



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

March 2006

With valor: Seven members of PAVE country honored



Capt. Matthew Berry and Col. Alsid

by Jamie Haig
16th SOW Public Affairs

Seven members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron were decorated Dec. 16 for their heroic actions in Fallujah, Iraq.

Capt. Matthew Berry, Master Sgt. Randy Kensey, Tech. Sgt. Byron Allen, and Staff Sgts. James Bowling and Christopher Dalton were all presented with

See **PAVE** pg. 3

Inside Features

A/B-26 Reunion	pg 20
Christmas Party	pg 14 & 15
Editorial	pg 2
Hap's Comments	pg 6
Letters	pg 7
McCaskrie T.F.	pg 12
Membership	pg 5
President's Corner	back pg
Rossel's Report	pg 22

Hangar Interior Under Goes Make-Over

Extension of The Hall of Memories

by Roger Klair

I'm most happy to tell you that the "Hangar," our back storage room, has been transformed into a beautiful Memorabilia / Library / Reading / Gathering Room that you can be mighty proud of, and we're not done yet! We still have some wall space for your treasure to keep your wonderful memories alive. You can send photos of your Commando days (framed only please), artifacts, flags, books (WWII to present) and we'll try to get them all displayed. And most importantly, stop by the ACA building and have a look for yourselves. It's yours!

This remarkable change could not have occurred without the help of many volunteers. Chief among them is Don Maxwell. Don has bought and sent literally hundreds of books to enhance the library for your reading pleasure. All of them have come from his overseas location.

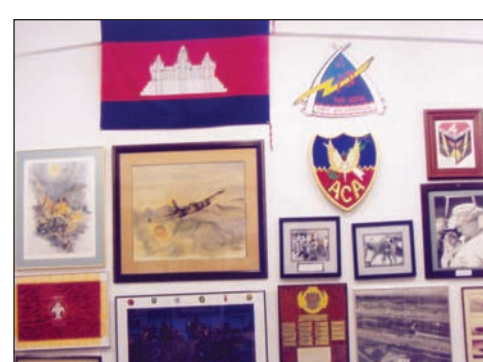
Mike Sheehan has been another major player. Mike donated almost all the books from his private library and the attending bookcases to match.

Others contributing their paint-



ing and rug laying talents were President 'Sam' Sambogna, Bob White, Juan Bazan, Mike Sheehan, Fred Sanders, John Connors, Hap Lutz, Willie Hall, Dave Harrington, John Grove, 'Bud' Gonlazes, 'Snake' Schoknecht, Bill Clinch, Charlie Jones, and yours truly. The combined talents of all these selfless volunteers not only saved countless dollars in labor and furnishings costs, they transformed an eyesore into a thing of beauty,

And to our brothers-in-arms,



(i.e. Rangers, Special Forces, Seals, Marine Recon, Air America, CASI, Delta) you are most welcome to stop by for a gander Monday thru Friday, 0900 to 1200.

**AIR COMMANDO
ASSOCIATION, INC.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

OFFICERS

President Felix Sambogna 2006
Vice President Dick Geron 2007
Treasurer

DIRECTORS

John Connors 2007
David Harrington 2007
Joe Harris 2008
Charles E. McDaniels 2008
Ted Saunders 2007
Gordon H. Scott 2006
Bob White 2006
Fred Platt (Field Rep)

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Pete Bowman

CHAPLAIN

Charlie Jones

The Board Of Directors normally meet at 9:00 AM the last Saturday of each month (Except December) at 2502 W. Hwy 98, Mary Esther, FL.

**McCoskrie/Threshold
Foundation, Inc.**

Director: Harry C. Aderholt

Asst Director: John Grove

Treasurer: Richard Geron

Field Advisor: Karen Kramer

Medical Advisors: John Peters, MD
and Hap Lutz

Secretary: Felix Sambogna

ACA Newsletter

Published Quarterly By The Air
Commando Association, Inc.

Jim Boney, *Editor*

Jim Yealy, *Asst Editor*

Eugene Rossel, *Editor At Large*

Chuck Wheelahan, *Proof Reader*

Jeanette Moore, *Graphic Designer*

Gloria Doster, *Type Setter*

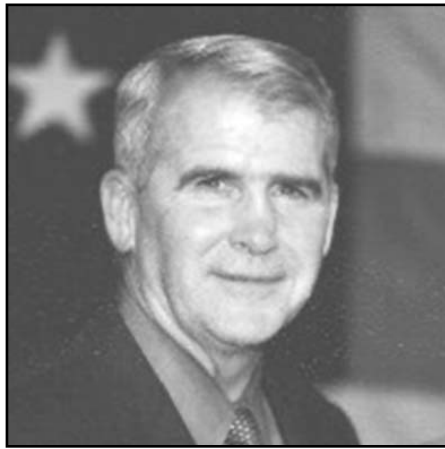
Jimmy Ifland, *Photographer*

Fred Nowak, *Photographer*

Circulation: The Air Commando
Association Newsletter is distributed free
to members and other interested parties
for a combined circulation of 3000
copies. Submit Copy Or Letters To The
ACA Newsletter, PO Box 7, Mary Esther,
FL 32569 or Email to
aircommando@aol.com.

This publication is for the information,
interest, and enjoyment of our readers.
Views and opinions expressed are of the
author or source of material and do not
necessarily reflect opinions, views, or
endorsements of the ACA. Material in the
ACA newsletter may be reproduced pro-
vided the source is credited. Located 4
miles west Of Hurlburt on Hwy 98, The
ACA Hq Office is open 9am-noon,
Monday-Friday. Mail: Box 7, Mary Esther,
FL, 32569. Phone: 850-581-0099. Fax: X
8988. website address is:
www.home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1

Editorial Comments



New Year's Resolutions

by Lt. Col. Oliver North, USMC, (Ret)

As the sun set on 2005, there were a number of people and events worthy of mention and remembrance - some good, some not so good. It is also that time of year when we must make our resolutions for the coming year. And since I'm in the business of unsolicited advice, herewith are a few suggestions to those who may or may not need them.

First, congratulations must be in order for the Iraqi people along with a respectful suggestion that they resolve to stay strong and continue the astounding progress they are making in transforming their country from a brutal dictatorship to a working democracy. In the course of 12 months in 2005, Iraqis have braved terrorists threats and persistent pessimism from the press to go to the polls and show that democratic government is a viable alternative to the violence we have witnessed in that part of the world for too long.

All year, the determination of the Iraqis and the brilliance of our troops were denounced by the likes of Howard Dean - the leader of the Democrat Party - who should resolve to become more optimistic about America and our

troops. Just a week before the Iraqis held their most recent, historic, peaceful election, Dean was speaking to WOIA Radio in San Antonio, TX, and predicted that America would lose the war in Iraq. "The idea that we're going to win the war in Iraq," Dean explained, "is an idea which is just plain wrong."

And speaking of being "just plain wrong," there are two prominent liberals who, in 2006, should resolve to take refresher courses in American history so they don't continue to impugn the character of our service members and our country. After correspondent Andrea Mitchell reported that Iran's new president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad may have been one of the terrorists who held Americans hostage in Tehran in 1979, NBC News anchor Brian Williams responded, "Andrea, what would it matter if proven true? Someone brought up today the first several U.S. Presidents were certainly revolutionaries and might have been called terrorists at the time by the British Crown, after all."

As bad as that remark was, it was topped by Senator Dick Durbin, who accused U.S. troops serving in Guantanamo Bay of war crimes, saying their treatment of terrorists prisoners resembled that "done by Nazis, Soviets in their gulags or some mad regime - Pol Pot, or others." In addition to the remedial history lessons, Durbin should resolve to make the sincere apology he never made,

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is another liberal Democrat who should resolve to think before he speaks. Within hours of Hurricane Katrina's devastation, while hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens in New Orleans and the

Mississippi Gulf Coast were mourning dead family members, Kennedy blamed it all on Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour. "Now we are learning what it's like to reap the whirlwind of fossil fuel dependence which Barbour and his cronies have encouraged," Kennedy suggested.

Of course, liberals can't accept the fact that the Big Government bureaucracy that they worship let them down during Hurricane Katrina. Which brings us to rapper Kanye West, who should resolve to stick to the script. He failed to do so during a televised charity fundraiser for Katrina victims and instead accused President Bush of racism, saying, President Bush "doesn't care about black people."

Of course the president grieved the loss of life caused by Katrina. And 2005 also saw its share of celebrity deaths - including TV host Johnny Carson, lawyer Johnnie Cochran, Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist, Sen. Eugene McCarthy. But no passing was mourned more than that of Poland's Karol Wojtyla, better known as Pope John Paul II. Laid to rest on 8 April in a crypt below Saint Peter's Square in Vatican City, the pontiff's funeral was seen by more than one billion Catholics around the world and attended by kings, presidents prime ministers, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and Protestants. Corporate Executives and craven politicians should resolve to ignore anti-Christian activists who want expunge religion from the public square and American culture.

Along those lines, Hollywood producers should resolve to make more movies like Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," and the "Chronicles of Narnia," - which

Pave

Continued from page 1

the Distinguished Flying Cross with Valor for their efforts during a resupply mission April 12, 2004. Master Sgt. Robert Colannino and Staff Sgt. Jesse Lee were presented the Bronze Star with Valor for their actions on the same mission.

Two crew members, Capt. Steven Edwards, now at the 14th Weapons School, and Airman 1st Class Casey Mabry, were also cited for valor during this engagement, but were unable to attend the ceremony. Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie, who was wounded during the mission, assisted Col. Mark Alsid, 16th Operations Group commander, in handing out

the medals.

On the night of April 12, the crew flew two MH-53J PAVE LOW helicopters in formation to resupply troops in contact with enemy forces. They couldn't land on their first approach.

As the second ship exited the area, a rocket propelled grenade exploded in the nose of the aircraft. The RPG blasted through the windshield, wounding the pilot, copilot and flight engineer. The blast severed communications lines, destroying the instrument panel and automatic flight controls. The gaping hole rendered the aircraft nearly uncontrollable.

Despite his injuries, a severely-damaged aircraft, blacked-out conditions and unfamiliar terrain, Captain Edwards, with the aid of Sergeants Kensey and Colannino, managed to crash land the aircraft in the hostile enemy territory.

Upon landing, Sergeants Kensey and Lee secured the damaged helicopter, directed Army special forces Soldiers in establishing a defensive perimeter, and returned to evacuate the crew, weapons and classified materials.

Sergeant Colannino moved the seriously-injured flight engineer out of the damaged cockpit and administered first aid. Then he

removed the injured pilots from the cockpit.

The damaged systems didn't allow for a normal shut down of the engines. However, in pitch-black surroundings, under direct enemy fire, Sergeant Colannino's knowledge of the aircraft system allowed him to find the correct wires and disengage the system.

After the second ship was struck by the RPG, the crew of the first MH-53J took immediate, evasive action avoiding a possible mid-air collision. While under fire from enemy forces, Sergeant Allen and Airman Mabry spotted enemy concentrations and returned accurate fire, while Sergeant Dalton dispensed flares.

Using the navigation guidance system, Sergeant Bowling quickly located the downed aircraft. Captain Berry then passed along the coordinates to the crew of an AC-130 that engaged enemy forces.

While flying to the damaged aircraft, Sergeant Dalton talked Captain Berry through the approach, landing 200 feet away from the crash site. Sergeant Allen set up a defensive perimeter and provided cover for three Soldiers to evacuate the crew from the helicopter.

With all downed crew members aboard and initiating a take off, the helicopter again took fire from enemy forces, prompting Sergeant Allen and Airman Mabry to suppress the barrage, allowing the crew to safely fly out of harm's way.

"These warriors define 'cool under pressure'," said Lt. Col. Scott Howell, 20th SOS commander.

When faced with a difficult situation under enemy fire, they fell back on their training and focused on their mission."

Resolutions

Continued from page 2

appeal to middle America -and make fewer cinematic screens about twinkle-toed cowboys with lavender lassos.

Left-wing filmmaker Michael Moore should resolve to make a documentary on liberal hypocrisy-and he can start with himself. After making his name by bashing corporate America, it was revealed by

Peter Schweitzer new book "Do As I Say, (Not As I Do)," that Michael owns thousands of stock in Halliburton-the company that liberals love to hate, especially Moore, who lambasted the company in his movie "Fahrenheit 9/11."

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld should resolve to do what he has always done-ignore

his critics. Every few months, the "enlightened" Washington press corps writes Rumsfeld's political obituary only to have to update it months later with the accomplishments he's achieved in the interim.

President Bush should resolve to fight in 2006 like he fought the last month of 2005-with courage and conviction. After months of letting his critics get the better of him, he decided to engage them, and in some cases go over their heads directly to the people. Surprise, surprise-his poll numbers improved.

The soldiers, sailors, Guardsmen, and Marines of the U.S. military should resolve to keep doing exactly what they are doing-defending American citizens and doing so with pride and honor. And the public should resolve to do even more to support those who are sacrificing so much for our country.

As for me, I resolve to be less opinionated in the New Year-a resolution I vow to keep at least to my next column. Happy New Year!

Courtesy: MILITARY

NEWS FLASH!!! BG King Memorial

I just got finished talking to Autumn Standley of the Memorialization Board at Eglin Main and she said that they have approved something to be named after BG Ben King as of this week during the Memorialization Board meeting. This has been over a 5 year effort with Gen Piotrowski, Gen Svendsen, Col Gleason, CMSgt Jack Kelso, MSgt Ed Douglas and others. They are working on finding an appropriate building (checking to make sure it isn't being torn down-something permanent and not currently named), something where SO are over at Eglin now or a street. They will have collectively decided probably next week. There was a question of 40 year gap but we had one of the largest memorial request package to hit Eglin in the last 15 years. They were really impressed with King's legacy, our effort and his heroics.

She is working on a ceremony for the memorialization and I asked her to consider the ACA annual reunion in Oct. She said she would have the Board consider this since we will have a lot of Commandos in the area and we can ask King's family and his sister to attend.

More will follow. Gene Rossel

An outstanding story of a great Air Commando

Aerospace pioneer once leaped from balloon nearly 20 miles high Published: January 05, 2006

By Jeff Mullin

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong took "one small step" off lunar module Eagle onto the surface of the moon, becoming the first human being to set foot on another celestial body.

But if Joe Kittinger had not made one "giant leap" Aug. 16, 1960, Armstrong's feat might not have come about.

On that day Kittinger, an Air Force captain, rode a open gondola dangling under a helium balloon to a height of 102,800 feet above the earth (almost 19.5 miles), a record that still stands today.

Kittinger did not ride the balloon back down, however. He jumped from the gondola, free falling for four minutes and 37 seconds before his parachute opened, then riding his chute for another eight minutes to a safe landing on the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.

"When I jumped off, I rolled over and looked up at that balloon," said Kittinger. "I thought, 'This is amazing, that balloon is rocketing up into space.' Actually it was me going down and the balloon was staying right there."

Kittinger was in Enid Monday and Tuesday as a guest of Vance Air Force Base. Monday he was featured speaker for the 71st Flying Training Wing's safety day.

Kittinger, who joined the Air Force in 1949, was a test pilot for NATO and the Air Force before being recruited by aerospace medicine pioneer Col. John Paul Stapp for Project Man High, which would test whether or not humans were physically and psychologically capable of spending time in space.

Kittinger's Man High flight took him to 96,000 feet. He then became part of Project Excelsior, which studied the use of a parachute to escape from a space capsule or high-altitude aircraft.

Standing on the threshold of the gondola, Kittinger said, was the experience of a lifetime.

"Standing up in that door and looking out at the world 20 miles away," said Kittinger, "I could see 400 miles. That was an exotic place to look at the world. But when it was time to go, I was ready to go. It was the quickest way down."

The jump gave Kittinger three world records - highest open-gondola

balloon ascent, longest free-fall and the longest parachute descent. He became the first man to break the speed of sound without an aircraft or space vehicle, when he reached a speed of 714 mph during his free fall. His feat also put him on the cover of Life magazine Aug. 29, 1960. But he says he wasn't in the program for the glory.

"They (the jumps) are still a record today, some 46 years later, but we didn't do it for the record, we did it for information that we needed," said Kittinger.

Kittinger also jumped out of balloons from 74,000 and 76,000 feet, paving the way for the first astronauts.

Craig Ryan, who wrote the book "The Pre-Astronauts: Manned Ballooning on the Threshold of Space," once asked Alan Shepard, the first American astronaut in space, if he would have stepped out of that balloon at 102,800 feet.

"Shepard said, 'Hell no,'" said Kittinger, laughing.

Kittinger said he harbored his own dreams of becoming an astronaut but stuck instead with his role as a researcher.

"I was very much involved with research at that time," said Kittinger. "I had an opportunity, but I felt that I was more obligated to continue the research that I had already started. You never look back, you look ahead. I never regret that I didn't become involved with it."

After Excelsior, Kittinger moved on to Project Stargazer, during which he piloted a balloon containing an astronomer to 82,200 feet above the earth.

Kittinger then volunteered for three combat tours in Vietnam, flying 485 missions. On May 11, 1972, a missile struck the right side of his F-4 Phantom. Kittinger and his electronic weapons officer bailed out and soon were captured by enemy soldiers. Kittinger spent 11 months in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" North Vietnamese prison.

After retiring from the Air Force as a full colonel in 1978, Kittinger continued flying. In 1984, he made the first solo transatlantic crossing in a balloon, flying 3,500 miles in 83 hours.

Now 77 and residing in Florida with his wife, Sherry, Kittinger continues flying in balloons and a restored, 1929 open-cockpit New Standard biplane.

"The sky is still my office," he said.

He spent part of Monday flying a T-6A Texan II trainer, the newest aircraft on the ramp at Vance.

"What an airplane," said Kittinger. "The first airplane I flew in the Air Force was a T-6, but it had a round engine and no ejection seat."

Kittinger has made several trips to Bartlesville for a biplane reunion but never visited Vance. It was, he said, his first invitation to speak at an Air Force base.

"The students look pretty young," he said, "but they still have the enthusiasm that makes me proud to be a member of the United States Air Force. They represent our country well."

An email from Joe on a deadly parachute - excellent reading

I seem to recall that Milburn Apt was killed in '56 testing an X-2. Released from a B-50, He reached M 3.2 at 65,000, but when he turned back toward EDW, the bird tumbled and ejection was unsuccessful. He also had some narrow escapes in the F-104.

Speaking of ejections, before rocket seats were developed, all ejection seats were cartridge based, basically a 37 mm charge. (I sat on them for many an hour in F-86's and Lockheed Racers (T-birds) until they retrofitted rocket seats around '64. Because the F-104 could reach Mach 2, there was concern that the pilot & seat might not clear the vertical fin on ejection. Increasing the cartridge charge to increase the trajectory was

not an option, because we were already at the third derivative $\frac{d^3s}{dt^3} = V, \frac{dV}{dt} = a, \frac{da}{dt} = \left(\frac{ds}{dt}\right)^3$ or "jerk" limit for vertebra injury. In fact, most ejections of that day resulted in minor to serious back injuries. Hard seat cushions were required to limit injuries. A soft cushion would quickly compress and the seat would then slam your back as it accelerated. Of course, with later rocket seats, "g" onset is much softer and the trajectory is controlled by thrust and burn time. You may recall that the Yankee system was retrofitted to the A-1's

Anyway, given the problem, the early F-104's had downward ejection seats. Certainly not optimum for the traffic pattern, where the majority of ejections were occurring. If you were

very lucky, you might have enough control authority left to be able to roll inverted before you bid adieu. I'm not sure, maybe someone else will research this, but I believe Kincheloe was killed this way.

The first eleven F-111A's (pre-super weight improvement RTD&E aircraft) had conventional ejection seats. (Also the first three Navy F-111B's). I was Systems Command chief of test back then and airplanes twelve and on had crew modules. This provided the luxury of being able to pull the yellow handle and "jettisoning" the airplane when the occasion demanded. Also, if you can believe it, on the first eleven, the wing

See **PARACHUTE** pg. 6

Membership News

In Memory Of:

LESTER M. ADAMS, JR
DECEMBER 2005

MARY MORGAN CRAIG
FEBRUARY 2006

CHRIS HENTZ
DECEMBER 2005

WILLIAM H. JACKSON
AUGUST 2005

ORVILLE OSBORNE, JR
DECEMBER 2005

JOSEPH H. TAYLOR
JANUARY 2006

*NATALIE B. MELLEN
FEBRUARY 2006

**Editor's Note: Mrs. Mellen donated her detailed account of the China-Burma-India Campaign in World War II to our Air Commando Museum. It's the most comprehensive individual memorabilia we have seen to date including an autographed photo to her husband, Bernard, from Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia, for his contribution to Mercury Project.*

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

AARON BARNES
JAMES CLARK
HOWARD I. HALSTEAD
DAVID M. HATCHER
RANDY KINNARD
EARL R. LANNING

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

SCOTT HOWELL
PETER INTHISONE
JOHN THOMPSON
LO YANG

CONVERTED TO LIFE

HAROLD JACOBSON
ROBERT W. KUHN
KENNETH V. ROBERTS

LOST MEMBER

COLLEEN S. LINDSEY

ON THE MOVE

PAUL A. CHICK
339 BLESSINGER DR
FT WALTON BCH, FL 32547

JOSEPH K. DENNIS
8611 NAPA VALLEY RD NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87122

DANIEL S. GLOWA
1779 BRIDGEPORT CO
LONY LN
FT WALTON BCH, FL 32547

BRADLEY T. GREEN
DET 139 ABW PSC 90
APO AE 09822

TIMOTHY L. HALL
1912 OAKVIEW DR
FAYETTEVILLE, NC 28304

ROGER D. HANELINE
3 TURNJNG LEAF WAY
SAVANNAH, GA 31419

HAROLD U. HUNSBERGER
1001 MAR WALT DR #506
FT WALTON BCH, FL 32547

KATHERINE P. JAY
103 B LONDON AVE NW
FT WALTON BCH, FL 32548

RICHARD I. KOETEEUW
37376 HWY 19 N #7
PALM HARBOR, FL 34684

DOUGLAS E. KREULEN
4136 DOUGLAS LOOP
USAF ACADEMY, CO 80840

JOSEPH N. LUTHER
PO BOX 291749
KERRVILLE, TX 78029

MARIE WEST MELANCON
1019 KALISTE SALOOM RD
#914
LAFAYETTE, LA 70508

BETTIE M. MOORE
1200 HAWTHORNE HOUSE DR
#102
SHALIMAR, FL 32579

LAWRENCE A. NEAL
PO BOX 90081
TUCSON, AZ 85752

DAVID R. PETZOLDT
4555 NORTHRIDGE PL
NICEVILLE, FL 32578

JOSEPH REYNES
3802 TIGER POINT BLVD
GULF BREEZE, FL 32563

THEODORE R. SCHWEITZER
8635 W SAHARA AVE #486
LAS VEGAS, NV 89117

ROBERT R. SOUCY II
PO BOX 9312
HURLBURT FLD, FL 32544

SCOTTIE S. THOMPSON
1350 BANDERA HWY #617
KERRVILLE, TX 78028

MIKE THURBER
309 MATTIE KELLY BLVD
DESTIN, FL 32541

WILLIAM TODD
156 LANE DR
WEST COLUMBIA, SC 29169

JOSEPH E. VIGIL
PO BOX 5495
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87185

JAMES E. WAFFLE
PO BOX 336
UNIONTOWN, AR 72955

SETH G. WILSON
2131 S VINCENT
MESA, AZ 85209

LARRY A. WRIGHT
PO BOX 402
WAYNE, IN 48184

EMILY YANG
10015 SPRING VIEW WAY
ELK GROVE, CA 95757



Dear Friends in the ACA,

My apologies for being so slow in writing, I have not had an address. Please know how much your thoughtfulness meant to us in our saddest days of our lives! My precious husband so enjoyed his camaraderie with all of you! He still lives in our hearts and will forever!!

Thank you for your kindness, your sharing and your caring.

The Gochbauer Family

Hap's Comments

I must once again preface my remarks with an apology. In rereading my last column, I thought I had thanked all of those that had dutifully assisted on the reunion fish fry. To my dismay, I hadn't. I somehow skipped past one of our leading volunteers, Doug Blair. So Doug, thanks for all you always do and accept my apologies in the fond hope that you'll be present for muster this year!

Let me shift gears completely at this juncture and share with you that two of our very high profile Air Commando Association members, both dear to me, are currently undergoing therapy for cancer. The first is our Chaplain and Recorder, Charlie Jones.

As I write this, Charlie is presently in the Eglin USAF Hospital, receiving around the clock treatment. I have just moments ago spoken with Sugie, his dear wife, prior to her departing to spend her day with him.

Sugie apprised me that Charlie started chemo therapy regimen on

Parachute

Continued from page 4

sweep handle was pushed forward to sweep the wings aft and vice-versa. GD's theory was that if a pilot wanted to go faster, he pushed the throttle forward, so why not do the same with the wings? Crazy, against all human factors design criteria. It killed Herb Brightwell and seriously injured Donovan McCance in F-111A No 9 at EDW and then indirectly led to the deaths of two Grumman test pilots in Navy 4 at Peconic River. But that's a story for another day.

Maybe someday I'll write a book about my 22 years in the Air Force, much of it in flight testing. Think I'll call it "While Others Worked."

the 7th of February and will receive it every 21 days. It was only very recently that the doctors at Eglin Hospital discovered his malady following his complaint of unexplained generalized weakness.

Charlie and Sugie both ask for your prayers as they struggle through this insidious bodily onslaught.

Charlie and Sugie are both very strong people as evidenced by Charlie's remarkable military career, their personal life commitments, and rebuilding their beautiful home after suffering two hurricane destruction episodes. I don't believe this downer will defeat them either.

Colonel Concy Phimphavong, my former Royal Lao Air Force Commander at Savannakhet during 3 of my 6 tours to that site, was diagnosed with cancer quite some time ago. It was only recently that he confided to Roger Klair (Smokey Control) of his illness. He had been shutting the fact away as if it were an embarrassment to him.

General Concy (we ceremoniously promoted him at a Lao-American Baci in San Antonio in 1977) has had one regimen of chemo therapy and has just started another to run thru April. His e-mails to Roger, with infos to me, are all upbeat.

General Concy would appreci-

ate hearing from any of you that served in Laos, especially with him. He also requests your prayers

On 6 January, Shirley and I attended the 86th Birthday Celebration of our Air Commando Association Founder, "Heinie" Aderholt. It was a happy occasion that also included out-of-towners Robbye Binkley, Robbie and Delores Roberson and daughter Charlene Murphy. On 22 January, I attended the 87th Birthday Party of former 1st Air Commando Wing Commander Bob Gates. It was a very gala event attended to by many of the local luminaries and his host of family and friends. It was held at the "Bob Gates Welcome Center" of the "Bob Hope Enlisted Widows Home."

The annual Christmas Social was a slam dunk. We had 110 attendees at various times during the event. Almost all of those attending brought a non-perishable food item for "Caring and Sharing." Lovely Joyce Harrington was our Hostess accompanied and assisted by husband and Director Dave Harrington. Dave was also the Duty Photographer. The event was emceed by President 'Sam' Sambogna. Special guests were our newest team member Jeanette Moore, her daughter Hannah, and her significant other Steve Witkos. Norm Evans and Sidekick Delores spinned platters of gentle Christmas mood music for all to

enjoy. John Connors provided us with an active, welcoming artificial Santa Claus. Mr. "T" and staff of the Two Trees Restaurant arranged a bang-up cooking, decorating, memorable, and hospitable occasion.

I'll close telling you now that our next event will be the 4th of July Social on the 4th of July at the same venue (flyer will remind you in the local area.) Bim Barker will again be whipping up his famous BBQ ribs!

Ed. Note: Since Hap wrote the above concerning Charlie and Concy, Charlie has been released to home and is now being treated as an outpatient. As of yesterday (22 February), his white blood cell count has regained considerably and his read blood cell count is rebuilding gradually, and he has experienced several "feel good" days.

Concy and wife Lam keep Hap and Roger (Klair) updated and his experience is much better as of now.

AEESEA BANGKOK REUNION

The 2006 Bangkok Reunion will be held Thursday 21 September to Sunday 24 September 2006 at the Twin Towers Hotel. Hosting the reunion will be the Association of Expatriates in Southeast Asia, which is composed largely of former Thai employees of Air America, CASI, USAID, Embassy, USIS, IVS, USAF, Army, and Navy, SKY, SKY FAG, Thai SGU, etc. There are also American of the local group, of which Phil Dreith, Les Strouse, and Mac Thompson will be assisting the Thai side with the reunion organization.

Survey - Please participate

A survey form is included with this newsletter. Please complete and return it so our Board can better serve the membership. We want your input. Results of the survey will be published in subsequent newsletter.

Sam

Letters

MR. SAMBOGNA,

I was recently recognized at Hurlburt Field and two of the many gifts I received was from your organization.

The 50th anniversary challenge coin will have a featured spot in my slowly growing collection.

I especially wanted to take a moment and tell you how much the Korean Blood Chit means to me. My father was a veteran of the Korean Conflict and one of my uncles died there. It is a special gift and a treasured memento. Thank you for thinking of this incredible gift!

Carol Vickers

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR MR. ADERHOLT,

On behalf of Team Eglin and the displaced Department of Defense families who sheltered here, we would like to express our gratitude for the assistance of Mr. Bob White and Mr. John Grove during the months of September through December 2005.

HUMOR

A C-130 was en route on a mission when a cocky F-16 pilot flew up next to him. The fighter jock told the C-130 pilot, "Watch this!" He went into a Barrel roll, followed by a steep climb, then finished with a sonic boom when he reached the speed of sound. The F-16 pilot asked the C-130 pilot what he thought. The C-130 pilot responded, "That was impressive, but watch this." The C-130 droned along for about 15 minutes then the 130 pilot came back on and said, "What did you think about that?" The F-16 pilot asked, "What did you do?" The C-130 pilot responded, "I got up, stretched my legs, went to the back poured a cup of coffee and took a leak."

This was a traumatic time for families who fled Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. Mr. White and Mr. Grove were instrumental in organizing all the donations received by the Eglin Airmen's Attic. Without their invaluable assistance, the Attic would not have been able to serve all the families (over 1,600) that were helped.

In addition, your organization donated toys for active duty family members and displaced hurricane families at the December Christmas toy giveaway. Mr. White provided assistance with this effort and continues to help us at the Eglin Airmen's Attic.

If you could have seen the faces of the individuals receiving the supplies from the Attic, and the Christmas toys, you would know how much it meant to them. Once again, thank you for your support.

Jiri Crowder, Director
Eglin AFB Family Support Center
502 W Van Matre Ave, Ste 1
Eglin AFB, FL 32542-6823

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR MR. SAMBOGNA,

I would like to offer you my sincere appreciation for the congratulatory remarks and generous gifts the Air Commando Association presented to me at the recent Hurlburt Field Quarterly Awards for 4th Quarter 2005. I am extremely proud to be the recipient of the Korean War Blood Chit and Air Commando 50th Anniversary coin. The blood chit in particular holds special meaning to

Bangkok

Continued from page 6

Although this is not an "official" Air America function, lots of members did attend the 2002 reunion and would hope to see lots more this time.

This will be, as was the 2002 Return to Southeast Asia reunion, an "everybody is invited" affair and we hope to get a good turnout from all who served in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Even at this early date, we'd appreciate an alert as to who and how many might be attending. Please send e-mail to: aesea2006@yahoo.com with note that you're "coming for sure": "thinking about it, but not yet sure": "can't make it." FYI, you can change your mind at any time.

me-it is a treasure I will carry throughout my military career as a reminder of the sacrifices made by those who came before me.

I am both humbled and honored by the award I received and feel that I am but one representative of all defenders of freedom who are simply doing their job. Your Association's support of this event and everything else you do for our local military members are a testament to your continued patriotism and devotion to the values our nation holds dear. The local support and encouragement you provide also stoke my personal desire to continually excel throughout my military career and make me proud to serve in defense of our great nation. On behalf of all Airmen at Hurlburt Field thank you for all that you do.

Eric C. Hanssen, Captain, USAF
Project Engineer
823d RED HORSE SQ (ACC)
Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HEY JIM,

What can we say? It was very nice of you to send us the reunion tape. We really enjoyed viewing it. I miss the activity around here, working with John and Bob White. I haven't gotten involved with too many activities here on the Lake. Everyone is very laid back. Every time I tried to help out its like, well we need help but we will get around to it. I gave up. In the meantime I keep adding on weight. I hope its the winter hibernation, holidays,

and not the tamales, the 18 hour smoked brisket, the over abundance of Tex-Mex food or the lack of hard sweaty labor. I have a stationary bike, a health rider, a treadmill and an abs cruncher. My kids are doing everything to keep me healthy. They know if I kick the bucket they will have to support their mother. Ha ha ha Gretchen, bless her heart, on the other hand has tried to stay active. She has been attending art classes in New Braunfels and has gotten involved with the Canyon Lake Art Guild. She even decided to learn the game of golf. We made arrangements for some golf lessons at the local golf club here at the Lake. The first nice day in January she went for her first lesson. The next day she told me she had thrown her back out and was in pain for a week. Thanks for the nice golf pen, that will serve as a constant reminder of how much fun the game of golf can be. She is okay now. I think it was just a dormant muscle(s) that woke up during the activity.

Canyon Lake is indeed a beautiful area. We live on the south side with-in walking distance to the lake. The Randolph AFB Recreation area and Marina is across from us on the north side of the lake. The nights and mornings are cold but by noon the day warms up to a comfortable level. Gretchen says thank you for the video and of course, the golf pen. If you ever come over this way give a holler, its a nice spot to cool ones feet and still be in close proximity to San Antonio or Austin. We are 24 miles from San Antonio proper and a hop and a skip from the airport. We are having minor changes done to the house, if the work ever gets started. This week we are having some cabinets installed in the guest bathroom. The guy started working on them last November. Another person is suppose to install storm doors and other work that has been pending since September. He supposedly will start in two weeks.

I am enclosing an article that I sent to my kids when I turned 70. You

See **LETTERS** pg. 8

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: _____

Letters

Continued from page 7

have my permission to reprint it in the ACA newsletter if you care to, please make corrections as necessary. Say hi to the members. We will definitely try to make the reunion this year. Some of the folks looked older than I expected, but aren't we all. Hope you enjoy the enclosed article.

Sincerely,
Juan & Gretchen

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS,

Another year, and I'm happy that I am still around to pay my dues for 2006. No disrespect, but I'm happy to be around to pay 06 dues to any organization!

As Bette Davis, the movie star said, "Old age ain't for sissies"! Smart lady, that Bette Davis.

Glad that we still have enough fellows up and around, and fellows like you to run it, to have the Air Commando Association.

Trust that 06 will be a year to treat us all kindly.

Hal Voigt
1519 Bell Ave
Mattoon IL 61938-5909

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HI,
The newsletter is great!

Tony & Joyce Holland
434 Cardinal Avenue
Ft Walton Beach FL 32548

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

I hope all had a Merry Christmas and will have a happy and safe New Year.

Just a few words to say how much I enjoy the newsletter! And thanks for saying Merry Christmas instead of Happy Holidays!

Also I thought someone would like a copy of our local Cracker Barrel due to the fact it covered the AC 119!!!

Also please find two checks, one for goods as listed and one to help

with the good works you all do.

P.S. Enjoyed my short time at NKP much better than the rest of my tour in SEA
Sincerely

Anthony F. Pruchniewski (Tony)
1405 Sherman Avenue
Hagerstown MD 21740

Ed Note: Thanks for your kind words and generous donation.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YO JIM,

Many thanx for the DVD of the reunion. Your thoughtfulness typifies the comradery of the Air Commandos and of the glue that holds us all together these many years.

Mother nature's wrath won't cause me to miss next years reunion!!

Blue Skies,
Marty Jester
9530 SW 187 St
Miami FL 33157

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HI JIM,

Thanks, I cannot express how much your photos of the reunion and NKP means to me. It does my heart good to see a bunch of good looking people get together in harmony.

Many of the NKP photos I recognize, however, there are many I don't. These pictures must have been taken after 1967.

Before I forget, enclosed is a check for \$200. This is the money I usually spend at the reunion in support of our McCoskrie Threshold Foundation. Keep up the good work. I have just returned from the Disabled American Veterans California State Mid Winter Convention in Bakersfield, CA. I was horrified to learn that last November Committee Chairman Steve Buyer decided to end a decades long tradition that gave veterans groups the opportunity present testimony regarding a wide range of legislative priorities before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. The DAV and other

See **LETTERS** pg. 9

Letters

Continued from page 8

organizations tried, unsuccessfully, to get Rep. Buyer to reinstate those joint hearings, which they viewed as an invaluable tool in formulating public policy toward America's veterans. One of my many positions in the DAV is Aide to the National Commander.

I also thank you for Heritage of the Quiet Professionals. Those that put it together did a great job. I also appreciate the beautiful golf pen. Being a commando and automatically having a suspicious nature, I wonder if there is a hidden meaning to this pen. Most golfers use a pencil to keep their score. If there is an ACCIDENTAL error or a miss count in the strokes taken, score can be erased. Then to, the eraser can be used to lower your overall score before turning it in. I know that you are not a golfer and did not realize the significant use of eraser or a pen. I have concluded that your faith in my honesty, by sending me a beautiful pen, has been confirmed. I am one that does not change or erase his scores.

On a more serious matter, our prayers are with Charlie Jones and his family. We wish him a speedy recovery. Heinie, Dick, Hap, Eugene, Joe, Herb, Jim, and all you guys, slow down and smell the roses. There are not too many of us blessed to still be here.

By the way Hap, for many years I have intended to write a true story of the Bien Hoa Phantom. As I was looking through (cleaning out) my stuff, I found many notes on the Phantom. I don't have to tell you whose name more than randomly appeared.

Thanks for thinking about me Jim, I'll see you guys, or as you say down your way Y'al, at the reunion.

Always a friend,
James R "Chilli" Wills
44113 4th St E.
Lancaster CA 93535

P.S. Due to pressure from the veterans groups, Rep Buyers has given in. However, he will only allow each organization to speak for three min-

utes and only allow five persons from each group may attend the session. So unless something else happens I will be in Washington DC from 25 Feb 2006 to 1 Mar 2006

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SIR,

I received my quarterly newsletter of Dec 2005 and on page 28 was very surprised to see such a long list of Air Commando/Special Operations General Officers, and General Second says the list seems complete. I don't want to say you made a mistake but while I was in the commando's General Gilbert L. Pritchard was our Commander and it was he who appealed to the TAC Commander and got the Australian-type bush hat designated the "Air Commander Hat" Please correct me if I'm wrong.

Thank you.
James J. Knadle L2044
8570 Concord Lane
Westminister CO 80031-3720

Editor's Note:

Dear James,

Thank you for noting our omission of Gen Pritchard. He was such a prominent person I'm shocked one of our proof readers missed him. Correction will be made in the March newsletter.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HELLO JOYCE,

I enclosed my money order for \$120 for 10 Project 404 Challenge coins. I hope this will be enough for them and if it is not please let me know so I can send some more, and thank you so much for making them available for us. Two years ago I found out about this coin but did not know where to look for them until I got to know Mr. Wesley Wittkop in Key Largo, he sold one on E-Bay and then got hold of him and he said not available anywhere?? And then I spoke to Dr. Charles Jones and he said you have them in the Air Commando store, then finally found them.

So this is why / this coin it clearly

stating my home town in it and my whole country in it, and this should be something that could tell other people where we came from and who we are. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,
Lo Yang
2722 W 100th Drive
Federal Heights CO 80260
(303)464-1977 / (720)988-0378

*Dear Lo,
Thanks for your letter, it's good to hear from you. Your 10 (404) coins are on the way!*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SIR OR MADAM,

The Salvation Army would like to thank you for your contribution of \$100.00 received December 12, 2005. Your generosity goes toward assisting those in need throughout Okaloosa County. The Salvation Army's daily goal is to provide counseling and assistance to stabilize incomes in order to help as many as possible, your donation along with others in our community, make this possible.

We share your concern for so many during this Christmas Season. We pray you be richly blessed by God.

In his service,
Janet Baggett
Development Director
PO Box 1117
Fort Walton Beach FL 32549
(850)243-4531

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HEY JIM,

Thank you so much for the pictures and negatives. I particularly appreciate the picture with Karl Leuschner. I haven't seen Karl since Vietnam, Laos in 1967.

Joe Holden
CAVU
127 Sandalwood Dr
Kissimmee FL 34743-8127

*Hi Joe,
I still like "CAFB"*

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

Thanks for your generous donation of \$100.00 to support our various ministries here at the Hurlburt Chapel. There are so many worthy programs we support and your donation makes servicing those efforts all that much easier. Our focus on single and married airman, deployed airman, and their families positively impacts our mission outcomes for Hurlburt Field and the Air Force.

Thanks again for your continuing support of our programs.

Sincerely,
Steven A. Schaick, LtCol, USAF
16 SOW Wing Chaplain

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

CAPT ROBERT L.SIMPSON

Dear Hoi:

Thanks for the fast reply. I have been waiting for this over 10 years and you came through. I know where Cerritos and frequently go there for the deli and the Army reserve base. I will call you when I am down at Garden Grove.

Limpantsis and Dougherty have both died. Limpantsis died last year and I don't know the exact year Dougherty died. I knew both and served with them in Vietnam, in Panama and back at Hurlburt. The CC list contains a lot of T-28 drivers and some that were at Bien Hoa when you were there in 62. I will put your emails in the Air Commando Association (ACA) newsletter for March.

I would really like to know if it was Toan at Simpson's crash site. I know the USN Lt that was at the site. Maybe we can put this all together finally.

We had TSgt Nguyen-Huu Thanh, VNAF assigned to Det 2A at the end of 62 as a head of 72 VNAF NCOs who rode in our aircraft for cover story and if you know where he is at we would like to know. He was a very popular man with our organization. I want to thank you for writing

Letters

Continued from page 9

me about Capt Simpson. we have been trying to find the family of the VNAF Lt who died with him that day. I believe it was a Lt flying with him and not a WO.

Again thank you very much for the email.

Gene Rossel

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR GENE,

My name is Hoi B. Tran and I am the person you were asking the author of "A Sense of Duty", Quang X. Pham for my email address. Now you've got it. I live in Cerritos, a small city located at the south end of Los Angeles County and the northern side of Orange County, not that far from Garden Grove and Westminster.

I have some good friends who were in the VN Navy and one of them happened to have a same first name Toan as you mentioned in your article. I'll absolutely make an attempt to find out if my Navy friend Toan is the

one participated in the search and rescue at the crash site. If he is, I'll connect the two of you so you can communicate with him directly.

With regards to Air Commando/Farm Gate at Bien Hoa in 1962, are you still in contact with Art Limpantsis and William E. Dougherty or other members of this group? I'd love to get in touch with them and would appreciate it very much if you could help me. I can be reached either by email or my telephone (562) 802-5901 H. Thank you Gene and have a great evening.

Hoi B. Tran

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR MR. ROSSEL,

The National Museum of the US Air Force is planning an exhibit on Vietnam POWs, and this exhibit will include a segment on the Son Tay raid. I'm researching the exhibit and gathering photos to support it.

In a recent (1997, Air Univ. Press)

book called Apollo's Warriors, there are a few Son Tay images that are credited to the Air Commando Association. Can you direct me to the right person to talk to in your organization to ask for these images to support our exhibit? I found your name, by the way, on the Air Commando Association website.

Thanks very much for your assistance--I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
Doug Lantry
Research Historian
National Museum of the United States Air Force
Research Division/MUA
1100 Spaatz Street
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH
45433-7102

Can any of you help Doug Lantry with the Son Tay images he is looking for? If you can't help can you pass this on to others that may be able to help. Thanks.

Gene Rossel

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HI JIM, JIM AND HAP,

Sorry I can't type, don't know if you can use this, but feel free. I thought a lot of the "old" guys might enjoy this memory.
Wade

Dear ACA

After reading the current newsletter which included letters from guys praising General Ben King, our first "Jungle Jim" commander, or from guys like me who were pleased just to shake his hand and renew old acquaintances; I feel prompted to write a story about a man who was such a great leader, always demanding perfection, but also a man with a great sense of humor and who always loved a little fun.

During that first hot summer of 1961, all the "Jungle Jim" guys or members of the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron as we were called, were busy checking out in our T-28's,

B-26's or C-47's. We were learning to fly tree top missions. We all took our trips to Stead for the nine day survival training. In between flying training we were doing PT and running in our flight boots or learning the finer art of hand to hand combat. The medics, combat controllers and ground support were all training diligently also.

The memorable day I'm writing about was the second or third day into a required survival "camp out" week. It was either in August or September and still very hot and we were in the swampy area where the base exchange and commissary are now. We had pitched tents, dug latrines and even had a small kitchen and a medical tent where Doc Threadgill kept shop. Hap, were you with us? It was late afternoon, we were relaxed in the shade of tents after chasing out any pygmy rattlers or scorpions.

All of a sudden our peaceful quiet was shattered by the roar of a single T-28 buzzing right over our tree tops! We suddenly were bombarded by rolls of toilet paper crashing down at amazing power and speed. I think the pilot made 5 or 6 passes. At least 3 tents were knocked down but I don't think anyone was hurt. The pilot turned out to be Colonel King. He came over to the camp and we all had a great laugh. Colonel King was a great commander and we loved him.

Wade Everett
6 Shady Lane
Mary Esther FL 32569

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SHAKY HART'S LAST FLIGHT

At 7 PM tonight, Feb 13, 2006, MD "Shaky" Hart left us for a better place.
Salute.
Arrangements pending.

Lloyd- Please let the Ravens & Friends know. Thanks.
Ed

11 Feb 2006

I just talked to Estelle. MD

See **LETTERS** pg. 11

ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

STUDENT'S SOCIAL SECURITY # _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ AGE: _____

COLLEGE: _____

ADDRESS OF COLLEGE: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

MEMBER'S NAME: _____

MEMBER'S # _____

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

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

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

Note: There will be four \$1500 scholarships drawn at the 2006 Reunion.

Letters

Continued from page 10

"Shaky" Hart is going down. He has been moved from ICU to Hospice in the Conroe Regional Medical Center. The Doctor estimates about a week until his final flight west.

Sadly,
Ed Gunter
132 Tyelawney
McQueeney, TX 78123

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JIM,

I received an e-mail from Al Shortt this week asking me to write an article on the A-26 reunion we held in Oct. last year. I think he is sending you some photos of the reunion. Anyway, here is the article. I also emailed Pete Bowman a copy as I did not know your time requirements for getting it into the ACA paper. If you have any questions, let me know. My e-mail is tangblack@austin.rr.com

Tim Black
3301 Barker Hollow Pass
Austin, TX 78739

Editor's Note: Tim, thanks for delivering the A-26 article. "You done good!" See A-26 Reunion Report on page 20.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

Thanks so much for the donation to Sharing and Caring. You have helped us care for the needy in this area and we are grateful. Thank you for caring.

Sharing & Caring
Lucille Handschumacher

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PETE,

Find enclosed dues for a couple of years. Still enjoy all the news via the quarterly newsletter and the ACA Association web site. Keep up the good work.

Especially sorry to read of about Major Gochbauer's accident and death. I worked A-1E's from September 1963 until March 1966

and got to know the Major quite well. He was one of the best pilots I flew with in my twenty years. They don't make them like that anymore.

In the membership list on line my first name is listed as RAYMOND. If possible, could you change it to RAYFORD.

Hope to retire in a few years and maybe get down to a reunion.

Rayford W. Leggett
904 E White Pond Road
Fairmont, NC 28340

Ed Note: On line name corrected. Your sentiment concerning Major Gochbauer is that shared by many.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SAM,

I am still working on my project (USAF in Laos) and need inputs regarding USAF personnel who served in Laos from May 1964 to Jan-Mar 1973.

As you may or may not know, almost all of us were sent to work in Laos on TDY orders. The result is that the USAF does not have a roster of who served on the ground inside Laos. The main difficulty with this is that since there are no "official" records (read: our NPRC records) that show that we were there, those of us who suffer from diseases that only crop up in old age get a cold shoulder from the Veterans Administration. An example of this is Erik Stewart who died last April and after the VA refused his claim.

I want to compile a list of the names of we USAFers who did serve inside Laos on the ground. Toward that end I would like you to consider running a short article in the next issue of the Air Commando Association Newsletter something like the following:

Did you Serve on the Ground Inside Laos, 1964-1973?

The USAF didn't keep any records of those of us who were sent TDY to work in Laos. As a result there are no official records of who was there. If

you were working on the ground inside Laos from May 1964 to Jan-Mar 1973 on TDY please send your name, address, telephone number, email address, AFSC, dates you were in Laos, and where you worked in Laos to:

L/Colonel Al Shinkle
1652 South Grand Avenue #239
Pullman WA 99163-4906
or email to
shinkle_al@hotmail.com

Thank you.
Al Shinkle

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

How very nice of you! Thanks for a lovely party. The best yet!

Edith Strickland
500 Gulf Shore Dr.
Destin, FL 32541

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

OUR PATRONS,

American Legion Post 296-Destin wants to thank you for the annual Veterans Christmas party. Our Fish Fry and Auction was a big success. With the Fish fry and Auction we raised over \$4000. We gave the Tuskegee (AL) Veterans Hospital \$2,750 and the Clifford Sims VA Nursing Home in Panama City, FL \$2000.

Thanks to your contributions, our veterans at both facilities had a wonderful Christmas Party. Thanks so much for helping our Veterans!

For God and Country,
Ray Bourque
Post V&R Chairman
804 Harbor Lane
Destin, FL 32541

Ed. Note: ACA Member "Cajun" Ray Bourque works tirelessly and selflessly on behalf of veterans. We also, as an association, contributed \$500 towards Ray's noble veteran's assistance goals.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

Just wanted to say thanks for the lovely gift - and to let you know I am always willing to help with your typing...Any Time, Any Place! So whenever you need help please don't hesitate to call.

Gloria (Doster)
304 Holmes Blvd
Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548

Ed Note: We are profoundly grateful for the typing you do for the association and the very timely manner in which you do it Gloria. The gift was only a small token of our sincere appreciation.

A Salute To Our Troops

Jack Lavin, son of John and Stacy Lavin of Mary Esther FL loves to dress up in his late grandpa's Air Force uniforms. Jack is the grandson of John and Anne Lavin. Grandfather John, a member of the ACA, passed away three years ago. According to his mom, the five year old loves anything to do with the military. "Here he is saluting all our brave soldiers," Lavin said.



McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation Update

Supporting Honduras



Schools

By John Grove

Through the years we have mentioned the schools in Honduras that we help support in the mountains near El Progreso. I had some preconceived notion of the conditions but recently was jarred to reality when George Mealer and Bless the Children's Karen Hubbard were discussing support for a new high school. We have sent lots of supplies to support several mountain village grade (up to 5th) schools. Now the effort might include a high school.

Just how hard is this? Well very! The schools we have supported do not have running water, no electricity and the kitchen is a fireplace type structure they heat with wood. We think of kitchens with stoves, microwaves, cabinets, refrigerators etc. Down there they have the fire place, that's all! So to get the next level of education they need some electricity, but none is in the mountains, so a generator is necessary. They don't have vehicles or gas stations so gas or diesel has to be carried to them on a weekly basis.

The building needs all the schools 'stuff' and to really get them started in this century, they need computers. Feeding these kids is really necessary

since they have little at home. A teacher has to be hired which is relatively cheap, I hear, about \$400 per month. What will they use for the building, a church has been contacted



The fireplace/stove.

and they may start in that facility. Still no water and no electricity. They need a new structure for this school.

To help these people out of the cycle they are in, generations of poverty, an education is necessary. About 45-50 kids have indicated they wish a higher education. It is my plan to help with this effort and the MTF will send school 'stuff' to make this happen. Donations are always welcome and like all these projects all the money goes to support the effort. Your all volunteer force is at work.

Montagnard Update

The Air Commandos have been active in support of the Montagnard resettlement in North Carolina. Retired Special Forces folks in the central NC area have been helping hundreds of our comrades in arms from SEA settle in the United States. Our ACA members have contributed funds, clothing and supplies to the SF effort. Our members have been helping the 'Yards pay down the mortgage on the farm they purchased in NC. More donations are needed. They have about \$125,000 to go to burn the mortgage. Donations can be sent to George Clark, 9005 Erect Rd, Seagrove, NC 27341. Let him know it is for the mortgage on the STMP (Save the Montagnard People) farm. Thanks to the Air Commandos who have already donated.

The resettlement is going great according to Mike Linnane, retired SF Major, who has been a ramrod on the project. He said "The 138 Montagnards who arrived last month (Dec 2005) continue with medical and dental processing and treatment. Some have already been on job interviews. The kids are enrolled in school. STMP was able to provide all at least 5 sets of clothing and other needed items including some household goods and initial food items." As you can imagine the introduction of these folks into our society is a giant task that only dedicated folks like Mike and the SF can handle.

The outlook is for many more to follow as soon as the 'wickets' are all handled. They know of about 850 who are ready in Cambodia and Vietnam to move here as soon as the various paperwork battles are won. The 'Yards who have moved in the past years are doing great, some are in college, most have jobs, and lots of them have cars. They are paying their way in our society, doing great things for the communities they move to and doing great things for their own people. They just need a start.

Mike Linnane is so dedicated to this cause that he sold his retirement

home out west and is moving back to NC to continue the work he started years ago. The MTF will help when he asks.

Farm Animal Update

The Grove Family donated a cow to the Honduran 'Street Kids' project in the name of mother Doris. Doris Eaton, John Grove's Mom, has supported the MTF for years and at 86 (two weeks younger than Heinie) she continues to help pack and stuff the crates for shipment. It was fitting, but might not be flattering, to name the donated cow 'Doris'. George Mealer,



Doris the cow.

in Honduras, has to travel to the next large city to do E mail, so getting info is a catch as catch can with him. When we do get info it always thanks you Air Commandos for the support and donations of supplies.

During the ACA Christmas party, 'Willie T' donated funds for some more animals. I had the funds sent to Honduras and suggested chickens or a goat, Thanks Willie T, now maybe there is 'Willie the ol Goat' in the hills of central Honduras. Speaking of farm animals, if we had more photos of them with rich high ranking individuals we would have more funds available for the MTF.

Costs; Cow \$585, goat \$35, sheep \$35, chickens 10 for \$35, pigs \$50, ducks 10 for \$30, and a horse is worth \$225.

If you donate to this cause please indicate the donation is for farm animals. We will publish photos of them

See MTF pg. 13

MTF

Continued from page 12

in future issues of this newsletter. Send funds to MTF and we will forward them to Honduras through Bless the Children. BTC sends all the money we send them to this program, so it is 100% effective.

Airmen's Attic Support

By Bob White

We were privileged to assist Eglin AFB carry out its Hurricane Katrina and Christmas distribution efforts. Both these programs proved to be highly successful. We obtained and distributed tons of 'stuff' to those in need. We stocked the entire ground floor of the old Eglin NCO Club, some 6800 sq ft, with donations and oversaw the distribution of all of it.

The donations included cases of soap and other toiletries, way more than needed. We hooked up with the Destin Florida Woman's Club after learning they were sending ditty bags to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, as part of their "Smiles Across The Miles" project. Our initiative resulted in a most sincere thank you letter.

We are now out of the old NCO Club and back in the regular Airmen's Attic facility. Eglin has asked me to continue to manage the facility for them and I plan to do so. Helping our warriors at Eglin and Hurlburt is the right thing to do. Our program will include helping the Army Special Forces who will soon begin to relocate from Fort Bragg NC.

We generate military uniforms from retiring, separating, or from those who have outgrown their current issue. What we can't redistribute, we donate to the local ROTC programs, which helps them keep costs down.

Lions Club and MTF

Past ACA president Bill Brown was also very active in the Lions Club in the Ft Walton area. One of the many projects he promoted was the distribution of eye glasses to the needy. His departure from here to the land of 'really retired' folk in central Florida left the MTF with a need for

good eye glasses. Bill put us in contact with Betty Reynolds, his replacement in the Lions. She has been great for our mission in Honduras. This past Christmas Wish over 6000 pairs of good clean graded glasses went with Santa. The glasses will be distributed by medical teams to the needy. Great program these Lions have, great leaders also.

Combined Federal Campaign

Thanks to the hard and very tedious work of Dick Geron, the MTF was once again a part of the CFC for our local area. Last year the donations helped our bottom line and supported our shipping and storage. The amount of this years contributions from federal employees has not been sorted out yet. I hope our MTF name and good work will be recognized by the local folks and the funds will make all of Dick's hard work worth while.

Christmas Wish 2005

"This was our best Christmas Wish program to date". That is what Major Manny Torres had to say after returning from Honduras on the Combat Talon II with the folks who made it such fun and so successful. Manny should know, he has been involved in every one of these missions and he helped start the program



in La Ceiba Honduras about 15 years ago. The program started when Manny and 'Redman' Poole saw a sign on a jungle road pointing to "SOS Orphanage". They investigated and found a pressing need for help. The Special Ops wing at Hurlburt took this on as a project, and they have asked the MTF for help year after year. This year we had some pit falls but Lt Col Robert Toth, Commander of the 15th SOS, got

involved and through one of his friends who is stationed in Honduras they got er done. Air Force Santa arrived a week later than expected but tons of stuff made it to the needy. MTF looks forward to helping with this project and similar missions in 2006. Exercises of this nature are a great way to put our troops in front of the folks of other nations and show the rest of the world just how good the "Good Ol USA" really is.

2005 Donors to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation

Thanks to the following 2005 donors the MTF continues to help the needy. Please see the articles in the MTF section covering specific humanitarian's events. The donations are used to cover storage and shipping expenses. A special thanks to John Grove, Bob White and their band of volunteers who make it happen.

Note: If you made a donation and your name is not included please let us know and we will correct our error.

FRETA ANDERSON
JAMES ARENDT
AC-119 GUNSHIP ASSOCIATION
O'DEAN BALLMES
JUAN BAZAN
ROBERT BEALE
RAYMOND BENKOSKY
ROBERT BIEBER
PRESTON BRADLEY
AL BRASHEAR
HAROLD BRITAIN
BETTY BROOKS
COMBINED FED CAMPAIGN*
MICHAEL CARDEN
LAWRENCE CATO
RUSSELL CHAMBERLAIN
JANET CHURCHILL
AARON COMBS
PEYTON COOK
KIRK COPPER
DONALD CRANE
BILL CULLEN
MARK CUNNINGHAM
BARBARA DOBARD
TERRENCE DYE
LARRY FIELDS
THE CUPBOARD FOOD STORES
TERRY GILBERT
MICHAEL GILMORE
LTGEN WILLIAM GINN
CHARLES GOODSON
A GOODWIN*
RICHARD GUERTIN

WOODRUFF HALSEY
FREDRICK HARRIS
HOMER HARRISON
RICHARD HAYS
VIRGINIA HEIN
LEON HEINLE
DEBRA HENDERSON
KAPPA KAPPA IOTA
HAROLD JACOBSON
ROBERT JENKS
GLENN JOHNSON
ANTHONY KENDRICK*
CARL KENNEDY
BETTY KENYON
H.E. KIEFER
JOSEPH KITTINGER
DAVID LAMOUREUX
CRAIG LANDEFELD
ANDREW LEWIS
DAVID LUNNEN
RICHARD MALCOLM
PHILLIP MARSHALL
ROBERT MARTEL
CHARLES MAUCK
MARY MCCOSKRIE
JOHN MCCOSKRIE*
D.T. MCCULLOUGH
ROBERT MCKENNA
FIRST UNITED METHODIST
PHILLIP MILLER
BOBBY MONEYMAKER
THOMAS NEISS

2005 ACA Christmas Party



Felix Sambogna, ACA President



Carol & Pete Bowman



Lee & Rita Griffin



Dave, Santa, & Joyce Harrington



Robert Downs & Jerry Rhein



Friends of the ACA.



Friends of the ACA



Robert Downs, Hap, & Ray Bourque



Eva Whippie, Rita & Joe Harris



Friends of the ACA



Ace Shepherd



Sam, Dorothy & Roger Klair, & John Grove



Jay Degraw, Miss Hap & Hap



Everyone enjoying the wonderful food



Jerry Rhein, Bob Schneidenbach,
Donna Riley & Edna S.



'Chief' & Mary Louise Gornto



Hap & 'Snake' Schoknecht



'Chief' & Mary Louise Gornto



John & Amy Garvey



Bev & Charlie Kapsa



Cake



John Grove



Mr. "T"



George Rosenstrom & Bea Shehan



Jeanette, Santa, & Hannah



John Connors & Dick Geron



Jeanette Moore & Betty Kenyon



Jeanette, Betty Kenyon,
Steve Witkos, & Hannah Moore



Mike & Fran Mikulec



Norm Evans and Dolores



Santa & 'Sam'



Fred Sanders & 'Sam'



Roger Klair



Joyce Harrington and 'Sam'



Gloria Doster and 'Sam'



Another lucky door prize winner



Great food at Two Trees Restaurant

New Country Store Items!!

Shown below is the new 8" Car Decal available for \$3.00 - white lettering on dark blue background



License plates available in white (as shown above) or with a blue background.



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
NEW 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	\$4.00
Hat Bands (royal blue).....	\$5.00
ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering	\$10.00
Air Commando Bush Hat (M,L,XL).....	\$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").....	2/\$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.

Covey Down

Thirty five years ago near a dusty little village in South East Asia, an American 02/A forward air controller found himself in dire straits, low on fuel, and trying to make it to friendly airspace for a safe landing, time was not on his side. He was briefed on friendly emergency landing sites inside the neutral country and made a calm-cool call to "smokey control."

Smokey, this is covey 243, low on gas, request landing your location although "no" American war birds were to operate or land inside the kingdom of Laos, ever, (over flights OK). Permission granted, AOC Cmdr notified, use runway 35, check wheels down, wind 360@6, cleared to land, smokey, to save gas I'm shutting down rear engine, have the field in sight. (Last transmission from covey 243). The aircraft crashed in a jungle clearing one mile south of Lima site 39. (Savannakhet, Laos).

I watched the aircraft fall out of the sky, then a large cloud of dust when it hit, no gas - no fire. "Oh God", I blasted down a dirt path in a radio jeep calling "Texas 7, Texas 7", our medic on location reached the crashed aircraft in about four minutes, contacted "hillsboro", an ABCCC bird that a aircraft was down at my location. I checked for

survivors. To my surprise there were two souls on board. The pilot, no pulse, died on impact. His companion an army special forces NCO was badly broken but alive. Pulled both away from the aircraft, advised ABCCC of one survivor. Our local FAC, Raven 33 (Ed Chun) returning from mission cir-



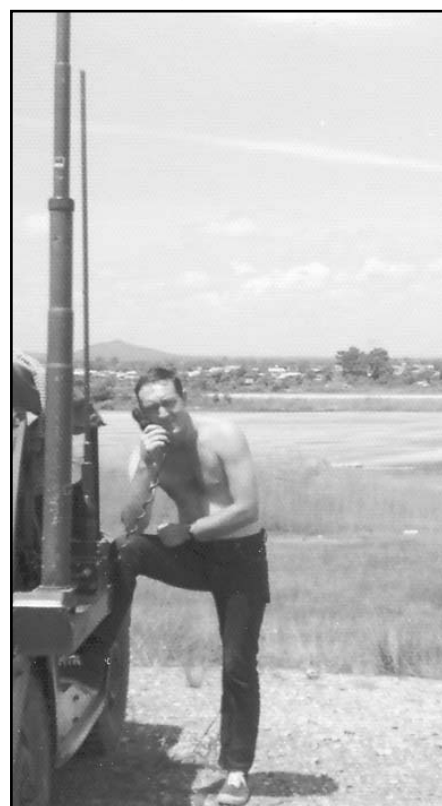
cled the crash site looking for bad guys, made a call to "Churchbell" the CAS component to request help for med Evac. Made survivor as comfortable as possible until help arrive in approx 15 mins. Loaded both men aboard the H-34 on stretchers and they departed Laotian airspace, "Air American does it again". ABCCC notified that crew has been extracted.

This incident occurred on or about 3 December 1971, the survivor was called a Covey rider". The special forces used one of their own to fly with U.S. Air Force FAC's on specific missions, keeping in contact with their ground teams in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. This was mostly likely a "Prairie Fire" covey FAC mission.

I guess it's just an old age thing that I feel as though I should at least try to find the names of these two warriors. The pilot lost his life that day but the rider may still be kicking some place. I've contacted John Plaster and Steve Sherman, both SF types that have knowledge of the program and also many former covey FAC pilots, they can't put a date or face on that incident. To. Summarize:

- What: 02/A FAC aircraft crash, one dead, one survived
- Where: Lima Site 39, Savannakhet, Laos
- When: On or about 3 December 1971

If anyone can shed any light on names of covey/rider crew please contact: Air Commando Association, c/o Roger "Smokey" Klair, P O Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569, PH 850-581-0099.



Roger "Smokey" Klair

Air Commando/Special Operations General Officers

Listed are those who have served in AC/SO Units, commanded, or are still on active duty both active duty and reservists.

This has been brought up to date by many people who sent me names but we still may be missing some.

BGen Harry C. Aderholt
MGen Jim Ahmann
MGen John R. Alison
LtGen Maxwell C. Bailey
MGen S. Bowen Ballard
MGen Walter H. Baxter
BGen Edward N. Brya
BGen Robert L. Cardenas
Gen Duane H. Cassidy
BGen James B. Cobb
MGen/DR William A. Cohen

BGen George P. Cole JR
BGen James L. Cole Jr
MGen Richard L. Comer
MGen Hugh L. Cox III
Gen Michael J. Dugan
BGen Richard H. Dunwoody
MGen Thomas E. Eggers
MGen Marv Ervin
MGen Mike Farage
BGen Eric Fiel
LtGen Bruce Fister
MajGen John Folkerts
LGen William H. Ginn JR
BGen A. Gray III
MGen Lee V. Greer
MGen Gary Heckman
Gen Paul Hester
MGen James R. Hildreth

MGen James L. Hobson Jr
MajGen Jack Holbein
Gen Charles Holland
LtGen James D. Huges
BGen Richard A. Ingram
BGen James M. Johnston III
BGen Jerry Jones
BGen Benjamin King
BGen Frank J. Kisner
BGen Lyle Koenig
BGen Noah E. Loy
LtGen Leroy J. Manor
BGen James R. McCarthy
BGen Clay McCutchan
LGen George D. Miller
MGen George W. Norwood
MGen Robert B. Patterson
Gen John L. Piotrowski

BGen Mike Plantert
MGen Gil Pritchard
MGen Walter S. Putnam
Gen Norton A. Schwartz
MajGen Dave Scott
BGen Hanson L. Scott
MGen Richard V. Secord
MGen Donald W. Sheppard
MGen John K. Singlaub
BGen Dale Stovall
MGen William A. Studer
MGen Leroy W. Svendsen Jr
BGen Greg Trebone
MGen Daryle E. Tripp
BGen Garry A. Willard Jr
LTGen Joseph G. Wilson
LtGen Michael W. Wooley
MajGen Donnie Wuester
MGen Kendall S. Young

Know Your Executive Board Members

(A snapshot view of each Board Member will be included in our Newsletters - all members should know who is steering this great ship)

Felix L. "Sam" Sambogna, a lifetime member of the ACA, began his service with special operations units when he reported to Hurlburt Field for AT-28 training in 1966. He then served as an AT-28 pilot in the 606th

Air Commando Squadron, Nakon Phanom, Thailand, under the command of Colonel Aderholt. Other special operations unit assignments included flying the A-37 at England AFB and Hurlburt Field; staff officer at SOF Headquarters, Eglin AFB; Special Operations Liaison Officer, Vietnam; and OV-10 Squadron Commander and Deputy Base

Commander at Hurlburt. Sam retired in 1982 with 29 years of service, 15 years in special operations units. Since May 2001, Sam has been an ACA Director on the ACA Executive Board. He was elected ACA President in October 2004. His most significant special operations accomplishment was defeating Colonel "Road Runner" Thomas in tennis.



Felix L. "Sam" Sambogna
President, ACA

HANOI JANE STILL NOT POPULAR!

The anti-American actress Jane Fonda, aka Hanoi Jane, visited Israel recently as a guest of the left-wing "peace" group called Women in Black. Nadia Matar, who heads a right-wing group known as Women in Green, had an encounter with Ms. Fonda at a Jerusalem restaurant. As Fonda's fancy minibus arrived, her PR man jumped out and began to bark out instructions to journalists. "Listen fellows, Jane Fonda is arriving from Jordan where she got the royal treatment. You are allowed to film her, but don't you dare ask her any questions. She should not feel your presence. Everybody should stay quiet and distanced and respect her privacy. And I repeat, don't talk to her or ask her any questions!" As Fonda stepped out of

her minibus, the Women in Green began heckling her: "Hanoi Jane! Hanoi Jane! You are an American traitor! How many Americans were killed because of you? You are an American traitor and you come to Israel as a guest of Peace Now, the Israeli traitors. You constantly identify with the enemies of the western world. First it was in Viet-Nam where you identified with those who murder Americans and now you come to identify with those Arabs who murder Jews. Go home! Shame on you! Shame!"

Editors Note:

She has not changed!! She lied on a talk show when she said she was sorry about her actions concerning POWs. She is still a Commie-Loving-Left Wing piece of s__t! Even her father despised her.

I Am Coming!

Dear Terrorists,

I am a Navy Aviator. I was born and raised in a small town in New England. I come from a family of five. I was raised in a middle class home and taught my values by my mother and father.

My dad worked a series of jobs in finance and my mom took care of us kids. We were not an overly religious family but attended church most Sundays. It was a nice small Episcopal Church. I have a brother

and sister and I am the youngest in my family. I was the first in many generations to attend college.

I have flown Naval aircraft for 16 years. For me the flying was never a life-long dream or a "calling," it just happened. I needed a job and I liked the challenge. I continue to do it today because I feel it is important to give back to a nation which has given so much to me. I do it because, although I will

See I AM COMING pg. 18

The Deadly Parachute - The Life saving story of Capt Harer

by Capt Apt on 12-22-54

*This came from Life Magazine - 1956
via Joe Kittinger*

At least 99% of the thuds and explosions and bellows of smoke on the desert are the result of planned, normal exercises in which no one is hurt. But plane crashes do happen, usually to some obscure soul whose name means nothing when it appears in the newspaper on page 26 next to the item about the triple-yoke egg. Here is the story of one crash: The mission was an odd one. Because jet fighter lands at high speed, many of them are equipped with drag parachutes to slow them down. The parachutes are opened after the plane's wheels touch the ground. But in this case, the intention was to open the drag parachute at an altitude of 20,000 feet, to see what would happen. If the plane could be suddenly slowed in mid-flight, it was

thought, the maneuver might have some value in aerial combat.

A captain named Richard J. Harer was assigned to make the test in an F-94C, capable of flying 600 miles an hour. The plane was equipped with a manual release, so Harer could get rid of the parachute after the test. In the event that the manual release failed, Harer could get rid of the parachute by detonating a small explosive charge which was wired to the rope that secured the parachute to the plane. If both of these devices failed, Harer could still get rid of the parachute by going into a dive and maneuvering the parachute into the blast of flame from his afterburner. In sum, a thoughtful arrangement of affairs.

Harer got into his plane and took it up to 20,000 feet, closely followed by a chase aircraft flown by another captain named Milburn Apt. Harer opened

the parachute, began to tumble crazily across the sky and then - as far as anyone knows - must have tried the manual release. It failed. Then, because he was a cool, skillful pilot, Harer must have kept his head and tried the explosive charge, although no one is sure when he did. In any case, the charge did not explode. By this time Harer was plummeting out of control toward the dry lake bed at perhaps 500 miles an hour, with Captain Apt flying right beside him shouting advice over the radio. Harer's plane continued down, wallowing, gyrating, the deadly parachute never quite getting into the flame of the afterburner. Harer crashed. His plane burst into flames.

Captain Apt landed on the lake bed at almost the instant of the crash. The two planes, one burning, one under control, skidded along beside each other. As soon as he came to a halt, Apt leaped out of his plane and ran over to Harer's. "If was nothing but fire," Apt remembers.

The only part of the plane I could see sticking out of the flames was the tip of the tail." Apt dashed around to the other side of Harer's plane. Strangely, this side was not burning. Apt was able to climb up onto the plane and look through the Plexiglas canopy into the cockpit. It was filled with smoke, but he could see Harer inside, feebly, faintly moving his head. Apt grabbed the canopy release, a device on the outside of the plane designed for just such an emergency. It failed.

The dry lake bed has absolutely nothing on its surface except the fine-grained sand of which it is composed. No sticks, no stones, nothing that Apt might have picked up to smash the canopy. He tried to pry it off with his bare hands, an effort that, had it not been for the circumstances, would have been ludicrous. He smashed it with his fists and succeeded only in injuring himself. Meanwhile he could see Harer inside, the fire beginning to get to him now.

As Captain Apt smashed his fists on the canopy, a single jeep raced across the lake bed toward the plane at 70 miles an hour. Reaching the plane, the driver leaped out and ran over to it, carrying the only useful piece of equip-

ment he had: a five pound brass fire extinguisher, the size of a rolling pin. He could as well have tried to put out the fire by spitting on it. Apt and the jeep driver shouted contradictory instructions at each other above the growing roar of the fire. The jeep driver emptied his extinguisher on the forward part of the plane, and then handed the empty container to Apt. Apt raised it above his head and smashed it down on the canopy. It bounced off. He pounded the canopy again and again, as hard as he could, and each time the extinguisher bounced off, "It was like hitting a big spring," he says forlornly. "I couldn't break it."

By this this time Captain Harer's flesh was on fire. The jeep driver dashed back to his vehicle and returned with a five-gallon gasoline can. "My God" Apt thought - "No, no," the jeep driver cried, "It's full of water. It's all right."

Apt hefted the can, which weighed nearly 50 pounds. He raised it high in the air and smashed it down. The canopy cracked. Apt hit it again, opening a hole in it, letting out the smoke inside. In a few seconds he had broken a large jagged opening through which Harer could be pulled out. "It was a tough job" Apt says. "Harer was a very tall man."

Was a tall man. Not is, but was. "He's not tall now," Apt says. Both of his feet were burned off. Captain Harer lived. Today, he gets around very well on his artificial feet. He has been promoted to major and will soon be honorably retired from the Air Force with a pension. He has no memory whatever of the accident. He recalls flying at 20,000 feet and popping open the parachute, and his next memory is of awakening in a hospital two weeks later.

Half an hour after the crash, Apt was back in the air flying another mission, with a YAPS on his nose, his tires safely inflated and his plane flying beautifully because some good, responsible sergeant had worked on it. Below he could see the sprawling, wind-swept base and noticing a particularly big puff of smoke on the desert. "What the hell are they doing over there?"

I Am Coming

Continued from page 17

never be rich, my family will be comfortable.

I do it because many of my friends have left for the airlines and someone has to do it.

My government has spent millions to train me to fly these multi-million dollar aircraft. I make about 70,000 dollars a year and after 20 years will be offered a pension.

I like baseball but think the players make too much money. I am in awe of firemen and policemen and what they do each day for my community, and like teachers, they just don't get paid enough.

I respect my elders and always use sir or ma'am when addressing a stranger. I'm not sure about kids these days but I think that's normal for every generation.

I tell you all this because when I come for you, I want you to know me. I won't be hiding behind a woman or a child. I won't be disguised or pretending to be something I am not. I will be in a U.S. issue flight suit. I will be wearing standard US issue flight gear, and I will be flying a navy aircraft clearly marked as a US war-

plane. I wish we could meet up close in a small room where I could wrap my hands around your throat and slowly squeeze the life out of you, but unfortunately, you're hiding in a hole in the ground, so we will have to do this a different way.

I want you to know also that I am very good at what I do. I can put a 2,000 lb weapon through a window from 10,000 feet up. I generally only fly at night, so you may want to start sleeping during the day. I am not eager to die for my country but I am willing to sacrifice my life to protect it from animals like you.

I will do everything in my power to ensure no civilians are hurt as I take aim at you.

My countrymen are a forgiving bunch. Many are already forgetting what you did on Sept 11th. But I will not forget!!

I am coming. I hope you know me a little bit better, see you soon...sleep tight.

Signed A U.S. Navy Pilot

Our Soldiers are one of our greatest assets!

God Bless

REUNIONS

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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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

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. Thank you.

Harry Beam, Jr.

403 N Jefferson Avenue, Canonsburg, PA 15317

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

301ST RESCUE SQUADRON, USAF RESERVE REUNION

Fri. - Sat. March 10th and 11th at the Radisson Oceanfront Ballroom in Melbourne, Florida. For more information contact Bill "Harpo" Harper at billharpo89@comcast.net or cell phone (850) 567-4152.

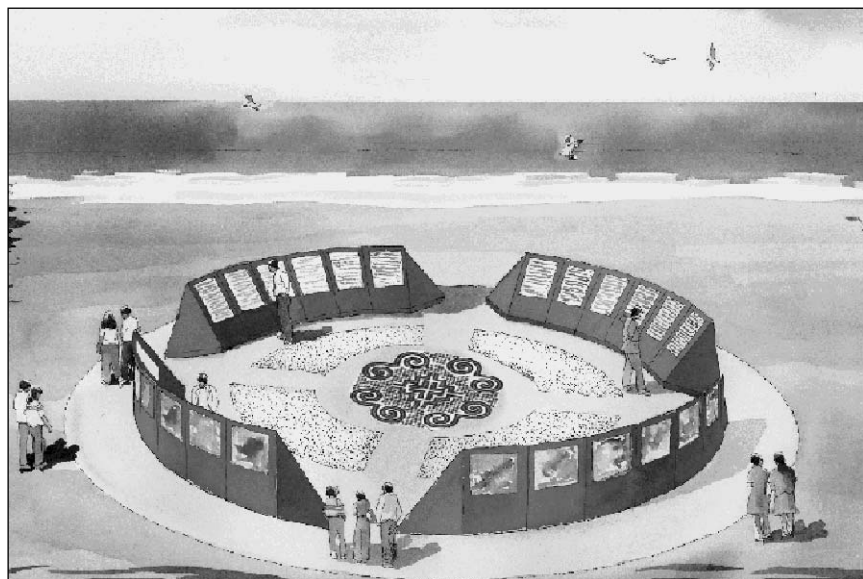
The Lao, Hong, and American Veterans Memorial

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 or contact Steven Schofield at (920) 726-4618 email: schofield@lakefield.net. Sam



MTF Donors

Continued from page 13

WARREN NICHOLS
SYLVIA NIKONOVICH
JOHN ORDEMANN
FRANK ORR
JAMES OSIECZANEK
T.R. OWENS
DENNIS PEAK
FRANK RABELL
JOE RAMSEY
RONALD ROLFE
KARL SCHAEFER*
RONALD SCHWADE
JOSEPH SHANNON
BER SHELTON
MGEN JOHN SINGLAUB
CHARLES G. SMITH
HAL SMITH

JOHN SODERGREN
RICHARD ST JOHN
ERIK STEWART
CHAD SWEDBERG
PAUL TOBEY
MICHAEL TRIMPERT
EMCH FAMILY TRUST*
WILLIAM TURK
SUZANNE TYNER
GINO & SHIRLEY VALENTINE
THOMAS WICKSTROM
CHONG YANG
JON ZACHARIAS
ROBERT ZIMMERMAN

*Indicates donation of \$1,000 or more

Ambassador for Peace Award



Bless the Children, Inc.
gratefully acknowledges

**McCoskrie/Threshold
Foundation**

for your help in making this a
better world for children.

You are *Highly Commended* for your work.



"Works of Love are Works of Peace"

-Mother Teresa

A/B-26 Reunion

A-26's in the 60's Reunion

Farmgate, Big Eagle, Nimrod...they were all represented by the crews and family members that turned out this past October for our bi-annual reunion which was held in conjunction with the ACA reunion. Over 70 folks showed up to swap old war stories (some of which seem to get bigger at every reunion), and renew friendships that were forged years ago. At each reunion, all of our activities are joined with the ACA until Sunday night when we have our special A/B-26 dinner.

As at most reunions, those of us who attend are no longer in our 60's, 70's, or ??, but we get to go back in time to the days when we were in our 20's and 30's. Stomachs turn to chests, hair returns, glasses disappear and talk turns from illnesses, pills, aches, and pains to flying, war stories, women, booze, R & R, women, unbelievable airmanship skills. AND this is the way it should be!

This year we had some special guests. Karen Crane and Cindy McNevin, daughters of Dean Crane, attended and presented the organization with a generous check in honor of their Father. Susan Means, daughter of Jack Mauldin, came all the way from Alaska with several family members to be with us. Don Vogler, son of Charlie Vogler, flew in with his instructor pilot to attend and meet the pilots and navigators who flew with his Dad. Don was so impressed that he is in the process of trying to obtain the last On-Mark converted A-26 as a flying memorial to those who flew the 26 in Southeast Asia. Anyone interested in being involved with this project should contact him at don@vogler.com.

Two very intrepid, highly skilled aviators were selected to coordinate this year's reunion. Tim Black (as writer of this article I felt compelled to take certain liberties) and Bruce Gustafson, the dynamic duo of past



and present, had the dubious honor. They were able to pull off this year's reunion in spite of themselves. The next reunion will be in 2007, so mark your calendars now.....so you won't forget as you get older.

Gathering at the 26 on the pedestal in the airpark sure brought back a lot of memories. Al Shortt did his normal superb job of taking the "formal" picture after the memorial service. Paul Marschalk made the appropriate comments at the memorial service of those of our group who have passed on. Ken Spring had his usual groupees/followers hanging on every word of his combat stories, which seem to get better with age. Gen. Aderholt took one for the troops at the dinner. As he was getting up to address the crowd (even though they had become rowdy), he received an "incoming round" (dinner roll) to the

top of his head. Being unfazed at receiving a "hit", he took the podium and immediately..... returned fire! It's unusual that so many spouses have such good throwing arms. Some people at the dinner seemed to be popular targets. Tom Wickstrom, Jay Norton, Nolan Schmidt and Crazy Poteet tried to deflect their share of incoming rounds. One individual that seemed oblivious to the entire "war" was Don Maxwell. However, he did jump into the fight once he was hit with a barrage fire from several tables. Who says you have to act your age at these get-togethers???? The guest speakers who took to the podium with their insightful songs, jokes, poems, and general B.S. stole the show. Lee Griffin and Pete Bowman did their usual outstanding part in making this one of the best reunions to date. The

hospitality suite was a favorite gathering place with lots of memorabilia and swapping of war stories. One suggestion for next time, add orange juice. 'Nuf said.

If you weren't there, you missed a great time and we missed you. If you were there, hope you enjoyed yourself. It's hard to remember all the events that took place, as after several hours in the hostility suite, things seemed to get a little blurry.

Gary Pflughaupt, along with some other volunteers, will be coordinating the next reunion. Gary has the roster of crew members, along with all the e-mail addresses we have. If you are not sure you are on the roster, contact Gary and make sure. His e-mail address is garypflughaupt@sbcglobal.net. If you don't have a computer, get with

MEMORIES OF THE "GOONEY BIRD"

I recently enjoyed the article about the latest converted C-47 addition to the 6th SOS. Interestingly enough, I recently had the pleasure of a guided tour by Major Chris Mock of the 6th SOS. We did a "walk around" while he explained to me all the new innovations to the old bird. Then we sat in the cockpit and he explained to me all the instrumentation along with the wonderful new capabilities it has. What a fantastic new version that all we old "Gooney" pilots would have loved! For instance, cruising at 170 knots with turbo props and auto feather instead of 130 knots, Wow! I noticed though, that the same old rubber deicer boots were still on the wings and the props.

Chris and I had a great chat and while sitting in the cockpit I related a few old Jungle Jim war stories. I told him about our 12 ship formations on

"COMMANDO FLIGHT - CHECK IN"

Our sixtieth was sensational. To those who made the formation, you probably noticed how much older, balder, fatter and wrinkled everyone appeared. But they showed up! We remembered all the no shows, fondly accepting that circumstances dictated their non-attendance. Yet they all were with us in Commando spirit.

Escape and Evade was a part of our training to go overseas. Here's a different "R&R definition for our beloved family. Rather than "Rest and Recuperation," we shared "Respect and Remember" throughout 2005's rejoin. The respect shown to the widows, spouses and family members as memorable. Dozens of persons expressed to our honored guests that they were touched by the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II. I saw many a wet eye (even Commando One.)

The football Saturday on an autumn weekend in Dixie is an annual "fix" for many. I sure need it since we live out here on the "Left Coast." The legacy, tradition and pride in the unique mission of the Air Commandos will keep us coming.

"Commando Flight - Check in!"
Commando Clean

Saturday mornings the summer of 1961. We'd fly all the way down to just west of Panama City over the beach and then back to Hurlburt and how exciting - and funny - to watch the last half of the formation attempting to land in all that prop wash. I related the story of when Dick Smith, Roy Lewis, myself, Mack McGavin, Ed Ahern, with our engineer and load master took off from Hurlburt in February 1962 and flew 22 non stop hours to Travis AFB with a 500 gallon Benson tank installed in the cabin. It was the longest flight I ever flew in my career! From there we island hopped all the way to Bien Hoa, SVN. I must admit we spent a couple of extra days at Hickam and Clark, helping our new detachment commander Colonel Chester Jack celebrate his new promotion.

The last story I told Chris was how I, Steve Edwards and Will Seirer and our crew successfully dropped napalm out of the side door of our C-47. We flew two missions dropping ten 55 gallon barrels on pallets one at a time on each pass on the target. On our third mission somehow the pallet and barrel didn't separate properly and they bounced off our horizontal stabilizer! Of course we terminated and flew back to Bien Hoa and when we landed Col Jack announced that was our last Air Commando napalm mission. The fact that I'm able to tell that story is testament to the toughness of that old bird!

During my flying career I logged close to 7,000 hours, 3,000 of that in the "Gooney Bird", over an 8 year span. During that time I experienced a grand total of two engine failures, again testament to the reliability of the old warhorse. While sitting in that cockpit the other day I was really overwhelmed with a lot of memories. In fact I felt like I could strap that baby on and fly it away one more time!

Wade Everett
6 Shady Lane
Mary Esther FL 32569

Hurlburt's Quarterly Awards

Below are the names and categories for the 4th Quarter Awards:

AMN CATEGORY:

SrA Christopher A. Garcia,
16SOS (OG)

HG CATEGORY:

SrA Matthew S. Burton,
16AMXS

NCO CATEGORY:

TSgt George D. Anderson,
16EMS (MXG)

SNCO CATEGORY:

MSgt Gregory A. Smith,
4SOS (OG)

CGO WINNER:

Capt Eric C. Hanssen,
823RHS (PUG)

GS 1-8 WINNER:

GS-7 Carol Vickers,
16CONS (MSG)

GS 9-12 WINNER:

GS-11 Robert Jeffers,
720OSS (PUG)

WG/WL/WS WINNER:

WG-08 David L. Smart,
16LRS (MSG)

21st Patch



Never saw this one, wonder where it came from?

Jim Henthorn 21st SOS.
Nov '67 - May '69.
jhenthorn@panhandle.rr.com

A/B-26's

Continued from page 20

the program or use your kids'.

I'd like to close out with the following. Don't know who wrote it, but even though it's entitled "Ode to a Nimrod", it is dedicated to all who flew the 26 in the 60's.

Tim Black, email: tangblack@austin.rr.com

ODE TO A NIMROD

The sleek black beauty sits on high
frothing vengeance from the sky.
A nimble candle lites a light,
the enemy convoy comes into sight.
The marks are placed, no more to say, that
valiant bird is on his prey.
With nerves of steel he makes each run,
the guns are up but this is fun.
His load is gone, his guns are dry,
the weary Nimrod relieves a sigh.
Now the time has come and he must go...
But God, he's been a fearless foe.
His wings are clipped, he'll cease to soar...
That mighty hunter we'll hear no more.
But in our hearts they'll live again,
For we'll have known we've fought with men.

Rossel Report

Remembering General King

Gene,

While I was answering your email, I got to thinking of just how I got involved with Gen. King... I have not told this story before, but I think you might enjoy it since you and I so loved the man... I was selected by the CO of the Survival School to be the Project NCOIC for a classified program to be run at Stead AFB... I was to meet the person who was in charge of the project at the flight line and bring him to meet with the CO of the Survival School.

I was sitting at the Ops Bldg at the prescribed time when a B-26 with wing guns and nose cannon landed and taxied up in front and killed the engines. Out pops a Col. in fatigues, pants bloused over combat boots and a .45 on his hip... I saluted, reported to him and he said lets go Sgt and get this show on the road. We went to meet with the CO of the school and Col. King started to lay out what he wanted to do in the program. The CO of the Survival School told Col. King that he just could not have that kind of program run since the school had been raked over the coals with the congressional investigation that resulted in a real watering down of the program. (You might remember it as "torture in the desert" as TV reported it). Col. King stopped him at that point and said "just a minute Col. and picked up the phone. He dialed a number and said "I have a Col. here who says he can't do what I want done, and handed the phone to the school commander.... Here is the conversation that I heard from our end of the phone line: Yes general, no general, yes general, yes general LeMay, no questions general, goodbye sir.... The school commander then assigned me to work with Col. King and do whatever Col. King wanted for the program.

When the first class of Jungle Jims reported to class, I stepped up to the mike to introduce myself and start the class when Col. King stood up and said "say good morning to our instructor gentlemen" and the whole group stood up and nearly blew me off the stage with "GOOD MORNING YOU ASS-HOLE"..... That's when I knew that this was a special group of men... When the last group of men was due to go thru the program, Col. King came out to Stead to meet with the school CO to review the program. After their meeting Col. King called me into an office and asked me if I wanted to join him in the most challenging program in the USAF at the time.... My answer was...Col. King, I will follow you anywhere and do anything you want done...

No persons other than Gen. King and Col. Gleason have meant more to me than my father in my whole life.... and I would give my life today for either one of them.

Jack Kelso, 1309 Mt. Vernon, Ennis, TX 75119

★BANGKOK CLEANERS★

Rated one of America's Best Cleaners.

A continuous supporter of the Air Commando's
MTF Humanitarian Mission.

Support the folks who support us.

Drop off or delivery, same price!

Save time and money today !!

**Call 850-243-4556
for personal service.**

Located at 125 SE First Street Ft Walton Bch, FL 32548

Attache in Burma

Tom Schornak is an old helicopter pilot, a fighter pilot, an old Air commando and has the distinction of being an Attache in Burma when the Poles brought a small Russian transport and since he spoke Polish they let him fly it for awhile until they found out he was just more than a pilot. I believe it was a AN-39 (??) He flew T-28 with the Air commandos.

Tom Schornak, email: schornakt@comcast.net

Looking for Son Tay Images

The National Museum of the US Air Force is planning an exhibit on Vietnam POWs, and this exhibit will include a segment on the Son Tay raid. I'm researching the exhibit and gathering photos to support it.

In a recent (1997, Air Univ. Press) book called Apollo's Warriors, there are a few Son Tay images that are credited to the Air Commando Association. Can you direct me to the right person to talk to in your organization to ask for these images to support our exhibit? I found your name, by the way, on the Air Commando Association website.

Thanks very much for your assistance---I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Douglas N. Lantry, Research Historian

National Museum of the United States Air Force

Research Division/MUA

1100 Spaatz Street

Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433-7102

Douglas.Lantry@wpafb.af.mil

Can any of you help Doug Lantry with the Son Tay images he is looking for? If you can't help can you pass this on to others that may be able to help. Thanks.

Gene

U-2 Replaced by Global Hawk

January 10, 2006: The robots are starting to replace pilots in the U.S. Air Force. The first to go are those who fly the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. All 33 U-2s will be retired over the next five years. They will be replaced by Global Hawk UAVs. Both aircraft are similar in size and carry similar sensor packages, but the lack of a pilot enables the Global Hawk to stay in the air twice as long (24 hours.) The air force is buying over 40 Global Hawks to replace the U-2, and several other recon aircraft. The U-2 has been in service for half a century, while the Global Hawk is just entering regular service, after nearly a decade of development.

Next? Robo-Warrior - able to leap over tall buildings in a single bound

"Walter Dutton" wlundstein@cox.net

I was a USAF Combat Controller and served with the 8th Aerial Port Squadron out of Ton Son Nhut AB in 1971-1972. While there, I was able to locate an old U.S. Army camp (that had become a Vietnamese town) from where 2 of the men on the aircraft had been recovered. One of my friends, Floyd Loveland, MSgt, went with me and was also a history buff. Floyd later died of cancer and is listed on the CCT memorial list of the association web site. In any event, it was an interesting 12+ months. Walter Dutton, wlundstein@cox.net.

Thanks for the information.

Rossel

Continued from page 22

Site 85 Laos

"Vietnam MIA identified with help, U.S. identifies remains from 1968 attack"

By ROBERT BURNS AP Military Writer

Nearly four decades after 11 American servicemen were killed by North Vietnamese commandos at a secret radar site in Laos; U.S. investigators have made the first identification of remains with the help of two of the commandos.

The breakthrough is one of the most remarkable achievements in the U.S. military's decades-long effort to find and identify the remains of hundreds of U.S. serviceman missing in action from the Vietnam War.

Yet the recovery and identification of the remains of Air Force Tech. Sgt. Patrick L. Shannon, of Owasso, Okla., also created a new mystery. On the mountain ledge where his remains were found, U.S. investigators discovered boots, clothing fragments and other personal items that indicated that some of the other missing Americans had been on the same ledge. None has been seen or heard from since the attack.

Eight of the 19 Americans at the radar site when it was attacked in the early morning of March 11, 1968, were rescued several hours later by CIA helicopters. One of the eight died en route to a base in Thailand.

The capture of the mountain facility marked the start of a major communist offensive in then-neutral Laos. The CIA said in a 1995 study of the episode that it was the beginning of the end for the non-communist forces in Laos, which today is one of the world's last communist countries and one of its poorest.

Larry Greer, a spokesman for the Defense POW-MIA Office, said U.S. investigators plan to return to the area, although no date has been set. The area is in Houaphan Province, about 25 miles from the provincial capital of Sam Neua, then a stronghold of the communist Pathet Lao and a gateway between Laos and North Vietnam.

In 1966, the U.S. installed navigation radar atop Phou Pha Thi Mountain, above a landing site known as Lima Site 85. In 1967, it was upgraded with bombing-control radar to direct U.S. bombers to their targets in North Vietnam. The site was guarded by about 1,000 local Hong troops advised by CIA paramilitary officers.

The Americans who operated the site were known as Circuit Riders, Air Force technicians operating under civilian cover. The 1995 CIA study said the men proved to be no match for the North Vietnamese commando team that attacked the site, apparently by scaling a 5,600-foot ridge line to reach the radar site.

With the help of the Vietnamese government, two of the commandos were located, interviewed and taken to Lima Site 85 with U.S. investigators in March 2003. The two showed the investigators three places atop the mountain where they said that after overrunning and killing the Americans, they threw the bodies off the cliff.

The investigators then threw mannequins off the cliff at each of those three locations and videotaped the path of the mannequins from a helicopter hovering nearby. That led them to the ledge, about 540 feet below the radar site, where they found human remains later identified as those of Shannon.

Its a miracle, its amazing news, said Pamela Shannon, 48, of Oklahoma City, who regards her father as a hero a 13-year Air Force veteran who was 30 years old at the time he was killed. She said her family was notified of the identification the day before Thanksgiving.

It was a great holiday. It was shocking, she said.

A Raven speaks out about SAR

Harry Icke, USAFA, Class of 1966, Covey FAC at Danang (and elsewhere) SVN relates the following:

Bat 21 SAR - Documentary: "A couple of months back . . . I returned to Vietnam this past summer as a guest of the The Discovery Channel to take part in the filming of a documentary about a SAR I took part in during the war. Several people asked me to let them know when the documentary was going to be broadcast so here it is.

The show will come on for the first time on February 13th at 9 P.M. Central Time. That's the good news. The bad news is that the show will be broadcast this time (and repeated several more times) on the Discovery Military Channel. This used to be called The Discovery Wings Channel and is now usually just called The Military Channel.

I have not seen the program myself as they will not provide me with a copy until it is broadcast for the first time Those of us who took part in the filming of the documentary are anxious to see how the program balances our own views of the war with those of the North Vietnamese veterans who traveled with us and were also interviewed extensively. Some of you probably also know another grad who took part in the filming, Darrel Whitcomb, '69 [Nail 25, Raven 24]. Darrel wrote an excellent book on the "true" story of the rescue entitled: "The Rescue of Bat 21".

Here is the "tickler" from The Military Channel's website: Battlefield Diaries II - Just One Man

On April 2, 1972 an American combat jet, call sign Bat 21, was blown apart by a North Vietnamese missile. Of the six men on that plane, just one survived, the navigator, Lt. Col. Iceal "Gene" Hambleton.

Regards, Harry Icke '66

Please ensure widest distribution to all organizations/members/veterans that might have an interest. Some of you knew them, some of you relied on the LS-85 steers to and from the downtown area, some of you worked the SARs, but all who flew were effected by these losses.

H. Ownby

Chamaba (Khmer Repub.) '74 Raven 26 (Laos) '72-'74

Nail 76 (Laos, SVN, NVN) 71-72

Iris (SVN) '70-71

Email: raven26h@aol.com or Email: hkownby@aol.com

Telephone: Ofc: 972-618-1087 Mbl: 972-679-7880 Fax: 972-618-9518

Mail: P O Box 866791, Plano TX 75086

John Siskind jsiskind@wsfcs.k12.nc.us, 19th ACS Patch

Mr. Rossel,

I was a member of the 19th ACS at TSN. After I arrived the designation was changed to the 19th SOS and I understand it was finally the 19th TAS. We

were referred to as the "last of the Air Commandos" by the new guys.

I have really enjoyed the information on your website. It was wonderful.

I still have a cloth patch and a metal pin for the 19th ACS but I lost the metal with the loop that was worn on dog tags. I have no idea what happened to my BF hat.

I was wondering if either the hat or the metal tag is available anywhere for sale? Thanks for your time and for the wonderful website.

John Siskind, Former Capt USAF, Now, Director of Alternative Education, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Post Office Box 2513, Winston-Salem, NC

27102-2513, 336 748-3375

Jim Henthorn jhenthorn@panhandle.rr.com

Doing some research on a tail number and need help. Looking for infor-

Rossel

Continued from page 23

mation on an H-3, 65-15697. If you flew on her please get back to me. It does not have to be in SEA, anywhere you flew this tail number will help. Please check your Form 5s and log books. Thanks everyone.

Also have a new e-mail address. jhenthorn@panhandle.rr.com

Jim Henthorn 21st S.O.S. Nov. '67 - May '69

LS-85 Memorial

Gene -The former members of the 1st Combat Evaluation Group are collecting tax exempt donations to build a memorial at Barksdale AFB to the 12 men lost during the fall of LS-85 in 1968 in Laos. The other 7 men lost in Vietnam will also be part of this memorial. They are trying to raise \$10,000 and have reached a total of \$7000 as of 7 Feb 06. All donors will receive a written tax exempt receipt from the 8th AF Museum. All donations, big or small are welcome. Please send checks to: Emerson McAfee, 1357 Red Lick Road, Berea, KY 40403. Make check out to: 8th AF Museum/Emerson McAfee. Mark the FOR line: 8th AF Museum
Gerald Clayton, email: jayree@tampabay.rr.com

Gene & Joe,

I just received word that Mary Morgan Craig, Burke Morgans widow passed away on the 6th of Feb. She had been in intensive care for a liver problem for over three weeks. Very ironic as she had only been informed just before Thanksgiving that Burkes remains had been recovered and ID'd. Please pass this on to those who might be interested.....Any Time-Any Place
Tom Wickerstrom, A26NIMROD@aol.com

Thanks for the email and we'll put it in the ACA newsletter.

Operation Farm Gate combat missions authorized December 6, 1961

U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff authorize combat missions by Operation Farm Gate pilots. With this order, U.S. Air Force pilots were given the go-ahead to undertake combat missions against the Viet Cong as long as at least one Vietnamese national was carried on board the strike aircraft for training purposes. The program had initially been designed to provide advisory support to assist the South Vietnamese Air Force in increasing its capability. The gradual but dramatic expansion of Operation Farm Gate reflected the increasing involvement of the United States in Vietnam.

President John F. Kennedy originally ordered the Air Force to send a combat detachment to South Vietnam to assist the Saigon government in developing its own counterinsurgency capability. The Air Force formed the 4400th Combat Crew Training Squadron, which arrived at Bien Hoa Airfield in November 1961. Under Operation Farm Gate, the 4400th used older, propeller-driven aircraft to train South Vietnamese Air Force personnel. With the new order from the Joint Chiefs, the 4400th mission was expanded to include limited combat missions in support of South Vietnamese ground forces.

Farm Gate pilots began flying reconnaissance missions and providing logistical support to U.S. Army Special Forces units. The rules of engagement for combat missions dictated that American pilots only fly missions that the South Vietnamese were unable to undertake. The first Operation Farm Gate mission was flown on December 16, 1961. However, by late 1962, the communist activity and combat intensity had increased so much that President John F. Kennedy ordered a further expansion of Farm Gate. In early 1963, additional aircraft arrived and new detachments were established at Pleiku and Soc Trang.

In early 1964, Farm Gate was upgraded again with the arrival of more modern aircraft. By March 1965, Washington had altogether dropped the requirement that a South Vietnamese national be carried on combat missions. In October 1965, another squadron of A-1E aircraft was established at Bien Hoa. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara approved the replacement of South Vietnamese markings on Farm Gate aircraft with regular U.S. Air Force markings. By this point in the war, the Farm Gate squadrons were flying 80 percent of all missions in support of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). With the buildup of U.S. combat forces in South Vietnam and the increase in U.S. Air Force presence there, the role of the Farm Gate program gradually decreased in significance. The Farm Gate squadrons were moved to Thailand in 1967, where they launched missions against the North Vietnamese forces in La.

C-123 Crash at Hurlburt

If anyone has any information on the C-123 that got its extraction load (15,000 lb load) caught during deployment and crashed at Hurlburt please send information to aircommando1@earthlink.net

FAC Museum

Pilots salvaging forward air control planes, used from World War I through the Persian Gulf War By Chris Vaughn, Star-Telegram, Fort Worth -- In a city known for its museums, another one is quietly and quickly acquiring an inventory with little public support or knowledge.

Far from the city's art gems in the Cultural District, this museum is in an aging hangar adjacent to Meacham Airport on the north side and dedicated to a rather obscure sub-group of combat aviators. It is the Forward Air Control Museum, five planes and growing.

"We never expected to have this many airplanes this soon," said Jim Hodgson, president of the OV-10 Bronco Association that launched the museum as well as being a commercial pilot in Grapevine. Unlike the more obvious-sounding 1st Cavalry Division Museum or the Cavanaugh Flight Museum, this military-focused place requires some explanation of both forward air controllers and unfamiliar planes such as the OV-10 Bronco and O-2 Sky master.

The planes -- the O stands for observer, like the F in F-16 stands for fighter -- flew "low and slow" reconnaissance missions, guiding artillery, naval gunfire and tactical aircraft onto specific targets.

Although forward air control planes were used from World War I to the Persian Gulf War, the focus at Meacham is on the Vietnam era when men like Hodgson, 57, earned their air medals.

"Now they've got guys in Florida controlling unmanned drones in Afghanistan doing the same thing we did," he said. "They get to go home with the kids and the dog at the end of the day, instead of going to the club and saying, 'Wow that was close today.'"

The founders and members of the Bronco Association, formed in 1997 at a house in Colleyville, worked for years to obtain airplanes that might help them tell their stories to a wider audience.

Admittedly, the OV-10 would bring a narrow audience and interest would be unlikely to survive the eventual deaths of its members. Enlarging the museum to include all forward air controllers might mean their history could survive.

"We want to tell a more complete story, rather than just have our individual stovepipes," said Doc Lambert, 63, a retired Air Force pilot who lives in Fort Worth. "We can gain momentum."

Rossel

Continued from page 24

The museum is definitely a work in progress, bankrolled by no one wealthy and operated on a shoestring budget. There isn't even an admission charge, only a donation box. It's open only for six hours on Saturdays and Sundays.

It shares space with the Vintage Flying Museum, which showcases a number of World War II-era aircraft.

The indoor museum is only a few hundred square feet, filled with Vietnam-era memorabilia, a memorial to the forward air controllers killed in Vietnam and a sign at the front that says "Cleared Hot."

On weekends, the association members who live close enough drive in to help restore the war birds, sanding and rebuilding an O-2 Spymaster in a cramped room next door.

But only in the last two years did they have much success in securing any airplanes. They first got an OV-10 mockup, and then added the O-2, then an F-4 Phantom that flew in Vietnam.

Trying to get the big-name fighters is key to making the museum successful, they said.

"It's kind of like a circus," Hodgson said. "We've got to have a main attraction, so they'll come see that but then they'll see the side shows too."

The museum received its second OV-10 Bronco on Wednesday, after having finally convinced the California Department of Forestry to give up two of them a few months ago.

Both planes had been moth-balled for years after having flown for the military and then for the Bureau of Land Management.

Both need extensive work, especially since the museum volunteers want to make them airworthy again.

"We want to fly these bad boys," said Garry Goff, 47, a commercial pilot and Richardson resident who flew Air Force OV-10s during the 1980s.

They expect it to take \$300,000 to put one in the air again, to be used as a flying memorial to the 63 air control pilots and crew members killed in Vietnam. Where they'll get the money is another matter entirely.

Even so, they're still in the acquisitions business. They've purchased and will soon take delivery of an F-5, which they intend to paint in the colors of the South Vietnamese air force.

"We FACed for them too," Hodgson said. "The OV-10 is only a chapter in a book. And the book isn't complete."

TO: All Vietnam Veterans, particularly Jolly Green, Crown, Sandy and Nail crews

SUBJECT: The SAR effort for SOPHOMORE 50 and SUMO, 27-29 February 1968 Jolly Green's and Other's

I am the POW/MIA analyst for Laos and Cambodia at Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA) at Camp Smith Hawaii and I would like to ask your help on an MIA case that has become somewhat of a mystery to us. What I am looking for anyone who participated in the SAR effort for SOPHOMORE 50, a Navy OP-2E that was shot down in Laos, south of Ban Karai pass/ Ban Laboy Ford, and north of the chokes, while dropping Igloo White sensors on 27 February 1968

Bill Forsyth, Joint Task Force-Full Accounting email: forsyth@pixi.com or forsytwl@hq.pacom.mil.

Bill-we will put this in the ACA Newsletter.

Not Your Grandfathers Fighter Cockpit

January 28, 2006: TV and movie depictions of life in fighter cockpits still look a lot like World War II. But the reality is that in the past sixty years,

the inside of that cockpit has changed dramatically, if somewhat gradually. For example, the joystick began disappearing, in U.S. aircraft anyway, some two decades ago. Even before that, the HUD (Head Up Display) began to show pilots all sorts of information, on what appeared to be a see-through computer screen at the front of the cockpit canopy. About the same time the joystick became old-school, while the instruments and dials in the front of the cockpit were getting replaced by computer displays. These displays eventually displaced all the old fashioned stuff, and became touch sensitive as well. Just like many ATMs, or laptop computers. Meanwhile, the French pioneered controls that responded to voice commands (even when given in a voice stressed by combat, or pulling lots of Gs). Added to this were HUD type displays on the pilots visor, as well as sensors that knew what the pilot was looking at.

Much more automation is now available to pilots. This includes diagnostics of system failures (or battle damage), tactical advice and automatic landing systems (autopilot for level flight has been around for a long time.) Today's fighter cockpit is very definitely not your grandfathers fighter cockpit.

Military Record Search

If you are looking for records try this site, if you haven't already: www.archives.gov/veterans/evetrecs/index.html, Semper Fi, Dave Horne

Comments on the Internet about the new DOD Anti Sex Rules

Patronizing prostitutes just got more costly. New rule means those convicted face dishonorable discharge, jail. By Karen Jowers

Service members now may pay dearly for hiring a prostitute. Under a change in the Manual for Courts-Martial, troops who patronize prostitutes can receive a dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and up to a year in jail.

Funny how over time things have changed...If you look at the history of the "Hooker", it was instituted by a Civil War General named Hooker...Somewhere in the Virginia, Maryland area I believe...He cared for the mental and emotional well being of his men so much, he felt it necessary to start this hooker set-up for his men's morale...How 'bout that....!! www.swcivil-war.com/hooker.html

Now look at it! They'd have to give me an article 15, cause I ain't stoppin!

The Navy New Enlisted Pilot Program

Back in 58 several of us were enroute to our first operational assignment as a new interceptor pilots in the 51st Fighter Interceptor Wing on Okinawa. We boarded a MATS (joint service back then) C-121 at Travis. The aircraft commander was an old time Navy Chief Petty Officer. On some legs, he invited us up to ride the right seat which was the first time any of us had been in the right seat of a many-motored monstrosity. He was as smooth a driver as I've ever ridden with and knew that airplane like he was a part of it.

The AF had some flying sergeants and flight officers during and shortly after WWII, but the Navy had enlisted pilots much longer. Other countries used enlisted pilots more. The RAF had some. In the IJN, most of the Zero pilots were enlisted, but in the Japanese Army, more of the pilots were commissioned.

Bill Mosenteen

I was at NKP May68-May69, Loaded weapons on T-28's and A-1's. Email: bmosenteen@hotmail.com

Rossel

Continued from page 25

Bill Moyle

dc8driver@adelphia.net, Santa Ana, CA
602nd SOS 1969 NKP SSGT Weapons

Glad to find you guys - Jim Clark

Was at NKP 12/69-4/70 at 1987 Comm Sq. Got to go on 2 Candlestick missions. Later, as reserve JAG, assigned to Hq AFSOC/JA '88-'93, and volunteered for AD during Desert Shield where I was chief of ops law. Jim Clark, coljimclark@msn.com, Denver, CO

Glad to get news from the current forces.

Best time of my life

Was in Det2 1st ACW from Dec. 68 to Aug 71. Took part in raid ON P.O.W. camp in SONTAY N.V. in Nov 70. Best time of my life. Hope to hear from anyone who was there. Elliot Rothman, "JuJu Raiders", ELR5@aol.com, Phila. Pa

We'll put this in the ACA Newsletter and you should hear from someone from the old warriors.

Just checking in

Shinkle, Albert D., shinkle_al@hotmail.com, Pullman WA

Interested in ACA

Doing research, glad to find your site! Dad (then LtCol Wallace J McKenzie and still living!) was Sq. Commander in 4th SOS A Flt. flying AC-47's in DaNang 68-69. Arrived Aug 68, the month it went from ACS to SOS. Trying to rekindle his interest. It's there... anyone feel free to contact me. Interested in ACA. Kevin McKenzie, ludditekev@earthlink.net, Austin Texas

We'll put this in the ACA Newsletter and I have sent you where to download the application form.

Interested in joining ACA

SMS (Ret) Kenneth G. Swick, swickk@superpa.net, Gettysburg PA
Retired 193rd SOW. Served Udorn / Laos AT-28 /C-47 Night missions 1964-65 Panama, Grenada, Desert Storm, Afgan etc.

Thanks for the email and we have sent you the site for downloading the ACA application.

Many Thanks

Very nice, informative web site. Many thanks. Larry W. Raines, b52c406@charter.net, Belchertown, Ma

Thanks for the email.

Found the Web Site

Found the site via an e-mail on TLCB. Looks fantastic and I will be spending a lot of time here. Was at Binh Thuy, Nha Trang, worked on O1Es, AC47, U-10s, O-2s. Later, was flying out of Korat on EC121Ds and Ts. Bob Price, Rsuperconnie@AOL.com, Gig Harbor, WA

Thanks for the email and glad you enjoy the home page.

605th Air commando Squadron in 1967 -1970

I served in the 605th Air commando Squadron in 1967 -1970 at Howard AFB in Panama as an Aircraft maintenance technician on DC-3, C-54, T28, and U2, considering joining soon and attending reunions any members wishing to email me may do so. My name was Augusto Abbatematteo.(Alfie). John Mooradian, mjohncam@aol.com, Spring Hill Florida

Thanks for the email and we have sent you the page for downloading the ACA application. I served in the 605th ACS but I left in 1966.

Just Surfed In

JP Van Doorselaer, vve.uda@skynet.be, Oostduinkerke - Belgium
Homepage: De Verdedigingsstrijdkrachten van de Luc, www.uda.be
Just Surfed In. Greetings from the Belgian Air Commando Association, (NVVVE - ANUDA). We are based at Oostduinkerke in Belgium, (coastal area). Contact: +.32.475.85.01.02 or email: vve.uda@skynet.be or uda@uda.be

Always glad to hear from fellow commandos from around the world.

DUANE R. HOUCK

drhouck@comcast.net

1st ACS PLEIKU JAN-MAY 1966, FAC NKP, CUCHI MAY-DEC 1966
INSTR. 0-1, 02, 0V-10 HURLBURT 1967-1970; AOC L-39 MAY-OCT 1970.
A7D SANDY JAN-AUG 1974 KORAT

Thanks for the email.

Fellow ACA members

My name is Larry G Porter and I am trying to locate SSgt Judd L Ravsten. Mr Ravsten I'm sure by now Judd and myself and 5 other men were in a crash at Hurlburt on Sept 3 1968 C-123k # 54-640. Judd was seriously injured in this crash and I need to see if I can get a buddy letter from him so if anyone knows Judd I would appreciate either him contacting me at the above e-mail address or letting me know how to contact him for any assistance that my fellow members can provide. Will greatly appreciated as I was a student loadmaster at the time training for Vietnam and Judd was and instructor loadmaster. Larry G. Porter, lgportermc@hotmail.com, Hines, Oregon
ACA Member yes

Reply

I found this in the History of the Special Operations Force 1 July 1968-31 December 1968 history in the 4408th Combat Crew Training Squadron history for that period:

"On 3 Sep 68 the squadron experienced a major aircraft accident in which one crewmember was injured and the C-123K aircraft destroyed. The loadmaster suffered a broken arm from a high speed projectile during crash landing." There is no mention of the crew members anywhere in the histories. I was unable to find a4408th CCTS association. The aircraft accident report is at the USAF Safety Center at Kirtland AFB, NM, but it is classified, and I doubt that they would release it.

The aircraft belonged to the 19 Air Commando Sq.

See **ROSSEL** pg. 27

Rossel

Continued from page 26

We don't have aircraft accident reports after 31 Dec 1954. He'll have to get that report from the AF Safety Center at Kirtland AFB, NM. If he can provide me with the unit that the aircraft was assigned to, I can check the histories.

Hope this is helpful, Mickey

I am at work and sending this to both you and my home address. This wasn't the C-123 that the load got caught and crash at the end of the runway at Hurlburt? I was at Hurlburt at the time and I am trying to recall this accident. Who were the crew members of the C-123? I will go and try and get info for you, put it in the paper and look for the aircrews of the time. You don't happen to have the report of the crash?

We'll do everything to help you. The next paper is going out in March.

Gene Rossel

A Vietnamese Experience. Capt Simpson, KIA 1962 & VNAF History on his death in 2006.

It took a long time to get a VNAF input on Capt Simpson KIA story but finally a son of a former VNAF pilot, who is now a USMC pilot, discovered Simpson's story and has provided information on who was the Vietnamese with Bob Simpson in the back seat of his T-28 the day he was shot down in Aug 1962 in Soc Trang Province."

Pham's father was named HOA and flew T-28s during this period when Bob Simpson was KIA in 1962 and that was what caught his attention. Here are the emails I got on this and it is very interesting of what the children of our fellow Vietnamese warriors are doing today in the US.

Information on the ACA Home Page which caught Phams' attention

"On the 28 August, 1962 Capt Simpson was leading a flight of two aircraft in Soc Trang Province (Col Gene Mechling, just recently arrived, was flying the other FT-28 as his wingman) and both had Vietnamese AF pilots (indications they were Lts) in their rear seat(Capt Simpson had a pilot, possible named Lt Hoa, who was a nephew of the Vice President of South Vietnam). Charlie Brown was nearby in another T-28. Their mission that day was to escort the US Marine Corps(USMC) helicopters who were transporting Vietnamese Army troops (ARVN) to attack a VC stronghold."

First email from Quang X. Pham, son of a VNAF pilot, in Jan 2006

Author of "A Sense of Duty: My Father, My American Journey"
This is eerie. My father was in the VNAF's 2nd FS in 1962, flying the T-28s from Nha Trang. His first name is Hoa and he is not the nephew of any RVN politician. But he did survive the war and the reeducation camps.

I live in Orange County, Calif. I think my wife's uncle, John Edmond Ryan, is a member of your organization. He took me to Hurlburt in 2003 when we were in Destin for a family reunion. My father had been trained in the C-123 at Hurlburt in 1966. Many of his VNAF photos can be viewed at www.pham-vanhua.com or www.phamvanhoa.com. He passed away in 2000.

A good friend of my father in VNAF who was in the 2nd FS or PD2KT replied to my inquiry about Capt. Simpson. I've pasted his email below my signature.

Email from TBHoi to Quang X.

Pham who was originally trained in 1961 at Bien Hoa in T-28 gunnery by Det 2A Air Commandos.

Hi Quang, As far as I can remember, the back seat rider in this August

1962 crash was either 2nd/Lt Vo Truong Chi or Warrant Officer Huynh Huu Hai, not Lt Hoa. My guess is it's more likely W/O Huynh Huu Hai due to the misspelling of Hai and Hoa? If my memory serves me right, Nguyen Cao Ky did have a nephew KIA in a strike mission and his name is Le Nguyen Hai, not Huynh Huu Hai. Both Lt Vo Truong Chi and W/O Huynh Huu Hai were officially assigned to PD2KT later after PD2KT was formed in late 1961. I was one of the first few PD2KT pilots going to Bien Hoa in late 1961 with Pham Long Suu for gunnery training with the Farm Gate/Air Commando crews. At Bien Hoa, we flew solo in our VNAF's T-28 during gunnery training and at completion, we ferried these birds to Nha Trang. I remember the instructor/leader of my flight throughout the training were Capt Arthur G. Limpantsis or Capt William E. Dougherty (original Air Commandos who went to Bien Hoa with Col Ben King). The name of Capt Robert L. Simpson does not sound familiar to me. It could be that he was with the Farm Gate Detachment in Soc Trang where Farm Gate crews conducted their own strike missions in the Mekong delta. During those early USAF's involvement in VN, Farm Gate usually put VNAF pilots or even VNAF mechanics in the back seat for deniability reason. I am also sending this to An in hope he could add something or shed some more light on the questions raised. Semper Fi,
Gene Mechling

Thanks Gene for forwarding this to me(Quang and TBHoi emails). I would like to meet Capt. Pham sometime or at least chat with him. I will buy his book. I have many very fond memories of Viet Nam and the Vietnamese people. We did abandon them - a national crime - which we can't repeat again!!
Gene Rossel

Thank you Pham for the email and I would like to meet you and also buy your book. I will put this in the Air commando Association Newsletter for March 2006. We weren't sure of the name of the person in the back seat with Bob Simpson when he was KIA but if your father knows who he was I would really like to know. Would like to know more about you and where you can be contacted. I am in Chino, CA.

Gene Rossel

Quang X. Pham book

"A SENSE OF DUTY: MY FATHER, MY AMERICAN JOURNEY by Quang X. Pham " (Ballantine Books, 2005) www.asenseofduty.com or www.asenseofduty.com

About the Book:

In 1964, Hoa Pham, a South Vietnamese (VNAF) fighter pilot, was shot down by Viet Cong anti-aircraft fire while flying in support of American forces and rescued by a Marine helicopter. When Saigon fell to the communists, his 10-year-old son Quang escaped with his mother and three sisters to America. Thirty years later, Quang, now a U.S. Marine pilot turned successful entrepreneur, retraces a uniquely spirited yet agonizing journey from the Vietnam War to peace, from blame to forgiveness, and an eventual surprise reunion with his father who survived twelve years in post-war prison camps. A Sense of Duty explores the inner conflicts of a young man caught in the often contradictory forces of national identity, loyalty, truth and trust in the aftermath of America's most divisive war. It reveals the turmoil of a family torn apart and reunited by the fortunes of war. It is an American journey like no other.

C-47/1st Transport Group, T-28/2nd FS (516), A-1H/1st FS (514), C-47/33rd TW, AC-47/817 CS, C-123K/425th TS, C-130A/437th TS, 53rd TW

Eugene D. Rossel

Tel 909-930-5700 Work, 909-591-7342 Home, Fax 909-930-5710

E-mail aircommando1@earthlink.net

ACA Home Page Web site <http://home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1>



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION, INC.

PO BOX 7, MARY ESTHER, FLORIDA 32569-007

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

MARY ESTHER, FL
32569
PERMIT NO. 3

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



March 2006

President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

of goods by the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation to Honduras, Montagnards in NC, VA home in Panama City, and to a church in Tuskegee, AL. The Christmas Wish shipment (toys and goodies for children in orphanages in Honduras) was a great success.

- Enactment of a services contractor to assist in design and layout for the Newsletter and to provide computer support for the office.

Goals for 2006

- Continue to update office procedures using computer technology, including storing membership records on CDs/DVDs.
- Adhere to strict accounting procedures to be a good steward of the ACA funds.
- Complete improvements in the back room.
- Continue to publish an excellent Newsletter.
- Arrange as good a 2006 reunion as possible.
- Maintain our valuable building.
- Continue recruitment efforts.
- Honor, through the Hall of Fame and memorials, air commandos who have made significant contributions to special operations.
- Support our widows and veterans in need in any way possible.
- Continue to support the MTF.

As we enter the 39th year of our association, it is well to reflect on

some of the milestones and to thank all the original folks who formed the ACA, raised the funds to build the building, and did so many things to make the ACA what it is today. Milestones:

- 1967 - ACA founded by Brig Gen Aderholt and his team.
- 1971 - first reunion
- 1972 - incorporated as a 501©19 Veterans Organization
- 1990s - building campaign
- 1998 - building dedication

There are many unsung heroes in the ACA. Many have been recognized by induction into the Hall of Fame, but there are others (retired and active duty) who have not been recognized because it takes an effort to nominate someone. I encourage members to make the effort to nom-

inate deserving persons. If you need help, contact the office and we will get you started.

Also, there are many untold interesting air commando stories. I encourage all our members to submit articles for our newsletter so we all can share in these experiences. I believe it will make our newsletter even more interesting.

As each year passes we can just do business as usual or try to improve our association. From our approximately 3000 members we get very little input or suggestions. Consequently, we have included a survey in this newsletter distribution. Please take the time to complete and return it – all comments will be considered by your Board and results will be published.



2005 in Review

Our association had a good year 2005. Among the many accomplishments were:

- A great reunion weekend and successful July 4th and Christmas social events.
- Addition of 77 new members, most as the result of our amnesty program initiated by recruitment Board Member John Connors.
- Donations of \$9,000 to worthy causes.
- Upgrade of our back room at minimal cost to provide for a library and space for additional memorabilia.
- Exceptional support (manpower and donation) for Hurricane Katrina folks who evacuated to our area.
- Continued support of local airmen through the efforts of Board Member Bob White at the Eglin Airmen's Attic.
- Publication of four excellent Newsletters
- Induction into the Hall of Fame of two air commandos who have made significant contributions to special operations.
- Shipment of over 200,000 pounds