



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2008

ACA Members Score A Trifecta



Three of our life members are now in top leadership positions in the Air Force. General Northy Schwartz has been confirmed as the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Lt General Donny Wurster is the AFSOC Commander and Brig General (sel) Tom Trask is the new 23 AF Commander. We in the ACA know of no greater leaders who are more capable and can lead our fighting force in this time of war.

Inside Features

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Aussie Medals..... | pg 23 |
| Editorial | pg 2 |
| Letters | pg 7 |
| McCoskrie T.F. | pg 14 |
| Membership | pg 4 |
| Pave Low | pg 12 |
| President Corner | back page |
| Rossel Report..... | pg 26 |

Get Ready for ACA 37th Reunion Oct 9-12

By Ken Lengfield,
ACA Vice President

The 2008 reunion is rapidly approaching so get your plans started. The reunion this year is Thursday October 9th through Sunday October 12th. As always, we will meet at the Quality Inn on Thursday October 9th for check in and hospitality room gathering of old friends. We will have an informal social Thursday night at the Hurlburt Field Sound Side Club at 1700 hrs. The room rate for the Quality Inn is the same as last year, \$73. Can't say the same for the gas prices.

Golf tee times will be avail-

able for those who want to play on Friday with check-in at 0900 hrs. at Hurlburt's (Gator Lakes) Golf Course. Friday will be the fish fry starting at 1600 hrs, with war stories in the hospitality room. Some may even be true. On Saturday we will have our annual business meeting at 0900 hrs at the Special Tactics and Operations Building on Hurlburt Field. We will have an election of Air Commando Association board members at this time to fill positions of those retiring. This will be followed by a briefing by personnel of the Special Tactics and Operations organization. After

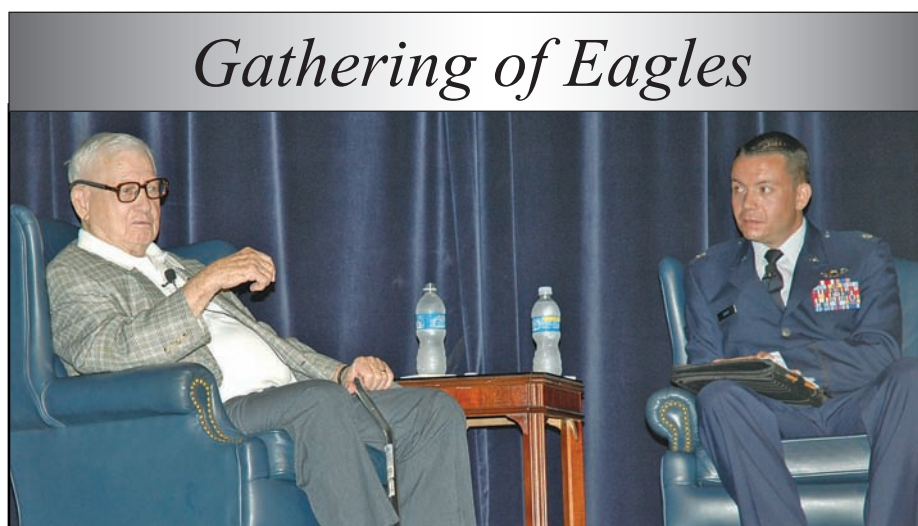
the meeting we will have our annual burger bash behind the building.

There will be a ladies luncheon on Saturday at the AF Enlisted Home. For more on this wonderful facility see our story on page 6.

Our annual ACA banquet will begin with a social hour at 1800 hrs. at the Sound Side Club. The evenings events will be well worth your time, so be there. We will have some inspiring music from some of the local high school students in our area. We also plan a long overdue salute to some who have made

See *REUNION*, pg. 3

Brigadier "Heinie" Aderholt and Master Sergeant Ed Horton Honored by Air Command and Staff College



BGen Aderholt and Major Jason Kirby

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

Fred Nowak, Warren Trest, and I joined General and Mrs. Aderholt at the "Gathering of Eagles" events at Maxwell AFB the week of 3 June 08. In front of the graduating class

of several hundred students at Air Command and Staff College General Aderholt was one of several speakers who were honored and inducted into the Gathering of Eagles to join many others who had truly

remarkable careers in aviation. As a lead in to the briefing, a narrated film clip with pictures showed our general at various stages in his career. General Aderholt's presentation was outstanding as Major Jason Kirby (his appointed student at the ACSC) led him through many parts of his interesting career. The entire audience was entertained by many of General Aderholt's stories and comments that related to events in his long career in special operations. Our general provided information, humor, and emotion that were so well received by the audience. The audience roared when General Aderholt expressed his thoughts when in combat situations: "Kill the S-O-Bs."

After General Aderholt's pre-

See *EAGLES*, pg. 3

AIR COMMANDO
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Editorial: *Why Were We In Vietnam?*

We used to fight communism; now we prop it up

By Harold Meyerson

Doing business in China is beginning to cost real money. Not that Chinese workers are buying second homes or anything like that: Their average wage is still a little short of a dollar an hour. But so many Chinese have now left their villages for the factories that the once bottomless pool of new young workers is beginning to run dry, and the wages of assembly-line employees are rising 10 percent a year.

Worse yet, new labor laws are making it harder for employers to cheat their workers out of their wages and benefits. Many American businesses that do their manufacturing in China had warned against those laws; the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai had flatly opposed them. But the good old days of Maoist labor discipline, when the government could send tens of millions of skilled workers down to the farms to be toughened up and periodically tortured, are gone. Mao's heirs, though not above a touch of torture here and there just to keep the system humming along, are concerned, as he was not, with achieving social harmony, even if that means compelling employers to sign, and honor, contracts with their employees.

Confronted with such appalling squishiness, what's a good, cost-cutting American business to do? Many are fleeing south of the border -- not our border (Mexico costs way too much) but China's.

They're bound for Vietnam.

According to a report by Keith Bradsher in the New York Times last month, such multinational companies as Canon (the printer and copier maker) and Hanesbrands (the North Carolina-based underwear empire) are expand-

ing or building factories in Hanoi, where they churn out products for Wal-Mart and other American retailers. Foreign direct investment in Vietnam increased 136 percent between 2006 and 2007, while it increased just 14 percent in China.

The reason for the move south is straightforward: Vietnamese factory workers make about a quarter of what their Chinese counterparts earn.

But why Vietnam and not, say, Thailand, where labor is similarly cheap?

Vietnam's edge, it seems, is political. "Communism means more stability," Laurence Shu, the chief financial officer of Shanghai-based Texhong, one of the world's leading manufacturers of cotton fabrics, told Bradsher. This view, Bradsher reports, is common among Asian executives and some American executives, too, though they have the presence of mind never to say so on the record. After all, Vietnam, like China, outlaws independent unions. Absent free speech and free elections, no radical shifts in the government's economic policies are likely to be sprung upon unsuspecting American businesses.

Now, far be it from me to begrudge the Vietnamese their moment in the sun before global capital finds them too costly and moves on to Bangladesh and Somalia. But didn't we fight a war to keep Vietnam from going communist? Something like 58,000 American deaths, right? And now American business actually prefers investing in communist Vietnam over, say, the more or less democratic Philippines? In all likelihood, it would prefer investing in communist Vietnam to investing in a more chaotic, less disciplined democratic Vietnam, if such existed.

Let's imagine, just as an exercise, that we're trying to explain this to those 58,000 Americans and their loved ones. We could argue that by investing in communist countries, we're pushing them to-

ward democracy. But everything we know about China suggests that, in reality, such investments merely make authoritarian regimes stronger. We could argue that what we're really doing is bringing communist nations into the world capitalist system. Then again, the effect of bringing into the global labor pool hundreds of millions of low-wage workers -- people whose wages are held in check by both capital mobility and communist repression -- is to hold down wages in democratic nations with advanced economies and with no national strategy to preserve and expand good jobs at home (i.e., in the United States).

Or we could argue that our one-time opposition to communism was noble and all that but that, unburdened by the illusions of the past, American business, backed by the American government, has realized that the problem with communism wasn't that it was undemocratic but that it was anti-capitalist. And that once communism was integrated into a world capitalist system, its antipathy toward democracy not only wouldn't be a bad thing but would actually be good. That is clearly the political logic that underpins our involvement with China. It's a little dicier to say this about our growing involvement with Vietnam, since all those Americans whose names are on that wall on the Mall probably didn't realize how compatible with global American enterprise Vietnamese communism would turn out to be or how the cause of democracy would turn out to have been of no real importance at all.

I guess a note from the American establishment to those men and women with their names on the Wall would be in order. Something like: Say, guys -- sorry 'bout that!

This article courtesy of The Washington Post, Harold Meyerson writes for The Washington Post. He can be reached by email: meyersonh@washpost.com



ACA Member Gen. Trask back with 23rd

By Capt. Amy Cooper
AFSOC Public Affairs

The 23rd Air Force welcomed a new commander during a ceremony in the Commando Auditorium here July 14.



Col. Thomas Trask (right), who has been selected for promotion to brigadier general, accepts command of the 23rd Air Force from Lt. Gen. Donny Wurster (left), commander of Air Force Special Operations command, during the 23rd AF change of command July 14 at Hurlburt Field, FL. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Sheila DeVera)

Col. Thomas Trask, who has been selected for promotion to brigadier general, assumed command of the Numbered Air Force from Brig. Gen. Michael Callan during the ceremony, presided over by Lt. Gen. Donny Wurster, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command.

“The 23rd AF has a great his-

tory, and has been closely associated with special operations for all of its modern history,” said General Wurster. “Mike, I thank you for your efforts here at Hurlburt. I hope you were taking notes as it looks like you’ll be building another one of these from scratch for (Africa Command).”

General Callan leaves the 23rd AF to become the 17th Air Force vice commander at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany, the numbered Air Force supporting the newly-formed AFRICOM. During the ceremony, he was awarded the Legion of Merit first oak leaf cluster for his leadership since April 2006.

“My sole message this afternoon is to briefly express the supreme pride I have in the many accomplishments of the men and women of the 23rd AF,” said General Callan. “It’s been an honor to witness their hard work and be part of this great team. I ask the men and women of the 23rd AF not to be satisfied with what they’ve done in the past, but to instead continue to set the bar even higher.”

Colonel Trask returns to AFSOC after serving as the Squadron Officer College commandant at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. He has several previous assignments in AFSOC and is a career MH-53

pilot.

“Special operations is at the tip of the spear like it’s never been before,” Colonel Trask said. “Half of the things this command is working on weren’t even a vision when I left AFSOC a little over four years ago. I’m very excited to be back and be back on your team.”

As the commander of 23rd AF, Colonel Trask is responsible for supporting the U.S. Special Operations Command and AFSOC commander’s strategic, operational and tactical objectives across the full range of military operations.

He is also dual-hatted as the

AFSOC air, space and cyberspace director. In this role, Colonel Trask will implement and direct operational command policy for AFSOC’s worldwide special operations units, including 12,900 people and \$4 billion of assets.

“Our vocation as Airmen and air commandos is very special,” said Colonel Trask. “We defend our nation’s most treasured right--freedom-- and we are entrusted with our nation’s most treasured resource -- our sons and daughters -- and I promise to remember that every day.”

Eagles

Continued from page 1



Major Kirby, Heinie, Sam, and Anne sentation, Doolittle raider Ed Horton also provided an interesting and extremely well received

account of his role in the historic Doolittle raid in 1942. Ed was accompanied by his regular escort and ACA member Wes Fields.

Among the other honorees this year was Kenneth Rowe. He was the North Korean MiG-15 pilot who defected in his MiG to South Korea. His tale was also very interesting.

The ACSC students treated us in grand fashion during all the events that included social gatherings, breakfast, lunch, etc.

Another well deserved honor for Commando 1 and our Doolittle raider.

Reunion

Continued from page 1

Special Operations an integral part of the Air Force. This may be the last banquet at the Sound Side, as it may be torn down later this year. We are currently in negotiations with the Hurlburt authorities in respect to our offer from the ACA to tear down the club during our banquet. They do not appear to be receptive to our offer at this time.

On Sunday the 12th, we will have our memorial service honoring those who have taken their last


flight. The memorial will be at 1200 hrs. at the Hurlburt Field Air Park. Then on to the BBQ and auction at the Quality Inn at 1300 to 1600. We still need worthy donations for our Silent Auction so please contact Joyce Harrington at 850-581-0099 for more information on donating your items. The reunion will come to a close after the auction.

Let’s have a big turn out this time gang! You will not want to miss this one! See ya soon.



L-R: Fred Nowak, Ed Horton (Doolittle Raider), Heinie and Felix Sambogna

Membership News



TAPS

In Memory of:

Preston Bradley May 2008
Carl S. Fairbank Jr. May 2008
Frank Harrison May 2008
Mike Kercheval July 2008
George Ruzich June 2008
James H. Campbell Nov 2007
Ernest L. Connors May 2003

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Michael Buffington
69 Forest Hill Ct.
Commerce, GA 30529-2609

Steve Burt
6087 Silverwood Dr.
Harrisburg, NC 28075

Dane E. Harrel
1447 Arbor Green Trail
O’Fallon, IL 62269

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Ft Walton Bch, FL 32548

Michael W. Thomas
2902 A Beacon Beach Rd.
Tyndall AFB, FL 32403

LIFE CONVERT

William P. Turk
3606 W. 123RD PL
Crown Point, IN 46307

MGen Donald C. Wurster
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Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

NEW LIFE MEMBER

Donald A. Devito
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Amsterdam, NY 12010

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299 Timberline Dr.
Crestview, FL 32539

FOUND

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7400 Crestway Dr. Apt 816
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Ronald K. Sable
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LOST

Richard V. J. Anderson
Jaime Benitez
Joe Boone
Michael G. Brennan
George J. Chambers III
George J. Garrett
John P. Garvey
Aaron C. Hall
H. P. Harrison
Sid Howard
Mike Lewis
Mike G. McDaniel
Leslie D. Minchew
Ron Newby
Guy C. Rhone
Duane H. Sceper
R. Todd Small
David K. Sparks
Alta M. Stone
David M. Vardaman
Michael D. Warbis
Clara Watson
Wesley D. Weber
Vue Yang
Roger L. Youngblood

**If anyone knows the wearabouts
of these lost souls let us know.*

ON THE MOVE

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Continued from page 1

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Department of the Air Force 1st Special Operations Wing

Dear Air Commando Association,

We are extremely grateful for the donations the Air Commando Association continues to provide to our military troops deployed. With such a large contribution, we were able to ship care packages to several locations overseas. Having recently been deployed myself, I can tell you these items mean the world to us.

Again, thank you for supporting the military community. We

appreciate the time you served and for showing your pride in those of us who continue to carry the torch. With sincere thanks!

Andrea Luna, TSgt, USAF
Personal & Family Readiness Center

Note: Board member Bob White, initiated this project. He collects numerous "goodies" that we package and deliver to the deployment processing line. Another great ACA effort. Sam



Correction:

On page 10 under "Letters" of our May newsletter we incorrectly stated the information regarding Howie Pierson and Jim Boney. It should have read "Met Howie Pierson in 1954 at Biggs AFB. He was a co-pilot in the 97th Bomb Wing (B-47s). I (Jim Boney) was a co-pilot in the 95th Bomb Wing (B-36s).

Military

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Aderholt reopens with flair

(Left to right:) Levin Lord, the contractor in charge of the Aderholt Fitness Center renovation, retired Brig. Gen. Harry Aderholt, the Aderholt's namesake, Col. Brad Webb, 1st Special Operations Wing commander, and Tech. Sgt. Heather Klein, 1st Special Operations Force Support Squadron, cut the ribbon to mark the official reopening of the Aderholt July 28. The ribbon cutting kicked off a day's worth of events celebrating the Aderholt's reopening after being closed for renovations since November 2007. (U.S. Air Force photo/Airman 1st Class Kimberly Darnall)

ACA Spouses Invited to Air Force Enlisted Village

By Jodi L. Jordan
Deputy Director of Marketing
and Communications, Air Force
Enlisted Village



When the spouses of Air Commando Association members visit Fort Walton Beach in October for the ACA's annual reunion, they will have a special treat in store. Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Jim Binnicker, the president and CEO of the Air Force Enlisted

Village, has personally invited all spouses for a tour and luncheon at the AFEV. The AFEV was founded in 1967 to provide a safe, secure and dignified place for surviving spouses of retired Air Force personnel. Today, the AFEV operates three locations in the Fort Walton Beach area; Teresa Village, Bob Hope Village and Hawthorn House, and is home to more than 500 people.

"We're very excited to have the spouses from the Air Commando Association visit with us," said Binnicker. "I think they'll enjoy the visit, and learn a lot about the AFEV. While the attendees may not need to know about the AFEV, chances are that one of the attendees knows someone who needs us."

The tour will be Saturday, Oct. 11, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. Tour attendees will receive a briefing

on the AFEV, as well as a comprehensive look at the grounds and apartments of Bob Hope Village, in Shalimar, Fla.

For more information, call Jodi Jordan, deputy director of marketing at the AFEV, at 1-800-258-1413, or e-mail to afef@afev.us.

Hap's Comments



I had a nice call from General Bill Ginn. He's doing well and spends his time doing for others when not traveling. Not sure yet about attending our annual reunion.

Bud and Paulette Britain visited recently from Eagle River, Alaska. Unfortunately we were unable to join them. They did visit the ACA building and noted all the changes since their earlier visit some years ago. Also, they very thoughtfully sent Shirley a beautiful "get well" bouquet.

Received a "wish you were here" post card from Howie and Gilberta Pierson from Australia. They were touring and visiting some of our Vietnam War co-warriors.

Congratulations to Heinie and Ed Horton on their recent induction into the very distinguished "Gathering of Eagles". From all accounts shared with me by attendee Fred Nowak it was quite a glistening ceremony punctuated by the appropriate pomp and circumstance. President Sambogna also attended.

Robby and Dee Roberson were in town briefly. We were able to share an evening together hosted by Heinie and Anne Adersholt. It was sort of a "down memory lane" kind of visit. In the early 60's Anne lived just a few

houses down from us on Memorial Drive and Heinie just behind her on Leah Miller Avenue... but they didn't know each other. Our kids were all great friends and got together often.

I'm absolutely thrilled that ACA member General Norty Schwartz has been nominated as AF Chief of Staff. No one in my memory is more qualified. He will show them how to do it right and I'll be astounded if he doesn't pass total muster. A pox on any nay sayer.

Joe Coleman called to tell me that his dear wife Connie was down again with cancer... her third episode. Just several days ago I received a note that Connie had passed. Our sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy Joe. Joe did a lot of magic in Thailand in our Civic Action programs.

The 4th of July social was a screaming success again. "Bim" Barker and his "rib moppers", Jerry and Damon, prepared what several people told me were the best ribs ever! "Mr. T" and crew fixed all the attending sides complimented by a tasty chocolate cake. Joyce Harrington put the event together and along with Ted Saunders granddaughter, Ashley, did the decorating. The attending ladies were presented with a beautiful red, white and blue corsage hand crafted by Reine White, wife of Board Member Bob White.

Dru Blancroft retires from the Mary Esther Post Office in early August. Her service to the Post Office, and especially to us, has been unequaled. Husband Ken was on the mission to secure our Iranian hostages. Thanks Dru for everything, and you too Ken.

Hope to see you in October!

Air Force Enlisted Village Facts

Top 10 Things You Need To Know About the Air Force Enlisted Village

1. We are one of the four official charities of the Air Force.
2. We receive no Federal, Air Force or State appropriated funds.
3. The 50 cents that comes out of all active duty people's paychecks each month? That money DOES NOT come to the Air Force Enlisted Village. It goes to the Armed Forces Retirement Home.
4. Dependent Moms are accepted at the Air Force Enlisted Village. The dependent parents of retired or active-duty members are eligible for residence there.
5. The Air Force Enlisted Village is a safe, secure community. We have contracted security personnel available after normal business hours.
6. We have the Hawthorn House, an assisted living residence for when our residents need help with the activities of daily living.
7. Subsidy is available for qualifying Air Force enlisted widows to assist with the costs of independent or assisted living at the Air Force Enlisted Village.
8. Life at the Air Force Enlisted Village can be as active and involved as each resident chooses. Some of our residents participate in almost all of the many events and activities we have each month. Some choose a more private lifestyle. It's up to the resident.
9. Everything we do at the Air Force Enlisted Village is based on "The Mom Rule." We treat each resident the way we would want our own Moms to be treated.
10. The Air Force Enlisted Village is not a place where widows come to die. We're where you come when you're ready to live. The residents (average age 76) outrun the staff (average age 36) most days.

ACA Letters & notes

Dear Air Commandos

DEAR SIR,

Having found your address on the internet, I hope to write you in reference to the base de Couvron in France during the 1960's of which you were based with the Military Police. I am looking for information for one of your colleagues named Charlie John Johnson who was a sergeant in the APS from 1961 to June 1964 at Cauvron. He is from North Carolina and participated in D-Day in Normandy. The name of my mother is Raymonde Dambrine. This information may not be too accurate but if you know someone who may fit these details, would it be possible to contact me?

I am including my address, telephone number and Internet address in case you have some ideas which could help me find my father, or if you would find need to contact me.

I am looking for this man because he is my father. I would like to know him or to know if I have sisters or brothers. Help me please!

I thank you in advance for any help which you could give me.

Sincerely,
Denis Dambrine
38, Rue d'Ypres
69004 LYON France
Tel: 0033 4 78 28 48 33
E-mail: denisdambrine@yahoo.fr

*Ed Note: Submitted by Jo Bailey 20 months ago. It was misplaced until now.
Jo, please accept my apologies.*

★★★★★

DEAR MR. SAMBOGNA,

My family and I join in thanking you for sympathy and condolences at the death of our dear husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and friend. "Doug" would be so pleased that a donation to the

ACA Scholarship foundation has been made.
Thank you.
Sincerely,
Jeanine Tiartack

★★★★★

DEAR SAM,

Thank you, the photos are greatly appreciated as is the donation in my dad's name. He took great pleasure in the ACA after his retirement, to be remembered at his passing means a great deal to us.

The Harrison Family
912 Pocahontus Dr
Ft Walton Beach FL 32547

★★★★★

FELLOW COMMANDOS,

I was very sorry to see Dick Givens appear in the Taps column. Dick and I flew together many times with the 605 ACS during 1966-67 in Panama and surrounding areas. I was always happy to be his navigator in the A-26, and on one memorable occasion, in a box-new CH3 helicopter which he agreed to test-drive for the squadron.

Although I have not seen him since I left there in December 1967, I have related many stories to my kids and other family about some of our adventures. He was an officer and a gentleman; a good friend to me, and a heck of a pilot. He was a good man. He will be sorely missed by me, and I'm sure many, many others.

Bob Urschel
Perry Park, Colorado
rjurschel@comcast.net

★★★★★

SAM,

Thanks for printing the press clip and note about David Krebs III and the Krebs family in the May newsletter.
Ruminating about the past over a beer at David III's house memo-

rial Sunday brought out some interesting (to me anyway) parallels between his career and my experiences. Both of us served on active duty for more than 5 years before getting pilot wings, him as a civil engineer and me as a gunner (B-36, B-52). I was assigned to Hurlburt to fly a single engine aircraft (T-28) in March 1963 and he was assigned to Hurlburt to fly a single engine aircraft (U-28) in March 2008.
So we have 2 Air Commandos, David A. Krebs Sr. and David A Krebs III, at Hurlburt almost exactly 45 years apart. Spooky isn't it?

Dave Krebs Sr.
Box 773
Destin, FL 32540

Thank You



1st Special Operations Wing

On behalf of the entire 1st Special Operations Wing, thank you for supporting Hurlburt Field's Quarterly Award Breakfast. Without the continued contributions of our community the breakfast would not have been a success. The men and women of Team Hurlburt truly appreciate your kindness!

Marshall B. Webb,
Col USAF,
Commander

★★★★★

ACA,

As a life member of the Air Commando Association, and one who has lost contact with the organization, I wanted to send you my new address

Ronald K Sable, Col. USAF RET.
6561 N Mesa View Drive
Tucson AZ 85718
ph 520-971-4318

Please update your records.
Thanks
Ronald K Sable, Col. USAF RET
Email: rkssable@aol.com

★★★★★

TO ALL WHO KNEW OR SERVED WITH LT COL PRESTON E. BRADLEY

Lt Col Preston E. Bradley USAF Ret, born May 20, 1927 in Palmetto, FL, passed away on May 15, 2008. He was buried alongside the Bradley family with military honors at Lake Wales Cemetery. He is Survived by his wife Eleanor Bradley and their children and grandchildren; and those of us who were privileged to serve under him in the 21st SOS at Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, Thailand from 1971 to 1972.

As a commander, he was not exactly John Wayne. He was better. He was a heads-up, common sense, no nonsense guy. He was soft spoken and spare in his words, possessing a delightfully dry sense of humor. He respected and knew his people exceptionally well and they, in turn, respected him and held him in high regard. He had a knack for sorting out the warriors and flyers from the administrators and the not-so-good flyers and assigned duties and tasks equal to their rank and abilities. Thus it was not unusual to see company grade officers flying flight lead on combat missions leading field grade officers of lesser abilities. He set the example for us all, flying most of the tough missions because he felt that he should have to share the same risks his men took on any combat mission.

He had a dramatic and positive effect on the company grade officers who served under him, establishing quite a legacy. All who

See LETTERS, pg. 8

NEW!

SILENT AUCTION

at the 2008 ACA Reunion
Thursday - Sunday in the Hospitality Room.

Donations Needed!

Items-of-Value only please
Memorabilia, Books, Pictures, Models, etc.

Call the ACA office or stop by with your donated items *before* Oct 9th.
Contact Joyce at the Country Store at 850-581-0099 if any questions.



Forward Air Controller Reunion

October 1-5, 2008

Welcome to the Forward Air Controller's (FAC) Reunion.
The Crowne Plaza in Colorado Springs is the place for renewing old friendships and starting new ones. You will want to attend the entire event!
Be sure to call the hotel directly for your reservations and tell them you are with the Forward Air Controllers to get the discounted rate of just \$95.00! These rates are good from September 28 to October 8, so - come early and stay late! Check the hotel website for a list of amenities.

You can also make your hotel reservations at:
www.crowneplaza.com/coloradospring.
Enter your requested dates, enter our Group Code F01 (F Zero One) then click Check Availability.
The hotel address and reservation phone number is:
Crowne Plaza Hotel
2886 South Circle Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
1-719-576-5900

The basic reservation fee includes the banquet, transportation to the Memorial Dedication, and memento gifts to each registrant. Our distinguished banquet speaker will be Major General Mason Whitney (Mike 54). There will be entertainment following the banquet.
FAC aircraft will be on display and available for flights at Meadow Lake Airport. These aircraft will also provide a 'fly-by' at the Memorial Dedication, along with F-16's from the Colorado Air National Guard.
Once again, you are encouraged to make your hotel reservations early, as we expect a very large reunion attendance. Please check the reunion website regularly for updates: www.fac-assoc.org

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| Joe Potter, Reunion Chairman 719-488-3954 jpottercs@aol.com Sidewinder 16 | Charlie Pocock Reunion Co-Chair 719-488-9056 Charmarpock@comcast.net Viper 7 | Ken Blutt Reunion Co-Chair 719-351-8284 kblutt@earthlink.net Covey 587 |
|--|---|--|

Letters

Continued from page 7

knew him tried to emulate him. Most of them went on to achieve ranks ranging from Lt Col to Maj. Gen becoming outstanding commanders in their own right.

To those of us who were fortunate enough to have served under him, he was the best of the best. That's the kind of guy he was to us in our tiny, obscure band of brothers of the 21st SOS, NKP, RTAFB, Thailand.

God bless you and keep you Col Bradley, rest in eternal peace and joy.

Robert Lovretich
YO ACA BROTHERS,
Got the Challenge coin!

If any VN Blood Chits pop up, keep me in mind.

Just got home from Memorial Day services in Washington DC at our 'wall' and Arlington National Cemetery where I visited grave sites of Air Commandos (several of which were marked: 1st Air Commandos); Vietnam. Also visited the USAF Memorial across the river, spectacular! And the Army's Special Ops Museum at Ft Bragg (also well done!).

If ya'll haven't visited them, shame on you, they are very worthwhile visiting.

Marty Jester
9530 SW. 187 St
Miami FL 33157

Memorial Day Tribute



ACA member Butch Sluschewski salutes with members of the Fort Walton Beach High School ROTC.

By Joyce Harrington
This past May 26th, Beal Cemetery marked 15 years of a service honoring our deceased veterans hosted by the Disabled American Veterans Playground chapter 72.
The sun shone brightly across the acres of American flags that were placed on the graves by the Fort Walton Beach High School ROTC. Uniforms worn so proudly represented all the branches of service. Over 50 different organizations came forward to place their wreath, and to read the names of those deceased within the past year.
ACA member Bill Zell was the

Emcee during the ceremony. A first this year was ACA member, Terry 'Ace' Shepherd placing a wreath for the Merchant Marines. A related story on the Merchant Marines is on page 20.
As 12 noon approached, the roar of the F15s from the 85th Squadron of Eglin AFB came overhead for the missing man formation. One plane appropriately disappeared into a cloud in front of the crowd.
This service of remembrance is only a small gesture to honor our deceased veterans. We live in the land of the free because of the brave.

First Ever World-Wide Combat Talon Reunion Held in Fort Walton Beach

By Robert B. Underwood Jr

On one hand, some of the “stars” who helped make Talon history over the past four decades were there for the weekend. Seasoned crew members from the Son Tay Raid, “Desert One,” “Urgent Fury” and “Just Cause,” joined Talon vets



Gen Narty Schwartz

who flew combat over the skies of Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Iraq, Kuwait and Afghanistan (to name a few areas of operations) to share and compare stories with their Talon comrades in arms. The weekend together gave all the Talon members, past and present, the chance to “catch up” on each other’s stories and reflect on friendships that have last through the many years.

On the other hand, the stars came out in blue, in the form of General officers there to honor the Combat Talon mission and the men and women who flew it. General (that’s four-stars) Narty Schwartz, currently the Commander of United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), came in for the reunion, and was the keynote speaker at Sunday’s memorial service. Gen Schwartz has a solid Talon legacy as a pilot and former commander.

Joining him were Lt General Donny Wurster, the Commander of Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) his vice commander, Maj Gen Kurt Cichowski, Maj Gen Dave “Chode” Scott, Deputy

Director at US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) Center for Special Operations (and former 16 SOW/CC), and the current Vice Commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing, Col. Mark Alsid. This esteemed collection of the most influential leaders in today’s Air Force Special Operations was testimony to the Talon legacy and the people who brought it to life.

As a bonus to everyone in the Talon community, just a few days after the reunion we found out that General Schwartz had been selected to serve as the next Chief of Staff of the Air Force! Having a former MC-130 pilot and 16 SOW Wing Commander as the upcoming leader of the United States Air Force only emphasizes how the Talon and its people have become integral to the mission of the USAF and today’s mission in the Global War on Terrorism.

Friday and Saturday were days for the Talon family to eat, drink and visit together. Saturday morning also featured a visit to Hurlburt Field for an update-brief on the current and future ops of the Combat Talon around the world. Thanks to Ned Calvert for putting that very special presentation to-

gether. In that “up close and personal” brief, we heard, first hand, of some of the incredible combat exploits in ongoing Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom, and then we saw what’s in the future for the Talon mission and aircraft. From that briefing, we went out to the Hurlburt flight line and took an in-depth tour of Combat Talon

I and II aircraft. For many of the families who were there, it was the first time they had ever been on-board this aircraft so important to their spouse or loved one. For some of the folks for whom it has been a few years since stepping aboard a Talon, it was a nostalgic trip back to a familiar time.

One of the highlights for the weekend was when Buff Underwood unveiled a LARGE draft of a Combat Talon memorial monument. This magnificent, stone monument will be placed in a prominent spot to be announced later.

The replica showed that the monument will commemorate all of the organizations that have been home to the Talon over the years, as well as serve as a memorial to the men and women who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in service to the Talon mission. The cost for this massive stone will be borne totally by members of the Talon community, and we raised more than \$10,000 in donations in this reunion weekend. Quite a good omen for the campaign we’ll be conducting over the next year to raise the funds for the monument. By the way, a special commemorative Combat Talon coin was un-

veiled at the reunion, and it will be presented to all donors to the Talon Monument fund over \$20. This is definitely a collector’s item, and it’s available in a limited quantity.

Sunday morning we gathered at the Hurlburt Air Park for a memorial service, honoring our fallen brothers and sisters. At the service were family members of our lost

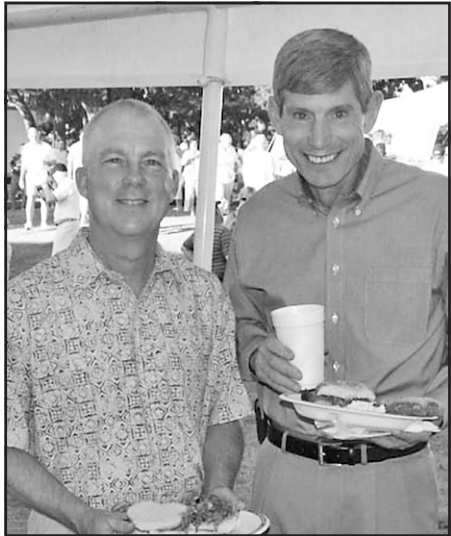
comrades. Gen Schwartz gave a tribute from the heart, and we were all touched by this solemn ceremony of distinction and its meaning to the Talon community.

For all of you who missed the reunion, you deprived yourself of a great time! The hospitality room was a popular place with eats, drinks and friends, and the weather at the Quality Inn was perfect for all to enjoy a Spring weekend dur-

ing one of the best times of the year for the Florida panhandle. Barbeque, wurst on the grill, free-flowing suds and a few hundred members of the Talon family were a perfect mix for the three days.

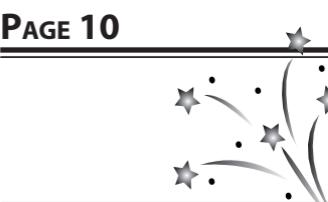
For the many people who helped plan and execute this weekend, we say thanks. There are too many to mention in this article, but without your hard work and commitment, this weekend would not have happened. Talon members have been noted for their dedication to mission, and the volunteers who put together this first reunion exemplified that proud tradition. We’ll be posting photos of the weekend soon, on the 7th ACS and SGI websites, so check them out!

Although this was the first all-Talon reunion, it won’t be the last. We’ll let you know when we have another one in the planning stage.

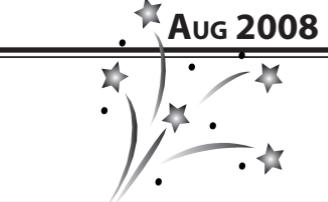


LtGen Donny Wurster and Gen Narty Schwartz enjoy food and friends at Talon reunion.





ACA 4th of July Social





Doolittle Raiders receive heartfelt homecoming

By Airman 1st Class Anthony Jennings
96th Air Base Wing Public Affairs

Six of the surviving 16 Doolittle Raiders were in attendance for the 66th anniversary of the Doolittle Raider on Japan. The Airmen were part of a secret mission designed to retaliate against the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, Dec. 7, 1941. The airmen were successful in their mission and were named from the Doolittle raiders for Lt. Col. James "Jimmy" Doolittle.



Retired Master Sgt. Ed Horton, Doolittle Raider from Crew 10, signs a piece of the Special Delivery, a personally-owned B-25 Mitchell. Sergeant Horton flew to Duke Field for the Doolittle Raider Homecoming May 31 in the Special Delivery. Sgt Horton is an ACA member and resides in Ft Walton. (Photo: U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Stacia Zachary)

"Throughout the history of this mighty nation, many Airmen and other military service members have had the chance to stand on the shoulders of giants," said Col. Rick LoCastro, 96th Air Base Wing vice commander. "Today Team Eglin has the wonderful opportunity to dine with them."

Sixty-six years ago, after the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, 140 Army Air Corps personnel were brought to Eglin Main, Wagner Field, Duke Field and Eglin Auxiliary Fields No. 1 and No. 3, to train for a "dangerous secret mission," from March 9

through 25, 1942. They were told any violations of secrecy could mean that the lives of hundreds of people would be put at risk. Little did they know they would be part of the war's turning point and ultimately be recorded in history as American heroes.

"I landed at Eglin Field on March 3, called all the men together, and told them that they would be training for an exceptionally dangerous mission," said Gen. James "Jimmy" Doolittle in a 1991 book interview. "If anyone got particularly nosy about why we were at Eglin or what we were doing, they would give me his name, and the FBI would take it from there."

The crew was also informed that the mission would be a one-way trip and they were given an opportunity to back out. No one did considering the magnitude of the mission's importance. The members did not find out the target destination until the planes were loaded on the USS Hornet and the raid was underway.

"We may not have known where we were going, but we knew that we wouldn't have enough fuel to make it back," said Staff Sgt. Dave Thatcher, engineer/gunner aboard the seventh aircraft to take off during the raid. "We accepted that fact long before we left so there weren't any second thoughts or regrets once the raid commenced."

The first part of the training program for the pilots participating in this historic event was practicing taking off from carriers.

**Ed Note: This is incorrect. None of the B-25 pilots assigned to the Raid ever took off from a carrier. Only Lt. John E. Fitzgerald and Lt. James F. McCarthy made take-offs from the Hornet 100 miles out from Norfolk, VA. These 2 pilots proved there were no problems on carrier take-offs with ordnance and extra fuel tanks.*

Navy Lt. Henry Miller, ordered from Pensacola, Fla., familiarized Army personnel with naval customs and carrier techniques. With flags spotted along the runways every 100 feet, all pilots conduct-

ed extensive practice under varying conditions to determine which technique would be most suitable for the B-25 Mitchells to adopt for short distance take-offs essential for the mission.

While at Eglin the Doolittle Raiders also spent considerable time practicing bombing runs over water at minimum altitude using water slicks as target. Many Florida coast residents subjected to the vigorous low-altitude dry-run attacks made numerous telephone complaints to the commander at Eglin Field.

The project was led by then Lt. Col. James "Jimmy" Doolittle, a man whom many of the surviving Raiders refer to as a "leader like none other."

"Jimmy Doolittle was the best person for the job leading those 16 aircraft in the entire Air Force," said Lt. Col. Bobby Hite. "I couldn't imagine the mission going any more successful with someone else taking the lead."

On March 25, 1942, the airplanes and crews departed for Sacramento, Calif., where they received a final check and additional flight training. By April 1, 1942, the 80-man crew and 16 chosen airplanes were loaded aboard the Hornet and set off to accomplish their mission.

Colonel Doolittle feared Japan may have been aware of their presence after a small fishing boat was spotted and destroyed. As a result, the Doolittle Raiders launched off the aircraft carrier April 18, 1942, to travel 600 miles to the Japanese mainland. Because of the early take-off, the planes would be short of fuel to reach the "safe zones" in nearby China. The aircraft underwent desperate measures to prepare the planes to give them the maximum amount of fuel storage available.

Despite the lack of fuel, all 16 planes took off successfully, reached and bombed their assigned targets. Many planes encountered anti-aircraft fire while some encountered enemy interception in

the air. After successfully completing the bombing raid, all planes except one either crashed landed or the crew bailed out. One plane landed in Russia and the five-man crew was interned, but released one year later. The last aircraft to take off from the carrier crash landed on the China coast and the crew became Japanese prisoners of war.

"The most memorable moment of the mission wasn't the training, long over-water flight or the dropping of the bombs in Tokyo, it was the crash landing," said Sgt. Thatcher. "You just can't forget something like that."

Of the 80 men who took part in the raid, two drowned after ditching their aircraft, one died after bailing out of the aircraft and eight men were captured by the Japanese: Three crew members were executed by firing squad, one died of beriberi and mistreatment, and the other four survived 40 months of prison, most of which spent in solitary confinement.

All 80 raiders were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Those imprisoned and tortured also received the Purple Heart. Two Doolittle Raiders were given the Silver Star for gallantry in the line of duty, one being Sergeant Thatcher. Colonel Doolittle received the Medal of Honor from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Many World War II historians hail this mission as the crucial turning point in war. In a time when Japanese morale couldn't be higher, it was inconceivable to believe that an attack on Japan's home islands was possible. The idea that enemy forces could bomb Tokyo, let alone bomb the Imperial Palace, sent shockwaves throughout the War Cabinet and the Imperial High Command. As a result, Japanese fighter groups were recalled from abroad for home defense.

Six of the 16 surviving Doolittle Raiders that attended the homecoming were Lt. Col. Dick Cole, Maj. Tom Griffin, Maj. Gen. Davy

PAVE LOW lands in Air Force Museum

By 2nd Lt. Lauren Johnson
1st SOW Public Affairs

Chief Master Sgt. John De-Salle and MH-53 PAVE LOW aircraft number 68-10357 have something in common: they both have roots in Ohio.

Chief DeSalle, a 20th Special Operations Squadron gunner, grew up in the state. The helicopter, known as 357, planted permanent roots in Dayton July 7 when it was inducted into the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

“It’s important to us at the museum, because we have a charter,” said retired Maj. Gen. Charles Metcalf, museum director, in an induction ceremony in the museum’s Cold War Gallery. He referenced the museum motto: “We are the keeper of their stories.”

“Visitors come and want to hear the story about each and every aircraft.”

Number 357 has many stories to tell.

In 1970, it served as the com-

mand and control helicopter in the rescue attempt of American prisoners from the Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam. For the mission, the crew of 357 received an Air Force Cross and four Silver Stars. Out of the five helicopters that participated, 357 is the only one not lost in combat.

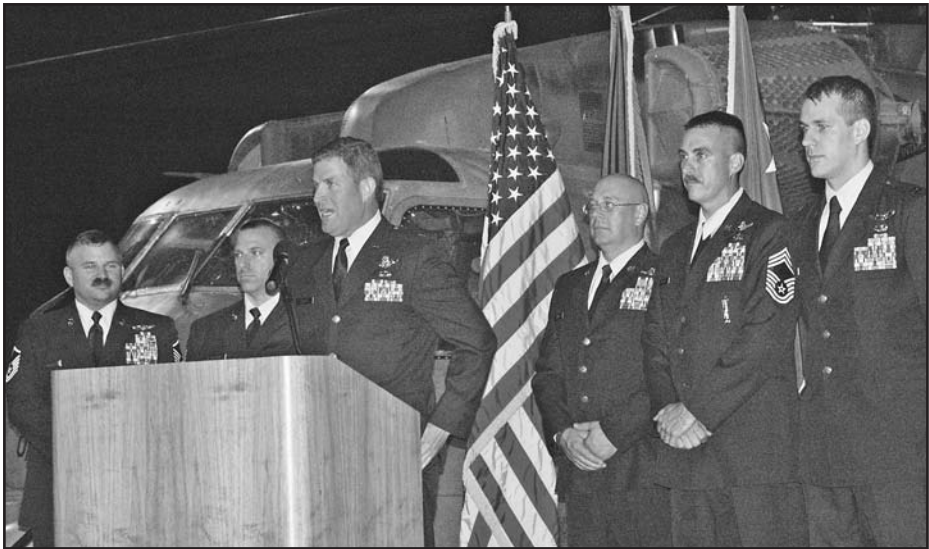
After 38 years of service, 357 flew its final mission in Iraq March 28.

DeSalle, who served on that mission, said it was bittersweet.

“I’ve been flying the PAVE LOW for 16 years,” he said. “We’re a six-man crew from crew brief to debrief, but it is this aircraft that really brings people together. It’s awesome. I hate to see it go.”

During the ceremony, Lt. Gen. Donny Wurster, commander of the Air Force Special Operations Command and former MH-53 pilot, addressed the rich history of the entire PAVE LOW community.

“(357) is but one of a fleet of 72 of its kind that the Air Force owned



Lt. Col. Shawn Henrie, 20th Special Operations Squadron, addresses the crowd during the induction ceremony for the MH-53 PAVE LOW tail number 357. Henrie was the aircraft commander for the helicopter’s final flight June 28 in Iraq. He is accompanied at the podium by his crew: Master Sgt. Robert Strong, Tech. Sgt. Vincent DePersio, Master Sgt. Kevin James, Chief Master Sgt. John DeSalle and Capt Nathan Davidson. The remaining MH-53s will be retired by Sept. 30.

and operated that have been flying for two-thirds of the history of the Air Force,” he said. “The machines did not do the job themselves, but always they remained the enduring posture to respond to the nation’s call when needed.”

Lt. Col. Eugene Becker, 20th SOS commander, said the museum, which saw 1.3 million visitors last year, is a fitting resting place for the PAVE LOW.

“Inducting it here is a very appropriate way to end its career of important service to the Air Force and to the United States,” he said. “It recognizes the 40-year combat legacy of the H-53.”

The remaining MH-53s will be retired and the 20th SOS will be

deactivated by Sept. 30. Some of the helicopter’s mission sets will be taken over by the CV-22 Osprey.

“This is home for me,” Colonel Becker said, “This aircraft, this squadron. I haven’t thought a lot about the future, I’m just trying to cherish every moment of it.”

For many of the squadron members, including Sergeant DeSalle, the museum provides a saving grace — their mission immortalized a chance to reflect on their shared history well into the future.

“September is going to be a tough month for us,” he said, “but we have everything to come back to.”

See more Pave Low on page 22

The end of an era for Pave Low and 20th SOS



MH-53 PAVE LOW helicopters from Hurlburt Field fly over the Gulf of Mexico during the last five-ship formation of the 20th Special Operations Squadron June 12. The MH-53 will be retired from the Air Force inventory later this year. (Photo/Senior Airman Emily Moore)

The last of the Special Ops combat helicopters will retire this fall. That is the end for the mighty MH-53 Pave Low as they are sent to the bone yard or placed on sticks in front of Air Force bases around the states. This calls for a party. The 20th deactivation party and Pave Low retirement will take place in Ft Walton on 16 – 18 Oct 2008.

The events include a dinner on 16 Oct at the Hurlburt Soundside Club, deactivation and dedication at the Hurlburt Air park on 17 Oct, and a party at the Quality Inn motel on 18 Oct. Details are available on the Pave Low web site at: www.thepavecave.com. More information will be posted on the web as the detailed plans are made.

Doolittle

Continued from page 11

Jones, Master Sgt. Ed Horton, Lt. Col. Bobby Hite and Staff Sgt. Dave Thatcher.

When asked how they would like for their legacy to be honored, Maj. Tom Griffin responded, “We don’t ask a special holiday be created for us or anything like that, we only wish to be remembered as service members that were given a mission and we accomplished that

mission despite the dangers.”

Ed Note: Recently, four of the Doolittle Raiders: Richard Cole - crew #1 Doolittle’s copilot; David Thatcher - crew #7 engineer-gunner; Tom Griffin - crew #9 navigator; and Ed Horton - crew #10 engineer-gunner, visited the ACA building, escorted by ACA member Wes Fields. They autographed their book, the “Doolittle Raid” for our library.

Air Commando Day at Planes of Fame Air Museum

By Eugene D. Rossel

The Planes of Fame (POF) Museum of Chino, CA held another Air Commando Day at the Chino Airport on 5 Jul 2008. They called me a little late this year due to some management changes and I had a week to get speakers and material. The ACA sent me their new recruiting pamphlet with some newsletters and AFSOC sent me their pamphlets, pictures of airplanes and two books to give out during the briefings. All were given out to the approximately 350 attendees (a smaller attendance was expected because of the 4 July holiday) and the two books, along with Bob Gleason's book "Air Commando Chronicles," were included with the drawing for a ride in a P-51D Mustang. This added to 4 drawings which everyone was happy about.

Due to the short notice I was able to get 2 speakers as well as myself for the day and their subject delighted the 350 eager aviation aficionados who attended. There were two WWII Air Commandos-OB Carter a P-51A pilot and his crew chief Gene Piester. The POF Air Museum has been totally upgraded in the last couple years and is now a world-class air museum to include an Air Commando display. The founder of the museum is Ed Maloney (non flyer but a very knowledgeable expert on all aircraft) who started the museum some 50 years ago and his son-in-law Steve Hinton, a world famous aviator and movie pilot who never served in the military and learned his flying while working at the museum, is the president of the POF and has flown every WWII and most Korean jets at the museum. Steve is currently widely known as one of the few P-38 pilots who fly Glacier Girl which was recovered from Greenland.

The briefing was started at 1000 hours with their MC giving a short history of the WWII Air Commandos and I then followed with the evolution of the Air Commandos to the current SOF -from 1943 to

the present.

The Air Commandos started in 1943 when Gen Arnold was asked by the British for help supporting Gen Wingate and his Chindits in Opening the Burma Road to support China since the Japanese took control of it in 1942. This was the beginning and birthplace of Special Operations.

The Air Commandos WWII successes includes

- Validated Forward Air Controllers
- Tested and validated helicopter technology
- Established aeromedical evacuation process
- Pioneered the development of special operations unit
- Expanded air logistics role in theater ops
- Exploited night operations
- Foreshadowed Night gunship tactics
- Introduced rocket weaponry

In 1961 the USAF established Jungle Jim in the 4400 CCTS which was the forerunner of the USAF Air Commandos and Special Operations Forces today.

Col Ben King, a WWII ace and unconventional officer, was named commander by Gen Lemay

The unit was based at Hurlburt Field, FL (Field 9 of Eglin AFB which is the largest Air base in the world (850 Sq miles Land territory

and easily can shield any operation from prying eyes).

Airplanes assigned were WWII and Korean vintage to include B-26, C-47, C-46, AT-28, A-1E and a U-28/U-10 Helio STOL aircraft. All prop driven, which matched the WWII Air Commando aircraft.

The USAF AC/ SOF Units were the most decorated in Vietnam.

50% of the USAF MOH winners were from AC/SOF units.

Today Hurlburt Field has grown into a modern base with great facilities, money for support, and latest technology in aircraft assigned (CV-22 Osprey & UAV) and state of the art equipment. It has a squadron of Russian aircraft which they use to help friendly nations who use these aircraft. It is a base we never dreamed of in 1961. The AC/SOF forces have continued to grow since BG Ben King organized it with practically nothing in 1961.

Books Ralph Van Wagner's book "Any Place, Any time, Any Where" and Bob Gleason's book "Air Commando Chronicles" are the two best books on the history of the Air Commandos.

Jack Spey, Vietnam Ranch Hand Association President and C-123 pilot for 11 years with some 5700 hours and 3 1/2 years in operation Ranch Hand, talked about the operation in South East Asia. It started out in 1961 when six C-123 were sent to Vietnam and in January 1962 they started defoliation

along Route 15 below Bien Hoa Air Base and Vang Tau. He talked about how they flew their defoliation mission and the maneuvers they used to surprise the enemy to avoid his gunfire flying 100 ft off the deck. They also used FAC aircraft to call in fighter aircraft to soften the area up before they flew low and slow over the area to be sprayed. He indicated that people claiming to have been drenched by "Agent" Orange on the ground was questionable since 3 jiggers (3 ounces) of Agent Orange was used per acre-- .009 oz per sq foot. The term agent orange was coined by Bill Curtis of CBS. His talk was informative, humorous and well received by the audience.

The next speaker was Charlie Spicka who talked about his experience in flying the AC-130 Gunship in SEAsia, '68 - '69. Charlie served in the Pentagon, '70 - '73, with several ACA members, including Tom Schornack, and the Purple Water Fountain Gang. Charlie always wanted to be a fighter pilot, but was sent to C-119's after UPT. He flew Flying Boxcars (C-119's) all over Europe before converting to C-130 aircraft in '58 in France. Charlie was assigned to the AF Academy, '65 - '68, where General Robin Olds told him to get some combat time. Charlie was advised that he had an A-1E SEA assignment when he learned there was a need for Gunship pilots. As Charlie had lots of C-130 Hercules time, AF/MPC changed his assignment to the 16th SOS at Ubon RTAFB, Thailand. Charlie gave the assembled group an insight into a typical "truck killing" Interdiction mission, at night, over the Trails in Laos. He also explained how an aircraft, using 'Pylon Geometry' with sensors connected to a computer, could locate targets. He described all the AC-130 weapons and how every 14 member crew worked together to destroy 10,000 (*Ed note: this number is highly questionable*) trucks between '68 and the end of the Vietnam War.



Photo courtesy of Frank Mormillo/Planes of Fame



MTF UPDATE

By John Grove

Laos

Our Newest Project

The MTF partnership with the TLC Brotherhood is expanding to include school projects in northern Laos. Many of the SEA era Commandos have spent many hours over and on the land around the Plain du Jares (PDJ). Our member Mac Thompson recently made a trip to the NE corner of Laos and has selected several projects that we as Commandos and TLC members can accomplish with little funds and great results. Mac has established a working relationship with the local governing officials and feels confident that we can make a difference. If you were a guest of the great Lao people and would like to repay them for the hospitality NOW IS THE TIME. When you donate funds this quarter to MTF please indicate which country you wish for us to provide assistance.

Thailand

4 More Schools

The MTF/ Air Commando effort has been just outstanding. Your contributions have funded at least 22 school projects in the NKP area. Many of these were complete rebuilds of the rural schools, like the last four you funded this



Thai kids enjoy a break at one of the tables provided by the Air Commandos.

summer. Many Thai school kids now have clean safe water for the first time thanks to you. They also have roofs that do not leak and floors that

do not flood. Most of the schools now have real indoor bathrooms as well. We still have many projects identified that need our attention. Give a little or a lot, just give, to help these wonderful people. Send you check to: MTF, PO Box 67, Mary Esther , Fl 32569. Indicate if the funds are for our general MTF fund, Thai ,or Laos projects.

Ecuador

Working with the Admiral Jeremiah Denton Foundation, the MTF will provided a major portion of a SEA LAND container for the people of Ecuador. The Denton Foundation has arranged for shipping and distribution of many items. MTF will provide soap, razors, ball point pens, hospital textiles like sheets and scrubs, kitchen items, and chairs for a hospital waiting room. We have worked with the Denton Foun-

dation over the years in places like Philippines and Panama. This shipment will arrive in Ecuador this fall.

Tennessee

Continuing our Support

MTF received a nice thank you letter from the Hawkins County area Habitat for Humanity. MTF has provided large loads of clothing and supplies to Rogersville, TN in the past 9 months. Our support to that very poor area of the US is made possible because Air Commando Frank Gray and his bride Penelope. They have arranged to store and distribute the items to the most needy. That includes the Habitats new home recipients. We will continue to haul 'stuff' north for Frank and Penelope to distribute.



Projects in Honduras like the John Grove High School are giving children a chance to learn.



Above is a learning lab with computers donated by the ACA for students.

Pictured right is a grade school saying thank you for food, clothes, and continued support in maintaining buildings.



Donation from ACA members made it possible to provide first aid kits like the one pictured above to area schools.



Planes

Continued from page 13

Charlie mentioned he had nominated Col. Ron Terry, USAF (ret.), the Father of Gunships, for induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio.

They next introduced one of the first Air Commandos, a WWII P-51A pilot who had shot down two Oscars. His name was O.B. Carter who is a docent at Palm Springs Air Museum and well versed and gave us a short talk on his experience in the organization. His crew chief Gene Piester was the next speaker. He was selected for the WWII Air Commandos through an interview in the states and was chosen out of

5 mechanics. He said OB Carter always completed his missions and did not return early from a target with some strange sounds they heard in the engine that day. There were other pilots that would.

Jack Spey, who spent 3 years in Laos, was to talk about Project 404 and the air war in Laos but time ran out. They then had a drawing for the P-51D ride and for the three books donated by AFSOC and ACA. The P-51 took the lucky winner up for about a 20 minute ride over the Chino airport and the rest of us either left or toured the museum.

Campbell receives journalism award

Local writer Bill Campbell has received the Will Rogers Humanitarian Award at the National Society of Newspaper Columnists' annual conference.



The award recognizes columnists whose sustained work in civic journalism benefits their communities.

Campbell, a former columnist for the Northwest Florida Daily News, has been writing in the area for more than 20 years.

He has served on a number of local boards and been involved in many organizations, including the Children's Advocacy Center and the American Cancer Society.

He now is a columnist for the Beachcomber in Destin.

"I was just overwhelmed," Campbell said of receiving the award. "It just kind of validates an otherwise hedonistic existence."

Ed note:

Bill is an ACA life member. He has been very supportive of the ACA in past years. He has been the emcee at our banquets, and has written complimentary stories about ACA members when he was a columnist for the Northwest Florida Daily News. Bill, thanks for all you do!

Gets great mileage: The average American walks 900 miles a year, reports a Harvard study. The average American drinks 22 gallons of alcohol a year; says the American Medical Association. So Jack Finarelli of SportsCurmudgeon.com connected the dots: "This means Americans get about 41 miles to the gallon. Kind of makes you proud to be an American."



Air Commando Association Membership Application

- Membership is open to:**
- Persons who served or are currently serving with or supported Air Force Air Commando/Special Operations Units.
 - Widows of persons eligible for regular membership qualify as non-dues paying members.
 - Other units/interested parties may join as non-voting associate members with approval of the Board of Directors.

Type of Membership you are requesting:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ \$20 Annual Regular | _____ \$150 Life Regular |
| _____ \$20 Annual Associate | _____ \$150 Life Associate |
| _____ Widow (No Dues) | |

Name: _____ Rank: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: (____) _____ Cell:(____) _____

Email: _____

Branch of Service: ☐ USAF ☐ Army ☐ Navy ☐ USMC ☐ Other
If other please list: _____

AFSC/MOS: _____ Job Title: _____

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

Air Commando/Special Operations Service:

Unit: _____ Aircraft: _____ Location: _____ Date _____

Unit: _____ Aircraft: _____ Location: _____ Date _____

If more room is needed please use separate piece of paper.

Present Occupation: _____

Spouses Name: _____

Permission to provide phone # and address to other ACA members only? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Permission to publish phone # and 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: _____ Ck #: _____ Date: _____

☐ Entered in Membership Database ☐ Welcome Package Sent



REUNION 2008



Schedule of events - October 9-12, 2008

★ ★ ★ Thursday, October 9 ★ ★ ★

1300-2000 Early registration & check-in at Hospitality Suite, Quality Inn
1400-??? Hospitality Suite open for action
1700-2100 Heavy Hors d'oeuvres at Hurlburt Soundside Club

★ ★ ★ Friday, October 10 ★ ★ ★

0830 Golf registration at Hurlburt Golf Course
1000 Golf shotgun start
1000-1600 Reunion registration at Hospitality Room
1200-??? Hospitality Suite back at it
1430 Golf awards ceremony
1600-??? Fish Fry at Quality Inn

★ ★ ★ Saturday, October 11 ★ ★ ★

0800-0830 Bus at hotel to take folks to Business Meeting
0900-1030 Annual Business Meeting at 23rd STS
1030-1400 Burger Bash at the STS (pay as you go)
1100 Bus leaves for Ladies Luncheon & Tour at Air Force Enlisted Village
1400-??? Hospitality Suite ready to rip
1800-1900 Social hour at Hurlburt Soundside Club
1900-2130 ACA Banquet at Hurlburt Soundside Club

- Featured Speaker
- Hall of Fame Presentation ceremony
- Awards Presentations

★ ★ ★ Sunday, October 12 ★ ★ ★

0900-1100 Open house at the ACA Building
1200-1300 Memorial Service at Hurlburt Air Park
1300-1630 BBQ at Quality Inn
1300-1630 Hospitality Suite good to the last drop
1400 Silent Auction at Hospitality Suite
1630 Reunion over

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!! The Quality Inn will be the reunion headquarters again this year. The room rate for our people will be \$73 per night. We have 85 rooms and they will go first come first served. Call Quality Inn at (850) 275-0300 to make your reservations. Please mention you are with the Air Commandos. To get our special rate you must book by September 1, 2008. The reunion tickets must be ordered by October 1, 2008.

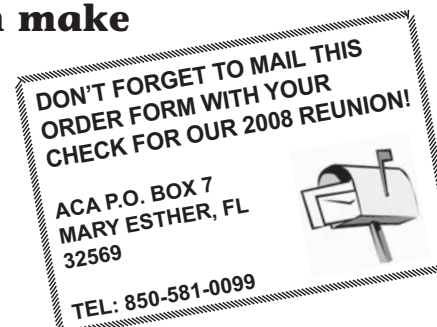
Buy Your Tickets Early

The 2008 banquet will feature table service with choice of entrees; prime rib or chicken. Please mark your ticket order with your choice. The banquet facility has a strict seating policy enforced by the base fire marshal. The maximum number of guest seats is 320. No squeeze-in seats for last minute space. A hopefuls. Please buy your tickets early. An accurate head count for planning purposes is very helpful. Thanks.

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

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

We encourage all widows to attend. Also, for those ladies interested there will be a Saturday luncheon and tour at the Air Force Enlisted Village. Please let us know if you are interested so we can make the necessary arrangements.



2008 Reunion Ticket Order Form

| | Ticket Price | Number of Tickets | Total Cost |
|---|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Reunion Package (Includes Fish Fry, Banquet, & BBQ) | \$70.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Friday Fish Fry ONLY | \$15.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Saturday Banquet ONLY | \$40.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Sunday BBQ ONLY | \$15.00 | _____ | _____ |
| ACA Widow Package* | \$0 | _____ | _____ |
| TOTAL | | | _____ |

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

| | | | |
|---|----------------|-------|-------|
| Thursday Night Social at Hurlburt Soundside Club | \$10.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Friday Golf Tournament | \$50.00 | _____ | _____ |
| Saturday Ladies Luncheon | \$10.00 | _____ | _____ |

TOTAL from both boxes _____

| | |
|---|---|
| Banquet Meal Selection: ____ Prime Rib and/or ____ Chicken (Indicate Number Please) Please indicate what group you want to sit near _____ | Special Banquet Needs Request Please indicate if you need assistance with: <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair <input type="checkbox"/> Early Seating <input type="checkbox"/> Seating near exit <input type="checkbox"/> Special Dietary Requirements. across from restrooms (Please call us) |
| For Golfers My handicap is _____ | |
| Indicate status: <input type="checkbox"/> ACA Member <input type="checkbox"/> ACA Widow <input type="checkbox"/> Separate Guest Registration | |
| The above order is for: <input type="checkbox"/> Myself <input type="checkbox"/> My Spouse ____ (#of) Guests. Please indicate guest names on a separate piece of paper. | |

Name _____ Spouses Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ ACA Number _____ Email _____

I will be staying at _____

Signature _____

ACA COUNTRY STORE

Joyce Harrington, Country Store Manager



Denim Long Sleeve w/crest or lettering-\$20



Black or Navy Blue Golf Shirt w/lettering - \$15
Ball Caps w/lettering-\$10



Golf Shirt - S-XL \$15 / XXL \$18



ACA T-Shirts (White Only)
S-XL \$10 / XXL \$12



B-26 T-Shirt
All Sizes
\$10



Bush Hats - Firm Only! \$20



ACA Embroidered Cloth Tab \$3



Jackets M - XXL \$35



New! Gorski Posters (B26 & Truck)
set for \$20



50th Posters
(Full Color
20"x24") \$1



Golf Towels (w/ACA
Logo) \$8



Assort Patches \$3 each

You must add 20% Shipping & Handling charges to all orders!



Ball Cap - ACA Crest or Lettering
(Navy, Royal & Light Blue, Black,
White, Gray, Denim, Camo, & Red)
\$10



New License Plate Blue \$12



New License Plate White \$12



Traditional ACA License
Plate \$10



ACA Glass Mug \$10

New! Thai Wallet (Brown or
Black Leather) \$8



ACA Bumper Sticker \$2



ACA Car Window Decal \$3



ACA Decal
(4" x 5")
2/1.00



ACA Lapel Pin
(Small or Large)
\$4



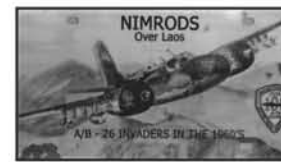
Son Tay Raider Plate \$12



Over Mekong Plate \$12



Printed Plastic License
Plate Holder \$4



Nimrods Plate \$12



A1-H Hobo's Plate \$12



B26 in SE Asia Plate \$12



ACA Coin (Bronze) \$5



POW/MIA Flag \$12

Please see the Country Store price list on page 19 for a full list of available items. If you have questions on any of the items please call Joyce Harrington at 850-581-0099 from 10am-12 noon. The ACA will try to accommodate all orders but we cannot guarantee availability on all products. If the item is no longer available we will gladly refund your entire purchase.

AGA COUNTRY STORE

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| ACA Coin (Bronze) | \$5.00 |
| ACA Decal (4" x 5") | 2/1.00 |
| POW/MIA Decal..... | \$2.00 |
| ACA Patch | \$3.00 |
| Group Patch | \$3.00 |
| Zap Patch | \$3.00 |
| POW/MIA Patch | \$3.00 |
| ACA Cloth Tab..... | \$3.00 |
| ACA Bumper Sticker | \$2.00 |
| ACA Car Window Decal – 8" | \$3.00 |
| Printed Plastic License Plate Holder..... | \$4.00 |
| Traditional ACA License Plate | \$10.00 |
| New! License Plate choose White or Blue..... | \$12.00 |
| <i>Special Aircraft License Plates - Over Mekong, B26 Asia,</i> | |
| Nimrods Over Laos, Son Tay, A1-H Hobo's | \$12.00 |
| ACA Lapel Pin (Small or Large) | \$4.00 |
| New! Thai Wallet (Brown or Black Leather)..... | \$8.00 |
| ACA Ink Pen | \$1.00 |
| ACA Glass Mug..... | \$10.00 |
| New! Gorski Posters (B26 & Truck) | set for \$20.00 |
| 50th Posters (Full Color 20"X24") | \$1.00 |
| POW/MIA Flag..... | \$12.00 |
| Golf Towels (w/ACA Logo) | \$8.00 |
| Ball Cap (Navy, Royal & Light Blue, Black, White, Gray, Denim, Camo, & Red) ACA Crest or Lettering..... | \$10.00 |
| Bush Hats Firm Only! M, L, XL | \$20.00 |
| ACA T-Shirts (White Only) S, M, L, XL..... | \$10.00 |
| ACA T-Shirts (White Only) XX-Large..... | \$12.00 |
| B-26 T-Shirt All Sizes | \$10.00 |
| Denim Long Sleeve Shirts (Ladies M, L, XL Mens M, L, XL, XXL) available in Crest or Lettering..... | \$20.00 |
| ACA Golf Shirts (White, Red, Royal Blue, w/ Crest) or (Navy or Black w/ Lettering)..... M,L, XL | \$15.00 ... XXL \$18.00 |
| Jackets M - XXL (Tan, Navy, Black, or Royal Blue) | \$35.00 |

Country Store Order Form

Send to: ACA, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

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

Sub Total _____
 20% Shipping & Handling _____
 Grand Total _____

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

Freedom Rock in Adair County, Iowa

Every year, for the last nine years, a talented artist, Ray (Bubba) Sorensen II, has done a Memorial Day tribute to our servicemen and servicewomen, both past and present, with a stirring tableau painted on a large granite boulder which stands next to Highway 25. The huge granite boulder weighs approx. 56 tons and is 12 ft high.

For years this boulder was known as “the graffiti rock” and was decorated for high school rivalries, etc. Since the Memorial Day paintings began, the “rock” has remained with the annual tribute intact.

When Sorensen was 19, he saw ‘Saving Private Ryan’ and this motivated him to paint the rock. He knew if he painted the rock a lot of people would see it.

Sorensen paints over the previous years mural. This takes him anywhere from one to three weeks to paint. He gets his ideas from books, movies, previous artwork and images by other artists.

If you are anywhere close, you shouldn't miss the opportunity to see what is truly an American treasure.



Commemorative ACA Brick

Our Brick Campaign has been so successful that we are expanding our Wall of Fame! Commemorative bricks are again available for you, a beloved family member, or a devoted or departed friend. The donation remains at \$100. We are currently making additional wall space available and bricks will be allotted on a first come, first served basis. Please submit your request to: Air Commando Association, ATTN: Brick, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007.

☐ Yes! I would like a Commemorative Brick displayed on the Wall of Fame in the hallway of the Air Commando Association building. My three (3) lines should be crafted as follows:

I understand that my three (3) lines are limited to no more than 17 characters per line. By definition that means letters, spaces, periods, commas, dashes, etc. Here is an example:

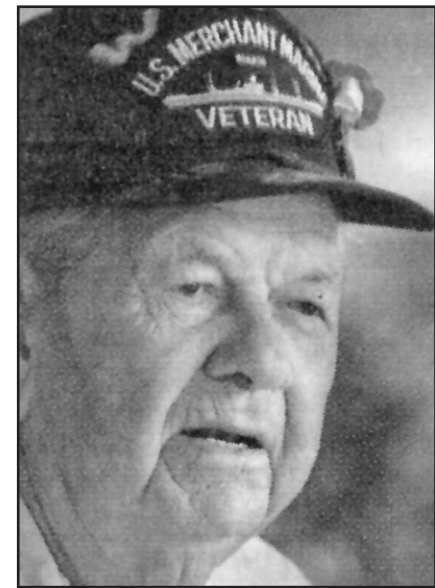
LARRY MOORE
311 ACS 67-68
SMSGT RETIRED

Merchant Marine vet disappointed few know of seamen's sacrifice

By Kari C. Barlow

More than 60 years have passed since Ace Shepherd's days as a U.S. Merchant Marine deckhand.

But he can still recall the sway of the ship, the all-night poker games and the threat of torpedoes.



"I hadn't even gotten out of high school, but I wanted to work for the (World War II) effort," recalls the 81-year-old Shepherd, an Air Force retiree who lives in Fort Walton. "We all wanted to help."

During wartime, the Merchant Marine acts as an auxiliary to the Navy. Although records vary, about 243,000 mariners served from 1940 to 1946.

"The bad years were in '42 and '43," Shepherd says. "I'm not sorry I missed that time, that's for sure. I'm sorry for the ones who didn't." The Merchant Marine suffered a larger percentage of casualties than any other service during World War II, according to American Merchant Marine Casualties at www.usmm.org.

The service lost close to 10,000 seamen during the war. German submarine wolfpacks sunk many ships, but aircraft, armed raiders, mines and the elements also threatened the fleet, according to the Web site.

"They helped save England," Shepherd says. "They moved equipment, supplies and personnel.

If you don't get the guns and boats, you can't shoot anybody."

Shepherd wants more people to know about the role mariners played during the war. For decades, he has attended the Memorial Day service at Beal Memorial Cemetery, and this year he carried a handmade red, white and blue flower wreath for the Merchant Marine. He stands alone, wearing his Merchant Marine hat with a small black-and-white photo of himself pinned to the side.

"It's amazing that this generation doesn't know anything about (the Merchant Marine)," he says. "It's just disappointing that there aren't more people aware of it."

Doing his part

In 1944, Shepherd was a teenager in St. Louis. Times were hard; gas and food rations were in place. For news of the war, he would listen to the radio or read the Post-Dispatch.

All around him, friends were signing up to fight. Barely 17, he, too, intended to do his part. The Army Air Corps, however, turned him down.

He eventually found his niche in the Merchant Marine as a seaman, first serving in the Army Transport Service and then on a tugboat docking ships.



For the next three years, he sailed the world's oceans, docking at ports in the Marshall and Mariana islands, Guam, South America, Holland, Italy, France and Canada. "I learned to mind my own damn business," says Shepherd, who served alongside green recruits and old timers from Scandinavia.

"I learned what to do, when to do it and how to do it right."

Although the worst of the war was behind him, he had a few scary moments.

"I used to stand watch on the bow, and these porpoises would come at you, and you were never sure if it was a torpedo or not," Shepherd recalls.

He also learned the critical difference between a boat and a ship. "If you can hoist it aboard a ship, it's a boat," he says with a laugh.

Monumental sacrifice

Aboard ships such as the U.S.S. Lumber Lady and the U.S.S. Ring Leader and the U.S.S. Wolf Creek, Shepherd learned lessons that would guide him the rest of his life.

"That three years in the Merchant Marine, that technical training I got made me better prepared for the Air Force," he says. Today, he would love to reminisce with other mariners, but their numbers are few.

"I'm about the only one around here that I know of," he says. "I know there has to be others here, but I haven't been able to find them."

He wants people to remember that the seamen of the Merchant Marine accepted their government's call to duty. "They're the least recognized of any veterans," he says. "That kind of puts a burr under my butt!"

Mostly, he wants young people to know the history of the Merchant Marine and its wartime contribution.

"I'd just like to get a reviving of the recognition if World War II Merchant Marines," Shepherd says. "Just the monumental sacrifice."

Ed Note: Terry 'Ace' Shepherd is a life member of the ACA.

Permission to reprint this story by the Northwest Florida Daily News. Daily News Features Editor Kari C. Barlow can be reached at 863-1111, Ext. 1104

Gene Rossel gets Kudos from MOAA

Rossel worked for eight years to help Royal Australian Air Force pilots -who flew as forward air control and Dehaviland CV-4 Caribou aircrews in support of U.S. forces in Vietnam -obtain U.S. Air Force Air Medals.

U.S. Ambassador Robert McCallum presented the 127 Air Medals at the Australian War Museum in Canberra in April. Rossel received a citation for outstanding service from Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Defense Support. Courtesy of [Military Officer](#) July 2008

WHY VETERANS REUNITE

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity.

I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades...Such good men"

Author Unkown
(Courtesy of *The American Legion Magazine*, May 2008)

A farm of a different sort

By Joe Perry
Item Staff Writer

Walking around his three-acre kiwifruit plot off Oswego Highway, ACA life member Al Gummerson inspects the male and female viny plants and makes a hopeful decla-



Photos by Chris Moore, of the Item, S.C.

ration based on 23 years of experience.

“This year looks like it’s going to be a bumper crop,” he said.

Gummerson, 78, is a New Jersey native who joined the Army at 17 and served in the Air Force for 27 years, retiring as a chief master sergeant. After a 12-year stint at BD as a supervisor, he retired, and decided he wanted to do something different.

“I had all this land here and always wanted to farm something when I retired, and I wanted to grow something different,” he said. “The New Zealanders were over here promoting kiwi, and I went to a couple seminars and I said, ‘That’s just about as different as you can get,’ and that’s how I got into it.”

Sumter County’s Clemson Extension Agent Greg Harvey said the state’s agriculture department hosted a contingent of kiwifruit – commonly called kiwi – experts from New Zealand in the mid-’80s to extol the virtues of kiwi farming as an alternative to peaches.

A year-round and labor-inten-

sive endeavor, kiwi farming requires heavy fertilization and irrigation.

“Summertime when it’s hot, like around 100 degrees, each one of these plants takes 30 gallons of water a day to support the transpiration [--] the moisture going out

through the leaf,” he said.

The nitrogen fertilizer, potassium and phosphorous costs have just about doubled, he said.

Gummerson plans to get his grandson, Justin Hyatt, more involved with the operation to spread some of the burden of farming and selling the fruit of Sumter County’s only kiwi orchard.

“I call it a vineyard, but New Zealanders call it an orchard,” he said.

The state was thinking about getting a company to handle all the excess fruit, Gummerson said, as there were big plans for the hoped-for kiwi harvest. New Zealanders make candy, toothpaste and wine out of kiwi, Gummerson said.

“Anything you can think of, they make with kiwi,” he said.

Gummerson started kiwi farming in 1985, and after working with Clemson University professors and extension agents for the first two years -- and waiting the two to three years it takes to see fruit -- he nearly saw his entire efforts wiped out by a freeze the first year.

While the first few years were

“dicey,” Gummerson soon saw progress in the development of a strong root system. But Hurricane Hugo in September 1989 proved to be a major setback when he had to harvest early in a vain effort to save the crop, which had yet to ripen properly and had to be tossed.

Last year’s harvest was ruined by the chilly Easter weekend, and resulted in about 400 pounds of fruit, whereas his most productive March to November growing season can result in 30 tons, or 6,000 pounds.

Gummerson jokes about being “too stubborn” to quit, and how he initially farmed five acres. But he clearly enjoys being out in the plot, staying busy with tasks such as replacing the T-shaped wooden trellises needed to support the top-heavy trees.

“I’ve enjoyed it. It’s kept me out of the bars [--] mostly,” he said, laughing. “After I joined the church I don’t go to the bars to speak of.”

Whether tending to the upkeep of the trellises, or inspecting fresh blossoms, or mowing the paths between the rows of plants, being a



kiwi farmer means constant physical labor.

“I don’t have to join the ‘Y’ and I don’t have trouble sleeping,” he said, smiling.

Kiwi facts:

Gummerson said he relies on a ratio of one male kiwi plant for ev-

ery eight female plants for fertilization. Only female plants bear fruit, and average about six each, which have to be harvested by hand.

Once harvested, kiwi need to be placed in a cooler to remove the “field heat,” and if stored in the bottom of a refrigerator in a plastic bag, without other fruit, can last up to a year.

Wind breaks in the form of taller trees are used to prevent strong spring winds from snapping off vines.

Gummerson calls his land Apteryx Farm, named after the flightless bird native to New Zealand, and a symbol of that country.

Gummerson grows the most common Hayward kiwi as well as the smaller Arctic kiwi.

Kiwifruit originated in China and was known as Chinese Gooseberry.

Harvest usually requires about 30 people, and Gummerson has some friends who help out so they can make wine from the fruit; and Gummerson said his wife Miriam has hundreds of kiwi-influenced recipes -- kiwi can be used in ev-

everything from muffins to margaritas and sauces for fish and meat, as well as the ever popular kiwi key lime pie.

Reprinted with permission of The Item, Sumter, S.C.

Ed Note: Al, What AFSC covers Kiwi farming??

Helicopter retires after service in Vietnam, Iraq

MH-53 Pave Low helicopter tail number 68-10357 flew its final mission and last flight supporting special operations forces March 28 in Iraq after 38 years of service.

it was also considered a success because conditions for POWs held in North Vietnam improved after the raid.

Training for the Son Tay raid



Current and former members of the 20th Special Operations Squadron and the 1st Special Operations Helicopter Maintenance Squadron and former Son Tay Raid participants gather by an MH-53 PAVE LOW before a ceremony inducting the aircraft into the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio June 7.

The helicopter was the lead command and control helicopter for a mission to rescue approximately 50 American prisoners of war from the Son Tay prison camp in North Vietnam in 1970, which became a significant event for Air Force special operations.

From Iraq, the MH-53 known as 357 will be transported to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton, Ohio, where it will sit on display in the Cold War Gallery.

“It’s fitting that this aircraft’s last mission was flown in combat before it is placed on permanent display at the museum,” said Lt. Gen. Donald C. Wurster, commander of Air Force Special Operations Command and an MH-53 pilot. “Aircraft 357 led a formation of HH-53 and HH-3 helicopters on a daring raid into North Vietnam to rescue American POWs. Of those five 53s that participated, only tail number 357 is left.”

Historical records indicate 66 prisoners were being held at the Son Tay camp, located 23 miles west of Hanoi.

Although the mission was considered a tactical failure because no prisoners were found at the camp,

many years. It was lost in combat in Afghanistan in 2002.

Although “Apple 1” changed call signs many times since 1970, it continued to fly in operations supporting U.S. national objectives around the globe.

“It is awe inspiring to know people sat in this very seat and created history,” said Col. Brad Webb, 1st Special Operation Wing commander and MH-53 pilot. “I’ve flown this tail number periodically since 1988,” Colonel Webb said. “The closest I came to combat while flying 357 was a combat search and

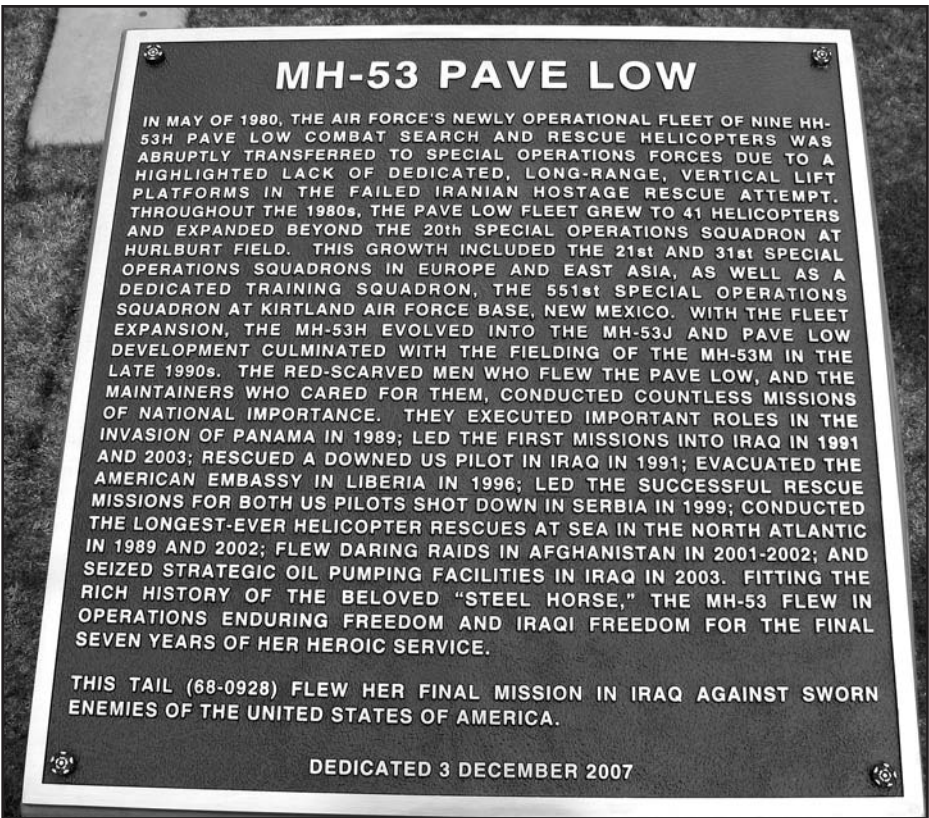
rescue mission for a British aircraft shot down near Gorazde, Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994. I also flew it in Kuwait several times under combat support missions for Operation Southern Watch in 2001.”

Inevitably, aircraft age and technology advances.

As a result, the MH-53 Pave Low’s long and distinguished career will soon complete its service to the Air Force. The remaining MH-53s in the Air Force inventory will be retired as they return from combat duty.



MH-53 PAVE LOW on display at the Hurlburt Air Park, below is the plaque that describes the 68-0928 missions.



Ambassador McCallum Presents Medals to RAAF Heroes

By Gene Rossel

On April 4, at the Australian War Memorial, Ambassador McCallum presented more than 80 United States Air Medals to members or family of members of the 35th Squadron of the Royal Australian. These medals were awarded for the 35th Squadron's participation, support, and heroism in Vietnam from 1964 to 1972. The 35th Squadron was the first Royal Australian Air Force unit to serve in Vietnam and the last to depart.

The Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV), that later became No 35 Squadron, received the USAF Air Medal at the Australian War Museum, Canberra, Australia on Friday 4th April 2008. The RTFV flew with the 315th Air Commando Group (later renamed 315 ACW and 315 SOW) flying the DeHavilland DHC-4 Caribou to support Air Commando units in Vietnam.

The US Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Mr. Robert McCallum Jr. awarded the Air Medals and pinned them on each veteran. There were 83 of the 105 members present for the awards. Six family members received the Air Medals for Vietnam Veterans who were either deceased or couldn't make it because of illness. The RAAF couldn't provide a C-130 transport to bring the far flung veterans to the ceremony as had been expected.

The presentation took place at 1400 hours on a very hot afternoon. The US Embassy provided an Honor Guard (great feeling to see US military members attend the awards), the Band of the Royal Military College provided the music, the Australian Rugby Choir provided the vocalization and the singing of both National Anthems and there were other readers and a

military chaplain. Before the ceremony started there was a Caribou fly-by over the War Memorial that brought back many memories of when we used to do the same thing. The No 38 Squadron Caribou was flown by Squadron Leader Vicki Rookyard.



The United States Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Robert McCallum Jr, presents to all deserving RAAF members with the United States of America Air Medal.

The Director of the Australian War Memorial, Major General Steve Gower, gave the welcome address. The US Ambassador addressed the audience of about 400 people (including four ACA members - Col Benson, Garry Cooper, Ron Workman and myself - stressing the close relationship of



The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, presents US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Eugene Rossel with the citation of outstanding service.

the two countries and that Australia has always supported our efforts. The Air Commando Association was recognized for its efforts in getting these awards. Air Marshall Geoff Shepherd AO, Chief of the RAAF, gave a short address. Ambassador McCallum presented

the Air Medals, as setup by the Defense Attaché Col Britschgi USAF, to the first six family members and each RAAF Vietnam Veteran. I was presented with a plaque by the Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support, The Hon Dr Mike Kelly AM, MP, as a VIP guest. There were a number of 35 RTFV Vietnam Veterans who made remarks. The highlight of the event was the presentation and laying of a plaque for the 35 RTFV in a special area of the War Memorial for Australian units. The order of the service followed the Australian protocol and was a delightful ceremony. That seemed the justification for getting money for the ceremony and the party afterwards used by the RAAF veterans. Ron Workman and I appeared on Australian Channel 7 on the 3rd April at 0630 on a very cold

morning on the Sunrise show seen all throughout the country. The ACA was recognized for their support in getting the Air Medals. The 21 Australian Vietnam Veteran Forward Air Controllers (FACS) received their Air Medals on 24 April at the US Ambassador residence with about 100 attendees, including the American FACS who are holding their reunion in Australia this year. There were 36 RAAF FACS and the New Zealand Royal Air Force had 14 FACS in Vietnam. The reason that all were not included (including three RNZAF) was because they did not provide Garry Cooper, "Tamale 35", with data for to receive these Air Medals. Garry Cooper received his Air Medal with the 35 RTFV due to scheduling problems. Graham Neil (a RAAF FAC) took my wife and I to dinner on the 3rd April since my schedule did not allow me to attend the 24 April FAC Air Medal presentation. The 35 RTFV members were very appreciative of being awarded the Air Medals this late in life. Comments from members and their families were really great to hear. The 127 RAAF Vietnam Veterans truly deserved these awards and it was unfortunate it came this late. A list of people who were instrumental in getting these decorations finalized, approved and signed are as follows:

- The wives of Ron Workman, Garry cooper and Eugene Rossel. It would have been impossible to do this without them
- Colin Benson, an ACA member, who started it with an email from MacKay to me.
- Ron Workman, an ACA member, who was the most dedicated and persistent Australian responsible in getting the medals for the 35RTFV

RAAF

Continued from page 23

- and moving others to contribute their talent.
- Garry Cooper, an ACA member, persistence, writing ability, superb organization and desire to help his fellow FACs.
 - Lt Tony Snyder of the US Defense attaché office in Canberra who was a very positive force to help us gets it done at the Embassy.
 - Graham Neil who added his influence to move things in Australia.
 - Congressman Gary Miller’s local representative, David Varnam, was so instrumental to get this done and his patience putting up with me for all these years. It could not have gotten through without his support.
 - Jeffery Simmons who probably wanted to get rid of me with all my persistent faxes, emails, telephone calls but he stuck with me to the end.
 - Col Douglas Galipeau, an ACA member, was an excellent friend and supporter at the Secretary of the Air Force. As an old Air Commando he wouldn’t let us down.
 - General “Heinie” Aderholt, an ACA member, provided his signature for the FAC submittals which meant everything for getting the FACs Air Medal.
 - The Air Commando Association (ACA) who contributed many things to help with this effort.
 - Col David Fleming, USAF Ret former commander of the 315ACG in Vietnam. Ret USAF commander of the units who had the 35RTFV fly under his organization and who started the process back in the 60s in Vietnam but had to keep the Australian decorations for the 35RTFV locked in his desk because of the Australian Government policy. Probably some VC who

later found them wondered what the hell this was all about.

Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Robert D. McCallum at the Australian War Memorial Air Medal Awards Ceremony April 14, 2008

The Honorable Dr. Mike Kelly, Air Marshall Geoff Shepherd, Major General Steve Gower, Lt Col Gene Rossel, members and family of the Royal Australian Air Force Transport Flight Vietnam, distinguished guests, Returned and



Air Marshal Geoff Shepherd AO, the Chief of the Air Force, presents Mr Ron Workman with the citation of outstanding service.

Services League members, ladies and gentlemen:

I am honored to represent the United States of America at this ceremony today where we will present United States Air Medals long overdue to more than 80 members or family of members of the 35th Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force.

I am particularly honored to present these medals in this most hallowed of military settings, the Australian War Memorial Museum. General Gower, please accept my thanks and that of my country to

you and your outstanding staff for hosting this important and meaningful ceremony.

The history of the Australian-U.S. Alliance is a long and storied one, steeped in shared combat, in kinship and mateship. From the trenches of World War I to the unforgiving terrain of Afghanistan today, the soldiers, seamen and airmen of our two countries have stood together in the cause of freedom, not just for our own nations, but for people around the world.

We are here today to recognize a particular group of Australian airmen who in their own particular Australian way wrote a page to that history and made their mark on our countries’ alliance.

It was nearly 44 years ago on 8 August 1964, that Squadron Leader Chris Sugden, who passed away just this last week and is represented today by his son, Peter Sugden, led 33 members of the Royal Australian Transport Flight from their new Caribou aircraft onto the tarmac of Vung Tau Air Base, South Vietnam in a driving rain. 7 of those original 33 are here with us today. What followed was nothing short of amazing. For the next 7 ½ years, “Wallaby” airlines with just 6 twin-engine DH-4 Caribous flew over 80,000 missions totaling 47,000 hours. In that time, they carried 677,000 passengers, moved 36 million kilograms of cargo and, probably most importantly to the Australians and Americans deployed throughout Vietnam, over 5 million kilograms of mail. Day and night, sometimes flying in the worst of weather and into the worst terrain and airfields imaginable, the Wallabies got the job done. The Royal Australian Transport Flight, later designated as the 35th Squadron was the first RAAF unit to serve in Vietnam and the last to depart. Often

under fire, they never lost a man. In short, the men before us today represent a very special aircrew, a unit of airmen, pilots, support and maintenance personnel who in the well-established tradition of the Royal Australian Air Force, punched above their weight, earned the respect and admiration of their American brothers in arms and have our continuing gratitude today.

The Air Medals we are about to present today are not easily won. They are awarded to valiant aviators who have distinguished themselves in meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. These medals are recognition of their

bravery and sacrifice. I have a joint letter from the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Chief’s of Staff which reads;

A Joint Message From The Chief Of Staff And The U.S. Army And The Chief Of Staff Of The U.S. Air Force

“On behalf of the Secretary of the Army, Sergeant Major of the Army, Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, it is our great honor to congratulate this distinguished group of Vietnam veterans from the Royal Australian Air Force. Your receipt of the U.S. Air Medal



Gene Rossel observing Color Guard.

RAAF

Continued from page 24

for your participation, support
and heroism in Vietnam is long
overdue.

From 1964 to 1972 the Royal Australian Air Force contributed desperately needed squadrons of transport aircraft, helicopters and bombers. RAAF forward air controllers were famous for bringing in air support to save American servicemen on numerous occasions and the U.S. Army could not have sustained itself without the support of the RAAF Transportation Flight Vietnam. For all of you receiving this award today, we applaud and thank you for your courage and dedication. Thank you for your service and congratulations on your receipt of this prestigious and well-deserved award. Signed; George W. Casey, General United States Army Chief of Staff and T. Michael Moseley, General United States Air Force, Chief of Staff.”



MSgt Eiteneuer with tray of medals.

Now, it is my honor to present United States Air Medals to the brave men of the 35th Squadron with the grateful thanks and admiration of the Government and citizens of the United States of America.

Binnicker named Executive of the Year

By JODI L. JORDAN
Air Force Enlisted Village

The leader of a local charity was recently named "Executive of the Year" by the Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.

On July 30, James C. Binnicker, president and CEO of the Air Force Enlisted Village, received the FAHSA Executive of the Year award, which recognizes the highest qualities of leadership, innovation and commitment.

Binnicker has shown all these qualities and more, said Charles Coxson III, a member of the FAHSA Board of Trustees and the regional vice president of ACTS Retirement-Life Communities, Inc., Florida Division.

“The community he oversees has grown under his leadership — not only in size, but also in the scope of services it offers to some 500 residents with modest incomes.



ACA Scholarship Application

Student's Name: _____

Student's ID# _____

Relationship to ACA Member: _____

Student's Age: _____

College: _____

Address of College: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Member's Name: _____

Member's ACA Number: _____

This year we will award four scholarships of \$1500 each. The scholarships will be awarded at the general membership meeting. The Board of Directors will randomly select the winners 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.

Authentic Blood Chits

Genuine USAF issue Blood Chits are available. To obtain a Korean War Blood Chit, all you have to do is recruit a new member. If that is too hard for you to handle, a \$15.00 donation to the McCoskrie/ Threshold Foundation will achieve the same purpose. Currently there is only one variety of Blood Chit available: The Korean War variety, published in 1951. Again, make check payable to the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation and mail to:

ACA/BLOOD CHIT
P.O. BOX 7
MARY ESTHER, FL 32569

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

Shown is Official Korean War Blood
Chit 1951 issue from survival kits.



ROSSEL'S REPORT

RAAF C-130 EXCHANGE PILOT.

Gene--It was a pleasure and a great honor to have you with us on 4th April. The Medal Presentation part of the ceremony was as much yours as it was ours - you and Ron Workman did a great job pushing the bureaucracies till the award was eventually recognized. As one of the originals (in on the 8th August 64) thank you again - we grew up in Vietnam flying most of every day mostly supporting your Special Forces. We feel we made a difference in those small and remote camps - we were often re-supplying ammunition that was almost gone, just in time for attacks that came in behind us or that night, sometimes while attacks were underway in the vicinity (especially in the Ashau Valley). Later on (1970-72) I had a tour with the USAF (TAC) at Pope AFB as an instructor and then Stan Eval Pilot preparing C130 crews to go into Vietnam - mostly onto gunships. I made several trips to Hurlburt during that time and had friends who lived in Fort Walton Beach. My time on Caribous in Vietnam was useful background - it all helped later when I became Commander of our own C130H tactical squadron, and developed what became the RAAF's current tactical transport practices. I hope you and Anne enjoyed your time in Australia. We enjoyed hosting you. Regards, and hope you stay in touch.

Kevin Henderson, email: kevhend@bigpond.net.au

Didn't know you were at Hurlburt.

AUTHORITY FOR THE RAAF VIETNAM VETERANS TO WEAR THE NEW USAF AIR MEDAL

Approval to accept and wear US Air Medals Chuck. Australian Defence Force personnel were approved by the Governor-General to accept and wear the US Air Medal on 15 Apr 08. For those personnel on the list, the medal may be mounted with other Australian medals and worn on the left accordingly. The precedence for foreign awards in accordance with the Australian Order of Wearing is after all other Australian medals and in order of date of authorisation of their acceptance and wearing. Regards Mr Pat Clarke, A/g Director Honours and Awards T-4-08 Department of Defence

AUSTRALIAN T-28D TAIL NUMBER 38364

This old commando AT-28D which came out of Laos, bought by the Philippines from Laos is owned by Kim Rolph-Smith of Warbird Adventure Flight. Trying to find the history of the bird I received the following:

After the signing of the Paris Peace Treaty, 16 T-28s were transferred to the Philippines AF. Of the remaining 40, about 29 were taken over in 1975 by the Pathet Lao. The last RLAF offensive operation occurred on April 14, 1975, when a vital road junction just north of Vientiane had been captured by the Pathet Lao. The attack, performed by nine T-28s, was ordered by the Royal Lao Government Defence Minister, who hadn't secured permission from the Prime Minister in this matter. As a result of the public berating of the Defence Minister, the RLAF became de facto grounded.

It was a USN bird #138364, sold by the Phillipines to Australia in 1990, in 2004 at Maitland (Russell Field) New South Wales, Australia in 2004.

MacAlan Thompson

T-28 Tail Number 38364 supposedly used in Laos.

The plane not assigned to specific pilot. They were assigned to fly

what plane in commission or ready. The plane that came out of phase or major service at Udorn might end up at different base. Each pilot might end up fly almost every one of them, one at a time of course. I believed Australia got about 13-15 of them when PL crated them up for sale 15-20 K-US each a few reach US from AU for 30-40 K.Kham CPK Red. Email: KManiT28FB@aol.com

T-28 Number 38364...Hold on to your socks

Hi Gene, Some time ago I had heard that the Aussies had #364 and then saw the photos your forwarded a week or so ago. #364 was in Vietnam in 1963 (bien hoa, soc Tran, Da Nang) and I must have flown it six or eight times or more. I kept a rather detailed log entry of each mission I flew and #364 comes up frequently.

Tom Schornak, Email: schornakt@comcast.net

T-28 Tail Number 38364 supposedly used in Laos

The number would be 53-8364. I was Chief of Maintenance for the det in Udorn when 15 T-28s were stripped from the Lao to go to the Philippines. Incidentally, the Lao were really mad about giving up the planes and just cut the wiring on the pylons rather than undoing it. All of them were in terrible shape. Thai-Am got to rebuild them.

Thomas Crocker, Email: normcrocker@yahoo.com

T-28 Tail Number 38364

Gene - I have been off line for the past 3 weeks. I personally flew T-28 # 364 15 combat missions out of Soc Trang and Bien Hoa in 1963-64 in #364.

Dean Hunter, Email: BearFlt@aol.com

Thanks guys-it certainly gives a better perspective what has happened to our birds but after 35 years a lot of data is lost. Somewhere in these emails we have 38364 and someone will recognize it. Search for Warbird Adventure Flights on the internet and you will see the most beautiful T-28D 38364 in flight.

COL DAVID FLEMING

He was with SAWC at Eglin and Commanded the 315 Air Commando Group in Vietnam which had the RAAF 35 Sq. He is now 92 and lives at a retirement home --Sterling House of W. Melbourne, 7300 Greenboro Drive, West Melbourne, FL 32904. Phone: 321-953-6464. If you are in the area drop in and say a kind word to this old warrior.

THANKS FOR AIR COMMANDOS!

Brothers, for me probably totally different from all of you. I was born in Samneua but grew up in Vientiane and joined RLAF in 1965. For me some unfriendly neighbors were invaded my country it's my job to serve and defend my country. I was freshly out off college and soon to be 18, the 1st day I show up at Savannakhet or L-39 the primary Pilot Training School of RLAF I was insulted by my older friends which washed out from T-28 class from Udorn that I could not be a pilot because I was too young, too small (short) 5 foot 2 and 94 # but I challenge them, that I will proof them wrong, size did not really matter.

I survived the war after rag up over 3000 combat sorties on T-28 over 5 years and over 1200 sorties on AC-47 Gun ship until the war end, and became trash hauler and still flew C-123K and C-47 for PL after they took over until 77 when they sent me to Re-education camp in Ban Ban area. I feel like I was blindfold and doing my job to serve and protect my country, I credit my surviving to USAF Air Commando and Air America

Rosset

Continued from page 26

(C-123-K) who trained me so well. I had great respect for all Aviators of all branch and especially Ravens who most of the time working side by side with us and sometime share same meal (20A) they were my Peers and my Mentors and more than Brothers to me, some of them paid the ultimate price. The TLC brotherhood open my eyes from that blindfold, for me all I know was there was a war between North and South Vietnam and Laos was used as passing route. Now from every brothers experiences link the whole scene of the SEA War, and everyone did their part and their assign job and it's as important neither more nor less but some might be more risky than other. I never know that the whole Secret War in Laos were conduct, direct and control by CIA until I settle down in US, all I know was Laos war were support and aid by US Government. You all earn my respect and camaraderie, YOU ALL MY BROTHERS IN ARM. Kham Phiou Manivanh, CPK Red and Spooky-13.

The Hmong pilots motto was "Fly till you die or blast out of the Sky" and that hold true for most of them. The Hmong far more aggressive because the war was on their door step and backyard, when you have no place to run and/or hide you fight like "The cornered Dog" I feel the same way and consider myself lucky to survive.
Kham Phiou Manivanh, Email: KManiT28FB@aol.com

Thanks for the gratitude to the Air commandos.

REMEMBERING DON MORRIS

I was an instructor at Udorn in the Det 1, 56th Air Commando Organization. I arrived in May 1970. Don had lost his life about a month before I got there. All the people remembered him as a great guy. He was well respected by the pilots and the maintance personnel. I am sorry that I did not get a chance to meet him. We trained Laotian students to fly the AT-28 and how to fire guns and drop bombs. We also flew combat missions on weekends. We worked with the Raven FAC's and trained many of them to fly the AT-28. We had a plaque on the wall at our operations honoring Don. Hope this will help you in your quest for info.
Gary Parker, MQM107@aol.com,

I received an E-mail from Don Morris' son requesting info about him and anyone who knew him or had pictures at Waterpump during 1969-70, when Don was there. Being old and a bit senile, I can only remember a few names that might have been there and known Don. Larry Tarnow, Doug Brazleton and Howie Below.

RANK HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

My first assignment in Vietnam was with a MACVSOG dedicated organization at Nha Trang, called "First Flight Detachment". We flew specially equipped C-123F aircraft with 1 USAF pilot and 9 Chinese Air Force crewmembers from Taiwan. We lived on the beach, 5 miles north of the airbase, in a rented Catholic Church compound. Long story to get to the point, but in our Officer's Club, upstairs in our quarters, we had hanging over the bar a 4 foot by 4 foot picture of a monkey screwing a duck. The monkey was staring at the camera and grinning very big when one of our guys took the picture. One day we had a surprise visit from the son of the famous General Stilwell. The son was also a general. When he saw the picture he said it was his and took it. We weren't too worried because the guy who took the picture had just rotated back to the states, so we wrote him and asked him to send us the negative so we could have

the picture duplicated and re-hung over the bar. We never heard from the guy and never got our picture back. We were all kicking ourselves for not having pictures made when we had the chance.
Al Brashear, Reperek@Hughes.net,

AIR FORCE ORDER OF DISPLAY/WEAR

Here's a spiffy site. Just check off the medals AND devices you were awarded and click at the bottom. It sets them up in the correct order as they would be worn. www.usmedals.com/RibbonSelect.aspx
PAUL TOBEY, paultobey@verizon.net

LAO T-28S

I flew a number of Lao T-28s both in Udorn and clandestinely in Laos. It always confused me that I could take off from NKP and bomb the hell out of Laos but an American could not take a T-28 off in Laos and bomb the hell out of it., go figure. While the AOC Commander in Vientiane I was encountering some resistance from the B pilots with the excuse that it was too dangerous to attack some targets. I tried to find out where they were getting their information and it lead to a Thai compound a few clicks east of Udorn. In talking to them I found that my leg might be being pulled by the Pilots. I proposed to the Air Attaché (Col."Pappy" Pettigrew) that I be allowed to lead some of those mission in a T-28, he made an attempt but the Ambassador turned it down except that I could take off from Udorn and lead a flight, this was a coordination nightmare and I finally talked them in to letting me fly as a FAC, I first rescued a U-17 from a dirt strip at the west end of the PDJ that had been abandoned by an RLAF, pilot. I flew this airplane to Udorn and had Air America work their magic on it; I got it back a few days later with target marking capability and in tip top shape. I used that for a couple of months mostly directing flights in support of FAR forces. I then inherited a derelict O-1 from the RLAF, again Air America made it like new, that number I remember 2666, it was later used by the Ravens.

In 1986 I made a trip to Bangkok to visit a friend. I had a friend in the states who wanted to acquire at least one T-28 so I went to the MAAG in Bangkok and inquired into that possibility and was told that those airplanes were still considered US assets and could not be bought, yeah right. My friend eventually got two T-28C out of the bone yard at Davis Monthan, he offered to have me fly one back to Florida, and since I hadn't flown any significant amount since 1978 I declined. Never in the history of the US have so many Draconian and incompetent Rules of Engagement been imposed on an American fighting force. I understand that obscenity is gradually creeping in to the Battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan; I suspect by political pressure from the incompetents we seem bent on electing. Joseph Holden, aceusaf@earthlink.net

Thanks Joe—always enjoy your war stories.

SOME REMEMBRANCE OF PANAMA

I was originally assigned to Vandenberg AFB, Calif. Was slated to go to Danang with a Prime Beef outfit, but TET hit and they rerouted some of us. Later I sat in a stupid hanger for 2 solid weeks with 50 other guys with all arms, equip., and baggage, eating C rations & waiting to go to Korea if needed. They had just captured the Pueblo. That blew over and I thought I was safe for a while. Came home to get married in June 68, returned to Calif. in July and was immediately handed orders for 24th

Rosset

Continued from page 27

ACW in Panama. Didn't even get to sign back in!
Steve Burt, Email: wsburt@uncc.edu.

I TOOK A LOOK AT YOUR WEBSITE

I had better luck going through the Special Operations site. You've compiled a lot of good information. I noted your goals to keep the flame alive—what a great task. I also saw another of the goals of ACA is to help families of fellow Air Commandos through scholarships. Is John Carney associated with you? I believe John's Special Operations Warrior Foundation also works on behalf of Air Commando descendants. I had met him at Scott back when he was still on active duty and he spoke at one of our Program Management Reviews in Georgia. Stay in touch – good to talk to you.
R.D. Van Wagner, slowfr8@sbcglobal.net , Author of WWII Air Commandos

LIVER PROBLEMS AND RECOVERY.

I am back from two weeks of testing at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, FL. All about my liver. I do have minor problems with my liver but have had minor problems since my early physicals with the Air Force. Great news is that I do not need a transplant, just good checkups every three months at Mayo. I am very excited and positive about the news. To throw out a few numbers that I do not understand, called MELD numbers. The numbers run from 6 to 40, 6 are the best and 40 are the worse. I am a nine which sounds pretty good to this non-medical guy. So I am putting this sorry liver on the back burner and going on with my life at the beach and ball games and whatever else I desire to do. In short the Mayo experts at Mayo, every doctor there graduated in the top 10 at medical school, lot of pin heads in one place said I can walk, talk, eat, drive and enjoy life and they do not want to mess with my quality of life by giving me dozens of pills for 40 days and then some for life. Take care. Walt Hennigan, whennigan@yahoo.com,

LAVELLE TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS

Gen. John D. Lavelle, former four-star general and U.S. Air Force commander in Southeast Asia, testifies before the House Armed Services Committee. He had been relieved of his post in March and later demoted after it was determined that he had repeatedly ordered unauthorized bombings of military targets in North Vietnam. Court-martial charges were brought against him by his subordinates but were dropped by the Air Force because the "interests of discipline" had already been served. Lavelle became the first four-star general in modern U.S. history to be demoted on retirement, although he continued to receive full general's retirement pay.
Willi Pete, Da Nang + Monkey Mountain, Korat EC-121D RIVET GYM and The Pentagon, NSA and CIA afterwards

KIA FIGURES FLIP FLOP

The original figure of American troops lost--54,246 killed--became controversial when the Pentagon acknowledged in 2000 that all U.S. troops killed around the world during the period of the Korean War were incorporated into that number. For example, any American soldier killed in a car accident anywhere in the world from June 1950 to July 1953 was considered a casualty of the Korean War. If these deaths are subtracted from the 54,000 total, leaving just the Americans who died (from what-

ever cause) in the Korean theater of operations, the total U.S. dead in the Korean War numbers 36,516.

AF HISTORICAL SITE

There is a new website that indexes 550,000 Air Force Historical documents at www.AirForceHistoryIndex.org. The site is very interesting for historical data of the Air Force--might not give you everything but it sure as hell is very interesting. Try it.

COL ED LEONARD

Does anyone know of an A-1H pilot named Ed Leonard, Col, USAF, Ret. He flew 257 combat sorties and was shot down twice over Laos, captured the second time. He spent five years at the Hanoi Hilton. The reason I ask is he will be the featured speaker at the Veterans Memorial Museum 11th annual Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day on July 26th in Chehalis, WA. Anyone in the northwest who may be interested in attending can find more information at www.veteransmuseum.org I am a member of the museum but was not asked by any member to post the above information. Just doing a FYI. Paul C. Lee MSgt, USAF, Retired 23rd TASS, NKP & Ubon '69 O-2, Fixxer Upper Extraordinaire, Email: pa2lees@msn.com

FOUND LOST USAF BRACELET

USAF Bracelet I found a bracelet at Lake Mead and figure it may belong to the family of this soldier. The engraved name is Donald L. Wright USAF 11-24-69 with Laos and MD also engraved. Maybe they would like to have it back? I would be happy to send it to you or to them. I have had it a few years and just ran across it in the moving process and thought I would Google his name. It came up on your site. Please e-mail me or give me a call at 702-860-6215. Happy, Happyinvegas2007@aol.com

I have the bracelet and if anyone knows where I should send it let me know.

MOH FOR LS-85

I recommended the MOH for CMSgt Richard Etchberger, one of the troops killed at LS-85, right after it happened. It was downgraded to the AF Cross because of the publicity the medal attracted. We could not admit we were in Laos. The CSAF told me and his exec, who is still alive, that it would be upgraded to the MOH after the war was over and the project was declassified. Unfortunately Gen Ryan is dead. However the request for upgrading has been resubmitted has passed the House and is in the Senate as S2787. We have high hopes.
Gerald Clayton, jayree@tampabay.rr.com

SAR PICTURE

To you all collectively and individually - you are invited to the dedication of the SAR painting (Rescue on the PDJ) to the CIA art gallery. The event will take place on 10, October 2008 at the CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia.

Hotel rooms have been blocked off at the Embassy Suites in Tyson's Corner VA. for reservations 800 362 2779 under Air America (\$119)

If you are interested and can make the trip, I will need your social security numbers.

Rosset

Continued from page 28

It is my understanding that Sam Jordan will be driving up from Florida in a van that accommodates eight (8)

Undoubtedly I have overlooked some names or information - let me know! RSVP, John Wiren, jwiren@centurytel.net, Air America

LOOKING FOR A RANCH HAND ARTIST

Ranch Hand query was referred to your site by a vet who signed his email “jaz”. He was responding to my display advertisement on VA-watchdog.org. Essentially, Tony Swindell (attached to 4/3 LIB and spec ops ‘68) and me (D 1/7 Cav ‘70) are widely published writers hoping to write a book about the gallows humor war jokes and war art. Referring veteran said there was a Ranch Hand fixed wing artist on your site whose cartoon work I should check out. Couldn’t find it. If possible please send a link or FWD this email to Ranch Hand vet. Thanks much. Marc Levy, silverspartan@gmail.com,

Can anyone help?

SON OF SPOOKY A SHORTY—LIGHT GUNSHIP

SOCOMs gunships (the AC-130) are wearing out because of heavy use in combat. In 5-10 years, all of them will have to be retired, or heavily rebuilt. So the air force portion of SOCOM (AFSOC, Air Force Special Operations Command) is going to try converting new light (two engine) transports to “light gunships.”

Last year, the U.S. Army and Air Force have agreed on using the Italian C-27J two engine transport, to replace the elderly C-23s (used, via a special Congressional loophole, by the U.S. Army National Guard), and thus provide more small transports for delivering cargos in places even C-130s can’t reach. The C-27J (a joint U.S./Italian upgrade of the Italian G-222) is a 28 ton aircraft that can carry nine tons for up to 2,500 kilometers and land on smaller airfields than the C-130 can handle. The new “Joint Cargo Aircraft” is officially designated the C27B.

ARMY/AIR CORPS ENLISTED PILOTS NEWSLETTER

Greetings to all. The sad news of the day for me is that I had a serious computer glitch and lost a lot of data. One of the most serious was my address book. I am trying to get things back in order. Send me an e-mail indicating if you would like to receive the newsletter by e-mail or regular mail. The e-mail is free. Billy Nickell, Editor, bvern@efn.org

U.S. TO HONOR MEMBERS OF SQUADRON IN ‘SECRET WAR’

The Presidential Unit Citation will be awarded Wednesday to members of Observation Squadron 67.

Not many men in the military are eager to join a brand-new unit, where they don’t know people, don’t know what they’ll be doing and don’t have a proud unit lineage. But the Navy assured the men it would be good for their careers.

So some men volunteered and a lot more were drafted to join Observation Squadron 67, so named because that was the year it was born.

After a while the men took to calling themselves “the Ghost Squadron” because they felt forgotten, participants in a secret war that neither the U.S. nor the North Vietnamese wanted to acknowledge was being waged next door to Vietnam.

Silenced for decades by their classified missions over Laos, the men finally in recent years began to speak publicly of their war, a decision that would ultimately lead to a rare historic correction by the Navy.

Forty years after the squadron’s actions, VO-67 has been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest decoration for combat valor a unit can receive. Some of the surviving 300 members of that squadron will be on hand Wednesday in Washington, D.C., for the ceremony in front of the U.S. Navy Memorial.

“It’s special after all these years,” said John Forsgren, a young sailor who served in the squadron and lives in Arlington. “But it’s also bitter-sweet. How do you get proud of something that you did 40 years ago? There’s a bit of a feeling of ‘Why didn’t they recognize the unit 30 years ago?’”

The Presidential Unit Citation is reserved only for the most valorous combat units, and it’s worth noting that far fewer of them were awarded for the Vietnam War than Medals of Honor. A unit receiving the citation is the equivalent of every man receiving a Navy Cross. Submitted by Chris Vaughn, Star-Telegram Staff Writer

B-57 & C-123 COLLISION

Until recently I was unaware that USAF used B-57s in addition to the A-26 missions on the trail. I also understand that they did not do as well as the A-26s. Apparently quite a few were either shot down or had malfunctions of some sort or another. My question is, were the B-57s pulled from that duty before the war ended due to poor performance? I do not blame the crews, they were and are brave men who did as they were ordered, but perhaps it was the wrong aircraft for the job. Bob Lewis, bobbblewis@comcast.net, NKP 67-68

Info I just got off the web says that both aircraft (B-57 and C-123K) were lost in a mid air on Dec 13, 1968. The C-123k pilot was able to bail out and was rescued. His name was Lt. Thomas Turner. All other crew members were lost and never heard of from returning POW’s. More on this story at: www.aiipowmia.com/ssc/smith324c.html Bob Pruiksmas, Email: rspusaf@bellsouth.net

Anyone know Lt. Turner?

CUBAN AIR FORCE IN EXILE PILOTS

Cuban Air Force in Exile pilots who attended Squadron Officer School with me in 1963 which we discussed at the Air American Reunion:

1. Capt Farias the leader--his story is in the Reader Digest “Decision for Disaster by Mario Lazo
2. Capt Soto who flew the B-26 from Cuba and landed at Tampa and caused turmoil in the US Air Defense Command
3. 1/Lt Alvarez

Do you know where any of these pilots are now?

Janet Ray Weininger reply:

Capt Van Hovel was one of the American instructors for the Cuban Air Force in Exile.

Matias Farias is living here in Miami and a retired USAF Col. I think the Soto you are referring to is Antonio “Tony” Soto Vazquez. who is also here in Miami and flew in the Congo. Alvarez could be Mario Alvarez Cortina who is deceased. I’m off to LA for the weekend, but will

Rossel

Continued from page 29

try to find these guys when I return.
Last night, I was reading the Air Commando Association newsletter. What an honor for BG Aderholt. I am going to try an attend this year's reunion.
Janet Ray Weininger, Home 305-255-5994 Cell 305-610-6464
PO Box 56-2801 Miami, FL 33256, Email: WingsValor@aol.com
Website: www.WingsOfValor.org

THE GREATEST PILOT WE NEVER SAW

from *The News Observer, Raleigh, NC.*
Jay Price and Peggy Lim, Staff Writers

When the CIA needed to fly a small team into Iran to lay out a landing strip for a Delta Force operation to spring 53 U.S. embassy hostages -- and maybe save Jimmy Carter's presidency -- it knew where to turn: Clayton resident Jim Rhyne. It was 1980 and Rhyne may have been the only pilot alive who could regard the request as routine. For him, the question wasn't whether the flight was possible, but how to do it. He employed perhaps his second-best skill: calculating the risks against the options. Yeah, he replied, a Twin Otter with extra gas tanks, and brings it in at roof-level.

Rhyne was perhaps the greatest pilot no one ever heard of, the only person to win the CIA's top two medals for valor and a veteran of Air America, the notorious airline secretly owned by the CIA. The company was perhaps best known for supporting the agency's clandestine war in Laos in the 1960s and early 1970s. Rhyne played a central role there.

He also is part of the answer to a North Carolina mystery that has puzzled people across the world.

He moved to Clayton in 1979 to start Aero Contractors, tucked away at the small Johnston County Airport.

Its most controversial suspected mission is flying prisoners captured in one foreign country to be held -- and perhaps tortured -- in another. This practice is known as extraordinary rendition.

Many of these prisoners have been suspected members of al-Qaeda, but at least one was a case of mistaken identity.

Rhyne died in a plane crash -- the circumstances are disputed -- not long before the 9/11 attacks. It's unclear whether the company was involved with renditions when he was alive.

But Secord, who flew with both Hoover and Rhyne, said, "There's no comparison: Jim could fly rings around him." And Hoover had two legs. Rhyne had only one. Love of flying. Rhyne was the son of a pharmacist in tiny La Fayette, Ga. In his early teens, he and his friend Paul Robinson began hanging around a local airport, begging rides whenever they

could, doing odd jobs. Eventually they scraped together a few hundred dollars for a Piper J-3 Cub, a small plane famed for its simplicity. The boys were 13 or 14 years old, too young to fly alone legally, said Rhyne's older brother Bill, but that didn't stop them. Jim Rhyne joined the Air Force in 1954, according to an unpublished interview with historian William Leary in 1990. When budget cuts in 1958 made the Air Force cut flights for each pilot to two a month, Rhyne said, he decided to quit. While running a small airport in Georgia in 1960, he heard about Air America and applied for a program that used planes specially designed to fly from rough, extremely short runways.

He flew in India and other places, but beginning in 1962 he spent more than 10 years flying over the landlocked kingdom of Laos, where the CIA was running the largest paramilitary operation in the agency's history. In short order, he was a senior pilot supervising some of the company's best pilots on its most secret programs.

Air America also flew CIA agents and paramilitary officers in and out of hundreds of tiny strips hacked out of jungles and mountainsides in Laos, and dropped both supplies to indigenous forces fighting the communists and food to their villages. Some of the more unusual planes were designed for gut-wrenching landings and takeoffs in strips little longer than a soccer field.

The airline also moved freight and passengers in the open. It also was sometimes the only resource available for rescuing downed U.S. pilots. Rhyne was known as a disciplined, careful pilot who was always planning for the next day. He would take a drink or two, but seldom more -- there was always a flight coming up, after all. He was known for a sense of humor and, perhaps not surprisingly, for being unflappable and tight with information about himself.

"He was something of an enigma," said friend and former Air America flier Ward S. Reimer of Las Vegas. "I don't think anyone really knew him in depth. What you knew about him, he let you know."
Submitted by Ronald W Brown, Email: ronnreenie@starfishnet.com

AVIATION MUSEUM , FULL AIRCRAFT LISTING

For you aircraft buffs, this is a keeper.

This is the most comprehensive collection of aircraft info that I have seen. Want to check out almost any airplane ever built in the World? Old, new, military, civilian? Browse this site for a few minutes. You will be amazed at what has been done in airplane design. The amount of info available is unbelievable. www.aviastar.org/index2.html

USAF RESEARCH SITE

The United States Air Force Historical Research Agency maintains hundreds of thousands of historically significant U.S. Air Force documents representing some 70 million pages of interest to historians, researchers, and Air Force buffs. These include unit histories, special studies, personal papers, end-of-tour reports, oral histories, interview transcripts, and more. Now an index of 550,000 of these documents -- representing records held by AFHRA up to 2001 -- is searchable on the web at www.airforcehistoryindex.org.
Dale, Nail 49

VOLUNTEER FLARE KICKERS

I wish that one day someone would write about the volunteer flare kickers who flew the flare missions every night after they worked their

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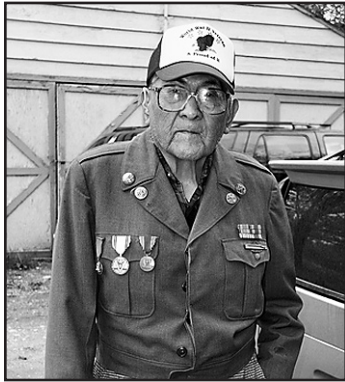
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Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow: A story of a real warrior Chief

On June 25, 2008 Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow, 94 received France's highest award, the Legion of Honor, for his distinguished service in France during WW2. The ceremony was on the Crow Indian Reservation (sovereign territory) in Garryowen, Montana and the date was chosen because it was the 132nd Anniversary of the Battle of Little Big Horn, where Custer made his last stand. Ceremony was at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier commemorating the battle and is apparently the only such monument in the US outside of Arlington National Cemetery. Parts of the battle started at this spot.

Biography- Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow

Joseph Medicine Crow was born in Lodge Grass, Montana in October 1913. He attended primary and secondary school on the Crow Reservation. His college education includes an A.A. degree from Bacon College; a B.S. degree from Linfield College and an M.S. degree from the University of Southern California (USC). His continuing PhD studies at USC during



1939-41 were interrupted by war. He supported his studies by writing Hollywood scripts. Joe Medicine Crow was the first Crow on the reservation to receive a Master's Degree.

Dr. Crow served during World War II with the U.S. Army 411th Infantry Regiment attached to the 103rd Infantry Division. Following U.S. Army induction in March 1943 and basic training, he was deployed to France in October 1944. Joseph saw action in Central Europe. He was involved in dangerous missions behind enemy lines and was one of the first soldiers to cross the German Siegfried Line from France with heavy resistance. He met the four requirements for

becoming a War Chief during his military service: (1) He touched an enemy, and (2) took away his weapon in hand to hand combat; (3) He led a war party by taking a squad at night on a dangerous mission in a combat area to retrieve dynamite; and (4) he captured an enemy's horse by sneaking into a barn at night and rode out on bareback with stampeding horses belonging to retreating German SS Officers. Dr. Medicine Crow's significant decorations include the Bronze Star, and the Combat Infantry Badge awarded for meritorious achievement in combat. He was discharged at Camp Mc Coy, Wisconsin in January 1946.

After World War II, Joe served as an Appraiser for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Montana for over 25 years. After 1984, he became involved in college teaching and to this day is a self-employed rancher, author, public speaker, and Indian History consultant.

Dr. Joseph Medicine Crow is a noted author with five published books covering the Crow Indian culture. His significant recogni-

tions include Honorary Doctorate degrees from the University of Montana/Missoula, Rocky Mountain College, and the University of Southern California. In 2000 he performed the opening song at a United Nations summit conference for Spiritual and Religious Leaders, and in 2005 was named Montana Tourism Person of the Year. Joe and his wife Gloria reside in Lodge Grass, Montana and have been married since 1947.

History Of The National Order Of The Legion Of Honor

During the French Revolution all the orders of the kingdom were abolished. It was the wish of Napoleon, the First Consul, to create a reward to commend civilians and soldiers regardless of their stature in life. In 1802, a Légion d'Honneur, (Legion of Honor) was established as the first modern order of merit. The order is France's highest award and is conferred upon men and women, either French citizens or foreign nationals, for outstanding achievements in military or civilian life.

Submitted by Robert Johnson

Rossel

Continued from page 30

regular jobs, some lost their lives filling in as combat crew members in 1966 flying out of Vietnam. S Master SGT Gary F Thomas, Email: veter3@sbcglobal.net, 310th Air Commando

Anyone got any stories on these flare kickers?

RISEING RUSSIAN AIR FORCE POWER

Reported from our ACA member in Finland.

Friends: Russia's air power is nowadays as strong as it was during the Soviet Union. They have many big and active air force bases near our border and their strongest fighter/bomber units are located near our border!!! It is sure that the Russkies have done that because they know Finland will join NATO sooner or later. Russkies flying activities have increased back to Soviet Union era.

Well, well... may be they are afraid of us... after all.

Jari Salo, jarisalo@netikka.fi

CLASS 59 PILOT TRAINING CLASS REUNION.

The 1959 - H pilot training class will hold its 50 reunion on 8-12 Oct 2008 at Wrigth-Patterson AFB, OH. Contact Paul Schueler or go to

www.class59-D.org.

Paul Schueler, Email: peschueler@hotmail.com

We are looking for any type documentation/on-site awareness that may exist where the Australian 35th Squadron, flying for the 315th Air commando Group, where included in the award of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) or the Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) or in any of the other Air Commando/Special Operations units which they operated under for 8 years. For some reason while they worked for the Air Commando/Special Operations units who received both the AFOUA and PUC they were never included in the orders even though they were an integral part of the unit. The 315th ACG was under the command of Col David Fleming. Please contact me if you have any information you can provide me to help our RAAF Vietnam Veterans, particularly the non-rated officers and airman of the 35th SQ, get their fair share of war recognition

Eugene D. Rossel

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August 2008

President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

participate in the induction of General Aderholt into the "Gathering of Eagles" was a most enjoyable experience. Once again, our general made us proud. Please see comments and pictures of the event in this newsletter.

The 4th of July BBQ at Two-Trees Restaurant was a success. Bim Barker and crew certainly know how to prepare great ribs. All the food was super. Many thanks to Bim, Damon, Jerry, Joyce Harrington, Hap and Shirley Lutz, Ashley (Ted Saunders' granddaughter), and Mr. T and his staff.

The buzz in the local area is great concerning the confirmation of General Norton "Norty" Swartz to be Chief of the USAF. The General is a member of the ACA and was a great supporter while he was commander of the 16th SOW at Hurlburt. Congratulations General! We wish you success in this most difficult and important position.

As I mentioned in a previous column, Gene Rossel played a key role for eight years in the effort to help Royal Australian Air force pilots-who flew as FACs and Caribou aircrews in support of U.S. forces in Vietnam- obtain U.S. Air Force Air Medals. Gene was further recognized in the July issue of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) magazine under "Kudos." While in Australia for

the presentations, Gene received a Citation from Australia's Parliamentary Secretary for Defense Support. Well done, Gene.

ACA member Wes Fields was the driving force behind the "Doolittle Homecoming" held at Fort Walton Beach during May. The magnificent event that included B-25 flights, book signings, luncheon, and a spectacular banquet was a great tribute to these wonderful warriors. Seven of the remaining raiders attended and were treated royally. Ed Horton, one of the raiders, lives here, and Wes is his escort to all the events. The raiders visited our building and seemed impressed. Lt Col Cole, who was Doolittle's copilot, noticed a picture on our wall with a C-47 that was used to fly missions in Burma during a commando operation. He said he was assigned to the unit and flew that very aircraft. He recognized the tail number.

I represented the ACA at an event at Teresa Village, a part of the AF Enlisted Windows Home. Board Member Jim Binnicker is the CEO of this wonderful organization. AC-119 association members Gus Sininger and Garry Gourley presented two lithographs of AC-119s for display at the Village. Both men gave interesting talks about the role of the AC-119 in Vietnam. They stated the AC-47 and the AC-130 exploits get most

of the attention, but the AC-119 also played a significant role in the combat. Joel Talley, Teresa Village Director, receive the AF Cross for his effort on a rescue mission as a PJ medic. The respect and atmosphere of appreciation for the military is so obvious at the Village - warriors and widows who served proudly.

Our association remains healthy. Our membership is staying steady, our finances are in good shape, and through the MTF we continue to help the less fortunate. BG Aderholt remains in good health and continues to go to the Aderholt Fitness Center on Hurlburt at 0530 most mornings. He still provides guidance and suggestions for the ACA and MTF. He is looking forward to the 08 reunion and always enjoys seeing air commandos.

It has been mentioned that some of our members may want to know more information about Chuck Keeler, the candidate whose is running for ACA President. Charles "Chuck" Keeler is a life member of the ACA, is a retired Chief Master Sergeant. He is a past president of the ACA, serving two terms as president from 1986-1989 and 1992-1994. After retirement from the USAF, he worked in the community as Fort Walton Beach Chief of Police and as City Manager.

Stay well and join us in October. *Sam*

The trip to Maxwell AFB to par-