

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2005

Commando "One" Honored and Roasted on 85th Birthday

SURPRISE!, **SURPRISE!**

by Hap Lutz

Some 130 of us celebrated Heinie's 85th Birthday on the eve of said hallmark, 5 January 2005 at the now famed Two Trees Restaurant. Robby & Dee Roberson, Fred & Rosemary Nowak, Ray & Joanne Bourque, Roger & Dorothy Klair, and Shirley and I all got clandestinely together at the last ACA reunion and started the early planning. It was to be a surprise Party/Roast. And with the expert help of Anne Bruner, believe it or not, we pulled it off! Not a word was revealed to him about what was going down. And that is a first!

Heinie was quite overwhelmed by all that transpired that evening, but was really quite stunned to see old CIA comrades Bill Lair and Pat Landry in the mix. They came in

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Hap relating excerpts from story of the "stob". Heinie was deeply involved!

from Texas. And Howie Pierson all the way from California! Some others attending out-of-towners were Robbye Binkley from Morris, AL, Bob Smith from Maitland, FL., Judge & Mrs Robert Aderholt from Birmingham, AL., the Overtons from Sylvester, GA, Bill Brown from The Villages, FL, Fred & Rosemary Nowak from Leesburg, FL, and Robbie & Dee Roberson from Brandon, FL.

Our Master-of-Ceremonies, Bill Campbell performed superbly while keeping the evening moving and joyful. And after Roger Klair had read regrets from other invited out-of-towners, to include Tom Wickstrom, Jim Howell, Jim Stanford, and Jane Fonda, Bill quipped that Heinie had also received regrets from General Momyer and also that he forgave Heinie for calling him a SOB!

Our decorating committee was comprised of Brenda Hall, Dee Roberson, Roger & Dorothy Klair, Joanne Bourque, and David and Joyce Harrington. Fred Nowak had provided some thirty 8" by 10" photos of Heinie, which Roger mounted on felt covered cardboards and displayed them on easels around the room. And there was a huge photo of Heinie mounted on the dais. Above that was a 30 foot banner announcing "Happy Birthday Heinie" with assorted airplane figures.

Fred Nowak did his magic with

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"Blackbirds" welcomed home

by Capt. Tom Knowles and Tech. Sgt. Andre Nicholson Public Affairs

Approximately nine Airmen assigned to the 8th Special Operations Squadron at Duke Field were amongst the last members of the unit to return home Tuesday, following a series of highly successful deployments in support of operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Secure Tomorrow.

"This isn't a ceremony that needs a lot of words," said Col. Tim Hale, 16th Special Operations Wing vice commander. "Watching the aircraft land and taxi with the (American) flag waving out of the hatch, speaks for itself. When you see families waiting for loved ones, husbands and fathers arriving to open arms, we should all have a lump in our throat after that."

The squadron, known as the "Blackbirds," has been continuously deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism since Sept. 24, 2001.

Such a high operations tempo led to the squadron being named the Air Force's most deployed active-duty squadron in 2002 and 2003. When the World Trade Center fell Sept. 11, 2001, the 8th SOS was propelled into Operation

See BLACKBIRDS pg. 3

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ACA Newsletter

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Editorial Comments

Hidden secrets of the UN

ACCURACY IN MEDIA

by Carl Kincaid

Lee Feinstein of the Counsel on Foreign Relations was on MSNBC assuring the public that UN Secretary Kofi Annan has a good record of supporting the U.S. Feinstein, a former Clinton administration official, said the only exceptions have been a few comments critical of U.S. policy in Iraq. But he indicated that now that the White House has endorsed Annan and he has announced that he wants to send UN personnel back into Iraq to help with the elections, the U.S.-UN relations are back on track.

In fact, however, Annan's anti-American record is a long one. The facts show that Annan made a deal with dictator Saddam Husein, respecting Iraq's "sovereignty" and leading to the expulsion of weapons inspectors and Iraq's reemergence as an international security threat.

- Made a deal with Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, giving him immunity from prosecution in the Pam Am 103 terrorism case.
- Supports the comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which was voted down by the U.S. Senate.

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- Supports the global warming treaty, which would raise U.S. enerwhile prices benefiting Communist China and the third world.
- Supports the International Criminal Court with the power to arrest and imprison Americans.
- Supports the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, even though it was signed with a country that no longer exists and was violated by the old Soviet Union and Russia.
- Supports the Biological Weapons Convention, even though China and Russia have violated it.
- Opposes a national defense system for the U.S.
- Collaborated with Hillary Clinton to promote abortion as an "international right."
- Smeared the U.S. as a greedy nation in a Notre Dame speech claiming Americans don't spend enough on foreign aid.
- Supports all "necessary revenues" for the UN (i.e. global taxes).
- Lent his support to the international campaign to abolish the death penalty in the U.S. and other nations.
- Berated the U.S. for not paying U.S. "dues" to the UN when Americans had contributed billions of dollars to peacekeeping operations that had not been reimbursed or credited to the U.S.
- Promoted "global debt relief," a cover for transfers of more U.S. wealth to deadbeat Socialist third world dictatorships.
- As director of UN peacekeeping, refused requests to authorize UN peacekeepers in Rwanda to seize weapons and prevent genocide.
- Proceeded with a UN-sponsored independence vote in East Timor that led to a bloodbath.
- Covered up the fact that UN sol-

diers were spreading AIDS around the world.

In the anticipation of Annan's visit to Washington, D.C., Nora Boustany of the Washington Post wrote an article favorably highlighting a new Annan-commissioned report on how to make the world body more effective. This really means expanding the power of the UN while restricting the U.S. under the cover of "reform."

Boustany conveniently omitted the fact that Yevgeny Primakov represented Russia on the Annan panel that produced the report. Primakov, the former Russian foreign minister was always known for his close ties to Saddam Hussein and was alleged by Seymour Hersh in the 5 April 1999, issue of the New Yorker magazine to have accepted \$800,000 payment from the Iraq government.

Scott Ritter, the former UN weapons inspector in Iraq who turned into a critic of U.S. policy toward the Saddam Hussein regime, claims that Primakov's sister ran a Russian oil company that bought oil from Iraq under the oilfor-food program and sold it at full market value primarily to U.S. companies. Ritter claims the Clinton administration turned a "blind eye" to the deal because then-U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright wanted Russian help in dealing the Iraq regime.

Ritter has lost credibility stemming from the flip-flop on Iraq policy and personal moral scandals, but his charges about corruption in the growing oil-for-food scandal cannot be dismissed out of hand. It was under Albright as U.S. Ambassador to the UN that Linda Shenwick, the budget analyst at the

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Blackbirds

from page 1

Enduring Freedom. During that time, nearly the entire squadron was deployed, operating from several locations simultaneously to unseat the Taliban rulers and install the interim government.

"I've been deployed 50 percent of the time - 50-60 days at a time since the beginning of the war," said Maj. James Piel, 8th SOS pilot. "The most difficult aspect is the travel and being able to balance life. So, it's nice to have so much squadron support."

When Operation Iraqi Freedom kicked off, the 8th SOS was once again at the forefront. Its crews were some of the first to cross the Iraqi border as hostilities began, providing specialized airpower for coalition conventional and Special Operations Forces.

Throughout this period, the unit flew 2,555 combat sorties for a combined total of 6,778 combat flying hours, performed 307 combat airdrops, delivered 6.75 million pounds of cargo and supplied 1.3 million pounds of fuel to 275 heli-

copters in support of combat operations.

"You've landed in places and accomplished missions that no one would have thought was possible," Colonel Hale said. "You've taken combat air power to the enemy. We're closing out this chapter of the GWOT today for the 8th SOS. You represent the best of what America has to offer."

The 8th SOS, assigned to the 16th Special Operations Wing, is a geographically separated unit located at nearby Duke Field.

The primary mission of the 8th SOS is insertion, extraction and resupply of unconventional warfare forces and equipment into hostile or enemy-controlled territory using air-land or airdrop procedures.

Numerous secondary missions include psychological operations, aerial reconnaissance and helicopter air refueling. To accomplish these varied missions, the 8th SOS uses the MC-130E Combat Talon I, a highly specialized variant of the Lockheed C-130.

Surprise

from page 1

his photo equipment and produced a wonderful VCR record of the entire gala event. It is a masterpiece. I, along with the other members of the planning committee, and Heinie of course, have a copy of the keepsake.

Fred also put together and had produced a 'sort of "This is Your Life Heinie" book. It is a work of art, with very thoughtful and endearing captions. It is similar to the book Fred put together for me following our trip to the Ho Chi Minh Trail and Mu Gia Pass.

And speaking about books, Howie Pierson brought a birthday present book for Heinie also. He had all of us attending sign it as another great memento to the occasion.

"Spider" Ramsey's 85th was on the 8th of January so we dedicated a corner of Heinie's cake to him by having our cake maker put a web with a spider on board. He and his lovely daughter Renee Coleman came respectively from Greensboro, AL and Monroe, La.

Some other birthdays of note were Mel Bryants' 80th in late 2004 and Bob Gates' 86th on 23 January 2005. Three out of the four were my past commanders with the exclusion being "Spider" Ramsey. Congratulations to all!

DID YOU KNOW?

by Col. Charles E. Ramsey, Jr., USAF (Ret) December 23, 2004

Every person I have ever known for any period of time has expressed their opinion in some way that leads you to suspect how they feel about the state of affairs and the personal climate in which they live.

Recently I received an e-mail from an unknown source which I feel might be of interest to many of the people that I know. It might step on some toes but others it won't. Before making a copy for you to read, I have sanitized one of the words used since it might bruise the morals of some of our distinguished citizens. The original copy was written by George Carlin, and as he says at the end of the document, if you are the same kind of American as he is, you have his permission to copy his article and send it to anyone you please.

I am your worst Nightmare. I am a BAD American. I am George Carlin.

I believe the money I make belongs to me and my family, not some midlevel governmental functionary, be it Democratic or Republican!

I am in touch with my feelings and I like it that way, damn it!

I think owning a gun doesn't make you a killer, it makes you a smart American.

I think being a minority does not make you noble or victimized, and does not entitle you to anything.

I believe that if you are selling me a Big Mac, try to do it in English.

I think fireworks should be legal on the 4th of July.

I think that being a student doesn't give you any more enlightenment than working at Blockbuster. In fact, if your parents are footing the bill to put your pansy a- through four years plus of college, you haven't begun to be enlightened.

I believe everyone has a right to pray to his or her God when and where they want to.

My heroes are John Wayne, Babe Ruth, Roy Rogers, and whoever canceled Jerry Springer.

I don't hate the rich, I don't pity the poor.

I know wrestling is fake and I don't waste my time arguing about it.

I think global warming is a big lie. Where are all those experts now, when I'm freezing my a- off during these long winters and paying, paying, paying?

I've never owned a slave, or was a slave, I didn't wander 40 years in the desert after getting chased out of Egypt. I haven't burned any witches or been persecuted by the Turks and neither have you! So shut the-Hell-up already.

I want to know which church is it exactly where the Rev. Jesse Jackson practiced, where he gets his money, and why he is always part of the problem and not the solution. Can I get an AMEN on that one?

I think the cops have every right to shoot your sorry a- if you're running from them. I also think they have the right to pull your a- over if you're breaking the law, regardless of what color you are. And, no, I don't mind having my face shown on my driver's license. I think it's good....and I am proud that 'God' is written on my money.

I think if you are too stupid to know how a ballot works, I don't want you deciding who should be running the most powerful nation in the

Hidden Secret

from page 2

U.S. Mission, was harassed and eventually fired because she was raising alarms about waste, fraud and abuse in UN programs. The public interest law firm Judicial Watch defended Shenwick, who had to sue the State Department for damages for persecuting her. Curiously, the Colin Powell State Department hired Clinton lawyer Gregory Craig to defend itself against Shenwick. There was a settlement, but Shenwick was not allowed to return to the U.S. mission.

Did Albright suspect that Shenwick would uncover the oil-for-food scandal or the deals with Primakov? What U.S. companies were involved? The UN's belated help in Iraq should not preclude answers. The media should demand them.

From the AIM Syndicate, 4455 Connecticut Ave., N.W. Ste. 330, Washington, D.C. 2008; www.aim.org. Courtesy MILITARY

Did You Know? -

from page 3

world for the next four years.

I dislike those people standing in the intersection trying to sell me crap or trying to guilt me into making 'donations' to their cause. These people should be targets.

I believe that it doesn't take a village to raise a child, it takes two parents.

And what the hell is going on with gas prices . . . again?

If this makes me a BAD American, then yes, I'm a BAD American."

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The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Concerned Citizen:

Thank you for your recent letter roundly criticizing our treatment of the Taliban and Al Qaeda detainees currently being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Our administration takes these matters seriously, and your opinion was loud and clear in Washington. You'll be pleased to learn that thanks to concerned citizens like you, we are creating a new division of the Terrorist Retraining Program, to be called "Liberals Accept Responsibility for Killers" program, or LARK for short. In accordance with the guidelines of the new program, we have decided to place one terrorist under your personal care.

Your personal detainee has been selected and scheduled for transportation under heavily armed guard to your residence next Monday. Ali Mohammed bin Mahmud (you can just call him Ahmed) is to be cared for pursuant to the standards you personally demanded in your letter of admonishment. It will likely be necessary for you to hire some assistant caretakers. We will conduct weekly inspections to ensure that your standards of care for Ahmed are commensurate with those you so strongly recommend in your letter.



Although Ahmed is sociopathic and extremely violent, we hope that your sensitivity to what you described as his "attitudinal problem" will help him overcome these character flaws.

Perhaps you are correct in describing these problems as mere cultural differences. He will bite you, given the chance. We understand that you plan to offer counseling and home schooling. Your adopted terrorist is extremely proficient in hand-to-hand combat and can extinguish human life with such simple items as a pencil or nail clippers. We do not suggest that you ask him to demonstrate these skills at your next yoga group. He is also expert at making a wide variety of explosive devices from common household products, so you may wish to keep those items locked up, unless (in your opinion) this might offend him.

Ahmed will not wish to interact with your wife or daughters (except sexually) since he views females as a subhuman form of property. This is a particularly sensitive subject for him, and he has been known to show violent tendencies around women who fail to comply with the new dress code that Ahmed will recommend as more appropriate attire.

I'm sure the women in your household will come to enjoy the anonymity offered by the bhurka - over time. Just remind them that it is all part of "respecting his culture and religious beliefs" - wasn't that how you put it?

Thanks again for your letter. We truly appreciate it when folks like you, who know so much, keep us informed of the proper way to do our job.

You take good care of Ahmed - and remember...we'll be watching. Good luck!

Cordially...

Your Buddy, Don Rumsfield

Membership News

In Memory of:

Carlous L. Christian December 2004

Richard E. Cook 2003

Lester R. Hewitt March 2004

Robert W. Moore December 2004

A. Gene Rowland December 2004

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Jeffrey Bliemel Alfred C. Bowman William H. Clinch Alex Gross Edward J. Stanford Daniel Brent Widdis Douglas Todd Widdis

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David A. Ridhard

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ON THE MOVE

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Thomas Bohan 5571 E Shadow Ridge Dr Tucson, AZ 85750 James Boissonneault 138 Wall St #102 Corning, NY 14830

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James R. Edwards 3618 High Pine Church Rd Ashboro, NC 27206

Willard L. Elledge, Jr 123 Stout Rd Edenburg, VA 22824

Peaches A. Frisch 10515 Salome Dr NW Albuquerque, NM 87114

Harold B. Gilbert 106 Chesapeake Ave #B Tampa, FL 33606

Bgen George A. Gray III 101 S Knoll Ct Fletcher, NC 28732

Grant Harden PO Box 1308 Marion, VA 24354

Francis W. Hayes 768 E Jenkins Ct Hernando, FL 34442

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Franklin R. Jackes 2849 Nadeau Rd Monroe, MI 48162

Jim Kelly 3424 Hillcrest Dr Panama City, FL 32405

Joseph W Kerr 1139 Connor Rd SE Centralia, WA 98531

Gene A. Langenbach C6640 Bridlewood Way Suwanee, GA 30024

Kenneth M. Leckie 1114 N Minnesota Ave magnum, OK 73554

Michael A. Longoria 123 Bowen St Hampton, VA 23665

James W. McLendon 223 Black Oak San Antonio, TX 78230

Edward M. Muro PO Box 1285 Mary Esther, FL 32569

Richard E. Neel, Sr 80 Lakeshore Dr Kuttawa, KY 42055

Ron Newby 8522 Gulf Blvd #34 Vavarre, FL 32566

Allan C. Sawyer 3700 S Westfort Ave #102 Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Frederick W. Shuler 2101 Northside Dr #704 Panama City, FL 32405 David G. Smith 2055 Juno Cir Pensacola, FL 32526

Grace T. Sommers 7151 N 500 W Decatur, IN 46733

Alta M. Stone 9525 Woodland Hills Way Tallahassee, FL 32309

James M. Waurshuk, Jr 2810 Durant Trails Blvd Dover, FL 33527

Richard H. Wood 4563 El Dorado Way #124 Bellingham, WA 98226

Richard W. Wright 2456 Calle Del Oro La Jolla, CA 92037

James L. Wyttenbach PO Box 4334 Charleston AFB, SC 29404



CARLOUS L. CHRISTIAN

Senior Master Sgt. Carlous L. Christian, U.S. Air Force retired, of Niceville, Fla. Passed away peacefully at his home in Bluewater Bay, Fla. on Dec. 14, 2004. He was 80 years old.

Carlous Christian, known as "Chris" or "Lamont", was born in Eustis, Fla., on March 30, 1924. He was the son of Lottie Clara Crews and Frank William Christian, both deceased. Chris was one of six children.

As a young man, Chris served with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and joined the Cavalry. When the Army Air Corps was established, Chris joined the newly formed unit at Seymore

See CARLOUS pg. 6

Carlous

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Johnson Field, Goldsboro, N.C. There he met and married Doris Ruth Rose. They celebrated their 61st wedding anniversary on Nov. 27, 2003. Doris passed away five days later on Dec. 2, 2003.

In 1943, Chris volunteered to serve with the 1st Air Commando Group commanded by Cols. Phil Cochran and John Alison. For 16 months he courageously fought in the Burma Campaign and saw action with Merrill's Marauders. He returned to the U.S. in March 1945 where he received a hero's welcome and was awarded his first Star.

Chris, Doris and their three children enjoyed an exciting career in the Air Force, including assignments to Iceland, Brazil, England,

and several places in the U.S. In 1963 Chris joined the reinstated Air Commando Wing and served at England Air Force Base, Alexandria, La, and Hurlburt Field, Fla. As a first sergeant he participated in several tours in Vietnam receiving his second Bronze Star. He retired from the Air Force in 1973.

During retirement, Chris was a farmer and a fisherman. He and Doris enjoyed square dancing with the Tar Heel Twirlers of Goldsboro, NC. They spent many wonderful summers with their grandchildren at Sleepy Creek, Dudley, NC. They were affectionately known as "Grandpa Sarge and "Grandma Doris" not only by their own grandchildren, but by all the children in

neighborhoods where they lived.

Chris is survived by his son, U.S. Air Force retired Lt. Col. John Christian and wife Peggy; daughters Ruth C. Atwood and husband Terry of Shreveport, LA, and Omega Marie C. Dobard and husband Leo C. Dobard III of Alexandria, LA; seven grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren; sister Elzora Combs and her husband Aaron of Greenacres, FL; and many nieces and nephews.

Chris enjoyed his many friends in the Air Commando Association (ACA) and was honored as a member of the AC Hall of Fame.

Chris attended the 1st United

Methodist Church of Niceville. He was a devoted husband and father. Chris was a patriot and a warrior. He was positive, enthusiastic, fun loving, outgoing and warm and generous to all who knew him.

A funeral service with full military honors was conducted at the Hurlburt Field nominee Air Park at 1 p.m., Saturday, January 8.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested that contributions be made to the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation, PO Box 67, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0067.

Little Chapel Funeral Home was entrusted with the arrangements.

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

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MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN:

Enclosed are two applications for my sons to become Associate Members of your Association. I had to wait for my Navy son, Dan, to return from his six month deployment to Iraq with a Marine led force. Thank the Lord he returned four days ago to San Diego, safe and sound.

It has been a hectic few weeks since I called and asked for extra copies of the Newsletter (Newspaper with the article on NKP and the 609 SOS.) I gleaned more information from that, and Bob Schwartz (Jim's squadron commander) than I ever knew before about the risky business of flying the A-26. In addition, James Sizemore's dad was my Jim's Summary Courts Officer, packing up his things, etc. and returning them to me. In addition, my Jim was Jim Sizemore's wingman when my Jim was shot down 3/23/69. James is sharing pictures etc., with me. Have all those Jim's and James confused you?

Would you please send the initial membership letters to me? I want to package them (the membership material) as a "Stocking Stuffer" for Christmas along with a photo of the A-26.

A check for \$40.00 is enclosed to cover their memberships for the first year. Thank you so much for informing me that Doug and Dan were eligible for membership. The older they get, the more interested they seem in their Dad's last assignment -the 609th Air Commando Squadron. *Sincerely*,

Jo Anne Widdis 85 Woodbridge Drive Co Spring, CO 80906 Ph: (719)527-9527

Dear Jo Anne,

Thank you for your very interesting letter and providing membership to your two sons. We welcome them both and perhaps all three of you can make a reunion together someday.

"Sam" Sambogna

Letters to the Editor

DEAR JIM.

We are about to lose one of our own. Robert Waters, known to us as Captain Bob Waters, has been diagnosed with cancer and given three to six months to live. I kindly request that you advise all that know Bob that now is the time time to say goodbye. Please write or call, wishing him and his wife Nancy, God's grace:

Robert & Nancy Waters P.O. Box 1181

Keller, TX 76244-1181 Phone: (817) 337-5132

Yours very truly, Luther G. Jones III (1ACW 1964-66)

14785 Preston Road, Suite 550

Dallas, TX 75254 Phone: (214) 587-6437



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

Thanks so much for the donation to Sharing and Caring. Your help is greatly appreciated. Merry Christmas!

Sharing & Caring Lucille Hardschumacher

Corresp. Sec.

126 SW Beal Parkway

Fort Walton Beach FL 32548

Hap's Note: Let me add my thanks to all of you that attended the Christmas party and brought nonperishable food items. When Mr. "T" and I loaded my pick-up truck it almost filled the truck bed!



DEAR ACA,

Please accept the enclosed gift in memory of our departed comrade, SMSgt Carlous Christian. We extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

Lamar & Gloria Doster 304 Holmes Blvd Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548



DEAR HAP,

Thanks for responding to my request. As a Life Member (L729) I have received zero correspondence over the past 12 months. As indicated in my letter my wife and I reside in Washington State for the summer months (May-October) at #18 Lakeside Country Club, Lakewood, WA 98498, and then in Palm Desert, CA during the Winter months. Would it be possible to send my Newsletters accordingly to our dates?

I really feel bad about missing the October's Reunion as I was Gen Bob Cardenas's Executive Officer in the 18th TFW at Kadena for three years. We are also fraternity brothers in Sigma Chi. In any event I would look forward to next years reunion and hopefully the Newsletters in between. Thanks again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

W. Dean Hunter Ed.D.

LtCol USAF Ret

168 Madrid

Palm Desert, CA 92260

Dear Dean,

Will make every effort to insure that your newspapers are sent as you requested. You know by now that General Cardenas was militating in poor health and had to cancel as our guest speaker. Perhaps later for him.

Hap



PETE/HAP,

Enclosed is \$10 for the cause. Next time you are making address me? Many thanks!

Visited Geno Valentine in November at the VA Hospital in Gulfport, MS. He is doing okay. When he is livid (75% of the time) he can nail names and faces, times and places, and laughs with that huge basso profundo of his. Then, as is characteristic of guys with his condition, he goes "someplace else" for awhile. Many smiles, more than a few tears too.

Crazy weather all over the world this New Year. When I look at the Tsunami victims and all the flooding in CA, I decided not to bitch about the cold temps in Texas. **Best**

Lou Schindler 1518 Lakeside Drive W Canyon Lake, TX 78133-5800

Yo Lou,

I called and told you I had somehow pranged my disk containing the address labels. As usual, Pete bailed me out of the glitch and you should have the address labels well by now. (I've told them repeatedly not to let me around these machines I barely understand!)

Thanks for visiting Geno. Hap



HAP-COMRADE-FRIEND,

Heinie's 85th blast was #1. Our prayer was #2. Sir: God, Family, Country, ACA bonded us forever. But do remember that we're all expendable and the baton will be carried by the next generation of real warriors.

As you honored Carlous (Christian), I was calling on Geno! He was tracking, but shaky. I left some of Heinie's 85th pics, a note to Shirley (Valentine), and love from you, Heinie, Pete, Dick, et al.

labels, could you make out a set for He seemed very pleased to be remembered - PTL.

His, yours, Howie Pierson 145 Oak Shade Lane Novato, CA 94945-3432

Dear Howie,

How gracious and thoughtful of you to trek all the way from CA to attend Heinie's 85th Birthday party! And then visit Geno on your return trek. I know for a fact that Heinie was overwhelmed and Geno must have been equally as thrilled.



COMMANDO DEAR AIR FRIENDS.

Enclosing a check in memory of my brother, Carlous Lamont Christian, for the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation.

We appreciate the beautiful memorial service at Hurlburt Field Air Park. It was so fitting and precious to someone who loved his country and family dearly. Sincerely,

Elzora & Aaron Combs (Air Commando) 2236 Soundings Court Greenacres, FL 33413-2036



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

ATTN: F. L. Sam Sambogna, Pres.:

Enclosed are some newspapers from the Burma-India war zone in 1944-45. My late husband Raymond C. Jones brought them home with him from the war zone and kept them safely until his death in 1996.

I have tried several times to deliver them, but not knowing your

See LETTERS pg. 10

Hap's Comments

My dear friend and comrade "Chris" Christian died on 14 December. (His obituary is elsewhere in this newsletter.) I was quite shaken when son John called me announcing the sad news. I remain somewhat forlorn as I try feebly to scribe these few words in his memory.



"Chris" lived a life that best sellers are written about. But, sadly, no one has. He exemplified the name "Air Commando," in every sense of the meaning. Having served with famed British General Orde Wingate, the bestower of the moniker, made him and his heroic exploits especially more meaningful.

"Chris" is gone, but the inspiration and legacy that he left behind will serve as a conduit to all present day Air Commandos and those of the future.

Air Commando Association Chaplain Dr. Charlie Jones conducted a marvelous memorial service at Hurlburt Air Park on a glorious afternoon, 8 January 2005. Chris' cremains were placed at the head of the dais by the Hurlburt Honor Guard (an unequalled precision team). Roger Klair and I had the high and noble honor of placing the ACA wreath, he wearing his Combat Control beret and me in our commando bush hat. A flyby and taps concluded the Air Park part of the ceremony.

We then went to the Sound Side all ranks club for a social with Chris' family members. It was Chris' daughter Ruths birthday so we celebrated that along with the precious memories of Chris.

On a cheerier note, the Christmas party was a real hoot. Mr. "T" and staff at the Two Trees Restaurant did a splendid job in both food preparation and service. Joyce and David Harrington were our official greeters and President Sambogna our Master Ceremonies. Joyce even provided a door prize bottle of wine for the occasion. The bottle of wine Robby and Dee sent didn't arrive in time. They were going to bring it but Robby had surgery scheduled the day after the party and figured it more prudent to stay home instead. (It's a long, tiring ride from Brandon, FL to here also.) Joyce and Gloria Doster received poinsettias for their untiring efforts on behalf of the association. Joyce for managing the country store and Gloria for typesetting the newslet-

I've had nothing but high five compliments about the entire affair. If you had other plans and couldn't attend, I get it, but if you sat home on your duff and missed the opportunity to be with your friends at Christmas time, a pox on you! This years Christmas social is on the 18th of December. Mark your calendar now! Same venue, same time, same plan of operation

Our continuing presentation of "Through The Eyes of a Commando" was performed at the

Hurlburt Base theater on 26 January with General "Heinie" Aderholt and John Napier at the helm under the direction of Captain Kerya Reyes and 16th SOW Vice Commander Tim Hale as moderator.

It was a packed room affair with "Heinie" and John overviewing the Special Operator's role during the then Korean "conflict." John stayed to script, but as I and others forewarned, "Heinie" strayed into other paths of interest. His passion for what is currently going on in Iraq overwhelmed his interest in the past war in Korea, although he had a major role in it.

To Colonel Hale's everlasting credit, he tried repeatedly to keep "Heinie" on the Korean War track, but finally realized it was futile.

It was a very entertaining and informative evening by both "Heinie" and John. More importantly, we are interfacing more directly with the folks at Hurlburt and arousing interest in our past and our association. Additionally, about 300 of author Mike Haas' book and some 100 DVD's, "Apollo's Warriors," were distributed to those attending. It is a classic non-fictional account of the exploits and heroics of Special Operators serving "The tip of the Spear."

The next presentation will be in March 2005, at a date to be determined, with presenters Dr. Charlie Jones, Jerry Klingaman, and Jim Bates. Their subjects are RAVEN FACS and BUTTERFLY FAC.

I want to personally welcome new Hurlburt ACA members SSgt Alex Gross and TSgt Bill Clinch. They attended the events at the base theater and came to our building for a look see and decided to join. Alex has just recently submitted paperwork for OCS and we wish him well. Both he and Sergeant Clinch are C-130 Enginemen. Sergeant Clinch will be testing for Master in February and we wish him new stripes.

Larry King surfed the flea markets again and brought another load of baseballs, bats, soccer balls, gloves, basketballs, etc., etc. for overseas distribution. Larry is tireless in this initiative...and it is all out-of-pocket. You've earned another gross of attaboys Larry!

I had concluded this report and was signing off when CMSgt (Ret) April Jansen called MisHap Monday and sadly announced that her mother, Barbara Jansen, was very critically ill. (Many of you remember Commando Medic (deceased) Dick Jansen, an integral part of the Commando Medical Team.)

As I was preparing to leave for the office this morning (Wednesday), April called to say that her mother had expired the evening before at about 1020 p.m.

Barb was a wonderful Commando wife and close family friend. She, like many other devoted wives, raised the family while Dick was deployed, which happened frequently. On behalf of the Air Commando Association. Shirley and I extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the Jansen family.

Нар

BRAVERY

True bravery is arriving home late after a boy's night out, being assaulted by your wife with a broom, and still having the guts to ask: "Are you cleaning, or were you flying somewhere?"

Submitted by Bill Brown



Hall of Fame



Air Commando Hall of Fame Seeks Nominations for Year 2005 Induction

by Jim Ifland

The Hall of Fame Committee, headed up by Maj Gen Dick Secord, USAF, Retired, is seeking nominations for the year 2005 selection process. This selection process provides a unique opportunity for each of us to recognize those individuals that have made significant contributions to Special Operations. Air Commandos have been deeply involved in both overt and covert operations in all parts of the world spanning a time frame from WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Desert Storm/Shield, Kosovo, and more recently, intensive operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have many unsung heroes from each of these eras that were "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. I urge each of you to take a moment to reflect on your vast experiences

and reflect and identify those individuals that 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 also an opportunity to recognize the "troops in the trenches" whose significant contributions were so vital to our suc-Your recommendations cess. should include in depth details this individuals significant contributions and or continuous outstanding performance. A short paragraph saying he's a good guy won't hack it. Please observe the Hall of Fame criteria. Your nomination should include awards and decorations, a copy of the 214, a narrative justifying selection to the Hall of Fame and any other supporting data will assist the committee in their selective review. Recommendations for consideration should arrive at the Air Commando Association office no later than 31 July 2005.

ACA Hall of Fame Nominating Policy

Eligibility Criteria:

- 1. Nominee must have been officially assigned or attached to a recognized USAF or Special Ops/Special Air Warfare Unit.
- 2. Served honorably while on active duty and in civilian life.
- 3. Made a significant, unique contribution 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:
 - Verifiable and detailed personal information (DD214) and complete justification for selection.
 - A one paragraph citation to be sent in an induction ceremony.
 - The name, address, and phone number of two additional references.
 - Nominations packages will be sent to the ACA HOF Committee, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007, to arrive NLT 31 July of each year.

COUNTRY STORE ITEMS AVAILABLE

ZAP Patch	
Original Air Commando Gp Patch	
Project 404 Coin	
ACA Bumper Sticker	\$2.00
ACA Challenge Coins (Bronze)	\$5.00
50th Commemorative Coin (Bronze)	\$5.00
ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & It blue, black ,white, gray, denim,	
camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering	\$9.00
ACA Lapel Pin	\$4.00
ACA Cloth Patch	\$3.00
ACA "AIR COMMANDO" Cloth Tab	\$3.00
ACA Decal (4"x 5")	2/\$1.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (L,XL)	\$10.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL)	
ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, ACA logo or lettering)	\$15.00
ACA Golf Shirt (white, red, royal blue - waffle weave with pocket)	
Air Commando Bush Hat (M,L,XL)	
Straw Hat	
**50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24")	
Jane Fonda Poster (black & white) 11x14	
ACA License Plate	
Jackets - (M to XXL-tan, Navy, black,)	
Jackets - XXL (2 yellow/black windbreakers)	
POW/MIA Decals	
POW/MIA Patches	
ACA 50th and 55th Reunion Videos (Various films	•
of various events. Costs include S&H.)	\$5.00
Hat Bands (black, wine, royal blue)	
Printed Plastic License Plate Holders	
Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo)	
Denim long sleeve shirts (Ladies M, L, XL Men M, L, XL, & XXL)	
Beer Mugs with logo or lettering "60 years Air Commando"	
Pens with "60 years Air Commando"	
Tono with objection community	φ1.00

ORDER FORM

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

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price

Sub Total _____
20% Shipping & Handling ____
Add \$2.50 for a mail tube ____
Grand Total ____

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

Letters

from page 7

hours, I could never leave them there. I didn't (and don't) want to throw them away because there may be stories about some of your members within.

Ray was very proud of serving in the Commandos and attended some of your meetings. I worked day and night as a newspaper reporter and bureau chief, so I hardly had time to do any outside things except our home and business.

Please accept them - at least long enough for your members to see if the news is about them, their buddies, or their stations during the times of printing.

Thank you,

Mary V. Jones 158 West Woodruff Avenue Crestview, FL 32536

Mary,

Thanks for the CBI newspapers. They will be preserved. Sam



RAY BOURQUE P O BOX 7 MARY ESTHER, FL 32569

RE:Donation to the Residents at Clifford Chester Sims State Veterans'

Thank you. Support for the Veteran's of the Sims Veterans' Home is overwhelming. Each time a member of the community or an organization donates time, money or supplies, it makes the residents stay a little more pleasant.

Please notice an inscription on our "Veterans' Appreciation Board" as our recognition of your generosity.

Again, on behalf of the Veterans' and Staff, thank you for your support.
Sincerely,

Wallace E. Warren, NHA Administrator Department of Veterans Affairs 4919 Tram Rd Springfield FL 32404



DEAR AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

Please change my annual membership to LIFE. Check enclosed. I enjoy the quarterly news letter. Hope someone comes up with good poop on the 14th ACW, later 14th SOW.

Thanks,

W.J. Cannon P O Box 133 Scottsville KY 42164

Ed Note: That person providing good 14th ACW poop could well be you W.J.!



SAM,

The ACA newsletter arrived today. It appears that there is some concern about the light turnout for last years get together. Florida was not the only place hit by Ivan. I live in the Northwest part of Montgomery and had some damage to my residence.

The destruction was very wide spread throughout the southeast. However, right in the middle of Sep. through the middle of Oct., I was out of action. I was trying to prepare my "ranch" for the upcoming storm. I was already under the weather with some form of ailment and while cutting down a dead tree to prevent it from hitting my cabin, part of the top limbs fell and I did not get out of the way fast enough. No serious injury, but the limb hit me in the right shoulder blade area and bruised me up pretty good.

Among the weather problems, the health problems had me sidelined for over 6 weeks. When I got so bad that I had to get medical attention, I was really in bad shape. It took a week of tests and 2 doctors to find that I have only a skip in my pulse rate and it is caused by sleep apnea. The next 5 weeks I had such problems as bronchial pneumonia, a stomach virus and a host of minor problems.

Since I am self employed in the metal recycling business, I could not work during the six weeks of illness. To top this off, I had a lot of work to do after Ivan did the damage.

Two main reasons for my not attending in October were health and money. A second reason is that I know so few people when I do come down. John Grove, Lamar Doster, Willie Knight and most of all, Gen. Aderholt. Last but not least, Robbie Roberson. Maybe I will make it next year. Like so many of you, I am not getting any younger. I will turn 70 next month. ANY TIME-ANY PLACE

William L. Carl, Ret. E-8 USAF 19 Johnson Ave Montgomery AL 35110

Dear William,

Thanks for the note and we hope your health is almost back to normal. Looking forward to seeing you at the reunion 2005.

Sam



DEAR FELLOW AIR COMMANDO MEMBERS,

Thanks for a wonderful party. It was good to see everyone again! Happy Holidays!

Edith Strickland

500 Gulf Shore Drive Apartment # 122 Destin FL 32541-3037

Ed Note: Edith is a RN who's devotion and hard work in Guatemala was greatly appreciated.



JOHN/HAP,

I struck out in help from the Alaska Air National Guard. Their flights are mostly west coast. And, the Hmong coordinator with social services assured me they have no transportation funds.

Most of the Guard's 210th Rescue Squadron, including PJ's, have been deployed to Iraq for a long time and last week another group with C-130's flew to Indonesia to deliver relief supplies and support the recovery effort.

So, the wife and I are going to see if we can help in the schools. The new Hmong kids arriving from Thailand need a lot of help and the schools need help for their few interpreters. My Thai has gotten little use since 1969 and I always had problems sorting out the Lao. Also, Paulette hopes she won't confuse them with her Georgia accent. After all these years she still speaks rebel.

Bud Britain 19445 Upper Skyline Drive Eagle River, AK 99577

Sawasdi Bud and Paulette,

Your donation is most generous, thoughtful, and useful. On behalf of the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation I thank you both very large!

You are both to be commended for getting involved with the school kids also. You are creating memories that will last them a lifetime. I can personally attest to that having

See **LETTERS** pg. 11

Letters

from page 10

gone back to some of the areas in Laos that I worked in during the early sixties and seventies and being fondly remembered by folks that I administered medical assistance to.

Hap



TO ALL MY ACA BUDDIES,

Just to let you know I have weathered a heart attack in '97. Renal cell cancer in '98 forced my retirement after 9/11 2001.

A special greeting to those in III Corps during all of '69 & Pipeline all of '74. I'm not able to travel much, but ACA folks are always welcome at our fire here in SE Kansas. Merry Christmas & Peace to all.

Warren & Jolene Nielsen 100 Howard Valeda St Coffeyville KS 67337



DEAR JIM,

Every era is defined by unique personalities as much as it by events. Memories of Hurlburt's first Air Commando, Col. Ben King, and his initial wave of Jungle Jims will forever be imprinted by the likes of Arnie Tillman, Jack Kelso, Dick Tegge, Frank Gorski, Barb and Frank Owens, John McGavin and Joe Conde, our first to deploy to South Bum F...

The following wave of volunteers brought an even larger group of immortal Air Commando characters. Francis Xavier DeFonce was notable among them. In addition to his two Viet-Nam (Ed: the correct form) tours, Frank was most proud of being MAC's lead navigator in the operation which brought

the POWs out of Hanoi.

In what appears to be a conspiracy of oversight, no one seems to remember that today's AFSOC began in 1962 as the Special Air Warfare Center, commanded by Brig Gen Gil Pritchard. Frank was my partner on the SAWC Briefing Team (Vern Bergstrom the augmentee) and we flew all over the country pitching the Air Force's new counterinsurgency role, and why we could do better than US Army aviation. In a break during a series of briefings on the West Coast, we were starting a mutual toast with our first martinis at the Pebble Beach Country (Beefeaters with pickled greenbeans was the vogue), looked at each other and broke out laughing: "We're getting paid for this!!"

In years later, "Frankie Hollywood" had a go at professional acting, and spent eight years in the city where he also managed a live theatre and company. In an era

when our circle of friends has sadly shrunk to those who have e-mail, Frank would have none of it. Many out there can attest, old friends were just a phone call away to FX, Any Time, Any Place!

A product of New York City and a street-smart cynic, he never bought into the latest bandwagon cause, the demagoguery of the moment. So I wasn't surprised when, a couple of years ago, he told me he'd taken an Arab-American girl friend--to do his bit for world peace. Or was it the alternative spelling? (It works either way.) My kind of Air Commando.

Don Maxwell PSC 2 Box 6618 APO AE 09012

Dear Don,

Thanks for the interesting letter. Your absence during reunion '03 and '04 was very noticeable especially by the widows.

DEAR JIM,

Below is a poor poem I wrote after the A-1 dedication at Hurlburt Field in 1993 for your newsletter consideration:

The Chorus

They gathered around on a sunny day
And walked among the airplanes on display.
They talked of friends they'd known and the things they'd done,
And just stood beneath the wings where the bombs had hung.
Quietly they recalled how it had all begun,
In those past years, when they were soldiers once - and young.

The memories flooded as the names were read-A roster of friends now long since dead. When the flags were furled and Taps had played, And silent salutes were passed back to nother day, They heard a chorus - oh, not so far away -A chorus proudly, and strongly sung, "Remember, we too were soldiers once - and young."

In memory of Roy Knight

Robert H. Karre, 217 Ralston Road, Converse, TX 78109-1909

Heinie says, "If you miss reunion '05, you will be listed as AWOL and will be restricted to quarters again."

Jimbo

See LETTERS pg. 12



Maj Gen Don Shepperd,
USAF (ret)
recently announced the
publication of "Misty",
a collection of personal
accounts of the Misty FAC
missions flown in Vietnam
using the F-100.
E-mail him at:
shepdonald@aol.com or
call (520) 299-5710.

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

Bud Day, Bill Douglass. Glean Jones. Gary Tompkins. Bill Mayberry. Dick Meyer. Barney Dalton. Maurice McHugh. Chuck Turner. Jack Harris. Paul Magill. Bol Blocher. Kripp Kippenhan. Sam Boyd. Keilü Heiniger. Dick Cunningham. Bob Craner. George Pinney. Nape Miller. Bob Porter. P.J. White. Charlie Neel. Jere Wallace. Jim Mack. Jones 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. Whisperring Smith. Elhers Slavey. Dick Rutan. Charlie Summers. Stopeock Mamilock. Howard Williams. Lanny Lancaster. PK. Robinson. Milce McElbanton. Don Kilgus. Frank Swarz. George Hanks. Wells Jackson. John Overlock. Chuck Shaheen. Dick Durum. Steve Ambor. David Jenny. Ted Powell. Bud Bacon. Jim Perry. Don Harlan. Roy Bridges. Frank Kimball. Whitey

Fitzsimmons. Kelly Fitzsimmons. Kelly Dick Williams. Kretz. Jerry

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Mas uret. Al Winkelman. Gregg Parker. Matt Husson, Jim Suc. Cast Cassaro. Richard Hepworth. Roger Winblade. Ron Fogleman. Jerry Walhout. John Grathwol. Amie Clarke. Bill Wallace. John Boles. Dennis Hlad. Laey 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 Gouley. Rufus Edwards. Kraze Kroese. Michael Martin. Scotty Dotson. Robert Seabury. Vic Macomber. George Buchkowski. John Hammar. Wayne Chaffer. Norm Lutz. T.K. Egan. Saint Hallman. Devil Muller. Gerry Van Riper. Robert Putz. Dennis Campbell. Bill Teske. Mario Peraldo. Michael Stone. Gabe Gabel. Pat Carroll. Gary Noghsker. Lamont Cranston. Jim Crasson. Dick Robe. Jack Clapper. Rich Reitan. Josh Mertill. Troy Morris. Larry Whitford. Robby Robinson. Harry Scott. George Lapham. John Nystron. Jerry Ryder. Dick Robbins. Dan Brown. Hank Buttelmann. Jack Doub. Lynn Farnsworth. Robert Armstrong. Paul Tackabury. Dave Thomson. Vince Cattolica. J.P. Richards. Moose Millard. Jim Davies. Dave Robb. David Samuel. Ray Lee. Tom Tapman. Ted Hascall. Dean Echenberg. Robert Gordan. Ray Bevviron. John Haltgan. Roger Van Dyleen. Clat Kunz. Beb Guido. Jim Titus.

Letters

from page 11

DEAR AIR COMMANDOS,

I, Erik Stewart, (nicknames: Shorty, 'Lil S..., or Stew) served alongside my fellow comrades in Southeast Asia intermittently during 1963 thru 1965. My AFSC was P20605, Photo Intelligence and P20405, Air Intelligence. As an Air Commando, I was stationed at Hurlburt Field, FL and went to Southeast Asia to serve in Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos. I was at Bien Hoa Air Base, SVN for three months during 1963. I was on Detachment #6 (Waterpump) during 1964, and served briefly in Vientiane, Laos (Lima Site 08) during 1965. As my fellow Commandos know, the USAF would send us to remote areas, often without orders, and on a moments notice, to serve in whatever region was necessary.

I am requesting the assistance of anyone who remembers me to please send me a letter stating that you saw or served with me in Vietnam during my tour there. My reasons for asking are herewith listed:

- 1. The Veterans Administration states that since my DD Form 214 does not show that I was in Vietnam, they cannot give me the assistance I need.
- 2. I was diagnosed with lung cancer, Post Traumatic Stress disorder, Agent Orange exposure.
- 3. I am currently on Hospice care 24/7 and have a limited amount of time left.

I am desperately seeking help from the VA. Without your assistance, I will not be able to establish that I was in Vietnam and I will pass away without my family being taken care of. The Hospice folks are helping me in all ways they can, but I need anyone that remembers me in Vietnam to document it with a note to me. Thanks so very much.

Write or call me at: Erik Stewart 2342 Brian Avenue South Daytona Beach, FL 32119 Phone: (386) 767-6849

Readers:

I talked to Erik on two occasions today, trying to establish firm dates of his TDY assignment in Vietnam. He could not do so, but if you were there with him, please send him a "Buddy" letter attesting to that fact.

I have personally done this for 35 fellow commandos that I served with in Vietnam and in almost all cases my testament was sufficient to satisfy the VA's requirements.

In many cases like Eriks, it is a sad commentary that we were required to serve in classified, austere, and clandestine environments and not have recorded documents reflecting this service. Although we went any time, any place, we have a 'helluva time proving it.

Gene Rossel also put Eriks plight on our CA website.

Hap



DEAR GENERAL ADERHOLT.

First of all allow me to introduce myself. I'm one of several thousand enlisted men who had the honor of serving under your command. I would be better known to you as Commando Barbie's husband.

Last June I had the honor of introducing LtCol Jay Norton, retired USAF, also an ACA member, who was guest speaker at our Elks lodge flag day ceremony. A young boy by the name of Sean Mulvey wanted to know if he could sit with Col. Norton and I. Sean loves the military and wants to become an Air Force pilot.

He was seated with us when I presented the Blood Chit to the

Arizona wing of the Civil Air Patrol. The presentation was made on behalf courtesy of the ACA. Sean was so impressed he wanted to know more about the commando's.

I told Sean that I would attempt to have General Aderholt send him an autographed copy of "Commando One." Thanks to you, Sean has the book. You made his day, this was an event that he will never forget and he talks about it every day. Who knows, some day he may become an AFSOC Commander and write about General Aderholt and other ACA leaders.

Thank you again! Thanks for your service and the opportunity to serve in your command.

Yours truly,

Commando Barbie's Husband Jim Alberts 13015 N Joan D'Arc Phoenix, AZ 85032



DEAR JIM,

I received the package and photos you sent to me along with copies of the ACA paper.

I want to thank you very much for taking the time to get a book autographed for Sean Mulvey.

We made this little boys day, one that he will never forget and will talk about for years to come. Who knows he may become the editor of the ACA news letter and write a story about it some day.

I have written to Heinie and thanked him also for the book and his time. Enclosed are the C.D.'s you sent. We enjoyed the pictures and are looking forward to the '05 reunion.

Once again, thank you very much and I will be available to help on the golf tournament this year. Blue skies always.

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

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS (LOC) VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Veterans of WWII and other conflicts are invited to submit their stories to the National Archives of the Library of Congress. To participate on the Internet go to www.loc.gov/folklife/vets and click on "Participate in the Project."

Here you can download forms automatically - a whole kit, a simple biographical form or information on the interviewing a vet you know whose story you think should be told. You can also write the story and send it to the National Archives via e-mail at this site. If the information you send is to be part of the public record, you'll need release forms for the veteran and the interviewer as well.

Send completed forms, including release forms available on line, photographs, video and audio tapes and other materials via UPS or Fed Ex since US mail sent to government agencies is being heavily screened and may damage tapes.

The address is: Library of Congress American Folklife Center, Veterans History Project, 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20540-4610

HALF-MAST/HALF-ASSED

Yasser Arafat gave the Palestinians death, destruction and misery, yet was honored by the UN when they dropped their babyblue flag to half-mast. Ronald Reagan helped make the world a safer place to live in yet the UN honored him with...nuthin.

PLAUSIBLE DENIAL (FARMGATE)

"If shot down and captured, are you willing to be disowned by your government?" Question put to volunteers for the U.S. Air Force's first combat mission in Vietnam

by Susan Katz Keating

In the fall of 1961, U.S. Air Force Colonel Benjamin King, a World War II ace and the survivor of a daring escape from behind enemy lines, assumed command of a newly formed unit stationed at an old French airstrip in South Vietnam. On one of his first missions King flew a C-47 dropping propaganda leaflets over villages near the air base. His copilot was a colonel in the Vietnamese air force by the name of Nguyen Cao Ky.

Neither the pilot nor the copilot could speak each other's language, so that day's mission, like many others, was conducted with little clear communication. When the flight came to an end, King, without speaking, simply headed back to land at a short airstrip.

But he had to abort the landing. "I was too long and too hot, and I had to give it power to go around," King recalls. The second try was no better. "I was still too hot, so I went around again." As King prepared to make his third attempt, he glanced over at copilot Ky, who would later become prime minister of Vietnam. "He was just sitting there, shaking his head. I took my hands off the wheel and I asked in English, 'Can you do any better?' " King pauses as if to savor the coming punchline. "Ky went around and landed that C-47 so short, he had to give it power to get it to the end of the strip." With a laugh, King adds, "And I was supposed to be teaching him to fly."

Stories like King's illustrate the

irony behind the cover story for his unit--that the Americans were advisors, in the country to train pilots of the Vietnamese air force. "More than 25 years after the fact," says King, "I can say this: We never trained a Vietnamese pilot."

King's unit was the first detachment of U.S. airmen to fly combat in Vietnam. Its code name was Farmgate, and beneath its training cover, its mission was to stop communist guerrilla forces in the south. "Farmgate was a highly classified mission to provide close air support to Vietnamese ground forces and to attack the Viet Cong," says one of the operation's first pilots, retired Major General Richard Secord, who later became a deputy assistant secretary of defense under Ronald Reagan.

The effort was an outgrowth of cold war saber rattling, specifically an ominous 1961 speech by Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev announcing the USSR's intent to support wars of "national liberation," such as "the armed struggle waged by the people of Vietnam." In South Vietnam, attacks by communist guerrillas supported by North Vietnam sharply escalated in the late 1950s. In 1959, an assassination campaign targeted at South Vietnamese government officials claimed 1,200 lives; in 1961, the number rose to 4,000. Terrorist attacks--usually conducted at night--on villages, military outposts, government offices, and American convoys and servicemen in Vietnam were also rising.

Krushchev's speech made a great impression on newly installed President John F. Kennedy, who urged the U.S. military to expand its counterguerrilla capabilities. As a result, the Army beefed up its Special Forces, the Navy formed the SEALs, and in April 1961, the Air Force established the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron, nicknamed Jungle Jim.

Jungle Jim was authorized a scant force of propeller-driven aircraft--C-47 transports, B-26 light bombers, and T-28 trainers--that seemed more appropriate for a museum display than for the modern U.S. Air Force. The aircrews had none of the sophisticated electronic aids their colleagues relied on. "We flew in all kinds of weather'," Farmgate T-28 pilot Frank Gorski recollected in a formerly classified 1973 Air Force interview. "If you wanted to get someplace, you just picked up a canal and went. That was your navigation system. Flew time and distance. Kept one eye on the fuel and one eye out the window and pressed on."

But the old C-47s and T-28s, which flew low and slow, were actually better suited than high-speed craft for the types of activities an airborne counter-guerrilla effort would conduct: dropping supplies and propaganda leaflets, for example, or bombing and strafing small, dispersed targets like huts or boats. The aged airplanes would also be inconspicuous in the Third World nations whose forces the Jungle Jim crews would assist.

In Vietnam, the missions would be flown by pilots wearing plain flightsuits that had been stripped of all identification and insignia, and they would be conducted in complete secrecy--both because they violated the 1954 Geneva Accords, which prohibited the introduction of foreign troops into Vietnam, and to withhold knowledge of the operation from the American public.

The Farmgate mission was so sensitive that even now some of the official documentation remains classified. More than one pilot contacted for this article echoed the comments of former C-47 pilot Bill Brown, who prefaced his remarks with a hesitant "I'm not sure what you're entitled to know."

Not that the documents were plentiful to begin with. "In those days, a lot of times the special operations folks simply didn't keep records," says writer Michael Haas, himself a former air commando, as the men of Farmgate were later known.

The information that is available reveals that in the spring of 1961, the Air Force sought volunteers: elite pilots and enlisted personnel, including mechanics, armament specialists, and combat controllers, who ranked among the top two percentile in their specialties. Potential recruits were told only that the program was highly classified and that it would remain so for 25 years after it ended.

More than 3,500 men volunteered

"The recruiting was rather unique in my 38-year Air Force career," says retired four-star General John "Pete" Piotrowski, who in 1987 became the head of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and the U.S. Space Command. A recently promoted captain at the time, Piotrowski was told to meet with a general who was visiting Luke Air Force Base in Arizona. "When my turn came I was ushered into a

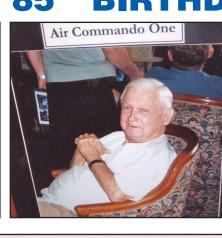
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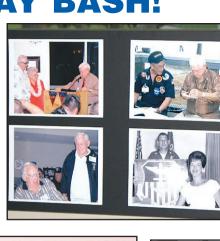


































































McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

Honduras For Christmas

Your McCoskrie Threshold gang was a major contributor to the Hurlburt Field Christmas program in Honduras. For more than a decade we have supported the Hurlburt effort to bring cheer and joy to the orphanages of LaCeiba and central Honduras. This year we provided the base with the paperwork (a pain) and bulk supplies for two C-130 loads of goodies. Many of the goods are donated by our Air Commandos, like the sports equipment from Larry King. Other items included thousands of toys, clothing, a freezer, about 100 bikes and lots of food.

Hurlburt personnel provided each child with a plastic snap top container of toys, clothing, hygiene, and school supplies. Over 500 children received the gifts from Santa, (one of the crew dressed in a Santa suit.) The crews were on operational missions, which included low level practice, some air drops and several other upgrade and continuation training requirements. This training is scheduled each year to happen about Christmas and thus allow the base to get the added benefit of spreading good cheer in the Civic Action style we old Commandos did so often.

Air Commando Dave Freeman had the chance to ride along on the mission, here is his report;

"On 8 December I was privileged to accompany members of the 16th SOW from Hurlburt Field on their annual "Christmas Wish" program to Honduras. The wing sent two C-130's loaded full of Christmas packages, pallets of miscellaneous supplies, and a load of Christmas cheer for the needy children in Honduras. Our first stop was LaCeiba on the north coast.

Honduran Air Force personnel helped us unload the presents and transported us to the nearby Alcea SOS and Casa de Ninos orphanage. There was a great deal of excitement at the orphanage as we arrived. The kids swarmed the bus (in a happy and orderly manner) to unload the packages. When all was

base. We then flew to Soto Cano air base in Central Honduras. At this point I had intended to make my way to El Progresso to see the fruits of the ACA/MTF charity effort. MTF has orchestrated sending over 125 tons of goods to Pronino (for the children) organization in El Progresso.



ready, one of Hurlburt's Commandos appeared as Santa! Santa then called the names and delivered a personalized present to each child.

Meanwhile, the rest of the crew handed out candy and played with the kids. This orphanage was founded in 1980 and has about 200 kids. The kids were very well cared for, however, the director told me that there are always great needs for facilities maintenance and repairs. They have a program by which individuals can help support by sending money and occasional presents to a specific child. Their web is:

www.helpinghonduraskids.org.

We returned to the Honduran base and Santa and the elves repeated the events for smaller groups of kids from near and on

I quickly learned some of the hardships of living in Honduras... The base has a sunset to twilight restriction on leaving the base, and it required a lot of paperwork to leave and reenter. Not only that, what I thought would be an easy 70 mile drive turned out to be quite an expedition that couldn't be arranged in the allotted time. The locals don't even make road trips at night. I did have a good talk with Pronino director, George Mealer. He passed his thanks for all that the ACA/MTF does for them. He said there is a lot of need in his organization, as in all of Honduras. The items we send that he can't use, he barters to other organizations in return for other goods and services.

Pronino takes in kids who have been abandoned, orphaned, or otherwise rejected and left to their own devices on the streets. Most of the kids are substance abusers (glue sniffers) and drug users. George and his crew work to get the kids off the streets, off the drugs, and eventually rehabilitate them back into schools or vocational training. This is quite an operation. Their web is; WWW.streetkidshonduras.org, they can use all the help they can get.

We delivered pallets of supplies and toys to the USAF and Honduran reps who will distribute it to needy/worthy organization in the local area. On 10 December we returned to Hurlburt. This trip was a great opportunity to see the fruits of the labors of all the people who support the ACA/MTF humanitarian efforts "Sincerely

Dave Freeman

What a Success

All Air Commandos should be proud of your successes last year in the humanitarian missions. It was one of our best years in recent times. Our overseas reach included the countries of Haiti, Guatemala, and Honduras. Our local missions have expanded to monumental proportions.

The overseas missions in support of this hemisphere were mostly to Honduras, which is still trying to recover from Hurricane Mitch of 5 years ago. Honduras is easy to send to and the cost is very cheap considering we have to overland ship from Crestview Florida to Gulfport MS, then boat it to a Honduras port, through the import process, then overland to Central Honduras. All this is still about \$1600.00 per 40 foot sea land con-

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tainer. In 2004 MTF shipped 13 containers weighing about 317,500 pounds. Ten containers went to Pronino in Central Honduras. The other loads were of school equipment and were divided between Haiti, Guatemala, and Honduras. Audra Murray of the Admiral Jeremiah Denton Foundation provided the coordination and found the funds for the school shipments.

Trying to come up with an estimated value is like doing a truck kill count in the SEA war, just would not be accurate. Let's just say the value is beyond what we can comprehend. For a community to receive so much, when they have nothing, will not only raise their standards and ease some suffering, but provide meaningful educational tools as some of the items are used as teaching aids. Much of the equipment sent is used in the vocational education classes for the street kids.

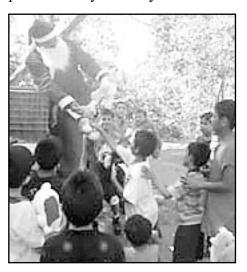
The world owes a great thank you to people like the Mealers, who have dedicated their lives to helping the kids in Honduras. They donate the time incountry, and our Air Commandos help with the donations of goods and funds to the MTF. Local volunteers help put it all together in a great program. What a success!

Pronino Christmas

Thanks to the generosity of the Commandos and many others from near and far, the MTF was able to provide Honduras with thousands of toys and goodies for Christmas. On 24 Nov MTF shipped a great load of Santa supplies to George at Pronino. They arrived just in time for George to don the Santa suit and travel the countryside being the jolly old man himself. He distributed from 24 thru 27 December, and visited all the local villages

near El Progresso. He was hampered by 'liquid' snow but that didn't dampen the joy of the many children. He writes:

"I just want to thank you for all of your efforts, you made Christmas a little brighter for countless children here. Your hard work is truly appreciated, I just wish you could have seen the reaction of these kids when Santa pulled out toy after toy for them."





So thanks from Honduras to all Air Commandos and the folks who donate. In 2004 we received funds from nearly 700 folks and 'stuff' from hundreds more. We are already planning what Santa will bring to the kids of Honduras in 2005.

Supporting our Troops

Our involvement with quality of life programs at Hurlburt Field and Eglin AFB was in evidence throughout 2004. Each base has a functioning Airmen's Attic where

Staff Sergeants (E-5) and below and their spouses can go and receive, free of charge, children's clothing, baby items, cribs, maternity wear, toys, uniforms, large and small appliances, furniture and other household items.

MTF, through Bob White, has delivered needed items to many Airmen and operated a pick-up and delivery service. They call we haul so to speak. Bob had to buy a new truck just to keep up with the demands of the program. We helped Vance AFB OK deliver a truckload of Hurricane Ivan disaster relief supplies to Hurlburt and helped distribute these supplies to many of the personnel who lost so much.

During 2004 we supplied in excess of 30,000 lbs of everything from entertainment centers to baby bottles.

We feel truly honored to help our troops defray some cost of living expenses. As one Airman stated, "Thanks to you I can get things here for my family without running up credit card debt. My family and I are very happy".

We look forward to serving our military in 2005 and with your help we will make it happen.

Montagnard Update

Your MTF is still active in support of the 'Yard resettlement program in North Carolina. On 1 February we filled a rental truck with blankets and winter clothing, and sent it on its way to Greenboro. We had help loading from the 20th SOS again. This time it was Jeff Talley, David Price, Jim Rhodes and Steve Cherrington to the rescue. They joined the usual suspects from the retired gang Commandos. This trip we were lucky in that we did not have to drive it north, but Doc John

Freeman, a retired SF soldier, was heading that way and did the driving and rented the truck. We will continue to help the 'Yards in any way we can as they continue to arrive in the United States. Small repayment for the support they provided to our troops during our efforts in SEA. Thanks to the donating Commandos and local labor force including: Dave Freeman, Juan Bazan, and Bob White.

Great Donation

The wife of one of our members is in the upholstery business. She had about 1200 yards of fabric and donated it to MTF. MTF sent it on the December shipment to the Mealers in Honduras. Gillian Mealer writes:

"Where did you find these bolts of fabric? They are fabulous! George has many ideas for this, including using them for the upholstery shop at Pronino. He is really excited about it. Please tell the donor that we are very pleased to see the fabric and we will be sure to put it to good use. Who knows maybe one day I'll be able to e-mail you pictures of furniture redone in these fabrics."

The Donor has been thanked. We never know just what great donations will arrive and how much they will be needed and appreciated.

Volunteers Needed

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

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small office, dark except for a light that shone on the interviewee," Piotrowski recalls. "The officer conducting the interview was barely visible--a shadowy figure in the darkness."

The interviewer asked three questions: Are you willing to fly old obsolete aircraft? Are you willing to fly combat? If shot down and captured, are you willing to be disowned by your government? With some hesitation over the third question, Piotrowski answered yes to all three, after which the interviewer said only, "You may go now."

Those who made the first cut were given a set of increasingly bizarre tests, which included standing for long periods on ice while naked and culminated in a three-week mountain survival course and an excruciatingly realistic mock prisoner-of-war camp.

Bill Brown, who tops six feet, spent about three hours of POW training stuffed inside a refrigerator-size cubicle. "It was torture treatment in a way," Brown says. "But I stuck it out."

Most did not. Says King: "The Pentagon told me that of the initial 3,500 applicants, only about 350 made it. They were an amazing group of people."

The men of the 4400th were taught to fly the air commando way. While in training at Eglin Air Force Base's Hurlburt Field in Florida, the pilots used C-47s to practice short-field landings, airborne loudspeaker broadcasting, leaflet drops, parachute drops of men and equipment, and night operations, including landing on short, unprepared strips in the dark. In T-28s and B-26s, they practiced strafing and bombing.

Once trained, the new unit fielded one group to the African republic of Mali and another, Detachment 2, to an unfamiliar hot spot in Southeast Asia. "This was some months after the Bay of Pigs episode," says Secord. "We thought we were going to Cuba. Imagine our surprise when we wound up in Vietnam."

By then code-named Farmgate, the initial Detachment 2 consisted of 41 officers and 115 enlisted men, each of whom had been assigned a secret clearance and authorized to bear arms. The unit was allotted a portion of the 4400th's fleet: four C-47s, four B-26s (which served in World War II as the Douglas A-26) and eight T-28s, which would be used as fighters.

Officially on 179-day temporary duty (that status would change for succeeding crews), the men and their airplanes converged on Bien Hoa, a languid, colonial-style provincial capital about 30 miles northeast of Saigon. The airstrip, which was surfaced with pierced-steel planking, was home to the First Fighter Squadron of the fledgling Vietnamese air force, whose members the Farmgate men were to "train." The Vietnamese were stationed on one side of the field, the Americans on the other.

The atmosphere at Bien Hoa was thick with secrecy. The men of Farmgate were confined so as to conceal the fact that Americans were there; the U.S. aircraft were disguised in Vietnamese air force colors. All news agencies were forbidden. Not even the men's families knew where they were stationed; nor did the rest of the Air Force know what they were up to.

Sometimes the pilots themselves did not know what they were truly being used for, as evidenced by an incident that took place in early November 1963. "I had just taken off from Bien Hoa in a B-26," Joe Kittinger says, "when I hap-

pened to look over to the side and saw the most amazing thing: Airplanes were bombing the palace in downtown Saigon! I said, 'My Lord, what is happening?' "

Kittinger immediately radioed the Air Force command center in Saigon to relay the information. He was instructed to report what he saw. It was the beginning stages of the coup that would result in the overthrow and assassination of South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem.

"I could see tanks and bombing, and a battle was going on," says Kittinger. "They kept running me from place to place to see what was going on. I was an airborne command post." The amazed pilot remained aloft nearly four hours before he began to run low on fuel. In retrospect, Kittinger believes that his commanders had intended for him all along to witness the coup, which the United Statesalthough it had earlier supported Diem--had come to believe was necessary.

"The only people who knew the truth about our assignment besides the 4400th commanders and the deployed troops themselves were the Joint Chiefs and President Kennedy, and they weren't talking either," wrote Secord in his autobiography, Honored and Betrayed.

The result was a command structure that, in its beginning covert stages, sometimes confused even the Farmgate leadership. "There was the matter of who we reported to," King says. "A lot of people had a lot of questions about that, including me. We were serviced and supplied theoretically through Ninth Air Force. I never met anyone in Ninth Air Force. I took my orders from two lieutenant colonels in the bottom of the Pentagon building. It seemed odd

to me at the time, given that I was a full colonel."

But the unusual command structure worked to the airmen's advantage as well, as evidenced by an incident involving, of all things, the commandos' headgear. The episode originated in late 1961 when King realized that even though the men of Farmgate had been driven almost to the limits of human endurance in preparation for their clandestine mission, they had not been properly equipped for the extremes of Southeast Asian weather.

"It was hotter than the hubs of Hell," says King, and rainy, and for headgear the men had been issued only baseball caps. As Farmgate's first commander, King jettisoned the caps in favor of the more practical broad-brimmed cowboy hats worn by the Vietnamese air force.

Later, after King had returned to 4400th CCTS headquarters at Hurlburt Field, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Gleason took command of Farmgate. Gleason soon hosted a high-powered delegation from CINCPAC (Commander in Chief, Pacific), which included no less a figure than Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp. Sharp apparently was unaware that he did not have operational control over the unit. He ordered the men to stop wearing "those crazy cowboy hats."

Aiming to ward off trouble, Gleason sent a hasty message that night to King, describing the hat order. "Within 24 hours I received a message sent through channels, including CINCPAC, stating that the cowboy hats had now been declared official USAF headgear for commando units." Gleason says. "It was signed by Curtis LeMay, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force."

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Of course, the unit had far weightier concerns. "One of the first things we had to contend with was the methods of the Vietnamese Air Force," Gleason says. "They had been trained under the French colonial system, and the French were very gentlemanly about fighting wars. They wouldn't fight at certain times, including at night. The enemy was well aware of the reluctance of the VNAF to fly at night, so they fought at night and wiped out the VNAF as a potential threat."

The Americans knew that making headway against the guerrillas would require flying when they could not see what was going on in the shadows below. The solution came after a sergeant mentioned that illumination flares had been used at night in Korea. Gleason and Piotrowski, who had been named the Farmgate armament officer, set to work on the suggestion. After some experimentation, a system using magnesium flares was put into use.

To illuminate the target, three or four parachuted flares would be dropped from the cargo hold of a C-47 at an altitude of about 1,500 feet. T-28s or B-26s would then immediately follow to strafe or bomb the target. By the end of 1963, tactics had become so refined that flareships were on constant alert, and most South Vietnamese army units in the IV and southern III Corps-the nearest of the four tactical zones U.S. military advisors had created--could get night illumination plus close air support within 20 to 60 minutes.

The system made its mark on the enemy as intended. "Initially, it was merely sufficient for a flareship to appear over a besieged position and expend flares to cause the VC to break off an attack," read a then-classified 1967 Air Force tactical evaluation report.

Night operations also led to a novel signalling technique. "We worked out a system with [the South Vietnamese army] at these little outposts, where they would set up a flaming-pot system pointing out the direction of the enemy," King says. "Later on it became a flaming metal arrow."

The large arrows, covered with woven bamboo, were laid directly on the ground. "They would point the arrow in a certain direction, and it would come over the radio: 'Drop your ordnance 200 meters away from the fire arrow,' or 100 meters, or some such," says Farmgate pilot Joe Kittinger.

"Sometimes it worked very well," says King. "Other times it didn't work worth a damn." When it didn't work, the fire arrows became merely another part of the confusion. Gorski recalled one such occurrence, while on a night mission in support of a besieged South Vietnamese fort shrouded in fog. "We could circle above this dude and pick up the fire arrow, but as soon as you tried to get some sort of angle on it, you lost it. Of course, the flareship was dropping flares and they would go down in the fog and that would really play havoc with your sight," he said in 1973. "But we would try everything we could because we had a limited resource, and we did things that maybe now we would say were a little bit harebrained or foolish."

For all their ingenuity, however, the Americans could not escape one cumbersome requirement: To keep up the appearances of a training role, they were required to fly all combat missions with a Vietnamese "trainee" on board. In contrast to the skills of the longtime Vietnamese pilots, whom King

characterizes as "some of the best qualified I flew with," new classes of VNAF fliers had not been properly certified.

"Actually, they never were allowed anywhere near the controls of the aircraft," says Bill Brown. When possible, the crews restrained the new aviators with safety straps to prevent them from reaching the controls. Otherwise disaster lurked. Secord and his Vietnamese copilot barely escaped crashing when the terrified backseater repeatedly grabbed the controls of Secord's T-28.

Gorski reported having trouble with a young pilot who could not seem to control the aircraft: "Every time I'd give him the darn airplane, he'd just go completely bananas all over the sky," he told Air Force interviewers in 1973. A subsequent debriefing of the pilot by Gorski revealed unsettling information. "I asked him how much time he had," Gorski said. "He said he had about 500 hours'. I said, 'How much solo time do you have?' He said, 'I've got one hour solo time.' "

Often the backseaters weren't pilots at all. "We'd carry anybody that was available," B-26 pilot Roy Dalton recalled in a formerly classified 1973 Air Force interview. "We'd go over to the Vietnamese base commander and he would give us the guy who was sitting around either typing or sweeping the floors--and he would fly with us." The Americans were further hampered by the requirement that all strikes be made at the direction of an airborne Vietnamese forward air controller, theoretically so that he could "authenticate the target," Gorski says. The FAC was essential to the mission: "Once we showed up on the scene, if the FAC wasn't there, we didn't strike."

Sometimes, the FAC's target selec-

tion mystified the Americans. "We were totally at the mercy and the direction of the [Vietnamese lieutenant] that came along and said, 'Hit this target!' " Dalton recalled. "We had no intelligence of our own, no hard intelligence, on who we are hitting."

Aside from these concerns, the commandos had problems communicating with the FAC. At times the radio did not work, or there was language difficulty. T-28 pilot Edwin "Jerry" Shank described the system in a letter home: "One of our complaints [to a representative Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara sent to Vietnam] was that we can't understand the air controller, so he suggested that we learn Vietnamese. We said we didn't have that much time, so he suggested we stay here for two years. A brilliant man. He's lucky to be alive. Some of the guys honestly had to be held back from beating this idiot up."

By this time, the escalating hostilities in Vietnam were attracting worldwide attention. The U.S. government had long been denying that U.S. troops were engaged in combat in Vietnam--at a news conference held in January 1962, President Kennedy issued a flat denial when asked the question-but reports in the U.S. press made clear that American trainers and advisors were firing and being fired upon. In March 1962, the New York Times reported that U.S. pilots were "engaged in combat missions with South Vietnamese pilots in training them to fight Communist guerrillas."

Farmgate became increasingly subject to public scrutiny. "Reporters were snooping around, and they would watch the airplanes

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take off," says Farmgate medic Hap Lutz. "They discerned that the Vietnamese on board weren't pilots." Ironically, journalists were confused by markings on the aircraft. The Vietnamese air force insignia so closely resembled that of the U.S. Air Force--only a subtle variation in color distinguished the two--that the reporters described the Bien Hoa aircraft as having American markings, thus inadvertently revealing the truth about which nation actually owned them.

Publicity only made the Farmgate operation more complicated and cumbersome to carry out. As more Air Force personnel became aware of Farmgate's activities, King says, "all the bureaucracy started, and we got orders from everybody." Over the years, wrote Air Force historian Carl Berger, Farmgate's simple rules of engagement "grew into many pages of detailed operating instructions telling Air Force pilots what they could or could not do in combat."

Other problems plagued Farmgate. The dangerous missions had produced a high rate of casualties: In 17 months from early 1962 to mid-1963, 16 Farmgate crewmen were killed in action. But crews in some B-26s and T-28s were dying as a result of what some euphemistically termed "equipment failure." In fact, the airplanes were falling apart in mid-air.

"These airplanes had been used in World War II and Korea, and they were tired," Kittinger says. "And we were using them as fighter-bombers." The old airframes simply were not up to the new task: "The wings started coming off them.

"If a wing comes off, you get just violent roll," Kittinger says. "The G-force would preclude you from doing anything. You can't get out. You don't have a chance."

In February 1964, after a number of B-26 losses, a wing failed on a B-26 during a demonstration at Hurlburt Field, killing two crewmen. The entire B-26 fleet was grounded.

There was a brief journalistic outcry surrounding the problems with what Farmgate crews irreverently termed the "folding-wing version" of the B-26. Soon after the Hurlburt Field incident, U.S. News & World Report published some of Jerry Shank's letters home, in which he complained about conditions in Vietnam. Among them was an indictment of the B-26: "That airplane is a killer." The letters were all the more arresting because they had been supplied to the magazine by his wife shortly after Shank had been killed when one wing of his T-28 sheared off during a bomb run.

Scarcely had rebuilt B-26s, intended to meet the demands of counter-guerrilla warfare, entered the inventory when, in mid-1964, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which authorized the increased use of American forces in Vietnam. In May 1965, the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade arrived at Bien Hoa. The airmen were followed by B-57s, F-100s, C-130s, F-102s, and more, as well as by surface-to-air Hawk missiles, a medical unit, and a civic action program to perform charitable duties for the civilian population.

The Farmgate operation lingered on for a time, but the arrival of the regular Air Force overshadowed it. Fittingly, Air Force historians can offer no precise date for the operation's end, although its parent organization--the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron--was deactivated in October 1969.

Farmgate crew members still speak of the waning of the operation with regret. "With Farmgate, we tried to contain the war as a counterinsurgency operation," Gleason says. "But events sort of swarmed in and changed the world. What we dreaded most was what happened, which was the conventionalization of the war. You can't fight Viet Cong in the field with B-

52s or with huge battleships patrolling offshore."

"Things just got bigger," explains former C-47 crew chief Bill Conklin. "It wasn't Farmgate anymore. It was a war."

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MTF

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newsletters if you can help. We will maintain a list of volunteers and call when we need help.

MTF Finances

Your contributions are the only way the MTF stays in the humanitarian business. The funds you have donated, and continue to donate, are essential to our programs. April 15 is just around the corner so note that your contributions are tax deductible. As you know we have no one on the payroll. All of the money is spent in direct support of humanitarian missions. The ACA has supported us with office and some temporary storage, however, the storage space has been taken away. Our biggest expense cate-

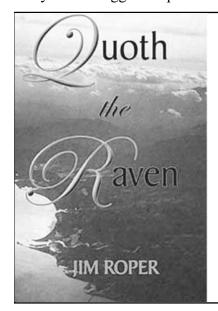
gories are transportation/shipping and storage. Last year approximate costs:

Forklift \$4200 Storage \$7700

Transportation, local \$2900 Shipping overseas \$14,800

Other misc. expenses including printing, phone, and the stuff it takes to run our office and to process and store the 175 tons of items \$1400.

Our income from donations has just about kept pace with the expenses. To do what we do, takes a lot of 'out go' of energy and funds. Keep up the great donations and we will keep the program going.



Quoth the Raven

By Jim Roper

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

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

Rossel Report

Searching for information on Capt. John Shaughnessy

Dear Gene: Sorry to bother you. I got your e-mail from the Air Commando web-site and was hoping I could ask you a question. I am currently researching the above USAF member, who was assigned to Det 2A, 1st Air Commando Group. He was KIA 02/03/63 while flying as a copilot in a RB-26. The pilot during that mission was John Bartley. While researching Capt. Shaughnessy, I came across a nice Vietnam memorial site that had some information regarding John Bartley. It gave some general information on their last mission and had the serial number of the RB-26 they were lost in.

I was wondering if you had any information specifically pertaining to Capt. Shaughnessy? I wanted to find out when he was assigned to the group, how many missions he flew, what awards he earned and hopefully, get a photo of him. Any help you could provide, even if it is just pointing me in the right direction, would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for your time.

Nic Cannarozzi, 831 School Street, Folsom, CA 95630 Tel 916-9839097 NCannarozzi@caed.uscourts.gov.

Hobson's book of aerial losses in Vietnam has the following information on the crash: 3 February 1963. B-26B 44-35692, Det 2A, 1ACG, USAF Bien Hoa. Capt John F. Shaughnessy KIA, Capt John Peter Bartley, 1 VNAF Observer, Name Unknown, KIA. February 1963 Farm Gate was operating 10 B-26s, five T-28s and two C-47s. The unit lost two of its B-26s within the space of four days in February. The first was shot down by small arms fire during a strafing run on a Viet Cong concentration in the Mekong Delta. All the crew was killed. This B-26, along with at least a dozen others used by Farm Gate unit, was thought to have been deployed to Taklhi RTAB in 1961 for use during the Laotian civil war by a clandestine USAF unit known as Mill Pond. In the event, apart from a few reconnaissance flights, the B-26s were not used in action and were ferried to Okinawa in August 1961. The other B-26 he talks about was 44-35507 which was shot down on 6 February 1963 where Maj James Raymond O'Neil was killed. It also states that following the loss of two B-26s within the space of three days, it became common to dispatch the bombers in pairs, one of the aircraft providing defense suppression while the other made the attack. This also applied to T-28s from around this time. Whoever knew Capt Shaughnessy could you help Nic in his research.

Thank you for creating a very interesting site.

Donald Leyden, MA

www.essential-air.com e-mail@essential-air.com

314th Troop Carrier Wing

Was in the 314th Troop Carrier Wing for a year in 1965 and just recently found out the 314th was actually part of the Air

Commando's at one time. Don't know about now. Thanks for your service to our country.

Tobey Smith,

<u>www.airtanker380.tripod.com/powmiastobeys POW/MIA</u> e-mail:<u>airtanker49380@msn.com</u>

WWII aircraft

Am looking for a list of army military airplanes remaining, in museums, flying, etc.

Charles Pettit Palm Springs, CA ctolin@earthlink.net

If you buy the following book you will find what you want: "Guide to over 900 Aircraft Museums USA & Canada" by Michael A. Blaugher. Web site is www.aircraftmuseums.com

e-mail: airmuses@ao.com

Crew Chief

I was a crew chief in the 4 ACS / AC-47 1965/66 ACA Member. Jerry Rothe, Rothej@cox.net

605th, C-47 pilot, '66-'67

Jim McMahon, San Antonio, TX e-mail: jsmcmahon@sbcglobal.net

Jim I was in the 605th ACS at the same time and I am trying to remember you.

Mayaguez/Koh Tang Reunion

Jolly Green Association will be hosting 2nd Battalion/9th Marines vets to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Mayaguez recovery operation at the Jolly Reunion 29-30 April 2005 in Ft Walton Beach. Also looking for 21SOS Knife crews and Spectre crews involved. Contact Bob Blough at e-mail: Jolly44A@aol.com or 248-348-0897. ACA Member L-2957

Bob Blough Novi, MI

Skyraiders

Surfing sites looking for info on Skyraiders finally found a model available in 1/32 scale and want to add to my collection of v/n era models good site for info thanx have a great new year. JJ John Johnson, Winnipeg Man. Canada email:john1568@shaw.ca

Fire Chief at NKP

32 years ago, I was the Fire Chief at NKP, Thailand during Linebacker Two, assigned to the 56th CES. After being in Vietnam for two tours as the fire chief at Tuy Hoa and ass,t chief at Phan Rang from 69 to 71, I volunteered my 3rd time to go back. to make a long story short, I filled an E-8 slot as fire chief as an E-6 at NKP. the same thing as Vietnam! alot of E-7s and E-8s wouldn't go. so, during Linebacker 2, over 2 hundred battle damaged aircraft made it to NKP from the bombing in the north, including 3 B-52s. I went out on every one of them. My people were magnificent. All of this happened 32 years ago while assigned to the 56th SOW. This is

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only a small part of what my firefighters did, like the fire at NKP city where we saved half the town. Or at Salkoon Nakhon when over 2000 houses were engulfed in a wall of fire. Maybe I was over there too long. When the POWs were out of N. vietnam, I was at NKP. I served 365 days in the 56 Special Operations Wing. When I left after 3 tours in SEA, I knew I would be back, just needed a little rest. It did not happen, so I served 3 tours in Korea.

Robert W. Remel (CMSgt Ret.), Niceville,FL, email: rwraf2543@cox.net ACA Member

Chief I know you probably saved some of our guys and I am sure some know you. You'll find out when the emails are sent from thankful members.

Great site

I am a member of SGI. I was there in October for the reunion and had a great time. I was with Heavy Chain. Keep up the great work. Homer W Guinn Jr., Maurertown, VA, email:wguinn@shentel.net ACA Member

Thanks for the comments and glad to hear from you.

Squadron Section Commander

I was Squadron Section Commander, 56th Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, NKP RTAFB, Thailand, 1974-1975. John Culbertson, johnculbertson@hotmail.com ACA Member.

Looking to join your organization

I have been an Air Commando since 1988 with assignments to the AC-130H and AC-130U plus SOF staff assignments at AFSOC, USJFCOM and now SOCEUR. Does your organization have a lifetime membership fee?

Lt Col Mike Brennan, Director, SOCEUR SOLE, Ramstein AB, GE, DSN 480-5836, Comm: (49) 6371-475836, Home: (49) 6371-466577

PSC 2 Box 6645, APO AE 09012-6645 email:mbren333@aol.com

I have sent the page from the ACA home page with the application on it. Welcome back.

Aerial Gunner

I was an aerial gunner with 4th ACS / 4th SOS A-Flight operating out of DaNang RVN and later an instructor after returning to England AFB. Also served as an instructor training Laotian & Cambodian s...flew with Air America etc. Lloyd J. Marshall Jr., New Hampshire, email:aux884@yahoo.com ACA Member.

When were you in Laos with the AC-47's. I was there in 69-70 and was involved with getting them to fly night missions. I remember one night going up with them and two American gun plumbers for testing night flights. There was a fiesta in Vientiane and we ended

up with about 15,000 spent cartridges and if I remember right we had two guns developed bad cylinders. So we went to Vientiane and partied with them.

Major Frank Farthing

My uncle Major Frank Farthing was recruited to fly with Air America. I believe he had completed Air Commando training with the USAF prior to joining Air America. I am currently an associate member of the Air America Association. Reading about the recent joint reunion I felt that I should contact your association to see if you could determine if my uncle was indeed once part of the USAF Air Commando group.

George T. Andrews, Air America Log, email: tandrews@vertisinc.com

Frank Farthing was indeed a part of the Air commandos and he and I were at Bien Hoa AB, Vietnam in 1962. I remember him well as well as a lot of the other guys. I will try and find some things on him and send it to you. He flew U-10s and was a powerful figure-he said what he meant and meant what he said. I liked him and he was a good officer.

Former Major, USAF

Continuously assigned to A -1 operational or training squadrons from 2 Jan 1966 to 31 March 1972. Pilot with Tropic Moon I at NKP and Bien Hoa 1968.

Robert P. Christiansen, Homosassa, FL, email: bobanmary@earthlink.net ACA Member

Glad to hear from you - a real part of the A-1 history.

Great Website Tons of info and related sites

Wayne Hembrook, Adams Wisconsin, kb9nlg@mags.net

Thanks for the comments and hope you use the site for your historical research.

THE KITCHEN TABLE GANG TRUST

Attention military veterans. Having problems getting your veteran's benefits? Check out the Kitchen Table Gang's website at www.kitchentablegang.org. It's a great resource, with loads of new helpful information and might be able to give you direction towards the right answers you have been searching for.

Charles Taliaferro, Madera, CA (USA) ctaliaferro@kitchentablegang.org

Thanks for advising us of your site and signing the ACA Home Page.

"ROBERT COWARD"

I have been trying to locate a First Sergeant from TSN, think in

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310th Spy War Flt, in 1967: TSgt Coopernurse (maybe Kupernurse). Any idea how I can locate him? Robert Coward, CMSgt, AF Ret. Formally: 14th ACW, Nha Trang r.coward950@worldnet.att.net

We'll put it in the ACA Newspaper and see if anyone recognizes the person.

WINNING HEARTS AND MINDS WITH BETTERBOMBS SOMEWHERE IN ASIA WITH JIM THOMPSON

U.S. Troops' Remains in Laos to Be Buried

WASHINGTON - Bone fragments that scientists determined are the remains of six U.S. servicemen whose AC-47 gunship crashed in Laos in 1966 during the Vietnam War will be buried as a group Friday at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors, the Pentagon said Tuesday.

The individual fragments, recovered by a joint U.S.-Lao excavation team in 1995, were too small to positively identify with any one of the six servicemen, but forensic anthropologists concluded after extensive study of the fragments and other evidence that the bones were from all six men.

Larger pieces of remains recovered from the crash site at the same time were positively identified in April 2003 as those of Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Luther L. Rose, of Howe, Texas, who was the aerial gunner aboard the AC-47 "Spooky," a World War II-era cargo plane that had been converted to a gunship.

Rose's remains were buried last summer.

The others were identified as Air Force Col. Theodore E. Kryszak, of Buffalo, N.Y.; Air Force Col. Harding E. Smith, of Los Gatos, Calif.; Air Force Lt. Col. Russell D. Martin, of Bloomfield, Iowa; Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Ervin Warren, of Philadelphia, and Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Harold E. Mullins, of Denver. Their plane went down on June 3, 1966, during a nighttime armed reconnaissance mission over southern Laos, where U.S. forces were secretly engaged in combat to disrupt communist Lao and North Vietnamese forces.

The six were members of the 4th Air Commando Squadron, which was based in Nha Trang, South Vietnam, but maintained a detachment at Ubon Royal Thai Air Force Base in Thailand to fly interdiction missions along the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Witnesses reported that the AC-47 caught fire and crashed in a heavily wooded area 30 miles northeast of Tchepone, in Khannouan Province, Laos, according to Defense Department records. No parachutes from the crew were observed and no emergency beepers were heard, the Pentagon says.

In 1994 a joint team of American and Lao specialists traveled to the suspected crash site and a villager led them to an area where personal effects, aircraft wreckage, crew-related materials and a crew member's identification tag were found. The next year an excavation was done and human remains were recovered, along with identifying materials from crew members.

STEVE CANYON, <u>www.as.org</u>, <u>SHEEPDIPPER@SPOOKTOWNUSA.COM</u>

Thanks for signing the ACA Home Page. Next time you write put you address down so that we may know where you are at.

Nostalgic return to yesteryear

Karl Leuschner, Lebanon. PA, Karl123@comcast.net

Thanks for signing the ACA Home Page.

In Viet Nam 1962 assigned to B-26 and U-10 units. Ron Payne, rpayne7777@aol.com

Thanks for signing the ACa Home Page. I was at Bien Hoa in 1962 so we were probably there together.

Looking for aircraft maintenance techs

That were stationed at Hurlburt Fld between 1970 and 1973 in the 319 SOS C-123s or 415 SOTS AC-119s Bob Call, Alabama, callrf@yahoo.com ACA Member

Just checking on what is new

Great web page, excellent links. Fred W Harris, Monroe, MI, canambrit@netscape.com ACA Member yes (life)

Thanks for the input.

Aussies in Vietnam with 315th Air Commando Group

My Name is David Lunnen. In 1965 and 1966 I was with the 315 Air Commando group, 8th Aerial Port Squadron. I was in Vietnam from April 1965 - April 1966. At this time the troop buildup was very large. I was on the ground loading and unloading aircraft at locations such as Ankhe, Kontum, Dakto, Bien Hoa, Vung Tau, Qui Nho'n, Nha Trang, Pleiku, and as always in past wars, the Australians were there with us. The caribous came in and out of small airfields with troops and supplies as did our C-123's. I recommend they receive any air medals due them for their gallant service. Ga Day. David R. Lunnen, marciahuddy@yahoo.com Thanks for the information and I will use it in pursuing Air Medals for our Aussie friends who stood by us in Vietnam.

Willard Edward Wyatt

My father was Willard Edward Wyatt. He served 35 years, and I believe he was a member of your unit during the early sixties. I didn't know him well. My parents were divorced around 1965, and he was only a shadowy figure during the childhood I spent in FWB. He died a bit over four years ago, in Victoria, Texas. I have received no information about his life, and have only the few stories he e-mailed to me before his death, vague memories from my

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early childhood, and stories my mother (also deceased) told me. Please, could you tell me if he WAS a member of your squadron at any time? I believe he flew AC-47s as an enlisted crew member (he was an E6) but I am not sure.

I wear a hat like your squadron wore, all the time in memory of him. Any help you could give me would be greatly appreciated, and I thank you for your time.

Randy W. Wyatt, 12525 Sterling Run Court, Jacksonville, FL 32225, (904) 221-6150 email: <u>LaurasGentleMan@aol.com</u>
P.S. I have already heard from Col. Bob Gleason, and am thrilled with what I learned. Thanks!

We have sent this to a number of Air commandos and will put this in the ACA Newsletter. Also, why don't you think about joining the ACA.

Commanded SOS at Thia, Cambodia, Laos delta named Warrin. Supported clandestine ops and others. Retired Air Force. John Walsh, Central Georgia, <u>Johnww1422@aol.com</u> ACA Member

Major Bruce R. Williams

I am attempting to locate anyone who knew or served with Major Bruce R. Williams. He was KIA in April of 1967 while navigating his Puff. I am his son. Thanks.

Charles Williams <u>sandwventures@netscape.net</u> (S & W Ventures, Inc.)

I will try and find someone or people who knew your father with Spooky personnel through the email connections and the ACA Newsletter which will be published in March 2005. In the meantime I will give you what is in the "Vietnam Air Losses" by Chris Hobson. Here is there account:

"AC -47D 43-48921 4th ACS, 14ACW, USAF, Nhatrang detached to Tan Son Nhut.

Maj Burnett Neal KIA

Maj Bruce Reginald Williams KIA

1LT Clifford C. Barnett KIA

SSgt Frederick Edward Barnette KIA

SSgt Robert Wendell Davis KIA

SSgt Thomas Alfred Preaux

A1C Michael Jeff Stephens KIA

A Spooky gunship on a night flare mission was flying a normal orbit off the coast near Cam Ranh Bay when it was observed to crash into the sea and explode. All on board the aircraft were killed in the crash, the cause of which was not ascertained."

4th ACS "Party" Suit

"Party" suit with his name and squadron patch on it in trade from a fellow collector. He bought this from a thrift store in the Marietta, Ga. area 10-15 years ago. I would like to put some "history" with

this uniform. Any information would be for my personal records and not for monetary or other gain. I use my collection in a high school VN history class. I tried to e-mail the 4th ACS and was not successful. Any information or advise you can offer will be appreciated. Thanks, Al Mark catdrg1@netscape.net

USAF Support in Vietnam 1950-1960

When we were originally sent to Vietnam in 1961 there was a period between 1950-1960 which USAF history wasn't readily available, such as how many aircraft we gave to the French, what did we fly if we flew anything to help the French, what type of support did the USAF provide to maintain the aircraft we gave to the French and what happened to the USAF support personnel who were captured by the Viet Minh about 1955. The story of the captured USAF personnel is covered in the April 2005 Flight Journal, "Trash Haulers to the Rescue," about C-119s that were sent to Vietnam in 1954. There was a letter to the editor in the Air Force Magazine in November 2004 which provided some insight into what the USAF was actually doing. This is USAF Retired Lt Col Jack E. McDonald's input on the short history of USAF activities in Vietnam in the fifties.

The statement in "Dien Bien Phu" (in a previous edition) that "France only requested use of 25 B-26s bomber and 400 USAF support personnel to maintain them" and that "Eisenhower sent only 10 B-26s and 200 airmen to maintain them" are not factual. After December 1950, US aircraft shipment started with 90 F-8F Bearcat fighters delivered to the French in Indochina in February-March 1951. In July 1951, five RB-26s arrived in-country and were turned over to the French. In December 1951, 33 B-26 bombers were renovated and turned over to the French at Tourane (Da Nang) AB. In March-April 1952, 10 C-47s were turned over, and in September-October 1952, some 60 additional C-47 were delivered.

These additional aircraft, however, completely overwhelmed the French maintenance capability, and as a result, in January 1953, approximately 28 USAF maintenance personnel from the 24th Air Depot Wing at Clark Field, Philippines, were dispatched to Nha Trang AB, Indochina, to provide needed support. This team remained at Nha Trang until August 1953. This was the first contingent of USAF personnel (outside of the MAAG) to be assigned to Vietnam.

When the French paradropped into Dien Bien Phu on Nov 20, 1953, they immediately discovered that they could not support the airlift requirement needed to maintain their new base. No land resupply was possible, so everything had to arrive by air. Consequently the French Air Force again requested support, and a detachment of C-119s from the 315th Air Division in Ashiya, Japan, was sent TDY to Cat Bi Air Base outside Haiphong, and, on Feb 5, 1954, some 200 USAF personnel were sent from Clark Field to Indochina. Half of the personnel went to Tourane (Da Nang) and

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established a B-26 maintenance facility, while the remainder went to Do Son (East of Haiphong on the Gulf of Tonkin) to establish a C-47 maintenance facility. These renovated and teams remained in place during the entire Dien Bien Phu operation, and the units at Cat Bi and Do Son came under attack by the Viet Minh forces.

I could go on about this operation, but the one major point I wanted to establish is that there exists no official USAF history about this period. And as I stated earlier, the French Air Force Historical Division book gives more coverage to USAF support than my own service has done. While I am considered a Vietnam veteran due to a 100-plus mission combat tour with AC-130s I find it hard to reconcile the fact that the ones I served with in 1953-54 are not considered Vietnam Veterans.

Lt Col Jack E. McDonald, USAF Ret. Warrenton, VA

Carlous Christian

Hi Gene.

My father was Orde Wingate's Medical Officer - from the time of the 77th Indian Infantry Brigade (here is his webpage-that I made-www.glanmore.org/gvf/jri1.html) and through to Mytykina, so he had contact with the Air Commandos all through the war.

He was a Canadian who volunteered in 1939 for the British Army as a Private - didn't tell them he was a Doctor so he would not get stationed in England. He was found out to be a Dr. at Dunkirk because he stayed on the beach to treat the wounded. And he was right, after it was discovered he was a physician, they were going to station him in England. He really did want to be a "Doc" in the front. He volunteered for Wingate and the Chindits after the Quebec Conference in 1943. He was a part of the training at Imphal and that other place that didn't exist which I can't remember the name of right now.

Here's part of the article by the RAF vet: www.glanmore.org/gvf/jri2.html. I like it because it's written from an RAF point of view (pov) and speaks to finding "why" he was sent on missions which, on the surface made no sense, 'til he found out that they were providing diversion for the Chindits from reading my father's papers just by the dates.., connecting dots. I'm in the middle of reconstructing it for the web. It's a great article.

Carlous "Chris" Christian was in a glider crash with my father. I'm pretty sure it was the crash over which there has been much written. It was crash on "Operation Broadway." Other crew members were Peter Fleming (Ian's brother). He wrote a book that refers to it as well. Another US military - Frank? (I have it all), walking out together from behind Japanese lines 1,000 miles.

I have more to add to it, but he was first with Wingate and then, after his death, was transferred to the Morris force and on from there 'til they made him go home - he was too sick. He was in China, a number of places (I have a document written by an RAF vet that goes into all of it in detail. I just got permission to use it from him for the web). I think David has one actually by J. Ian Robinson, RAF.

Thanks again for printing the letter Gene. People like Chris they are "honors" in one's life. Thank you for the Christmas letter. I always enjoy those from you very much.

Warmest regards, Anne Faulkner, Canada Faulkner@cogeco.ca

Proof of being in Vietnam & Laos in the early days.

One of the biggest personal fights many of us had was proving that we were in Vietnam or Laos when we were given orders saying we were TDY someplace (the some place was Vietnam but not spelled out) or assigned to Project 404 in Thailand while we were actually assigned to Laos. At first we accepted the fact that it was a classified assignment but later when we needed it for VA support or for military reasons we did not have it in our records. This fight continues today where people can't prove they were in Vietnam or Laos because their orders and DD form 214 doesn't list these countries. There have been endless fights with the VA on getting medical support for some of these people. I know that when I had my records change indicating I was in Vietnam in 1962 and Laos in 69-70 it took me years to do it, badgering many personnel weenies until I wore them out and they put it there just to get rid of me. The letter below just came from Erik Stewart, An old Commando and an ACA member, and reached my desk where I immediately started an email hunt. Bob Gleason, Nick Emigholz, Bob Hollwell, Chili Wills and a number of other started to help our brother who is in hospice and in real bad shape. Hap Lutz got the letter to the hunters, Bob Gleason has been rounding up data and now has a Chaplain helping, Nick Emigholz searched all his records for his name since he thought he worked with him in Vietnam, Chili called the big dogs out and has the VFW working for Erik and Robert Hollowell got some data to help the rest of you still fighting proving you were in Vietnam or Laos. (See Erik's letter in the "Letters to the Editor" in this newsletter.)

Records Bare

Guys, we have another Air Commando that has found his AF records bare of any and all reference to his duty at Hurlburt, and Viet Nam. Recently George McNamara found himself in the same situation, as VA said his records did not reflect his Det. 2 service Fortunately I had a copy of the Special Orders sending us to Bien Hoa, and I mailed it to Col. Gleason, who made it a "certified true copy" and now that problem is solved. Stewart is in a bad way, so any assistance will greatly help him and his family. If you remember Erik Stewart, or have a stray copy of orders with his name...please e-mail me ASAP. I hope all is well with each of you, and your family.

Load Clear....Bob Hollowell email: winningphoto@comcast.net

Erik Stewart needs help with the VA of his services in Vietnam

My name is Tom Allman and I found myself TDY in Bein Hoa from January 1962 to July 1962. I was injured in June 1962. It took

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a long time for me to prove I was there and get VA help but here's what I did. Although Erik and my time at Det. 2 did not match, I know he has to be frustrated and too weak to fight the long fight. Maybe Erik or his designee has tried these but it is worth a try.

After 30 years of trying to get the 5th AF to acknowledge I was ready to give up. Luckily a friend referred me to my local National Officer of the Purple Heart. I believe there is one in every state, not sure. He blew open doors and got my VA claim approved. We tracked all my pay and found I was paid \$1.35 per day per deim during the same time I was away from Clark AB Philippines. Where was I? They pulled my AF medical records and found a Dr's entry, "injured on a classified assignment with no medical support". Where was I? The search continued looking for a DD215 the amendment document to a DD214 and they found it dated 1975. It was mailed to me in 2002.

My heart goes out to Eric because he has to be frustrated and too weak to fight the long fight. If he has been diagnosed with Agent Orange (AO) where do they think he got it, Midland Michigan where Dow Chemical made it? I was told I could have contacted it from drinking hot liquids from a Styrofoam cup (HO HO HO). However we found out that it was proclaimed by some pentagon source that official records state that AO was not used until 1965 (HO HO HO). So I guess that "stuff" in 55 gallon green barrels with black lettering "Defoliation" and sprayed from C-123's based at Bein Hoa in 1962 was not AO.

Seriously I will find out who the National Officer in Eric's area. P.S. Were you a load master on a C-47 at Det.2 in 1962? Your name sounds familiar. Best regards...Tom

Tom.

Thank you for your informative and timely response. This may well assist Stewart's family in getting the assistance he so urgently needs. I keep seeing more guys lacking the documentation they need for benefits that they are certainly entitled to, but suddenly discover their "201 file" lacks all reference to that part of their service.

Yes, you are correct... I was a L/M on the SC-47's at Bien Hoa, and if memory serves me correctly... you were in "Communications", and you were the young man that played "taps" at the memorial ceremony for Capt. Ed Kissam and his crew at Det. #2. Oddly enough, tomorrow (Feb. 11th) marks the 43rd anniversary of their death, on 11 Feb 1962. I have just received your second e-mail with the link for the Purple Heart Organization: www.purpleheartchapters.org/states/Florida.htm

Robert Holmes

Dear Mr. Rossel,

I am doing some research on my father (Robert Holmes), the aircraft he flew in, and people that served with him while he was attached to the 1st Air Commando's. I would greatly appreciate any help that you could give me.

I have a few pictures, a flight log showing his missions, the

"ZAP" pin and I remember playing with the bush hat when I was a child but unfortunately I don't know whatever happened to it. I am attaching a picture of him in front of his aircraft (RB26C) after a mission. He was the camera operator. My father is on the right but I do not know the other person in the picture.

According to the flight log that I have he flew his missions between 27 APR and 11 Sep 1963, and the picture reads that he had just returned from a mission and was at Da Nang. According to another website http://home.att.net/~jbaugher4/a26_11.html, there were only two RB-26L's in SEA and were delivered at Bien Hoa in March 1963.

My father passed away at age 76 in Aug 2002 to cancer. I believe he could have lasted until he was 100 if it wouldn't have been for that. He could work circles around me. Thank you. Tom Holmes, 817-656-8792, thomes@charter.net

Did any of you know Robert Holmes? If you did could you please help his son and info me because I am interested in his story.

A1 Firefly Action 1968

Dear Sirs: In the Fall of 1968, I was crew on the ABCCC airborne command post, call sign Alleycat. One night, a friendly site in Laos, north of the big loop in the Mekong River (as I recall), was under attack; I remember their call sign as Red Hat. There was solid cloud overcast blocking the mountain peaks from above. A flight of two A-1s, call sign Firefly, out of NKP, were orbiting above the clouds. As the situation on the ground got worse for the good guys, Firefly lead asked us to figure out a DME and radial off of Udorn TACAN Channel 70, and he would let down through the clouds. (There was no radar coverage.) I spread out charts on the floor of the capsule and figured out a safe heading and let down point for the Fireflies. They let down on my information and saved the site. The risks were obvious, but the pilots wanted to help friendlies on the ground. I would like to find these brave pilots and learn their story of that night. Did they ever get recognition for their heroism? Does the situation sound familiar to any of your

their heroism? Does the situation sound familiar to any of your members? Thanks so much for your help. Sincerely, Jim Stanitz, jimbo707@mail.cannet.com

Can you beat this one?

Here is a story which turns commanders' head grey. This is a story out of Hobson's book "Vietnam Air Losses."

12 April 1963. C-123B 56-4380. 777 TCS, 464 TCW on TDY, USAF, Don Muang. 1Lt Raymond E. Doyle (KIA), 1Lt Richard L Hatlestad (KIA), SSgt Stanley E. Truesdale (KIA). After taking off from the airfield at Nakhon Phanom the pilot of a Provider attempted to snare a red flag on top of a flag pole. Apparently, this trick had been attempted before by other C-123 crews based in Thailand. During the second attempt the left wing hit a house and the aircraft crashed killing all three crew and two Thai civilians on

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the ground. Nakhon Phanom airfield in northeastern Thailand, close to the border with Laos, was still under construction when this accident happened. It is possible that the C-123s were bringing in construction equipment or supplies.

Old MOH Write-up for Bob Moore, who recently died.

LtCol Robert W. Moore, USAF [Ret] served with extraordinary courage and distinction for over 20 years of active duty. His lengthy assignments to USAF Special Operations units were highlighted by his three combat tours in Southeast Asia and were varied from pilot advisor with the Vietnamese Air Force to a distinguished member of the Military Equipment Delivery to Cambodia. During these tours in Southeast Asia he logged over 1000 hours of combat flying in both helicopter and fixed winged aircraft. In addition to his extensive combat time, he worked extensively and gave freely of his time in support of a unique medical program sponsored by the Air Commando Association in Guatemala. After his retirement he continued to support Air Force Special Operations and Air Commando Association activities in Central America as well as other locations. LtCol Moore is a highly motivated combat warrior with an enviable record of Southeast Asia performance.

His many combat decorations are highlighted with his award of the Distinguished Flying Cross with 9 OLCs, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 25 OLC's, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and many lesser both U.S. and foreign decorations. LtCol Moore is the epitome of a Special Operator, highly decorated Air Commando and clearly an outstanding warrior.

Father Luke

Remember Father Luke Bouchard OMI, the Catholic Priest who administered to the Hmong around 20 Alternate (Long Tieng) and who walked everywhere? He administered to the Hmong, both in their village and on the battle field, yet he could walk in both friendly and enemy territory and no one killed him. A book should be written about this brave person. Air America and the Ravens would give him a lift over the hills to cut his walking time from hours to minutes. He came by the Raven AOC at 20A and enjoyed a beer with the guys and he attended one of the Air America reunions in the US. Our friendly and very popular priest is and has been in Indonesia for some time. In my last letter several years ago he told me that he doesn't walk that much since he must by boats between the islands in Indonesia. His current address is: Fr. Lucien Bouchard, OMI, Kotac Pos 2, Semitau 78771. Kalimantan, Indonesia. Some of our members sent money to help him after the Tsunami and if anyone wants to send him money his order told me to send it to the following address and they will get it to him. Please make your check to: MISSIONARY OBLATES OF MARY IMMAC-ULATE and send it to: Fr. Darrell Rupiper, OMI, 5531 So. Kenwood, Chicago, IL 60637. If you have any questions please email Fr. Darrell Rupiper: drupiper2000@hotmail.com or call him at (773) 493-8917. Darrell is an old classmate of mine from back in Illinois. Thanks to all those who have sent money to Fr. Luke's Tsunami Relief Fund.

Navajo Code Talker

Navajo Code Talkers died in Nov 2004. He was one of the Navajos recruited and helped develop a code which the Japanese never broke. There were 421 code talkers which also included a handful of Comaches and other Native Americans. In 1942 the Japanese cryptographers were breaking US military codes seemingly at will. To combat the problem a son of a missionary, who had grown up on the reservation and was in the military, suggested devising a code based on the unwritten Navajo language, which was hardly spoken outside of the Navajo Nation. The article claimed that a bunch of 16 year-old Navajos kids, who were sheepherders, developed the code.

It proved itself to doubters in a trial at Camp Pendleton when the older US codes required two hours to encrypt, transmit and decipher

Samuel Billison, one of the while the Navajo code took only 2½ minutes. It further stated that were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima. Samuel Billison who dreamed of becoming a Marine had his life changed when he became a code talker. Instead of returning to the Navajo Nation as a sheepherder he went on to earn a doctorate in education and studied law at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. He became a leader and respected educator in the Navajo Nation and organized the Navajo Codetalkers Association when the code talkers mission was declassified in 1968. He was a consultant on John Woo's movie "Windtalkers" and was the authentic voice on Hasbro's GI Joe Codetalker doll. There are fewer than 100 code talkers surviving today.

ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT'S NAME:	
STUDENT'S SOCIAL SECURITY #	
RELATIONSHIP:	AGE:
COLLEGE:	
ADDRESS OF COLLEGE: _	
CITY:	
STATE:	ZIP:
MEMBER'S NAME:	
MEMBER'S #	

Rules: The number and amount of the scholarship(s) will be determined annually by the Board of Directors.

The Scholarship(s) will be awarded annually in May. The Board of Directors will randomly select the winner(s) from the eligible candidates submitted by the membership.

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

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

ACA Board of Directors.



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March 2005

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Felix "Sam" Sambogna

As I wander through our building, study the memorabilia, and meet more and more of our members, I am so impressed by the accomplishments and adventures of so many. A few of our folks have written books highlighting their experiences and exploits, but many more have great stories to tell. If writing a book seems too daunting, how about submitting stories to our Newsletter. I assure you they will be welcome.

Recently, a fellow F-102 pilot I was stationed with in Japan a long time ago sent me a copy of a book he wrote titled Forget Me! Not! It is a fictitious story of a Raven shot down in Laos. There are many references to Laos, Victor, and the highly acclaimed Raven pilots and support personnel. According to the author, Col (ret) Donald "Rube" Waddell, his goal was to "flame the fire for the continued full accounting of all missing MIAs in South East Asia and offer some final closure for those shattered lives." Rube, a fighter pilot and ACA member, also served as a Water Pump commander.

Once again, Hap Lutz and his team arranged two great social events - the Christmas Social and the celebration of General Aderholt's 85th birthday. More about these events in Hap's column.

Year 2004 was another good year for our organization. Thanks to the efforts of our volunteers, especially Hap and Pete Bowman,



we remain a viable organization. This is a tribute to all the folks who have kept the ACA going since the 60s - not bad for an all- volunteer group. Although many of our members are getting gray (older), our membership remains around the 2500 mark. In 2004, when comparing losses and gains we had a net loss of three. Among the ACA members who went to their maker was Carlous Christian. A beautiful and touching ceremony was held in the Air Park as many payed tribute to this wonderful man and air commando. Thanks so much to the family, ACA Chaplain Charlie Jones and members Hap Lutz and Roger Klair, and the support from the base folks. It truly was a great event.

Your Board's goals for 2005:

- Continue to publish an excellent Newsletter.
- Arrange as good a 2005 reunion as possible.
- Improve financial accounting of our assets. (We were without a treasurer for several months. Now past president Downs is the treasur-

er and he is improving our system. We are financially sound.)

- Promote recognition of outstanding ACA members.
- Improve the appearance of our building.
- Continue to support MTF and other worthy causes.
- Continue to improve our relationship with the Hurlburt 16th SOW. (Hap is our project officer for the on-going "Through the Eyes of a Commando" lecture series that is sponsored by the Wing.)
- Improve use of <u>www.aircommando.net</u> to get the word out on current issues/happenings.

We welcome comments/suggestions from the membership. Should we be doing more, if so, what? Or should we just continue to keep the ship on course?

In the columns on the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF) John Grove presents a recap of accomplishments in 2004. It was a great year and volunteers from our ACA supported many of the tasks. Dave Freeman, one of our members who regularly helps John Grove with the difficult loading tasks, flew on a 16th SOW C-130 to Honduras and helped deliver the goods for the annual Christmas Wish Program in support of orphanages in that country.

I encourage local folks to attend the "Through the Eyes of a Commando" lecture series - history and legacy of air commandos sponsored by the 16th SOW. Memorabilia from our building are loaned for the events to create the air commando atmosphere. I think you will find the evening informative and enjoyable. This is another event that strengthens the bond between the ACA and the SOW personnel.

Thanks again to all those who continue to support with donations the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation. Stay well and let us hear from you.

Cheers, Sam

UPCOMING REUNIONS

A-1 Skyraider Ass'n Reunion Sept 16-17 2005

Menger Hotel, San Antonio TX
Contact:Rocco DeFelice
(210)-659-5965.
roccodef@earthlink.net
or Ralph Hoggait at
(210)-494-3190 tadhoggait@aol.com

AIR AMERICA REUNION June 2 - 5 2005

The Silver Legacy
407 N. Virginia Avenue
Reno, Nevada 89501-1138
Make your own arrangements.
Call 1-800-687-8733
Request group code: AIR
AA05

For itinerary contact:
Patricia Sherman
51 Royal Drive
West Warwick, RI 02893-5424