



# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH

2004

## SECAF HONORS AIRMEN FOR HEROISM & VALOR

By TSgt Andre Nicholson  
Hurlburt Public Affairs

Twenty base airmen were honored at an awards ceremony Tuesday for their actions in support of the Global War on Terrorism to include Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

The hour-long ceremony was held in the corrosion control facility and was presided over by Secretary of the Air Force Dr. James Roche and Lt. Gen. Paul Hester, Air Force Special Operations Command commander.

The event provided an opportunity to recognize members of the AFSOC community, with the presentation of four Silver Stars, 15 Distinguished Flying Crosses and a Purple Heart.

As distinguished guests, families, friends and co-workers looked on, General Hester expressed the importance of the ceremony.

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## AIR COMMANDO LEGEND ADERHOLT HONORED WITH FITNESS CENTER NAME DEDICATION

By MSgt Ginger Schreitmueller  
AFSOC Public Affairs

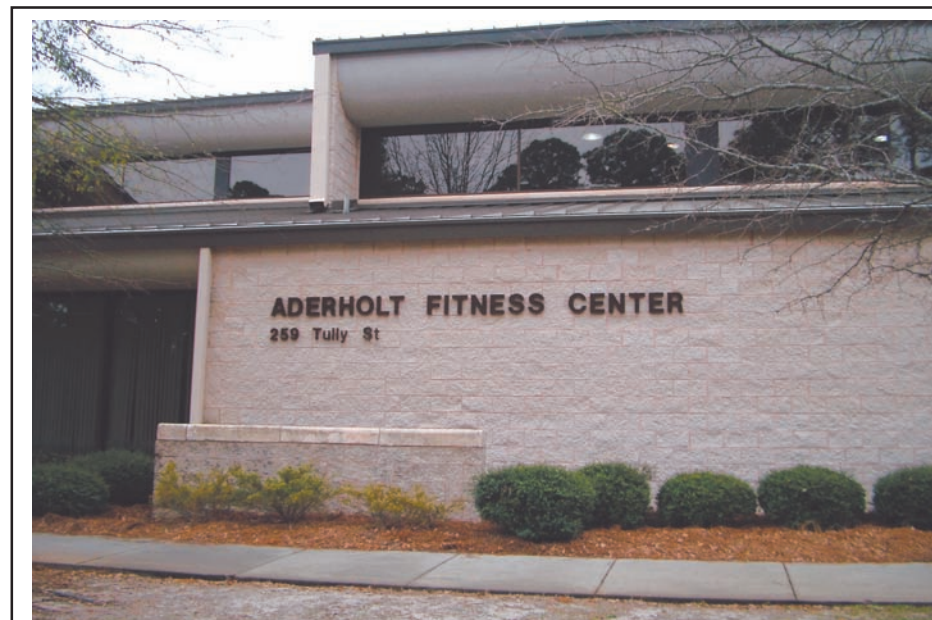
He is a recipient of the Air Force Special Operations Command Order of the Sword and the U.S. Special Operations Command prestigious Bull Simons Award.

The accolades and achievements for retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Harry "Heinie" Aderholt are extensive, recognizing the contributions of a man many consider the father of Air Force Special Operations.

In celebration of his 84th birthday, one more honor has been bestowed on "Air Commando One" with the naming of the main fitness center in his honor.

A plaque designating the Aderholt Fitness Center was unveiled during the opening events of the AFSOC headquarters staff's Fit for Fight test, Tuesday.

AFSOC leadership invited General Aderholt to help kickoff the test under the guise of his commit-



The newly dedicated Aderholt Fitness Center on Hurlburt Field.

ment to physical fitness.

"Every day at 5 a.m., you can find General Aderholt in the gym," said Brig. Gen. John Folkerts, AFSOC's vice commander. "It's only fitting we ask him to join us for this test, especially since today he celebrates his 84th birthday."



Photo by SSgt Carrie Hinson  
General Aderholt speaks to the early morning crowd gathered at the gym.

After a round of "Happy Birthday" and the presentation of a cake, General Folkerts turned the celebration

over to the 16th Special Operations Wing commander.

"General Aderholt's support to this community is exceptional, and in honor of his dedication to Special Operators the Air Force Chief of Staff has authorized the naming of the fitness center in his honor," said Col. O.G. Mannon, 16th SOW commander.

The event was a true surprise, said General Aderholt. "This is incredible and quite the birthday present," he said. "But every day is a celebration when I can be associated with (Special Operators)."

See **FITNESS** pg. 6



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# EDITORIAL COMMENTS

## RESPECT YOUR RESERVE HEROES, TOO

By Col David Hackworth, USA (ret)

Citizen soldiers have saved our country since the battle of Concord in 1775, when Minutemen fired "the shot heard around the world."

Today, such patriots are members of the reserve components -- the National Guard and Reserve elements of all services -- and our armed forces couldn't defend America without them. Especially since, as in the early stages of almost all of America's wars, our active-duty military is presently stretched mighty thin.

But even though our standing-duty GI Joes and Janes have more missions than troops and gear to fulfill them, the Pentagon is foolishly gutting the ranks of these valiant part-time soldiers. Legendary Marine leader Gen. "Chesty" Puller hit the center of the bull's-eye when he warned, "When war comes, there will never be enough professionals to do the job."

Since 911, tens of thousands of Reserve and Guard soldiers have reported to the colors, responding to the cry, "Call up the reserves!" More than 200,000 of these mislabeled "part-time warriors" have been activated and are serving in the bloody trenches of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our reserve-component warriors have traditionally been a backup team. Whenever trouble strikes, our regulars move to the vanguard and engage the enemy, while the Minutemen gear up. But since the huge cut in our active forces at the end of the Cold War, so much more of the burden of picking up the slack has fallen

on the shoulders of our reserve warriors that they're being treated more and more as regulars and are sometimes rushed into the breach in front of the so-called First Team.

Minutemen are America's original all-volunteer force, dedicated patriots who don't join up because it's a job offering three squares a day and perks such as college tuition after the enlistment runs out. Most already have good civilian jobs and join up for purely noble reasons: love of country and a deep-seated desire to defend the homeland.

Being a reservist is not about playing paintball. It entails long hours, personal sacrifices, and weekday evenings and weekends spent on the drill field instead of with loved ones. More than one-third of the 200,000 reservists already called to active duty are missing civilian promotions and losing money by serving. Many say their military medical plan that's supposed to replace their civilian plans sucks; thousands of our activated reservists choose their civilian medical plans over the military's and pay for same out of their own pockets.

Too many of the recalled reservists have been finding out that the old axiom "hurry up and wait" is alive and well in today's force. After dropping everything when Uncle Sam says, "Get here quick smart," they kiss the spouse and kids goodbye only to find themselves sitting on their duffel bags at Base X or Y, doing demeaning, keep-'em-busy stuff.

A reserve Army demolition expert with nine years' ac-

tive duty blowing things up was called up and assigned to a post headquarters as a data-entry and filing clerk in an office staffed with civilians. "What happens when we really need reservists?" he wants to know. "Many of my pals have already decided to quit when their current activation is completed. I can tell you now, after my release from active duty, I'll be leaving, too."

Many Army reservists are royally upset by active Army leaders treating them as dumb country cousins who can't be trusted with critical tasks. Even though Army spin is that regulars and reservists are equal, no one's bothered to brief the active regular leaders in the field — who too often still treat reservists like inferior weekend help. An activated Reserve colonel says, "Believe me, we've seen far more than our share of active-duty bigotry."

A senior Pentagon officer who's asked to remain anonymous says: "[Secretary of Defense Donald] Rumsfeld and the rest of the Pentagon brass don't have a decent plan to fix these problems. They study the issues to death but don't have a clue."

Unless wise heads quickly fix these problems, we'll

See **RESERVES** pg. 3

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# AWARDS

from front pg

"It is important we recognize the heroic actions of these airmen on the field of battle, in defense of our great Nation," the general said. "For those of you that are here representing the greater AFSOC family, this ceremony is a tribute and a salute to the individual actions and collective efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq and in other battle fields around the world. No one sets out on the field of battle to earn medals.

These airmen rose to unique challenges and displayed courage, skill and an action that comes from a belief larger than themselves."

Upon presenting the awards, Secretary Roche commented on the bravery of the recipients.

"Today we honor the warriors who serve on the front line in the war on terrorism," said Secretary Roche. "Brave airmen who's selfless devotion to duty have delivered victory in a time of conflict. We reward their gallantry and heroic service to our nation."

The secretary said those gathered to witness the ceremony demonstrate the solidarity and cohesiveness of the community.

"The airmen and the community that supports them continues to teach me the true meaning of duty, honor, devotion to country and military service," the secretary said. "They teach me about the value of our Special Ops and provide visible examples of what it means to live life according to the dictates of war."

While the ceremony honored airmen who've returned from the war on terrorism, the secretary asked everyone to also

remember those who didn't.

"Let us never forget all the fallen members from each of the services and their families," he said. "They made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom we Americans enjoy everyday. Our lost warriors are forever with us in spirit."

Honored during the ceremony were:

## SILVER STAR

Capt Benjamin Maitre, 15th Special Operations Squadron  
*Other Silver Star recipients requested their names not be published.*

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Maj Ronald Baldinger, AFSOC  
Maj Paul Pereira, 16th OG  
SSgt John Stott, 20th SOS  
Capt Ian Marr, 19th SOS  
TSgt Robert Fisher, 19th SOS  
Capt Paul Mancinelli, 15th SOS  
SSgt. Nathan Shero, 15th SOS  
Lt Col Thomas Markland, 8th SOS  
MSgt Gregg Jones, 6th SOS  
Lt Col Gerald Harris, 16th SOS  
MSgt John O'Dell, 16th OG  
Maj Enrique Gwin, 9th SOS  
TSgt Charles Swanson, 9th SOS  
Capt. Terry Sears, 4th SOS  
TSgt Burton Toups, 4th SOS

## PURPLE HEART

A1C Douglas Batchelder, 347th Rescue Wing, Moody Air Force Base, GA.

★★★

# RESERVES

from pg 2

see a huge exodus of reserve-component personnel that will destroy this vital force and place our national security in even greater jeopardy.

★★★

# ANOTHER COUNTRY'S PERSPECTIVE

We rarely get a chance to see another country's editorial about the USA. Read this excerpt from a Romanian Newspaper. The article was written by Mr. Cornel Nistorescu and published under the title "C"ntarea Americii meaning "Ode To America") on September 24, 2002, in the Romanian newspaper Evenimentul zilei ("The Daily Event" or "News of the Day").

Submitted by Robert Eveleigh, ACA Member #806

## Land of the Free Home of the Brave



*God Bless America!*

## ~An Ode to America~

Why are Americans so united? They would not resemble one another even if you painted them all one color! They speak all the languages of the world and form an astonishing mixture of civilizations and religious beliefs. Still, the American tragedy turned three hundred million people into a hand put on the heart.

Nobody rushed to accuse the White House, the army, and the secret services that they are only a bunch of losers. Nobody rushed to empty their bank accounts. Nobody rushed out onto the streets nearby to gape about. The Americans volunteered to donate blood and to give a helping hand.

After the first moments of panic, they raised their flag over the smoking ruins, putting on T-shirts, caps and ties in the colors of the national flag.

They placed flags on buildings and cars as if in every place and on every car a government official or the president was passing.

On every occasion, they started singing their traditional song: "God Bless America !" I watched the live broadcast and rerun after rerun for hours listen-

ing to the story of the guy who went down one hundred floors with a woman in a wheelchair without knowing who she was, or of the Californian hockey player, who gave his life fighting with the terrorists and prevented the plane from hitting a target that could have killed other hundreds or thousands of people.

How on earth were they able to respond united as one human being? Imperceptibly, with every word and musical note, the memory of some turned into a modern myth of tragic heroes. And with every phone call, millions and millions of dollars were put in a collection aimed at rewarding not a man or a family, but a spirit, which no money can buy.

What on earth can unite the Americans in such a way? Their land? Their galloping history? Their economic Power? Money? I tried for hours to find an answer, humming songs and murmuring phrases with the risk of sounding commonplace.

I thought things over, but I reached only one conclusion...Only freedom can work such miracles.

★★★



# MEMBERSHIP NEWS

## IN MEMORY OF

JAMES W. CHASTAIN  
DECEMBER 2003

ROBERT M. DETWIELER  
UNKNOWN

HARDY F. LEBEL  
NOVEMBER 2003

PAUL A. PETTIGREW  
DECEMBER 2003

BOB L. PROSSER  
APRIL 2003

WILLIAM O. 'SAM' SCHISM  
MARCH 2003

PAUL A. SEIFERT  
JULY 2002

WALTER VON RYIK  
JANUARY 2004

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JANUARY 2004

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STEVE PETERS  
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HAROLD E. TOWLER  
TOM WILSON

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NHIA XUE XIONG

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MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653

## LOST MEMBER

BETTY CARSON

★★★

# LETTERS

## DEAR ACA

Before I forget my obligation, please find enclosed payment for my 2004 dues. Almost forgot till the Quarterly Newsletter arrived. Keep up the good things the ACA is doing.

Thomas Hill ACA #3739  
55224 Galliver Cto  
Baker, FL 32531-8394

## DEAR ACA

I wish to return to the Ft. Walton/Mary Esther area. If any one could send me any info in the real estate area, moderately priced, I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

Sincerely,

H.J. Pease, ACA #3520  
780 22nd Ave N.W.,  
Naples, FL 34120

## DEAR ROBERT

You will remember the story Robin told about the four-ship airshow he led that, among other things, cost him a Legion of Merit he was to receive at end of tour. The pilot who was tasked with planning that 4-ship was then Capt. Tom Hirsch.

Tom and I were in the Triple Nickel and often flew together. Several years ago he told me the details of that "misadventure" with Olds, so I knew about it before we heard the story at the banquet.

Jimmy Ifland took a pic of Robin, Heinie, Dick and me, so that I could send it to Tom (who lives in the UK). I sent the pic to Tom with a Christmas card, and, in a reply, Tom told me that he has a cartoon that one of the squadron pilots drew of Olds' exploit back then-- a 4-

ship diamond in -101s.

Tom would like to send the cartoon to Robin but has long since lost track of his address. Could you, or someone else on the ACA staff, look for his address, possibly in correspondence connected with his joining us in Oct.? Probably he would enjoy hearing from Tom and receiving the cartoon depicting his younger-and-wilder days (although he still appeared to be pretty wild after the night of drinking with you "hosts"!!

Thanks,  
Larry Harwood  
614 Periwinkle Court  
Sumter, SC 29150-2326

## DEAR 'CHASTAIN' FRIENDS

We received a sad note this past week that our friend and ACA Buddy Jim Chastain passed away December 1, 2003 in Turtletown, Tenn. He was my Shop Chief at Hurlburt Field.

We have known Jim from back in the late 50's early 60's before he and Sue were married.

As you may remember, Sue was killed instantly in the car wreck on their way to the ACA Reunion in 1997.

Jim Chastain was a good friend, a good Shop Chief, and a good "Jungle Jim" buddy that will be sadly missed.

Sincerely,  
Dan & Fran Daniels  
240 C.R. 790  
Clanton, AL 30545

## DEAR HAP

Hope you folks are all well. It's too cold in KY this year; but, I'm glad I'm not in Minnesota....!

Please list my son Mike as "ON THE MOVE" again. He's

a Life Member ACA, who just came back from Iraq, stayed for 40 days, and then back to Iraq this past December.

He looks forward to each ACA Newsletter. Mike's new address is:

GYSGT. Mains, W.M. USMC  
1st BN. 5th Marines Alpha Co.  
FPO AP 96609-9738  
God's blessing and our prayers to all...!

Bill and Lis Mains

## DEAR ROBERT

I am enclosing a brief summary and news article about my family escaping as the Communist took control of Laos. In 1965-66 I flew C-123's in the 311th Air Commando Squadron at DaNang AB Vietnam. Thereafter I had TDY's and flew numerous missions in 'Nam from 1967 to '75.

## ESCAPE FROM LAOS

After a 3-1/2 year stint at Kadena AB Okinawa in the 18 TFW, I was assigned to the 60th MAW at Travis AFB as a C-141 pilot, QC Test Pilot, with a secondary AFSC as a C-5 Maintenance Officer in 1973.

I received orders to Laos as Embassy Pilot, C-47/Army U-21 and Chief of the Defense Attaché Office (DAO). My colonel at Travis called me to his office and accused me of "rangling the assignment". I denied this and he asked if I minded him pulling strings at the Pentagon to cancel my orders. I said no. He was told by a three star General that I was the only one available who was qualified in the C-47 with limited conversational French and a secondary maintenance AFSC.

So in September 1974 off

we went to Laos (wife, daughter 10, and son 5). We had a four day stopover in Honolulu for CINCPAC briefings and thence to Bangkok with four days at the Dusitani Hotel while we waited for Visas for Vientiane, Laos.

The Army Embassy U-21 (Beach Queen Air Turbo Props) flew us to Vientiane. We moved into the KM-6 Housing Compound (140 houses four miles outside Vientiane housing USAID civilians, military, and dependents).

Laos is bordered by China, North and South Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, and Burma and was divided in half by the 1962 Geneva Accords and the 1973 Peace Accords.

A Coalition Government was formed and headed by Souvanna Phoumi (Royal Laos - our side) and his half brother Souvannouvong (Communist Pathet Lao side). The Pathet Lao had about a battalion of troops in Vientiane designated by the Accords to secure the airport. They also had barracks downtown near the Palace.

In April 1975, the US abandoned Saigon and shortly thereafter Phnom Penh, Cambodia. We knew then that the end was near for us in Laos.

In May I flew the Embassy C-47 to Long Tieng in the mountains to pickup General Vang Pao. He had an Army and Air Force of made up of Meo Tribesman. I flew him to Vientiane and drove him to the Palace to see Souvanna Phoumi. A company of Pathet Lao and a Russian PT-76 tank had crossed the Coalition line and were headed toward Vientiane. The US Army and USAF Air Attaches along with Vang Pao had plans to interdict

See **LETTERS** pg. 6



# FITNESS

*from front pg*

For more than six decades, General Aderholt has made it a point to wake early and do some form of exercise. "Trying to stay as fit as possible is important to me," said the general. "I have no specific workout program; I just start at 5 a.m. and go for an hour. Let me tell you, after 60 years it doesn't get any easier!"

General Aderholt said during his tenure at Hurlburt Field there wasn't a fitness center per se, but six days a week all the commanders were expected to get out and run with their troops. The general served as the vice commander, then commander of the 1st Air Commando Wing from 1964-1965.

"I haven't stopped working out since then," he said. "Though it will seem a bit strange walking into the center each day and seeing my name, I'm going to keep working out until I can't work out any more."

General Aderholt retired from service in 1976 after more than 34 years of service to the nation.

★★★

# LETTERS

*from pg 5*

the Pathet Lao with troops, 105 howitzers, mortars, and T-28 ground support fighters.

Vang Pao came out of the Palace sans his stars. He told me that Souvanna would not let him fight whereupon he removed his stars and resigned. Souvanna refused to accept his resignation. He then ask me to fly him to Udorn AB Thailand, some 26 Kilometers south of the Mekong River.

That same day, Kamprasert (my Lao #1 man in DAO) came to me and said that the Pathet Lao had killed his

Lao USAID neighbors (husband, wife, and two children). He asked me for my help and I gave him an International Scout Embassy vehicle and a .38 cal long barrel revolver and a box of ammo. That night Kamprasert drove his and two other families south to the Mekong River and crossed in canoes safely into Thailand.

The next day on the way home from the USAID Compound to KM-6, a Pathet Lao platoon had the road blocked with barbed wire and a Russian tank. They stopped me, confiscated my Embassy vehicle and prodded me with AK-47's. I walked to KM-6.

Shortly thereafter students and Pathet Lao surrounded the USAID Compound, Embassy, and blocked the KM-6 gate; and patrolled the perimeters. They had taken over the radio station and the telephone. No one was allowed in or out of KM6. An army Captain who lived in KM-6 had a PRC-21 field radio. We ran the antenna up a tall tree and contacted the Army and Air Force Attaches in Vientiane. They kept us abreast of the latest developments.

After four days in the compound, we were informed by General Round (the Army Attaché) that he and the US Charge d'affaires, Christian Chapman, had negotiated with the Pathet Lao to bus the USAID civilians and dependents, excluding US Military, out of KM-6 to the airport for evacuation to Thailand.

The next day three large buses arrived at the KM-6 gate and after an hour or so, were let in and loaded with about 180 people (USAID, Embassy, civilians and their dependents).

We decided to send the military wives and dependents behind the buses in our civilian

vehicles, hoping the Pathet Lao would not identify them as military. There were four cars loaded. My wife drove our Chevy wagon with our two kids, another wife and her two children, and a teenage boy. I and five other military men were ordered to stay behind. At the gate, after an hour and a half wait, the buses were boarded and searched as were the cars. I watched with binoculars down the road and saw the Red Student Demonstrators surround and shake the vehicles.

The Army Attaché and US Charge d'affaires were outside the gate along with the Pathet Lao and Red Student Demonstrators. The buses and cars were finally released. The buses drove to the airport for flights to Thailand and my wife's entourage with four cars drove to the US Army bachelor quarters in Vientiane. In the early morning dark the next day, my wife's group were driven to the airport and flown to Udorn AB, Thailand in a US C-47. They were put up in a hotel downtown. The next day, my wife's group was flown to Bangkok and thence to the Philippines and the US. My wife opted to remain at Udorn with the kids and await my arrival. She had no idea if or when I would get out of Laos.

In the meantime at KM-6, I and other military men were ordered to get belongings we could out of the houses, place them in piles at the school gymnasium with owner's names on each pallet. We were also ordered to pour all alcoholic beverages down the drain. Many of the homes had been burglarized by "Stealy Boys", who cut holes in the 10 foot high perimeter fence at night.

After four days I got to the airport to hopefully evacu-

ate our Embassy C-47 to Udorn. Our bird was dwarfed by a Russian four engine jet on one side and a North Vietnamese three engine jet on the other. A platoon of Pathet Lao surrounded the C-47. We cranked and taxied hoping we wouldn't get hosed. As far as I know, we were last military to get out of Vientiane.

I was reunited with my family poolside in Udorn at the hotel and started shaking badly. I thought I had malaria, but my wife said I just needed some rest. After 12 hours sleep, I felt fine.

We got my family on a C-141 to Clark AB two days later. I stayed at Udorn a week to submit reports, do OER's and Enlisted Effectiveness Reports.

Thereafter, I was reunited with my family in Wooster, Ohio. I finished my career at McGuire AFB, NJ as a C-141 flight commander, instructor pilot, and flight examiner; and retired in 1980.

Al Mongeau  
Major, USAF (ret)

## DEAR PETE,

I am sending a newspaper article that I think is interesting and entertaining.

The one titled Army General.... was interesting. I was number two sitting alert at Bien Hoa with Mouse Nordman when we got scrambled. We sat at the end of the runway for a couple of extra minutes for an emergency on final approach.

When we got airborne we were directed to the Forward Air Controller (FAC) frequency. On check-in with the FAC, Fritz Eichler, he said, "go burner, go burner, we are under heavy attack."

See **LETTERS** pg. 7

# LETTERS

from pg 6

It was a North Vietnam Regiment that had come across the Cambodian border and set up an ambush and hit an U.S. armored column. The first tank was burning and the last tank was burning blocking any movement. The tanks and APCs were getting hammered from both sides of the road, and the enemy had anti-aircraft positions all over the place. The ceiling was 300 feet, but there were some holes in it.

We had CBU 2 Cluster Bomb Units (CBU), Napalm, and 800 rounds of 20mm.

Mouse led us down one of the holes and we found the target. The FAC requested CBU first. Mouse said he would take the right side of the road and for me to take the left. Mouse started his run — 250 feet and 400 knots. I was lining up on the left and saw my airspeed as 300 knots so I lit the burner. About that time Mouse said "I'm hit, I'm hit, I heading for Bien Hoa." I said to Mouse, "if you are running OK I'll stay here." There was a pause then Mouse said "it's still running OK, I'm, coming back." (Later we found that they had hit a can of Napalm and it blew up on his wing).

In the meantime I am making my CBU run and I can see muzzle flashes everywhere I look. I finish the run and turn left for another pass. It seems like the left wing is touching the tree tops and that the right wing is touching the clouds. But the sucker didn't want to turn, so I looked inside and saw I was doing 700 knots — I had forgot to come out of burner because of Mouse's emergency.

Anyway, we finished up our ordnance, and I think we

did the most damage to the enemy as we were the first flight at the scene. There were 18 flights put in and all airplanes had holes in them except mine. I think they must have been shooting behind me. Everyone got a Silver Star except me because I didn't have any holes in my aircraft. I was awarded an Air Medal.

I later was a FAC at Lai Khe and worked for the FAC, Fritz Eichler, who had put us on the target. He was very grateful for the help we gave him that day.

George Savage  
4170 E. Welter Ave.  
Las Vegas, NV 89104

## LATE OBITS

### PAUL SEIFERT

We learned from Paul's wife Joan that Paul had passed away on 2 July 2002. Remarkably, we only learned because Paul's name had been scratched through on his forwarded newsletter to a new address. After recognizing something quite untoward, I wrote to Joan and asked of Paul's current circumstances. I sent a letter with a self-addressed envelope and Joan revealed Paul's passing.

Paul was an exemplary Commando Medic. We worked together on many assignments. Additionally, he was assigned to Project 404 on several occasions and won high praise from his peers and superiors alike.

I extend sincerest sympathy and personal regards to Joan Seifert and family members.

Hap

### JOE C. VADEN

I received a call from Mary Vaden on the evening of 14 February that Colonel Joe

had passed away the previous day and I was quite shaken with this sad news.

Colonel Joe was one of my Commanders daring one of my tours on Detachment #6 (Waterpump) at Udorn Air Base, Thailand. We had many colorful times together daring that tour. Chief among those memorable days was his going into the bush with us to assist in our Medical Civic Action outreach program. He did so in spite of his other heavy tasks as Detachment Commander.

Colonel Joe was unequaled in his deportment with those of us assigned under him, his peers, and his superiors. His high standards were firm, but always fair. I am profoundly proud to have served with him and for him.

I extend sincerest condolences to Mary Vaden in her loss.

Hap Lutz

*Glenn Frick, Karl Leuschner, Bob Brown and many others worked for Colonel Vaden at Waterpump and we all had the greatest respect and sincere admiration for Joe. He was one heck of a guy.*

**Robert Downs - President**

The following information is from Bob Safreno - L 2741, shadowbob1@juno.com

### WILLIAM A. CONKLIN

Friends, I am sorry to have to tell you that Bill Conklin passed away. Information listed below was sent to me and I am passing it along. For your information the residential address and telephone number is:

Gloria Conklin  
10 Ormand Court  
Novato, CA 94947-3009  
(415) 897-3748

Bill passed away on February 22, 2004, at the age of 73.

**Dear ACA,**

The Air Commandos have lost one of its most unique individuals. Sgt. Walter F. von Ryik died on January 27, 2004. Enclosed is a copy of the obituary and eulogy delivered by his wife. Enclosed also are some photographs. In the group photograph, Sgt. von Ryik is the second from the right. The next photograph is Sgt. von Ryik with his prize cat from Panama, Sam who later became the movie star in Disney's movie "Charlie, the Lonesome Cougar." I request that due recognition be given to Sgt. von Ryik on his passing by an article in the Commando Newsletter.

There is something I would like to add. I was just a young, rather innocent second lieutenant when I arrived at Hurlburt field in May of 1964. My father's advice to me upon entering the service was to "find a good Sergeant and do every damn thing he tells you to do!" I chose Sgt. von Ryik. I'm glad I did. I'll save you the long story of all he taught me. I will tell you a bit about him.

Sgt. von Ryik was a former Luftwaffe pilot. There were some stories there. Once he was ferrying a fighter to the Eastern front when he encountered a Mustang. In an effort to shake off the Mustang, he dove under a bridge. He made it, the Mustang didn't. He wore Air Force fatigues with a little extra touch by wearing a Africa Corps cap and bloused his fatigue pants over his boots like a German trooper. That rankled regular Air Force types, but I figured he earned the distinction.

Then there was Sam. Sam was "procured" by Sgt. von

See **LETTERS** pg. 8



# LETTERS

from pg 7

Ryik while TDY to Panama. He grew up in the Intelligence shack at Hurlburt field. He went with us on field exercise and was always the first to exit the ramp from our C-123 on a chain followed by Sgt. von Ryik. The green beret boys remembered us. Sam, who slept beside my desk, loved to "play" by jumping on your back and pretend to be biting at your neck. He was heavy and usually you fell from the weight. One day a

ished from the base. It's OK; however, he went on to become a movie star.

We had some special and unique types in the Air Commandos and the intelligence outfit was no different. Sgt. von Ryik was, perhaps, the most unique. I am proud to have served with him and will be ever grateful for his leadership, as well as protection.

Yours very truly,  
Luther G. Jones III  
Attorney at Law  
14785 Preston Road, Suite 550



Sam the cougar and Sergeant Walter von Ryik, two of the most unusual Air Commandos to ever work in an intelligence office! Security was never a problem with Sam around.

JAG type Major was shortcutting through the Intelligence shack to get to the legal offices. Sam leaped onto my desk and with the agility only a cat possesses jumped over a plastic partition wall, and fell upon back of the hapless Major who fainted dead away. Sgt. von Ryik shooed Sam away and revived the Major. The Major's first words were, 'I just didn't expect to be jumped by a mountain lion.' Alas, Sam was ban-

Dallas Texas 75254

**Dear Mr. Jones,**

Thank you for your continued interest in my husband Walter. I wish I had known more about his military career. We met after he had retired, and while he told wonderful stories, I knew few actual details of his military life. He did often talk about you and Bob Waters.

Thank you for sending

the pictures and kind note. He sat on the side of his bed with trembling hands and looked and looked with a sweet/sad smile. Eight days later he was gone. What a nice memory for you to know that you touched another's life at that moment.

Enclosed is a copy of Walter's obituary. I am pleased to know that you will put it in the Air Commando paper. I never would have thought of it. I have taken the liberty of enclosing also a copy of the eulogy that I gave at his memorial service. He was a real character and his absence has left a huge hole in my soul.

Best Wishes,  
Luisa von Ryik

## WALTER'S LIFE

Walter would feel so honored to see how many of you have come to celebrate his life - and to wish him farewell. He was a dynamic, vibrant, spirited, one of a kind man. He wanted us all to know that he did it his way - and everybody usually got the point!

I remember an incident that happened shortly after we became members of this fellowship. During the service Walter burst from the men's room, interrupted the minister from the back of this room, and proceeded to lecture in quite graphic terms on the condition of the men's room, and how some parents needed to train their children in how to use the facilities.

Who was this man who so loved living life on the edge - this man who was a fighter pilot, a parachutist, a sharpshooter, a multilingual fighter who worked in special operations behind the lines during wars? Who was this man who

raised a mountain lion named Sam? Sam became a movie star - but that's another story. Walter raced motor cycles, cars and anything else that moved - even to get out of his own driveway. Anyone who rode in a vehicle with him as the driver did so only one time - and afterward volunteered to do the driving.

If there was action he was there to join in, and yet he played the sweetest accordion music you have ever heard. He was a romantic man who looked into the eyes of women ages 9-90 and melted them on the spot.

The Walter I knew for a quarter of a century was a gentle, shy, soft-centered guy who was born in the Carpathian Mountains in a picture book village called Kronstadt in the region of Transylvania in Romania. The Austrian language was spoken in his home, and he attended Austrian elementary school. Bubi - (little boy- as he was called) spent his time taking care of his wolf/dog - hiking and skiing in the mountains behind his house and running from bears, wild wolves and gypsies.

He attended Romanian high school where he had to relearn math and science in a new language. Even though Germany was already at war, Walter's father sent him there to attend an aeronautical engineering university. Later this 18 year old naive young man was drafted into the Luftwaffe along with his fellow students.

He served on the Russian front, and froze his toes during the winter retreat. Eventually he would no longer fly due to severe injuries -injuries that would give him problems the rest of his life. He spent time in Russian prison camps, and es-

See **LETTERS** pg. 34



## McCOSKRIE/THRESHOLD FOUNDATION WAREHOUSE

By Robert Downs

We are starting an ambitiously large MTF Building Fund soon. Don't have exact figures, but \$500,000 to \$750,000 will be needed to buy or purchase a warehouse to support our MTF operation.

We have outgrown the numerous small storage units currently used which are scattered about the local area. Using these small storage units are extremely labor intensive. Materials are handled four to six times before final shipment.

Our guys are beating themselves to death trying to

meet schedules and loading requirements. We have grown considerably and are moving much more than we were in the past.

Sea containers often have to be loaded and back on the road less than two hours after arrival. Talking about strain, this demands real "butt busting" work from our volunteers to meet such schedules.

A large warehouse with a loading platform is a must if we are to continue to meet the demand for humanitarian assistance at home and abroad.

★★★

## Authentic Blood Chits

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you are recruiting a new member, make sure you



indicate on the application that you recruited the new member so that Pete can give you credit for your Korean War Blood Chit. Get busy today so you can get your chit together!

★★★

## HAP'S COMMENTS

Sadly, retired Colonel Paul A. "Pappy" Pettigrew passed away on New Year's Eve, following a long illness, at McLean, Virginia. He was, undoubtedly, the finest Air Attaché I had the noble honor to know and work for during several of my tours in Laos. He was renowned for his high professional standards and was revered by his counterparts in the Royal Lao Air Force.

I've told this story before, but it's definitely worth repeating: Along with Roy Dalton ("Captain Loy"), I was posted to Nongbulao, Laos, assisting Colonel Noupheet (ultimately Military Region III Commander) with his sick and wounded troops as we were attempting to capture Donghene, Laos.

It was Christmas Day of 1966 and an unannounced Air America H-34 landed on our crude jungle runway. "Captain Loy" and I joined Colonel Noupheet in meeting this interloper. It was none other than our Air Attaché, "Pappy" Pettigrew. His wife Ann had cooked a turkey dinner for us, with all the trimmings, and he was our "Santa Claus" delivering it! He also brought a fifth of Crown Royal and Johnnie Walker, which we couldn't partake of because of our precarious undertakings.

It is the most memorable story of any of my tours in Laos and further defined the wonderful traits and character of "Pappy" Pettigrew. "Captain Loy" in this story is retired Colonel Roy Dalton.

See HAP pg. 11

## Quoth the Raven

JIM ROPER

## 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.

★★★

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# COMBAT CONTROLLER NEWS

## SECAF DEDICATES MEMORIAL TO HIGHEST DECORATED COMBAT CONTROLLER



AF hero memorial unveiled by Air Force Secretary Roche



24th Special Tactics Squadron

by MSgt. Scott Elliott - Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON -- The secretary of the Air Force unveiled a memorial at Arlington National Cemetery on Jan. 8 to honor the service's highest-decorated combat controller.

Tech. Sgt. John A. Chapman, from the 24th Special Tactics Squadron, was killed March 4, 2002, while fighting against the Taliban during Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan. He was posthumously decorated with the nation's second-highest award for valor, the Air Force Cross.

The memorial, a glass-enclosed life-size model of a combat controller in full combat gear, features Sergeant Chapman's award citation and photos of him on duty in Afghanistan. It will remain on display in the cemetery's visitor center until March 15, after which it will move to Air Force Special Operations Command headquarters at Hurlburt Field, Fla., for two weeks. The display then will travel to the Air Force Enlisted Heritage Museum at the Gunter Annex of Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala., where it will be permanently displayed beginning March 31.

A duplicate memorial will be on permanent display at Lackland AFB, Texas.

"This display exemplifies all we value in the Air Force," Air Force Secretary Dr. James G. Roche told Sergeant Chapman's relatives and representatives of the combat control career field. "John's personal bravery in the face of the enemy was emblematic of the warrior ethos."

According to his award cita-

tion, Sergeant Chapman was attached to a Navy SEAL team when their helicopter was hit by enemy machinegun fire. A rocket-propelled grenade then hit the helicopter, causing a SEAL team member to fall from the aircraft into enemy-held territory.

Sergeant Chapman called in an AC-130 gunship to protect the stranded team after the helicopter made an emergency landing more than four miles from the fallen SEAL.

After calling in another helicopter to evacuate his stranded team, Sergeant Chapman volunteered to rescue his missing team member from the enemy stronghold. He engaged and killed two of the enemy be-

fore advancing and engaging a second enemy position -- a dug-in machinegun nest.

From close range, the citation reads, Sergeant Chapman exchanged fire with the enemy from minimum personal cover until he succumbed to multiple wounds. His engagement and destruction of the first enemy position, and advancement on the second enemy position, enabled his team to move to cover and break enemy contact.

The Navy SEAL leader praised Sergeant Chapman unequivocally with saving the lives of the entire team.

"It takes a particular breed of warrior to accomplish these missions," said Senior Master Sgt. James Lyons, commandant of the Air Force Combat Control School. "(It takes) an exceptional brand of courage, as well as confidence and patriotism, not mention just a little bit of daring."

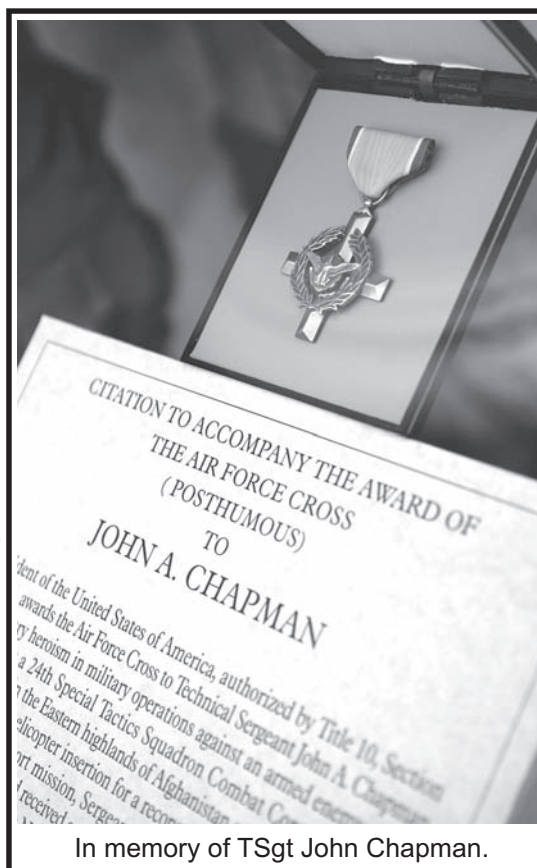
The memorial's unveiling comes nearly a year to the day after Secretary Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper presented the Air Force Cross to Sergeant Chapman's widow, Valerie.

"John died fighting terrorism, and we continue to live free today because of his sacrifice and the sacrifices of others," the secretary said.

Sergeant Chapman's aunt and uncle, Sallie and Dale Chapman, helped Secretary Roche unveil the memorial, pulling off the olive drab parachute that had covered it.

"It's wonderful; what a tribute," Sallie Chapman said, her voice breaking with emotion. "My favorite part is the photo of him holding the (Afghan) child. I think they captured, in just this small display, every part of him."

★★★



In memory of TSgt John Chapman.



# HAP

from pg 9

Two quite famous people had knee replacements during the recent past. They would be Dee Roberson and Joe Coleman. Dee was first and has graduated from walker use to cane. Joe just got out at this writing and he's probably on the cane by now. Both are progressing well with home therapy.

My recent telecom with Dee was just after she and Robbie had returned from judging a wine tasting event at the Tampa State Fair. But she hasn't let radical surgery impugn her activities schedule one iota. In fact, we are all going to Thailand in May for two weeks.

My recent telecom with Joe was somewhat different. The "high end" pain suppressant they administered him resulted in some rather bizarre after effects. He envisioned he was back on active duty and he and "Heinie" were attacking and overcoming all the "bad guys" in the area.

Joe was breaking up as he related this story and he had me in stitches too. And since this was told to him by his "captors" (nurses and aides), it must have had the whole hospital ward on guard!

I gave a brief overview about our annual Christmas Social in the last newsletter. I'm going to revisit that event just briefly. First I want to thank all that attended and brought a nonperishable food item for "Sharing and Caring." It was a tremendous first time successful event. When Shirley (MisHap) and I took our almost full pickup truck there for delivery, the folks were quite overwhelmed. (We received a nice thank you note from the director, but it's lost somewhere in

the mail chain.) So, look for more of the same this year.

Mr. "T's" promise of "heavy hors d'oeuvres" turned into an all you can eat buffet sit down dinner. And folks, for \$10 each it was quite spectacular. And his golf course "Two Trees" restaurant is the perfect venue. Thank you Mr. "T" and staff for a flawless Christmas social.

"Rajun Cajun" Ray Bourque, our reunion fish fry manager, just stopped in. He revealed that he's getting a pace maker this Thursday. In his typical carefree fashion, he said, "It beats the alternative." Ray will be our Friday reunion fish fry manager again this year. And again, in his words, "If I'm still around."

Talking reunion, Vice Geron is way into planning. During our recent meeting, he apprised the Board of the steps he has already taken towards another enjoyable reunion. With view to this being the 60th anniversary of Air Commandos worldwide, it is going to require super efforts by all. Hope you make it!

★★★



**550 Mary Esther Cutoff,  
Ste. 14**

**Ft Walton Bch, FL 32548**

**PH: 850-986-5555**

**Carry out available**

**Call for party reservations**

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

## McCaskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

### MTF ASSISTS NEEDY IN GUATEMALA AND HONDURAS

*By John Grove*

The McCaskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF), in conjunction with the National Forum Foundation (NFF), the Okaloosa County School District, Bless the Children Inc. (BTC), several moving and storage companies, and many volunteers provided one large load of supplies for schools in Guatemala and Honduras.

The US Government and US Southern Command have in place a program, "New Horizons", which builds schools and community projects in foreign countries. This January 2004 a load of building materials was shipped to Honduras and Guatemala for that purpose. They lacked school fixtures and our community had lots of them.

Several months ago Taco Sanchez and the local school folks were discussing the MTF mission and it was determined that the school has had in storage for many years, school desks that would probably never be returned to service in

our schools. Taco notified our MTF folks, and the plot was starting to hatch.

I had contacted Audra Murray of the NFF regarding another shipment and she said that Southern Command was preparing to ship materials and supplies to build schools starting in January.

The Okaloosa County School District followed by authorizing a gift of 1000 desks for shipment. Many thanks to the School District for their support.

The heavy lifting started in early Jan 2004 with preparation of the load; see the volunteer list for who helped. Plywood crates were either donated or provided very cheap by moving companies. They were filled and sealed in Crestview FL at an old school facility.

On 28 Jan 2004 Scott Moreland trucked 18 large shipping boxes to meet the shipping schedule deadline.

Another part of the load was school kits and they were supplied and coordinated By Audra Murray and Col Craig Tate of the Civil Affairs group in Pensacola. The load was divided into 4 locations, One crate

to Trujillo Honduras, One crate to ProNino, El Progreso Honduras, and the other 16 crates divided equally between the Honduras and Guatemala building projects.

The load consisted of 18

large plywood shipping crates weighing 28,000 lbs. Contents consisted of: 651 student desks, 562 from Okaloosa schools, 1 teachers desk, 1 podium, 28 chairs, 4 drafting tables, 3 student tables, many student kits, books, and paper, 7 chalk and bulletin boards. and book bags from BTC. Volunteers were: Col Craig Tate, Audra Murray, Taco Sanchez, Tom Palmer, Bob White, Clyde Howard, Ed Howard, Tim Mursch, Robert Downs, Asa Stackhouse, Tom Green, Lon Lancaster, Scott Moreland, and several school employees especially Dale Walker who provided access to the school facility.

**NOTE:** Our next mission will involve more of the same heavy lifting, so we can use all the help we can get.

Call John Grove 243-4010 or 496-4007 cell, or call Bob White 581-0661 or 585-5023 cell to volunteer.

★★★

## MTF SENDS MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT TO THE REPUBLIC OF GEORGIA

The McCaskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF) has teamed with the Georgia Air National Guard for several years in support of the State of Georgia, Partners in Peace program, in the Republic of Georgia (part of old Russia).

We work with Col Ed Wexler and SMSgt Wayne Bradford of the Georgia Air National Guard, who coordinate the loads, assists unloading and organizes the offload crews.

The dynamic duo of Jack

and Norma Hassinger, of the Atlanta area, advise us of the particular needs for the shipments, and I believe do most of the coordination with the USAID folks for the shipping and distribution.

On 18 Dec 03, Bob White and Juan the chopper pilot delivered one large trailer load of goods consisting mostly of warm winter clothing and blankets, to the Georgia ANG Storage facility at Dobbins ANG Base in Marietta, GA. The load was huge and was all we could haul; but not nearly enough to fill a 40 foot Sea Land container. Norma advised us that a new and most pressing need was for hospital items.

Noting that we had just what Norma requested in our storage units; we started preparing an additional load. During the next few weeks, the ACA load crew of Roger Klair, Sam Sambogna, Bob White and several hard working folks loaded the necessary items.

On 4 Feb 04, a second large load was delivered to Marietta. Two loads and two long 685 mile round trips were necessary to deliver the following inventory of goods and supplies badly needed during the frigid cold Republic of Georgia winters: Inventory as of 4 Feb 04 follows: Walkers - 85; Crutches - 42; Potty Chairs - 21; Walking Canes - 9; Wheel Chairs - 4; Patient Chairs - 2; Bath Chair -1; Adult Stroller - 1; Knee Brace System -1. List of boxed Hospital Textile Items follow: Clothing - 74 Boxes; Blankets - 13 Boxes; Sheets - 12 Boxes; Towels - 8 Boxes; Diapers - 6 Boxes; Baby Pillows - 3 Boxes; Misc. Baby Items - 2 Boxes; and Aprons - 1 Box. The load is estimated at 10,000 lbs and the value is probably near \$40,000.00.

★★★



"Wheelchair Bob" inspects pickup truck load of donated wheelchairs.



# TRAINING FLIGHT AIRLIFTS 'CHRISTMAS WISHES'

By 1st Lt. Gabe Johnson  
16SOW Public Affairs

Some caught the flight hoping for a unique experience. Some wanted to briefly visit another culture. Some went because they volunteered last year and couldn't stay away this year. But they all volunteered because children were counting on them.

A routine training flight over Central America Tuesday became the perfect platform for "Operation Christmas Wish" to complete its mission. Thirty-seven Hurlburt Field airmen made the most of space-available travel aboard an MC-130 Combat Talon II, as they hopped a four-hour flight to deliver 9,500 pounds of supplies and toys to orphanages in Honduras.



The first stop was Goloson International Airport where 'Operation Christmas Wish' was greeted by the Honduran Air Force. U.S. and Honduran airmen off-loaded 5,000 pounds of supplies.

Half of the supplies were donated to the families of Honduran Air Force members and the other half were loaded onto a truck for delivery to Aldea Infantil SOS La Ceiba, a local orphanage and home to 115 youth ages 2 to 19. The Hurlburt airmen loaded onto a bus to personally accompany the delivery.

"There's something about the hills here that reminds me

of Jamaica," said Staff Sgt. Candacy Wint, 16th Security Forces Squadron personnel specialist. Born in Jamaica, she looked out the window of the bus and saw many parallels to her native country. They passed miles of green pineapple fields that ran into steep hills that jutted through layers of hanging clouds.

"Last year I couldn't believe I was in Honduras and I had so much fun," said Sergeant Wint, a second-time volunteer. "The kids greet you like celebrities, and they know how to say words like 'hello' and 'thank you.' They played music and did a little show for us."

"I came this year because I'm the point of contact for the squadron. We sponsor 86 of the children at the orphanage," said the sergeant.

"Sponsorship is when your unit gathers a list of things the kids need like hygienic products, educational supplies and we even include little toys. We package each kid's stuff in separate boxes for shipment."

Upon arrival, all 115 children were lined up to greet the entourage all smiling and unable to contain their excitement.

Staff Sgt. Juan Llantín, 16th Equipment Maintenance Squadron, came dressed as Santa Claus and was almost unable to walk through the front gate of the orphanage because children lined up to hug him.

Another little girl immediately grabbed the hand of 1st Lt. Drew Cunnar whom she recognized from the previous year's visit. "I met Alma last year when we came down here," said Lieu-

tenant Cunnar, 15th Special Operations Squadron navigator. "My wife and I have been sending clothes to her and her sister."

"Santa" began giving the prepared boxes to the children calling each one by name to come up and receive their gift.

"There's a lot of excitement



around the orphanage for about a week before the airmen arrive," said David Ashby, a volunteer from California now retired in Honduras. They're all very anxious to see what's inside the box when their name is called.

"This is the only military unit that comes here, and they look forward to the visit every year."

Staff Sgt. Vanessa Hansen, 15th SOS aviation resources manager, has been to Honduras on various missions with her unit and was born in Boaco, Nicaragua. "I love Honduras. The people are so humble and they really open their homes to strangers," Sergeant Hansen said. "I can really identify myself with them being from Central America." "It's just great to see the kids. If you gave them a tiny toy from a happy meal they'd be so happy about it. They appreciate everything they get."

Operation Christmas Wish departed after two hours

leaving the children playing with toys, eating candy, and shouting "Gracias!" from behind the walls of the orphanage playground.

On the way back to Hurlburt Field, the Talon II stopped at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, to deliver the remaining 4,500 pounds of toys and supplies. There, the 612th Air Base Squadron would make deliveries to orphanages in their surrounding areas.

With all cargo offloaded the crew and volunteers set their sights toward home, but they had one more delivery to make. Senior Master Sgt. Michael Roberts, 612th Air Base Squadron civil engineer, came along for the ride to spend the holidays with his family living in Navarre, FL. "It's a great opportunity and it really shows how space-A travel can come through for people," said Sergeant Roberts, who has spent the last six months at Soto Cano on a remote tour. "My wife and my 3, 5 and 8-year-old have no idea that I am coming home, they are going to be so surprised to see me. We thought I wasn't going to be able to come home this year."

Before take off Chief Master Sgt. Dennis Desilet, 612th ABS chief enlisted advisor, boarded the aircraft to address Operation Christmas Wish. "What you did tonight greatly impacted many lives in Honduras. Go back to Hurlburt and tell everyone what you saw in the children's faces at La Ceiba."

**President's Note:** MTF provided wheelchairs, crutches, and walkers; also, a pickup truck load of Oreo Cookies for this mission. Kudos to all the Hurlburt Air Commandos who helped.

★★★

# AIR COMMANDO HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE SEEKS NOMINEES

By Jim Ifland

For those of you not able to attend the 2003 Reunion there is an excellent article in the December 2003 Newsletter

that highlights the Hall of Fame ceremony that took place during the Reunion Banquet. The article further recognizes the recent inductees, their background and the citation that accompanied their selection for this prestigious award. We continue to have an excellent Hall of Fame program and outstanding nominees for the selection process. Our thanks to everyone for their recommendations and the quality of their inputs.

Its time to start thinking about the nominations for 2004 and your Hall of Fame Committee chaired by Maj Gen Dick Secord, USAF (ret) is seeking your recommendations. This selection process provides a unique opportunity for each of us to recognize those individuals that have made significant contributions to Air Force Special Operations. Air Commandos have been deeply involved in both overt and covert operations in all parts of the globe spanning from WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, Kosovo and more recently, Afghanistan and Iraq. We have many unsung heroes from each of these eras who where "just doing their job" but

in fact were designing, improvising, developing new procedures/equipment/tactics and laying the ground work for Special Operations as we know it today. Don't overlook our Active

Duty, Guard and Reserve forces that are performing in such an outstanding manner in current

operations around the world.

I urge each of you to take a moment to reflect on your vast experiences and recall those individuals who stood out and really made a difference. Remember, this process isn't just about medals and decorations and the aircrews that earned them, it's an opportunity to recognize the "troops in the trenches" whose significant contributions were so vital to our success.

The criteria are included on this page. Your recommendation should include in-depth details of the individual's significant contributions and or continuous outstanding Air Commando performance.

Please include information such as awards and decorations, a copy of the DD 214 (if applicable) and any other supporting data that would assist the committee in their selection review.

Recommendations should arrive at the Air Commando Association office no later than 30 June 2004.

★★★

# ACA WINS SILVER "WEBBIE" AWARD

*The following letter was received along with notification of this award to the Air Commando Association.*

The American Association of Webmasters Awards are primarily designed to supply formal recognition to webmasters and designers who have shown outstanding achievement in web design content and creativity.

Congratulations! Your site, [www.aircommando.net](http://www.aircommando.net) (Welcome to the Air Commando Association), has been selected to receive The American Association of Webmasters, "Silver" Award. We see all the hard work and dedication that you have put into constructing your web site and your efforts are well deserved. Your site displays: Excellent Design and Layout of Website, with quality content and informative information for your visitors.

A link to your site has been placed on our winners list.

You may verify this by going to our site at [www.aawebmasters.com](http://www.aawebmasters.com) and

click on the award type you have won and the month, from our drop down menu.

Congratulations once again on a wonderful website and contributing interesting content to the World Wide Web

We wish you all the best.

Sincerely,  
Awards Committee - American Association of Webmasters  
Donna Snyder – Founder

**Ed. Note:** This prestigious award is the result of many long hours of imaginative attention to detail and demonstrates the excellent work of our previous Vice President, Rip Kirby. The site has valuable information for our members. Visit [www.aircommando.net](http://www.aircommando.net) and spend some time getting acquainted with the content.

You'll find schedules, past ACA Newsletters, a tour of our Headquarters, ACA Membership Application, leading stories of interest, pictures of Heinie's adventure on the "Trail", links to important websites, and much more.

*Thanks Rip from all Air Commandos for a job well done!! Robert Downs*

## ACA Hall of Fame Nomination Policy

### Eligibility Criteria:

1. Nominee must officially been assigned or attached to a recognized USAF or Special Operations/Special Air Warfare Unit.
2. Served honorably while on active duty and in civilian life.
3. Made a significant, unique contributions to the betterment of Air Force Special Operations (AFSOF).

### Nomination Procedures and Requirements:

1. Anyone may nominate any Air Commando/Special Operations member who meets the criteria to the ACA HOF.
2. Nomination packages will include:
  - a. Verifiable and detailed personal information (DD Form 214) and complete justification for selection.
  - b. A one paragraph citation to be used in an induction ceremony.
  - c. The name, address, and phone number of two additional references.
3. Nominations packages will be sent to the ACA HOF Committee, PO Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569, to arrive NLT 1 June of each year.

★★★



The Hall of Fame Board in the board room at the ACA HQ building. The HOF now has 99 members and will pass the 100 member mark in 2004.



# POW/MIA STATUE OF MIA COMBAT CONTROLLER ANDY GUILLET

*By Charlie Jones, Combat Controller*

As Combat Controller brothers will remember, Commando Combat Controller Andy Guillet was shot down in May, 1966, while on a Forward Air Control mission in Laos. The shootdown was over one of the most heavily defended sections of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, wending down into Laos and South Vietnam from the North. The bodies of Andy and his pilot, Lee Harley were never located. Their fate has never been established by any evidence at all. Andy's name is inscribed on various monuments at Hurlburt and elsewhere.

Andy's faithful and patient sister, Doris Maitland, has become a dear friend to many of us. She has been an inspiration of diligence, and stays in constant contact with military and other officials, determined that no stone be left unturned in efforts to one day account for Andy and Lee, and to bring them home if fate and events would ever turn this way. Doris keeps her persistence and patience in perfect balance, and no body would assign to her any measure of the kind of radicalism too frequently seen in some others in similar circumstances. We love you Doris!

Doris told me last week that the USAF Casualty Office notified her of the possibility that Andy's shoot down site in Laos may have now been located! Based on determination of the accuracy of this, excavation and other work may begin to discover some evidence of the fate of these two brave comrades. She will keep us posted as this unfolds.



What a great joy we will all experience on that day when some news and evidence of Andy's fate is established. Joy will flood our hearts with the event that Andy's earthly remains can finally, after almost forty years, be brought home. He can then peacefully sleep near his boyhood home, or perhaps be interred at some other location worthy as a final resting place for this brave brother! This would then close the books on our MIA CCT brothers. We do remember the great joy we experienced when our other MIA brother from the Vietnam War, Controller Paul Foster was brought home from Laos, and laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery. (I shared this good news with you in a previous article.)

Let us keep our hopes and prayers strong for Andy, and for those who faithfully watch and wait in his behalf. May God give strength and direction to those who work to close this piece of combat history and sacrifice in that long ago war!

★★★

## COMING HOME

*By Charlie Jones*

Fellow Commandos:

I received the following somber observations from an anonymous member of the "Old Guard," the very sharp soldiers who take care of honoring our fallen comrades upon their arrival back home in the United States. It is worthy of your reading!

### HONORING THE FALLEN, QUIETLY

There are no reporters on the tarmac at Dover Air Force Base. The public is not allowed to witness the military tradition of "receiving the remains." Instead, there are soldiers, roused at dark hours to stand in the confines of what seems like a secret as the dead are brought home.

I am one of the soldiers. Nearly every day we learn of another death in Iraq. In our collective consciousness, we tally the statistics of dead and wounded. The number is over 500 now. But none of our conjurings are as real and tangible as the Stars and Stripes folded perfectly over a coffin cradling one of those statistics on his or her way home.

It does not matter where someone stands politically on the war, but I believe that all who have an opinion should know the cost of that opinion. When a soldier dies in a foreign land, his or her remains are returned to the United States for their final rest. The remains arrive in Dover, Del, without fanfare. No family member is present. There are no young children to feel sad or confused. Just a small group of soldiers waiting to do their duty and honor the fallen.

"Dover flights" are met by soldiers from the U.S. Army's 3rd Infantry Regiment, the storied Old Guard. They are true soldiers, assigned to an esteemed regiment, but it is a unit defined by polish, not mud. It seems that they quietly long to be tested with their comrades "over there." But it is clear to me as I watch them that they find immense pride in honoring their country this way.

I am a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Army, and it is my job to have the honor guard at Dover at whatever hour a flight arrives. In military-speak, the plane's grim contents are referred to as "HRs" --- "human remains." Once the plane arrives, conversation ends. The soldiers form a squad of two even ranks and march out to the tarmac. A general follows, flanked by a chaplain and the ranking representative from the service in which the fallen soldier served.

The plane's cargo door opens slowly, revealing a cavernous space. The honor guard steps onto a mobile platform that is raised to the cargo bay. The soldiers enter in lock-step formation and place themselves on both sides of the casket. The squad lifts, the soldiers bucking slightly under the weight. The remains have been packed on ice into metal containers that can easily exceed 500 pounds. The squad moves slowly back onto the elevated platform and deposits the casket with a care that evokes an image of fraternal empathy. It is the only emotion they betray, but their gentleness is unmistakable and compelling. The process continues until the last casket is removed from the plane. On bad nights, this can take over an hour. The few of us observing

See **HONORING** pg. 17

# MY SECRET WAR

## 56th SECURITY POLICE K-9 AT NKP

By George L. Conklin

*"Mix'n it up with some Communist Thai's (CT's) on the perimeter at NKP late '70. Every dog handler can't wait till he has to release his dog and allow the dog to get his "pound of flesh".*

**Score: "Ango" ... 1, "CT's" ....0.**

To better explain, read on...as I remember it, 56th Security police K-9 Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, 01 April 1970 - 31 March 1971. In direct support of the war in Viet Nam, I received my orders to the war in Southeast Asia while I was stationed at Nellis AFB Las Vegas, Nevada. I was first to return to Lackland AFB to receive further training. I entered the 3AZR combat preparedness course. This encompassed the use/training of heavier weapons than I was previously taught as well as a much greater detailed training program.

After taking 30 days leave, I found myself at Clark AFB in the Philippines, for two weeks of Jungle survival and E & E (escape and evasion) school and then on to my duty station at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, located in Northeast Thailand; just 230 air miles from Hanoi, North Vietnam.

The country of Laos, which was communist controlled, was just 20 miles away. Nakhon Phanom, was located on the Mekong River in N.E. Thailand. I was assigned to the 56th Air Commando Wing, 56th Combat Support Group, 56th Security Police K-9. Our duties

were command and control of the areas within our assigned post; which was to include the base perimeter, weapons storage area, flight crew quarters, fuel storage areas, as well as other sensitive areas of the base.

We were also used as listening posts and were sent to guard downed aircraft in Laos and Thailand until sensitive equipment and/or documents could be recovered or the aircraft destroyed. We were also used to detect trip wires, booby traps, mines and tunnels.

Several times throughout my tour, my dog "Ango," ear tag OK31, was to save my bacon.

Well, this particular day wasn't so different. As I don't remember the day, I do remember that I was downtown at "Johnny's" (a quaint little bar along the Mekong River) with some of the local talent. Having to work that night, I decided that I would catch a decent meal. We had pretty good chow at the "Skyraider Inn" named after our many A-1 Skyraiders (call sign HOB0/SANDY).

So I jumped on the bus and got off at the main gate and took a taxi back to the hooch. It was when I got back to the hooch, that I heard this F-105 Thunderchief (Thud as they called it) was inbound with battle damage, a fire warning light and smoke in the cockpit. Word traveled fast. Well, this LtCol couldn't make it in and punched out. He hit the silk about a quarter mile out.

The aircraft impacted just outside the base perimeter and the debris splash took out our concertina wire, tangle foot and numerous trip flares; leaving a gaping hole in our defenses.

Continuing on, the air-

craft (or what was left of it) slid across the perimeter road and slammed into the observation tower and the M-60 machine gun bunker at its base. B-29 or Bravo-two Nine (as it was better known) was located at the end of the active runway, was now destroyed. Given the fact that it was daylight, there was no USAF Security Policeman posted there, but we did lose the life of the Thai guard posted in the bunker. The pilot made it out just fine.

At guardmount that night, I was taken aside and met with my flight chief, kennel master and some brass from the head shed. I was then briefed on the "events of the day" and was promptly given my post. Yep, you guessed it .....that gaping hole at Bravo two nine.... My mission was to enter that area just off base and secure it. I was assured that there was no ordinance left in the area as EOD had cleared it and deemed the area safe. Yeah, right, the check's in the mail, too! Hell, there was 20 mike-mike rounds scattered all over the place. But, who am I to argue. After checking out my assigned weapon and a few extra "slap flares" (hand fired parachute illumination flares), I proceeded to the kennels and picked up my best friend and partner, Ango, a dark dog of 5 years and about 75 pounds. He knew his job and did it well. This night he was to save my life.

Upon entering the area I immediately sized up the situation, wind direction, cover and concealment and the best way out should things really heat up, bunker locations etc. My call sign was "Night Fighter Six Four." Earlier at the briefing it was best determined that I clear the area and then take-up a de-

fensive position where, if any one entered the area, I could call in the dog's alert and then receive the necessary help from the sector's QRT (quick reaction team), the QRF (quick reaction force), the Thai AF, and (of course) our nightly orbiting HH-3E Helicopter with flare kicker, "Sunspot" search light and 7.62 miniguns. We also had a very eager mortar pit crew at our disposal and K-SAT (K-9 security alert team).

The vegetation was something else, as you could get down on your hands and knees and see for many yards. Yet, if you stood on your feet you then could only see for a few feet. As Ango and myself were clearing the area; he stopped and looking over his right shoulder, streaked passed me and proceeded to rip into one of three individuals lurking under this bush just inches by my side. I let him chew, as I was now very busy with two others that failed to heed my challenge. I'm now "popping illumination" and squeak'n and freak'n on the radio. It did not take long for the QRF in their M-113 to come bustin' in, as did the QRT from bravo sector in their 706/V100 armored car. I had learned later that they were never very far away.

Well, One Thai national got away, which we figured was OK as he/she would tell the others that, "It's not the dark you have to be afraid of, but what hunts in the dark," and that you don't fool around with those K-9 cops at NKP. One of the other teams caught another "CT" and of course, Ango, my dog, had his trophy. As things settled down and we debriefed, it was then determined that the Thai that Ango had caught a US issue

See **ANGO** pg. 17



# ANGO

from pg 16

bayonet on him (I wonder where he got that?) and at the time the dog had struck all this guy would have had to do was to thrust his hand and arm up and he would have got me between the ribs and probably my liver. I would have just bled out right there.

With only thirty days left of my tour at NKP I found myself "short." A term all of us "in country" would use as our time here was indeed short. We would celebrate this time in our lives with the "Shortimers Calendar." This calendar was in cartoon format and each day had a square that was to be colored in as the days went by. As we got closer to our day of rotation (the day we would go back to the world (states), our duties got lighter as this would assure us of going home, supposedly. Our last night there was a party for those of us who were going back. Then all would accompany us to the terminal and watch us leave on the "Freedom Bird" and would sing "Leav'n on a Jet Plane" by John Denver.

Can you imagine a handful of guys drunk and or hung over singing out of tune...every one in the area was laughing and joining in. Flew back to Don Muang, in Bangkok, an over nighter, and then onto the states.

Once on board the Commercial flight, there was a lot of hopping and hollering, yelling and screaming, a party all the way home. As each of us received a bottle of wine, cheese and some crackers.

Our arrival at Travis AFB California was very anti-climatic and we encountered the war protesters and their bothersome chants and cat

calls, booing etc. We felt hurt, betrayed and angry. It's taken me sometime now, for me to get over it, but I feel I have for the most part.

## ~In Retrospect~

As I look back, some thirty years later, I know that God had his hand on my shoulder, as he did for all of us during those difficult times. Someday I hope to return to Thailand for some closure and to reminisce. As for my dog "Ango" there isn't a day that goes by that don't think of him.

I am proud to have served with the 56th and the Air Force during those difficult and secretive years. That year I spent over there was quite possibly the most influential year of my life and I most certainly had the time of my life. That's not to say it was good times, on the contrary, there were times of great sadness, fear, sorrow, and heartache. But none the less, ....I am proud to have served.

## ~Today~

There is not much left of the airbase as we knew it. As most all of the buildings have been salvaged or removed. The jungle has reclaimed the area and the snakes and animals have moved in. The runway and the taxiway have been maintained and there is a new terminal which is used on a daily bases. The Thai Army has a small detachment there as well, and what it takes to maintain that mission. The city of Nakhon Phanom is, of course, still thriving in spite of the economic down turn. New hotels and shops, the river front beach with its park and a general renewing of the city is all geared towards the booming tourist trade since the war has ended,

as people are discovering just what a beautiful country Thailand is.

I have since learned that "Ango" was humanly put down in August of 1974 due to complications of soft tissue sarcoma and died peacefully in his home kennel at Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air force base.

*Submitted by Sandy Sanborn*

**Ed. Note:** Great story! Currently George is not a member, but I'll bet he will join if we can locate him!

★★★

## NO, FREEDOM ISN'T FREE

I watched the flag pass by one day,  
It fluttered in the breeze.  
A young Marine saluted it,  
And then he stood at ease.  
I looked at him in uniform,  
So young, so tall, so proud,  
With hair cut square and eyes alert,  
He'd stand out in any crowd.  
I thought how many men like him,  
Had fallen through the years.  
How many died on foreign soil,  
How many mothers' tears?  
How many pilots' planes shot down?  
How many died at sea?  
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?  
No, freedom isn't free.  
I heard the sound of Taps one night,  
When everything was still,  
I listened to the bugler play,  
And felt a sudden chill.  
I wondered just how many times,  
That Taps had meant "Amen,"  
When a flag had draped a coffin.  
Of a brother or a friend.  
I thought of all the children,  
Of the mothers and the wives,  
Of fathers, sons and husbands  
With interrupted lives.  
I thought about a graveyard  
At the bottom of the sea.  
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.  
No, freedom isn't free.

*Submitted by Ken Spring*

★★★

# HONORING

from pg 15

say nothing, the silence absolute, underscored by something sacred. There is no rule or order that dictates it, but the silence is maintained with a discipline that needs no command.

The caskets are lowered together to the earth, where the soldiers lift them into a van, one by one. The doors close, and the squad moves out. Just before the van rounds the corner, someone speaks in a voice just above a whisper. We snap to and extend a sharp salute.

There are those who would politicize this scene, making it the device of an argument over the freedom of the press. But if this scene were ever to be exploited by the lights and cameras of our "infotainment" industry, it would be offensive. Still, the story must be told. A democracy's lifeblood, after all, is an informed citizenry, and this image is nowhere in the public mind. The men and women arriving in flag-draped caskets do not deserve the disrespect of arriving in the dark confines of secrecy. But it is a soldier's story, and it must be told through a soldier's eyes. In the military, we seldom discuss whether we are for or against the war. Instead, we know intimately its cost. For those of us standing on the tarmac at Dover in those still and inky nights, our feelings have nothing to do with politics. They are feelings of sadness, of empathy. And there is nothing abstract about them.

★★★

## ★ BANGKOK CLEANERS ★

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# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY - 2003



Augie Jones, Robert Downs, Charlie Jones, and Treasurer Charles



Anne Bruner, Heinie, Dee Roberson, and Ray Bourque



Joe Harris, Rita Harris, and Eva Whippe



Da' cake !!



Heinie and Gloria Doster



World's Greatest Fighter Pilot Mike Horgan and Dee Roberson



Dick Secord and Dick Geron



Carlous "Chris", Peggy, and John Christian



Kay and "Editor" Jim Boney



Joanne and Ray Bourque with Roger and Dorothy Klair



Geraldine and Gaylord Hall



George Rosentrom, Leon Rowland, and Ace Shepherd



Cake Cutter Bonnie, Hap Lutz, and Santa's Elf



Lori Lutz, Steve Baldwin, and Shirley Lutz



Ace Shepherd and Bea Shehan



Carol and Pete Bowman with Gene Traczyk



Sam Sambogna, John Grove, Mr. "T", and Joyce and Dave Harrington



Joy Downs and Betty Kenyon



Anise and Orvin Copeland with Carlous Christian



Juan and Gretchen Bazan



Mrs. Grove (John Grove's mom), Reima Atkin, and Mary Lou Hugher



Charlie and Marie Wheelahan



Jerry Rhein with Bruce and Ann Keller



Charlie and Beverly Kapsa



Sam Sambogna flanked by Bill and Dottie Ryan



Bob White and John Grove



Fred Saunders with Anise and Orvin Copeland



Marie Howell with Ted and Barbara Sande



## ROSSEL REPORT

*I RECEIVED THIS 2003 CHRISTMAS card from the brother of Paul Windle B-26 pilot and O-1 FAC KIA Vietnam.*  
Gene

Thank you for having me on the ACA Newsletter mailing list. It always has articles that are of interest to me. Thanks for keeping the memories of the Air Commando alive. The memorial dedicated in October 2002 to those who served in Jungle Jim is great. It contains information new to me.

Because of the article you wrote about my brother Paul, which is on the Internet, I was contacted last year by Paul McDaniel (Corvallis, Oregon) who was the camera operator for Paul on his second tour to SVN. He sent me some photos of them and their airplane.

Thanks to the ACA Newsletter I learned about [www.virtualwall.org](http://www.virtualwall.org) I logged onto it and found J.S. (Duke) Granducci II, had included a nice article about my brother. He replaced Paul as a FAC. He included information, which was new to me. We exchanged a few e-mails.

I think about you every ACA Newsletter. However, I procrastinated and never thanked you. We do have email now, ([newindle@juno.com](mailto:newindle@juno.com)) which Nan uses frequently.

Sincerely, Leaford Windle, 1205 N. Mesa Road, Belen, NM 87002-3369

ON 14 JUNE 1943 at 0602 in the morning, just off the Coral Sea, a B-17C Tail Number 40-2072 crashed after take-off from Mackay, Queensland, Australia returning 41 R&R troops and

crew back to Port Moresby, New Guinea.

The families of the killed received a telegram, which said "your son/relative died on 14 June 1943 in South West Asia" and that was all. It was very similar to some of our early Air Commandos who were killed in Vietnam.

The Australian appreciation of American effort in WWII and their yearly remembrance of this disaster got American veterans interest through the Internet. Today they have an organization of Australians and Americans searching for any living relative of those killed. Through the brotherhood of the military the USAF 5th Air Force in Japan, which the plane was assigned to this command in WWII, is officially notifying these families of what actually happened with their loved ones in 1943.

To this date 24 relatives of the crash victims have been found and during the 60th Anniversary at the monument in Australia, there were 6 families of those who died who attended the Memorial service on 14 June 2003 because of the efforts of the Australian and American Veterans locating them after all these years. Many of the other families couldn't attend because of age and cost of the trip.

We are looking (includes several ACA members who are involved and who have found some of the families to include Bill Brown) for the remaining families of the following American military that were killed in this crash:

Rank/Name	State
PFC Jerome Abraham	FL
TSgt William A. Briggs	SC
TSgt James A. Copeland	KY
Sgt Carl A. Cunningham	AR
TSgt George A. Ehrmann	CA
FO William C. Erb	CA

PFC Norman J. Goetz	IL
PFC Vernon Johnson	NJ
Sgt Charlie O. LaRue	TX
PFC Raymond D. Longabaugh	KY
2nd Lt Jack A. Ogren	OH
PFC Frank S. Penksa	PA
CPL Charles W. Sampson	NY
CPL Raymond H. Smith	PA
CPL Franklin F. Smith	NC
PFC Frederic C. Sweet	MI
CPL Edward Tenny	WV
SSgt Frank E. Whelchel	GA

If you have any information on any of the families please contact Gene Rossel at 909-930-5700 work, Tel/Fax 909-591-7342 home, 6083 Rosa Ct, Chino, CA 91710 or email [aircommando1@earthlink.net](mailto:aircommando1@earthlink.net)

FROM A NAVAL AVIATION VET.... A little Military Aviation "History" Lesson....C-130 Lands on aircraft carrier 1963.

The pilot, Jim Flatley, was our Air Group 3 LSO in USS Saratoga in 1964-1966. His dad, James Sr, was a WWII ace who made 4 stars. Last I knew, Jr was a RADM.

Not only did the C-130 land on and take off from an aircraft carrier, but what is even more amazing is that the plane did so unassisted--without using arresting gear to reduce the landing roll or using the ship's catapult to become airborne.

The astounding feats occurred from the deck of the USS Forrestal in October 1963 using a Marine Corps KC-130F

The motivation for these tests, ordered by the Chief of Naval Operations, was to determine the feasibility of using the existing C-130 aircraft as a long-range carrier on board delivery (COD) transport.

At the time, the Navy was using the C-1 Trader for COD du-

ties, but the plane was limited to a rather small payload and a 300-mile (480 km) range. When operating far out at sea, carriers were unable to receive desperately needed supplies without steaming closer in to shore. It was hoped that the larger, long-range C-130 would be able to address that deficiency. And so it was, on 8 October, that the Navy received the KC-130F refueling tanker (BuNo 149798) on loan from the USMC. Prior to the tests, Lockheed had modified the plane by installing an anti-skid braking system, removing the underwing refueling pods, and adding a smaller nose gear orifice. The aircraft carried a crew of four: LT James Flatley as pilot, LCDR W. "Smokey" Stovall as copilot, ADR1 Ed Brennan as flight engineer, and Lockheed flight test pilot Ted Limmer.



Initial flight-testing began on 30 October when the C-130 made its first landing on the Forrestal into a 40-knot wind. Helping to guide the C-130 along the deck was a special dashed centerline, but even with this line, the aircraft's wingtip cleared the carrier's island control tower by less than 15 ft (4.6 m).

Adding to the challenge of operating the large aircraft from a carrier deck was a relatively heavy

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sea state. In the words of Lockheed's chief engineer, Art Flock, who was aboard to observe the tests, "The sea was pretty big that day. I was up on the captain's bridge. I watched a man on the ship's bow as that bow must have gone up and down 30 feet." To ease the operations, the ship increased speed to provide more wind speed over the deck and reduce the unsteady rocking and heaving motions. "That airplane stopped right opposite the captain's bridge," recalled Flock.

"There was cheering and laughing. There on the side of the fuselage, a big sign had been painted on that said LOOK MA, NO HOOK."



Perhaps one of the most amazing accomplishments of the plane was described by Lockheed pilot Ted Limmer, who had qualified test pilot LT Flatley to fly the C-130. "The last landing I participated in, we touched down about 150 feet from the end, stopped in 270 feet more and

launched from that position, using what was left of the deck. We still had a couple hundred feet left when we lifted off. Admiral Brown was flabbergasted." LT Flatley was eventually awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by the Navy for his participation in the test program. All told, the flight tests included 29 touch-and-go landings, 21 unarrested full-stop landings, and 21 unassisted takeoffs at gross weights ranging from 85,000 lb (38,555 kg) to 121,000 lb (54,885 kg). At the

lower weight, the aircraft managed to come to a complete stop in only 267 ft (81 m), which is little more than double the plane's wingspan.

Even at maximum weight, the C-130 required only 745 ft (227 m) for takeoff and 460 ft (140 m) for landing. Landings were made shorter by reversing the propellers while the aircraft was still a few feet above the flight deck.



Based on these tests, it was determined that the C-130 could carry 25,000 lb (11,340 kg) of cargo and personnel to a carrier at a range of 2,500 miles (4,020 km). However, the risks of operating such a large aircraft in the hectic day-to-day carrier environment were considered too great, and the idea of using the C-130 as a COD aircraft was abandoned. The C-130 has never been operated from a carrier since, and the much smaller C-2A Greyhound was later selected to fulfill the COD role.

## WASP WWII

*A partial extract from the Reunion Magazine about the brave female pilots in WWII.*

The Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) in WWII consisted of almost 2000 aviation driven ladies. The WASP pilots flew over 60 million miles, delivered planes to pilots who flew them into battle and inspired generations of women to follow their dreams. From September 1942 to December 1944, WASPs battled the enemy by flying every type

of plane that saw service during WWII.

General Paul Tibbets, pilot of the B-29 Enola Gay, called them the best pilots in WWII regardless of gender. The "Fly Girls," as they were called in the '40s, came from across the country, from all walks of life, for the chance to fly the same planes that male HPs (Hot Pilots) flew to be "Miss HP." Many of the women were not rookies. Some were flying instructors for years before the call went out in 1942 for women to fill non-combat duties, freeing men to fight overseas. Of 25,000 women who applied, 1830 were accepted and only 1,074 earned their wings. Qualified women ferried planes from factories to airfields. They were shot at while flying target planes, and test-flew planes after repair or design. They performed every Army Air Force required activity except combat. "The WASP proved women could do it. They flew through snow and dark and they flew through their period. They flew planes as fast and far as men but safer!" wrote the Associated Press about the WASPs in 1944.

They paved their own way. They bought their own uniforms and even paid for transporting the remains of those who died in the line of duty. With all their accomplishments and sacrifices, the WASPs were not recognized as part of the Armed Services until November 23 1977.

LETTER ON PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH and the criticism of his landing on an aircraft carrier.

As a retired Naval Officer, with two Gulf carrier deployments under my belt, I find your criticism of President Bush's visit to the Lincoln offensive in the extreme! This is the first time that the Commander-in-Chief

took time out of his schedule to pay a visit to thank those who served in the line of fire, in a way that was both dramatic and meaningful to those on the carrier. And it wasn't lost on me that the President spent thirty seconds shaking hands with the Admiral, CO, and CAG. He then spent the next 45 minutes putting himself at the disposal of the people who make that ship work-the yellow shirts, the green shirts, the purple shirts, the chiefs, the sailors. Not dressed out in formal uniform (I understand at the President's request), but in their greasy, smelly, sweaty work uniforms. Working a flight deck is hot and hard work. And yet he, in his flight suit, put himself at their disposal. This was their moment for 19 or 20 something year old young men, many just out of high school, to get a picture of themselves with the President of the United States, his arm draped around their shoulder.

That was a moment those young men never dreamed would happen to them, maybe not even knew when he was coming aboard. Surely, he would see the brass, not the troops. But it was the troops to whom he gave his time and it was the most natural moment in the world. You might have thought it was a family reunion, and in a way it was.

The President is one of them, the common man, and while he is still the most powerful man on the planet right now. He has not lost his touch for them. Was it a political moment? What moment of a President's life is not a political moment? Was it grandstanding, to come in to an OK pass to a 4 wire, a bit high in close, correcting, left of centerline? Well, hell, he didn't fly the approach anyway, though

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I understand from the pilots who flew with him that he did a pretty good job at formation flying, tucked in close for a lead change. You can always tell a fighter pilot, you just can't tell him very much. And apparently after 30 years, it all came back with a little coaching, I am sure. Frankly, I would like to see him come aboard in an FA-18 but the Secret Services vetoed that, and the President accepted their judgment. Again, a mark of a good leader.

Lewis F. McIntyre CDR, USN Ret.

COMMANDO BILL LEACH, ACA Member #0195 retires after flying 50 years and 20,000 hours in the cockpit as reported by the Atlanta Journal Constitution, 8 January 2004 by Eric Sturgus.

Bill Leach thought something was wrong when the control tower at DeKalb-Peachtree Airport asked him to delay his landing. Then he noticed two DeKalb County fire trucks on the taxiway. When Leach was allowed to land, the trucks doused his plane with water, not because of any trouble with the aircraft, but as part of a celebration of his final flight.

Last week, after 50 years as a pilot for the US military and for corporate clients, Leach, 71 made his last flight as a pilot an hour and 45-minute round trip from Atlanta to Moultrie GA.

"It's been a great run," said Leach, surrounded by several dozen relatives and friends who for more than six months had been aware of the surprise.

Leach, who lives near Snellville, has been flying for corporate clients based at DeKalb-

Peachtree Airport since 1986. His love of flight blossomed during childhood in upstate New York. Relatives have photos of Leach holding a model airplane as a 10-year-old boy.

Leach graduated from high school during the Korean War. He joined the Air Force, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross during a 20-year career that included stints in Africa, Europe, South America (605th ACS) and Vietnam.

With about 20,000 flight hours, Leach made a decision to retire last summer after his wife, Mary, retired from a teaching career.

Leach's son, Jonathan, was unsure whether his father would actually call it quits. "Not until they pried his hands from the throttle," Jonathan said.

Leach said he plans to travel with his wife. But he won't be doing the piloting to their destination. "It's unusual for people to spend their lives doing what they love," he said.

A LITTLE HUMOR FROM THE FRONT OFFICE. It is with the saddest heart that we must pass on the following news. Please join us in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community.

The Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast infection and complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71. Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Buttersworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, and Captain Crunch.

The gravesite was piled high with flours. Aunt Jemima delivered the eulogy and lovingly

described Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a very 'smart' cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes. Despite being a little flaky at times he still, as a crusty old man, was considered a roll model for millions.

Doughboy is survived by his wife, Play Dough; two children, John Dough and Jane Dough; plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly dad, Pop Tart. The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.

SOLE SURVIVOR of the worst aviation disaster in WWII and in Australia then and now, Foye Roberts died peacefully in his sleep on 4 Feb 2004 in Wichita Falls, TX. Corporal Foye K. Roberts, US Army Air Force, of the 6 TCS of the 374 Troop Carrier Group, New Guinea, was the only survivor of 41 aircrew and passenger who were on a converted B-17C, which could no longer be used as a bomber because of structural damage from diving from the Japanese attacking Pearl Harbor in December 1941, crashed on 14 June 1943 at Bakkers Creek, near the city of Mackay, Queensland, Australia. 40 of the 41 on board were killed. Foye Roberts was the only one who survived due to being in the rear of the aircraft and cushioned by all the other people in the aircraft when it crashed and burned. All the passengers had been on R&R from New Guinea in Mackay, and were returning to New Guinea-a 4.5 hour flight. They were literally packed in the aircraft, most sitting on the aircraft floor without seat belts. The B-

17C, tail number 40-2072, had just taken off from the airport at Mackay when it developed problems and was returning to the field. The aircraft's wing hit the ground and it cartwheeled in a flame of fire. A few survived for a short time but died within the day. Foye Roberts suffered a great deal from the crash, which was to affect him the rest of his life.

VO-67 IS ATTEMPTING TO LOCATE COL CONRAD BROWN, USAF who was assigned to VO-67 as a Norden Bomb site instructor at NKP. It appears that the 13 VO-67 Bombardiers may have been the only ones to use the Nordon bomb-sight during the Vietnam War. Colonel Brown was very special to this group and if he is still living we would like to get him on our reunion roster. The Colonel was able to secure a copy of the Norden Bomb Sight training film from WWII and some training manuals from the Smithsonian Institute to train the Bombardiers. Contact Bob Reynolds, VO-67 SQ, [www.VO-67.org](http://www.VO-67.org), via email [crklmoon@aol.com](mailto:crklmoon@aol.com).

QUESTION FROM JOHN KNOWLTON. I was flying the C-123s out of Tan Son Nhut with the 310th Air Commando Sq from 1963 to 1965.

MACVSOG was recognized and awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. Are we, as ACA members, eligible to receive the same specially minted coin that the esteemed Major John Plaster received?

*This question was answered by Al Brashear, 605ACS, SOG, C-123/130, [Typhoon@Direcway.com](mailto:Typhoon@Direcway.com)*

Answer: The award that

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Army personnel received for service while in MACVSOG was not a Presidential Unit Citation issued by the Department of Defense, but by the Secretary of the Army. It is only for US Army personnel. Plaster was given an Honorary award only because he wrote the book.

I doubt seriously that the Army would allow a non-Army person to have a copy of the coin. If the Secretary of the Air Force were to issue a similar Presidential Unit Citation, it would still only be for the USAF personnel that served in MACVSOG, which was very limited...and that would have been in the headquarters in Saigon, or one of the three flying units based at Nha Trang, ie Detachment 12, 1131 USAF Special Operations Squadron (C-123K), Detachment 1, 779 TAS (Pope AFB, C-130E) and 20th Helicopter Squadron.

Most people still misunderstand when they see the acronym MACVSOG, which was not part of MACV. It was a cover name for a CIA controlled group consisting of members from all 7 of the uniformed services of the US-Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Public Health Service, Coast Guard and NOAA.

I served in Det 12 (C-123K) at Nha Trang for 6 months and then in MACVSOG Headquarters in Saigon for 8 months, planning and controlling the C-123 and C-130 missions. I had time in both aircraft.

*Thanks and a tip-o-the-hat to Al Brashear for his excellent history (and memory) of MACVSOG.*

Ken Griswold, kgris703@citlink.net. I'm interested in the

partial history of how all the former Navy A-1 series aircraft went from storage in the US to NKP and their final disposition when NKP closed and the war ended?

LES STROUSE PROVIDES A FIGHTER PILOT'S ATTITUDE AND ANSWER TO THE QUESTION.

When I went through USAF pilot training in 1955/56 the Pilot Training classes were divided into single engine and multi engine. We all started out at the same base for primary training (PA-18 and T-6); but, then according to whether you were selected for single engine or multi engine you went to a base that specialized in that training.

In our case, multi engine candidates went to train in the B-25. Single engine candidates trained in the T-28 and T-33. I was a single engine candidate and we were indoctrinated from day one of our Basic Single Engine Pilot training, to be FIGHTER PILOTS. We were trained to have an attitude! You are the best. There is only one way to fly, single engine single seat jet FIGHTER's. You are the BOSS, you are the BEST that the USAF has. You will be the best FIGHTER PILOTS in the world. We believed all of that stuff....until graduation when we had only one fighter assignment and 5 interceptor assignments! The rest were B-47 co-pilots or observers training for pilots

I was lucky that I had a high enough class standing to get one of the interceptor (F-89/F-94) slots. That is, up until the time before graduation when MATS came through with a priority and the five of us who were going to interceptor school were advised

that we were going to C-124 co-pilot school.

Talk about a blow to one's self esteem! I was indoctrinated to be a FIGHTER PILOT! So, I spent two years as a C-124 co-pilot and then upgraded to Aircraft Commander. My ATTITUDE was long gone! But, I became the youngest C-124 AC in MATS at the time-a 23-year-old 1/Lt.

My attitude returned! I think all pilots have a bit of attitude. It goes with the territory. It is just Fighter Pilots have more of an attitude and it is needed to survive in that atmosphere.

*Many thanks to Les Strouse, Thailand, member of the ACA, 1st ACW, Air America and other such organizations for being a great story teller. Contact him via loongles@netscape.net.*

A MEMORIAL SITE FOR FAC LT BILLY COLEY, killed at Soc Trang on December 20th 1963, can be found at [www.jacklummus.com](http://www.jacklummus.com) For any T-28 driver who may have flown #38364, be it known that she is still alive and can be found on [www.warbirdaviation.com.au](http://www.warbirdaviation.com.au).

*Many thanks to William "Bill" Verebley, verb@visi.net*

Paul Parkosewich, ACA #0106, [webmaster@andreguillet.com](mailto:webmaster@andreguillet.com). To view summary of the 81st JFA for case 0343, go to <http://www.andreguillet.com/summary81stJFA.html>.

Lynn Jackson McFadden, Shreveport, LA, [lynmcfadden@lycos.com](mailto:lynmcfadden@lycos.com). You have compiled a lot of data for the ACA home page. Thank you for your hard work. I would like to

hear from anyone who knew my father USAF Capt Carl Edwin Jackson. He is currently listed MIA in Vietnam on 27 June, 1965. My brother, sister, and I are in need of any information that anyone who may be willing to share with us about our dad. PLEASE HELP!

SHANNON ROGERS, [pfrogers@excite.com](mailto:pfrogers@excite.com) I'm looking for a picture of a C-47 to use on the cover of a book my grandfather has written. He flew C-47's in WWII. I came to the ACA Home Page via a DC-3 website.

*Shannon, there are a lot of C-47 pictures from WWII at the DOD Audio Visual unit in New Mexico. The WWII Air Commandos will have pictures of that period but most of our guys are from the Vietnam era Air Commandos who flew the C-47 in all types of configurations. Let us know what the title of the book is and we will be able to help you more.*  
Gene

THOMAS F. FLYNN III, Wallingford, CT, [tff3@snet.net](mailto:tff3@snet.net), I'm interested in researching my father's effort 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.

*Send us your father's full name, rank and when he flew the L-5. I will send this to the WWII Air Commandos for their newsletters.*  
Gene

ROBERT WILLIAMS, MSgt USAF Ret, ACA #3810 [will1934@westelcom.com](mailto:will1934@westelcom.com). I am presently building a diorama on the Tamiya 1/48 scale USAF ver-

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sion A-1J Skyraider and was wondering if some of your members could help me. The model is a beaut and has all the munitions that we loaded during the Nam war. Would like info about the AGE equipment that was used such as the MD-3. Do any of your members know where I could find this equipment in this scale (1/48)? Also did the A-1 use the nitrogen/oxygen utility cart. Any help would be appreciated. I would like this diorama to be as realistic as possible right down to the revetment.

Thanks!

CARLOS MORENO, Carloreno@aol.com. I was in the Air Commandos in Hurlburt as a C-123 Loadmaster. I served from 1962 to 1966.

Ed. Note: Carlos, ACA Membership application sent.

RICHARD L. SCHNEIDER, Maj USAF Ret, Harbor, OR, richlsch@charter.net. I was Chief of Stan Eval for the 311th at Danang during 9/1963-9/1967. Am I eligible for ACA membership?

*Four years as Stan Eval at Danang! You are definitely eligible for membership-application is attached.*

Gene

ROG HAMANN, Greene, Maine, Yankee72@aol.com Fantastic site!!!! Can't believe all the links you've got in here. I served with the 23 TASS as a Rustic FAC out of Ubon from 71-72 as an airborne interpreter (enlisted GIB).

*Thanks for the comments.*

Gene

Konstantinovich, Poland, <http://siekierski50zbigniew.winteria.pl>, [miezonka@op.pl](mailto:miezonka@op.pl) I am looking for all information about the family Konstantinovich-owners of DEKA, and about the DEKA factory and the DEKA engines. A certain family Konstantinovich possessed in St Petersburg a business "Duflon, Konstantinovich & Co." abbreviated as DEKA i.e. a joint stock company; co-owner Aleksander Konstantinovich from the Mscislau line probably-and we built up the military factory of aero engines in a town Aleksandrovsk (later named Zaporozhye) in 1915 and 1916; the Mercedes type 100 HP assembled here in September 1916 and designated Decal M-100; Motor Sich JSC at present. I want to find more information about the Russo-Baltic Wagon Company and a director Michael Szydlowski with the rank of Major General who was an ex-navy man with connections to the Russian military. Thank you very much for your help.

*Can any of you help-I know you didn't fly these but I thought it would be interesting. If Bill Palank was an ACA member we would have an answer for the Polish gentleman.*

Gene

J.C. WHEELER, [jc@ec47.com](mailto:jc@ec47.com) I received an email from the daughter of one of our EC-47 Flight Mechanics from the 360th. I am looking for anyone who knew Clifton C. Wages. His daughter thought he was a TSgt and he was Flight Mechanic with the 360th TEWS in 1969-1970. If you knew and remember him please let me know and I will either put you in contact with him or pass on the information. Her

dad passed away 2 years ago.

MICHAEL D. LINDHORST, [mdlindy@aol.com](mailto:mdlindy@aol.com) I'm a lost member. How do I renew my membership?

Ed. Note: Call Pete Bowman at ACA HQ (850) 581-0099

## THE PLANES OF FAME

The Planes of Fame in Chino, CA will have another Air Commando Vietnam day on Saturday, 3 April 2004 and I need 4 speakers who want to tell stories about their aircraft and about their experience in the Vietnam War. We want aircrew who will talk about their experience in Air Commando aircraft such as the A-1, T-28, A-37, C-123, AC-47/119/130/123, Helicopters, A-26 and others. If anyone is interested please let me know by email with your name, a bio and what you want to speak on at [aircommando1@earthlink.net](mailto:aircommando1@earthlink.net).

If anyone has any old Air Commando aircraft that they would like to show off they are invited to fly it in for display at the hangar where the discussions will be held.

Last year it went over well despite the weather and we had Paul Marschalk's friends fly in an A-1J and a T-28.

If you have written a book you can bring it out there and there will be a table to sell it. You could also make a deal with the museum's bookstore for them to carry it. Bob Gleason's Air Commando Chronicles has been sold in the museum bookstore for the last year. They have an excellent bookstore.

For attending the Museum raffles off a ride in a WWII aircraft for these lecture series. Each month they have different aircraft lectures - see

[www.planesoffame.org](http://www.planesoffame.org).

A visit is worthwhile and you can see the museum Air Commando display. The airport is full of old WWII aircraft memories and they have the only flying Zero, a Northrop flying wing and a lot other one of a kind flying machines.

On Saturday, 3 July 2004 they are having a Forward Air Controller day at the Planes of Fame and I need volunteer speakers to include Ravens, O-1, O-2, OV-10, a fast FAC pilots etc to tell stories about their aircraft and about the war. We need 4 speakers and again it starts at 10 and they have a raffle for a ride in one of their WWII aircraft.

Please email me at [aircommando1@earthlink.net](mailto:aircommando1@earthlink.net) with your name, a short bio and what you would like to speak on. If you have a book you can bring it out and a table will be set aside to sell your story.

The Planes of Fame Museum is the oldest aviation museum west of the Mississippi.

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](mailto:aircommando1@earthlink.net)  
URL: <http://home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1/>

★★★

**NATIONAL ORDER OF BATTLEFIELD COMMISSIONS** is trying to locate all men, WWII, Korea and Vietnam, 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, Ocean Dr., St. Augustine, FL 32080; 904/471-7695, e-mail [jnobe@msn.com](mailto:jnobe@msn.com) or, for more info, visit [www.battlefieldcommissions.org](http://www.battlefieldcommissions.org)

# ENJOY YOUR PIE

*Submitted by: Larry Harwood*

This story is told by Lori Kimble, a 31 year old teacher and proud military wife. A California native, Mrs. Kimble currently lives in Alabama.

I was sitting alone in one of those loud, casual steakhouses that you find all over the country. You know the type--a bucket of peanuts on every table, shells littering the floor, and a bunch of perky college kids racing around with longneck beers and sizzling platters. Taking a sip of my iced tea, I studied the crowd over the rim of my glass. My gaze lingered on a group enjoying their meal. They wore no uniform to identify their branch of service, but they were definitely "military:" clean shaven, cropped haircut, and that "squared away" look that comes with pride.

Smiling sadly, I glanced across my table to the empty seat where my husband usually sat. It had only been a few months since we sat in this very booth, talking about his upcoming deployment to the Middle East. That was when he made me promise to get a sitter for the kids, come back to this restaurant once a month and treat myself to a nice steak. In turn he would treasure the thought of me being here, thinking about him until he returned home to me.

I fingered the little flag pin I constantly wear and wondered where he was at this very moment. Was he safe and warm? Was his cold any better?

Were my letters getting through to him? As I pondered these thoughts, high pitched female voices from the next booth

broke into my thoughts.

"I don't know what Bush is thinking about. Invading Iraq. You'd think that man would learn from his old man's mistakes. Good lord. What an idiot! I can't believe he is even in office. You do know, he stole the election."

I cut into my steak and tried to ignore them, as they began an endless tirade running down our president. I thought about the last night I spent with my husband, as he prepared to deploy. He had just returned from getting his smallpox and anthrax shots. The image of him standing in our kitchen packing his gas mask still gives me chills. Once again the women's voices invaded my thoughts. "It is all about oil, you know. Our soldiers will go in and rape and steal all the oil they can in the name of 'freedom.' Hmph! I wonder how many innocent people they'll kill without giving it a thought? It's pure greed, you know."

My chest tightened as I stared at my wedding ring. I could still see how handsome my husband looked in his "mess dress" the day he slipped it on my finger. I wondered what he was wearing now. Probably his desert uniform, affectionately dubbed "coffee stains" with a heavy bulletproof vest over it.

"You know, we should just leave Iraq alone. I don't think they are hiding any weapons. In fact, I bet it's all a big act just to increase the President's popularity. That's all it is, padding the military budget at the expense of our social security and education. And, you know what else? We're just asking for another 9/11. I can't say when it happens again that we didn't deserve it."

Their words brought to mind the war protesters I had watched gathering outside our base. Did no one appreciate the sacrifice of brave men and women, who leave their homes and family to ensure our freedom? Do they even know what "freedom" is?

I glanced at the table where the young men were sitting, and saw their courageous faces change. They had stopped eating and looked at each other dejectedly, listening to the women talking.

"Well, I, for one, think it's just deplorable to invade Iraq, and I am certainly sick of our tax dollars going to train professional baby killers we call a military."

Professional baby killers? I thought about what a wonderful father my husband is, and of how long it would be before he would see our children again.

That's it! Indignation rose up inside me. Normally reserved, pride in my husband gave me a brassy boldness I never realized I had. Tonight one voice will answer on behalf of our military, and let her pride in our troops be known.

Sliding out of my booth, I walked around to the adjoining booth and placed my hands flat on their table. Lowering myself to eye level with them, I smilingly said, "I couldn't help overhearing your conversation. You see, I'm sitting here trying to enjoy my dinner alone. And, do you know why? Because my husband, whom I love with all my heart, is halfway around the world defending your right to say rotten things about him."

"Yes, you have the right to your opinion, and what you think is none of my business. However, what you say in public is something else, and I will not sit

by and listen to you ridicule MY country, MY president, MY husband, and all the other fine American men and women who put their lives on the line, just so you can have the "freedom" to complain. Freedom is an expensive commodity, ladies. Don't let your actions cheapen it."

I must have been louder than I meant to be, because the manager came over to inquire if everything was all right. "Yes, thank you," I replied. Then turning back to the women, I said, "Enjoy the rest of your meal."

As I returned to my booth applause broke out. I was embarrassed for making a scene, and went back to my half-eaten steak. The women picked up their check and scurried away.

After finishing my meal, and while waiting for my check, the manager returned with a huge apple cobbler ala mode. "Compliments of those soldiers," he said. He also smiled and said the ladies tried to pay for my dinner, but that another couple had beaten them to it. When I asked who, the manager said they had already left, but that the gentleman was a veteran, and wanted to take care of the wife of "one of our boys."

With a lump in my throat, I gratefully turned to the soldiers and thanked them for the cobbler. Grinning from ear to ear, they came over and surrounded the booth. "We just wanted to thank you, ma'am. You know we can't get into confrontations with civilians, so we appreciate what you did."

As I drove home, for the first time since my husband's deployment, I didn't feel quite so alone. My heart was filled with the warmth of the other diners

*See PIE pg. 26*



# HMONG GENERAL DRAWS CROWD OF MORE THAN 2,000 IN LAKE ELMO

Joy Powell, Star Tribune

Hmong immigrant Yia Xiong wore a Purple Heart and other war medals on his military uniform as he kept guard against possible assassins Saturday in the lobby of the Prom Center in Oakdale. Inside the auditorium, one of the greatest heroes of his culture, Gen. Vang Pao, spoke to more than 2,000 Hmong and Laotian followers.

Xiong, 52, of St. Paul, was among a security force of 20 men who were guarding Pao, the 74-year-old general who is working to bring democracy, peace and prosperity to Laos, now under Communist rule.

In the auditorium, the immigrants, most of them middle-aged, listened raptly to Pao, who is seeking the help of other countries in what he calls a humanitarian rather than a political mission.

As the general, who now lives in California, stumps across the country, he has caught the ear of many, from Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minn., to Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., to U.S. State Department officials.

Pao said he started fighting for the United States at age 13 in Laos to protect freedom and democracy for the Hmong. So did Xiong, who fought side by side with U.S. soldiers during the Vietnam War, attaining the rank of lieutenant.

While those jungle fights are over for Xiong, as with many Hmong immigrants of his generation, the struggle continues on another level: to fulfill their dream of someday returning to their homeland of Laos, a land of 5 million people. For that to happen, the Communist regime

would have to be broken, Xiong said.

These days, thousands of family members of ethnic minority groups, predominantly Hmong, are caught up in rapidly deteriorating conditions in jungle areas of Lao. They were allies, recruited by the CIA under the guidance of Pao, during the Vietnam War and subsequent fighting in Laos and Cambodia.

Last fall, Amnesty International decried the recent deaths of scores of civilians, including children, resulting from attacks by the Lao military and starvation caused by soldiers who prevented families from foraging for food. The human rights organization also condemned the use of land mines in farm fields.

"We have to work with the international community to bring peace and prosperity to our beloved relatives whom we left in our motherland," Pao said Saturday.

Coleman has joined the effort to bring to the United States about 14,500 Hmong refugees who live in a compound next to a Buddhist temple near Bangkok. The goal is to bring them to this country in 2004 and 2005.

Not all may qualify to immigrate, but of those who do, about 60 percent are expected to come to Minnesota, said Xang Vang, director of the Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association in the Twin Cities.

The Twin Cities has the highest concentration of Hmong immigrants in the United States. Estimates on how many Hmong now live in Minnesota range from 50,000 to about 75,000.

The war goes on. Meanwhile, in Laos, many of the Hmong who served as U.S. allies have continued to fight over the past 28 years. When the United States pulled out of the region in 1975, there were no plans for the allies, many of whom have lost legs, eyes and suffered other war wounds since then.

"The people who worked side by side with the Americans are being chased and hunted and killed every day," said Vang, who helped organize Saturday's meeting. It included a film that documented recent atrocities in Laos.

"Those pictures in there -- that's what we're fighting for," said Xiong, a married father of 11 who works as a machine operator.

He earned the Purple Heart for being shot three times during the Vietnam War, including twice in the head. In addition to his Purple Heart, Xiong wore other medals, including one from the Laotian King Sisavangvathana, who died in prison after capture by Communists.

Gen. Thonglit Chokebiengboune told the crowd that 14 years ago there were 8,000 such freedom fighters. Today, there are only about 800 left in the mountains, and they are asking to be helped out of Laos before they, too, are slain by the Communists, who follow them mountain to mountain.

A call for peace. Pao said he is weary but will lead his people in this new effort. In the past 60 years, he has been wounded numerous times, survived seven plane crashes and consoled many war widows and orphans.

American ways are difficult for many Hmong, he said. He called on clans to put aside their differences and build a new future for the immigrants here as well as for those who remain in Laos.

"We have gone through a very long period of pain and suffering -- more than enough to last a hundred lifetimes," he said. "The era of killing and bloodshed must end and allow the new era of peace, prosperity and happiness to come to the millions of people living in Laos."

★★★

## PIE

from pg 25

who stopped by my table, to relate how they, too, were proud of my husband, and would keep him in their prayers. I knew their flags would fly a little higher the next day.

Perhaps they would look for more tangible ways to show their pride in our country, and the military who protect her. And maybe, just maybe, the two women who were railing against our country, would pause for a minute to appreciate all the freedom America offers, and the price it pays to maintain it's freedom.

As for me, I have learned that one voice CAN make a difference. Maybe the next time protesters gather outside the gates of the base where I live, I will proudly stand on the opposite side with a sign of my own. It will simply say, "Thank You!"

Ed. Note: To those who fought for our nation, Freedom has a flavor the protected will never know. *GOD BLESS AMERICA!*

★★★

# SOME HMONG WARY ABOUT MOVE TO STATES

*The Associated Press  
January 25th, 2004*

ST. PAUL — Thousands of Hmong refugees will soon have the opportunity to leave the Wat Tham Krabok compound in central Thailand and immigrate to the United States, but Hmong leaders in Minnesota said not all of them will take it.

"There's a lot of uncertainty there," said DFL state senator Mee Moua who represents the east side of St. Paul, which contains one of the nation's largest Hmong populations. "I thought all along that people would just say, 'Yes, we want to come to America.'"

"It just breaks my heart that people are having doubts about coming here," Moua said, who has been getting telephone calls from the camp. Moua came from Thailand herself in 1978 and won election to the Legislature in 2002.

The Wat Tham Krabok compound is at a Buddhist temple in central Thailand. It is scheduled to be closed, and its Hmong inhabitants could be repatriated to Laos this year.

Hmong refugees still in Thailand have just been offered the opportunity to resettle in the United States, rather than being forced back to their ancestral homes in Laos or trying to live illicitly elsewhere in Thailand.

State Rep. Cy Thao, DFL-St. Paul, who followed Moua into the Legislature in 2002, said interest in bringing the refugees to the United States is nonetheless very high.

Refugee advocates contend the communist govern-

ment in Laos already persecutes its minority Hmong population for siding with the United States against the communist insurgency in Laos during the Vietnam War.

Hundreds of thousands of Hmong fled after the Lao monarchy fell in 1975. Now, nearly 30 years later, between 14,000 and 20,000 refugees remain in neighboring Thailand, poised to join the Hmong who have already resettled to California, Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Carolina.

"They have heard about the challenges here in the U.S.," Moua said. "They have heard about the gang issues and about the freedom that children have. They fear it will make children disrespect their parents. And there's the other side, too, that Americans don't really want them here."

She said the Hmong in the Wat Tham Krabok compound are keenly aware of anti-immigration sentiment and cuts to human services programs in the wake of the recent recession - twin challenges that will make it tougher for their families to make a new home, she said. "I think the biggest worry is of the unknown," Moua said. "Some say that at least there or in Laos, they can get a plot of land and farm and make it day to day."

Thao, also a Hmong immigrant, said there are other forces at work, as well. "There's a political piece here," Thao said. "There is still some hope that someday the regime will change in Laos and all these people will be able to simply go home." Part of the dilemma is also generational, Thao said.

Younger refugees don't have the ties their parents had to Laos and would rather start fresh somewhere else.

Jim Anderson, a human services planner with Ramsey County and a former refugee camp worker, said other options for the Hmong refugees seem to be running out. The Wat Tham Krabok compound is the last significant refuge for the Hmong who fled Laos, Anderson said, and the Hmong are generally not welcome to simply disperse throughout Thailand.

The State Department also has said this will be the last effort by the United States to accommodate their former allies.

"Clearly there are folks, unquantifiable, at this point, who don't want to resettle," Anderson said. "But how this all will play out continues to be very, very unknown."

*Courtesy of St. Paul Pioneer Press,  
WWW.TWINCITIES.COM*

★★★

## AWOL

Fifty-one years ago Herman Jones, a West Virginia mountain man, was drafted into the United States Army.

On the first day of boot camp the Army issued him a comb. That afternoon an Army barber cut off all his hair.

On the second day of boot camp the Army issued him a toothbrush. That afternoon an Army dentist pulled out seven of his teeth.

On the third day the Army issued him a jock strap.....the Army is still looking for him.

*Thanks and a Tip-o-the-Hat to Sid Griest, L-3849, Pheonix, AZ.*

★★★

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**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:  
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call (520) 299-5710.**

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

But 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 Finney, Nape Miller, Bob Porter, F.J. White, Charlie Noel, Jere Wallace, Jim Mack, Jomesy 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, Stopeck Mamlock, Howard Williams, Lanny Lancaster, P.K. Robinson, Mike McIlhanon, Don Kilgus, Frank Swartz, George Hanks, Wells Jackson, John Overlock, Chuck Shaheen, Dick Durant, Steve Andor, David Jenny, Ted Powell, Bud Bacon, Jim Perry, Don Harlan, Roy Bridges, Frank Kimball, Whitey Thompson, Doug Weidman, Robert Lynch, Bob Fitzsimmons, Kelly Irving, Rosie Detwiler, Bones Edwards, Kretz, Jerry B o b Chris R o g e r Seiler, Norris Chuck Holden, B u l l e t B o b M a s s u r e t, A l Winkelman, Gregg Parker, Matt Hunsen, Jim Sue, Cass Cassaro, Richard Hepworth, Roger Winblade, Ron Fogleman, Jerry Walhout, John Grathwol, Arnis 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 Seabury, Vic Macomber, George Buchkowski, John Hammar, Wayne Chaffier, Norm Lutz, T.K. Egan, Saint Hallman, Devil Muller, Gerry Van Riper, Robert Putz, Dennis Campbell, Bill Teske, Mario Persado, Michael Stone, Gabe Gabel, Pat Carroll, Gary Nophker, 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 Catallica, J.P. Richards, Moose Millard, Jim Davies, Dave Robb, David Samuel, Ray Lee, Tom Tapman, Ted Hascall, Dean Echenberg, Robert Gordan, Ray Bevinino, John Haltigan, Roger Van Dyken, Cal Kunz, Bob Guido, Jim Titus.

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



# GENERAL SAM STILL HAS LESSONS TO TEACH ON SPYING

*By Joseph L. Galloway*

Samuel Vaughan Wilson stares intently at the TV news from Iraq. American infantrymen are kicking in a Sunni Muslim family's front door, yelling and screaming and manhandling the father. Wilson grimaces.

"This isn't counter-insurgency," he says. "This is not the right way to do this."

Sam Wilson knows counter-insurgency. He invented the term and wrote the Army's first manual on how to do it. A protege of Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, the legendary anti-guerrilla warrior, Wilson was the leading proponent of counter-insurgency in what he called "a political struggle with violent military overtones" in Vietnam, circa 1964-1967.

"General Sam," as he is known by his neighbors in this tiny community 55 miles southwest of Richmond and by his students at nearby Hampden-Sydney College, is 80 and has retired from three professions.

He sits on the porch of his three-story home looking down on Frog Hollow Lake and tells of a life of adventure, danger, opportunities and service to his country. Few of his countrymen know his name, much less his story, but with Americans battling insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan and hunting terrorists on every continent but Antarctica, it's time that America knew Wilson.

As a 16-year-old farm boy in June 1940, he was listening to the radio late one Sunday afternoon. He heard a rebroadcast of English Prime Minister Winston Churchill's famous post-

Dunkirk speech: "We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender!"

Late the next day, Wilson began jogging the seven miles to town through a heavy rain. He ran through Pete Clark's woods and on to Farmville and the National Guard Armory on the courthouse square. It was drill night, and Wilson enlisted on the spot.

"I added two years to my age to qualify and I was in the Army, as a private," Wilson says.

Thirty-seven years later, in August 1977, on the day he retired from the Army as a three-star general, Wilson had his brother drop him off at the same courthouse square. He taped his retirement medal to a plain granite and bronze monument that bears the names of 50 local sons, many of them his buddies in that National Guard outfit, who never came home from World War II.

Then Wilson began walking the seven miles home to the old farm house in Prince Edward County where his brothers Billy, John and Jim and Sam together own almost 2,000 acres and where they would grow old together. A much-loved older sister died two years ago.

"It took me one hour, 32 minutes back in 1940," the general says. "It took almost three hours in 1977."

Local citizens who had heard of Wilson's last march lined the roads and the crossroads to cheer him on and shake his hand and welcome home a favorite son.

In his 37 years in the Army, Wilson was briefly in the Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency; then a 19-year-old first lieutenant assigned as chief reconnaissance officer with Merrill's Marauders in Burma; a CIA spymaster in Berlin; one of the founders of U.S. Special Operations forces and one of the authors of the concepts for their employment; a political-military specialist with the rank of minister at the U.S. Embassy in Saigon; chief defense attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow; the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency; and the deputy director of the CIA. Later, he helped create the Army's top-secret Delta Force.

Sitting on a remote mountain ridge in Burma in 1944, Wilson listened as a radio operator tuned in Radio Moscow's war reports while a fellow Marauder who spoke Russian translated. He was fascinated by the bravery and sacrifices of the Russian people and he resolved one day to learn the language and study the people.

The Army tried to send him to West Point in 1945 but Wilson couldn't pass the physical because of lingering health problems from his service in the tropics. Instead, he went to Columbia University and began five years of intensive study of Russian there and in occupied Germany. That was the first of eight languages he would master, among them French, German, Spanish, the Kachin dialect of Burma, and Mandarin Chinese.

By 1955, Wilson was on the front line of the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. His cover job was at the Office of Military History. His real job

was as a CIA spymaster. Wilson ran a ring of 18 "ladies of the evening," most of them young German women. Their targets were high-ranking Soviet military officers based in East Germany.

His greatest coups are still classified, but what Wilson calls some "gloriously successful" operations caused the Soviets to send over a false defector whose assignment was to kill or maim the young American Army major.

"He came at me with a fist full of razor blades sticking up between his fingers," Wilson recalls. "I kicked him in the groin."

Almost hidden in a dark hallway hang photographs of the famous and powerful, all warmly inscribed and signed to Wilson by Ed Lansdale, Cyrus Vance, Al Gore, George H.W. Bush, Richard Nixon, Lyndon B. Johnson, William C. Westmoreland, Gerald Ford and the late CIA Director William Colby. There's also one from filmmaker Oliver Stone.

In 1992, Wilson was named president of Hampden-Sydney College, and he did that job for eight years. He now teaches three classes a week, including an advanced seminar on leadership and ethics and "Spying 101." He tries to limit enrollment but hundreds apply for the coveted spots in Wilson's classes each semester.

"I can't retire," Wilson says. "A lot of young men seem to be counting on me. Somehow I find things to say and do with them that they perceive as meaningful. And I get letters from their parents asking: 'What on earth have you done to my son? He's a completely changed individual.'"

*See SAM pg. 29*

# SAM

from pg 28

His leadership class at Hampden-Sydney, scheduled from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. every Thursday, is often extended by the students until midnight. Before the Thanksgiving break, with the class scheduled to close at semester's end, the 10 students stood and asked Wilson if he would please continue the class throughout the spring semester, even if it meant they received no credit for the extended session.

"They really get turned on," the general says, adding, "They put in more time, energy and attention than I require and I really have to work hard to stay ahead of them. This defines fulfillment to me. I look forward to going to work every day. Everything I have ever done comes into play. To them I am a grandfather figure, and grandfathers aren't nearly so forbidding as fathers."

Sam Wilson, the Sage of Frog Hollow Lake, will continue marching, as befits an American hero whose deeds are known only by a few old soldiers, a few old spies and, now, by a new generation of young American students.

*Author Joseph L. Galloway is the senior military correspondent for Knight Ridder. Courtesy of Knight Ridder News Service.*

★★★

## SOUTH KOREA SENDS TROOPS TO IRAQ

Seoul sent 700 of their soldiers to Iraq, they would send more except for the screaming leftists in that country. US Viet Nam veterans who came in contact with Koreans know they are very good soldiers.

★★★

# THE LIGHTER SIDE

A MECHANIC was busy removing a cylinder head from the motor of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle when a well-known heart surgeon entered his shop. The surgeon was waiting for the service manager to take a look at his bike when the mechanic shouted across the garage, "Hey, doc, can I ask you a question?"

The surgeon, a bit surprised, walked over. The mechanic straightened up, wiped his hands on a rag and asked, "Doc, look at this engine. I open its heart, take valves out, fix 'em, put 'em back in, and when I finish, it works just like new. So why do I get such a small salary and you get the really big bucks, when you and I are doing basically the same work?"

The surgeon smiled, leaned over and whispered to the mechanic, "Try doing it with the engine running."

## YGBSM !!

Have you ever wondered where the phrase, "You gotta be sh- - - 'n me" came from? Well, it just so happens to have originated through the Father of our Country.

Way back when the Colonies were fighting furiously for their freedom against King George of England, General George Washington was desperately trying to move his army across the Delaware River to escape an overwhelming hoard of British troops.

There were 33 men in Washington's small boat and the night was pitch black, and it storming like all "git out". Waves were higher than your head and tossing the small boat about

furiously. Afraid of grounding the boat against rocks and losing his men General Washington stationed Corporal Peters as point man in the front end of the boat with a lantern. He ordered Corporal Peters to keep swinging the lantern back and forth so they could see where they were heading and avoid being smashed against the rocks.

Corporal Peters, struggled in the driving rain and freezing cold, desperately swinging the lantern back and forth to light the way. Suddenly, a big gust of wind and a huge wave struck the boat with such fury that Corporal Peters was thrown overboard into the freezing water of the Delaware River.

General Washington and his troops searched feverously for hours desperately trying to find Corporal Peters; but to no avail. All of the troops felt terrible, for the Corporal had been one of their best men.

Pressing on valiantly, General Washington and his troops eventually landed on the other side of the river, wet, cold and totally exhausted.

Washington rallied his troops by telling them that they must go on to avoid capture and search for shelter. An hour or so later, one of his men yelled, "General Washington, I see lights ahead."

Grudgingly, General Washington's men trudged forward in the rain and sleet toward the lights and eventually came upon a huge tavern. What they didn't know, was that this tavern was also a house of ill repute hidden deep in the forest to serve all who found it.

General Washington pounded on the door, while his men crowded around him chilled, wet, and cold. Suddenly

the door swung open, and much to Washington's surprise there before him stood a very beautiful slender young damsel. A huge smile came across her face as she saw so many men standing there.

Washington was the first to speak, "Madam, I am General George Washington and these are my men. We are tired, wet, exhausted, and desperately in need of ale, warmth, and comfort."

Again, the Madam with a broad grin on her face looked out over crowd of young men standing before her in the cold dark night and said, "Well, General, You have come to the right place...! We can surely meet all your needs and give you ale, warmth, and comfort. Just how many are there of you...?"

General Washington replied, "Well, Madam, there are 32 of us without Peters."

And the Madam exclaimed loudly, "You gotta be shittin' me...!"

*And, now you know the rest of the story...! Editor*

Dear Abby,

My husband is a liar and a cheat. He has cheated on me from the beginning, and when I confront him, he denies everything. What's even worse, everyone knows he cheats on me. It is so humiliating. Also, since he lost his job two years ago he hasn't even looked for a new one. All he does is sit around the living room in his underwear and watch TV, while I work to pay the bills. Since our daughter went away to college he doesn't even pretend to like me. He keeps calling me a lesbian.

What should I do?

Signed, Clueless

See **SIDE** pg. 30



**SIDE***from pg 29*

DEAR CLUELESS:

Grow up and dump him. For Pete's sake, you're a United States Senator from New York now -- you don't need him anymore.

*Submitted by Mary Parker***LOST GRANDPA**

I was at the Mall with my 5 year old grandson last week and somehow we got separated.

He approached a uniformed policeman and said, "I've lost my grandpa!"

The cop asked, "What's he like?"

My grandson replied, "Vodka and women with big boobs."

They baited a trap and caught me straight away.

*Author Unknown***U.S. NAVY RULES FOR GUNFIGHTING**

1. Adopt an aggressive offshore posture.
2. Send in the Marines.
3. Drink Coffee.

*Submitted by Don Moody***COMBAT PILOT NOTABLE QUOTES**

The first time I ever saw a jet, I shot it down.

-- Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, USAF, describing his first confrontation with an ME262, German jet fighter, in WWII.

★★★

**TLCB TO BUILD MONUMENT AT NKP**

A project being undertaken by the Thailand-Laos-Cambodia Brotherhood (TLCB) should be of interest to members of the Air Commando Association. The TLCB is engaged in a project to build a memorial monument in the city of Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand. The monument will commemorate all those who served in the cause of freedom during American involvement in the Vietnam War.

Some ACA members may not be familiar with the TLCB. Many members of TLCB are also proud members of the Air Commando Association, but TLCB membership is broader in scope, and not as restrictive. It



includes Thailand veterans from all services, and from all the bases and installations we occupied in Thailand. It includes people involved in and with the allied forces in Laos and Cambodia. Moreover, TLCB welcomes wives and fam-

ily members of veterans of the so-called Secret Wars. TLCB also is proud to include members of the Australian and New Zealand forces who served in Thailand under SEATO and other treaties, former members of Thai and Lao military forces, civilian contract pilots and other civilians who served in the region, and a few interested non-veterans.

TLCB is incorporated in the State of Virginia as a non-profit charitable organization. The stated objectives of the TLCB are to provide an open association for the benefit of TLC veterans, to provide humanitarian assistance, particularly in TLC, to honor those veterans who did not return from TLC, to preserve TLC history and promote public understanding of TLC service. Please visit the TLCB website -- [www.tlc-brotherhood.org](http://www.tlc-brotherhood.org) for more information.

*See TLCB pg. 31***Save The Montagnard People, Inc.**

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

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

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

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

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# TLCB

*from pg 30*

As many of you are aware, the TLCB conducts an active exchange of recollections about service in TLC via internet email, as a way of expanding our collective knowledge of the highly compartmentalized activities we once supported. Additionally, TLCB has actively pursued charitable ventures in receptive areas of Southeast Asia. TLCB has worked in cooperation with ACA and the McCroskie Threshold Foundation to meet mutual goals for humanitarian assistance in northeast Thailand, and has provided both direct and indirect small-scale assistance in Laos as well.

## Why Nakhon Phanom?

A question that arises frequently is why such a memorial to all those who served in Southeast Asia should be located in Nakhon Phanom. There are several answers, but they boil down to the symbolic, and the practical. Symbolically, NKP is a logical site for the monument because it hosted the US-occupied base located closest to the war zone, which began right across the Mekong. Missions headed in and out of North Vietnam frequently transited NKP airspace on their way to and from their objective. The practical answer is, we were invited.

The monument project came under active discussion about two years ago. A suggestion by a TLCB member visiting Thailand came to the attention of the then Governor of Nakhon Phanom Province. In due time he formally approached TLCB with the offer of some 400 square meters of

land in a new city park in NKP as the site for a monument. He asked TLCB to take responsibility for design and construction costs for a monument on that site which would be “non-political” in character, but recognize the Americans (and foreign forces) who served in Thailand, as well as the Thai contribution to the effort.

A committee formed by TLCB has developed a monument design, received approval of the Thai authorities in NKP, and coordinated a plan for construction of the monument, in conjunction with on-going development of a new park located in the general vicinity of the old Shindig nightclub, which once was on the outskirts of town. NKP city has grown and changed significantly over the past 30 years. Many of the old landmarks are long gone. The new park location, however, offers good prospects for development, and is in a section of the city that now needs a recreational area. The planned monument will occupy a place of honor in the park, and will be a major attraction for future visitors from outside the city.

The park and monument are viewed by city officials as a potential magnet to lure former American servicemen back to the Northeast on a sentimental journey. Nakhon Phanom Province is still considered “remote” to most Thais, and as a result, NKP ranks last among all Provinces of Thailand on “quality of life,” as reported by a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) ranking. (See [http://www.boi.go.th/english/focus/focus\\_measuring\\_quality\\_life.html](http://www.boi.go.th/english/focus/focus_measuring_quality_life.html)) American and other foreign tourism in the province will bring in foreign capital, and stimulate local businesses. Province officials are already

planning a major initiative to invite foreign guests to visit “the River City” (NKP) during the year 2547 (Buddhist Era), or as we know it, 2004.

## Project Background

Development of the new park and the monument are at an early stage. Brig. Gen. (Ret) Heinie Aderholt officiated during NKP Days in 2002 in dedicating the future location of the monument, but after that event, the project was slowed by questions about design issues, the park development schedule, costing, and a general difficulty in communication between the US and Thailand. TLCB Monument Committee Chairman Gerry Frazier was able to visit NKP in October, 2003, and with the help of NKP veteran, TLCB member, and NKP resident John Middlewood, revived the project. TLCB is also fortunate to have an advocate for the monument in a prominent position in the Thai community. Mr. Phrompan Kulapah, a local NKP radio broadcast personality, and former member of Thai security forces at the NKP airbase, is actively promoting the project in the local community.

The undeveloped land for the new park was donated to NKP City by a prominent citizen, and is in an early stage of construction. The park flanks a small lake that drains to the Mekong. The lake forms a part of continuing efforts by the city to manage the high waters that accompany the rainy season. Accordingly, the park site is receiving fill material intended to raise the monument site and the average height of the whole park 1-2 meters. The monument site will be visible from a street that passes about 100

meters away. Some large and attractive shade trees will be retained on the site, but construction of walkways, picnic shelters (locally known as a sala) and probably a paved area to accommodate group aerobics are planned. General plans of the park and monument can be found on the TLCB website.

The monument design is a simple, elevated hexagon at the center of four intersecting walkways oriented on the cardinal directions. The principal construction material will be Thai granite. The hexagon is topped by a brass finial in a unique design intended to symbolize an eternal flame. The faces of the hexagon will be used to mount plaques commemorating the purpose of the monument, as well as organizations, units, companies or individuals who make significant financial contributions to the project.

The TLCB is collecting funds for construction of the monument, salas, and potentially other attractive additions to the park, with a goal of raising \$150,000. Any funds over and above requirements for construction or continuing maintenance of the monument and park will be directed to support continuing TLCB humanitarian assistance projects in northeast Thailand. We hope you will take this opportunity to join us in this effort.

Individual contributions may be sent to: SEA Monument, c/o TLCB, P. O. Box 425, Springfield, Virginia 22150. Make checks payable to TLC-Brotherhood, and please write “Monument” on the Memo line. All monument contributions received will be acknowledged.

Thanks for your support of this long overdue memorial.

★★★



# THE RAVENS

*Greetings to all by Raven President – Larry "Sandy" Sanborn*

An invitation to parachute jump with the Thai PARU in the April, 2004 Friendship Airborne was passed through Raven Jim Roper from "Doc" Osanka. The first of these events was held in 1993 and previously resulted in the awarding of parachute badges from the Thai Police PARU wings, the Thai Air Force basic airborne wings and Thai SAS. If you still have the zest for adventure and want to participate, contact Doc Osanka at docFATSInc@aol.com, telephone: (262) 639-0780, or visit the web site at [www.geocities.com/friendship\\_airborne](http://www.geocities.com/friendship_airborne).

The last Raven Reunion in San Antonio held a special item for the Ravens members. Lone Wolf Pictures premiered the newest Raven Video for the attendees. The final version of the video entitled "The Ravens: Covert War in Laos" will officially air on the Discovery/Times channel, or Discovery/Civilization channel possibly in your area, on March 9th and 10th. It will run six times beginning at 8:00 PM (ET). This one hour feature will allow you to accompany four Ravens as they return to visit Laos after being gone for over thirty years. Ravens Mike Cavanaugh, Ron (Papa Fox) Rinehart, Fred Platt and Sandy Sanborn returned with the video crew last April and got to witness some of what Laos is like today. We hope you will enjoy it as much as we Ravens did.

I have just finished a move to Fort Walton Beach and am now back in business. If you have questions or information



of interest to the Ravens contact Raven President, Sandy Sanborn at [LSanborn@msn.com](mailto:LSanborn@msn.com) or visit our web site at [www.ravens.com](http://www.ravens.com). The Guestbook there will allow questions or comments to reach the Ravens.

Nevermore,

Sandy Sanborn

**ACA President's Note:** We invite all Air Commando Units which were, have been, and are a part of the Air Commandos and/or the Air Force Special Operations such as the A-1E's, AT-28's, A-26's, C-123's, C-47's, FAC's, O-1's, O-2's, OV-10's, C-119's, C-130's, Gunships, Combat Controllers, Wrench Bender's, Medic's, TLC Brotherhood, and all, to provide articles to the ACA Newsletters. Your organizations are all a part of us and we are proud to support you where and where possible. Fact of the matter is that we will set aside a specific space/corner in each Newsletter for your remarks/use such as we have for the Ravens in this column. The Air Commando Association is all inclusive and we welcome each and everyone of you...!

★★★

## CURTIS-WRIGHT P-40 "WARHAWK/TOMAHAWK/KITTYHAWK"



The Curtiss-Wright Corporation started designing a single-wing, fighter aircraft with radial engine, retractable landing gear and all-metal construction in 1934. The resulting aircraft they dubbed the Hawk 75 and the American military called it the P-36 Mohawk. By 1937, over 1,300 had been delivered when the Curtiss-Wright Corporation decided to make a major modification by installing an Allison liquid-cooled engine. This alteration was successful and started a long series of models, the first named the P-40 Warhawk by the Americans. The rest of the aircraft was essentially unchanged from the P-36.

By 1940, the RAF was accepting delivery of the new aircraft that they called the Tomahawk I. In comparison with the Messerschmitt Me-109 or the Supermarine Spitfire V it was decidedly inferior except in maneuverability at low altitudes and having a tough construction. The Tomahawk was used in Britain as a trainer and an army cooperation aircraft. It was sent to the Orient, India and North Africa to augment the Hawker Hurricanes. This was the common solution to inferior aircraft, even if the Japanese, Germans and Italians were flying better fighters.

The RAF, Royal Australian Air Force and the South African Air Force flew them as ground-attack aircraft in sup-

port of the 8th Army in North Africa. Unfortunately, for many pilots they were also forced to use this inferior aircraft as an escort fighter for light and medium bombers against Me-109s and Maachi 202s. It showed up badly against both aircraft, with a high loss rate.

The P-40D, named the Kittyhawk I by the English and the Warhawk by the Americans, had an improved Allison engine that allowed for a shorter nose and had the fuselage mounted 0.50 caliber machine guns moved to the wings to allow for a hefty six 50 caliber machine guns that would become the standard suite of armament for all American fighters.

A Packard Merlin-engined version was produced for export to Russia, but no models were received by the English, Australian or South African squadrons flying the Kittyhawk. Many versions of the aircraft were developed all in an attempt to improve the performance of the inadequate Allison engines (the one pictured above is a P-40M). None of the modifications made up for this engine's lack of power.

Overall, the various models of the P-40 made it the second most numerous fighter aircraft produced by the Allies during WWII. They had a production run of some 13,738.

*Submitted by Joe Holden*

★★★

## AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

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

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

RELATIONSHIP: \_\_\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

COLLEGE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ACA# \_\_\_\_\_

**Rules:** The number and amount of the scholarship(s) will be determined annually by the Board of Directors. The scholarships will be awarded annually in May. The Board of Directors will randomly select the winner(s) from the eligible candidates submitted by the membership. Eligibility criteria: (1) Applicant must be the child (natural, adopted, or step), grandchild, or great-grandchild of a member in good standing of this association. (2) Applicant must be accepted to or enrolled in an accredited college or university and be less than 24 years of age at the end of May. (3) Applicant may not be a member of this association, on active duty, attending a Service Academy, or on full scholarship to a college or university.

## RETIREE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS NEWS

*Submitted by Tom Green*

Some of the following web site addresses (URLs) may provide helpful information on obtaining military records, a DD-214, WD AGO 53-55, NAVPERS or other service branch Statements of Release From Military Service.

### MILITARY RECORDS:

<http://members.aol.com/forvets/htomr.htm>

### ONLINE VETERAN AND MILITARY PERSONNEL LOCATOR/REGISTRY:

<http://www.amervets.com/registry.htm>

(Information on Accessing the database:

<http://www.amervets.com/database.htm>)

### FREE VETERANS DIRECTORY

<http://members.aol.com/veterans/freedir.htm>

### SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE WHO SERVED IN THE MILI-

### TARY:

<http://members.aol.com/veterans/warlib46.htm>

### DD-214 DISCHARGE (SPN/SPD) Codes:

<http://members.aol.com/veterans/warlib25.htm>

<http://members.aol.com/veterans/warlib45.htm>

### REBUILDING LOST DD-214'S:

<http://members.aol.com/forvets/dd-214.htm>

### ABOUT MILITARY RECORDS:

An original copy of your DD-214 should be located in your DD-201 (Master Personnel) file that is stored (if it was not destroyed) at the National Records and Personnel Center in St. Louis MO.

Good information for our ACA members to have at their fingertips. Additional links to the VA and other retiree benefit organizations can be found on [www.aircommando.net](http://www.aircommando.net).

★★★

## 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>	
Hat Bands ---( black, wine, & royal blue) -----	\$5.00

## ORDER FORM

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price	Total

**Sub Total** \_\_\_\_\_

**20% Shipping & Handling** \_\_\_\_\_

**Add \$2.50 for a mail tube** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your check or money order along with complete shipping instructions to ACA, PO Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007. Please understand that we do not accept credit cards or cash through the mail.



# LETTERS

from pg 8

caped near the war's end when he heard they would be shipped to Siberia.

After walking over 1000 miles back to Austria, Walter joined his parents, his widowed sister and her 3 children (one of them, Rommy, is with us today). As refugees in Vienna they shared two rooms as well as powerful hunger and cold. They were stateless.

Walter received an opportunity to come to America and arrived in NYC with a vocabulary of three words - "eggs over easy"!

After struggling alone for a few years he joined the Air Force. There he found a home, opportunity to learn English and to educate himself. In every sense he became the recipient of the American dream - Home, family, and a wide open future. He served in Vietnam and after retiring he finished his education and worked in engineering. He produced three fabulous children whom I adore - and six wonderful grandchildren whom I also adore. He became a Mason, and he was a member of Concord Lodge #50 of Crestview.

Walter was never satisfied with his accomplishments. He always told me that he was an alien. There were language and cultural barriers that prevented him from being himself. I disagreed. His gifts were many. Humor - zest for life, stunning musical talent and a powerful determination to protect and preserve his children and family.

Whenever we get together it has become a habit to tell "Walter Stories". Not to laugh at him but to enjoy his unique lifestyle and personality.

I want to share a very special "Walter Story" with you. During his last days in the nursing home he became weaker by the day. Yet he refused to use either his walker or his wheelchair. He would drag his body from the bed - stagger from one piece of furniture to another to reach the men's room - and later collapse into his bed. His roommate, a former friend of mine when we were volunteers at the hospital, now in the late stages of Alzheimer's disease, would drop into his own bed with arms and legs akimbo and be unable to cover himself with his blanket. One night while I was there, Walter, using all the strength he could muster, dragged himself to Pat's bedside, lifted his legs into the bed, straightened his body and covered him with the blanket. Then with that big beefy hand of his he gently patted Pat's cheek and said, "Now you go to sleep Buddy".

Walter hated the idea of war (although he was always prepared and up in Crestview no one needed to worry about any foreign invasions). But regardless of his disdain for senseless bloodshed he was a TRUE MILITARY MAN. Every night at bedtime he religiously checked the perimeter. And now that he has gone from our home I find myself driven to repeat this ritual and check the perimeter before retiring.

The last ten years were spent fighting cancer. He never gave up an inch without rebelling. Only a few days before his death he ordered me to bring him his car keys, a wallet full of real money, and his pocket knife because he needed to go downtown shopping. This was a real mouthful for a man whose voice box no longer functioned.

Walter never lost his

courage - his will to live - his determination to maintain his dignity, or his ability to motivate all the nurses and staff to kiss his bald head, and squeeze his hands every day.

Walter is out there on the perimeter, Watch your step...!

## ★★★ PRESIDENT

from back page

Lutz and Pete Bowman and crew got their hands on the Newsletters, we were back onto the high road. The papers were addressed, bundled, and mailed at the speed of heat. Thanks Hap, Pete and crew for rescuing us...!

### CHRISTMAS PARTY

In and among the Newsletter fracas, we had an unbelievably successful Christmas Party. Hap arranged for heavy hors d'oeuvres for our Christmas Party with Mr. "T"; who operates the "Two Trees Restaurant" on the Fort Walton Beach City Golf Course.

Well, let me assure you that Mr. "T" is no slouch; he turned this little event into a full blown sit-down scrumptiously delicious dinner.

I walked in expecting heavy hors d'oeuvres, and see a beautiful setting of tables all prepared with silverware, and delicious food everywhere. I looked over at Hap and saw a little sheepishly looking guilty grin come over his big ugly mug; and, I knew then that Hap was as surprised as I was.

All this scrumptiously good food and for only \$10, many thanks Mr. "T" and God Bless you. You are always more than generous to your fellow Air Commandos! We owe you good

buddy, ...and we owe you big time...!

We had approximately 100 people attend the Christmas Party. It was great seeing Bob Schneidenbach, Clay McCartney, Dee and Billy Roberson and so many other "old timers" joining us. Dee and Billy drove up from the Tampa area to be with us at this Christmas social.

Special guys like Silver Star recipients Marty Traczyk and Marty Jester were there rubbing elbows with other old warriors and new acquaintances.

Met a very special guy while at the party, Al Mongeau, who believes that he brought out the last the US military to escape from Laos, as the country succumbed to Communist rule. Al became separated from his wife JoAnne, and their two children and had a harrowing experience being searched and jostled about as they bluffed their way through the Red Student Demonstrators and Pathet Lao lines while E&E'd out of Vientiane. Al and JoAnne have one heck of a wild story to tell; it is a must read. Look for their article elsewhere in this Newsletter. People can really get hurt doing stuff like these two did...!

### SPRING PARTY

Hap wants to pull together another Air Commando "get together" about midpoint between January and the 4th of July; watch for Hap's notice. All of you be there, you hear...! Bob Schneidenbach and Clay McCartney, do bring your lovely wives, Edna and Liz, to this social; we had much rather see and talk with them than you ol' Toads...!

**McCOSKRIE THRUSHOLD/  
FOUNDATION**

See **PRESIDENT** pg. 35

# PRESIDENT

from pg 34

That one eyed, ornery ol' long haired guy by the name of Helio John has been at it again. Transported a couple of large size trailer loads of much needed winter clothing to Atlanta to be further transshipped to the Republic of Georgia (see report on MTF page). We owe many thanks to the Georgia Air National Guard for their support in this annual humanitarian effort.

Helio John just can't leave well enough alone, he coordinated with Audra Murray and conned her in to paying for a shipment of 18 huge shipping crates filled with school desks to various places in South America. Checkout the MTF articles for more details.

Folks, we are in bad need of a "Loadmaster". Helio John continues to overgross his trailers too often and so bad that each has taken a permanent bow between the front and the back. For his efforts, he has a couple of blown tires, and several badly scuffed tires from overloading trailers.

Boy this John is sure a slow learner, typical of most ol' Air Commandos we all have known...! And, John is just unbelievably hardheaded. I keep telling him that when the front and the back of the trailer are both dragging the ground, the trailer is excessively overloaded...!

## USSOCOM VISITORS

We had visitors from USSOCOM's Tampa Headquarters taking real interest in our MTF activities. They were impressed with the large quantities of goods being shipped and equally if not more important,

the vast number of needy folks to whom we provide humanitarian support. We expect more to come from this visit.

## MILITARY CIVIC ACTIONS

Much too often military Civic Actions in undeveloped countries arrives too late and with too little. Often appears to being an afterthought; ...this should not be...!

If we are to stop "Terrorism" in its tracks, Military Civic Actions are a must in undeveloped countries. This is where our Air Commando MTF support comes into play. We can coordinate and provide the materials needed to make Civic Actions successful.

## GUATEMALA

Through back channels, we've been informed that Guatemala is coming to us with a request for support as we so successfully did many years ago.

## IMPRESSIONS OF MTF

The thing that impresses most people about MTF is the fact that all funds we gather are spent almost entirely on storage and transportation. We received a letter from General Poythress, Adjutant General of the Georgia Air National Guard singing our praises...and it was well deserved in my opinion.

We have no paid staff and our overhead expenses for telephone calls, administrative staffing, and such comes out of the hides of our volunteers and the Air Commando Association.

## THE HEART OF MTF

John Grove, BG Heinie Aderholt, Dick Geron, and Felix "Sam" Sambogna have been just absolutely awesome in making MTF a functioning operation...! Encourage these guys and

praise them often.

## CORE OF MTF

Of course the real backbone of this entire operation is the strong cadre of Air Commando volunteers who do the labor intensive work.

People such as Bob White, Asa Stackhouse, Clyde Howard, Roger Klair, Sam Sambogna, Tom Green and family, Col Kenny Poole and family, "Taco" Sanchez, and so many of our active duty military personnel support our MTF work. And, there are so many other names which my faltering memory fails to recall at this moment.

It is not unusual to see some of these tired old geezers getting out and helping one of their cramped-up, bent over, badly hurting buddies get out of the vehicle and up and into the house at the end of a hard day of back breaking work. God Bless each and everyone of our volunteers...!

## HURLBURT'S AIRMEN'S ATTIC

Bob White initiated a very successful MTF program with the Hurlburt Airmen's Attic. They provide lists of their needs and then Bob fills their requests. This new initiative is working wonders for the airmen.

## UNITED WAY

You will find it interesting to

know that Dick Geron is coordinating to get MTF recognized by the National United Way Office to support our humanitarian efforts.

## GERMAN FIGHTER PILOT

I'll bet you didn't know that we had an ambitious young German Fighter Pilot within our ranks for years. He was good; brought down a P-51 fighter during WWII before joining us good guys. I'll leave it at that and let you search through the articles in this Newsletter to determine the name of this guy who served with you. Many of you knew him.

## SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Please support our troops on each and every opportunity you can...! They are the "good guys" who put their lives at risk defending your and my freedom and this great nation we all love...! Our future depends on the successes of these highly trained and wonderful guys...! And as always, God Bless America...!

★★★



Major General David B. Poythress  
Georgia Department of Defense  
Post Office Box 17965  
Atlanta, GA 30316-0965

January, 8, 2004

Mr. John Grove  
1 Lakeside Court  
Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548

Dear Mr. Grove:

My sincere appreciation for your efforts in providing the multitude of needed items to the citizens of the Republic of Georgia. The benefits received from your continued dedication to this project over the years are beyond measure, and I wanted you to know how much the Georgia National Guard appreciates the generosity of your time and talents to this worthwhile endeavor.

Very truly yours,

DAVID B. POYTHRESS  
Major General, GA ANG  
The Adjutant General





# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION, INC.

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MARCH

2004

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER



**ROBERT DOWNS**

### PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

There is so much that has been happening since the last Newsletter and all good stuff, I must tell you. So, here goes.

### DECEMBER'S NEWSLETTER

First off, Jim Boney and Rip Kirby worked their silly "buns" off getting the last Newsletter out. The paper was late due mostly to having taken a much needed breather after the Reunion. And, getting names with faces in pictures was no small task.

I literally put the "shaft" to Rip when I gave him a disk with the some 1200 plus digital pictures which Jimmie Ifland, Fred Nowak, Chuck Wheelahan, and I had made.

Later, we discovered that Jimmie had made an additional roll of film for the A-26 Reunion Group, ...had to scrounge around, find that roll and then

get it digitized. And even later, we had to chase down the large group photo of the A-26 guys. Anyway, the plot thickened. Actually, we sat around much too long just plain "fat dumb and happy" with ourselves; bragging-on how successful the 2003 Reunion had been.

We eventually discovered that Lee Griffin was the culprit with the film of the A-26 activi-

ties and fortunately he had the large original A-26 Group picture buried back deep within his files. But, the film was not digitized.

Got the film digitized for an unbelievable cost of \$28; about seven to eight times the cost it would have been had we digitized it when being developed.

Rip had to take two pic-

tures and put guys into one shot to get the results Jim Boney wanted. Jim Boney didn't realize what Rip had put the two guys together until I later told him. I don't think that he even knows today which picture Rip fixed. It was that good...!

Rip missed holidays, parties, Christmas guests and friends while working hard to get your Newsletter to you. There were some real unhappy campers around Fort Walton about that time. You have never looked into the pits of hell until you've seen the fire breathing glare that Jim Boney gives when he is really angry. Whew, I don't want to go there again...!

Dick Geron and Felix "Sam" Sambogna rushed into the fray, "kicked butt" and sorted all of us young folks out; rescued the entire operation. Reminded me so much of typically run Air Commando operations in the past...!

Whatever you guys do, give Jim Boney and Rip Kirby a hardy slap on the back and a well earned "THANKS" for their Herculean efforts in getting the December Newsletter published and to you.

And, you'll be glad to hear that editor Jim Yealy is back at the desk assisting Jim Boney. Welcome back Mr. Yealy...! Only 20 more years until you can retire, good buddy.

Now, once the pro's, Hap



Hap Lutz and Roger Klair put the finishing touches on mail bags full of quarterly newsletters. Hap has quite a well-oiled crew who devote a morning of their time to stick on 3,000 labels and pre-sort the newsletters to comply with the Postal Service mailing regulations.

See **PRESIDENT** pg. 34