



# AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

June 2006

### A Warrior's Memorial Day

by Col. Norm Brozenick Jr.  
16th SOW Commander

Memorial Day offers us the chance to reflect on our military heritage and the legacy of selfless service extended every day by men and women like you.

Along with your families, you selflessly shoulder the pain of loss, endure frequent separation, and overcome the mental and emotional challenges of deployment without foreseeable end.

This is a war unlike those fought by our forefathers, yet like them, we remain committed to win. You already occupy a hallowed place in our nation's history. Yet we must ask you for more.

We remain engaged in a global war on terror against those who will not stop efforts to destroy

See **MEMORIAL** pg. 3

### Inside Features

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Blind Bat.....           | pg 29      |
| Editorial .....          | pg 2       |
| Hap's Comments .....     | pg 4       |
| Letters.....             | pg 8       |
| McCoskrie T.F.....       | pg 12      |
| Membership .....         | pg 5       |
| President's Corner ..... | back pg    |
| Reunion Info.....        | pg 16 & 17 |
| Rossel's Report .....    | pg 20      |



## Salute To The 16th SOW "America's Air Commandos"

### Guess What? Reunion Coming Up

By Dick Geron  
ACA Vice & Reunion Chairman

The ACA Reunion is coming up on 5 thru 8 October, 2006. Be there to welcome old friends and meet new ones. Everyone wants a big crowd this year. Last year was not as crowded as we hoped for due to hurricane worries. We have solved the problem for this year by ordering no talk of hurricanes. Any inquiries of hurricanes will be met with the official response, "We Are Enjoying Tropical Breezes And The Fish Are Biting." Nothing else!

**THE THEME OF THIS  
YEAR'S REUNION WILL BE  
TO SALUTE THE 16TH  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS  
WING/ AMERICA'S AIR  
COMMANDOS.**

In keeping with this theme, we are honored to have as our Featured Speaker for the Reunion Banquet, Colonel Norman J. Brozenick, Jr., the present Commander of the 16th Special Wing at Hurlburt. This will be a great opportunity for all persons interested in Special Operations to



**Soundside Club - Saturday Nite banquet locale or site.**

hear from the current person in charge.

There is a Thursday evening "First Nighter's" Social on the Veranda at Mr. T's Two Trees Restaurant at the Ft. Walton Beach Golf Course.

There is also a one-day casino excursion to Biloxi early Thursday morning for \$20.00, providing enough folks sign up.

Friday at 1000 hours Golf Tournament at the Ft. Walton Beach City Golf Course. Gator Lakes Golf Course at Hurlburt closed for greens makeover.

Friday afternoon is the Fish Fry at the Quality Inn Motel. A ladies Social is also planned for Saturday, from 11 to 2pm, Two Trees Restaurant, with Joyce Harrington as Hostess. The Banquet will be Saturday evening at the Hurlburt Soundside Club. The Memorial Service will be at noon on Sunday at Hurlburt followed by a Bar-B-Que at the Quality Inn Motel. Then the auction and another great reunion will be in the books!

Make your reservation EARLY! See you there!

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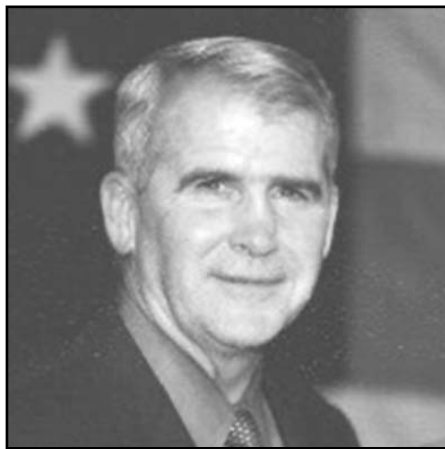
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# Editorial Comments



*Lt Col Oliver North USMC (Ret)*

## The Pen and the Sword

In the play, "Richelieu," Edward Bulwer-Lytton, the English novelist and playwright, wrote, "the pen is mightier than the sword." Were Lord Lytton alive today, he would likely concede that the pen has been supplanted by a television camera - and swords by lethal projectiles and explosives. But it's doubtful that the author would have claimed that those who use pens - or cameras for that matter - were more important than those who wield the weapons. Yet that seems to be the way it is today for those who fight in, and cover, the war in Iraq.

In late January, when ABC's Bob Woodruff and his cameraman Doug Vogt were badly wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED) near Taji, Iraq, the incident was instantly reported on every network and news wire. The following morning it was front-page news in every major newspaper.

The course of the two men's treatment, their evacuation - first to a field hospital in Iraq, then to Landstuhl, Germany, and finally to the National Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Maryland - has been detailed on TV, talk-radio, in news magazines and Internet blogs. In the aftermath, the incident has

been cited as "proof" that the war is going badly.

On 30 January, CNN's "Chief Foreign Correspondent" Christiane Amanpour told the No. 2 news network's Larry King that the war in Iraq "has basically turned out to be a disaster, and journalists have paid for it, paid for the privilege of witnessing and reporting that and so have many, many other people who have been there." She then continued, "...for some reason, which I can't fathom, the kind of awful thing that's going on there now on a daily basis has almost become humdrum. So, when something happens to people that we identify, like Bob and like Doug, we wake up again and realize that, no, this is not acceptable, what's going on there, and it's a terrible situation."

Statements like these - so full of self-importance and clearly made to advance a political perspective, obscure important facts. They also illuminate some very unflattering aspects about the modern "news business."

All but ignored in the "noise" was the poignant and extraordinarily sensitive statement of Bob Woodruff's wife Lee: "We realize that our family is going through something that thousands of military families have experienced over the last three years since the war began and throughout our history. Bob's name may be more recognizable, but his story is no more important. He would be the first to insist that the attention should be focused on the members of the U.S. military whose heroic actions he has reported on for years."

Lee Woodruff has it exactly right. That's what those who cover young Americans serving in harm's way are supposed to do:

document events as they happen; prepare a "first draft of history;" file accurate reports - no self-inflated hubris, no polemics.

War reporting is an inherently dangerous business. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 61 members of the media have been killed in Iraq since March 2003. But this war cannot be properly covered from the balconies of hotels in the "Green Zone" or by regurgitating press releases prepared by over-worked public affairs officers. That's why Woodruff and Vogt were standing up in the back of an armored vehicle when that IED exploded. To get the story right - on film, videotape or newsprint - they had to be where the action is. It has always been that way.

During WWII, Ernie Pyle's column - a foxhole fighter's perspective on the war - was avidly read in 400 daily newspapers and 300 weeklies - because it was the real thing. After covering most of the European campaign, he went to the Pacific Theater and was killed by a Japanese bullet on 18 April 1945, during the invasion of Ie Shima, a tiny island off Okinawa, Japan.

Joe Rosenthal would never have captured the picture of those five Marines and a Navy Corpsmen staining to raise that flag atop Mount Suribachi if he hadn't gone ashore into the carnage called Iwo Jima in February 1945.

Joe Galloway was a young UPI reporter/photographer "em bedded" with Hal Moore's understrength battalion when they were helo-lifted into Viet-Nam's Ia Drang valley on 14 Nov 65. His stirring chronicle of that three day battle against three North

# Memorial

Continued from page 1

American society until they are captured, killed or otherwise vanquished. You are our nation’s only line of offense and defense. The stakes are tremendous. If we fail, our nation will cease to exist.

You are correct - others could be doing more. Nonetheless, you continue to risk life and limb for our country. You are different. You are warriors. You voluntarily chose the honor of defending our country, and quietly carry that burden in your very souls. Yes, you could be sitting at home this holiday weekend without any experience in uniform or civilian service.

You might not even think about the war. Perhaps your biggest stressor would be deciding what type of mini-van to buy, or whether to accept that job offer with a \$50,000 signing bonus.

Instead, you’ll think about our deployed Air Commandos and their teammates who eagerly engage and destroy enemies of the United States.

And while you’re at home, you’ll cherish every minute with family and friends, knowing full well your next deployment is coming soon.

I may not know exactly what motivated each of you to serve, or why so many of you volunteer to remain in uniform.

But I do know this. You know the price of freedom. You know we cannot win without you. You know a grateful nation is forever in your debt.

You know what it means to be a warrior. May God bless you, your families and our deployed Air Commandos. Anytime, anyplace.

Courtesy *COMMANDO*

## 16th SOW Aimpoints

- Fight and win
- Take best care of our wingmen, families and resources
- Develop the next generation of Air Force and Air Commando leaders

# Pen and Sword

Continued from page 2

Vietnamese Army regiments could never have been drafted from a desk in Saigon.

None of these journalists tried to make themselves the centerpiece of the story. Neither did Woodruff or Vogt - though others have done so. Though they all faced life-threatening peril, none of them ever crowed, as Dan Rather once proclaimed to Larry King, “danger is my business.”

None of them gave evidence that they considered themselves to be more important than the soldiers, sailors, airmen, guardsmen and marines they were covering. All seemingly heeded another of Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s pithy comments: “One of the sublimest things in the world is plain truth.” And unlike Amanpour, they all reported facts - not opinions.

Courtesy - *MILITARY*

## Purple Heart Stamp Reissued

A commemorative Purple Heart stamp has been reissued at the new first class rate of 39 cents. Originally created in 2003, the stamp pays tribute to Americans wounded or killed in action. With the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq having produced well over 16,000 wounded and nearly 2,300 killed, reissuing the stamp seems only appropriate. *VFW March 2006*

# ACA is Healthy

Felix “Sam” Sambogna, ACA Treasurer

As I reviewed the comments on some of the surveys, it became apparent to me that we should publish our financial status in the newsletter. Folks who attend the annual business meeting during the October reunion are briefed, but the many who do not attend may not know our status.

Our ACA is very healthy. We have nearly 3,000 members counting the widows and our numbers are not significantly decreasing in spite of the age of many of our members. New members and returning members balance the losses caused by folks who drop out or pass on to commando heaven.

Our financial status is shown below in a commando version of a balance sheet that we review at the monthly ACA meetings.

| <u>ASSETS</u>                         | <u>12/31/05</u>   | <u>04/30/06</u>   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| FNB&T                                 | 10,180.59         | 15,886.61         |
| WHITNEY                               | 16,623.71         | 17,240.31         |
| FCB                                   | 10,980.43         | 11,644.20         |
| CD-WHITNEY                            | 90,000.00         | 90,000.00         |
| CD-FCB                                | 50,000.00         | 91,280.80         |
| CD-PEOPLES                            | 41,000.00         |                   |
| CD-REGIONS                            | 60,776.91         | 61,000.00         |
| PETTY CASH                            | 200.00            | 200.00            |
| <b>TOTAL CASH &amp; ACCOUNTS</b>      | <b>279,761.64</b> | <b>287,251.92</b> |
| <u>OTHER ASSETS</u>                   |                   |                   |
| CS INVENTORY                          | 10,289.30         | 10,289.30         |
| PREPAID DEPOSIT                       | 40.00             | 40.00             |
| REAL PROPERTY – BLDG, EQUIP& LOT      | 194,528.00        | 194,528.00        |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                   | <b>484,618.94</b> | <b>492,109.22</b> |
| <u>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</u>       |                   |                   |
| UNRESTRICTED –GEN FUND                | 28,968.55         | 32,008.83         |
| Liquid Assets -GEN FUND- CS INVENTORY | 18,679.25         | 21,719.53         |
| TEMP RESTRICTED – BLDG & LOT          | 194,528.00        | 194,528.00        |
| TEMP RESTRICTED – BLDG FUND           | 53,233.39         | 53,233.39         |
| RESTRICTED LIFE DUES                  | 207,889.00        | 212,339.00        |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b> | <b>484,618.94</b> | <b>492,109.22</b> |

Summary: We have over \$287,000 in CDs and cash. Interest from the CDs is one source of our income. Our income at the beginning of the year increases because dues are paid early in the year. We own our building outright and in the current market it is worth much more than the \$194,528 that we include above. Our other sources of income are dues, a little profit during the reunion, country store sales, and donations. We are able to pay for the quarterly newsletter and other expenses that are offset by our income.  
**WE ARE IN GREAT SHAPE!**



# Hap's Comments

By now almost all of you know that our founder Heinie Aderholt has been hospitalized with acute pancreatitis for some three months. You've been apprised of his progress, or lack of it, via e-mail, telecons, hearsay, and the venerable grapevine.

As of today, 22 May 2006, weather permitting, General Secord is supposed to fly Larry Ropka to Montgomery, AL and Larry is to accompany Heine back to Ft. Walton via ambulance. Heine will then take residence and further treatment and rehabilitation at Westwood Healthcare Center.

Heinie's struggle has been long and arduous. Several of us have tried to make his journey lighter by providing companionship and simple ancillary care procedures.

Chief among those doing so are Larry and Joan Ropka. I cannot here adequately document the many hours of love and care they have so selflessly given on Heinie's path to recovery. They have forsaken all other of their needs to focus on his well being and his getting well and staying well. They are truly "Angels in the Midst."

Another who has sacrificed time, energy, and resources is Heinie's "Special Friend," Anne Bruner. She has spent many bedside hours at his beckon call. She also schedules the volunteer "sitters" for our around the clock vigilance.

Those "sitters," former and current, include Ken Lengfield, Sam Sambogna, Roger Klair, Larry & Joan Ropka, Clyde Howard, Li-Anh Bayard, Porn Kirdpirote, Joanne Secord, Anne Bruner, Warren Trest, Doug Blair, Bob Gabriel, Joe Caruth, Dick Geron, Dick Secord, and yours truly.

I would be remiss in my commentary if I failed to tell you that General Secord has been a major player in Heinie's recovery. His tasks have been more daunting in that he has Heinie's medical power-of-attorney and is the "play" caller in all cases.

During a couple of my "sitting" experiences, I read several of your many cards and well wishes to Heinie and I can tell you first hand they are very meaningful and uplifting. He will no doubt thank you personally someday, but I wanted to share some of the events of my past "watches."

I just talked to Sugie Jones and our Chaplain Charlies' medical progress continues to be favorable. His path to recovery too has been arduous, with many peaks and valleys. Sugie has kept you informed and up-to-date via the magic of e-mail so I can't share anything new. Keep him, Heinie, Concy, and all our troops in harms way in your morning and evening prayers.

I had the occasion to accompany Saras Taveprungsenukul (Mr. "T") to Luke AFB for the 6 month maintenance evaluation of the 21FS Gamblers F-16 Program. Mr. "T" bid and received the contract to maintain the F-16s for the country of Taiwan.

To say the least, it was a most informative and interesting experience. I met all his Line Chiefs and those responsible for putting this program together and conducting it. As I expected, Mr. "T's" overall program evaluation was superior. It follows on all his other successful adventures.

My real purpose for tagging along with Mr. "T" was to visit "Mac" and Donna McCombie who reside in Sun City, AZ. I have promised for years to visit and as I no longer drive great distances,

this offered an opportunity to do both things.

"Mac" was an EOD Supervisor who I met during the '70s when he came to Savannakhet, Laos for duty. Among other things, he was very resourceful in "acquiring" goods for a hospital that I, and others, were putting together for the Royal Lao Air Force, Colonel Concy Phimpavong, Commander.

We had a delightful get-together, including a sumptuous dinner meal at Red Lobster. He and Donna plan to revisit FWB for the annual EOD Reunion this November.

I have talked to many, many of you over the phone since Heinie's hospitalization. I thank you for your concern and I have conveyed your well wishes to him and he is most appreciative.

Plan now to be at our 4th of July Social!

### Ed Note:

Heinie did move to the Westwood Healthcare Center as planned. Larry Ropka, along with a former Special Forces Combat Medic, accompanied him on the some three hour ride. He is now resting comfortably and receiving the therapy necessary for his recovery. Ironically enough, Heinie's next door roomie is Delores Roberson's brother Frank Mariner. And, Jim and Shirley Yealy reside in the apartment portion of the complex.

From all normal lab and x-ray reports, observations of his "sitters," and reports from his doctor, his progress is excellent and he may well be in attendance at this year's reunion, if only briefly!

## AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION 2006 BALLOT

### PRESIDENT (VOTE FOR ONE)

FELIX "SAM" SAMBOGNA ( )

Write in \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

### BOARD (VOTE FOR TWO)

GORDON SCOTT ( )

BOB WHITE ( )

Write ins \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

\_\_\_\_\_ ( )

### PROXY

(To vote in your stead at the General Membership Meeting)

### I GIVE MY PROXY TO

\_\_\_\_\_

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

ACA # \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE RETURN BY 1 OCT 06

# Membership News



## *In Memory of:*

ALPHANSO R. ALTIERI  
MARCH 2006

WILLIAM L. BARBER  
NOVEMBER 2005

NORBERT GORMAN, JR  
OCTOBER 2001

WILLIAM H. HAMILTON  
MARCH 2006

WILLIAM M. JEARY  
UNKNOWN

HARRY CLAY LEYSER III  
OCTOBER 2005

JOHN A. SALYARDS  
DECEMBER 2005

### **NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS**

HARRY J. BRIGHT  
RALMOND J. CHAPMAN  
RON COOK  
PAUL R. ETTERLING  
ALAN C. GROOMS  
DEAN A. HALL  
JOHN T. KEMP  
KEVIN M. LEOPOLD  
JOSE A. MATA  
JAMES L. O'CONNOR  
EDWARD J. SCHEUREN

### **NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

JAMES W. BURNS  
PATRICK M. FLOOD  
RICHARD E. MENARD  
ANDREW M. WILSON  
CHUE YANG

### **CONVERTED TO LIFE**

MARK C. ALBERTSON  
PEDRO ARROYO-JULIA  
M. A. 'BEETLE' BAILEY  
GLENN S. BREMENKAMP  
TOM BURCH

BERNARD J. BURKACKI  
ROBERT S. CEBINA  
JIMMY E. GRANT  
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CRAIG S. LANDEFELD  
CHARLES P. LONG  
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PAUL SAUNIER  
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ROBERT F. TROZZO  
BELVA D. 'BD' WALKER  
KENNETH WICHMAN

**NEW HONORARY MEMBER**  
BOBBY ADERHOLT

### **LOST MEMBERS**

EUGENE V. BECKER  
MGEM RICHARD COMER  
ANISE COPELAND  
WILLIAM L. FORSYTH  
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Continued from page 5

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## SURVEY REPORT

*by Pete Bowman*

Over 300 people responded to the survey sent with the last newsletter. There was one item that caused some consternation. We are not planning to dissolve the ACA. We are developing a plan for the disposition of our assets if and when we should ever do such a foolish thing.

The rest of the survey developed some good comments and suggestions. The voting on the newsletter was pretty well split. In response, we will both mail out our newsletter and post it on our web site.

We were surprised at the number of people who check the web [www.home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1)

## ACA History

The Air Commando Association (ACA) is an organization formed during the Vietnam war by Air Force personnel who served in Jungle Jim, 4400 CCTS, Air Commando Units from all wars, and Special Operations units, Special Air Warfare Center, Combat Application Groups, Project 404, Raven FACS, Combat Control Team, and all members who served with units equipped with the following aircraft performing special operation missions: A-1, A-26, A-37, U-10, T-28, C-47, C-7 C-130, C-123, C-119, O-1, O-2, OV-10, L-1, UC-64, L-5, B-25, P-51, C-46, Helicopters, YR-4, CH-53, H-34, MH-53, MH-60, UH-10. Waco Gliders, all gunships, etc.

The purpose of the ACA was to

keep alive the Air Commando spirit, to rekindle comradeship of wartime relationship, to honor the dead and the living who participated in our wartime effort and to promote the utilization of low key peacekeeping activities of special operations. As the ACA matured it also contributed to nation building and healing by providing medical supplies and personnel in countries which we had served in, promoted the children of our members, both deceased and living, by offering scholarships, offered our experience to the US Air Force, contributed to the history of our units and made the world aware of our sacrifices for our country by our members. There were over 400,000 personnel who served in

See **HISTORY** pg. 7

# Hall of Fame

## Air Commando Hall of Fame Seeks Nominations for Year 2006 Induction

by Gordo Scott

The Hall of Fame Committee, headed up by Col Dennis Barnett, USAF, Retired, is seeking nominations for the year 2006 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 success. Your recommendations 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 2006.

### 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 31July of each year.

## History

Continued from page 6

these units from 1961. The ACA has over 2,600 active members. It has a history of over 50 years with the first Air Commando unit established in 1943 and commanded by Col Phil Cochran immortalized by Milton Caniff in his comic strip Terry & The Pirates as Steve Canyon from 1944-1988.

### ACA MEMBERSHIP

There are four membership categories to include those who served in our units, those who served in our sister services or Government agencies, associate members and special membership. Membership cost \$20 per year and benefits include a quarterly newsletter, a yearly reunion at Fort Walton Beach FL and association with the finest airmen in the world.

There is a growing need for new and old blood to return to the flock and to the days of yesteryear's thunder at Hurlburt Field, of memories of the sweet smell of avgas early in the morning, the churning sound of the C-47 lifting off at day break, the majestic return to base of the B-26,

the AT-28 groaning at the end of the runway for takeoff, the U-10 hanging in the air on takeoff, the CCT parachutes silent opening for another air show, the unheralded but vitally essential mechanics' long hours and sweat in keeping our ancient aircraft airworthy and safe for our aircrew, tales of the Ravens and gunship's Mekong gunslingers, helicopters unheralded rescues, the untold stories of our current Special Operations units, the memories in the hallways of our non-descript buildings of Col Cochran, B/G King, B/G Aderholt, M/G Pritchard, Col Gleason, LtC Doyle, LtC Mueller, all the young turks, now and then, who wanted to replace them someday and the echos of our heros who never returned from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Latin America, Africa and other nameless places. Join now for these memories, a super home page, an unparalleled historical quarterly veteran newspaper and a fantastic annual reunion in Oct at Fort Walton Beach FL for \$20.00 a year or lifetime for \$150.

## ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S SSN \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

ADDRESS OF COLLEGE: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

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

MEMBER'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER'S # \_\_\_\_\_

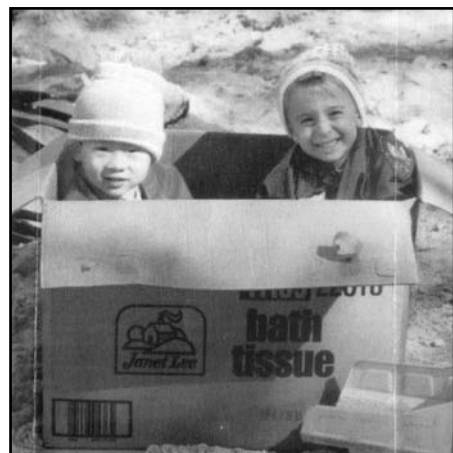
**Rules:** The number and amount of the scholarship(s) will be determined annually by the Board of Directors. The Scholarship(s) will be awarded annually in May. The Board of Directors will randomly select the winner(s) from the eligible candidates submitted by the membership.

**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 \$1500 scholarships drawn at the 2006 Reunion.

# Letters

## DEAR HAP

I recently found this picture of my boys playing at age 4. My son Terry, who is now 22, pointed out his Air Commando patch on the shoulder of his "flight jacket."



He and his brother Kawai, were playing, probably air commandos, in an old cardboard box in the yard.



The second picture is of Terry, JR C2C, now 22 years old. He is standing beside our Jet (he is a CFI) and 4th year at the USAFA. He was home on leave during the summer.

I guess I raised him right.

Hope Heinie is doing well, and you are still going strong.

Terry Fregly  
PO Box 3886  
Tallahassee, FL 32315

## DEAR SAM,

Per your request I will tell you about four F-105's that the AFLC RAM Team repaired.

The time frame was during 1968-69. The place was RTAFB, Udorn, Thailand. The weather was finally clear after two weeks of rain and fog. All our war birds had been repaired and gone except for two RF-101's awaiting parts.

My older men were rested and my younger men (18 to 20 yrs experience) were restless. Between 1000 and 1100 hours we had four F-105's to repair. The first was being driven by a Squadron Commander that I knew. It was a later model with more modifications than the other three.

The first bird had a large hole in the left wing. Even though the F-105 has dry wings, the hole was so large we were not permitted to repair it. We had to order a replacement wing from Sacramento.

The Colonel said, "I will be back tomorrow afternoon to check on my aircraft," and headed for the "O" Club.

The second F-105 had a large hole in the right wing (non-repairable).

The third F-105 had an aft section that looked like a sieve.

The fourth F-105's engine had gobbled a 20mm shell connector.

We removed both wings, the aft section, and engine from number one bird. With the exception of the fuel system, the F-105 is an easy aircraft to work on.

In fact, all four war birds were being worked on simultaneously. Within six hours, I phoned the owning organizations of numbers two, three, and four birds to send test pilots. We had de-modified the aft section of number one, changed the tail number and installed it on

number three. We removed and replaced the wing on number two bird. And removed and replaced the engine on number four bird.

It wasn't long before test pilot "Kit" Carson was doing what he did best.

I phoned the owning organization to send a replacement engine. Sent a message to S'MALC to send bird number one's wings and aft section.

The following day, after looking at what was left of his aircraft said, "What did you do to my aircraft "Stretch?"

Three days later we received a message from S'MALC: "Will send the wings you asked for, but will only fit number one aircraft and will not work on number three.

My message back to S'MALC: Four of my RAM Team men are from S'MALC aft section rod and repair section. All the F-105's in question have made two to three combat missions, so please send the P/N aft section I previously asked for!

James "Stretch" Pliley  
PO Box 396  
Cool, CA 95614-0396

*Sam's Note: Thanks to "Stretch" Pliley for submitting another example of a miracle performed by the great maintenance folks who keep our planes in the air.*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## JIM BONEY

Here are copies for ACA Archives of patches now in my possession.

I have been working with Maj John Knowlton C-123) and Joe Peck on these. Joe had a note in the December newsletter looking for patches.

I have 100 of each. I had two of them. John Knowlton sent me the C-123 patches and the 605<sup>th</sup> Air Commando Squadron. I still have 2 patches ©-123) one with "Jungle Jim", and one with just "Goon", both yellow.

The newsletter sure is good to receive. Keeps us up to date on all of the old gourds. E-mailing back and forth John, Joe and I realized it is 45 years now since Fort Walton Beach, Field 9. Too many are moving to the big landing in the sky.

I am willing to work on any patches that individuals are looking for. One glitch is we have to order 100. It takes less than 14 days from time of order until received. I am also willing to foot the initial cost to get the patches.

My wife and I hope to get to Hurlburt this October.

Richard A. Henderson  
843 Crance Avenue  
Hastings NE 68901-4259

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## GREETINGS FROM L0123,

My, farther-in-law, Homer Harrison, sent a couple of documents related to the beginnings of "Jungle Jim." Homer, then a Master Sergeant, was stationed at Shaw in 1961, when he went to Hurlburt for a site survey. The documents consist of his TDY orders and subsequent trip report. He assigns much importance to his part in the start-up of what eventually became a very important organization in our lives as Air Commandos.

If you have a niche for the documents, they are herewith presented for you to use.

We are keeping Heinie in the forefront of our hopes and prayers.

See **LETTERS** pg. 9



# Letters

*Continued from page 8*

He is one of a kind— the Right Kind—and we need his continued presence in our lives.

Thanks for being there, and for doing all that you do to keep us going.

Larry K. Harwood  
614 Periwinkle Court  
Sumter, SC 29150-2326

*Ed Note: Thank you very much for the documents Larry. Presumably you received Hap's voice mail telling you they are here.*

*Your comments about Heinie are shared by us all. As our founder, we all continue to do the "things" we do with him utmost in our thoughts. He brings folks together in unity and comradeship much the same as he did while on active duty. His example of doing and acting any time, any place, inspires us all.*

★★★★★★

## AIR COMMANDO ASSOC.,

On behalf of the Disabled American Veterans, Playground Chapter 72, we would like to thank you for your generous donation. All monies collected will be used to purchase a canopy for use at the Memorial Day and Veterans Day Services held at Beal Cemetery.

Again, we would like to thank you for your charitable gift and your continued support as we pay tribute to our Veterans.

Sincerely,  
Cathy L. Magnuson  
Commander  
Disabled American Veterans  
Playground Chapter 72, Inc.  
2A David Street  
Ft Walton Bch FL 32547  
850-862-9215  
[dav@fwb.gccoxmail.com](mailto:dav@fwb.gccoxmail.com)

## DEAR HAP,

Thought I sent this donation, I'm sorry!

Missed the Christmas party because I was visiting kin/family.

Thanks for your continued interest.

Sincerely,  
Pat Ammons  
214 Martisa Rd  
Ft Walton Bch FL 32547-4737

*Dear Pat,*

*Thank you so much for your card and the attending donation. It is most generous of you.*

*We missed you at the Christmas party. Perhaps you can make the 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration. You will receive an advance flyer announcing the particulars.*

*Again, thank you Pat, and sure hope to see you on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July!*

*Very Sincerely,  
Hap*

★★★★★★

## AIR COMMANDO ASSOC ATTN: ROGER CLAIR

I am sending two books via US Postal Service. I am donating these for the new hall of memories which looks very inviting (latest newsletter). You and friends did an outstanding job for the Air Commando Association.

Those of us who live elsewhere and cannot join in the preservation of history certainly do appreciate all your efforts. I hope these two copies gives reading pleasure to our friends in The Air Commando Assoc.

Sincerely,  
Rube Waddell  
13322 Air Way  
Panama City FL 32404

## DEAR ACA,

I am a member of the Air Commando Association and President of the Air Rescue Association. I would like to submit the upcoming ARA reunion information as follows:

Air Rescue Association, Sep 24<sup>th</sup> through the 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 at the Double Tree Hotel in Savannah

GA. For more details go to the ARA web page or contact John Flournoy at 505-821-1145, [jflournoy2@comcast.net](mailto:jflournoy2@comcast.net) Or Jim Fall at 951-849-3777 [jimbetf@verizon.net](mailto:jimbetf@verizon.net).

John Flournoy

See **LETTERS** pg. 11



Shown above are 2,650 copies of the ACA Newsletter awaiting address labels.



Above, volunteers who attach mailout labels to the June Newsletter for our members. Left to right: Ted Saunders, his granddaughter Ashley, Mi Young Sheehan, Mike Sheehan, Joe Harris, John Connors, and Leroy Melton. Not shown are Hap Lutz and Pete Bowman.

## Air Commando Association Membership Application

### Membership is open to:

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

*Newsletter is published quarterly.*

*Annual Reunion held in October*

### Type Membership requesting:

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

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

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

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

Home# (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

### Air Commando/Special Operations Service:

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Location \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Permission to provide phone # & address to other Members only? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

Permission to publish phone # & address in ACA Newsletter? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

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

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

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

**For Office use only:** Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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

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

## C-46 - the original Commando Walking the Airpark



**This Douglas C-46 Commando retired to Hurlburt Field Airpark in 1985, after serving both military and commercial ventures around the world.**

The C-46 Commando located in the Hurlburt Field Airpark has quite a story to tell about places its been and the missions its accomplished.

Although not as well known or perhaps as well liked as the beloved Douglas C-47 Gooney Bird, the C-46 could carry twice the cargo and personnel that the C-47 could.

The C-46 was known for its heavy load capability, and because of that the transport was thrown into WW II operations in the China-Burma-India theater supporting air commando operations and British Gen. Orde Wingate's "Chindits."

With this capacity, the C-46 was ideal for carrying supplies and ferrying troops over the "Hump" — the CBI passage over the Himalayan Mountains. The aircraft was originally designated for seating 24 people, but often carried as many as three dozen troops. The C-46 was built by the Curtiss Aircraft Company, now known as McDonnell-Douglas. The U.S. Army Air Force took possession of 3,180 models A through G, C-46 aircraft in 1942. Production ended at the end of WW II and the C-46

was used primarily by Air Force Reserve units for pilot and aircrew proficiency training before seeing action once again, this time with the Far East Air Force during the Korean War.

In 1962, with the return to action of the 1st Air Commandos Group, and the activation of the 1st Air Commando Wing, the C-46 was pressed into service and flew supporting missions while assigned to the 319th Troop Carrier Squadron. When American involvement in Vietnam began, the C-46 flew for Air America, the U.S. sponsored airline of Vietnam, making the C-46 one of only three aircraft to see action in three wars, WW II, Korea, and Vietnam.

The C-46 was finally retired from active service in 1968 as the C-130 assumed the primary role in cargo and personnel transport. Unfortunately, the early official records for the C-46, tail number 44-77424, on display at the Hurlburt Field Airpark were lost. This aircraft did fly courier duty with the 437th Troop Carrier Wing in Japan during the Korean War. It then saw service with the Japanese Air Self Defense Force from 1955



## A FASCINATING STORY

by Hap Lutz

During last year's reunion banquet Shirley and I had the high pleasure of sitting with Bill and Ruth Cullen, John L'Heurux, and Franklin and Janice Wimberly. It was a delightful evening made special with their warm companionship and interesting dialogue.

I have known Franklin since our early "Jungle Jim" days at Hurlburt Field. I have known John since he reported here for training in 1966 on his way to Project "Lucky Tiger" at Nakon Phanom, Thailand. The Cullens are relatively newcomers to me. Bill and I first met when he was on the Air Commando Association Building Committee. Following that, Bill, Ruth, I and eleven other did a marvelous trip to Thailand and Laos together. Our friendship swelled during that exciting event and has remained so.

But this story is about Frank and Janice. During the Sunday Barbeque, Frank came up to Shirley and presented her with a beautiful handmade cane. He had noticed that she walked with a somewhat limp. (She has an ongoing knee problem that needs fixing.)

Shirley was completely taken

aback and quite overwhelmed with such on-the-spot generosity. She asked Frank about the cane and how it came about. He shared the story with both of us.

Frank and Janice have a ten acre place in Broadway, NC. Frank spends his spare time carving handmade canes from the many trees they have on their property. They are truly works of art. Janice is also into making knick-knacks for their home and others.

The joyous part of this fascinating story is that Frank carves these canes for others. He has crafted over three hundred of these collectors items in the past year. He then takes them to Fort Bragg, NC and gives them to those who have been injured during the Iraq war! What a wonderful avocation.

Frank and Janice visited recently and presented me with a cane and one for Heinie and Jim Boney. Heinie for when he completes his recovery and Jim for his residual medical problems related to his near fatal aircraft accident some years ago. (Aircraft error.)

This is yet another story of Commandos during very meaningful things in retirement.

## Letters

Continued from page 9

DEAR JIM,

Every day we lose 2000 vets of World War II. This anecdotal article was sent to me at Christmas time, by my wartime best friend, Phyllis Welling. Her husband, veteran, Art Welling was the young pilot, who ferried to safety, three of the most distinguished Generals in the China-Burma-India (CBI). She used to listen to me "name-drop" about living with Gus Grissom & family at a base in Maine in the Korean War, and since she lost her beloved Art over a year ago, she sent me a copy of Art's most exciting day of his war years. Phil & Art moved to Ft. Lauderdale after the war and we kept in touch. I so noted on the back of the original to see if you could use it in your publishing. Probably most of your articles are of later military news, but as I am

such a history buff and at that time I loved reading everything in the papers and the war movies made everything military fascinating. If you do use it, send me two copies - one for Phil. Of course I think of you as a hero for what you went through for your country!

Mailman just went by - will try to catch him at the end of his route. Love to you and Kay.

Helen Gill

*Ed Note: Helen is a dear friend from Toledo Ohio. Her late husband John and I had some exciting times while flying our Air Guard C-47 together. Not all flights were authorized or "official business," i.e. - Booze runs to Mexican border towns and lobster flights to Pease AFB, N.H.*

See **LETTERS** pg. 14

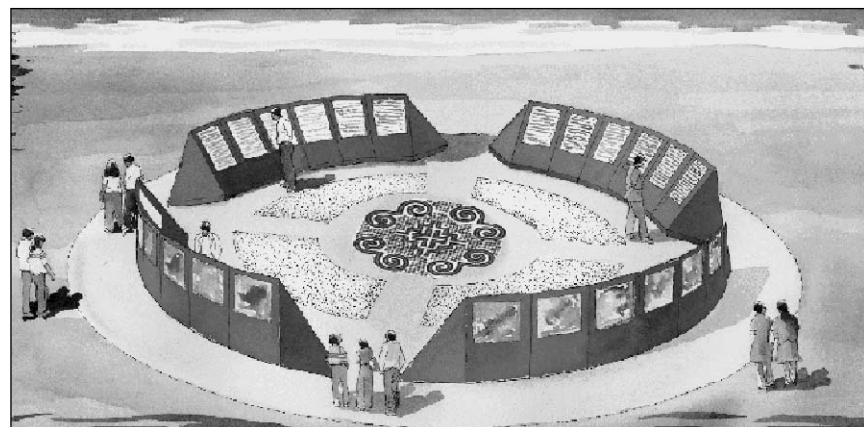
### The Lao, Hong, and American Veterans Memorial

Dedication on 15 July 2006 At Lake Michigan Shore in Sheboygan, WI

A spectacular memorial honoring those who participated in the "secret" war in Laos is being constructed and will be dedicated on 15 July 2006 in Sheboygan WI. It will include an etched story of the "secret" war and the names of U.S. Army Special Forces, Air America and Continental Air Services, Inc. crews KIA.

An effort is underway to obtain the name of air commandos KIA in Laos so they can be added to the memorial. Please contact the ACA if you have any knowledge of air commandos who should be included.

The memorial committee still needs additional funds to complete the task. Anyone who wants to make a donation or find out more about this noble effort can go to [www.secretwarinlaos.com](http://www.secretwarinlaos.com) or contact Steven Schofield at (920) 726-4618 email: [schofield@lakefield.net](mailto:schofield@lakefield.net).  
Sam



# McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

## Supporting Honduras

### Honduras Needs Food

The success of the school programs that are on going on the mountains can only continue if the children continue to be fed. The grade schools that are in place have food supplied mostly by Bless The Children with a little help from the MTF shipments. They need more! One of the problems the United States solves for the legal and illegal migrant folks from Honduras is they can earn enough here to support the family that stays behind. In 2004 the amount sent home was about \$1.3



billion. A string of poor food production years in Honduras, hurricanes, and the poverty have all contributed. One out of every two children from the poor communities suffers from malnutrition. Hard to learn when you are always hungry. We are trying to do more by sending what we can get cheap or donated free. We are thinking peanut butter and red kidney beans if we can find them at the 'right' price. Any Air Commandos have any good source of food??

### Honduras High School

By John Grove

The high school I talked about is a reality! The teacher has been paid for this year and the 1.5 acres of land with a shack and outhouse

has been negotiated for purchase. Now the work begins at the Ft Walton *and* the Honduras ends. We need to send a sea land container load of building supplies. The local villagers will rebuild the structures as their contribution to the effort, but they have no 'stuff' to do it with. Bob White and I are planning on sending the tin roofing, plywood, treated lumber and other things necessary for the repairs and construction of this very simple building and out houses. They will have electricity supplied by the generators I sent. *What do we need from our local Air Commando members?* If you know of a free supply of new or used building 'stuff' we need it. Tools, nails, and all the things it takes to build are needed. These folks probably have one hammer per village. They are that poor!!

The President of Bless the



Children and our contact, Karen Hubbard, was visiting the project last month and sends me this report. "The high school on the mountain started this year because of your generous donation. We have 36 children attending high school. This is the first time in history that children have been able to go to high school classes on the mountain. The high school kids meet in the afternoon at the grade school in the center of the moun-

tains. George Mealer has already told the community that the school name will be THE JOHN GROVE HIGH SCHOOL. George said we can purchase the land and do minor repairs necessary to get started for \$2500. (US)." The money has been sent and all is ready to go.... except for materials and supplies. George is the retired US Army gentleman who lives in Honduras and makes all this effort come together.

A side note is- the land is covered with coffee bushes, so the Air Commandos have a large supply of coffee if we can figure out how to import, transport, roast, grind and package the estimated 10,000 lbs that it will produce each year. We don't do projects that just are 'feel good'. The things we do should have a goal that is consistent with the United States goals. Education is the key to building a middle class, a middle class will be more inclined to be informed and democratic, and they will stay in the home area and make a better life for the families. This just might be the key to reducing the pressure to travel north. At the least it will give these folks a chance at a better life on the mountain and a spot in their hearts for the United States.

### Animal Update

The farm animal purchase program is going well in Honduras. I have not had any new requests for more funding for this project since the great donation from Mary Pepper Vaden. Her funds are in the bank in Honduras and by the time you read this they will have two sheep and some chickens that are

providing protein and wool for the mountain folks of North Central Honduras. The project also gives the orphanage children a good learning experience. For now we will concentrate on other needs for these people, but if you want to donate and like this program please send the funds along our way

### DEAR JIM,

Thanks for the pictures. It was a great picture of Betty and Christine.

I went to the Air Force Academy reunion for our old Squadron. What you didn't know is Bebe, Joe, Pepper and I were all at 7625 Ops Squadron, Denver. They both volunteered at the same time to come to Hurlburt. They played in the same poker club, golf, etc.

I would like to come this fall to the reunion but I do have some good choir days.

I am sending a check for \$105 to buy 2 sheep and 10 chickens. You know I was an old farm girl. I



Sheep - "Honduras speaking sheep"

thought about a horse. I had one when I was in Panama with Pepper and was stuck with being in charge of the stables there. My Panamanian horse was a boy



# Commando in Afghanistan

Karen Kramer, ACA life member, has been assigned to help build and rebuild some of the Afghanis medical clinics and facilities. Karen was assigned to both Duke Field and Hurlburt during her career. She has volunteered with the MTF many times. She started her Air Force life enlisted and through hard work, higher education and drive she is now a Captain and the Military Public Health Officer at Tyndall AFB. She volunteered to go to Afghanistan to help in the rebuilding, and arrived in Kabul in February. Her arrival message includes the following: "The convoy I was in from Bagram to Kabul was nerve racking to say the least. We were "locked and loaded". I carry an M-9 and M-4. .... I am now safely tucked away in a heavily guarded compound here in the capital, Kabul, with about 1000 other U.S. and coalition forces. I will be working with the Minister of Health on projects that include gender issues, women's health, and jobs for Afghan women and the disabled. Many people have lost limbs to mines."

A month later she writes: "I have met several young boys and their elders during a clinic assessment. We were out in the mountains about 50 miles from Kabul. The people I have met are so kind and wonderful and in such need of our help, especially health care. The closest clinic is 2 1/2 hours away on foot. If we are able to get this clinic up and running it will



support 3000 people."

Recent messages from Karen are very upbeat: "I've been here three months and things are going as well as can be expected. I have met some wonderful people who work for an NGO (Non Govt. Org) called Morning Star Development. They are from Colorado Springs. They are trying hard to help the Afghan people in regards to health, education, agriculture and communication. Our introduction came when I found they were looking for funding and supplies to support several remote health clinics. One clinic serves 39 villages and about 10,000 people.... I used my contacts to find other NGO's and govt. agencies willing to help.... USAID and some high level US Embassy folks were able to use some resources for funding, supplies and equipment."

This Memorial Day weekend the riots in Kabul were just outside

the compound and the situation has caused problems with her



efforts to do travel and do more good. Karen's adds: "One of my big projects for a 100 bed hospital in the southern province of Ghazni, hit hard by insurgency, was approved for construction. I wish I could see the project through. The time goes by so fast and it's hard to see the fruits of your labor."

Another success story of the United States and an Air Commando helping others. Karen can be reached at: [kramerk@cfc-a.centcom.mil](mailto:kramerk@cfc-a.centcom.mil)

## MTF

*Continued from page 12*

named Carmine. I enjoyed riding in the jungle. The donation is for myself, Joe Vaden and Doc Pepper.

Pepper did a lot of work down at the stables at Howard and believe me my horse was taken care.

Thanks for the picture and maybe I can make the reunion this year.

I see Juan and Gretchen Bazan live in Canyon Lake. Send me their address.

Mary Pepper Vaden  
13515 Beltway  
San Antonio TX 28712

*Ed Note: Address sent.*

## 'Yard Update

Mike Linnane, the resettlement and bed down project guru, writes about the recent Memorial Day celebration in the settlement of North Carolina. Mike explains how moving and fitting the day was for all the Americans and Montagnard Americans. Then he said: "The Montagnard resettlement is now 20 years old and going strong, 37 new 'Montagnard were welcomed at the Greensboro NC airport last week.... The small Montagnard community in NC provides the only hope that someday all Montagnards will live free of oppression. I left with a very strong impression that STMP (Save the Montagnard People) has successfully accomplished what many thought could not be done. The world-wide Montagnard community has unified itself around this 100 acres of North Carolina dirt." To continue support for this great project send donations to MTF and we will forward them to STMP.

## Books

The sale of books at the reunion has been a success for the past two reunions. Bob White has another great supply for sale this year. Also, if you have any books that would add to our library collection or wish to get rid of, we can either display them or sell them. All the books that do not sell have been donated to the VA hospitals with the help of 'Cajun Ray' Bourque. Commandos helping the other vets.

# Letters

Continued from page 11

## HOW'S YOUR CBI IQ?

What was the most brass ever on a single flight of that old workhorse of the CBI skies, the C-47?

I believe, with the help of the crew, I've got the answer for you. The story goes back to the item in my May, 1982 column about the Hump flight of Lt. Gen. H. H. "Hap" Arnold. The B-17 carrying Gen. Arnold and his party was lost over China and was in the air some 4 ½ hours over estimated flight time from Dinjan to Kunming before landing in Kunming.

The "Fujiyama Foo Foo", a C-47 (with C-53 configuration), was sent to Chungking to ferry General Arnold's party to Stilwell's headquarters at Chungking. When the party was ready to return to Kunming, the manifest for the "Fujiyama Foo Foo" included the following (the first three passengers were members of Arnold's original party.

Lt. Gen. H. H. Arnold  
Commander  
U. S. Army Air Force.  
Sir John Dill, Chief  
British Imperial General Staff.  
Brig. Gen. Clayton L. Bissell  
CB CG, Tenth AF.  
Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell  
Commanding CBI Theater.  
Brig. Gen. Claire Chennault  
Of the Flying Tigers.  
Brig. Gen. Albert C.  
Wedemeyer of the Pentagon.  
Gen. Ho Ying-chin  
Chief of Staff, Chinese Army.

The captain of this bucket-seat aircraft was Lt. Arthur J. Welling, now of Wilton Manors FL. Other crew members were Lt. A. V. Rothenberg, now of Tampa FL, SSgt Jim L. Shannon, now a Delta Airlines pilot living in Houston, and Sgt C. Sherman.

The flight on Feb. 7, 1943, took off from Chungking at 1520 hours.

Everything went well, says Pilot Art Welling, except...

"Except Kunming was completely socked in. So I was homing-in on the Kunming Army radio beam. No problems.

But then, would you believe, the Army beam went off the air.

General Chennault, apparently sensing possible trouble, came into the cockpit and suggested we go up and take a look at a mountain pass to see if it would give us the chance for a visual approach.

Well, heck, how high is up? We were already at 15,000 feet with no oxygen. I told Gen. Chennault 'No problem,' I could pick up the CNAC beam.

Fortunately the CNAC beam was operating. I got on it and we had no problems. Landed in Kunming at 1800 hours.

Jim Shannon, who also piloted the plane during his China duty, says that after Gen. Arnold's frightening experience over the Hump, he believes General Arnold was "relieved to see the beat-up 'Fujiyama Foo Foo' with the tiger mouth on her nose and to see some old China pilots. He treated us real fine.

That must have been the biggest load of brass for CBI records. If that plane had gone down it would have made the wrong kind of entry in the "Guinness Book of World Records".

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## DEAR JIM,

Carynn and I received the below e-mail from a friend and felt it should be passed on to our ACA readers. I'm asking our members to drop Kevin a card an attending note or letter. Let us try to bring his spirits up by letting him know we care.

Jim and Carynn Alberts

13015 N Joan D'Arc  
Phoenix, AZ 85032  
PH: (682) 482 8969

"There is a young soldier (a 23 year old Tennessee National Guardsman) named Sgt. Kevin Downs. He was blown out of his tank in Baghdad a year ago and left with no feet, mangled arms, and severe burns over 60% of his body. Everyone else in the tank was killed.

As you can well imagine his condition is not good. A surgery to improve the use the of his fingers on one hand inadvertently caused previous skin grafts to break down, and the grafts on his legs are cracking as well and may require starting over at square one.

Kevin is tired and in low spirits. He needs our support through cards with attending notes or letters. I would love to see him get cards from everywhere and hopefully he will know that people all over the country appreciate him leaving the safety of his home to fight for our freedoms.

I have personally never met Kevin or his family, but when my minister let us know that Kevin needed a lift, I couldn't keep quiet.

I love America and know that it could very well be one of my family members. Thank you all for all that you will do.

Kevin's address is:  
Sgt. Kevin Downs  
Brooke Army Medical Center  
3851 Roger Brooke Drive  
Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234

Thanks! Every little card and prayer will help!"

*Ed Note: Lets send this mangled brave soldier a card to elevate his spirits and let him know that Air Commandos "Really Do Care!"*

## DEAR DICK

I am experiencing a problem with the good VA, and I need some help. When I returned from Vietnam in 1967 I developed a cancer on my thyroid and had to have it removed. I explained to the VA that I was exposed to Agent Orange while escorting Ranch Hand Missions in late 1963 and 64. The Seattle office informed that the "WAR" did not start until 1965, and that we didn't use Agent Orange until then. They along with the USAF informed me that we didn't have any "attack" fighter aircraft until the A1-Es arrived in late 1964.

I have been fighting them ever since as I developed a rash on my face that again they couldn't explain. I told them that we had cut a small hole in the top of the canopy of the T-28 to get some cool air into the cockpit as the temperature inside the cockpit sometimes got as high as 145-50 degrees. Especially when flying in the number two position we would frequently be exposed to the spray from the C-123s.

What I need according to the VA is two "Buddy Letters" from anyone who knew me, knew the mission, or flew with me. The only two people that I can locate are yourself and Ken Lengfield. I flew 166 combat missions while assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> ACS. I even provided the VA with the exact target coordinates, and still they wouldn't believe me. A good friend of mine suggested that since the operation was covert, that I place the burden of proof on the VA – and that is what I want to do.

What I need from you is what the VA calls a "Buddy Letter" to "Who Ever It May Concern" indicating that you knew me during

## C-46

*Continued from page 10*

to mid-1980, when it was purchased by the City of Fairbanks, Alaska for commercial use there. It was delivered to Hurlburt Field on Nov. 12, 1985.

**Hap's Note:** Doug Blair and I met the C-46 aircraft when it was given to Hurlburt for the Hurlburt Air Park. As my memory of the event is not as concise as Doug's, I asked him to expound on the facts and he graciously did so. They are as follows:

"A week or so prior to the arrival of the aircraft, you called and asked if I could help meet it. We agreed on a time and were both at Base Ops in plenty of time. The weather was 4,000' scattered and nice and warm.

We checked with Base Ops and

they had him 12 minutes out, approaching from the west. Right on time he appeared over Santa Rosa Island at about 600'. He took a left bank and lined up on the north south runway. He landed on the first third of the runway and bounced three times. You turned to me and commented that was a normal C-46 landing. He met the Follow Me truck and directly pulled in front of Base Ops facing south. As he shut down the right engine, the left hydraulic pump failed and dumped several gallons fluid on the ramp. Again, you said, "normal for a C-46."

There were three pilots aboard. They climbed out and we thanked them and told them we had planned to put the aircraft on static

display. They were shocked and saddened as they felt there was a lot of life in it as it was a low time airframe aircraft. It had spent a lot of time with the Japanese Self Defense Force prior to it being in Alaska where it came to us from. There were a lot of Japanese markings inside, along with a spare engine.

We loaded their gear onto my '83 Desert Tan Ford Ranger and took them to the Billeting Office where we arranged quarters. We then went to the Officers Club and bought them some beers. Not long after we took them back to the "Q."

They left the next day, but would not let us take them to the airport as they had other arrangements, so we bid them farewell.

They had swapped the C-46 for a C-118 that was at the Rehab Depot in Tucson, AZ. As far as I know they gathered up the other aircraft and went back to Alaska.

I am not sure if the next part is accurate, however, here goes. I think the swap was made by a TSgt in the Fire Department. I know for sure he was involved with the C-119 that is in the Air Park as I worked with him on it. I cannot remember his name, but I kind of believe Lamar Doster might have some memory on the subject. I think he might have been the Senior Enlisted Advisor at or around that time frame. How the Fire Guy got involved I do not have a clue, but I am certain he did the swap and I think he was working others at the time."

## Letters

*Continued from page 14*

that time period and that I was assigned to the T-28 Section of the 1<sup>st</sup> ACS. That the T-28 Section flying out of Bien Hoa and Soc Trang definitely participated in escorting the Ranch Hand Mission. I would be greatly indebted to you for your assistance. I am currently in Palm Desert, CA, but will be returning to Lakewood, WA in 9 days. I would appreciate any help that you might provide.

While I was fighting with the

Air Force since they were the ones that told me that we didn't have any "Attack Aircraft" in Vietnam in 1963-64. I informed them that we lost 41 AT-28s plus 36 pilots during the Vietnam Conflict (this info came directly from 1<sup>st</sup> ACS records.) Anyway, thanks for whatever you can provide.

Sincerely,  
Dean Hunter  
#18 Lakeside Country Club  
Lakewood, WA 98498

## Colonel Roland K. McCoskrie

Colonel Roland K. McCoskrie served his country for over 31 years. His key special operations assignments included 56<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing Commander (Nakhon Phanom, Thailand), Chief of Staff, and then Vice-Commander of Air Force Special Operations Forces. His 11 years of foreign service included 4 years as Air Attaché in Thailand. After retirement he remained active in the ACA and served as a Director, Vice-President, President, and editor of the



ACA Newsletter. He also became totally involved with the Threshold Foundation, the humanitarian arm of the ACA. He served as task force commander for the highly successful medical team deployments to Guatemala. Because of his efforts, the Threshold Foundation was named after him. He also is a member of the ACA Hall of Fame. His wonderful family continues to make significant donations to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF) in honor of "Mac."



**Lana West  
Owner/Artist**

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# ACA 2006 REUNION

## Salutes the

# 16<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Wing

## America's AIR COMMANDOS

### Buy Your Tickets Early!

The 2006 banquet will feature table service with choice of entrees: prime rib or chicken. Please mark your ticket order with your choice. The banquet facility has a strict seating policy enforced by the base fire marshal. The maximum number of guest seats is 320...no squeeze-in seats for last minute space-A hopefuls. Please buy your tickets early. An accurate, early head count for planning purposes is very helpful. Thanks. The good news is that there is plenty of space for fish fry and BBQ attendance, so bring a friend and set a spell. The agenda has lots of free time built into the schedule. Access to the base is still tightly controlled. Don't forget your ID card. If you are driving a rental car, you will be required to park at the front gate and get a base pass for the vehicle. For those without an ID card who wish to enter the base, everyone must have a picture ID and a sponsoring party who will act as their escort. At Hurlburt, when you enter the gate area, the guard will check your ID. For those visiting Hurlburt, an event pass is available for vehicles without a sticker. Everyone must have a picture ID. Check at the registration desk about the vehicle pass for use on Sunday if needed.

We encourage all widows to attend. Also, for ladies interested there will a Saturday social at Mr. "T's" Restaurant at the FWB golf course. Please let us know if you are interested in this events. Arrangements will be made if we have sufficient response.

Our President, Fleix Sambogna will be Master of Ceremonies. Howie "Commando Clean" has permission to be AWOL.

### Directions to The ACA 2006 Reunion

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

### Schedule of events - October 5-8, 2006

#### Thursday, October 5

- 0700 - Biloxi Trip (\$20) contingent on enough people
- 1700-2100 - Buffet "The First Nighters" - Mr "T"s, pay as you go
- 1600-2000 - Early registration and check-in

#### Friday, October 6

- 0830 - Golf Tournament registration at Fort Walton Beach Golf Club
- 1000 - Golf Tournament shotgun start
- 1000-1600 - Registration at the Quality Inn in FWB
- 1200-??? - Hospitality Suite open at Quality Inn
- 1430 - Golf awards ceremony in clubhouse
- 1600-??? - Fish Fry at the Quality Inn in FWB



#### Saturday, October 7

- 0900-1030 - Annual Business Meeting (Buses will be provided to/from Quality Inn. Buses will depart at 0800 to 0830 in front of Quality Inn)
- 1030-1400 - Event to be scheduled
- 1100 - Ladies Social, Mr. "T"s Two Trees Restaurant, FWB Golf Course
- 1800-1900 - Hurlburt Soundside Club - Social hour
- 1900-2130 - Hurlburt Soundside Club - ACA Banquet
  - Hall of Fame Presentation Ceremony
  - Featured Speaker - Col Norman J. Brozenick
  - Awards presentations

#### Sunday, October 8

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



Hurlburt Field lies 6 miles west of Brooks Bridge and downtown Fort Walton Beach (shown above). The Quality Inn is the old HoJo's motel.

## 2006 Reunion Ticket Order Form

Register early! Don't pay more at the door!

|  | Ticket Price | Number of Tickets | Total Cost |
|--|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| <b>Reunion Package</b><br>(Includes Fish Fry, Banquet, and BBQ.) | \$60.00      | _____             | _____      |
| <b>Friday Golf Tournament</b>                                    | \$50.00      | _____             | _____      |
| <b>Friday Fish Fry ONLY</b>                                      | \$15.00      | _____             | _____      |
| <b>Saturday Banquet ONLY</b>                                     | \$35.00      | _____             | _____      |
| <b>Sunday BBQ ONLY</b>   | \$15.00      | _____             | _____      |
| <b>ACA Widow Package*</b>  | N/C          | _____             | <b>\$0</b> |

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

### Banquet Meal Selection: ☐ Prime Rib ☐ Chicken

Special Banquet Needs Request: Please indicate if you need assistance with:

- ☐ Wheelchair
- ☐ Seating near exit across from restrooms
- ☐ Early Seating
- ☐ Special Dietary Requirements (Please call us)

Please Note: Banquet seating is strictly limited to 320 people by the Base Fire Marshal.

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

For separate guest, please list host name on separate piece of paper and attach to this form.

The above order is for: ☐ Myself ☐ My Spouse ☐ \_\_\_ (# of ) Guest

Please list host name on separate piece of paper and attach to this form.

For Golfers: My handicap is \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouses Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please Note: The Fish Fry and BBQ will be held at the Quality Inn (old Howard Johnsons) complex on Miracle Strip Parkway in Fort Walton Beach. Saturday's Banquet will be held at the Hurlburt Soundside Club at Hurlburt Field. The Fish Fry will start at 4:00 pm on Friday. The BBQ will start approximately 1:00 pm on Sunday**

### MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY

The Quality Inn serves as headquarters for Reunion 2006. The Rodeway Inn is the overflow hotel. Room rates are \$73.00 for both hotels, first come, first served. Call 850-275-0300 to make your reservation. We have 85 rooms reserved until September 6, after that, no guarantees, so make your reservation early!



# Country Store Items Available

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| ZAP Patch.....   | \$3.00   |
| Original Air Commando Gp Patch .....   | \$3.00   |
| ACA Cloth Patch .....  | \$3.00   |
| POW/MIA Patches .....  | \$3.50   |
| ACA "AIR COMMANDO" Cloth Tab .....   | \$3.00   |
| Project 404 Coin .....   | \$10.00  |
| ACA Challenge Coins (Bronze) .....   | \$5.00   |
| 50th Commemorative Coin (Bronze) .....   | \$5.00   |
| Pens with "60 years Air Commando" .....  | \$1.00   |
| ACA Bumper Sticker .....   | \$2.00   |
| "AIR COMMANDO" 8" decal car window display .....   | \$3.00   |
| <b>NEW</b> ACA License Plates, white or blue .....   | \$12.00  |
| ACA License Plates, white or blue .....  | \$10.00  |
| Printed Plastic License Plate Holders .....  | \$4.00   |
| ACA Decal (4"x 5") .....   | 2/\$1.00 |
| POW/MIA Decals .....   | \$2.00   |
| ACA Lapel Pin (Large & Small) .....  | \$4.00   |
| ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering ..... | \$10.00  |
| Air Commando Bush Hat (Large only) .....   | \$20.00  |
| ACA T-Shirt (white only) (L,XL).....   | \$10.00  |
| ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL) .....   | \$12.00  |
| ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, white, red, royal blue, waffle weave, navy and black with lettering).....   | \$15.00  |
| Denim long sleeve shirts (Ladies M, L, XL Men M, L, XL, & XXL).....                                      | \$20.00  |
| Jackets - (M to XXL- Tan, Navy, Black, Royal Blue) .....   | \$35.00  |
| **50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24").....   | \$1.00   |
| POW/MIA Flags .....  | \$12.00  |
| Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo) .....   | \$8.00   |
| Beer Mugs with logo or lettering "60 years Air Commando" .....   | \$10.00  |

## ORDER FORM

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

| Qty | Color | Item | Size | Unit Price |
|-----|-------|------|------|------------|
|     |       |      |      |            |
|     |       |      |      |            |
|     |       |      |      |            |
|     |       |      |      |            |
|     |       |      |      |            |
|     |       |      |      |            |

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_  
20% Shipping & Handling \_\_\_\_\_  
Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

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



ACA members Jim Yealy and ‘Wes’ Fields flanking visitor Ed Horton. Ed was a B-25 crew member on the “Doolittle Raid.” Only 16 crew members remain.

## SIGN UP FOR REUNION 2006 EVENTS

*Please indicate on this form if you plan to attend the following events. (Indicate number of people.)*

☐ YES!

I/WE WISH TO ATTEND THE LADIES LUNCHEON AT THE TWO TREES RESTAURANT ON SATURDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2006. Cost: \$10.00 with a pay-as-you-go bar.

PRINT NAME(S) ABOVE

# of People

☐ YES!

I/WE WISH TO MAKE THE ONE DAY EXCURSION TRIP TO A BILOXI CASINO ON THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2006. Cost: \$20.00 - Traveling by Charter Bus

PRINT NAME(S) ABOVE

# of People

☐ YES!

I/WE WISH TO ATTEND THE THURSDAY EVENING BUFFET AT THE TWO TREES RESTAURANT (on the Veranda) ON THURSDAY, 5 OCTOBER 2006. Cost: \$10.00 with a pay-as-you-go bar.

PRINT NAME(S) ABOVE

# of People

RETURN TO: ACA REUNION  
ATTN: DICK GERON  
PO BOX 7  
MARY ESTHER, FL 32569-0007

# Know Your Executive Board Members

Vice President, Richard P. "Dick" Geron began his involvement with Special Operations when he reported to Hurlburt from George AFB during the summer of 1963 for check out in B-26 as a volunteer for a one year assignment in Viet Nam. He flew B-26

and AT-28's assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> ACS at Bien Hoa. He also served as combat operations officer for 34<sup>th</sup> Tactical Group (Commando) during this same period. Returning to the states in 1964 he flew F-4C's at McDill AFB. In 1965 he was invited to return to Special Ops and

became an A1-E instructor at Hurlburt before being reassigned to B26K's in the 6<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron (Commando) as the scheduling officer just before the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Commando Wing moved to England AFB, La.

From there he went to SE Asia as the liaison for the deployment of the newly renamed A-26 aircraft to Nakon Phanom, Thailand.

At 7<sup>th</sup> AF HQ he had the enviable task of providing newly arrived Gen. Mommyer with his in theater briefing on the outstanding attributes of the prop-driven A-26 used as a fighter aircraft. This did not turn out as well as was hopefully expected and the deployment was cancelled somehow.

Six or eight weeks later the deployment was re-scheduled. During this time, desperate to get out of the 7<sup>th</sup> AF HQ, he found a new assignment as the senior Liaison Officer to the Australian Task Force. During this one year assignment he flew O-1 FAC missions.

He was then assigned to the civilian airport at Oslo, Norway as Operation Officer of the USAF



Support Sqdn attached to NATO HQ for Northern Europe (AFNORTH). Duty was as pilot for the USAF Deputy Cmdr. Of AFNORTH and as the instructor pilot and stan/eval pilot in C-47, C-117 and VT-29, none of which he had ever flown before. (Good ole local checkouts)

After 3 1/2 years there he decided to retire not believing the AF could come up with another assignment to compare with this one. Retired after 20 years, two as a S/Sgt. radar operator, one year aviation cadet and 17 years as officer and pilot.

He is presently the ACA VP for the third time and also was President for a short time.

## REUNIONS

Dear ACA,

I am a member of the Air Commando Association and a Vietnam Veteran planning a reunion for 2006. I would like to submit reunion information as follows.

### PLEIKU AIR BASE REUNION

**WHEN: August 10 - 13 WHERE: Bowling Green, Kentucky**

All Detachments and Squadrons assigned to Pleiku Air Base, South Vietnam from 1962 - 1972 getting together at Bowling Green, Kentucky August 10, 11, 12, and 13. Contact Harry Beam @ (724) 745-9129. For additional info check web page: [pleikuab.com](http://pleikuab.com). Thank you.

Harry Beam, Jr.

403 N Jefferson Avenue, Canonsburg, PA 15317

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### CARPETBAGGER REUNION

**WHEN: Sept. 14 - 18 WHERE: Arlington, VA**

Sept. 14 - 18, 2006 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, located at 1480 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202. Call (703) 416-1600 or (800) 227-6963.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### 2006 OV-1 MOHAWK ASS'N 17TH ANNUAL REUNION

**WHEN: Sept. 21 - 23 WHERE: Oshkosh, WI**

Sept. 21 - 23, 2006, Oshkosh, WI. Contact Terry Clark, 8610 Heather Run Drive S, Jacksonville, FL 32256. Reservations: Hilton Garden Inn, Oshkosh, phone (920) 966-1300. Let them know you are with the Mohawk Reunion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

I am a member of the Air Commando Association and President of the Air Rescue Association. I would like to submit the upcoming ARA reunion information as follows:

### AIR RESCUE ASSOCIATION

**WHEN: Sept. 24 - 28 WHERE: Savannah GA**

Sept. 24th - 28th 2006 at the Double Tree Hotel in Savannah GA. For more details go to the ARA web page or contact John Flournoy at 505-821-1145, [jflournoy2@comcast.net](mailto:jflournoy2@comcast.net) Or Jim Fall at 951-849-3777 [jimbett@verizon.net](mailto:jimbett@verizon.net)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### ARCA REUNION 2006

**WHEN: Oct 2 - 5 WHERE: Reno, Nevada**

Silver Legacy Resort Casino, 407 North Virginia Street, Reno Nevada. (775) 329-4777 or (800) 687-8733 (toll free) [www.silverlegacycasino.com](http://www.silverlegacycasino.com)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER REUNION

**WHEN: October 4-8, 2006 WHERE: Dayton, Ohio**

REGISTRATION: Look for the formal registration package in the late spring. Check: <http://www.fac-assoc.org> for updates.

QUESTIONS/ COMMENTS: Contact Zot Barazzotto at: (937) 429- 2119 or [zot250@ameritech.net](mailto:zot250@ameritech.net)



## Bugles Across America

At [www.buglesacrossamerica.org](http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org) can be found the Bugles Across America organization. It is a nonprofit network of 5,000 musician, drill team and color

guard member volunteers who support about 1,000 military funerals a month throughout the United States.

In addition to playing "Taps" at veterans' funerals they also play at other military events, including Veterans Day and Memorial Day observances. Participation in the organization is free and open to anyone able to play "Taps" with dignity and willing to volunteer their time.

Families or organizations in need of such services should complete an online request form at [www.buglesacrossamerica.org/volunteer.php](http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/volunteer.php) to locate a volunteer to play taps.

## VA Cemeteries

In a speech given by Secretary Nicholson at the National Press Club on 27 March he noted that in 2007, "Taps" will sound for more than 107,000 veterans or approximately 300 a day. This is a sharp increase from just two years ago. In response to this growing need, VA is conducting one of the most ambitious expansions of national cemeteries since the Civil War.

Three new cemeteries will soon be added to the 12 existing cemeteries, and six more are in the planning stages. By 2009, the capacity will have nearly doubled. Burial benefits for veterans include in any of our national cemeteries with available space, opening and closing of the grave, perpetual care, a Government headstone or marker, a burial flag, and a presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances.

Cremated remains are buried or inurned in national cemeteries in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains. Burial benefits available for spouses and dependents buried in a national cemetery include burial with the veteran, perpetual care and the spouse or dependents name and date of birth and death will be inscribed on the veteran's headstone, at no cost to the family. For more information, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

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## Rossel Report

### DEAR JIM

Gene Rossel's Trip. I am going to leave my computer from 13 May to 6 June for a trip to Europe visiting France, Portugal and then Spain. In France I will stay with Mike Kadenacy who lives on the French Riviera near Nice. Mike was one of the original Air Commandos coming in 1961 with the first group as a navigator in a B-26. We were bunk mates in Vietnam in 1962 sharing the rest of the quarters with Bill Palank and Major Wood who was the intel officer. It was quite a crowd. The intel officer like to have gin parties and sometimes mission whiskey, Bill Palank was always busy as a T-28 driver and maintenance officer, and Kadenacy always flying with some pilots he disagreed with. Mike and I later were assigned to the 605th ACS in Panama where we had another ball being together. Mike later left the AF and became a very successful lawyer in LA and when I arrived at Los Angeles Air Station in the late 70th we got together again at parties in his Wilshire home. Several years ago Mike went to live and work in Europe. We have kept in contact by email and he invited me to stay with him when he found out I was going to Spain to see my son. Cool the email until I get back but Mike's email is [mkadenacy@hotmail.com](mailto:mkadenacy@hotmail.com).

I have included a list of all USAF personnel killed or MIA/Unaccounted personnel in Laos from 1955 to 1976 and a list of all Air Commandos and Special Operators killed or MIA/Unaccounted in SEA-Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia from 1961 to 1976. (Will be printed in the Sept 06 issue)

As I was retyping the 450 USAF personnel who died in Laos my heart was at a low since the guys were mostly young officers and airmen. We all went to SEA full of ideals and a whole bunch came back in coffins. It just made me feel very sad to retype all these names since they lost out on the best part of life. It didn't bother me much before but seeing them all on one list really got to me. May all their souls rest in peace. If they don't put these lists in the newsletter I will put them on the ACA home page later.

### C-123 PROVIDER

I want to thank all the people who sent me email on the C-123 which crashed with a hung load. Here are some of the details: "karl leuschner", [karl123@comcast.net](mailto:karl123@comcast.net)

The crash of the C-123B on Hurlburt, while attempting a cargo extraction, happened on 6 May 1964. The Accident report should be in the Safety Office at Hurlburt. After 42 years the details are too sketchy to attempt any useful information. I don't even remember who my copilot was. I was the A/C on that flight, I can't remember who the Copilot was, I think. The flight engineer was Roy Jernnigan, who was injured in the accident. The report will have the information and the cause of the accident. I am not a reliable source.

I just found the accident in the AC/SO history and they said it happened on 6 May and it was a 775th TCS C-123 and 4 airmen were killed while extracting a 10,000 load  
 TSgt Cleo C. White from Eglin AFB  
 Three 775th Loadmaster:  
 SSgt Malcom R. Cardwell

# Rosel

Continued from page 20

A1C William T. Hansley

A1C Jeff N. Cecil

I was working the Hurlburt extraction zone with Bob Schneidenbach when the load hung up during the extraction. We were the 1st to reach the crash site (May 1964).

Jim Stanford , email: [hkotm@ipa.net](mailto:hkotm@ipa.net)

## C123 crash with stuck load in 1964

Dear sir, I was at Hurlburt when the C123 crashed in late 1964? This is what I believe that I remember about that incident. In the winter of 63 - 64, I was still based at Pope. I ferried a C123 to the All American Engineering plant near Wilmington DE. We stayed in town for about a week while the aircraft was configured to carry and use a navy style hook to extract a load from the aircraft as it was flying low enough to grab a cable attached to the ground. That C123 ended up at Hurlburt. In the Summer of 1964 I also was transfered from Pope to Hurlburt. The crash occurred when Capt ?(I can still see him in my mind but cannot remember his name) was testing the load extraction system. They thought that they were carrying a 10,000 lb box of dry sand. What they did not know was that the sand had gotten wet and now the box weighed 12,000 to 14,000 lbs. When the hook and cable tried to extract the box it turned sideways and got hung up on the open ramp. This dramatically shifted the CG to the ass end. The nose went up, the aircraft stalled and came down HARD. When the aircraft hit the ground the box of sand broke loose from the ramp area and rapidly moved forward to crash into the forward bulkhead. When it all stopped the people in the cargo area (loadmasters plus) were all dead. The pilot, copilot and flight mechanic were injured but survived because the cockpit was above the flying box of sand. Later, Spring and Summer of '65, I was the lead C123 pilot in the regular airshow demonstrations. One of my events was the LAPES, low altitude parachute extraction system. We stopped using the hook and stopped using WET sand. In the fall of '65 I transitioned to T28's and in Dec transfered to Panama, 605 SOS I feel extremely fortunate to have been one of your Air Commandos. I enjoyed the work and am proud to have served. "The mission of the Air Force is to fly and to fight"

Respectfully, Jerold O'Brien [www.silvermtn.com](http://www.silvermtn.com)

## Officer at Eglin who was at Hurlburt getting some familiarization

Dear Gene, I had gone with the base ops officer, Capt Trusedale, to check on the RSU at the north end of the R/W. I remember going by a C-123 with a tropical palm on it like the Africa Corps... that was the plane that crashed. Getting back to base ops I watched the C-123 make a low pass at the dirt strip next to the main R/W. Usually a load would be extracted when the tailhook would catch on the line across the runway similar to the ones used on aircraft carriers. No load came out. The plane then went into a nose high climb, leveled off briefly at about 400', turned left and went down into the trees near the Doolittle R/W. I remember all the pollen on the trees caused a big cloud.

I remember someone witnessing the accident drew a sequence of aircraft movements that captured exactly what happened. There was at

See ROSSEL pg. 22

## INTERESTING AND MAYBE USEFUL ADDRESS' AND WEB SITES

- **The American War Library (13105320643) 16907 Brighton Avenue, Gardena, CA 90247-5420 1-310-532-0634 (10am to 4pm Monday through Friday) [amerwar@amervets.com](mailto:amerwar@amervets.com)**
- **To replace a lost or damaged family discharge or medal certificate:** <http://www.amervets.com/replacement/other.htm> or <http://members.aol.com/replacecert/other.htm>
- **Preserving your unique military experience:** <http://members.aol.com/veterans/warlib3.htm>
- **Free Veterans Directory:** <http://members.aol.com/veterans/freedir.htm>
- **Casualty Lists:** <http://members.aol.com/veterans/casualty.htm>
- **Unit Rosters:** <http://members.aol.com/forvets/library.htm>
- **Joining Other Vets: You are invited to join one or more military and veteran related discussion and information sharing forums.** <http://members.aol.com/warlibrary/share.htm>
- **Obtaining copies of military records:** <http://members.aol.com/frovets/htomr.htm>
- **Obtaining Presidential Memorial Certificate for Deceased Military Family Members:** <http://members.aol.com/forvets/vvssp4.htm>
- **DD-214 Replacement: Rebuilding DD-214's** <http://members.aol.com/forvets/dd214.htm>

## BREEDING BULLS

A man took his wife to the rodeo and one of the first exhibits they stopped at was the breeding bulls.

They went up to the first pen and there was a sign attached that said, "This bull mated 50 times last year." The wife playfully nudged her husband in the ribs and said "He mated 50 times last year." They walked to the second pen which had a sign attached that said, "This bull mated 120 times last year." The wife gave her husband a healthy jab and said, "That's more than twice a week! You could learn a lot from him."

They walked to the third pen and it had a sign attached that said, in capital letters, "THIS BULL MATED 365 TIMES LAST YEAR." The wife, so excited that her elbow nearly broke her husband's ribs, said, "That's once a day. You could REALLY learn something from this one!" The husband looked at her and said, "Go over and ask him if it was with the same cow."

Note: The husband's condition has been upgraded from critical to stable and he should eventually make a full recovery.

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# Rosel

*Continued from page 21*

least one person killed. He was a photographer from Eglin who was photographing the extraction. My understanding is that only one line was cut on the load during the extraction maneuver and the other line caused the load to move to the back and side of the aircraft where it got stuck. The aft c/g caused the aircraft to be un-flyable. When the aircraft hit the trees, the load that was on rollers moved forward and killed the photographer. The plane flew into the trees. The pilot did a good job of keeping control. Nothing was reported in the paper the next day. The aircraft was kept on base for some time. I pulled O/D one weekend sometime later and when someone moved it from its location near the R/W (I think it was being used for training) the crashed C-123 high tail hit the power lines and cut off all power to the base.

Bob Brady, [email: brady4@cox.net](mailto:brady4@cox.net)

*Thanks Bob. Bob and I were living the same BOQ at Ben's Lake, Eglin in 1960.*

## Ron was an ATC controller the day of the accident.

I was catching up on my reading and saw your request in the Mar 06 ACA Newsletter. I don't know how much help I can be but I witnessed the crash.

I was an air traffic controller with the 2068 Comm Sqdn. That day I was working in the GCA unit and had just finished the day shift. MSGT Johnstonbaugh and I were walking across the flight line to the parking lot in front of Base Ops and stopped to watch the cargo extraction. The C-123 made an approach to the parallel sod R/W, east of the main 17/35 R/W, now 18/36, from north to south. I think I remember seeing the extraction cable and hook trailing from the tailgate. It seems like it caught then snapped. The cargo was still inside the A/C. The pilot gained some altitude and started a normal left departure turn. I estimate his altitude around 500 feet max. The crash was southeast of the old 05/23 R/W, southeast of the transmitter/receiver sites maintained by the 2068th for the HRT VFR tower.

I did not know any of the crew members but seem to remember that everyone seated with their seat belt fastened survived the initial crash. One crew member exited the left forward door and ran into the still spinning prop in the #1 engine. I think four crew members were trying to replace the locking pins on the cargo pallet and died upon impact.

Two or three years ago I met a retired AF pilot at the VFW in Spring Hill FL, a little way north of Tampa, who said he was an Air Commando in the C-123 Troop Carrier Sqdn at HRT at that time and knew the pilot, copilot, etc. I don't remember his name but maybe the ACA member roster might narrow the search.

A little piece of trivia, a few days after the crash I visited the site. As I said it was close to our transmitter/receiver buildings. I went aboard the A/C and removed the pilot's lap belt. As a sport parachutist with the Commando Sport Parachute Club I knew it had value to make a quick release tie down for the apex of a canopy when repacking. I used it until Dec 73 when I sold it along with other gear to the Zephyrhills Parachute Center. If I can be of any further assistance please let me know. Ron Schott, VVA LMP 244659, ACA L1869, CCA LM 881, Cell 813-966-7249. [email: RonD1120@aol.com](mailto:RonD1120@aol.com)

*Thanks Ron. Want to heart more about Government equipment.*

*The C-123 troops who are complaining about seeing nothing on their beloved aircraft and experience in it we have had stories on it for the last 10 years and the ACA home page <http://home.earthlink.net/~air-commando1/> you will find a balanced and fair history of the men and the aircraft. Check it out. If you got some great stories on the provider either send it to the paper or to me and I will do something with it.*

## George Lattin, [glattin@mesh.net](mailto:glattin@mesh.net)

What was the Court Martial Ranch you mentioned in your C-123 email?

*Court Martial Ranch was about 25 minutes due east of Hurlburt in a Goon, (30"/3000RPM), it was supposed to be part of the Tyndall AFB reservation however; this was disputed by a turkey farmer after one of our early night navigation missions.... seems all of his turkeys got sick and died. Really pissed off "The Roadrunner."*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## AUSSIE FAC BOOK

There is a new book on Australian FACs in Vietnam which was just published in May 2006. It is called "Sock it to 'em Baby" by Robert Hillier and Garry Cooper. The ISBN is 1 74114 849 9 and will be sold in the US. I just got my copy and will give a report on it next Newsletter.

## FLYING THROUGH MIDNIGHT

This book Flying Through Midnight by John T. Halliday, is about C-123s in Vietnam, has varied reviews. Some think it is sierra hotel and others think that it has too much of questionable bravado and aircraft stress ability. I have read some of it and the first thing that turned me off was the attitude of the author. From discussing this with both pilots and non pilots the stories are great bar room tales but to the people who flew the aircraft just don't quite believe it. If anyone has a good or bad review of the book let me know. I don't want to do injustice to the author but it is polarizing to pilots and non-pilots.

## COMMANDO HELP IS NEEDED!

Charlie Brown, [cbrown@austintx.com](mailto:cbrown@austintx.com), Russian Aviation Museum at Monino, [www.richardseaman.com/Aircraft/Museums/Monino/Highlights](http://www.richardseaman.com/Aircraft/Museums/Monino/Highlights)

## AIR AMERICA 107, DET 1 56 ACW UDORN

My name is Ann Parsons and I'm looking for any one who served or knew of my dad in Udorn. He was assigned to 107 det 1 56 ACW from possibly 1961 to 1964, definitely from his DD214 it was from 1964 to 1968 and a 3rd tour unknown his name is Donald Mac Parsons and was a armorer he has all kinds of medical problems also he went by the name of papa son we have a photo of buddies in front of a rebel flag but just nick names one was Bull don't know the rest. He also served with

*See ROSSEL pg. 23*

# Rossel

*Continued from page 22*

Red Horse at NKP as armorer or on weapons, also he told me he was assigned to site 21 but I can not find any record of such site. I am trying to prove that he was in Vietnam. This story was told to me by my dad on his last mission he was sheep dipped on a routine mission to find a POW camp. They gathered their info and were picked up and while returning to base a call came in to re route to a different location when the chopper landed his team jumped from the Huey. The LT started running to a VC when all of a sudden mortars started coming in and all of his team got wiped out except for my dad and the pilot. I'm looking for the pilot who saved my dad to thank him. They put my dad on a nightingale flight to the states stripped him of everything so he has no record of even being there except his DD 214. Please help.

Thank you. Wesley Don Parsons, email: [anparsons@hotmail.com](mailto:anparsons@hotmail.com)

*We'll put this in the ACA Newsletter and hope someone recognizes your father.*

## JUST GOT THIS FROM AIR AMERICA NEWS

Some of you probably knew these guys. This message is from the Air America Association Board. [www.air-america.org](http://www.air-america.org)

In Memoriam:

John McRainey passed away at 5:30 PM on March 22, 2006. He had recently undergone a liver transplant in Houston. More information will be posted as soon as it becomes available.

Ken Conde passed away yesterday March 22, 2006 at 4:30 PM local time Bangkok. He was 44 years old.

Gene,

I knew both of them. John worked for me in Saigon with AAM and was a past president of the AAM Association. Ken was the son of Joe Conde, ex Air Commando and AAM. RIP quite some time ago.

Les Strouse, email: [loongles@gmail.com](mailto:loongles@gmail.com)

## JOE KITTINGER

Last Flying F-4, I also shot down a Mig 21 on 1 March 1972. Was getting close to getting Mig #2 when I was shot down by another Mig....., piloted by the world's best Mig pilot.. (He had to be to get me) Joe Kittinger

*Joe, you have some great stories and I always enjoy reading some of those great history pieces you send around.*

## "DOUBLE ACE" BOOTS BLESSE ACCOUNT FROM JOE KITTINGER

Enjoyed that article, he was there the same time I was, I was a "Mosquito" pilot and it was interesting to see that he referred to close air support and only mentioned the F-51 and F-80. I can only recall directing one flight of F-51s and one of F-80s during my entire tour, I was tickled to get a flight of Able Dogs (later called A-1) as they carried more ordnance on each airplane than a whole flight of AF airplanes carried. My next favorite were Corsairs which also carried a load, mostly

I worked with those two and F-84s and an occasional F9F flight. Towards the end of my tour. I volunteered to fly F-86s and was told I could get an assignment to F-84s (I had already flown that horrible airplane) and I said I was only a Second Lt but I wasn't stupid, there went my dreams of becoming an Ace. I ran into Jim Low in Taiwan, he was there with a F-104 group, we became fairly close friends and he told me that he pissed so many people off he didn't think he would ever get promoted past Captain. I think someone told me that he did make it past Captain.



Joe, your recall of these stories is always great reading.

Jim Boney would agree with you as would a number of others. The F-84-E had a folding wing which trapped pilots in their aircraft. I liked your comments by Jim Low. Seems like I heard similar stories in articles about him. Jim had a bad experience with this bird.

Joseph Holden, email: [aceusaf@earthlink.net](mailto:aceusaf@earthlink.net)

*Ed. Note: Indeed I did. "It busted my ass." A/C abruptly nosed over after takeoff (approx 150 feet) crashed & burned. (Control malfunction) Did not get credit for the landing. I'm pissed.*

## AMERICAN FLAG RETIREMENT

Don't throw that American flag into the trash! Do you have an old and frazzled flag that's lying around your office or home and you just don't know what to do with it? Then send it to us! We will properly dispose of it according to federal laws.

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Location: Madera, CA Charlie Taliaferro  
email: [ctaliaferro@kitchentablegang.org](mailto:ctaliaferro@kitchentablegang.org)

## SPOOKY REUNION

I was in the 4th ACS (AC-47) 65-68 and the 609th (A-26A) 68-69. Navigator need data on Spooky reunion, Jerry L. Meek, Maj/USAF (Ret) West Des Moines, IA email: [Major-meek@juno.com](mailto:Major-meek@juno.com)  
*I sent your requests to the Spookies.*

# Rossel

*Continued from page 23*

## DALE JEFFERS

[dale\\_jeffers@yahoo.com](mailto:dale_jeffers@yahoo.com), Oregon, Ohio

Comments: Worked on B-26, T-28, AD6, Flew on AC-119K, Uh-1P, AU-24/23. ACA Member

## MICHAEL ELDER

[elderma@sbcglobal.net](mailto:elderma@sbcglobal.net)

Great site gentlemen, just trying to determine where my father was in '65/'66. ACA Member

*Will put this in the ACA Newsletter and maybe someone will recall seeing him at this time.*

## SHINKLE, ALBERT

[shinkle\\_al@hotmail.com](mailto:shinkle_al@hotmail.com), Pullman WA

Just checking in. Al, ACA Member Yes: # 3598

## MGBADA MUMU

[ma@abatete.mugu](mailto:ma@abatete.mugu) , Location: Lome Togo. Very good site.

*Thanks-but where is Lome Togo?*

## JOHN HUNSUCK

John Hunsuck, [jdhunsuck@aol.com](mailto:jdhunsuck@aol.com)

ACA Member -Yes- Life

## ERNEST F ANDERSEN ANDY

skyraiders at NKP 69-70, OV 10 at NKP 74

Ernest F Andersen ANDY, [spaddriver@gmail.com](mailto:spaddriver@gmail.com) ACA Member -Yes

## WALT KOWALIK

[wekowalik@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wekowalik@sbcglobal.net)

311th ACS, Apr '66 - Apr '67. ACA Life Member

## I HAVE A NEW ADDRESS

LES BICKEL, [lbickell@cox.net](mailto:lbickell@cox.net)

3523 LANELL DRIVE, BOSSIER CITY, LA. 71112

ACA Member LIFE MEMBER

## RONALD F. DUKE

Air Force Special Opps Asoc

4409 Cmbt Crew Tng Sq, 4410 Cmbt Tng Wg 1966, USAF Special Operations Force 1970-1971, operations clerk for ops in HQ at Eglin.

email: [rduke@pinn.net](mailto:rduke@pinn.net).

## JIM AHMANN

I'm ret USAF LtCol. My uncle was LtGen Jim Ahmann who worked with Gen Aderholt. My email: [ahmanns@satx.rr.com](mailto:ahmanns@satx.rr.com), San Antonio, TX

*Now we need you as a member.*

## SAMBOGNA, "SAM"

Comments: I view the site often. Good work, Gene

ACA Member Yes, President [sambogna@arc.net](mailto:sambogna@arc.net)

## LUTHER (BIG LU) BOLIN

I was in the AC's at Hurlburt from 1963 thru 1966 as an instructor flt. eng. on the C-123 & C-123K and then to Vietnam flew with crews out of Saigon then out of Phan Rang in 315th ACW/309th ACS stan-eval (67-68). LUTHER (BIG LU) BOLIN, [curletj@tds.net](mailto:curletj@tds.net) ACA Member

## ENJOYED THE ASSIGNMENT IMMENSELY

I was associated with the 1st SOW in 1982 at Hurlburt Field. I worked the ECM gear on the Gunships, combat talons, and Pave Low Aircraft. Robert D. Shaffer, [robertshaffer2002@yahoo.com](mailto:robertshaffer2002@yahoo.com)

*I am sending an email with directions to join the ACA.*

## ENJOYED YOUR SITE AND WILL RETURN OFTEN

Hi: I came upon this site from a link from Pleiku Air Base Association, and [www.pleikupals.org](http://www.pleikupals.org) web site. I was assigned to the 1st Air commando Squadron Pleiku Vietnam, Jan 6 1967, I was a crew chief on A-1E's, we were transferred to NKP in Oct. 67, Hell of a place, but was glad to leave. Earl R. Lanning (S/SGT), [elanning@woh.rr.com](mailto:elanning@woh.rr.com) ACA Member - Yes

*Thanks for the email*

## INTERESTED IN JOINING ACA

Retired Air Force. Served with the 605th Air Commandos & 24th Spec Ops Wg. Flying C-123's & AC-47 Gunships from 1967 thru 1972. I am interested in joining, if I meet the qualifications. Joe Mata, [ymata84@cox.net](mailto:ymata84@cox.net), Chula Vista, Ca.

*You certainly qualify and an email is being sent to you to help you join.*

## MAJ RICHARD A. HALE

[majrahale@cox.net](mailto:majrahale@cox.net)

I was assigned to Hurlburt from 1968 to 1970 as the Wing Training NCO. I have many old friends who were combat controllers. Am I eligible for membership?

*You certainly are and the information has been sent to you.*

## JOACHIM (JERRY) ROTHE,

I was a member of the 4 ACS in 1965/66 in Vietnam. I was crew chief of AC47 which we ferried across the pacific in 1965. I was TDY to Danang and Plei Ku. I am interested in knowing if any other members of my squadron have contacted your sit. Joachim (Jerry) Rothe, [rothejg@cox.net](mailto:rothejg@cox.net), Phoenix, AZ

# Rosel

*Continued from page 24*

*Yes they have and this will be put in the ACA Newsletter, expect a few old buddies to call. You need to join and email is being sent to you to help you join.*

## INTERESTED IN JOINING THE ACA

Donald W. Coker, [dnldblackbird@aol.com](mailto:dnldblackbird@aol.com)

6640 river road, Camilla, GA 31730

Comments: I would like to join. I served in the 9 SOS, 8 SOS, 15 SOS and the 1st SOW.

*I am sending you an email and everything you need is in it to join.*

*We are looking forward in your joining.*

## GREAT WEBSITE!

Milo Johonnett, [milo1@gvtc.com](mailto:milo1@gvtc.com)

Canyon Lake, Texas

Comments: Great website! Very interesting pages and links.

I'm a former Kyushu Gypsy and a member of that association.

*Why not join the ACA? An email with all the things for you to join is being sent to you.*

## LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON ROBERT HOLMES

My fathers name is Robert Holmes; he was attached to the 1st Air Commandos Det2A in Viet Nam from Mar-Sep 1963. He was a camera operator on a RB-26L (tail#34718). I was born at Hurlburt in 1964 and had some type of problem with my blood so someone from my father's squadron volunteered to give me a blood transfusion. I would like to hear from anyone who knew my father or from the person who gave me the transfusion. Tom Holmes, [thomes@charter.net](mailto:thomes@charter.net), Ft Worth, Texas

*Can anyone help Tom?*

## AM I THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERS THIS?

In Oct. 62, The Sunday Steve Canyon comic strip featured the fictional antics of what was then Det3, 1stACW (later to become the 605thACS} in Panama, which involved a Russian? plot to blow up a ship loaded with steal eating microbes in one of the canal locks. Don't remember if it was a NY paper or if it was a week late, but we rushed out every Sunday to find out what we had been up to! If I remember correctly the bad guy was taken out by an engine block strung from a cable under a U-10! More fun. If anyone else remembers this or has saved a copy of the strip over all these years, I'd like to hear from you. Wouldn't it make a neat addition to the ACA's museum/trophy room? Dave Husher, email: [1daveh@cox.net](mailto:1daveh@cox.net), Siloam Springs, AR. ACA Member - Yes

## COL.WALTER E KURTZ-FSOC COMMANDER,

[asiantigers@hotmail.com](mailto:asiantigers@hotmail.com),

FREEASIA SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND FSOC, website is

<http://fsoc.8k.com>

SOUTHEAST ASIA GOLDEN TRIANGLE: FSOC SALUTES OUR MENTOR-SUPPORTER AND GOOD FRIEND THE LEGENDARY CHRIS HENTZ WHO SECRETLY FUNDED AND SUPPORTED FSOC COL.WALTER E. KURTZ

FREE ASIA SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (FSOC)

OUR PRAYERS ARE WITH HEINIE TOO.....

GOD BLESS YOU ALL FOR YOUR SERVICE... FSOC, OVER, OUT

*Thanks for the email but I sure would like to know who you are and where you are at?*

## ANYTHING ON AC'S ON KOREA?

John Kenney, [marbil@alamedanet.net](mailto:marbil@alamedanet.net), Alameda, CA

Served in Korea K16, 1953, Opns 6167Ops C-47, C-46, B-26--Airman no class but retired as Lt Col, USAF in 1981. Why isn't there anything on AC's on Korea? B-26.

*Will get something in there but if you have a good story let me know.*

## SOME OF YOU VETERAN AIRCREW / ACA MEMBERS WILL IDENTIFY WITH THIS

For the first few months of my tour (June 69 - June 70) Aussies of 2Sqn Canberra bombers, part of 35TFW at Phan Rang AB, could spend our one day off each week as supernumerary crew on board USAF C-123 flitting about South Vietnam. It was an arrangement between COs. I am not sure of the date, other than it may have been August or September 1969 when I was relatively settled into my tour. For my first flight, I rose early and somehow got to the briefing room across the Phan Rang strip around 0500 hours where the day's activities were outlined. In due course, we took off after the pilot (Lt Col) and co-pilot impressed me with their pre-flight checks. My first day in Vietnam had ended with a flight in a C-123 that was a real shocker - sitting on the floor on a large sheet of plastic covering cow-dung with a cargo strap for a seat belt. A group of us, all Aussies, were a little terrified as engines belched smoke as they started after we had been briefed on how to react if the crash alarm sounded on take-off. So, the pre-flight checks that day were comforting for a "groundie" radio technician who rarely flew in military aircraft. After about a half-hour flight westwards, we descended for landing. Little could be seen of the way ahead while sitting on a box of cargo chains behind the bulkhead as protection against hostile ground fire. It was obvious from the mountainous country and low clouds seen through the windows that we were landing on a mountain strip. After an aborted landing, the crewmen went aft into the tail section where they said we had the best chance of survival because they were very worried we might crash. After two aborted landings, we finally landed on the airstrip made by lopping off the top of a mountain. As the plane slowed, the crewmen lowered the ramp to dispatch the cargo of roofing iron. I could then see the strip was just wet clay. The brakes would have been useless and the plane could only have been brought to halt with reverse pitch. When the plane turned to reverse the direction for take-off, the wing

*See ROSSEL pg. 26*



# Rossel

*Continued from page 25*

went over the edge of the mountain, and I think my heart skipped a few beats. In recent years, whenever I've read of the incredible experiences pilots and aircrew had in Vietnam, I thought of the C-123 crews who must have done that kind of mission regularly. Our flights stopped after a C-123 allegedly landed short and flew into a strip not unlike that one. Col Benson, ACA Member Down Under. email: [valiant@mcs.net.au](mailto:valiant@mcs.net.au) Mackay, Queensland, Australia

*Thanks for the story down under.*

## B/G GERALD C. SCHWANKL , AF BIO

After completing combat crew training in A-1E's at Hurlburt Field, Fla., in 1966, General Schwankl remained there as an A-1E gunnery instructor for American and Vietnamese pilots. In July 1967 he was assigned to Project Tropic Moon 1 doing operational testing on a night reconnaissance and strike system using low light level television on the A-1E.

In January 1968 he was assigned with Project Tropic Moon to the 56th Special Operations Wing, Nakhon Phanom Royal Thai Air Force Base, Thailand. While there he flew 145 night combat missions in A-1s from Nakhon Phanom and Bien Hoa Air Base, Republic of Vietnam, where he served as assistant operations officer and operations officer.

Cheers, Vic

## AC/SOF LIST

Guys, your AC/SOF GO list is not quite "up to date," it is in fact "missing some" on the RC side. Next time you do this kind of survey you might consider consulting the AFSOC AFRC and ANG command advisors. Their offices are located in the HQ AFSOC building, I'm sure they can provide future updates. Other than BG Clay McCutchen (he must have made a big donation) the following individuals are not listed:

919 SOW - BG (sel) Mark Kyle,

BG (ret) Mark Stogsdill, LTG (ret)

Jimmy Sherrod and BG (sel) Bob Bailey.

AFSOC/CC Mobilization Assistants - BG Frank Padilla,

MG (ret) John Dorris, also 606th SOS at NKP Jun 1970-Jun 1971,

Maj Gen (ret) Bob Stephens,

BG (ret) Sam Mitchell and AFSOC DO/MA,

BG Mike Wilson, also former 919th SOW/CV.

193 SOW (PAANG) - BG Steve Sischo,

BG Herb Hurst, BG (ret) Steve Speer,

MG (ret) Reed Ernst, also ANG Assistant to SOCOM/CC,

BG (ret) Adolph "Ace" Hearon.

AFSOC/CC ANG Assistants - BG (ret) Bobby Brittain,

MG Bob Knauff.

Maj Gen (ret) John D. Dorris, MA to AFSOC/CC - Oct 1999 to Feb 2005. 606th SOS, C-123 Candlestick FAC, NKP RTAFB, Jun 1970 to Jun 1971

John Dorris, email: [john.dorris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:john.dorris@sbcglobal.net) ACA member -Yes

*Thanks for the input and we will add them to the list. We haven't forgotten the AFR/ANG and as soon as we find this type of information we*

*make changes. The list is always changing because of promotions and information that we get from members like you.*

## XC-142

Hi Gene: Don't know if I have told you or not, but I was involved back in 1964-65 With the XC-142. A four engine version of the V-22. It is an engineering "Mad-House" with the sub-systems. The XC-142 was developed by Chase/Temco/Vaught (I think) though the later patents were bought out by someone else. May have been Bell, but I don't think so. Anyhow, TAC did not want the 142 though I think Gen. Prichard may have been pushing it. They built 5 and four of them crashed. The only one that didn't crash was the one at Langley which was owned by NASA. Thanks to NASA, it was proven that the plane was not made to fly with any type pay-load. I never got to fly the plane, but did go thru the ground school for the systems in the hopes of getting to fly it. But alas, someone with higher authority (I think it was Gen. Disoway) killed the plans because of the NASA work. By the way I also worked with the XC-120 at Eglin AF Base during the summer of 1953."Bill Brown", [ac119pilot@earthlink.net](mailto:ac119pilot@earthlink.net)

*Thanks Bill-really enjoyed it. It is great to get your information and as you know we were both in Vietnam together in 62 at Bein Hoa and I had no idea, as well as others, that you were involved with the French war in the 50ths.*

## SMSGT FORREST G. TILTON USAF

Eugene, I understand that Senior Master Sergeant Forrest G.Tilton served in Vietnam as First Sergeant of an Air Commando Squadron in 1966 or 1967. I am hoping you can let me know which unit he served with, and when he was in Vietnam. After retiring from the Air Force, Tilton reportedly served as an Okaloosa County Sheriff's Deputy, and it appears he was living in Mary Esther at the time of his death on 14 December 1989.

I will be mentioning SMSgt Tilton briefly in a historical publication, and I want to make sure his unit is properly identified. By the way, I am an Air Force veteran. My one and only MAJCOM was Air Training Command a/k/a The Flying Ice Cream Cone. Almost all of my active duty was in the former Republic of Texas. Thank you

*Did any of you know Forrest Tilton in any of the Air Commando units?*  
*Gene Rossel*

## THEODORE ROOSEVELT ON IMMIGRANTS AND BEING AN AMERICAN IN 1907

"In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birth-place, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American...There can be no

# Rossel

*Continued from page 26*

divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag... We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language... and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people."

--- Theodore Roosevelt 1907

*Great piece during this time of demonstrations across the US and in particular the ability to bring 500,000 people together in a couple days in Los Angeles.*

## MOON'S MIA HUNTER

For more information on Moon's MIA hunters, visit

<http://pro5.com/mia>

## RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT MUSEUM

Howdy & G'Day to All: This site was forwarded to me from an Air Commando Friend. These are something else! I have never seen many of these before. What a treasure find. Take a close look at them You will see quite a resemblance to some of the USA planes.

Bill Brown, [brownbill@comcast.net](mailto:brownbill@comcast.net)

[www.richard-seaman.com/Aircraft/Museums/Monino/Highlights](http://www.richard-seaman.com/Aircraft/Museums/Monino/Highlights)

*Great site.*

## AF REUNION AT THE WHITE HOUSE

*This story came from a number of ACA members and it is a good read for fighter pilots.*

Undergraduate Pilot Training Class 70-04 at the White House. . . . Here are my first thoughts after returning to VLD from the DC trip to visit with the President at the White House. Use them as you see fit. It was an incredible two days. The occasion was the reunion of former Air Force student pilots in UPT Class 70-04 here at Moody AFB. President George W. Bush was one of those students, and I was their T-38 Flight Commander for the six months they were in that phase of training. They were gracious enough to invite myself and a few of their other instructors and training supervisors to share their reminiscences of days gone by.

Tuesday morning, April 4, 2006, Bud Kendrick, who drove up to DC from Gainesville, FL, picked me up at the Metro in Bethesda, and we drove out to Andrews AFB for a tour of Air Force One. After going through security to make certain we were who we said we were, they led us into one of the largest hangars I've ever seen. It can hold both of the Air Force One 747's and their smaller Air Force One Boeing 757, and still have room for a few more aircraft of some what smaller dimensions. One of the 74's was in Wichita getting mods, so we only saw one of the 747's and the 757, which we didn't board. Colonel Tillman, who is the President's pilot, had some of his co-pilots standing by as well as many of the other crew members who man the various sections of AF One, and maintain it on the ground. Off came our shoes for the walk through. Everything is absolutely spotless. They showed us the entire aircraft and

explained how each section works while in flight. The tour took over two hours. When asked how often they are requested to go through this exercise, Col. Tillman said only about once a year, so we felt very, very privileged. Yes, I sat in the Presidents office chair --AND in the pilot's seat. After so many years of "round gauges" this panel looked more like a video game.

Tuesday evening we arrived at the White House gate at 1815. After going through security we were met by the President and Mrs. Bush at the front door---Awestruck Event #1. # 2 was when the President took my hand and said, "It's great to see you again, Norm," (it's nice to be remembered by the powerful).

After drinks, chat, etc., it was to their private dining room for dinner. Since there were 33 of us, including the President and Mrs. Bush, they had set three tables. GW was at #1, Laura was at #2, and #3 was "hosted" by Bud. I was seated directly across the table from Laura; what an honor. She is a real beauty, relaxed and as easy to talk with as any of your closest friends; both of them are. The menu was delicious, and the conversation beyond description. I'd certainly like to own their wine cellar, too.

After dinner the President and Laura gave us a tour through their private quarters, giving us a lot of history behind architectural features, portraits, furniture, various rooms, etc.

Then GW asked, "You guys like to see the Oval Office?" When he opened the door and I walked into THE ROOM--- Awestruck Event #3! Folks, this just wasn't really registering with me by that point. I felt as though I was floating above it all and observing this take place outside of my body. Maybe the fact that I'd had no sleep since early Monday morning didn't help the situation, either. NO, I did NOT sit in THE CHAIR. After all, some things are sacred. However, I did walk behind it and place both hands on the back of it. The thought occurred to me that there had been many a high level butt chewing issued from this exalted side of the desk. Oh, to have been a fly on the wall. (No, I would have had to pass on a few of those infamous moments during the previous administration.) For me this, in many respects, was the high point of the evening.

The President is reverent, dynamic, articulate, passionate, and very emphatic about his concern for the safety of our nation, the rest of the world, and his hope that all oppressed people will be able to gain the liberties that are their God given right.

He also believes that it is our national destiny to help them achieve this. He made observations and specific comments I would not care to discuss in a public forum, as the media would cut and splice to their agenda.

Wednesday AM we were at the helicopter pad on the White House lawn to see him off to CN where he was to give a speech. He called out to us to behave ourselves and that he'd had a great time the night before.

Wednesday evening we had a dinner at the Army Navy Club followed by a panel concerning GW's AF and Guard experiences. This was organized and led by the staff of Ghost Wings Magazine, Adam and Brian Makos. A few of us had worked with them earlier when they commissioned a painting commemorating the President's pilot training days

See **ROSSEL** pg. 28

# Rossel

*Continued from page 27*

at Moody AFB.

The President and Laura Bush are easy to talk with. He is articulate, passionate, and absolutely convinced that we are doing the right thing regarding terrorism.

He also told of his conversations with the national leaders of some of the Islamic nations. He told them, to pick sides in the fight against terrorism, RIGHT NOW! If they weren't with us, they were against us, and they would suffer the consequences. ---A very decisive stand!

Rest assured, we have the right man in the Oval Office! To be able to sit around and talk as we did years ago in a completely different situation was really wonderful, and a privilege.

Regards, Norm Conant

## GEORGE BUSH ENTERTAINS HIS USAF PILOT TRAINING CLASS 70-04 AT THE WHITE HOUSE-- WHAT A GREAT REUNION!

Gene, that was really interesting.....I was in Moody UPT class 70-05, behind GW, one of my classmates, Dan Beaudette, was originally in GW's class. Dan got hurt playing sports and washed back to my class, so I met GW a few times through Dan. He was just another one of the guys, a good guy who fit in and was there for one reason to earn our silver wings. John D. Dorris, [john.dorris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:john.dorris@sbcglobal.net)

*Thanks John. Nice to have someone who was in training the same time as our President was.*

## LAO, HONG, AND AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

Gene, The ACA has agreed to donate \$500 for the Lao, Hmong... Memorial. Steve Schofield requests the names of air commandos KIA in the secret war in Laos ASAP. The dedication is in July. When can you provide the list? Full name is what he is after - no rank. Felix Sambogna, President ACA

## MICHAEL J. NOVOSEL PASSED AWAY

Medal of Honor recipient retired Chief Warrant Officer NOVOSEL, Michael J., 83, of Enterprise, AL died early Sunday, April 2, 2006 in Washington, DC He died peacefully, in his sleep, in Walter Reed Army Medical Center following a lengthy battle with cancer. A memorial service was held at Fort Rucker at the US Army Aviation Museum at 9:00 am Wednesday, April 5, 2006.

Charles Spicka, Oceanside, Calif., Ubon, Thailand '68 - '69

## TO JIM BONEY

I dug some things out of the closet on the C-123 and put some of it on the Internet and the remaining in the ACA Newsletter for the Blue Max. With a little help with Hollywood we should delight the hearts of those old warriors who strapped the mighty provider on their back. Hollywood has used this bird on numerous occasions in their movies. The attached letter on Large Marge from Alby & Juan Redick of Aviation Classic Ltd on the history of C-123K tail number 54-0709

shows that the Proud Bird is not dead. It was used in Nicholas Cages film Conair which was released in June 1997.

There are two excellent sources for maturing ex C-123 crewmembers to find out where their beloved now resides. Michael A. Blaugher's booklet "Guide to Over 700 Aircraft Museums" 16th Edition list locations of the Provider in various museums. The Totavia web site contains a list of all C-123 existing in the world today with tail numbers (some have changed due to nationality), location and a short history. The author asked me to send him any C-123 not listed that still is around today for inclusion of this list. This site is linked to the ACA home page under the Ranch Hand pages. Many of the current C-123 officials and pilots I talked to say that a Graham Robson of England is the world authority on the C-123-there could be some disagreement on this with our members. I could not locate him but he has done an excellent article in the Summer 1994 "Propliner" magazine loaned to me by Mark Hinzman of the Military Aircraft Restoration Corp(MARC) of Chino CA airport. Mark fell in love with the C-123 during the Vietnam war while servicing the C-123 in SEA as a 19 year old. He now restores them and flies the aircraft and has over 8000 hours in various aircraft. I visited MARC out at the Chino airport and the aircraft is in excellent condition and restored to military pristine condition. Don Howell of HAVECO tel 520-429-0025 sold the C-123 used in the Conair movie to crash land on the Las Vegas strip and crash into the Sands Hotel. It is the same aircraft I reported seeing under the Sands in Nov 96 while at Comdex. Don has a number of C-123 which he sells. According to Mark Hinzman a C-123 can be bought from the Aerospace Maintenance & Restoration Center (AMARC) in Tucson for about \$40,000 and when it is restored it sells for about \$250,000. I found out from the Restoration organizations that AMARC, tel 520-228-8771, doesn't like to be called "The Boneyard."

My research of the C-123 was a result of the reunion where a number of members had claims or were working on claims with the VA on Agent Orange problems and the Blue Max complaint about lack of C-123 stories in the Newsletter. I decided to provide our readers and our ACA home page with some updated information both on the C-123 and Agent Orange. The Internet doesn't have a lot on the C-123 and most of the Agent Orange articles are geared to one sided views. I found very little on the testing program and results of the AF 20 year epidemiologic investigation of Agent Orange affects on Ranch Hand crews and a control group.

According to Paul Cecil's book the code name Ranch Hand specifically referred to the C-123 herbicide spraying project. Herbicides were also applied by US helicopters, ground blowers(Buffalo Turbines), and hand sprayers. In the early days the Vietnamese Air Force flew some herbicide sorties, using fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. The code name for the overall herbicide program was Trail Dust.

The UC-123 aircraft referred to as "Patches" tail no. 362 is in the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB. It was called "Patches" because of the number of hits it took and patches required to fix it. According to Jack Spey there were 1,000 hits on 362 when they stopped counting in 64.

See **ROSSEL** pg. 29



# No, Bats are not blind!

## Flareships at Ubon, Spring 1966

by Sam McGowan

No, bats are not blind, but we might as well have been on those dark nights over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and southern North Vietnam. It's too bad we didn't have the senses of a bat because if we had, we might have been able to see something on the truck routes that wound their way through the dense forest beneath the wings of our C-130A.

Operation Blind Bat was perhaps one of the most interesting if not dangerous missions of the Vietnam War in the years between 1964 and 1970, when the mission was terminated. Because the Communist infiltrators took advantage of the darkness of night to make their way south out of North Vietnam, the United States Air Force worked diligently to find a way to detect the nearly illusive trucks and other means of transportation by which the North sent supplies to their troops in South Vietnam. Dropping flares from transports was nothing new in Vietnam; the technique had been used in Korea. In South Vietnam, C-47s and C-123s flew nightly flare missions in support of ground installations that might find themselves under attack. But the C-130 Blind Bat mission was different; our targets were trucks, not enemy squads and we were flying interdiction missions, not support for ground forces.

The C-130 flare mission had its beginnings in late 1964 when a detachment of C-130As equipped with an aluminum flare launcher and a wooden bins for flares was sent to Da Nang Air Base. From Da Nang, the C-130As from the 6315th Operations Group at Naha, Okinawa, flew nightly missions out over Laos seeking out targets. The C-130s operated as part of a four-ship formation made up of the flareship, a pair of USAF B-57 Canberra attack bombers and a USMC EF-10 EWO aircraft known as Willy the Whale. With the C-130 serving as a mother ship to lead the formation to the target, the team would leave Da Nang and hit west, and later north, to seek out the enemy and destroy him.

Though automatic flare launchers were later developed (but never used

by Blind Bat), the mission in the early days was very much a Rube Goldberg arrangement. The "flare launcher" was actually an aluminum tray that had been manufactured in the Sheet Metal Shop back at Naha, while the flares were stored in wooden bins tied to an airdrop pallet. The crews were equipped with the "finest" detection equipment - which consisted of the pilots' and navigator's eyeballs and a pair of binoculars!

Even though the equipment was rudimentary at best, the mission evidently was a thorn in the Communist side, for on July 1, 1965, a mortar and sapper attack on Da Nang was evidently aimed at the ramp where the three C-130 flareships were parked, waiting to go out on a mission. Two airplanes were destroyed in the attack and the third was damaged, along with an airlifter C-130B that had the misfortune to be parked nearby. The flareships were the first C-130s ever lost to enemy action.

In early 1966 the flare mission moved from Da Nang to Ubon, Thailand. At Ubon the mission changed, and recieved a new name as the Blind Bat call sign came into use. Actually, Blind Bat was one of two call signs used by the flareships, with Lamplighter being the other. Blind Bat missions operated over Laos while the Lamplighters went north, across the Anamite Range into North Vietnam. According to some veterans of the mission, flareships at one time operated as far north as the Hanoi-Haiphong area, but increasing enemy defenses forced the C-130s to operate further south in the Route Package One and Two areas south of Vinh. By 1967 the threat of SAM's in North Vietnam caused a cessation of operations over the North.

After the move to Ubon, the flare mission changed somewhat. Instead of departing as part of a formation, the C-130 flareships began going out single-ship to patrol a specified area looking for targets. Each flareship was allotted a certain number of strike flights each evening, and had the option of calling for more through the Moonbeam Airborne Combat Command Center which circled high over Laos each evening controlling airstrikes.

In the spring of 1966, shortly after I reported in to the 35th Troop

See **BLIND BAT** pg. 30

### A SALUTE TO MECHANICS FROM AN UNKNOWN PILOT

Here's to the people with the greasy hands;  
Who fuel the plane when the pilot lands;  
Who fix the canopies and stop the leaks;  
Who smooth the scratches and rivets the panels;  
Check "loud and clear" on the radio channels;  
Who read the write-ups; and make repairs;  
Check wires and cables for chafing and tears;  
Who pull the chocks and walk the wings;  
And do a million maintenance things;  
Who watch as the bird takes off and flies;  
So here's a salute to the gals and guys  
From a group of fliers who seldom ponder  
The ones who keep them in the wild blue yonder.

From the "Carpetbaggers," the newsletter of our WWII predecessors in Europe.

## Rossel

Continued from page 28

*Editors note: Picture of "patches" is on display at the ACA building. In his book Paul Cecil the term "Agent Orange" was a media reference to the 50:50 herbicide mixture of 2,4 dichlorophenoxyacetate and 2,4,5-trichlorophenoxyacetate, used primarily for defoliant. The herbicide was referred to in Vietnam simply as "Orange," a designation matching the orange stripe on the 55-gallon drums used to ship the chemicals from the US to Vietnam. According to the book the herbicide formulations used in SEA were as follows:*

*Blue Herbicide (1961-64) Orange Herbicide (1965-69)  
Pink Herbicide (1962-64) Purple Herbicide (1962-64)  
White Herbicide (1965-71)*

Eugene D. Rossel

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# Blind Bat

*Continued from page 29*

Carrier Squadron at Naha, I had my introduction to the flareship mission. I went in-country as the senior loadmaster of a crew commanded by Captain Bob Bartunek, with Captain Steve Taylor as copilot, Lt. Dick Herman (the writer) as navigator, SSgt Cecil Hebdon as engineer and Airmen Mike Cavanaugh, Willy Donovan, Sam McCracken and myself as loadmaster/flare kickers.

To say that our tour at Ubon was exciting is an understatement. Every other night our crew took off sometime between just before dark and midnight and headed northwest, out over Laos and sometimes up into North Vietnam. No, we were not shot at every time we flew, at least not that we could see, but we were certainly shot at enough! My introduction to North Vietnamese anti-aircraft came about within the first five minutes after we penetrated the skies of North Vietnam on my orientation flight. I was flying with a 21st TCS crew as an observer before our crew started missions the following evening. We put the flare chute out as we neared the Mu Gia Pass, and dropped a string to see if there were any targets in what was the most heavily defended place in southern North Vietnam. Our flares had no more than popped when we were greeted by cherry-red tracers, 37-MM fire, coming up somewhere far below. "I want my mother!" That was my thought when I realized someone down there was trying to kill me! But the rounds missed and we went on to a typical night of flare kicking over North Vietnam.

My tour was during the rainy season so truck traffic on the Trail was light. A lot of our missions were aimed at targets that had been identified from reconnaissance photographs taken earlier in the day. "Suspected" truck parks and ammo dumps were usually the targets in such instances. Other times we would just patrol the skies looking for the lights of trucks on ground

below. Since the NVA used shielded headlights, the trucks were difficult to spot. And as often as not, when we did find a convoy, they would speed into the shelter of a "village" where they were off-limits to air strikes.

One of our best nights came about strictly through a series of mistakes, all of which linked together to become a triumph. We had been told during our briefing to look for a "suspected" ammunition dump along the banks of a river in North Vietnam. Our intrepid officers had spotted the "dump" and had called in a flight of USAF F-4's to take it out. But just about the time the fighters arrived in our area, and right after Bartunek had told us to load six flares into the chute, the pilots lost sight of the target completely. If they couldn't see it, they couldn't tell the fighters where it was. The fighter pilots only had a few minutes of loiter fuel and they were starting to complain. Willy Donovan was sitting on the cargo door holding the flares in place with his feet and his legs were beginning to ache. Bartunek was getting frustrated. Finally, Willy had had enough. He raised his feet and let the six flares slide out into the night, where they burst into a brilliance that turned the night beneath us into near-day. With the illumination, someone, I think it was Dick Herman, spotted the target again just as Bartunek was raking Willy over the coals for letting the flares go without being told to do so. Everyone settled down and got back to the business of trying to destroy the enemy.

The first F-4, a Gunfighter out of Da Nang, roared in over the target and dropped his bombs. They hit close to the target, but not close enough to do any damage. His wingman came along behind him. He not only missed the target completely, his bombs fell on the opposite side of the river nearly a mile away! But through a fluke of good

fortune his bombs fell smack in the middle of the real ammo dump which was cleverly concealed and had not been detected. Even though he missed his aiming point by a mile (literally!) the errant fighter pilot destroyed the real ammo dump. We heard later that the pilot was put in for a Silver Star for the mission.

Missing targets was a common occurrence on night missions by fighters in Southeast Asia. Every crewmember who flew the Blind Bat or C-123 Candlestick mission can attest to the phenomenal lack of accuracy on the part of the fighter pilots, especially the F-4s. Of all the airplanes working over the Trail at night, the WW II vintage A-26 Invader was undoubtedly the best. One afternoon we went up early and worked with an A-26 near the Plain of Jars. For nearly an hour the NIM-ROD pilot worked over the target, first dropping bombs, then napalm, then firing rockets, after that his guns and finally dropping his own load of eight flares on the supply dump. It was undoubtedly the best airshow I have ever seen.

Along with the A-26s, the USMC and Navy A-4s were the most accurate bombers working the Trail. Air Force F-4s were undoubtedly the worst. The F-100s and A-1Es were pretty good, but they were flying mostly in South Vietnam in support of ground forces and not working over the Trail. The AC-47 gunship was tried over the Trail just before I got to Ubon but this was mission the venerable old Gooney Bird was not suited for. In less than a week Charley shot down both of the Spookies and AC-47s spent the rest of the war working in South Vietnam. It was not until the advent of the super gunship, the AC-130, that an effective truck killer came on the scene.

There was an area where the F-4s were good, though and that was with CBUs, or cluster bombs. The CBU had been developed for use

against anti-aircraft sites, and the Communists were well aware that if they revealed their position, a flight of CBU-carrying F-4s would soon be on the way to take them out. Watching a CBU strike was something else. One night a particular gun made the mistake of firing on us when we were a little bit out of range. Bartunek called in a flight armed with CBUs. I watched as the F-4 drew red tracers from the enemy gun as he made his bombing run. Suddenly, tiny winking white lights erupted all over the place from which the red tracers were originating - and the red cherry balls suddenly ceased. I must admit it sort of did my heart good to witness the gun crews destruction.

Even though we were flying out of Thailand, we were not safe from enemy attack. One evening while my crew was out on a mission, an enemy team tried to probe the base - right outside the Blind Bat enlisted men's quarters! A Chinese Nung guard managed to sound the alarm. He got off one shot with his shotgun as an NVA special ops soldier was cutting his throat. But the one shot was enough. A few shots were fired but the enemy soldier disappeared into the night.

One evening our crew had an unusual experience. We were called out of Laos to drop flares between Ubon and the Mekong River which constituted the border between Thailand and Laos. We were told to look for helicopters on the ground. It turned out that North Vietnamese aircraft had penetrated the area, evidently to deliver supplies to insurgents in the area or an enemy team. We did not see anything. Later we learned that an F-4 had been scrambled off of Ubon and had picked up the target on his radar, but in the rush to get him off the ground, the ordinance team had failed to pull the pins on his Sidewinders. The missiles failed to fire and the unidentified

*See **BLIND BAT** pg. 31*

# Blind Bat

*Continued from page 30*

fied airplane - probably a helicopter - got away.

Sometime in late 1966 a Blind Bat crew from my squadron, the 35th TCS, tangled with a North Vietnamese MiG and managed to live to tell about. They were working in northern Laos when Moonbeam diverted them to a point just inside the Laotian border about 120 miles west of Hanoi to provide flare support for friendlies on the ground who were under attack. The crew was busy dropping flares when they were alerted by College Eye, an EC-121 radar ship orbiting over Thailand, that a pair of MiGs had just taken off from Gia Lam Airport and were headed their way. It takes a MiG about ten minutes to cover 120 miles and it was not long before the crew had company. No American fighters were anywhere close to their position and the Blind Bat flareship was not armed. The crew had only one weapon at their disposal and that was the maneuverability of their airplane, combined with rugged terrain beneath them. They dove toward the ground, knowing they were over mountains and had no maps of the terrain on board the airplane. But they had a radar and a sharp navigator. Using the radar to keep from hitting a ridge, the C-130 crew wove their way through the valleys while the MiGs searched for them with their own radar. The enemy fighters were so close that the energy from their search radar caused waves on the C-130 crew's set. When they got back to Ubon later that evening, the fighter pilots in the officers club were disappointed that they had missed a chance at a MiG. The C-130 crew was just glad to be alive!

Another crew that was glad to be alive was also from the 35th TCS. Major Frank's crew was working near the Communist stronghold of Tchepone in Laos when they took a hit from a large caliber anti-aircraft gun. This particular gun was a leg-

end. The bad guys had it mounted on a railroad car and kept it hidden inside the mouth of either a tunnel or a large cave near the city. They would roll it inside where it was impervious to air strikes, then bring back out again to take a pot-shot at a "Yankee Air Pirate." The Blind Bat crew thought their number was up. The round set fire to their left wing, and was burning brightly fed by the hydraulic fluid in the primary system. Major Frank had rung the "prepare to bailout" bell and was just about to sound the "bailout" signal when the loadmasters called that the fire had gone out. After consuming all the hydraulic fluid in the system, the fire burned itself out before reaching the fuel tanks that were on either side of the dry bay in which it was burning.

Still, they had problems. The airplane would still fly, but all hydraulic pressure to the ailerons had been lost. SSgt Kenney, the engineer, went in back to help the loadmasters, Airmen Benstead, Taylor, Harris and Delaney, to put the fire out. Frank and the co-pilot, Lt Nelson, used all of their strength on the controls while Kenney and the loadmasters provided additional muscle pulling on tiedown straps that they had attached to the aileron bell crank. They managed to bring the airplane to a safe landing at Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, where each of the crewmembers kissed the ground when they jumped out of the airplane.

Getting hit on a Blind Bat mission was almost a regular occurrence, but surprisingly, casualties were fairly low. Two Blind Bat flareships were lost during the course of the war, along with their crews. Some crewmembers were wounded by flak on other missions.

There was some bitter humor with the mission as well. McNorton, a loadmaster in the 21st TCS, was called "Combat McNorton" because of his thirst for adventure. Before

Seventh Air Force put a stop to it, C-130 crews frequently fired their M-16s at the ground during strikes and sometimes used flares as bombs. I set up one bombing mission myself. We dropped a load of six after setting the fuzes for a long interval over the Mu Gia Pass. McNorton threw out a flare and hit a B-57 with it. As I remember, it was McNorton who came up with the Blind Bat black beret and patch that flareship crewmembers wore at Ubon.

A navigator had an experience of rather mixed blessing sometime in 1968. By this time Blind Bat had received some new equipment, including the Black Crow ignition detector and other equipment, including a system that required a navigator/operator to sit in a seat mounted on the outside of one of the paratroop doors. This particular navigator was coming inside the airplane when he accidentally caught the rip cord of his parachute and extracted himself from the airplane! He made it to the ground safely where he spent an uneasy night until the helicopters came for him at dawn. He was picked up and returned to Ubon - where there was a message waiting for him that he had been passed over for promotion and was being RIF'ed out of the service!

Blind Bat was a forerunner for the AC-130 gunship mission which replaced it in 1970. Most of the techniques and much of the equipment used on the gunships had been developed and/or tested by Blind Bat crews. Though there was still a mission for Blind Bat, cost considerations led the Air Force to terminate the program in 1970 after the gunships came on the scene.

Not long after I put this page up, I heard from Bob Bartunek. Bob reminded me of an incident that happened one night when we were - literally! - upside down in a C-130! The navigator had drifted off and let us get a little bit too close to a flak

trap. When the guns opened up, the pilots saw the tracers coming right at us. For years I thought Steve Taylor was flying, but Bartunek says that on this particular evening he was flying from the right seat and Taylor was in the left seat calling fighters. I know where I was - sitting on the door holding the flares in the chute with my feet. All of a sudden our A-model Herkybird was rolling all the way over onto its back! This is no shit, Sherlock! Bartunek rolled the airplane upside down and pulled through in a split-S - which probably kept us from getting shot out of the sky. And the whole thing was so smooth that not a single one of the flares came out the tray. The navigator, who was still half asleep when we went through the aerobatic maneuver, said there was no way we could have gone upside down - because his coffee had not even spilled!

Since I first put this page up in 1996, more than 100 former Blind Bat people have managed to find each other. Several of us have been communicating almost daily on the Flareships Email group described at the top of the page. We had our first reunion at the Holiday Inn Express in Biloxi, Mississippi the weekend of May 9-12, 2002. We all had a great time renewing old friendships and making new ones. Bob Bartunek and I were there from our crew. Sam McCracken passed away a few years ago of a heart attack. Dick Herman, the nav, is a successful military aviation novelist.

Speaking of novels, I have written my own about the Blind Bat mission. It is available direct from the publisher, 1stBooks as well as from book sellers such as Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.. Here is the promo I have on the web for it - The Cave.

*Ed Note: The underlined paragraph seems to be a bit far-fetched!!! How many of our readers really believe this? Your comments will be appreciated.*



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**June 2006**

## President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

We appreciate the many responses to the survey that was included in the March newsletter mail out. In a separate column, there is a summary of the responses. We included the question concerning a dissolution plan to promote interest and feedback, to motivate locals to get more involved in the ACA, and to recognize the fact that our By-Laws should include a dissolution plan. It is obvious that in the event of dissolution of the ACA for any reason, we should have a plan for the transfer of our valuable assets including our building, memorabilia, and funds. Your Board will come up with some ideas that will be discussed at the general membership meeting during our October 06 reunion. I EMPHASIZE THE WE HAVE NO INTENTION OF DISSOLVING THE ACA IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. WE JUST NEED A PLAN THAT INCLUDES THE DESIRES OF OUR MEMBERSHIP. WE HAVE A VERY HEALTHY ASSOCIATION. As a result of the survey, I realize that we should include a treasurer's report in our newsletter. I am concerned over the fact that some of our members think we have financial problems. We do not. We are in great financial shape. Please read the treasurer's report in this newsletter.

Also included in the March newsletter mail out were McCoskrie Threshold Foundation

donation slips. Once again the response has been outstanding. We received over \$5,700 in donations. Thank you, thank you! John Grove and his band of volunteers continue to collect so many items that are in turn shipped to the needy. It is well to frequently remember how fortunate we are in this great country – the poverty in so many parts of the world is overwhelming. Although we cannot solve the world's poverty problems we, through the MTF, are helping a lot of folks.

Board Member Bob White continues to run the Eglin Airman's Attic as a volunteer. He was the volunteer of the month at Eglin recently and was in contention for the volunteer of the year excellent award. I attended the Volunteer Recognition Ceremony and was pleased to hear Bob's plug for the ACA.

VP Geron has started the necessary planning for the October reunion. Please see the info in this newsletter and seriously think

about attending. Our survey responses indicate that the members who attend do enjoy the experience very much. Colonel Brozenick, 16<sup>th</sup> SOW Commander, will be the banquet speaker. His troops are very involved in the current hostilities. They are today's air commandos who have the same challenges and opportunities as the "old" air commandos. I know their experiences/war stories are just as interesting as the ones that came out of VN.

A reminder – this year we will award four \$1,500 scholarships. The drawing and announcement will be during the October reunion. The rules and application form are included in our newsletters.

Although our much-loved founder and inspirational leader is temporarily down, he knows that we are and will continue to carry on in air commando tradition. We are confident he will be back soon to ensure we stay on track. Cheers, Sam.



**View of the Santa Rosa Sound from the Club.**

It is summer time in FWB, and we hope that the hurricane gods are not as angry as they were the last few years. Some of our air commandos are still recovering from the violent storms.

Two of our great air commandos are ill. Our dynamic and inspiring past president and current chaplain Charlie Jones is fighting cancer. He is such a fighter we are confident that he will prevail as he has in many other critical situations in his exciting life.

Our founder and inspirational leader, General Aderholt, is very sick and has been hospitalized for several months. Friends, family, and air commandos have been with him to ensure his needs are met. The outpouring of love and affection for our wonderful leader is extraordinary. I am so proud to be associated with such a group of warriors who also show such love and compassion for a fellow warrior. Although he is very sick, we remain optimistic about his recovery. He continues to express his love for all air commandos and his strong desire to ensure the continuation of the air commando tradition – Any Time, Any Place. Please read Hap's column for more information.