losses by Chris Hobson, Page 108, should help. T-28D 49-1569, 606 ACS, 56ACW, USAF Nakhon Phanom Capt Jack Paris Dove KIA, Maj Boyd Edwin Squire KIA.*

*The 606th was by now well in its role of night interdiction over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Occasionally these missions took the T-28s into North Vietnam itself as well as throughout the Barrel Roll and Steel*

*Tiger regions of Laos. Capt Dove and Maj Squire were hunting for trucks during a night armed reconnaissance mission and were reported missing near Ban Katoi, just in North Vietnam. It was thought that they were hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed before either of the crew could escape. A SAR aircraft spotted a wing from the aircraft but there was no sign of any survivors. On 1 June 1992 the crash site was excavated and remains recovered that were later identified as being those of the T-28 crew.*

## FRANK RAMSEY

kramsey@ticnet.com.

Hello, my father in law, Frank Ramsey has been attempting to locate Merle Christy. In my search I came upon your website and saw their names one after the other. Can you tell me if you have information on Mr. Christy? Frank lives in Garland, TX and also has a place in Colorado. Any information you can provide will be most appreciated.

*Joni Ramsey for Frank Ramsey -- Merle Christy was one of the original Air Commandos He came to Hurlburt Field in 1961 from Kirtland AFB, was assigned to Engine Cond Crew, went thru survival training at Stead AFB in NV. He was assigned to Commandos from 61 thru 66.*

## SHIRLEE VOS,

svos@turnerpublishing.com

Dear Sirs,

We are the publisher of the ACA publication from 2000 entitled "USAF AIR COMMANDOS: ANY TIME - ANY PLACE." View the book at this link: [www.turnerpublishing.com/detail.aspx?ID=850](http://www.turnerpublishing.com/detail.aspx?ID=850). We have over a hundred of these books remaining in our warehouse and would love to get these beautiful history books into the hands of those who would appreciate them the most, the veterans of ACA and interested others. Will you please add this book information and

the above link to your website so that visitors will know the book is still available? Any assistance you can offer will be greatly appreciated!

Shirlee Vos

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[svos@turnerpublishing.com](mailto:svos@turnerpublishing.com)

## TOM STUMP,

Yankee Ejection System,  
[stump@seas.upenn.edu](mailto:stump@seas.upenn.edu).

I have nothing good to say about this ejection seat. In April 1970 I was on Donald Fincher's wing when he lost power after takeoff. Some of you may have been at NKP that morning. I watched him struggle to get out when his seat failed and ended up flying through the fireball. It was a very hazy morning with no horizon and I was concentrating on him rather than the ground. Almost cut my tour short that day.

While at Da Nang, we also lost Otis Morgan in July of '70 when his seat failed, and in October John Williams. All very good men who would be with us today if the seat had worked as advertised. We flew low and needed a seat that worked. Knowing you couldn't rely on the seat added quite a bit to the excitement. John Williams always told me he would never trust the seat; but that day in the Ashau he had no choice. However, when it did work, it worked very well. I also saw others get out just in time because of the 0-0 ability of the seat. So I am sure those folks have a much different view of the seat.

## LES STROUSE,

Air Commando & Air America

Comments on aircraft, evacuations can cause pilots and their airplanes to do superhuman

things. 130 Meo in a C-46 from Udorn to Nam Phong, no seats!

You are correct on my flying the U-10 in '63. But as far as Col. Doyle was concerned, I was on the other side, TRULY! I don't remember who was flying for Blue Forces. I was "covert" Red Forces, at Spartanburg, working with the Army and Col. Aderholt. He sent me over Ft. Campbell to drop 100,000 safe conduct passes the night before they came into the Exercise. I "borrowed" a Blue Forces call sign and made some practice GCA approaches. Enough approaches for me to determine where the marshaling area and mess hall were. After the last approach the tower asked what my intentions were. I told him to just watch the little airplane. 100,000 leaflets floated gently to earth.....well maybe some were in the trees and on buildings; but they went out.

Glad they never found out who did that one!

The Helio Corporation or someone who wants to resurrect the Helios surfaces every now and again; but never have been able to really get things together.

*Les, you always got some great flying stories.*

## ROBERT "MO" J. MOBERG

Robert was a helicopter pilot with the Army flying in Laos in 1970, died 31 May 2004.

The email from MacAlan Thompson's said his body will be taken to Wat Chai Mongkol in South Pattaya and the hand washing ceremony will be in the evening of the 31 May. He will be cremated on Saturday 5 June.

*Bob was well known by many Air Commandos who served in Laos. He was a great guy and we used to have a lot of fun with him. We will miss him and his email.*

See **ROSSEL** pg. 26

# ROSSELL

from pg 25

## LOFTIN ROBERT, N

SSgt 12 AF/IWF,  
Robert.Loftin@dm.af.mil.

I would greatly appreciate if you could contact me. My father, now retired TSgt, was a member of the 4400 CCT Sq, Hurlburt field from Jan 1960 to Aug 1963. I would like to give you information so you may contact him and add him to the history of the Air Commandos. Thank you very much.

SSgt Robert N. Loftin, NCOIC  
PSYOPS

12 IWF/DOO DSN 228-0695

Home phone: 520-271-3472

Email: rob\_vols@yahoo.com

*Send me the information.*

## THE SHADOW SPIRIT FLYING STINGERS AND BUFFS IN SEA

*by: Elton Fletcher Author of Shadows of Saigon.*

This is a new book by an Air Commando Association Member and a sequel to his *Shadows of Saigon*.

The book will have you riveted to your favorite reading spot from the beginning to the end. The continuing adventures of AC (Air-craft Commander) Paul Knight as he is forced to make hard decisions as to his future. Each chapter is based on a true story and described in full color. With a vivid imagination you can almost smell the cockpit.

## THE FAC ASSOCIATION

*- submitted by Charlie Jones*

The FAC Association recently elected the following officers to their Board:

Pres, Denny Crouch  
VP, Fred Pumroy  
Sec, Skip Smothermon  
Treas, George Ferkes

Hist, Darrel Whitcomb  
BOD, Cal Anderson, Ken Blutt, Ned Helm

Next reunion will be 2006 at Writ-Patt AFB, or Ft. Walton Beach. Decision by July.

## SUE KING-MARSCALK,

fruufy@san.rr.com.

How could anyone leave San Diego?? We're off to Bristol, Tennessee this evening, where I will close the purchase Monday on the house. We will retire in late July. Yes, this July.

It's a quality custom built French Provincial design, 3,662 square feet, 5 1/2 bathrooms (his and hers master baths, ladies!) 3 bedrooms, formal living and dining rooms, a den, an office and a bonus room.

It is located in the middle of Steele Creek Park on the top of the hill overlooking the park, lake and the city of Bristol. If you want to look up the location, the only online map system it shows up on is Yahoo maps, put in the address and it will pull up the right location, but the street name on the map shows as "Kelly Lane".

We've decided that 2 more years here in San Diego is just too stressful for us both, so we are going to green hills, lakes, air we don't have to chew first, all 4 seasons and a beautiful and serene setting in eastern TN hill country. Paul will keep and rent out the house here in San Diego.

Yes, Tri Cities Airport is only 12 miles away - so after August 1, ya'll come on down, ya'hear!

*- Love, Sue*

## PROJECT COMMANDO LAVA

I was just reading in the volumes of "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968" about project Commando Lava, which was intended to enhance and extend the effect of the rainy season on the HCM Trail in Laos. It seems some

trials had been made dropping common chemicals on the soil which had the effect of chelating the soil and making the mud even less able to bear weight than it normally would. Apparently the trials had been deemed highly successful, and in mid 1967 Ambassador Sullivan was pushing for the go ahead to use the approach in lieu of increased bombing of the trail as a means of cutting off traffic.

Amb Sullivan said, "I believe this program demands immediate, high level attention in Washington. I would hope that both Secretary McNamara and Joint Chiefs will have opportunity to be briefed."

"I would like to make mud on several routes in Laos, starting from 19 in north, through 6, 7, and 4, plus the entire Ho Chi Minh and Sihanouk Trail structures. If the drop aircraft are available and if the chemicals can be shipped, I feel that we can close more routes more effectively, and at a minute fraction of the current cost, than we can with our bombing efforts."

"I also feel that, if we could combine these techniques with techniques of Operation Popeye, perhaps within concept of Practice Nine, we might be able to make enemy movement among the cordillera of the Annamite chain almost prohibitive. In short, chelation may prove better than escalation. Make mud, not war!"

*Heinie said, "it wasn't successful."*

**CECIL TRUMAN THOMPSON - AC-47**, (Jan. 14, 1935 - Jan. 9, 1967)  
Killed in Action in Vietnam.

The following information appeared in the Sabetha, KS newspaper on Memorial Day which we have permission to use. Patty Locher, wife of Roger Locher, a F-4 Gib credited with 3 MIGs during the Vietnam War, who was shot down and survived the longest time without capture, wrote the article from

material the ACA was able to give her. Patty is a retired AF Intel Officer.

Roger Harris, a former AC-47 gunner provided us a list of AC-47 ACA members and lot of information for the article. There were several AC-47 web sites which provided information and some email and telephone provided others. It is an excellent tribute to our fallen AC-47 warriors.

Thompson was the flight mechanic (crew chief) on an AC-47 gunship, nicknamed Puff the Magic Dragon.

According to information from an AC-47 website, Puff's mission was close air support for ground troops. The aircraft carried 21,000 rounds for three 7.62-millimeter mini-guns and typically operated at 3,000 feet above the ground, flying at 130 knots, without armor and usually without escorts.

Information received from the U.S. Air Force archives via the internet reveals that Thompson's aircraft, tail number 43-49124, belonged to the 4th Air Commando Squadron which assigned to the 14th Air Commando Wing under the umbrella of Seventh Air Force in Saigon.

Thompson's crew was assigned to the squadron's A Flight, which flew out of Da Nang, RVN.

The downed aircraft had a crew of seven men, which included - in addition to Thompson - Major Joseph E. Wilkinson III, navigator; Captain Charles William Robertson and First Lieutenant James Donald Goodman, pilots; Staff Sgt Raymond Medina and Airman Second Class Lonny Leroy Mitzel, positions unknown; and Airman First Class Dana Richard Kelley, gunner.

The aircraft's mission was a target near Duc Pho, RVN. The aircraft was hit by ground fire, caught fire, and crashed near Quang Ngai, RVN, about 20 miles short of the target. All aboard were killed and the

**See ROSSELL pg. 27**



# ARE YOU A LICENSED PILOT?? A LICENSED STUDENT PILOT?? AN A&E MECHANIC??

By GARRY MARTAS, ACA #3126

If so, you should join the Civil Air Patrol (CAP). Missions were foreseen to fly mail and small supplies to army units, set up and operate supporting radio communications, search for missing planes and crews, and tow gunnery targets. Soon after America declared war on Japan, Germany and Italy, the CAPs greatest activity quickly became searching for and reporting enemy submarines, which were sinking many ships near our shores. This task was given to civilian volunteers because America was so unprepared for war that it did not have and was unable to build enough military planes to patrol U.S. coasts until August 1943. Thus, for 18 months, starting in March 1942, civilian pilots of the CAP, flying their own small planes, were primary for locating and reporting enemy submarines.

Though contrary to the rules of war regarding civilians, the torpedoing of ships was so serious that soon some of the larger civilian planes were authorized to carry a depth charge and small weapons. During their year and a half of patrolling, CAP planes reported 173 enemy submarines, attacked 57 and sunk one. They also spotted 91 ships in distress, helped save 367 survivors of torpedoed ships, and sighted 17 floating mines.

In helping defend America, 90 civilian planes did not return and 26 CAP flyers perished.

On April 29, 1943, the CAP was transferred from the Office of Civilian Defense to the War Department — in recognition of its brave service and outstanding contributions. On May 26, 1948, by Public Law 557, the CAP was made the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. In the 1950s, the CAP became USAF's primary resource for search and rescue over land. Currently it

flies some 85% of the hours to find missing planes and hikers. In a typical year, the CAP is credited for the rescue of over 100 people.

In USAF support, CAP's 62,000 volunteer members (of which 27,000 are cadets, age 12 through 20) currently fly more than 4000 of their own planes and 530 CAP planes. This privately owned fleet is the biggest in the world and has more air-planes than all U.S. Military services combined.

Not all senior members are pilots. Many volunteers operate and maintain CAP's communications network which, radio wise, is the largest privately owned one in the world. There are 1,650 CAP units throughout America.

The CAP cadet program, established on 1 October 1942, has long been one of Americas most respected for youths. Besides teaching aviation and military courses, leadership is emphasized. The quality of CAP training is such that former cadets invariably are promoted to Air-

man First Class rank upon completing Air Force basic training. At the Air Force Academy, 10% of the starting class is usually comprised of former CAP cadets.

Almost immediately after the 9-11 terrorist attacks on buildings in America, homeland security was added to the CAP's roles. CAP pilots were the first civilians authorized to fly over New York City to take photos for damage assessment, and also flew in blood supplies from numerous locations. For several days after 9-11, CAP planes were the only civilian ones permitted to fly, but only on government needed tasks.

With vital support so competently and voluntarily provided right after the 9-11 attacks, national perception of the CAP's value rose. Increased awareness of the CAP's importance to America resulted in the rank of its commanding general to be elevated from one star to two.

Courtesy of FLA AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

★★★



## ROSSELL

from pg 26

remains of all seven were immediately recovered.

The AC-47 website stated the gunship flew without escort, but Roger Locher said he escorted several of them, so we changed it to "usually without escort." It's nice to have my own technical advisor living with me!

**Send your comments and questions to:** Eugene D. Rossel

Work: 909-930-5700

Home: 909-591-7342

Fax 909-930-5710

Email:

aircommando1@earthlink.net

URL: <http://home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1/>

★★★

**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](mailto: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 Craner, George Pinney, Nape Miller, Bob Porter, P.J. White, Charlie Neel, Jere Wallace, Jim Mack, Jonesy 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 Amdor, 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, Bunca Kretz, Jerry Edwards, B o b Konopka, Chris Kellum, Roger Rice, Clyde Seiler, Norris Hanks, Chuck Holden, Stanton Smith, Bulter Bob Bryan, Donald Masureit, Al Winkelman, Gregg Parker, Matt Husson, Jim Sue, Cass Cassaro, Richard Hepworth, Roger Winblade, Ron Fogleman, Jerry Walkout, John Grathwol, Arnie Clarke, Bill Wallace, John Boles, Dennis Hlad, Lacy 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 Gourley, Rufus Edwards, Kraze Kroese, Michael Martin, Scotty Dotson, Robert Sesbury, Vic Macomber, George Buchkowski, John Hammar, Wayne Chaffee, Norm Lutz, T.K. Egan, Saint Hallman, Devil Muller, Gerry Van Ripper, Robert Putz, Dennis Campbell, Bill Teske, Mario Peraldo, Michael Stone, Gabe Gabel, Pat Carroll, Gary Nophaker, Lamont Cranston, Jim Cruson, 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 Cattolica, J.P. Richards, Moose Millard, Jim Davies, Dave Robb, David Samuel, Ray Lee, Tom Tapman, Ted Hassall, Dean Echenberg, Robert Gordan, Ray Bevinno, John Haltigan, Roger Van Dyken, Cal Kunz, Bob Guido, Jim Titus.

Edited by  
Major General Don Shepperd, USAF (Ret.)



# RAVEN'S CORNER

This edition's Raven Corner will be shorter than usual. As most of you are aware, we lost our President on May 1 due to complications from artery disease. Sandy was a giant of a man with a heart of gold. Always ready to reach out to help, always there with a smile, or as he said, a big SEG. Our Raven web site ([www.ravens.org](http://www.ravens.org)) contains a few of the many comments and emotions we have after his passing.

Sandy, we'll miss you.

Jan, our hearts go out to you.

One of Sandy's final projects was to shepherd thru the system the latest Raven documentary, recently seen on Discovery Times channel. It was a superb product, produced by Mica Lentz over the last couple of years. It follows Sandy, Cavanaugh, Platt, and PF as they return to Laos. If you missed it, you can get your own copy. See the Raven web site for more details. Airings are again planned for the last couple of days in June.

Other news has rumors of Lloyd Duncan getting married. Can anyone confirm? Big Al Galante is house-hunting near Scott AFB, IL, and Growth is living at Williams AFB, AZ, doing some government contract work. Jim Roper is off to a high school reunion as this goes to press. He refused to say how many years, but I believe they have those at about the 40 year point.....

## RAVEN REUNION OCT 21 – 24, 2004

Our reunion is planned for Oct 21-24 in Universal City & Randolph AFB. Pretty much the same schedule as always. Schedule starting Thurs, informally, and ending with a farewell brunch at the Randolph AFB O'Club on Sunday AM. Rooms will be at the Clarion Suites again. Make your plans now to attend.



Prices and a schedule will be available on the ravens web site soon.

Contact Ed Gunter ([edgunter@aol.com](mailto:edgunter@aol.com) or 830-560-2522) for reunion reservations or questions, and the Clarion Suites (210-655-9491) for room reservations.

Nevermore,  
Ed Gunter,  
Raven President

**Ed. Note:** Sandy was special to the Air Commandos and the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation also. When the call "RAVEN DOWN"...! ....RAVEN DOWN...! went out, it was indeed a shock to all who knew Sandy. Sandy's last request to the Editor was to publish the article titled "A Fallen Soldier Returns Home"; which you will find in this issue.

★★★

**LtGen Robert M. Shea, USMC, The Joint Staff (DJ6),** when asked what he knew about the Haitian gunmen who took part in shooting into a crowd, said, "I only know two things about him; he shot at my Marines...and he is dead."

*Submitted by: Bill Keeler*

# RETIREE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWS

## NATIONAL CEMETERY

*Submitted By ROBBY ROBERSON  
ACA #2*

This is not the most pleasant subject to discuss, but Dee & I recently had an occasion to attend a memorial for the wife of a fellow Air Commando at the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida, which is just 60 miles east of Tampa. I want to tell you that this is one of the most beautiful cemeteries I've seen throughout the world. For those of you who are undecided about your final resting place, you might want to check out the details. There are adjoining gravesites for members and spouses or crematory spaces both below and above ground. And, like all national cemeteries, everything is free. You can check it out at [www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov) or write to them at Florida National Cemetery, 6502SW 102nd Avenue, Bushnell FL 33513; phone (352) 793-7740.

**Ed. Note:** Thanks Robby, good information for our members to know.

## ATTENTION VETERANS: DON'T MISS OUT ON BENEFITS

*By Sylvester Brown Jr.  
Of the Post-Dispatch*

"Go away. I don't need your help. I don't need welfare!" That was Bill Monroe's pride talking three years ago. Monroe, now 58, wasn't trying to be rude to the social worker. The Vietnam veteran had gotten some bad news. The cancer doctors found in his prostate was "aggressive." Fortunately, they were able to remove it before the cancer spread.

Monroe gratefully accepted hospitalization benefits from the Veterans Administration but proudly expected nothing more. When the

social worker came to his hospital room to talk about eligibility for additional benefits, it angered him.

"Bill Monroe doesn't accept charity," he yelled.

"Let the lady talk," his mother told him.

The advice paid off. Monroe now receives \$827 per month in VA benefits - money he had no idea he qualified for. He'll get that amount for the rest of his life.

Many more vets are missing out. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 32,000 Missouri veterans may be eligible for as much as \$331 million in unclaimed benefits. The money represents disability compensation and pension benefits. Veterans may also be failing to take advantage of job, education, health and business assistance programs.

John Eckhoff, 54, is the manager of veterans services in St. Louis County. He's worked with veterans for 25 years. The reasons funds go unclaimed are varied and complex, he said. Many veterans who weren't injured while serving mistakenly believe they aren't qualified for disability benefits.

But many illnesses have been reclassified. For instance, Agent Orange was widely used during the Vietnam conflict. The government now associates exposure to the chemical with type II diabetes. Veterans with the illness may have been exposed, even if they weren't in combat.

"The VA used to only recognize veterans who served in particular areas of Vietnam. Now, all Vietnam veterans are recognized," Eckhoff said.

Monroe founded Thurgood Marshall Charter School in 1999 and now serves on its board. He consid-

**See VETERAN pg. 30**



# FATHER, SON, GRANDSON FOLLOW AIR COMMANDO TRADITION

By VANESSA ADAMS  
Public Affairs

When other high school seniors were considering what college to attend after high school, 18 year-old James McClain III knew exactly what he wanted.

"It clicked one day when one of my classmates told me how excited he was to be going off to college and finally doing something with his life, whereas I felt life had more to offer than to sit in class and take notes," said Senior Airman James McClain III 16th Helicopter Maintenance Squadron.

"I wanted a challenge and wanted to experience things most people only read or hear about, or in our case, what most people don't hear about," he said.

On the day he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force four and a half years ago, Airman McClain was following in the footsteps of his mother, father and grandfather, just like many often do. But unbeknownst to him, Airman McClain, who's named after his grandfather, was about to establish an even closer bond with his father and grandfather. He would soon join the ranks of countless others as Air Commandos, including the two generations before him.

"I came into Air Force Special Operations Command with as much of an open mind as possible, because I knew this was my time and that my experiences would be different from my parents' and my grandfathers'," Airman McClain said.

Both James McClain Senior, who worked in a supply unit and James McClain II retired from the Air Force after each had served at least 20 years on active duty. The younger McClain's mother, also served a short time in the Air Force, but separated shortly after her son was born.

Even though he had lost

friends in the Vietnam War, Airman McClain's father never had a doubt about joining the Air Force. Living across from a recovery hospital in Japan only strengthened his desire to pursue an Air Force career. When he became friends with the troops there, he knew it wasn't a question of if he'd join the Air Force, but when.

"I really enjoyed my Air Force career," said James McClain II, who worked mostly as a loadmaster during his military career. "The best part was the people I worked with, we were really close, everyone knew each other," he said.

James McClain II's 20 years of military experience has enabled him to share more than an ordinary father-son relationship with his son. Now they're also united as Special Operators.

"When my son is deployed, I tell him 'here's what to look for' and tell him to take care of each other out there," said Mr. McClain.

So far, Airman McClain's four years in the military have been nothing short of extraordinary, and it's only the beginning.

"It's been challenging and rewarding," he said. "I've learned more in four and a half years than I otherwise could have in a lifetime as a civilian."

Airman McClain plans on making the Air Force a career as an Air Commando, just as his father and grandfather did before him, and he's proud to do it.

"Despite the fact my mother, father, grandfather, and I have served in very different eras and career fields, there is still the bond knowing that we all served our country proudly and are part of the best team in the world," he said.

"I don't have any children now, but when I do, I will stand by their decisions to serve or not, just as my parents did."

★★★

# SPRIT OF AMERICA

Submitted by: Robert Eveleigh

Daniel Henninger wrote a letter that was printed in the Wall Street Journal on April 16, 2004, describing the efforts of Jim Hake, Spirit of America's entrepreneur founder, to raise \$100,000 to repair TV stations in Iraq and allow the military to make ACCURATE news available to the Iraqi people.

A follow-up letter was written by Mr. Henninger and published in the Wall Street Journal on April 30, 2004. Mr. Hake reports that in the 14 days since the first letter was published, they have raised \$1.52 MILLION, which allowed them to not only purchase the equipment needed to get the TV stations up and running, but to also honor a number of additional re-

quests from the military in Iraq and also in Afghanistan.

The tremendous response to the Spirit of America appeal appears to be a statement that the American people understand we ARE in Iraq and the most important thing is to get the job done. We chose to be part of a helping home front and tend to disregard the media efforts to treat Iraq as a political football, whose policy details can be dissected, revisited and rethought on a continuing basis.

Despite the best efforts of the media to focus our attention on less important matters, clear thinking people have not forgotten that more than 3,000 Americans lost their lives on 9-11-01, in the most heinous act of terrorism ever. We all have a stake in seeing this effort thru to an honorable conclusion.

★★★

# 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.

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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!

★★★

# VETERAN

from pg 28

ers himself an "informed man." But even after checking, he didn't realize he qualified for disability pay.

"I'm your average American vet," Monroe told me. "Hundreds of thousands don't have assistance and are missing out."

When Lt. Gov. Joe Maxwell learned the state of Missouri ranked 40th out of 50 states in compensating veterans, he decided to pump up the state's efforts. Maxwell, a 21-year veteran of the National Guard, started working with local veteran groups in 2001. They kicked off a program that provides numerous services to veterans and their families.

The "Supermarket of Veterans Benefits," modeled after similar initiatives in Georgia and Oklahoma, is a one-stop shop offering a cornucopia of veterans services. The state has offered 18 events since 2002 - six have been in the St. Louis area.

Partly as a result, Missouri now ranks 35th in the nation for veterans compensation. Some veterans are receiving from \$90 to \$3,100 of unexpected monthly payments, Eckhoff told me.

It's still tough getting a response - especially in urban areas. The largest number of veterans not receiving benefits reside in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas, Eckhoff said.

The Missouri Supermarket of Veterans Benefits Committee is promoting an event on June 5 at Vashon High School. They've set an ambitious goal of attracting 1,500 veterans - the largest turnout to date. Iraq war veteran Shoshana Johnson and comedian Dick Gregory are scheduled as special guests. More than 100 agencies and organizations will be available to help veterans claim benefits.

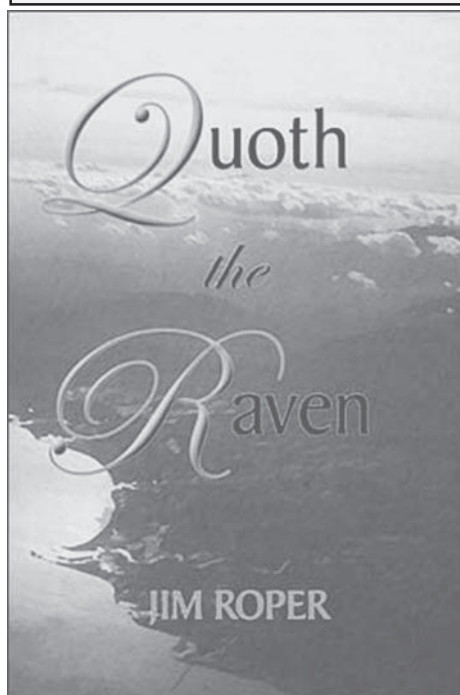
Monroe is actively promoting the event, but he wishes he could do more. "If I could, I'd rent an RV and drive to every major street cor-

ner in the city, announcing this event," said Monroe. "There's money out there for veterans, and every one of them needs to know it."

★★★

## PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"Congressmen who willfully take actions during wartime that damage morale and undermine the military are saboteurs and should be arrested, exiled, or hanged."



## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

★★★

## AIR RESCUE ASSOCIATION, INC. REUNION

Air Rescue Association annual reunion, Seattle, Washington, September 22 thru 25, 2004. Contact Sandy Gonzalez (407) 834-0105, P.O. Box 300945, Fern Park, FL 32730-0945; e-mail: [sgonzalez@cfl.rr.com](mailto:sgonzalez@cfl.rr.com) or John Holm (316) 722-9484, e-mail: [jholm4@cox.net](mailto:jholm4@cox.net). Visit the Rescue web site @ <http://home.cfl.rr.com/airrescue>.

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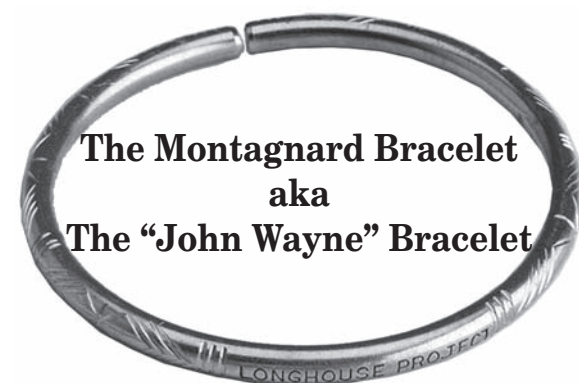
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Owner

Crestview, FL

Email: [rsemone@cox.net](mailto:rsemone@cox.net)

## Save The Montagnard People, Inc.

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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.

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**[www.montagnards.org](http://www.montagnards.org)**

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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., P.O. Box 844, Star, NC 27356.



# SKY REUNION

The CIA Case Officers whom many of you worked with and for in Laos held their Reunion in Fort Walton Beach a few weeks ago.

Generals Heinie Aderholt and Richard Secord hosted this group. As usual Jo Ann Secord, Dick Geron, Jim Boney, and Jerry Broadway and other local Air Commandos pitched in to make it an enjoyable three days for these guys.

Golf, good food, a few drinks, awesome war stories, great camaraderie, jokes, and you have set the stage for an awesome gathering the infamous cloak and dagger folks who were so important to our operations in Laos. Most all the Key Players from the past were present.

Tom Landry and these folks who gave birth to a small courageous indigenous group of untrained hill farmers to do battle against unimaginable odds on the battle field were there. Tom and his people are to be commended for their efforts. They had the little guys engaging the enemy in some awesome firefights with the only ragtag ill prepared people and grave-yard ratty war weapons taken from salvage yards through out the world. It was often touch and go; armed only with brave hearts, strong soles, determination, and natural survival instincts, this small handful of hill tribe people made continuous "hit and run" engagements; holding off a well trained and battle tested mechanized Army of North Vietnamese regulars.

They won the battles only to have weak kneed and inept politicians lose the war. A shame, it was a real crying shame....!

Any way, war stories were abound as the days wore into evenings and then on into late nights. Often reliving the past and wishing to God that they had done better by these hill tribesmen.

Jerry Klingaman from the 6th SOS gave an enlightening briefing to these guys on current Special

Operations capabilities. He also gave them a tour of a Russian helicopter and a Russian aircraft that members of the 6th SOS maintain flying currency in. These 6th guys can go into countries owning Russian aircraft and teach the guys the mechanics of maintaining these Russian built aircraft. Also, armed with full knowledge of Russian, Israeli and American tactics; our guys can teach them how to win in battle. This Hurlburt unit is awesome, it also possesses one of the very few turbo prop C-47's in existence today. This turbo prop C-47 is different, that's for sure.

Topping the weekend activities off with a visit to the Ranger Camp on Eglin AFB was interesting. Filled with interesting briefings on what it takes to successfully pass the Ranger Course, these Case Officers surprised me with deep and profound questions directed at the Camp Commander. He appeared surprised also.

Many of these old Case Officers have been recalled and are actively participating in ongoing operations throughout the world today. One had just returned from activities in Mexico. Another just returning from training groups in the Philippines to fight against Terrorist is now on his way to Afghanistan to provide security training there. Of course, they don't tell me squat-all and I certainly don't ask because I don't have a need to know. Interesting conversations were continuous throughout the three day activity.

All this was capped off with a scrumptiously delicious meal served at the Sound Side Club (the old Hurlburt Officers Club) Saturday night with short and interesting speeches. I really like these guys, they have important things to say and spit it out using very few words. They are my kind of folks, three minute speeches were the norm.

All in all I believe these guys had an enjoyable and fulfilling weekend.



## Air Commando Association Membership Application

### Membership is open to:

- A. Persons who served with or supported Air Force Air Commando/ Special Operations Units.
- B. Widows of persons eligible for regular membership qualify as non-dues paying members.
- C. Other units/interested parties may join as non-voting associate members with approval of the Board of Directors.

-- Newsletter is published quarterly.

-- Annual Reunion held in October

### Type Membership requesting:

_____ \$20.00 Annual Regular	_____ \$20.00 Annual Associate
_____ \$150.00 Life Regular	_____ \$150.00 Life Associate
	_____ Widow (No Dues)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: ☐ USAF ☐ Army ☐ Navy ☐ USMC ☐ Other

*Please list:* \_\_\_\_\_

AFSC/MOS: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Service: From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Retired? Y or N

### Air Commando/Special Operations Service:

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

**Present Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Spouse Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Permission to provide Phone Number/Address to other Members only?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Permission to publish Phone Number/Address in ACA Newsletter?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Return application to: Air Commando Association

P.O. Box 7

Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

For Office use only:

Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Entered in Mailing List: \_\_\_\_\_ Entered in Accounting Log: \_\_\_\_\_

Welcome Letter: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership File: Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

# AMERICA NEEDS TO WAKE UP!

By U.S. Navy Capt. Ouimette  
XO, NAS, Pensacola

That's what we think we heard on the 11th of September 2001 and maybe it was, but I think it should have been "Get Out of Bed!" In fact, I think the alarm clock has been buzzing since 1979 and we have continued to hit the snooze button and roll over for a few more minutes of peaceful sleep since then.

It was a cool fall day in November 1979 in a country going

through a religious and political upheaval when a group of Iranian students attacked and seized the American Embassy in Tehran. This seizure was an outright attack on American soil; it was an attack that held the world's most powerful country hostage and paralyzed a Presidency.

The attack on this sovereign U. S. embassy set the stage for events to follow for the next 23 years.

America was still reeling from the aftermath of the Vietnam experience and had a serious threat from the Soviet Union when then-President Carter, had to do something. He chose to conduct a clandestine raid in the desert. The ill-

fated mission ended in ruin, but stood as a symbol of America's inability to deal with terrorism.

America's military had been decimated and downsized/right sized since the end of the Vietnam War. A poorly trained, poorly equipped and poorly organized military was called on to execute a complex mission that was doomed from the start.

Shortly after the Tehran experience, Americans began to be kidnapped and killed throughout the Middle East. America could do little to protect her citizens living and working abroad. The attacks against US soil continued.

In April of 1983 a large vehicle packed with high explosives was driven into the US Embassy compound in Beirut. When it explodes, it kills 63 people. The alarm went off again and America hit the Snooze Button once more.

Then just six short months later a large truck heavily laden down with over 2500 pounds of TNT smashed through the main gate of the US Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut and 241 US servicemen are killed. America mourns her dead and hit the Snooze Button once more.

See **WAKE UP** pg. 33

## TRASH HAULERS HAVE FUN, TOO

Submitted by: Bill Keeler

Author chooses to remain anonymous for obvious reasons!!! **From the mailbag and for all my Air Force friends:**

There I was at six thousand feet over central Iraq, two hundred eighty knots and we're dropping faster than Paris Hilton's panties. It's a typical September evening in the Persian Gulf; hotter than a rectal thermometer and I'm sweating like a priest at a Cub Scout meeting.

But that's neither here nor there. The night is moonless over Baghdad tonight, and blacker than a Steven King novel. But it's 2003, folks, and I'm sporting the latest in night-combat technology. Namely, hand-me-down night vision goggles (NVGs) thrown out by the fighter boys. Additionally, my 1962 Lockheed C-130E Hercules is equipped with an obsolete, yet, semi-effective missile warning system (MWS). The MWS conveniently makes a nice soothing tone in your headset just before the missile explodes into your airplane. Who says you can't polish a turd? At any rate, the NVGs are illuminating Baghdad International Airport like the Las Vegas Strip during a Mike Tyson

fight. These NVGs are the cat's ass. But I've digressed.

The preferred method of approach tonight is the random shallow. This tactical maneuver allows the pilot to ingress the landing zone in an unpredictable manner, thus exploiting the supposedly secured perimeter of the airfield in an attempt to avoid enemy surface-to-air-missiles and small arms fire. Personally, I wouldn't bet my pink-butt on that theory but the approach is fun as hell and that's the real reason we fly it.

We get a visual on the runway at three miles out, drop down to one thousand feet above the ground, still maintaining two hundred eighty knots. Now the fun starts. It's pilot appreciation time as I descend the mighty Herk to six hundred feet and smoothly, yet very deliberately, yank into a sixty degree left bank, turning the aircraft ninety degrees offset from runway heading. As soon as we roll out of the turn, I reverse turn to the right a full two hundred seventy degrees in order to roll out aligned with the runway. Some aeronautical genius coined this maneuver the "Ninety/ Two-Seventy." Chopping the power during the turn, I pull back on the yoke just to the point my nether regions start to sag, bleeding

off energy in order to configure the pig for landing.

"Flaps Fifty!, Landing Gear Down!, Before Landing Checklist!" I look over at the copilot and he's shaking like a cat crapping on a sheet of ice. Looking further back at the navigator, and even through the NVGs, I can clearly see the wet spot spreading around his crotch. Finally, I glance at my steely-eyed flight engineer. His eyebrows rise in unison as a grin forms on his face. I can tell he's thinking the same thing I am. "Where do we find such fine young men?" "Flaps One Hundred!" I bark at the shaking cat. Now it's all aimpoint and airspeed. Aviation 101, with the exception there's no lights, I'm on NVGs, it's Baghdad, and now tracers are starting to crisscross the black sky.

Naturally, and not at all surprisingly, I grease the Goodyear's on brick-one of runway 33 left, bring the throttles to ground idle and then force the props to full reverse pitch. Tonight, the sound of freedom is my four Hamilton Standard propellers chewing through the thick, putrid, Baghdad air. The huge, one hundred thirty thousand pound, lumbering whisper pig comes to a lurching stop in less than two thousand feet. Let's

see a Viper do that! We exit the runway to a welcoming committee of government issued Army grunts. It's time to download their beans and bullets and letters from their sweet-hearts, look for war booty, and, of course, urinate on Saddam's home.

Walking down the crew entry steps with my lowest-bidder, Beretta 92F, 9 millimeter strapped smartly to my side, I look around and thank God, not Allah, I'm an American and I'm on the winning team. Then, I thank God I'm not in the Army.

Knowing once again I've cheated death, I ask myself, "What in the hell am I doing in this mess?" Is it Duty, Honor, and Country? You bet your ass. Or, could it possibly be for the glory, the swag, and not to mention, chicks dig the Air Medal. There's probably some truth there too. But now is not the time to derive the complexities of the superior, cerebral properties of the human portion of the aviator-man-machine model. It is however, time to get out of this stink-hole. "Hey copilot, clean yourself up! And how's 'bout the 'Before Starting Engines Checklist."

**God, I love this job!**

★★★



# REAGAN'S GREATEST VICTORIES

By ANDREW SULLIVAN

A sharp mind produced a conservatism without social intolerance.

All Presidents, like all human beings, get many things wrong. Ronald Reagan's extraordinary achievement as President of the U.S. was to succeed in getting the two biggest challenges of his time right: defeating the Soviet Union and reviving the American economy and spirit. Neither of those achievements was inevitable. Both were fiercely opposed at the time. But he persisted — his visionary focus matched only by a gentleness of character and a brilliance of rhetoric.

The gentleness first. Yes, he was known throughout the world as a cowboy. That helped. It certainly rattled the Kremlin — and all the other enemies of America. But personally, he was civil to a point. Reading the extraordinary collection of his letters to a wide variety of ornery correspondents — from international statesmen to high schoolers — you get a sense of how easily this came to him. "I have been informed of your complaint about my broadcasts and your suggestion that they be taken off the air," he wrote to one irate listener in his days as a broadcaster. "I'm sorry you feel that way and hope you won't mind my writing a few words in my own defense." He disarmed his correspondents as cheerfully as he disarmed the Soviets.

At the same time, Reagan was unflinching in the defense of his ideas. His critics thought he was stupid. Nothing could be further from the truth. His radio talks — given hundreds of times on a variety of political topics — are superb, intelligent popular journalism. They were the reflection of a man interested

above all in ideas. In one he summed up the essence of his belief in human freedom in his own idiosyncratic shorthand: "Our system freed the individual genius of man. Released him to fly as high & as far as his own talent & energy would take him. We allocate resources not by govt. decision but by the mil's. of decisions customers make when they go into the mkt. place to buy. If something seems too high-priced we buy something else. Thus resources are steered toward those things the people want most at the price they are willing to pay. It may not be a perfect system but it's better than any other that's ever been tried." That's about as acute a defense of market capitalism as you'll find.

His collected letters reveal an equally sharp mind. There's a detailed missive setting professor Arthur Laffer right on gas taxes; there's a complex analysis of spending trends on his watch; there's a long explanation of the crossed wires that led him to pay tribute to dead SS officers at a cemetery in Bitburg, Germany. And as early as 1982, there's candor about his strategy for defeating the Soviets. He tolerated the deficits, he explained, for a long-term reason: "I don't underestimate the value of a sound economy, but I also don't underestimate the imperialist ambitions of the Soviet Union ... I want more than anything to bring them into realistic arms-reduction talks. To do this, they must be convinced that the alternative is a build-up militarily by us. They have stretched their economy to the limit to maintain their arms program. They know they cannot match us in an arms race if we are determined to catch up. Our true ultimate purpose is arms reduction." A decade later, you could see how effective his long-term strategy was. And the money saved by winning the cold war — together with the lower tax rates he bequeathed — helped give us the boom of the 1990s.

In retrospect, the Reagan deficit of the 1980s was a long-term

bargain. But Reagan's significance went far deeper than merely getting the big issues right. Americans knew in their hearts that this unlikely man understood the deepest meaning of their country in a way no one else had for a generation. He saw what America's promise was; he exhilarated in its energy; he drew strength from its optimism; he drew out of Americans what was already in them and gave it shape and words and a grinning upward nod of the head.

Sure, there was always work to be done. But the point was the escape — to a ranch in California, to a new world, to a constantly changing future. He marshaled conservatism without calling forth the dark seam of religious or social intolerance. In his personal life, he was often distant and cold. But his real peers were

ordinary Americans, whose fears he assuaged and whose hope he rekindled. He took responsibility seriously but wore it so lightly. He gave Americans purpose again, and in return they gave him love. "During my first months in office," he once wrote to an old friend, "when day after day there were decisions that had to be made, I had an almost irresistible urge — really a physical urge — to look over my shoulder for someone I could pass the problem on to. Then without my quite knowing how it happened, I realized I was looking in the wrong direction. I started looking up instead and have been doing so for quite a while now." Well, now, at last, he will look face to face. And as surely as we are now grieving, he will be smiling.

★★★

## WAKE UP

from pg 32

Two months later in December 1983, another truck loaded with explosives is driven into the US Embassy in Kuwait, and America continues her slumber.

The following year, in September 1984, another van was driven into the gates of the US Embassy in Beirut and America slept.

Soon the terrorism spreads to Europe. In April 1985 a bomb explodes in a restaurant frequented by US soldiers in Madrid.

Then in August, a Volkswagen loaded with explosives is driven into the main gate of the US Air Force Base at Rhein-Main, 22 are killed and the snooze alarm is buzzing louder and louder as US interests are continually attacked.

Fifty-nine days later, a cruise ship, the Achille Lauro is hijacked and we watched as an American in a wheelchair is singled out of the passenger list and executed.

The terrorists then shift their tactics to bombing civilian airliners when they bomb TWA Flight 840 in April of 1986 that killed 4 and the

most tragic bombing, Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 259.

America wants to treat these terrorist acts as crimes; in fact we are still trying to bring these people to trial.

These are acts of war.

The wake up alarm is getting louder and louder. The terrorists decide to bring the fight to America.

In January 1993, two CIA agents are shot and killed as they enter CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

The following month, February 1993, a group of terrorists are arrested after a rented van packed with explosives is driven into the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people are killed and over 1000 are injured. Still, this is a crime and not an act of war?

The Snooze alarm is depressed again. Then in November 1995 a car bomb explodes at a US military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia killing seven service men and women.

A few months later in June of 1996, another truck bomb explodes only 35 yards from the US

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# A-37 CORNER



**Ed. Note:** Ollie Maier asked that the following article written by Russ Knoebel be published in the A-37 Corner of this issue in memory of Russ who passed away on 5 March 2004. Russ flew the AT-28's and the A-37's as an Air Commando. He was a long time ACA Life Member and will be missed...!

## SCRAMBLE RAP

By RUSS KNOEBEL  
Pilot, AT-28's and A-37's

The sun was barely slipping below the horizon, when that damn scramble bell rang. It had been a long day and we were about to be relieved from alert. Both Jack Held and I were pretty tired. We had been scrambled twice already and I was looking forward to getting cleaned up and falling into a glass of gin at the officer's club.

The last scramble hadn't been an easy one. We were vectored to the Laotian border to silence a 20mm anti-aircraft gun that had been harassing the forward air controller. Not wanting to get closer than necessary, the FAC lobbed in a smoke rocket and directed us from several miles south. We had less than ideal ordinance to take out a 20 mike-mike, Napes, CBU, rockets, and hi-drags. To be honest, we sort of dumped our stuff in four erratic passes and suggested they call in someone with slicks and a mach one delivery capability. So although the gun wasn't firing when we left, it was generally agreed that they probably went out for rice wine. We weren't credited with a kill which suited me fine. At least we were still in one piece.

This current scramble however, proved to be even more exciting than the last. We were directed southwest of Bien Hoa to the

Mekong River where it turns eastward toward the sea. We were told to contact the forward air controller about seven minutes from the target and he briefed us on the mission.

An A-1 and an Army helicopter gunship had been shot down by a 50 cal. machine gun. Seldom do we get anti-aircraft weapons that sophisticated this far south. Seems when the A-1 was unable to take out the gun, the Army decided that a helicopter gun ship could do the job. Naturally the 50 ate the gun ship and no one could get in to pick up the A-1 pilot or the gunship crew. Both crews were alive and still in communication with the FAC.

The A-1 was piloted by a Vietnamese and had been flying out of an airstrip near there, but the Vietnamese Air Force decided that since it was getting dark, they couldn't scramble anymore tonight. If you note the sarcasm here, be assured that I was feeling a lot more than sarcasm that night. There we were, facing another heavy automatic anti-aircraft weapon and the best aircraft armored to handle a 50 cal. hit was sitting on the ground because it was too dark.

The FAC briefed us on the urgency of getting to the downed crews as soon as possible. Helicopter gunships and rescue choppers were standing by just out of gun range, and it seemed it was up to us to take out the gun before the rescue could take place. We weren't really too happy about that, since we had the same lousy load this trip that we had on the last one. For the uninformed, all our ordinance (load) was designed to drop at low altitudes,

which isn't the smartest way to take out something as sophisticated as a 50 cal. machine gun with an effective range of over 5,000 feet.

Under each wing we carried a 500-pound hi-drag bomb. They had to be dropped below 1,500 feet for accuracy. Otherwise, when the bomb's large fins spread after release, winds had a strong effect on the trajectory. Next to the hi-drag was a large napalm. Nape tumbles when dropped so it also requires a low release altitude. Next was the rocket pod carrying nine 2.5 inch havair rockets, which should be fired at about 1,500 feet for accuracy. If the rocket is fired much higher than 1,500 feet the rocket motor runs out of fuel and the damn things go ballistic. This means they don't hit where the gun sight was fixed. Finally, we had CBU pods under each wing. These pods had six tubes, each containing dozens of small hand grenade sized bomblets that spread shrapnel and havoc when dropped in series. CBU should be delivered (delivered sounds like Domino's Pizza, but it's not quite the same to the recipient) from level flight at about 200 to 1,000 feet above the ground in a string a mile long. CBU are anti-personnel; not anti 50 cal. machine gun. So we decided to save the CBU for last and concentrate on getting the gun.

The guy firing the thing must have been the one who carted it all the way from north on his back. I say this because as soon as I rolled in, he opened up on me like he had been doing this for years. I could see the muzzle flash and occasional tracers streak by my cockpit as I came erratically down final.

I had decided to fire my rockets first, and Jack was to follow in closely with his hi-drags. The idea was to give them something to worry about with the rockets burning in on them and maybe Jack could sneak in close enough to do some good. The Tracers were too damn close for comfort, and it dawned on me that

the 50 probably had some kind of radar tracking capability. My butt puckered as I drove in and salvoed both pods. I must have flinched because my rockets only smoked up the area and Jack's bombs were a little short.

Pulling up off the pass, I pushed up the throttles and immediately felt a vibration in my left engine. I looked at my instruments, but couldn't see any thing in the dark, (I hadn't turned on my instrument lights yet). I eased back my left throttle to about 85%. The vibration smoothed out.

I turned up my instrument lights on base leg and except for a slight fluctuation in my exhaust gas temperature, everything seemed okay. I decided to leave the throttle where it was and turned down my lights. Jack cut his downwind leg short and turned inside me to make his rocket pass as cover for me. I rolled in just after him. I was a little worried about where he was in the dark, but soon I could tell by the 50 caliber tracers that he was ahead of me and a little to my left.

He fired both pods and pulled off about four seconds before I released my hi-drags. We were both given a bull's eye by the forward air controller who seemed pretty excited about the fact that we took out the 50 cal. I was pretty excited too because the vibration in my left engine came back as I pulled up hard to the left. Jack came up behind me. His transmission was broken, but I heard him call that there were sparks and fire in my left engine exhaust.

I yanked the left throttle to cutoff and asked Jack to take a look. He moved in close behind me, and said the sparks were gone and there was no sign of fire. Jack's transmissions were quite broken and it wasn't long before his transmitter went completely out. Seems that he had taken a hit also.

The FAC asked us if we

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# SCRAMBLE

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could dump our CBU and Nape in the area just south of the gun position so they could get to the downed crews. Jack was along side me and wagged his wings when I asked if he could read me and the FAC. He confirmed that everything seemed to be okay except his UHF transmitter. We re-established the position of the downed aircrews and Jack acknowledged again as I rolled in first.

I set the switches to release both napalm but only one came off. Fortunately, it was the one on the left, the side with the dead engine. Once again I pulled up to the left with the good engine and the remaining nape on the up-wing side. Jack dropped his nape just behind mine and it looked like half the delta went up in flames. Again, the FAC gave us a bull's eye.

I advised him that we had both been hit and that this would be our last pass. Jack and I rolled in almost side by side and spread our CBU where he requested. All during my pass, I was flicking the Nape switch hoping to get rid of that also, but no luck.

We cleared the target with praise and thanks from the FAC. Later we learned that the rescue was successful and we did in fact take out the gun.

With Jack on my wing, I climbed out over the river where it was widened as it poked it's way toward the sea. I called to Jack to jettison his CBU and rocket pods. He acknowledged with a wing rock and released on my count. I got rid of my CBU and rock pods, but the napalm stayed.

I next tried the hot button and my tanks went and the nape almost did. It released from the front hook and hung upon the rear. I was grateful that it didn't take the flap out, but actually it only dropped down a few inches. So there I was with a hot napalm that may or may not drag on

the runway when I landed.

Now that really gave me something to think about on the way home. Should I bail out or take a chance that the nape would not go off under me on landing? There is something so secure about that warm cockpit, especially at night, that I decided to chance a landing.

I called ahead to Bien Hoa and told them of our mess. I advised Jack to land first from a straight-in. As we approached final, Jack confirmed three gears down and locked. I relayed to the tower.

They were ready for us with crash crew and medics flashing red lights in greeting. I told them to keep the fire trucks back because of the nape. I then set up a long, single-engine straight-in. Now, I knew a straight-in wasn't the smartest approach to use at Bien Hoa, because final approach got a little hot at night with the enemy shooting at you. However, I wasn't as worried about the small arms fire as I was about that nape hanging under my right wing.

Sweat trickled down my face and the crack of my ass as I milked the flaps down a little. All the time I was hitting every pickle button and switch that I could find.

I must have been living right that night because the nape fell off clean about 300 feet high on final. It came off cold and didn't explode on impact, but I'll bet if Charlie was firing at me from final, he did a number in his pants when he saw that nape come loose.

The rest of the landing was uneventful, and I was really glad to unstrap and feel the ramp underfoot. The left engine had taken a 50 caliber slug right up the intake and every row of blades was deformed. I'm surprised it held up for that extra pass, but the A-37 really was in its element in Vietnam. As we had suspected, Jack had taken a hit in the UHF.

We got a nice letter from the FAC and the army on that one, but

Col. Weber had my butt on the carpet the next day. Seems that I was the magnet ass of the squadron, having been hit five times so far.

I suggested rather strongly (I was still running on adrenaline), that maybe the fault was in the ordinance on the alert aircraft. We had already learned that the Raps could deliver slicks as accurately as hi-drags and with slicks we would have versatility we needed to go up against some of the heavier guns that were turning up in the south. Headquarters had already taken us off hi-drags except for alert.

## WAKE UP

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military compound in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. It destroys the Khobar Towers, a US Air Force barracks, killing 19 and injuring over 500. The terrorists are getting braver and smarter as they see that America does not respond decisively.

They move to coordinate their attacks in a simultaneous attack on two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These attacks were planned with precision. They kill 224. America responds with cruise missile attacks and goes back to sleep.

The USS Cole was docked in the port of Aden, Yemen for refueling on 12 October 2000, when a small craft pulled along side the ship and exploded killing 17 US Navy Sailors. Attacking a US War Ship is an act of war, but we sent the FBI to investigate the crime and went back to sleep.

And of course, you know the events of 11 September 2001. Most Americans think this was the first attack against the US or on American soil: How wrong they are! America has been under a constant attack since 1979 and we chose to hit the snooze alarm, roll over, and go back to sleep.

In the news lately we have seen lots of finger pointing from ev-

I guess Col. Weber did his job, because shortly after we got rid of the hi-drags for good. That was my 113th mission. I also happened to be flying aircraft 513. And I used to think that thirteen was my lucky number!

Actually, as I think about it, maybe it really is....

**Ed. Note:** *This is the first of several War Stories about the A-37; the little jet fighter that could...! The A-37 crews claim that it flew more combat sorties than any other jet fighter in Vietnam.*

★★★

ery high official in government over what they knew and what they didn't know. But if you've read the papers and paid a little attention I think you can see exactly what they knew. You don't have to be in the FBI or CIA or on the National Security Council to see the pattern that has been developing since 1979.

The President is right on when he says we are engaged in a war. I think we have been in a war for the past 23 years and it will continue until we, as a people, decide enough is enough.

America needs to "Get out of Bed" and act decisively now. America has been changed forever. We have to be ready to pay the price and make the sacrifice to ensure our way of life continues. We cannot afford to keep hitting the snooze button again and again and roll over and go back to sleep.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto said "...it seems all we have done is awakened a sleeping giant." This is the message we need to disseminate to terrorists around the world.

Support Our Troops and support President Bush for having the courage, political or militarily, to address what so many who preceded him didn't have the backbone to do: both Democrat and Republican. This is not a political thing to be

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# SADDAM HAD THEIR HANDS CUT OFF – AMERICA GAVE THEM NEW ONES:

By DANIEL HENNIGER

By now, some Americans may feel the need for respite from the images of Abu Ghraib and the five hooded barbarians standing behind Nick Berg. This week's column will try to provide some measure of respite.

It is the story of Americans, in and out of the U.S. government, who moved mountains to help seven horribly maimed Iraqi men. It is not always pleasant reading, but there are rewards to staying with it, especially now.

Quite obviously it has been decided, as the handling of the Abu Ghraib story makes plain, that when America stumbles, we are going to have our faces rubbed in it. And rubbed in it and rubbed in it. As far as I can make out, the purpose of this two weeks of media humiliation is that we--the president, all of us--are being asked to morally prostrate ourselves before the rest of the world. Some may choose to do so, but this story should make a few Americans want to simply stand up straight again.

As perfect justice, the story in fact begins in Abu Ghraib prison, in 1995. With Iraq's economy in a tailspin, Saddam arrested nine Iraqi businessmen to scapegoat them as dollar traders. They got a 30-minute "trial," and were sentenced, after a year's imprisonment, to have their right hands surgically cut off at Abu Ghraib prison.

The amputations were performed, over two days, by a Baghdad anesthesiologist, a surgeon and medical staff. We know this because Saddam had a videotape made of each procedure. He had the hands brought to him in formalin and then returned to Abu Ghraib. Oh, one more thing: The surgeon carved an X of shame into the forehead of each

man. And the authorities charged the men \$50.

Last year, after we liberated Iraq, a veteran TV news producer named Don North--who has worked for major U.S. broadcasters--was in Baghdad with the U.S. to restore TV service. Iraqi contacts there brought him a tape of the men's amputations. Mr. North says dismemberment was common in Saddam's Iraq and that if one walks down a crowded Baghdad street one may see a half-dozen people missing an ear, eye, limb or tongue. He decided to seek out the men whose stubbed arms represented the civilized world's lowest act--the perversion of medicine.

He found seven. Mr. North determined to make a documentary of their story and get medical help for them. How he found that help, if one may still use this phrase, is an all-American story.

An oil engineer from Houston, named Roger Brown, overheard Mr. North's tale in a Baghdad café. He suggested Don North get in touch with a famed Houston TV newsman named Marvin Zindler. Mr. Zindler put him in touch with Dr. Joe Agris, a Houston reconstructive surgeon, who has worked in postwar Vietnam and Nicaragua repairing children.

Mr. North sent Dr. Agris a copy of the videotape of the surgical atrocities, and Dr. Agris said: Send me the men; I will fix them.

But flying seven Iraqi men out of Baghdad is easier said than done. In this case, prodded by Don North and government friends, the famous U.S. bureaucracy gave itself a day off. Paul Bremer wrote a memo authorizing their departure. Paul Wolfowitz told the Air Force it could fly them to Frankfurt. Homeland Security waived visa requirements.

Continental Airlines donated passage to Houston. There, Dr. Agris enlisted a fellow surgeon, Fred

Kestler, to assist. The Methodist Hospital donated facilities, and the men arrived in Houston in early April.

Dr. Agris saw that the Abu Ghraib "surgeries" were a botch. They'd cut through the joining of the wrist's carpal bones, "like carving a Turkey leg." Saddam's doctors did nothing to repair the nerve endings, which left the men with constant real and "phantom" pain. Drs. Agris and Kestler had two preliminary tasks: Repair the nerves, and, alas, take another inch off the men's lower arms, to leave a smooth surface for attaching their new prosthetic "hands." They worked for two days operating on the seven men, who then took a week to recover before receiving their new hands.

Those devices were donated by the German-American prosthetic company Otto Bock, at a cost of \$50,000 each. They are state-of-the-art electronic hands, with fingers, which respond to trained muscular movements. The rehabilitation and training is being donated by two other Houston companies, TIRR and Dynamic Orthotics. The Iraqi men are in Houston now, spending five hours a day learning to use their new right hands. And oh yes, the brands on their heads were removed.

Don North completed his documentary on what happened to these men in Iraq I watched "Remembering Saddam" this week. Several of the men insisted on seeing Saddam's home video of the atrocity, and so it's in the film--a bizarre, almost dainty image of forceps, scalpel, surgical gloves and green operating-room garments. Nothing like it since Dr. Mengele. Watching his hand come off, Baasim Al Fadhly says: "Look at this doctor, who considers his career noble and swears to God to be a noble person. Let everyone see this film."

This crime deserves condemnation from international medical societies, such as the U.N.'s World Health Organization, or the Red Cross. And Don North's film indeed should be seen--but may not be. After two months of trying, no U.S. broadcast or cable network will take it. This is incredible. TV can run Abu Ghraib photos 24/7 but can't find 55 minutes for Saddam's crimes against humanity?

On May 23, the American Foreign Policy Council will bring the restored men to Washington. They will visit maimed GIs at Walter Reed Army Hospital. It wouldn't be surprising if they said something positive about the U.S. soldiers who have not been on television the past two weeks.

Then Don North and Joe Agris will fly with the men back to Iraq, to survey the rest of Saddam's dismembered population. "The practice of prosthetics is very archaic," Mr. North says, "for a country where this is such an affliction." Dr. Agris hopes to survey the hospitals and bring in some modern equipment and supplies. "If they let me, I'll do some of the kids," he says. "Let's show the good side of what we can do."

Sure. Why not?

*Mr. Henninger is deputy editor of The Wall Street Journal's editorial page. His column appears Fridays in the Journal and on OpinionJournal.com.*

★★★

## WAKE UP

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hashed over in an election year: this is an AMERICAN thing. This is about our Freedom and the Freedom of our children in the years to come.

**Ed. Note:** *I sincerely hope and pray that the people of this great nation rapidly come to their senses and we get on with the business of expeditiously eradicating Terrorism!*

★★★



# FORT BRAGG PREPARING FOR GROWTH

FORT BRAGG, N.C. -- Money is pouring into Fort Bragg to improve the training grounds for the Army's special operation troops.

The U.S. Army Special Operations Command has about \$107 million in construction under way or about to begin. The command is adding space, updating old buildings and preparing for the growth of some of its units.

Plans call for adding about 2,500 soldiers to the base over the next four years.

In addition, Special Forces trainees jumped from 350 to 450 last year. The goal is to increase the number to 750 in 2006.

That means the command needs more trainers and a lot more students.

Stephen L. Bright of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, says the base will have to bring in 3,100 students to produce 750 graduates of the selective program.

Submitted by: Peter Kessler  
udorn3@verizon.net

★★★



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## PRESIDENT

*from back page*

you can talk about it now...! And, I know and understand that almost no one will believe your story unless they were there and saw it happen. Regardless, you may think that your stories are trivial and unimportant; but know this; our most interesting articles come from folks just like you.

Get out the pencil and paper and give story telling a shot...! Keep your stories worded just like you talk and you will do just fine...!

## McCOSKRIE THRESHOLD FOUNDATION

We recently received a letter from the wife of the President of Guatemala requesting that the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation become involved again in working humanitarian problems and issues in her country. She particularly addressed medical and health needs of the poor. Much needs to be done and we can make a difference in the lives of these people.

We are working through Bobby Moore to establish medical supply lines to Guatemala. There are a few issues which we must work before we become fully operational. Bobby is personally taking time to go back and forth between Guatemala and the U.S. to coordinate this project.

Many thanks for your efforts, Bobby...!

JUST RECEIVED GREAT NEWS....! The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation has been accepted under the local Combined Federal Campaign Fund umbrella for support. If we work this right, we may be accepted for funding from the national CFC fund. We owe the success in this venue to Dick Geron taking the necessary time to go through tons of paperwork. Thanks a million, Dick...! John Connors knew the

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## COUNTRY STORE ITEMS AVAILABLE

ZAP Patch -----	\$3.00
Original Air Commando Group Patch-----	\$3.00
Project 404 Coin-----	\$10.00
ACA Bumper Sticker-----	\$2.00
ACA Bronze Coins-----	\$5.00
50th Commemorative Coin (Bronze)-----	\$5.00
ACA Ball Cap-----	\$9.00
<i>(royal &amp; lt blue, black, white, gray, &amp; denim)</i>	
ACA Ball Cap-----	\$9.00
<i>(camo, black, &amp; navy with lettering)</i>	
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-----	\$15.00
<i>(black or navy, with or without pocket, sizes M-XXL)</i>	
ACA Golf Shirt -----	\$15.00
<i>(white, red, royal blue, waffle weave with pocket)</i>	
Air Commando Bush Hat (M-XL)-----	\$20.00
Straw Hat-----	\$10.00
50th Anniversary Poster (full color - 20" X 24")-----	5/\$1.00
Jane Fonda Poster (black & white - 11" X 14")-----	\$3.00
ACA Desk Clock (battery not included) -----	\$7.50
ACA License Plate-----	\$10.00
Jackets with ACA Logo-----	\$30.00
<i>(stone, cadet blue, or tan colors only)L, XL</i>	
POW/MIA Decals-----	\$2.00
POW/MIA Patches-----	\$3.50
ACA 50th and 55th Reunion Videos-----	\$5.00
<i>(Price includes shipping and handling)</i>	
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# PRESIDENT

from pg 37

right people and greased the skids for us to be accepted locally. Nice work John...!

Our McCoskrie guys have been busy as ever. John and crew are currently shipping more than one large 40 foot sea container each month filled with Humanitarian goods such as school desks, clothing, and school books. He is sending these goods to several South American countries. I repeat, shipments are becoming more and more frequent. Our hats off to John and his crews for the Herculean efforts they put into this worthy cause.

The U.S. Military has been building schools in impoverished areas of several South American countries. We often piggy-back on their shipments, at no cost to us. This makes your MTF dollars stretch much, ...much further.

We owe the Okaloosa School System considerable recognition for joining our MTF efforts. Many "Thanks" to the School Board President, Mr. Gatez, and his staff for their generous support. Their storage facilities were filled to capacity with old desks and other used and damaged goods gathering dust, and eventually going to the trash dump. This became a win-win situation for the Okaloosa School System, the Okaloosa County Tax Payers, McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, and many impoverished young children in South America.

It was the brainstorm of John Grove and "Taco" Sanchez to relieve the Okaloosa County Tax Payers and the School Board of the considerable expense for storing and salvaging. Good thinking guys...! Currently, the stored school supplies are being pulled and put to good use in newly constructed schools for young unfortunate children in impoverished countries. These young kids, who truly need educational opportunities,

do appreciate the opportunity to go to school and learn. They hardly miss a day of school. Look at the picture of all the smiling young children excited about their "new" school desks that we sent to them...great job!

Audra Murray continues to save us thousands of dollars in shipping fees. Audra visited the construction sites in South America and brought back glowing reports with pictures of many happy and smiling faces. You can see that the kids are filled with excitement about moving from open shelters with dirt floors and into dried-in weatherproofed buildings with new school desks. Audra, these undeveloped nations of children have the greatest admiration for the outstanding work you do..! Be proud of yourself, young Lady...!

Increased work load became so overbearing that John and his crews often could not meet our shipping requirements. John went begging and came-up with some fine "young bucks" from Hurlburt who pitched-in and pulled his buns out of the fire on several occasions. Our tired and worn older guys needed this relief badly. Thanks to each of you Hurlburt guys who pitched-in, ...you were a "God Send" for John and his

weary band of workers. We owe you guys "BIG TIME"...!

For all our members, your donations are making all the difference in world. You have managed to keep MTF afloat and healthy. Do keep up the good work.

## AIR COMMANDO MEMBERSHIP

Our ranks are rapidly thinning; we lost two Board members recently.

Sandy Sanborn (President of the Raven Association and ACA Board Member) after briefing a group of newspaper reporters at the Hurlburt Air Park on Friday evening asked Felix Sambogna, Jerry Rhein and me to have a couple of beers at the JR Rocker's lounge on Hurlburt with him. Sandy was all upbeat and filled with excitement about his plans for the future. Sam and I learned a great deal about Sandy's past accomplishments, which were no small thing; and, all good I assure you. Sandy had great and inspirational visions of what he wanted to do in the future. The Air Commando Association was clearly a part of Sandy's plans. After about two hours

we split and departed the lounge. Sandy shows up at home later that evening and tells his wife Jan that he had a slight heart-burn. He took a couple of "Tums's" and went to bed. Bright and early next morning I get a call from Jerry with the shocking news that Sandy passed away (Jerry being on duty the following morning with the sheriff's department).

Unbelievable, absolutely unbelievable shocking bad news....! Sandy appeared healthy as a horse; vibrant and outgoing just the evening before.

The following week I get this call telling me that Jerry Rhein is in the emergency room at the hospital. He had some blockage in his groin area stopping blood flow to his feet and legs. Jerry has spent some tough days recovering from this problem, and he is finally doing better! Hang in there Jerry, we are all wishing you a speedy recovery.

## SKY REUNION

More than a hundred Case Officers who served in Laos were in town a few weeks ago. Many of you knew of or had met these guys when you were in Laos. They had a fabulous gathering and their reunion followed along the lines of our Annual Air Commando Association Reunion. It seems that all the important and not-so-important people were there. I'm classifying me and Fred Platt in the not-so-important category; forgive me, Fred...! See SKY story elsewhere in newsletter.

Met the Case Office who interviewed Jane "Hanoi" Fonda on her return from visiting our POW's in North Vietnam. Ain't it just "gosh awful" that the folks who caused such pain and suffering for our Vietnam POW's were able to come back and be selected with great notoriety for their less than noteworthy activities.

Where has America's sense of responsibility gone...? Have the America people lost their souls...?

See **PRESIDENT** pg. 39



Children sit in desks salvaged, cleaned, and repaired by the Air Commandos. The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation arranged for several schools in various South American countries to receive shipments of school equipment and supplies. See the MTF article for details.



# PRESIDENT

from pg 38

## ADS

### **BANGKOK CLEANERS**

We owe Bangkok Cleaners our support, and I mean we owe them big time. These guys clean all the dirty clothing, bed linen, blankets, and so forth for the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation; and they do it at absolutely no cost to us.

Talk about being generous, this goes far beyond just being generous. We (the MTF) would spend hundreds of dollars each month for cleaning bills, were it not for these guys. Do use the Bangkok Cleaners; they are on our side and they are the "GOOD GUYS"...

### **FT. WALTON AUTO REPAIR**

Also, I was informed by some higher "muck-de-mucks", you know the authoritative types, people who are in the know about the important things occurring in and around the Fort Walton Beach area, there is a very reasonable auto repair business located at 120 Racetrack Road which you may wish to check into the next time you need someone to look into your automobile problems.

Don't blink as you drive down Racetrack or you will miss the location. They are on the north side of Racetrack, several blocks east of the Mooney Road turn-off.

Being inquisitive, I ran both my car and my truck by and had them checked out. It is true, these guys know their business; they are good, and they are very reasonable...

### **COME 2 U COMPUTERS**

There is a computer repair ad in this issue of the newsletter you may wish take notice of. Pete Bowman's computer rolled "tango-uniform" because of virus infestations, popup problems, needing up dates and so on. Pete couldn't keep his computer up and online for any

length of time.

Roy Semone came out to the Air Commando Headquarters Building, picked-up the computer, took it to his shop, corrected all the problems, returned and reinstalled the computer at very little cost. Pete swears by this guy; not at him. Talk to Pete if you don't believe me. I was so impressed that I had the guy work on my computer also.

## **SERIOUSLY, VOTE WITH YOUR HEAD – DO NOT BASE YOUR VOTE ON FEAR AND UNFOUNDED EMOTIONAL ISSUES**

America has been viciously attacked by people who declared war on you and the way you live; the freedoms you enjoy, and the rest of the civilized world. Keep focused on the real issue of rooting out and destroying Terrorists and the hatred they espouse in their youth.

In 1998 Osama bin Laden issued a Fatwa declaring a "Jihad against Jews and Crusaders." He also said, "the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies, civilians and military, is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is possible to do it."

Can you even for a moment envision strapping explosives onto your young daughter and sending her off to be blown to bits...?? Not on your life would you ever think of doing such a thing...! Yes, it is all about money, hate, envy, jealousy, and greed, but you are the target; and don't you ever forget it...!

Look into who is giving aid, comfort and support to the widows and mothers of the people who have blown themselves to smithereens. You may very well be surprised.

Listening to certain prominent American political leaders, it is hard to do other than conclude that they'd rather see America lose the war on Terror than have our president be re-elected. It has really got-

ten bad when groups are willing to engage in such anti-American propaganda. Surely we have a right to expect better of the news media and of our political leaders. Yes, there have been many mistakes made as we learn to deal with Terrorism. And, you must understand that many more mistakes will be made as the world takes sides on this issue and learns to deal with it.

Our military, has had the best training ever. And, they are very highly motivated due largely to the support you and I as Americans give them. Your encouragement and support is so important to these guys in the field, who are at risk, and letting it all hang-out; to protect you, me and our freedom...! Let's make every effort to keep these special guys aware of our strong backing and support for them in their fight against Terrorism.

We do have some problems in the upper echelons of our military. They sometime seem to lack vision and imagination; or they are afraid to speak-up for fear of missing a promotion. And, they and we are often still fighting the last war. This can be overcome. Terrorism is a different breed of cat and both our military, civilian leaders and we have got to learn to deal with the reality of how they think and work. Pain and suffering is their aim; our pain and suffering is in the cross hairs of their gun sights...!

Terrorism has been under our noses for years on end, ...and ignored in hopes that it would simply go away. The objective of Terrorist is to disrupt and destroy any and all civilized forms of government; to go in and hurt people for no earthly reason other than to show that you and I can't protect ourselves and our way of life. Much of the news media and many vocal politicians are often no friends of our nation, too often they give credence and support to the enemy in their own self interest and need for attention and notoriety. Much too often, they have passed

essential and valuable information to our enemies when they needed to to have kept their mouths shut. Good Generals like Patton would have hung these sorry ass bastards for such goings on during World War II.

Keep your head; and God's sakes don't cower or give in. We as a free nation can and will overcome these atrocities, however painful it may be...! Stick with those who will stand and fight for what is right, those who are willing to get bashed around a bit, and get their noses busted and blooded; for they are the people who will make this a better and more safe world for you, me, our children and our grandchildren.

We are likely to bleed a lot; but we will win this fight. Trust me; it will come to be...! God Bless each of you and God Bless America...!

★★★

## **THE LIGHTER SIDE**

I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it. So I said "Implants?" She hit me.

A good friend will come and bail you out of jail... but, a true friend will be sitting next to you saying, "Damn... that was fun!"

I signed up for an exercise class and was told to wear loose-fitting clothing. If I HAD any loose-fitting clothing, I wouldn't have signed up in the first place!

Don't argue with an idiot; people watching may not be able to tell the difference.

Why is it that our children can't read a Bible in school, but they can in prison?

Wouldn't you know it... Brain cells come and brain cells go, but FAT cells live forever.

Bumper sticker of the year: "If you can read this, thank a teacher.... since it's in English, thank a soldier."

Submitted by: Larry Ropka, ACA #0445

★★★





# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION, INC.

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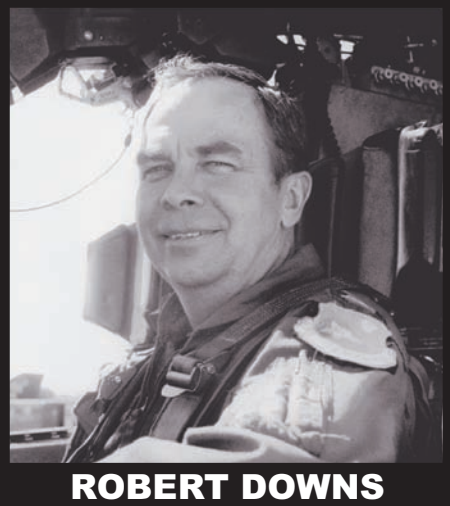
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## SERVICE CHANGE REQUESTED

JUNE

2004

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**ROBERT DOWNS**

### ACA 2004 REUNION

Plans are well under way for another rip-roaring Reunion. V.P. Dick Geron is in charge of all the "vice" this year. If you are in need of some "vice", call Dick. Dick has informed me that the food will be much improved at the Saturday Banquet this year.

Due to a great deal of Air Commando type "wheeling and dealing", Dick secured the ol' Hurlburt Officer's Club on the Sound for our Saturday Night Banquet. Don't ask Dick how he managed to get the Club, he is somewhat evasive regarding the subject.

If you want the very best Fried Fish, Hush Puppies, Beans, and Cole Slaw on "God's Green Earth"; check with "Raging Cajun" Ray Bourque at the poolside Friday evening. He will have more scrumptious food than you can eat. And, Jerry Broadway is serving the "Best BBQ" this side of heaven, at the poolside, Sunday afternoon. Now for Gosh sakes, ...don't miss out on this awesome occasion....!

### ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

Felix "Sam" Sambogna after much haggling and arm twisting agreed to run for president. Sam has always been keen on organization; I expect he will have us in "ship shape" in no time; you count on it. Of course, "Sam's" Board position will be open for a new officer. Sandy Sanborn unexpectedly passed away and his position is currently being filled by Dave Harrington. Our Treasurer Frank Clements had a terrible bout with cancer and asked that we elect someone to replace him. Jerry Rhein's term as Board member is expiring this year.

We will need to elect officers for these four Board positions.

Seriously consider whom you want to represent you on the Board; each of these four positions is critically important to the well being and the future direction which the Air Commando Association will take. It is your Association and your responsibility; so take an interest and get involved...! We need your votes...!

### NEWSLETTER

Jim Boney and Rip Kirby continue working their "buns" off producing what I believe is one of the "BETTER"; if not the "VERY BEST" newsletters around. Give each of them a hardy pat on the back for their work when you see them. They deserve every bit of encouragement we can give them; the News-

letter production is a tough job and these guys do take their work seriously. They also take a lot of unnecessary grief from folks like me and a few others whom I'll not name.

Jim Yealy had another stroke which set us back terribly. Jim, we sincerely miss your support; the guys are struggling without you being there to assist and advise. We hope to see you up and about soon. And, Jim, we are looking forward to you giving us "Hell" as we put together future newsletters. Jim Yealy's absence saddled Jim Boney with many additional responsibilities, headaches, and much more work; hang in there Jim and stay afloat...! We need you and like what you do; we are depending on you good buddy....!

We have been receiving interesting articles from our Air Commando members. Keep the comments and letters coming, folks...! We will make a better effort to get the newsletter out on time next issue. Please make a note on your calendar that the deadline for newsletter stories is August 15...we've had far too many "last minute-real important" requests...this is a quarterly newsletter, not the Daily Planet.

I encourage each and every unit to send articles to our newsletter. Your inputs give us variety and makes the newsletter much more interesting for our readership. Stories about events important to you should never be lost just because you are too darned closed mouth. Know this; what most of you did is no longer "Classified". Guys, it is a fact that

**See *PRESIDENT* pg. 37**



The nation mourned President Reagan's passing recently. He is honored by the flag at half mast at the Hurlburt Air Park. President Reagan's vision and leadership were the consistent character traits present in every great president. His passing was even mourned by his one time enemy as Mikhail Gorbachev attended the state funeral. God speed Mr. President, may you rest in peace.