



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

May 2007



Eugene Paul Valentine

Eugene Paul "Geno" Valentine, age 74, formerly of Shalimar, Florida, passed away Thursday, April 5, 2007, at the Gulf Coast Veteran's Hospital in Biloxi, Mississippi. He was born in Chicago, IL, on March 2, 1933, to Eugene and June Valentine. Geno retired as a Major in the U.S. Air Force after 20 years of service including two tours in Vietnam, where he flew combat missions in the B-26 and F-4 aircraft and

See **GENO** pg. 3

The Founding of the Force

By *Herman S. Wolk*

This is a new day," Gen. Henry H. "Hap" Arnold declared to the members of the Senate Military Affairs Committee. The date was October 19, 1945, and the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces (AAF) was testifying on the importance of legislating a new national security organization that would feature an independent Air Force.

General Arnold's masterful opening statement to the committee portrayed in microcosm the history and impact of airpower, culminating with the AAF's contribution to the great victory in World War II. A large part of this story was not pretty. The history of the 20th century had found the US unprepared for successive military crises. "Each new crisis," General Arnold emphasized, "has found our armed services far from effectively, efficiently, or economically organized. With each crisis, modernization and coordination have been hammered out under war pressure at great waste of resources, . . . [and] allowed in large measure to lapse when the crisis is over."

General Arnold pointed to the predicament of the Army Air Corps in the years before World War II. As a branch of the Army, the primary functions of the Air Corps were procurement of materiel and the operation of air-



fields under the supervision of the Army's Corps Areas. Even the General Headquarters (GHQ) Air Force, established in March 1935, reported to the Army Chief of Staff and remained as a tenant on its bases.

In 1937, Maj. Gen. Frank M. Andrews, commanding general of GHQ Air Force, described the airmen's frustration: "I don't believe any balanced plan to provide the nation with an adequate, effective Air Force . . . can be obtained, within the limitations of the War Department budget and without providing an organization individual to the needs of such an Air Force. Legislation to establish such an organization . . . will continue to appear until this turbulent and vital problem is satisfactorily solved."

Prior to the entry of the United States into World War II, this contentious issue--between the Air Corps and the War Department--tended to resolve itself under the pressure of aggression fomented by totalitarian nations. President

Franklin D. Roosevelt in early 1939 directed an enormous expansion of aircraft production. General Arnold, who had succeeded the late Maj. Gen. Oscar Westover in September 1938 as Chief of the Air Corps, immediately activated his ties to the aircraft industry; the result was the start of enormous airpower mobilization for war.

Perhaps no airman possessed as brilliant and farsighted a vision as General Arnold. The aircraft of today, he said in 1945, are "the museum pieces of tomorrow." To General Arnold, "an air force is always verging on obsolescence. Present equipment is but a step in progress, and any air force that does not keep its doctrines ahead of its equipment, and its vision far into the future, can only delude the nation into a false sense of security."

The Army Air Corps, 1926-47

Organizational changes in the US Army's air arm prior to and during World War II resulted in some persistent confusion. The key question revolved around the status of the Air Corps.

With establishment of the Army Air Forces on June 20, 1941, the Air Corps became subordinate to the AAF. On March 9, 1942,

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Editorial: Miracle in Washington

Gathering of Eagles warm graves of fallen soldiers:

By Judi McLeod

Yesterday, St. Patrick's Day 2007, a group of ordinary patriots, known nobly as The Gathering of Eagles, achieved something no one else ever could.

Ragtag by nature, Gathering of Eagles' membership includes the wounded, both walking and in wheelchairs, the gratefully and proudly ageing and the living-with-the-memory-of-lost- loved ones, brokenhearted. Some lie awake nights worrying about loved ones still in harm's way, but the one human emotion missing from Gathering of Eagle members is disillusion. All because if there was any chance the touted anti-war protesters were going to desecrate war memorials, then The Gathering of Eagles members were going to be there--no matter from how far away they had to come, no matter in what shape March 17 was to find them in.

When they came to the call of Move America Forward, they knew in their hearts that they would be up against it. March 17 was not only the 40th anniversary of the Mother of all anti-war protests, when a decades-ago massive march to the Pentagon demanded an end to the war in Vietnam, it was also being marked as the 4th Anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Capitalizing on the past, and gathering at a time when the Nancy Pelosi Democrats control the White House, the anti-war movement was flooding Washington, D.C. This weekend with a once-and-for-all demand for America to surrender the War on Terrorism.

Veterans joining up with the Gathering of Eagles from as far away as Hawaii, knew from the

outstart they could be vastly outnumbered in body, but never in spirit.

From a heralding media, hundreds of thousands were said to be descending upon Washington. Jane Fonda would be there to meet them. The mainstream media, so many sadly in sync with the "U.S. Out of Iraq Now" crowd, would ensure that the other side would get little network attention.

Mother Nature brought the dawning of a cold day with proof from the age-old adage that "March wind (is) colder than snow."

Even though the counter protest was to be resoundingly successful, only snippets of what took place in Washington was to flicker briefly from yesterday's supertime news.

But 'These Colors Don't Run', and this is what the troop-loving Move America Forward and the Gathering of Eagles accomplished against all odds.

The hundreds of thousands the anti-war movement promised did not descend on the nation's capital to mark a 40th anniversary destined never be forgotten. They numbered only in the thousands--and part of those thousands included the less protest savvy Other Side! Indeed, Fox News reported that the crowd totaled several thousand with as many from The Gathering of Eagles as from the anti-war crowd.

Jane Fonda was a no show. Not being able to count on Al Gore's global warming, perhaps she thought she'd get her tinted feathers wet.

Big-talking Hollywood celebrities left Cindy Sheehan out in the cold on her own.

Yesterday's sea change was

bound to usher in a new chapter in history. The anti-war protesters were in Washington trying to sustain a 40-year-old memory with tired, old chants like the standby "Impeach Bush" one.

The Gathering of Eagles was in Washington to protect war memorials erected to honor the fallen and in a symbolic show of love for all living troops in harm's way.

One thing for anti-war protesters to hint at desecrating war memorials. One thing for a media to remain silent when soldiers are spit upon. Quite another to meet from the distance of right across the street, the steely-eyed glint of the veterans of real wars.

Yesterday was a televised pageant of play soldiers fighting war from the safety of a world away, meeting face on, the real McCoys, a sort of underplayed Gathering of Eagles vs. The Moonbats.

As the event played out, not all of the teared over eyes from the faces in the crowd were the result of whipping Washington winds.

There was an unforgettable reason.

For the week leading up to yesterday's anniversary protest, a caravan of families who lost children in the war on terrorism, families who still have loved ones serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and veterans of Vietnam, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom had crossed the nation hoping to get a single message across: "Surrender is not an option."

Melanie Morgan's Move America Forward caravan must have hit the road with niggling worry laced in with hope as it left San Francisco.

Air Corps

Continued from page 1

when the AAF became co-equal with the Army Ground Forces and



the Air Corps then continued to exist only as a combat arm of the Army, like the cavalry or infantry.

During the war, personnel continued to be assigned to the Air Corps. Thus, during World War II, documents with the letterhead, "Headquarters Army Air Forces, Washington, D. C.," showed a signature block of "Joseph Smith, Colonel, Air Corps." Congress created the Air Corps on July 2, 1926, and it was abolished with the National Security Act of 1947, establishing the United States Air Force on September 18, 1947.

During World War II, the Army's twenty-eight corps were autonomous. Officers were commissioned into the corps of their specialty. Personnel spent entire careers in a single corps, and officers owed as much loyalty to the corps as to the Army as a whole. The corps had great freedom, and as a result, empire-building was rampant.

Consequently, when USAF was established in September 1947, the Air Force leadership decided not to create a corps system. Most USAF officers were

assigned to the Officers of the Line of the Air Force, where they competed on the same promotion list. Exceptions were chaplains, medical personnel, and lawyers. Each of these specialties resided outside the Line of the Air Force, each with its own promotion list. Within the Line of the Air Force, specialization was accomplished by career fields. Unlike the Army's corps system, officers of the Air Force were commissioned into the Air Force and owed their loyalty to the Air Force.

the Services of Supply (subsequently the Army Service Forces),

Geno

Continued from page 1

earned a multitude of honors and medals.

After retirement in 1973 Geno lived in San Diego, California for several years before coming to the Fort Walton area in 1981. He was employed by a personnel recruitment firm and later for many years

with Bridgeway as a drug and alcohol abuse counselor.

He was an active member of several military organizations including the 26's in the 60's, the TAC Tanker Association, and the Air Commando Association where he served as president from 1981

to 1983 and was inducted into the ACA Hall of Fame in 1994.

Geno was a colorful, charismatic personality beloved by his comrades around the globe. We were all saddened by his sickness and suffering these past few years and pray that he has been reward-

ed with peace and rest during this holy season.

Geno is survived by his wife, Shirley Lenore of Ft. Walton Bch, Florida; daughters Theresa Valentine of Brookfield, Illinois and Lisa Valentine of Davie, Florida; son, Eugene E. Valentine, of Hollywood, Florida; brother Ben Valentine of Prescott, Arizona; sister June Lear of Bella Vista, Arkansas and Connie Perry of Seaside, California; and other family members.

Memorial services were conducted at the Hurlburt Field Air Park on Wednesday, April 11, at 3 p.m. with Chaplain Father Elbert Fadallan officiating and a eulogy by John Connors life long friend and comrade. Flowers were welcome and appreciated, memorials may be made to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, 1359 Broadway, Suite 1509, New York, New York 10018. Condolences may be expressed by email at aircomando@aol.com.

Inurnment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date. A reception for family and friends was held after the service at Two Trees in Ft. Walton Beach.

Miracle

Continued from page 2

Anyone following the progress of the Caravan of Hope must have been misty eyed when reading about what happened within only hours of that departure. The caravan with its 10,000 flags to be sent as proof to troops fighting for free-

dom was mobbed along the way! Patient school children, holding homemade flags waited curbside for the caravan to pass by. Veterans wearing medals, school choirs sounding like singing angels and Americans from all walks of life left their kitchens to be there when the Move America Forward caravan was passing through Small Town America. By Texas, enthused crowds were so large, a police escort led the caravan along its way.

Little wonder why Washington winds couldn't extinguish heart warmth the caravan reached its final destination.

When history is written, March 17th, 2007 will at long last eclipse March 17, 1967, as the day when soldiers in faraway Iraq and

Afghanistan knew for certain, no matter what real time saw them doing, love and respect await their safe return. The day when it was proven to a watching world that Washington war memorials stand for what they always stood for, time immemorial, the day when the graves of fallen American soldiers the world were warmer.

God Blessed The Gathering of Eagles. They did it!

Canada Free Press founding editor Judi McLeod is an award-winning journalist with 30 years experience in the print media. Her work has appeared on Newsmax.com, Drudge Report, Foxnews.com, Glenn Beck and The Rant. Judi can be reached at: letters@canadafreepress.com.

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Membership News



TAPS

In Memory of:

Joseph A. Buebe
October 2006

Patrick W. Freeman
Unknown

Owen A. Heeter
February 2007

Thomas E. Howard
February 2007

Victor F. Janus
Unknown

Robert J. Meska
May 2006

James J. O'Connor
December 2006

William F. Sleight, MD
April 2007

Eugene P. Valentine
April 2007

Milo G. Yowell
Unknown

Darren H. Eskind
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Andrew J. Lewis
Steen Lunde
Lawrence A. Neal
Thomas J. Trask
William B. Walter
Bgen Garry Willard Jr
John T. Wotring Jr
Donald B. Wright

LOST MEMBERS

Serena A. Armstrong
Joseph Benson
Jesse R. English
Katherine P. Jay
Xai Chue Kue
Peter F. Lehw

FOUND MEMBERS

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Cottonwood, AZ 86326

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Liberty, SC 29657

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Phoenix, AZ 85024

Gardner W. Wilcox
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Mobile, AL 36619

George D. Wilson
2613 Sunny Meadow
Mc Kinney, TX 75070

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Gordon C. Berney
Sebastion Corriere
John E. Schillo
Kashane Tiger

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Jeffrey Bliemel
Bernard E. Ducat
Derek R. Hirohata
Jesse Joyce
Martin W. Weeks

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Robert P. Caron
John Chalfant
Joseph G. Ennis

Hap's Comments



fers no residual effects, but takes maintenance medication as a safety net. He did go skiing in Park City, Utah again this year... without the burden of a broken ankle as happened last year. General Ginn always entertains me with his witty wisdom and one or two liners during his calls. One I remember well, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." He too is going to try to make this year's reunion.

Along with "Heine," President Sambogna, General Secord, John Grove, and many other local luminaries, I attended the promotion pinning of ACA member Clay McCutchan to Air Force Reserve Major General at the Eglin Armament Museum. It was a stirring event and quite an exceptional feat.

I have known Clay (General) for quite a few years and interfaced with him frequently during his tenure as Assistant Historian at Hurlburt. He is now Chief Historian at Eglin AFB. (See other bio comments elsewhere in the newsletter.)

Many of you have asked how "Heinie" is faring these days since his near fatal illness. From my observation, he's doing exceptionally well. He didn't use his walker or any other means of support during our trip to the Armament Museum. He still hits the "Aderholt Fitness Center" at Hurlburt every morning at about 0600 for an hour and a half workout under the guidance of his personal trainer Joe Caruth. Joe has faithfully worked with "Heinie" since his release from the Westwood rehab center.

We are back in the brick business here in the office, temporarily. We reinstituted it to finish a section of the wall that permits it and

decided to do so as a result of a number of your requests we received. It will definitely be limited to 72 bricks. If you wish to be commemorated, or that of a loved one, or dear friend, do so now. We have already received 11 orders and anticipate continuing early response. (Brick request is elsewhere in the newsletter.)

All the above would not have been possible without the assistance of my longtime friend retired Chief John L'Heureux of Panama City. (We did Laos together in the seventies and he was most helpful in the RLAH hospital we were building.) Paver bricks for sandblasting are no longer available in this area and John was able to put me in touch with an outfit in Miami (Bricks-R-Us) that satisfies our needs.

Our active duty 1st Special Operations Wing Representative, 2nd Lt. Christine Lukasik, is cur-



rently deployed to "The Sand," as it is so appropriately called. She'll be there until sometime in late June. I had a call from her father, Mark Lukasik, and he apprised me of her current status. Mark is also a USAFA Graduate. He flew AWACS during his active duty stint. And as many of you know, Mark is the son of Bernie Lukasik, who was KIA in Vietnam during a successful but fatal rescue mission. Bernie was assigned here in the early '60s. There is a street

named for him on Hurlburt.

On the suggestion and urging of past President "Heinie" Aderholt, we conducted a Spring Social at the Hurlburt Soundside Club on the 13th of April. Our theme was to link the Commandos of the past to those now serving. Accordingly, we invited those serving at Hurlburt to join us in this gala event. Another purpose was to invite interest and answer questions about the association. Commando Extraordinaire Bill Zell and his lovely wife Helen were our official greeters. It was a lot of fun with a lot of food, drink and camaraderie. Our next social will be on the 4th of July. Plan ahead!

As many of you now know, past President "Geno" Valentine passed away on 5 April following an extended illness. His services were conducted at Hurlburt Chapel with John Connors as eulogist. John presented a superb overview of their intertwined lives together since being roommate at Nav training school. "Geno's" brother Ben, shared humorous "growing up" reflections and anecdotes and "Geno's" daughter Teresa, read a somber but eloquent remembrance. A "Celebration of Geno's Life" followed at the Two Trees Restaurant. Our sincerest and heartfelt condolences to Shirley and all members of the Valentine family. Shirley herself is currently undergoing cancer therapy. Please keep her in your thoughts and prayers.

I received an invitation to attend the graduation of Terrance H. Fregly, Jr. from the United States Air Force Academy on 30 May 2007. I am deeply honored for being remembered, but regrettably I cannot attend. Terry's

See **HAP** pg. 6

I received word via our Editor Jim Boney that Commando Extraordinaire Howie Pierson had contracted throat cancer. He is currently undergoing therapy and the outlook at this writing is good due to early detection. At my sincerest behest I enjoin all of you to keep Howie and Gilberta in your prayers as they navigate through this ordeal in their lives.

My last commentary extolling the octogenarians in our membership caught the eye of whom is believed to be our oldest ACA member and prompted several phone calls from him. Member and nonagenarian Jack Sirney stated that he is 92 and that those "other guys" are just youngsters! He further shared that he has no need for viagra either. Go Jack go! Anyone out there older than Jack and can lay claim to those same virtues?

Sam Baley calls in frequently to check on "Heinie," myself, and others in the association. Sam's had health issues that causes the use of a walker occasionally for steadiness and balance. He and Martha are going to try to make this year's reunion. We all urge you on Sam.

Have had several phone calls from General Bill Ginn recently also. He sustained what he describes as a "mild stroke" several months ago. He claims he suf-

Hap

Continued from page 5

dad was tragically killed in an aircraft accident in February of 2006. We were friends from days of yore when he was stationed at Hurlburt



Terrance H. Fregly, Jr.

during the 1960's. He lived in a trailer just behind Robby and Dee Roberson's and we got together frequently for cookouts and commando refreshments. During our last get-together here in the ACA building he offered to fly one of his Russian built vintage aircraft over for our reunion. I heartily accepted, but he never got the chance. Congratulations Terry, Jr.!

We were called by 1st SOW secretary Rhonda Gritsavage and apprised that ACA member and 1st Special Operations Wing Commander Colonel Norman J. Brozenick, Jr. has been selected for promotion to Brigadier

General. None could be more fitting and proper from this writer's perspective. My encounters with Colonel Brozenick at awards breakfasts, socials, and other functions of mutual interest, have revealed a man with profound intellect and leadership ability. The only downside to this action is that he will now move on and the 1st SOW will lose his invaluable services. Congratulations Colonel and Mrs. Brozenick!

I had a very pleasant surprise visit from my nephew LtCol (Doctor) Robert H. Lutz. He brought his Medical Unit from Ft. Bragg here to Hurlburt for E&E field training for several days. We had an opportunity to chit chat before their exercise began. Robert will be leaving next month for his 9th tour to Iraq and Afghanistan. He is an amazing man and doctor!

I attended Kerya Reyes and William M. Runyon's wedding on 5 May 05. Both are ACA members. Kerya and I worked quite closely on the very successful "Through The Eyes Of A Commando" series presentations at Hurlburt during 2006. Kerya was very instrumental in producing and directing the agenda and props during the entire run of the

series. She is now at Little Rock AFB. A hearty congratulations to you both!

Todd Bonasera, a former 823rd Red Horse Structural Technician, is one of our newest Air Commando members. He serves now as the Superintendent of Postal Operations at the Mary Esther Post Office. Welcome Todd.

Other new members of note are retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major Jesse Joyce and the 1st Special Operations Wing Command Chief Master Sergeant Jeff Richardson. Jeff assumed the duties of departing Command Chief Todd Small. Jesse and Jeff were at our most recent social, but "desk duty" precluded me from spending "quality time" with them.

President Lucien Lee and Lo Yang of the Lao Hmong Coalition visited from Milwaukee and Denver, respectively, during 3 and 4 May. The purpose was to meet with Generals Secord and Aderholt, President Sambogna, and yours truly. In the fond hope that we could be both constructive and instructive, they presented an agenda of initiatives, ideas, and requests for pursuing the goals of their organization for our consideration and interest. It was a mutually successful meeting and we enjoyed both the professional and social aspects of the get-together.

Our esteemed Editor, Jim Boney, recently attended his 61st Family Reunion in Clinton, NC. On his return trip to FWB he visited Larry and Phyllis Harwood in Sumter, SC. According to Jim, he was royally entertained with a sumptuous dinner, with all the trimmings, and an attending fine



Phyllis and Larry Harwood with Pat Gochanauer

wine. Recently widowed Pat Gochanauer of Sumter was also invited to the occasion. She's recovering well, following Bob's recent tragic death in his ultra-light aircraft.

The following day Larry and Jim visited Al and Marilyn Gummerson. Marilyn was somewhat under the weather unfortunately.

They toured Al's kiwi fruit farm and got a hand's on lesson in kiwi farming. Al has been very generous with bringing fruit to this area when coming to our reunions. I have been one of the lucky recipients.

All for now. See you in October!

The Gathering of Eagles

By ACA Board Member David Harrington

Saturday, March 17, Joyce and I had the honor of joining the "Gathering of the Eagles" in Washington, DC. Even though the weather was cold and windy, and the ground muddy, the feeling of purpose, camaraderie, and victory was very evident. The Veterans overlooked the entire 'Mall' from the Lincoln Memorial to the World War II Memorial. Very few of the protesters mingled where we were. There was a group on the sidewalk as we approached the area of the "Wall." It was advantageous to be there.

Was the protest a success? Since only about 2,000 protesters showed up after a permit for 30,000 was issued and their famed leader Jane Fonda made no appearance or statement, the Veterans again won the war.



Pictured from left to right: Felix "Sam" Sambogna, Lucien Lee, Hap Lutz, Lo Yang, General Secord, and BGen Aderholt

WAR STORY: Howard Pierson, aka Commando Clean

Go find Airman's Magazine circa 1965-66 or so...an article about a 310 Air Commando Sqdn fella, Howard Pierson, aka Commando Clean.

Howie was a real life out of the comic's and Men's magazine characters. He is about 6'6", strapping fella with the always very slick pate and the trade mark handlebar moustache...

As a C-123 driver, the Airman's magazine article focused on one mission to a SFA Camp deep in the hinterlands of II Corps up on the Cambode/Laos/VietNam border, the name of the camp escapes me now, been there a few months later, but just as it was described in the article... So the story went, the plane was making one of our characteristic diving swoops to plunk the bird down on the first puddle.

And just about touching down the plane is racked with .51 cal

fire. Ain't no evasive action at 2 or 3' AGL and going around was out of the question with the #1 on fire. Howie put the plane down and due to the loss of directional control at 90kts, one engine in reverse and sliding in the slick Laterite go off the side of the LZ.

He got it stopped, shut down the #2, calmly walked back to the pax and said, Time to get out, go off the rear and don't go into the mine field... that the plane was sitting, its nose smartly stuck in the dangerous zone.

He donned his Commando bush hat, adjusted the cowboy style pistol belt, and waved the pax on ala John Wayne. Commando Clean finished his C123 tour as I was arriving to the 311 Air Commando's and his legacy was well known from one end of the country to the other... you cannot miss this fella. Always with a big smile and a firm slap on the back.

Sadly, the face of the original Air Commando's changed with the arrival of disgruntled C-130 slugs as Air Commando leadership and any young Commando's out there were firmly discouraged from attempting at continuing Commando Clean's reput..

They got rid of the unauthorized Commando Bush hats and tried to get rid of the western style pistols and belts (ammo in the belt) and of course a K Bar or a Randall knife on the other side - balance.. And don't even think about a moustache. The legacy was hard to put down..

Later, in 1970, this time at Bien Hoa AB, a jeep arrives to the Sqdn hooch and out pops Commando Clean. I had met the fella at Hurlburt Field (Eglin Aux#9) at the O Club a year or so earlier, and went out to greet the slick one. Still a strapping tall fella with again the in-character "stache".

Not in the Commando fatigue bush out fit, but in character for A37's ala fighter jock (Commandos).

"I am looking for a job," he says. He was now a Lt Col and we were filled with bottle cap Colonels as it was. What a boost to the young A-37 drivers he

See **WAR STORY** pg. 9



DEAR SIR,

We would like to share this obituary of Colonel Owen "Al" Heeter. With serving 30 years in the Air Force, he truly respected and loved his country.

Burial took place in the Arlington Cemetery with full military honors.

We are sending the entire info, but use only what you need. Thanks so much.

The Family of Owen "Al" Heeter
(Ginger Heeter)
1458 Park Road
Rochester, IN 46975

Ed Note: Dear Ginger and family members. Please accept our sincerest and heartfelt condolences on "Als" passing. Regretfully, we've had to curtail printing the obits on our departed members due to space and typeset considerations. His obituary will be filed in his ACA record.

AIR AMERICA Memorandum to Pilots

Courtesy: Chusuk Bumrungrakul, CMECH/CNX

Dear Pilot:

When I start to fix an aircraft I'm sort of like Jack Webb. I need the facts. Often you don't give 'em to me - in writing, that is. The proper reporting of your inflight trouble will not only cut down on my work, but will give you a safer aircraft to fly.

Seems that some pilots figure a mechanic spends his time drinking coffee, changing spark plugs, and writing "Ground checks OK" on forms. This is not true. Quite often, in fact, your grumbling about an aircraft's condition should be aimed at yourself. In some instances brevity is OK but the lack of detail in many write-ups is bad.

Like most mechanics, I want to do a good job, but without your

help I don't have a chance. Without a few clues I'm lost and I get real frustrated going around in circles trying to figure out where to start.

Perhaps a few simple rules will help straighten things out. How about these?

Write it up! Your talking about it with other pilots is fine, but tell me, too.

Write in all the details. If it's about an engine, tell me the altitude, power settings, instrument reading, temperature and anything else you think of. If it's about a radio, tell me which channel and whether it's the receiver or the transmitter and what kind of noise it makes. Be specific - don't be afraid to use more than one block for the write-up if you need more space. Tell me everything.

Tell me what checks you have

made and what the results were. You seldom ever quit using a piece of equipment without some effort to make it work or to find out what's wrong. Remember, I may not be able to duplicate your tests on the ground.

Keep your kneeboard handy, write everything down as it happens. You'd be amazed at the items you forget after you are on the ground and in a hurry to leave.

I hope I've made my point, sir. With your help maybe I can get the maintenance officer off my back, give my ulcers a rest, and even quit beating my wife. Thanks!

Joe Maintenance

P.S. If your handwriting is poor, please print.

Ed Note: Good memo, I'm sure most all pilots have been guilty of incomplete write-ups.

Letters

GENTLEMEN,

After having viewed the Slide Show of Patches at the www.specialoperations.net website, a patch of special interest came up. This particular patch is that of the 424th S.O.T.S. My interest in this patch and the possibility of obtaining a clearer version than that shown is real. Here is my reason: When I came back from Vietnam in 1970, I was assigned to Aux Fld #3 (Duke), in the Fire Department and was a shift supervisor there until April 1973 when I went to Kunsan, Korea. While there I observed a lot of things going on around the airfield. In particular, the folks working out of the South Hangar who were flying the QU-22 aircraft. I observed many flights of that aircraft, manned and unmanned. I am hoping you can steer me in the right direction in obtaining a clearer version of the 424th patch. I have a reproduction of the 4473rd Combat Crew Training Squadron patch. I am

hoping you can help me in this request.

Thomas J. Hill, ACA#3739
5224 Galliver Cut-off
Baker, FL 32531-8394

Ed Note: If any of you can assist Tom, he'll appreciate it very much. We have no such item in our very limited inventory.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

It's 4:40 AM - dark hundred hours for most. It's the first day of spring, a slight mist is falling, hoping it turns into a much needed rain.

I went down to our mailbox to pick up yesterday's mail and the ACA newsletter put an exclamation point to the start of a wonderful day. It's always nice to read about, and see pictures of people I care about. I saw the pictures of Bob White and said to myself, "there's that Old Fart," in a friend-

ly way. I enjoyed working with him at the Airman's Attic.

'Nuff said. The birds have started chirping and I need a cup of coffee. Hope you enjoyed the first day of spring as much as I already have.

I didn't specify where the McCoskrie/Threshold check should be used. You know better than I do and I have no preference. Regards to all.

Juan & Gretchen Bazan
1620 Connie Drive
Canyon Lake, TX 78133

Ed Note: Thanks so much for your very generous McCoskrie Threshold Foundation donation Juan & Gretchen. I'm told that "Heinie," John Grove, and others volunteering in MTF are starting several new initiatives with the Thailand/Laos/Cambodia Brotherhood Association in Northeast Thailand around Nakhon Phanom. John will probably have more information concerning this adventure in the next newsletter.

We sure miss you folks around here. Do hope you can make the next reunion.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HAP,

Thanks for your call. It was good to remember stories of General Aderholt. Another would be getting Bob Hope to NKP for USO show at Christmas '67 (I think it was). Clips of that show made "The Best of Bob Hope & USO."

I had gone to Bangkok to "escort" him up and we spent the night as he and writers listened to me tell what was happening. Hope had a real way of telling the writers what was funny or appreciated.

Walt Disney died that night and I saw a Pro (Hope) in action.

Bill Turk
3606 West 123rd Place
Crown Point, IN 46307

Hap's note: Thanks for the program on Colonel Owen Heeter, deceased, Bill. It's most interesting and quite informative but too lengthy (and late) for news letter. Appreciate your letter too.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HI HAP,

Address labels came today. Many thanks for your fast response.

Is it generally known that address labels are available again? I seem to remember a few years ago when somebody asked about it and the answer was that something had been lost or misplaced and therefore the request answer was negative. Thanks again!

Stan Castleman
6 Island View Drive
Cumberland Foreside, ME 04110

Hap's Note: Many thanks for the generous donation Stan. I've been here from the beginning Stan and I can't ever remember refusing any one their requests for address labels for any reason.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ATTENTION READERS

I am a military author and Vietnam veteran. I am currently writing about the battle of Ngok Tavak that took place in May 1968. This was an outpost of the Kham Duc Special Forces camp that was evacuated 10-12 May 1968. An AC-47 Spooky came to the assistance of the Ngok Tavak

See **LETTERS** pg. 9

ACA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

STUDENT'S NAME: _____

STUDENT'S ID# _____

RELATIONSHIP: _____ AGE: _____

COLLEGE: _____

ADDRESS OF COLLEGE: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

MEMBER'S NAME: _____

MEMBER'S # _____

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.

Letters

Continued from page 8

outpost around 0430 hours on the 10th of May 1968. I am trying to contact any crew member who was on that aircraft. Can you help?

Bruce Davies
Australia
bruce.davies@optusnet.com.au

★★★★★★

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

Sorry to tell you this information this way but my husband Erwin Davis, AKA Ervin, AKA Butch, died this morning (22 April) at around 3:50 AM.

I know that all the people he communicated with by way of e-

mail was a Godsend to him and allowed him many hours of pleasure by conversing with friends of like interest.

Since I do not know who you all are I hope you will excuse my impersonal method of contact, but I know of no other way except to go into his e-mail and send out to all who regularly corresponded with him. If you receive a duplicate copy of this e-mail, I am sorry. I will try to keep a copy of all the addresses I send this to.

I am making arrangements tomorrow at Parsons Funeral Home.

Thank you for being a part of my husband's life.

Joan Davis
3625 N Miami Avenue
Muncie, IN 47303

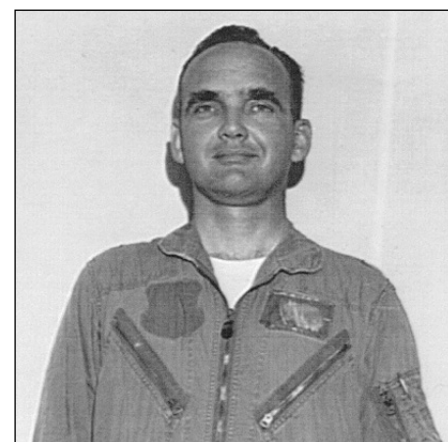
Ed Note: Please accept our sincerest and heartfelt condolences Joan on your and our loss of Erwin. He was a faithful and loyal commando to the end. He will be mightily missed by all. A following note to past president Robert Downs from Al Shinkle will be of interest to you.

★★★★★★

DEAR AIR COMMANDO FRIENDS,

I do appreciate the opportunity you have offered. I would like to

have a memorial brick placed in the name of my beloved deceased husband. There is no other marker anywhere to my knowledge (ashes were mingled and scattered by another). Because flying was always most important in his life, the inscription should simply read: Curtis Lee Messex
USAF Pilot, 1st ACS
03/29/1930 - 06/14/2000



I stuck with name and dates because rank is not of great importance and serial numbers changed several times.

May Curt continue to do flight checks with Angels. I remember that third date at the University of Colorado when he stated flatly that I objected to his flying, we would stop seeing each other. That was before basic cadets. I thank God he is out of pain. Thank you sincerely.

Anita S. Messex (Sherry)
718 E. Dalke
Spokane, WA 99208

Ed Note: Thank you for the brick order Sherry. Your inscription wishes will be exactly as you prescribed.

★★★★★★

ROBERT (DOWNS),

I doubt that you knew Erwin Davis. He served in Laos. He cre-

War Story

Continued from page 7

would be, for morale was down at shower clog heights and his mere presence as a juxtaposition to the former SAC bomber or ATC career instructor pilot corps of LTC's certainly would be a welcomed sight.

We found him a room and settled him in and with a map of the base, a few names and off he went to find a job. Normally, one who is assigned to Nam came with orders specifying their unit assignment, date of arrival.

Also part of this is the RTU training to qualify the assignee to the plane and mission, alas, not Howie Pierson...came over on leave order from CONUS; hopped a C141 direct to Bien Hoa for a short stay. (Holiday in the Combat Zone?).

Via personal connections he got a very unusual in-theater LA-37 check out, gunnery certification and Ojala an Ops Officer position came open with a new VNAFA-37 Outfit.. Off he went.

He did love the young fellas in

our and the other A-37 sqdns (90th, and the 604th SOS). He would be at any of the unit's Happy Hours or Commander's Calls and would by his presence and bearing inspire the jocks.

I recall one 8th SOS gathering and our Sqdn Cdr (a former SAC B-36 driver and HQ SAC staffer) was railing on about silly SAC'isms and instilling fear and career ending thoughts for minor indiscretions while in flight such as aerobatics or dive bomb runs of greater than 30 degrees (B-36's didn't do dive bombing).

Commando Clean noted the murmurs of discontent with the leadership and asked to make a few words LTC to LTC...the B-36 bottle cap Colonel agreed and Howie began via memory reciting the officers oath of office...very slowly and with perfect enunciation, eye contact with all there gathered...warmed the spirits of the young jocks and set the appointed leaders straight.

Howie, it was revealed over a Scotch, was a former SAC bent wing warrior in B-47's so he could speak SAC and knew of the dismal leadership by the LeMay crowd.

Funny sight to see Commando Clean (and the moustache was again growing) and his in-country Instructor Pilot, a former Detroit Lions Nose Guard, Major Jay Weenig, squeezed in the very tight cockpit of their mission A-37...like sardines being squashed in a can. How the canopy went down is a miracle.

Gotta funny tale about Howie meets Linda in the 8th Attack Sqdn hootch latrine and shower...but we'll leave that one for another day.

The 8th Attack Sqdn were Co-Ed and the only fighter hooch in country that could claim . both a round-eye red-headed nurse and Commando Clean as residents.

Submitted By: Dave Blum

Letters

Continued from page 9

ated the only fully devoted website devoted to Royal Lao Air Force Pilots. He created other websites too. When I felt the urge to correct or expand on his website info, I never hesitated to inform him of same; and he never failed to update his website with the info I provided.

I included him as an addressee on my request for inputs on the design of the Erawan Medallion and a few days ago he took the time to send me an email with his thoughts on same.

Since he was one of us, please contact whomever it is in the Air Commando Association that handles announcing such info and inform of Erwin's passing.

Odd note; it was either three or four years ago tomorrow that Don Randle completed his part of the journey in this incarnation and advanced to the next step. Don was a super good guy and I have fond memories of him too.

Al Shinkle
1280 NE Ellis Way, Apt C-4
Pullman, WA 99163-5349

★★★★★★

DEAR FELLOW MEMBERS,

I am requesting your assistance in the preparation of a book I am writing about the tactical air war in Southeast Asia. It is based upon my experiences when I served there during 1968-1970 as an aircraft mechanic in the U.S. Air force.

One of the appendices that I am preparing is an Air Order of Battle, listing the serial numbers of the aircraft assigned to the units in which I served. I am specifically seeking the serial number of the MC-130E assigned the call sign, "Cherry 02," and flown in the Son Tay raid of November 1970.

I have a personal stake in this inquiry. I was at Udorn AB that night and I was one of the three kids dispatched to to commence battle damage repairs on "Firebird 03" (F-105G #63-8327) after her recovery there. Of course I didn't learn of the significance of that night until months later.

Further more, a second appendix will feature unit insignia of the flying units which I served with while in Thailand. I am seeking full-size, really crisp color images of the patches of the following Special Operations Squadrons whose aircraft I worked on:
14th SOS AC-47D Shadows at Udorn, ca. 1969-1970.

18th SOS AC-119K Stingers At Udorn, ca. 1969-1970.

21st SOS CH-3E's (Pony Express? call sign "Custer"?) Udorn, ca. 1969-1970.

Any assistance rendered to me in this endeavor will be greatly appreciated.

Dave Hansen
3936 E Elm Road
Oak Creek, WI 53154-6622
(414) 764-1326

★★★★★★

DEAR ACA,

Sorry news about Geno, Please give Mern and my sympathies to Shirley and the kids. I wish I could be there, but issues require me to be here.

Dave Henry
8008 Plantation Lakes Dr.
Port St. Lucie, FL 34986

DEAR SIR,

Enclosed is a \$100 check in payment for a commemorative brick for a deceased fellow officer and US Air Force Academy classmate, Calvin F. Nay. He served as a pilot in the 310th ACS in

Vietnam. Information regarding the three lines to be crafted is also enclosed.

Request an acknowledgement of this transaction and would greatly appreciate notification when his commemorative brick is complete.

Charles R. Mordan
PO Box 278
Bosworth, MO 64623

Ed Note: Your letter and check is herewith acknowledged Charles. You have chosen a lasting and memorable way to remember your friend. Will notify you when Cal's brick is crafted.

★★★★★★

DEAR HEINIE,

Enclosed is a donation to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation in memory of my husband, Orel T. Hooks.

I appreciate the Air Commando Association listing Orel's name in the "TAPS" column.

I hope that your health will continue to improve.

Sincerely,
Mrs. LaJuana Hooks
10 Forest Grove PL
Fort Walton Beach FL 32548

★★★★★★

DEAR HAP AND FELLOW COMMANDOS,

I was very proud that the "Family Name" of "1st SOW" was reclaimed and redesignated. I was in the 1st SOW 4420th Supply Squadron, 603rd Special Ops Squadron, and Black Spot Task Force from '68 - '70. It was an honor to serve in such an historic and distinguished wing!

Chris Frick
911 13th Street
Highland, IL 62249

Hap's Note: I share your enthusiasm and excitement for all the same reasons Chris. I had the high honor of attending the memorable occasion and was flooded with memories from the past.

★★★★★★

TO ACA MEMBERS,

It has come to our attention that many ACA members have been trying to send BG Aderholt emails and they are unable to get through. Hap Lutz has obtained a current working email address for the General, it is: heinie@fareast-interiors.com. To the best of our knowledge this is a working email but as we all know, things can mysteriously get hung up or disappear in cyberspace.

ACA Editor

★★★★★★

Thank You



1st Special Operations Wing

DEAR ACA,

On behalf of the entire 1st Special Operations Wing. I would like to thank you for your support of Hurlburt Field's Quarterly

See **LETTERS** pg. 11

Letters

Continued from page 10

Awards Breakfast. Without your support the breakfast would not have been a success. Once again thank you for your continued support of the military in the area.

Norman J. Brozenick, Jr.
Colonel, USAF, Commander
131 Bartley St., Suite 315
Hurlburt Field FL 32544

★★★★★★

DEAR ACA

Thank you. Your thoughtfulness is very uplifting and meaningful during such a difficult time. It is reassuring and comforting that others care so very much.

Sincerely,
James J. O'Connor Family
Ms Dalene O'Connor
8240 Curry Rd
Biloxi MS 39532

★★★★★★



DEAR JIM,

It was with sincere appreciation that I received your kind thoughts and well wishes.

To date all has gone well and currently back in training as per the requirements of our rehab people.

At this moment preparations for our Anzac Day is under way at 100% and all time consuming as our National Day of Remembrance, more significantly

our Dawn Service as historically televised.

This is an event and task that I hold dear to my heart and enjoy. Making a soft point that society never forget what a free world is all about and not to take it for granted.

Well mate, both Marj and myself had a great time at the reunion as it certainly was a unique moment in time.

Jim, we thank you for your thoughts, take care and regards to all.

Ron Workman
53 Dogwood Drive
Palm Beach, Qld
Australia 4221

★★★★★★

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

Attn: John Connor & Jim Boney

On behalf of the Valentine Family, the enclosed check for \$5,000 is donated to the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation in memory of Gene "Geno" Valentine.

Keep up your outstanding efforts.

Ben Valentine
ACA Assoc. Life Mem.
600 Yavapai Hills Drive
Prescott, AZ 86301-5786

★★★★★★

LOOKING FOR CREW PHOTO

My name is Dane Messex. I am the grandson of Curt Messex (died in 2000). I am in search of a crew photo of him from 1968 or 1969. He would have been a Major at the time. I've been in contact with some of his crew and here is what one of them remembered.

We flew out of Ubon Thailand call sign Blind Bat. C130 A model.

The Major was our Aircraft Commander; 1st Lt. Hutton was Co-Pilot; Capt. Mastropiere Nav 1; Capt. Saue (sp?) Nav 2; SSgt. Adams Flight Engineer; Sgt. Hutton...in the back; A1c Allen....in the back; A1c Guelde ...in the back"

Any information would be helpful. Thank you for your time. Dane Messex, my e-mail address is: dmfireproof@yahoo.com

★★★★★★

DEAR ACA,

I have a question for you, I am trying to get some "care" packages to our people on the "pointy end" of Operations in Afghanistan, do you know how I might do that?

Charlie Johnson
ACA Member

★★★★★★

PETE

Thanks for the dues reminder! This Association is my "Band of Brothers" from days gone by.

Enclosed are my dues.

David E. Knobloch
Member # 4021
621 Carmel St
Johnstown PA 15904

★★★★★★

DEAR EDITOR,

I am sending this letter hoping that you will publish our planned reunion of those formerly assigned to Pleiku Air Base, Vietnam. The base was in operation from 1962 until 1972. Many Units, Detachments, and Squadrons were assigned during this time frame. I am in search of those assigned to the Air Commandos from March 1968 to 1969.

The reunion will be held from September 19th thru the 23rd,

2007, in Veteran's friendly Branson, MO. Please contact Harry Beam at (724) 745-9129 or E-mail: trpleiku@comcast.net and check out our website at: www.pleikuab.com.

Thanks for your help in our planned reunion for 2007. I hope I can make it to the Air Commando reunion one of these years. Keep up the good work in publishing the newsletter and Web site. I was an Air Commando with the 6th Air Commando's from 1968 to 1969 at Pleiku Air Base and Danang, Vietnam.

Harry Beam
403 N. Jefferson Avenue
Canonsburg, PA 15317-1248

★★★★★★

DEAR HAP,

Hello from the wilds of Idaho. Winter has passed and we are ready for a good summer.

I spent most of the winter in the hospital. I had two spinal surgeries, one being a spinal fusion and the other was to eliminate the infection from the initial surgery. Fifteen days later I had gall bladder surgery the hard way. I had accumulated so much scar tissue from previous cancer surgeries the procedure was difficult. But all that is past now and I am receiving water physical therapy and it is working very well. So much so, in fact, I'm playing catch up on my yard chores.

I have a question for you Hap. I am in a conflict with the VA about my disability rating and I need verification that I was a member of Project Water Pump and served in both Thailand and Laos during January 1965 to June of 1965. My DD-214 only shows that I was overseas during that period. The VA requires a letter or

See **LETTERS** pg. 12

Air Commando Hall of Fame Program

It is time to submit deserving individuals for the special recognition that goes with induction into the AC Hall of Fame. If assistance is needed, contact the ACA office. There are folks who deserve this very special honor.

The AC HOF Program is administered with the following guidelines established by the ACA

Board of Directors.

The ACA President, with approval of the Board of Directors, appoints the ACA Hall of Fame Committee. All committee members must be members of the ACA. At least one committee member must also be a member of the Hall of Fame.

PROCEDURES:

Nominations may be accepted at any time. Request for nominations will be made as a minimum in the May Newsletter. The Committee will review nominations in sufficient time to inform selectees prior to the annual October reunion where the announcements and presentations are made.

A. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. All nominees must meet the eligibility criteria for membership in the Air Commando Association.
2. Nominees must have been assigned or attached for no less than one year to an Air Force Air Commando or Special Operations unit.
3. No nominee shall be selected based upon a singular circumstance of bravery or heroics except this restriction does not apply to Medal of Honor awardees.
4. Nominees shall have served honorably while on active duty and in civilian life.
5. The justification for the nominee shall clearly reflect SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BETTERMENT OF AIR COMMANDO OR AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES.

B. NOMINATION PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS

1. Anyone may nominate any air commando who meets the eligibility criteria for selection to the Hall of Fame.
2. Nomination package will include:
 - a. Verifiable and detailed information about the nominees and complete justification for selection.
 - b. A copy of the DD-214 or equivalent documentation to ver-

fy service, awards, decorations, and/or other significant achievements.

- c. A one-paragraph citation to be used in the induction ceremony.
 - d. Photo of nominee, if available.
 - e. Names, addresses, and phone numbers of two professional references.
3. Nomination packages will be sent to the AC HOF Committee, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569 to arrive no later than 31 July of each year.

C. SELECTION PROCEDURES

1. The HOF Committee will process and validate nomination packages.
2. Recommend only those nominees who meet the basic criteria and have made significant individual and unique contributions to Air Force Special Operations.
3. Submit the list of recommended nominees for induction to the ACA Board of Directors for approval.
4. Nomination packages for non-selectees will be retained and automatically reconsidered annually for an additional two-year period.

D. SELECTION AND INDUCTION PROCEDURES

1. The ACA Board of Directors will provide final approval of the selectees.
2. The selectees will be inducted into the HOF at the annual reunion, normally at the banquet.
3. A certificate and special nametag will be presented during induction.
4. A brass nameplate will be mounted on the HOF memorial display maintained in the ACA building.

Letters

Continued from page 11

a copy of orders verifying that I was in fact at those locations. If someone who had knowledge of my being there would write me a short note, I would certainly appreciate it.

I will close for now and I hope you and your family are doing well and please tell Heinie I send my best.

Joe Coleman
220 N. Owyhee Street
Boise, ID 83706
PH: 208 389 9019

Dear Joe,

This verification of service problem, particularly in Laos, because we weren't there, has been a stickler for many, many of us. I have written 37 "Buddy Letters" on behalf of those I served with in the "Secret War." To my knowledge, all have been accepted.

So, I ask all you readers that served with Joe to respond to his needs. The letters that I crafted for my recipients were in a form of a certificate. A model follows:

CERTIFICATE

This is to swear and affirm that I, Roland H. Lutz, CMSgt, USAF, (Ret), did serve with TSgt (Ret) John Doe, SSN 000 00 0000, during the period 1 June 1970 to 1 December 1970 in the country of

Laos.

Roland H. Lutz, CMSgt, (Ret)
Attest

I made 5 copies of the item and signed them in front of a notary and sent them to the individual.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ACADEMY DEMOGRAPHICS CHANGE

The Air Force Academy this year admitted record numbers of women and minorities.

The Class of 2010, numbering 1,352 students, includes 277 women. They account for 20.5 percent of the class.

The minority figure is 317 new cadets, or just over 23 percent. That figure comprises 125 Asian-Americans, 34 Native Americans, 99 Hispanics, and 59 African-Americans. Of the minorities, 72 are women.

The academy received 9,255 applications, with 1,719 appointments offered. Of those accepting appointments, 1,075 were men. In the Class of 2010, 633 cadets are medically qualified to apply for pilot training upon graduation.

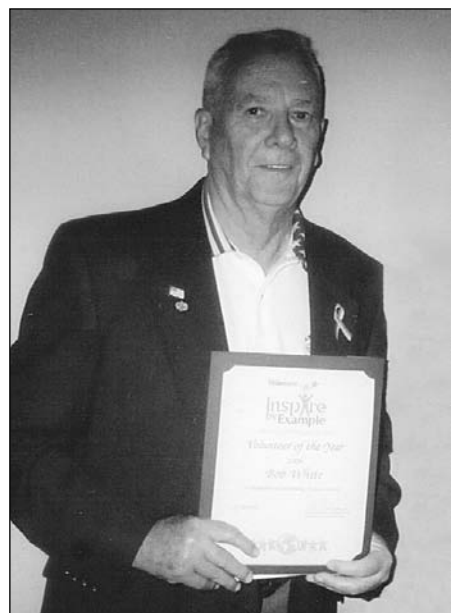
The academy also admitted 19 international cadets.

For the first time, the academy enrolled cadets from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Courtesy, AIR FORCE, Sep '06

ACA Board Member Wins Volunteer of the Year Award

Bob White, as many of you may already know, oversees and



ACA member, Bob White, was nominated and won the 2006-2007 Eglin Air Force Base Volunteer of the Year award on April 17, 2007.

manages the Airman's Attic located on Eglin AFB. His efforts along with a crew of dedicated volunteers have defrayed the cost of a PCS relocation for 3,204 Team Eglin Airmen and their families! This year to date, the Airman's Attic issued 6,221 household items. Going above and beyond throughout the year, Bob and his

team obtained donations from our local community, attaining things such as costly baby items and money for cleaning supplies, etc. To help our military families in need during the stressful holiday season, Bob also organized Team Eglin's Toys for Tots distribution resulting in 2,265 toys issued to 376 customers which served 473 children!

Bob's dedication goes beyond what one would expect. Such as, by being at the Airman's Attic every week, and, oftentimes, when it's closed! Bob inspires and builds relationships with Airman and their families, and in return, customers often "give back" by volunteering at the Airman's Attic themselves. The impact of Bob's tireless efforts on the Eglin community is far reaching and clearly deserved the Volunteer of the Year recognition for 2006!

A special thanks to Lisa Splinter of the Airman and Family Readiness Center for her efforts in submission of this information which was given to the Volunteer Advisory Committee for Bob's nomination and recognition.

For the Retired Members

For those not at the Business Meeting, the following information will be of interest. The Air Force History office is offering books on the Vietnam war, free of charge, to active duty and retired military members. You can only request them via the internet and all the information is provided below. Most of the board has already received theirs and they provide some different perspectives.

DIRECTIONS FOR OBTAINING COPY OF The War Against

Trucks and Air War over South Vietnam:

Active Duty, Retired, National Guard, Reserve, and current DOD civilians may receive one paperback copy of each book **FREE** of charge by sending an e-mail to: Debra.Moss@pentagon.af.mil along with your name, rank, service, which category (Active Duty, Retired, National Guard, etc.), number of years of service and your complete mailing address. This does not apply to veterans

See **MEMBERS** pg. 15



New American Legion is open and ready for business in Navarre. Post 382 is located at 1850 Lunette Street in Navarre, FL. (Just north of Regions Bank)

A-37 Reunion Sept 6-9, 2007

"Dragonfly" members and friends



If you flew, worked on, worked with, or just have a high admiration for the great little A-37 Dragonfly fighter aircraft, why not COME AND ENJOY a reunion with others to be held at the Hilton

Washington Dulles Airport Hotel in Herndon, VA during Sept 6-9, 2007. (A great place for a memorable vacation at our wonderful nation's capital.) Plus if you GIVE US your name and address, you will receive the A-37 'Reunion' Association newsletter **FREE** for a year. Why not give it a try. Contact Ollie Maier, at GM08@TxState.edu (that's GM zero eight) or 512/353-7432. Also check out the homepage: A-37.org. See you in there?

Thank you, Ollie

A/B/RB-26 REUNION

The bi-annual 26's of the '60 reunion will be held in conjunction with the ACA.

Reunion October 4-7 2007 in Ft. Walton Beach, FL. Farmgate, 1st Air Commando

Sqdn, Big Eagle, Nimrods, Panama, et al. Crews, both air and ground, family and friends are invited. If you are not on our mailing list, have been off the planet or otherwise overlooked please contact us for details:

Gary Pflugaupt (501) 835-5162 The26reunion@sbcglobal.net

Tom Smith, email: tsmith001@ec.rr.com

John Sodergren, email: jcsod@earthlink.net



Inspiration comes from unusual source for one Airman

*by Tech. Sgt. Michael Place
1st SOLRS*

Over the past few months, while doing my physical training every morning at the Aderholt Fitness Center, I noticed a person helping an elderly, white-haired gentleman exercise with weights and various equipment.

I thought to myself that they were probably retired chiefs or colonels coming to Hurlburt to get their daily exercise.

The white-haired gentleman would be lifting weights, just clanging away on the machines pumping iron, then he'd make his

way to the next piece of equipment with his friend helping set up the machine and assisting him.

I thought to myself that it was truly inspiring to see these guys coming to the gym every day to stay fit.

I saw the person that helps him in the locker room one evening and I wanted to thank him for helping and inspiring the white haired gentleman to come to the gym.

This gentleman, Joseph Caruth, proceeded to ex-plain that the 87-year old gentleman he assists, comes to his gym to inspire

and motivate the Airmen not only to be fit to fight, but to be fit for life.

The white haired gentleman is retired Brig. Gen. Harry "Heinie" Aderholt.

Both of these gentlemen should be commended for the example they set for Airmen young and old. Additionally, they have both had an incredible impact on the base and the community.

Wherever you are, whatever you do, you may never know who or where inspiration will come from



Joseph Caruth (left) and retired Brig. Gen. Harry Aderholt spin on the bicycles during their daily workout at the Aderholt Fitness Center. (U.S. Air Force photo by Jamie Haig)

Hurlburt dorm dedicated to an original Air Commando



**This dormitory wing is named in honor of
Senior Master Sergeant Carlous Christian
30 March 1924 - 14 December 2004**

First Sergeant

Senior Master Sergeant Christian's dedication in caring for his troops was legendary. He was an original member of the 1st Air Commando Group and participant in the 1944 aerial invasion into Burma, "Operation Thursday."

An intrepid member of the 1st Air Commando Wing, Sergeant Christian's selfless dedication tot he mission of Special Operations Forces reflects great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.



*by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes
16 SOW Public Affairs*

The east wing of building 91053 was dedicated in honor of the late retired Senior Master Sgt. Carlous Christian during a ceremony here Sunday.

The four-by-four style dormitory is located next to the Riptide Din-ing/Fitness Facility.

Sergeant Christian was one of the original members of the 1st Air Com-mando Group and was known for his caring and dedication to his troops as a first sergeant.

He served in many operations during his more than 30-year career, including the invasion of Burma in March 1944. While in Burma, India, Sergeant Christian was in a violent glider crash where he was one of only five survivors of a 22-man crew.

Sergeant Christian's son and daughter-in-law and his two

daughters were in attendance during the ceremony.

They were presented with a mock-up of the memorial statue. Sam Sambogna, president of the Air Commando Association also attended the ceremony.

The memorial will serve as a reminder of Sergeant Christian's commitment and dedication to the special operations community.



EDITOR, ACA NEWSLETTER,

I was member of the 311th Air commando Squadron stationed at Danang AB, RVN. A few years ago our crew got together at Natalia, TX, when the Traveling Wall was there, all except our co-pilot, 1st Lt. Howard R. McClain.

We were awarded the DFC 19 May 1966 for action on 24 August 1965. The rest of the crew was Captain Robert S. Clark, Pilot, 1st Lt. John H. Smith, Navigator, SSgt Frank J. Blackmon, Loadmaster, and SSgt Marshall D. Mitchell, Flight Mechanic.



Lt. Howard R. McClain 1965

We have tried through the years to find "Mac" with no success. We would appreciate greatly if you could run his picture in our newsletter and just maybe someone will know where he is. We are trying to plan another crew reunion soon and would like for him to be there. "Mac" was from Humboldt, AZ, and should be

somewhere near sixty-six years old. He is the youngest member of our crew.

Our commander, LtCol. Harry Howton was the best CO I ever served under. In the summer of 1964, he along with Captain Clark and other flight crew members, ferried a Squadron of C-123's from Crestview (somewhere near Hurlburt where fuel and oil tanks were installed in the cargo bay) to Saigon and DaNang.

He was the kind of leader that would not ask his men to do a job that he was not up in front leading. I had the privilege of flying with him on many occasions. We flew the crew system at DaNang. We were crewed up in December of 1964 and we flew with crew the entire time we were there. If for some reason a crew member was not happy with his crew, he could ask to be reassigned to another crew. Since Harry Howton was Commander, he was assigned a crew. He would show up at our briefing and tell Lt. McClain to take the day off. It was usually when we were making an air drop because they were the most exciting.

I had the privilege of flying with Col Howton in the lead C-123 when we tried to burn the Iron Triangle between Bien Hoa and Saigon in the summer of 1965. We were directed by Squadron Operations to abort our assigned

mission, return to base, pack an overnight bag, return to the aircraft and standby. While we were waiting, the unit clerk delivered our



Lt Col. Harry Howton

mail. I was stunned when I opened the letter from my wife. There in bold print was a news clipping, "C-123's BOMB IRON TRIANGLE," dated two weeks earlier. This is the mission we were going on. Needless to say the only thing we killed were monkeys. Mission was classified TOP SECRET.

We were twenty-four C-123's (this was before the modification of jet boosters) flying in formation. We dropping pallets of four 55 gallon drums of napalm and aviation fuel by parachutes trig-

gered by a flare with a time set to go off when the load was a tree top level. We made three passes and on the third pass the heat was intense at 2500 feet that Col Howton was having a hard time controlling the aircraft. I can just imagine how rough it was for the last plane in the formation.

We've read about all the C-130's and what they accomplished in Vietnam, but seldom hear about the real work horse that landed where no other aircraft could land except a helicopter or stol aircraft. I often wonder what happened to all the C-123's we left over there. I guess they are flying for the Ho Chi Minh Air Lines. They did not appear in the movie, "We Were Soldiers." It is possible there were not enough left to make a movie.

I'll have more information and pictures later. Thanks for helping to find Howard R. McClain.

Jeff Blackmon
397 CR 6717
Natalia, TX 78059
(830) 665-4487
jeffbl@devtex.net

Authentic Blood Chits

Genuine USAF issue Blood Chits are available. To obtain a Korean War Blood Chit, published in 1951, 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. Again, make check payable to the McCoskrie/Threshold Foundation and mail to the address listed below.

**BLOOD CHIT
ACA COUNTRY STORE
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!



Official Korean War Blood Chit
1951 issue from survival kits

Members

Continued from page 13

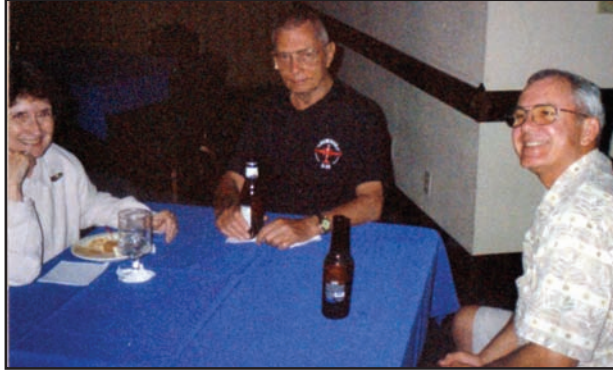
who are not retired.

Veterans who are not retired, and any others must purchase the books from the U.S. Government Printing Office at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>. Type in the name of the book in the search area and click on "Search" GPO requires prepayment by credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover) or personal check.

Contact or Telephone:

Debra A. Moss, GS-11, DAF
Resource Advisor and Security Manager
HQ USAF/HOH
3 Brookley Ave. Box 94
Bolling AFB DC 20032-50000
Voice: (202) 404-2224,
DSN 754-2224
Fax: (202) 404-2271

April 13th Social



ACA Country Store

Joyce Harrington, Country Store Manger



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



Bush Hat - \$20 - Firm (M,L,XL)



Ball Caps - \$10
(ACA lettering or crest)
Available in Navy, royal & light blue, black, white, gray, denim, camo & red.



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



Bush Hat - \$20 - Soft (M,L,XL)



NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /blue



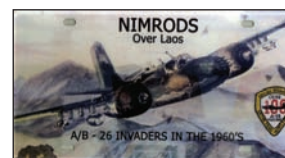
NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /white



Lic Plate - \$10 /white



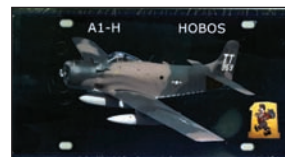
Aircraft Lic Plates
Son Tay Raiders - \$10



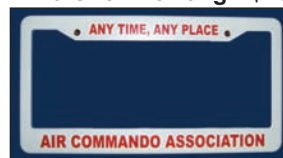
Aircraft Lic Plates
Nimrods over Laos - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates
B-26 Over MeKong - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates
A1-H Hobos - \$10



Lic Plate holder- \$4



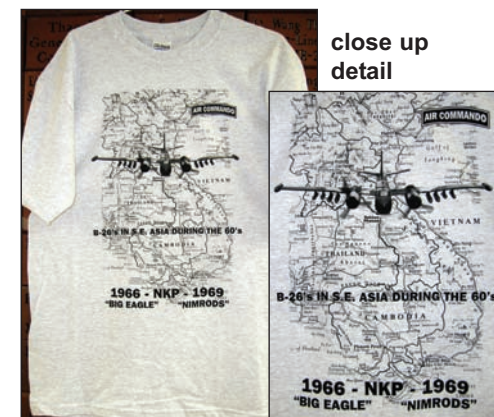
Aircraft Lic Plates
B-26 - \$10



Golf shirts - \$15 w/ crest
avail in red, white, royal blue



T-shirt - \$10 white only (S,M,L,XL)
(XXL) - \$12



B-26 T-shirt - \$10 (M,L,XL) Limited supply



Jackets - \$35 (M-XXL) Blue, Tan, Navy, Black



50th Poster - \$1.00 (20"x 24")



Beer Mugs - \$10 (Logo or Lettering)



Bumper Sticker - \$2.00



Window Decal - \$3.00 8" wide



Lapel Pin - \$4 (sm/large)



ACA Challenge Coin - \$5
bronze (front/back)



50th Commemorative Coin - \$5
bronze (front/back)



POW/MIA Flag - \$12

See the next page for full list of items and prices. If you have questions on any of the items you see please call Joyce Harrington on Tuesdays or Fridays 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.



Golf Towel - \$8



ACA
Decal
2/\$1.00
4"x5"



POW/MIA
Decal
\$2.00

Country Store Items Available

ZAP Patch.....	\$3.00
Original Air Commando Gp Patch	\$3.00
ACA Cloth Patch	\$3.00
POW/MIA Patches	\$3.50
ACA "AIR COMMANDO" Cloth Tab.....	\$3.00
ACA Challenge Coins (Bronze)	\$5.00
50th Commemorative Coin (Bronze).....	\$5.00
Pens with "Air Commando Association"	\$1.00
ACA Bumper Sticker	\$2.00
"AIR COMMANDO" 8" decal car window display	\$3.00

Aircraft License Plates

B-26 "Over the MeKong"; B-26 "in SE Asia in the 60's"; B-26 "Nimrods Over Laos"; "Son Tay Raiders"; "A1-H Hobos"	\$10.00
NEW ACA License Plates, white or blue	\$12.00
ACA License Plates, white.....	\$10.00
Printed Plastic License Plate Holders	\$4.00
ACA Decal (4"x 5")	2/\$1.00
POW/MIA Decals	\$2.00
ACA Lapel Pin (Large & Small)	\$4.00
ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering	\$10.00
Air Commando Bush Hat (M, L, XL).....	\$20.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (S, M, L,XL).....	\$10.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL)	\$12.00
ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, white, red, royal blue, waffle weave, with crest) (navy and black with lettering).....	\$15.00
Denim long sleeve shirts (Ladies M, L, XL Men M, L, XL, & XXL).....	
available with lettering or crest.....	\$20.00
Jackets - (M to XXL- Tan, Navy, Black, Royal Blue)	\$35.00
**50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24").....	\$1.00
POW/MIA Flags	\$12.00
Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo)	\$8.00
Beer Mugs with logo or lettering "60 years Air Commando"	\$10.00

ORDER FORM

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

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price

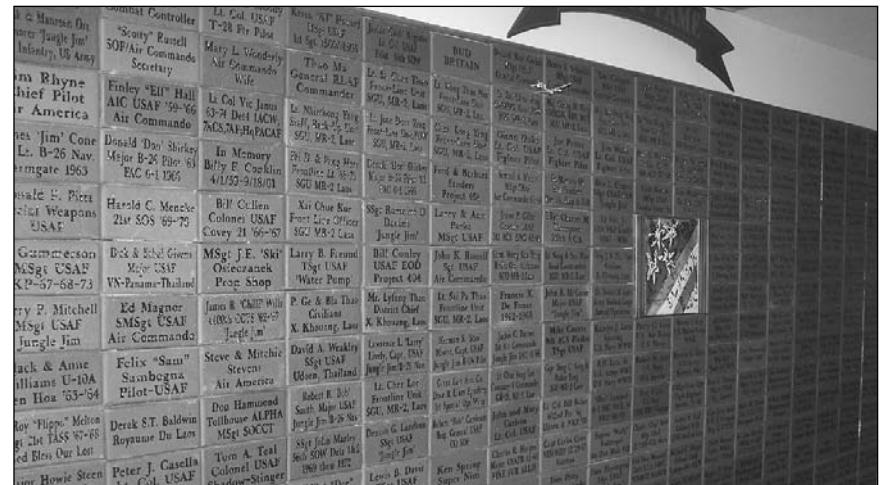
Sub Total _____
 20% Shipping & Handling _____
 Grand Total _____

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



Jerry Rhein and LtGen Leroy Manor displaying auto license plate commemorating their daring participation on the Son Tay Prison Raid. General Manor was the Special Operation Forces Commander, Jerry Rhein was the flight leader of the A1-E's.

COMMEMORATIVE ACA BRICK



Commemorative bricks are again available for you, a beloved family member, or a devoted or departed friend. The donation remains at \$100 and there are currently only 57 spaces available and are allotted on a first come, first served basis. Roger Klair and Willie Hall are eager to start so please submit your request ASAP. Forward requests 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:

John & Carolyn Wiren

Capt USMC & Capt USAF

Air America

The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation Update

By John Grove

Thailand Initiative

Air Commandos from all walks of life have signed up to work with the TLC brotherhood and support the many projects that are so needed in Thailand. The TLC (Thai Laos Cambodia) Brotherhood was formed to do just what they do best. Help the needy. The MTF has sent money thru the TLC to support four projects in Thailand, three water systems and one bathroom. All these are in schools in rural North East Thailand. The project list is long but the funds are few.

Organizations that have expressed interest in this effort are the Jolly Green, Stray Goose, Gunships and Nimrods. These are just the folks we have contacted so far and all are for it. What we propose is the ACA/MTF will collect funds for the TLC project list. TLC will let us know the project estimated cost and when they are ready to do more. We put the funds in the TLC account here in the USA. They draw it in Thailand as needed for the approved projects. We will look over the project list and fund just what we can afford, and not send them all the funds at once. They do send us photos of the before and after work, but they were of too poor quality to put in this newsletter.

Our ACA members who travel to that area have said they will look over the projects when they get to the area. Clyde Howard is very interested in seeing the progress we can make. He hopes to travel there this summer. Richard Helton will be in that area also.

The Thai people provide the labor to make this happen. Our

TLC folks just purchase the equipment and supplies, the local population does the labor. That gives them pride of ownership in a good job well done.

Americans owe the Thai people much for the years of unwavering support for US interests, and the Air Commandos really owe them for being such great hosts for the many years we spent in their great country.

Please send your donation to MTF, PO Box 67, Mary Esther FL 32569. Indicate on the donation it is for Thailand. 100% of the money we collect for Thailand will go to Thailand. Your donation is tax deductible as provided by law.

Thailand

Great news already for the Thai projects. John Grove briefed the Stray Goose (1st SOS and original blackbirds), officers at their staff meeting and they are very interested in contributing to the effort. The Jolly Greens, (Combat Rescue), annual reunion was in Ft Walton last month and they also are interested, they already have contributed some funds to the projects. The Special Ops helicopter force has also stepped up to help with contributions. This is one great effort for all Commandos and the good we will do is very important to the folks in NE Thailand. Please contribute all you can now. Indicate on your check the money is for Thailand. 100% of this money goes to buy parts and equipment for the project. Labor is provided by the villagers as their contribution.



McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 67

Mary Esther Florida • 32569

Ph: 850-581-0099 • Fax: 850-581-8998

Directors

President
Harry C. Aderholt

Vice President
John Grove

Secretary
Felix Sambogna

Treasurer
Butch Sluschewski

Advisors

John Connors
Bob White
Karen Kramer

Medical Advisor

John Peters, M.D.

TLC Brotherhood Inc.

The MTF is happy to inform you of the decision to fund several projects that you in the TLC have selected as high priority. They are;

1. Nong Bua Na Ratchakwai . bathroom project for Kindergarten
2. Koh Kong Elementary School Water purification project
3. Koh Naratchakway Noi School Water purification project
4. Nong Yao Elementary School Water purification project

The check for \$2145.00 is enclosed. Any funds left over may be applied to any of your Thailand projects that you deem worthy, just let us know where.

We asked that Dick Hopkins determine if naming a project for our major donors might be appropriate. Let us know. Maybe the larger project of the dining area could be one such project?? I like the idea of a plaque on each project if you think it can be done..

Please send us before and after photos as well as the after action report. We need these for to secure future funding.

We look forward to a long and fruitful joint effort.

Harry C. "Heinie" Aderholt, BG USAF Ret
Air Commando One, President MTF

John W Grove, Vice President, MTF

The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation is a charitable organization operating as a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation in accordance with IRS Tax Code section 501(c)3. The FEIN is 59 275 5196. Donations are tax deductible as provided by law. Mail donations to: MTF, P.O. Box 67, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0067. Thank you for your support.

Attic Space

If you need something done ask a busy person or Bob White. Bob is the ACA busy person at the Airman's Attic at Eglin and with the MTF. The Attic supports the



men and women from all services and all the local bases. If a person of any rank or a family is in need, Bob goes all out to get them squared away. To do this he needed more space as the photos show.

His current space is about half what he could realistically use to do his magic. He stayed on the track for space in the back half of the current building. After many weeks of doggin the powers at Eglin, he has the space. Now the Attic will grow to well over double the space and this is just in



time for the increased population of folks who are slated for this area. It is no wonder that Bob White has been recognized for his volunteer work. He does it all with a smile.

Air Commando Association Membership Application

Membership is open to:

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

*Newsletter is published quarterly.
Annual Reunion held in October*

Type Membership requesting:

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

Name: _____ Rank: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ ZIP: _____

Home# (____) _____ Work #: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

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

Please list: _____

AFSC/MOS: _____ Job Title: _____

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

Air Commando/Special Operations Service:

From ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____ Unit _____
 Location _____ Aircraft _____

From ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____ Unit _____
 Location _____ Aircraft _____

From ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____ Unit _____
 Location _____ Aircraft _____

From ____/____/____ To: ____/____/____ Unit _____
 Location _____ Aircraft _____

Present Occupation: _____

Spouse Name: _____

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

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

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

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

For Office use only: Membership Number: _____

Amount Paid: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Entered in Mailing List: _____ Entered in Accounting Log: _____

Welcome Letter: _____ Membership File: Sponsor: _____

An Example of “Breakdown” in Communication

Operation Halley’s Comet

A Colonel issued the following directive to his Executive Officer:

Tomorrow evening at approximately 2000 Halley’s Comet will be visible in this area, an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Have the men fall out in the battalion area in fatigues, and I will explain this rare phenomenon to them. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the men in the theater and I will show them films of it.

Executive Officer to Company Commanders:

By order of the Colonel, tomorrow at 2000, Halley’s Comet will appear above the battalion area. If it rains, fall the men out of fatigues, then march to the theater where this rare phenomenon will take place, something which occurs only once every 75 years.

Company Commander to Lieutenant:

By order of the Colonel in fatigues at 2000 tomorrow evening, the phenomenal Halley’s Comet will appear in the theater. In case of rain, in the battalion area, the Colonel will give another order, something which occurs once every 75 years.

Lieutenant to Sergeant:

Tomorrow at 2000, the Colonel will appear in the theater with Halley’s Comet, something which happens every 75 years. If it rains, the Colonel will order the comet into the battalion area.

Sergeant to Squad:

When it rains tomorrow at 2000, the phenomenal 75 year old General Halley, accompanied by the Colonel, will drive his comet through the battalion area theater in fatigues.

Safety Suggestion

Next time you come home for the night and you go to put your keys away, think of this: It's a security alarm system that you probably already have and requires no installation. Start keeping your car keys next to your bed on the nightstand when you go to bed at night.

If you think someone is trying to get into your house, or if you hear a noise outside your house, press the panic alarm on your car key chain. Test it! It will go off from most everywhere inside your house and will keep honking until your battery runs down or until you reset it with the button on the key fob chain. It works if you park in your driveway or garage.

If your car alarm goes off when

someone is trying to break in your house, odds are the burglar, or rapist, won't stick around...after a few seconds all the neighbors will be looking out their window to see who is out there and sure enough the criminal won't want that.

Try yours to make sure it works before you rely on it. Just know that you must press the alarm button again to turn it off.

And remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. The alarm can work the same way there...

This is something that should really be shared with everyone. Maybe it could save a life or stop a sexual abuse crime.

Courtesy - ARC light N/L

Can You Identify The ACA Presidents?

Since 1971 there have been 18 presidents of the ACA. A prize will be given to a member who identifies all, or most of the presidents correctly.

Excluded from the contest are: current and past ACA presidents, ACA and MTF board and staff members.

If several members identify all the presidents correctly, or if there are several responses with the most correct identifications, a random drawing of the correct responses will determine the final contest winner.

Send your guesses by letter or email to: Air Commando Association, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569; email: aircommando@aol.com. Responses must be received by 31 July 07. The winner will be announced in the August newsletter.



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



8. _____



9. _____



10. _____



11. _____



12. _____



13. _____



14. _____



15. _____



16. _____



17. _____



18. _____



MICHAEL YON : ONLINE MAGAZINE



COMBAT JOURNALIST

Michael Yon's Online Magazine. More than just award-winning photography capturing the chaos and drama of combat. More than just acclaimed frontline dispatches that are among the most downloaded news items on the internet. More than just trenchant analysis that time and again proves prescient way before any other reporter or website

calls it. More than just insightful interviews and profiles of military leaders, war correspondents and experts in international affairs. Michael Yon's Online Magazine is all these things and more. Log on and see why General Barry McCaffrey says, "Michael, I never miss a word you write."

HTTP://MICHAELYON-ONLINE.COM



AUTHOR

BLOGGER

PHOTOGRAPHER

To All ACA members

If you have not already done so, please send your email address to aircomando@aol.com. Note: the one "m" in commando. Please title subject of email "ACA MEMBER'S EMAIL"

We intend to send out information of interest to as many folks as possible. By using email we can fill the gap between publications of our quarterly newsletter and allow us to keep our membership informed of special events, loss of members, and other items of interest. Your email address will not be given out to anyone, it will be used solely for ACA official business.

Remembering Geno Valentine

Just getting around to reading e-mails, and am sorry to hear about Geno. He was one of my instructors in the A-26 at England AFB and a dear friend. Please pass my and Mimi's condolences to the family.

Leon "Crazy" Potet

Dear Geno,

Wait up for me old friend, we'll take one more flight together, out to Range 54 and have a ball dropping Mk 82s, shooting rockets and firing 50s. You were always bigger than life to me and I can't wait to see you again. Maybe after the flight, we could hit the "flying suit only" bar ... across from the O Club?

God Bless you,

Mark Dunker, AT-28Ds

P.S. to Robert Downs: Robert, please let me know when you have a date and time Geno will be buried at Arlington.

If you own a cell phone you need to read this!

All cell phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies and you will start to receive sale calls. And the worst part is YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS!

To prevent this, call the following number from your cell phone: 888-382-1222. It is the National DO NOT CALL list. It will only take a minute of your time. It blocks your number for five (5) years.

A member of our office staff called the number listed above and it is legitimate.

You must call from the cell phone number you are wanting to have blocked. You cannot call from a different phone number.

You may get more information at www.donotcall.gov.

Rossel Report

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE

(RAAF) Forward Air controllers and 35th Royal Transport Vietnam Flight Air Medals.

A number of you have helped in attempting to get the RAAF Air Medals for the FACs and 35th RTVF supporting us in Vietnam. Their Government had a policy against getting US Medals during the war and about 8 years ago they changed policies where they allowed their veterans being awarded our medals. Heinie added his penmanship to bolster things and a number of other Commandos helped with support letters and encouragement. It has been a long time and I have had trouble pulling up emails on this support but want to thank you all. Col Galipeau, a former C-130 pilot at Hurlburt and now with the Sec of the AF Military Recognition Office, handles these awards and has been waiting for several letters on the Raaf which were to be sent and somewhere along the line they either got lost or weren't sent. Last week the final letter for the 15 RAAF FAC were received and they are in the process of finalization of these awards. There were 39 RAAF FACs but some were either deceased, couldn't be found or we had no records on them. RAAF Flt Lt Garry Cooper, author of "Sock it to em Baby" book on RAAF FAC experience in Vietnam, assembled all of the paperwork to start the process some 5 years ago. Ron Workman, a crewman on the RAAF Caribous has been working on getting the 35th RTVF aircrew air Medals for over 30 years. He did tremendous amount of work in getting the names and records of the aircrew to present to the AF for recognition of their efforts in Vietnam. Both Garry cooper and Ron Workman are ACA mebers. There are 101 35th RTVF members that have been submitted. The DIA is finalizing their concurrence records this coming week and once Col Galipeau has this concurrence letter the finalization for their Air Medal will be made. When there are so many submitted and when you have the DIA, AFOSI, FBI, CIA, local Congressman and the American Embassy/Attache that have to coordinate on this paperwork (in this case there were over 1000 sheets of paper, things can go wrong and they did go wrong. Records got lost or were misdirected in this lengthy process covering some 10,000 miles between office involved will take place.

But now it is done and it will take some time for typing at the AFPC that they all should have it by the end of July. There are a lot of awards for our warriors in the Middle East and so these take back burners. I don't think the AF was too pleased to see 116 Air Medals submitted at once to them. They would have been broken up except the local Congressman wanted them all to be sent at once rather than as they came in.

GENO VALENTINE

I'll be out of state and unable to attend in person the service for Geno. I'm sorry about that. Maybe you can get Virginia & my respects to Shirley and family. We really feel so sorry for all, the way he was cheated out of the last few years of a very productive life. A real shame. As I thought again about him a many flying stories come to mind, but a couple especially warmed my heart.

When the new green On-Mark 26's came to Hurlburt, Gino and I were crewed together. Also later at Alex. He was an absolute Pro in the cockpit. He made my left seat job so easy, I sometimes wondered why he took me along and actually let me handle the controls. I nearly had to beg to get a landing every now and then. As everyone knows he was verbally gifted, and was quick to lay that old guilt trip on me about "when you are wounded you want me to be able to get us home in one piece don't you, well let me have this landing.". The other big wrestling match in the cockpit was after a bomb (or whatever) run and whether it was a left or right turnout. He insisted I practice a fake right and then do a left turn. My side down of course. He truly loved any live ordnance mission, guns bombs or rockets. But far and away his ultimate favorite was a nite airshow load of 8 LAU 3s (19 rockets each). I just got to line us up and he got to ripple off all those sparkley things. As in every flyers life a couple of "O- SHITS" were tatooed in our minds that we reminised every time we talked in later years. Hey, remember the nite airshow when we were no.2 with a load of rockets behind Dick Klopfer with a full load (8) napalm? Dick lost an engine somewhere on downwind of the hot run in and too late to abort. Everyones timing was real tight and with his load, Dick was just a few seconds slow. We saw him almost in position for us to fire and we did start the ripple. Damned if it didn't look as if Dicks plane just stopped on the final run. The pucker factor for both of us went clear off any known chart in that one half second. Man was that a close miss--Thank God. Another memorable mission was when Gino and I were no 2 again with rockets and guns behind ---- Bob or Stan??(forget his 1st name) White and Maury Bourne. They had internal 100 pounders and napalm on the wings. Their first run was to be napalm, but we saw the bomb bay open and bombs dropped, hit the ground skipped up just under their tail and exploded. They were right in front of us: fire then crash. Maury survived from a very low altitude bail out.

I'll have a toast to Gino and remember well all the good ways he touched my life. Bill Keeler, bkeeler041@cox.net

Thanks Bill. Most people didn't know that you were sick for some time due to a spider bite. We are looking forward to seeing you at the Reunion this year.

HMONGS IN THE NEWS

New Madison School Named After Hmong General From WKOW: Tuesday, April 10, 2007

For several months, the school board took in suggestions for the name of the new elementary school for Madison's far west side, in Linden Park.

Monday night, hundreds of Hmong parents and students filled the Doyle Administration building as board member Shwaw Vang pushed to name the school [after] General Vang Pao, a prominent Hmong leader. After a 12 minute speech in which Shwaw Vang talked of General Pao's importance to the Hmong and how naming the school after him would help the Hmong feel like they are part of the school district, the board unanimously voted to name the school General Vang Pao Elementary.

For a full appreciation of General Vang Pao's many contributions, school board members might wish to consult the scholarly work of UW

Rosset

Continued from page 23

Professor Alfred McCoy. For general tone, Tom Wolfe might be appropriate.

The new school's gardens will no doubt be populated by colorful poppies.

Congratulations to General Vang Pao. This is what makes our country great. Generation after generation of immigrants have seen this come to pass of the greatness they bring to our nation.

SHEBOYGAN MAN MAY BE ARMY'S FIRST HMONG FIRST SERGEANT

Shua P. Yang has 15 drill sergeants in his command

By Troy Laack

Sheboygan Press staff April 12, 2007

Shua Yang of Sheboygan, who may be the first Hmong soldier to attain the rank of first sergeant in the United States Army, is definitely ready for the challenge of being a commander in his unit at Fort Knox, Ky.

"The first sergeant is something that you look at as the mother of the unit," said Yang, 40, who was promoted during a March 29 ceremony at Fort Knox. "If you have a good first sergeant, the unit is going to be ready for whatever it encounters."

Yang took over as first sergeant of B Company of the 46th Adjutant General Battalion, 1st Armor Training Brigade. Yang commands 15 drill sergeants and is responsible for training and rehabilitating new soldiers who were hurt or became ill during basic training, he said.

Gini Sinclair, a public affairs officer at Fort Knox, said it's nearly impossible for the Army to verify that Yang is the first Hmong to make first sergeant. However, after checking online Army records, Yang is confident that he is the first Hmong to become a first sergeant.

"The Hmong, they've only got so many last names, five or six last names," Yang said. "Yang is a common Chinese name, but I know from checking the first name that they're not Hmong. It's not official, but I'm pretty positive that I am."

Vue Yang, 55, of Sheboygan is happy for his younger brother.

"He's kind of following in our father's footsteps," said Vue, 55.

Their father, Churchill Yang, was in the Laotian army and was a colonel in the Secret War. Shua, who has been in the Army for 18 years, said his father, who died in 1994, has been a motivating factor in his staying in the Army.

Making first sergeant, one of the highest ranks for enlisted personnel, is a highlight in the family's history and something the Hmong community can be proud of too, said Chasong Yang, another one of Shua's brothers.

OSPREY FLEET SURPASSES 25,000 FLIGHT-HOUR MILESTONE

CV-22 Crew At Kirtland AFB Sets Record On Training Flight

www.kirtland.af.mil

Aero-News has learned the Bell-Boeing V-22 fleet surpassed 25,000 flight hours recently. The milestone occurred when a crew from

the 71st Special Operations Squadron (71st SOS) at New Mexico's Kirtland AFB flew a 2.4-hour student qualification flight in CV-22 No. 02-0024, on March 9. The 71st SOS is the Air Force training squadron for the CV-22.

Air Force crew-members on the historic flight included Lt. Col. Todd A. Lovell, aircraft commander and director of operations for the 71st SOS, Lt. Col. James E. Breck and Capt. Patrick D. Fronk, both members of the first student class of the 71st SOS. Additional aircraft crewmembers aboard the flight were SSgt Jeremy Hoye, TSgt. Joseph N. Levine and TSgt Aaron S. Brown.

"It was a great flight. The aircraft performed flawlessly at Belen Airport and in the southwest remote areas. The CV-22 is an excellent aircraft, and we're pleased to be the crew that takes the fleet over the 25,000 flight hour threshold," Lt. Col. Lovell said.

B-26

LAO VETERANS OF AMERICA-LVA, website:www.laoveterans.com

Thank you, thank you, thank you for sharing! I printed this out and cannot wait to delve into it! My father, SMSgt Vance Miller Hinch (Air Commando) and his buddy, Sgt. Kirby Ballinger, went to the Congo in 1964 (if I remember the year correctly!)-I have glanced over the documents you have emailed, and it mentions this period of time and trying to get planes down there, etc. Can't wait to read it thoroughly! Once again, THANK YOU, for sharing!

Annette Hinch Patton

LAST B-26K COUNTER INVADER RESTORATION PLANNED

Some excellent comments on the A-26.

This article contains a number of errors that should be corrected, to point out a few:

The designation of the A/C we flew was A26A. True, when they first came from On-Mark the designation was B26K, but prior to our being able to use them out of Thailand, it had to be changed from a B to an A as the Thai's at that time did not allow the use of bombers from their bases.

Radio silence: We were in constant radio contact with GCI sites, airborne battle control C-130's, flare A/C, Candlestick, Lamplighter etc, FAC aircraft, O-1 or O-2s, other Nimrods that were airborne. I will admit radio contact on Barrel Roll missions was limited, but this was due to being about the only A/C flying at night in this area. When in the Barrel we worked with ground road watch teams, by radio! In fact at sometimes it was hard to do our job as we had so many people telling us what to do, by radio.

Our operation was no more secret than any other at NKP. They were all classified. In 1967 there was an article about the 26's and other operations at NKP. It was picked up by one of the wire services, my wife sent me a copy of it from the L.A. Times to let me know what I was doing. The Original article was from the Bangkok Post.

No honors or awards: The 609th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in early 68, mention of this was in the AF Times, Aviation

See **ROSSEL** pg. 25

Rossel

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Week in its Honors awards issue of 1968 specifically cited the 609th ACS, flying WW2 A/C for its outstanding results. In regard to medals, a number of us were awarded the Silver Star, I think just about everyone got at least one DFC and Air Medals were based on the number of missions flown, there were some Purple Hearts and Commendation Medals.

As far as hiding them at Davis Monthian, there weren't enough left to be of any use, to the AF, 5 of them went to museums and an additional 5 were released to a State fire service to be used as fire bombers. 679 was one of those.

Regarding equipment in the A/C, there is much missing. When I last flew in 679, the only radio he had was a radio shack type, the rest had been removed.

I hate to sound nit-picky but I think we got as much recognition as any other Air Commando outfit, and more than some others I know of. The basis of the entire Commando Operation was to be low key and effective. I think we were.

Tom, Tom Wickerstrom, A26NIMROD@aol.com

NEED SOME HELP

Who would know which crew supported the SF camp at Ngok Tavak on 10th May 1968 at 0430 in the morning?

Greetings from Down Under!

I am a military author and Vietnam veteran. I am currently writing about the battle of Ngok Tavak that took place in May 1968. This was an outpost of the Kham Duc Special Forces camp that was evacuated 10-12 May 1968. An AC-47 Spooky came to the assistance of the Ngok Tavak outpost around 0430 hours on the 10th of May 1968. I am trying to contact any crew member who was on that aircraft, can you help?

With regards, Bruce Davies, bruce.davies@optusnet.com.au

I will help you on this and it will take me a little bit. I have worked with the Aussies for Air Medals for a number of RAAF and have also participated in the B-17C annual memorial in Queensland. I really enjoy your country and will visit it again in 2008. Where do you live in Australia and what did you serve in Vietnam--Army, Navy or AF? Have you written any other books on Vietnam?

Gene Rossel

Hi Gene,

Bruce Davies was a member of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam with an extensive length of time in Vietnam in various Units. Bruce is now Victorian State Secretary of the AATTV.

Ron Workman, workmanr@bigpond.net.au

Hi Gene,

Thanks for your reply. I live in the state of Victoria in a small seaside town called Point Lonsdale, which is to the south west of Geelong and that is to the south west of Melbourne. I did a story recently for the SFA magazine 'The Drop' about a B-24 Liberator rebuild in a near-by town of Werribee.

I served three tours in Vietnam, Army. First tour I was with our

1st Battalion RAR that served with the 173rd Airborne Brigade at Bien Hoa. Second and third tours were with our AATTV [Advisers] and I served with ARVN units in I Corps, south of Danang down to Quang Ngai. I also served with the 5th Special Forces' Mike Force unit in II Corps out of Pleiku. I wrote a book about the AATTV and an e-book version is available here:

www.ebooks.com/ebooks/book_display.asp?IID=258748

It's a non-fiction summarised history of the unit from 1962 through 1972.

Ngok Tavak and Kham Duc - this was the main camp - were then located in Quang Tin province very close to the western border with Laos. The attack started on NT at 0300 hours on 10 May 1968 and Spooky is recorded as arriving at around 0420 hours. He ran out of ammunition, but remained on station to assist attack air. I have a copy of CHECO Report Kham Duc 8 July 1968, but that does not identify the aircraft's unit used at NT. The survivors evacuated to Kham Duc and then on to Danang. Kham Duc was under attack later that day and was evacuated by 12 May. Perhaps there is a link between the aircraft that support KD and the Spooky at NT. The interest is there were three Australians in Ngok Tavak at the time of the attack, one commanded the position. I'm trying to track the crew to get a perspective on the action from their point.

Thanks and regards, Bruce

Thanks Bruce. The Spookies are working on this and I will put this in the ACA Newsletter.

Reply to "Need Some Help"

Bruce, After reading our question to Gene, I would like to clarify some of crew duties on a Spooky. The gunner on a AC-47 was responsible for keeping the guns loaded, cleared of malfunctions and ready to fire. At the direction of the pilot, he would select the number of guns the pilot wanted to fire at any one time and the rate of fire that he wanted, i.e., slow or fast rate (3000/6000 rpm). He would select which individual gun to fire as he was the only one who knew which gun was ready to fire. The copilot controlled the Master Firing switch which was on an overhead panel above his head. At the direction of the pilot, he would make the guns hot or safe them. The navigator would make sure we were at the correct location and confirm the target with the pilot. The loadmaster took care to the flares, setting and dropping them at the direction of the pilot. The flight mechanic was watching what was going on the cockpit, i.e., engines, fuel, etc. The pilot, looking out his side window would identify the target and fire the guns with the firing button which was located on the pilot's yoke. Crew members had their responsibilities but they helped everyone else out.

Each Spooky location had different ways of doing things. I was at Pleiku AB from 4/68 to 4/69. I always fired from 3000 ft AGL. Others fired at lower altitudes. We took off with a total of 21000 rounds on board. Initially, guns were loaded with 2000 rounds. We also carried 10 ammo cans with 1500 rounds in them. As they were fired out, emptied, they were reloaded with 1500 rounds. In early 1968, we took off with 36 flares. Later this was reduced to 24 because of the weight of the flare

Rossel

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box that we had to carry.

Al, Lyle A. Sproul, LtCol USAF (RET) email: zrxrx7@earthlink.net

LIMA SITE LS-85, PHU PHA TI, LAOS

There has been a lot of email activity by a Col Lawrence Pence, USAF Retired, about his activity at the fall of the site. All the people who were involved with the site don't know who Col Pence and have serious doubts if he was ever there. Here are some of the choice comments from a number of sources:

Gene, As I said before, Pences story is unadulterated BS. How can a grown man say so much about something he knows so little about. Jerry Clayton, email: jayree@tampabay.rr.com, Commander LS85

Jerry Clayton, as Commander, and Gen Secord, as CIA Staff Officer, are the most familiar with what actually happened at Site 85.

I THINK I know 4 things: First, Ambassador Sullivan was very much opposed to having the radar put there because it would result in more US military presence in Laos and the activity would certainly draw the attention of the Communist. It took a personal phone call from someone VERY, VERY, VERY high up in the U S Government for him to relent. Second, The people involved were told on more than one occasion that they would be evacuated if and when it became obvious that their security could not be insured. Third, Ambassador Sullivan and General Momyer were not the greatest of friends. Fourth, Ambassador Sullivan did not need someone's permission to do anything he chose to do within Laos.

Stories like Timothy Castle's "One Day Too Long" and Christopher Robbin's "The RAVENS" surfaced containing numerous inaccuracies because they interviewed those people who were willing to talk with them. To be gracious, we should probably say that some of those interviewed had their memories tarnished a bit with age. For many years after I left SEA, I adhered to the promise that I would not reveal to anyone, including my family, where I had been, what I had been doing or who had been present with me. I was contacted by someone doing research for Robbin's book, but I refused to give them any information. After his book was published, I realized that someone, or some group of someone's, had certainly talked to him and some of what they told him was not correct.

Regards, Bob, Robert Eveleigh, kenny07@earthlink.net

I was there when the site fell. I was not privy to the details outlined of all the action in the article. I do know that everyone in AIRA advised Ambassador Sullivan to evacuate and at least ten days before the actual fall. I don't know for sure but most of the Thai mercenaries I was aware of manned Artillery or flew T-28s out of the Venetian AOC. Also I don't believe the Royal Lao Army was involved in that area of Laos since it was all VP territory, and I never heard of an "Intelligence Cross". I do recall talking to two of the AF types who were rescued (I can't recall why they came through the AOC) they told me that they did what they were told and were rescued, indicating that a number did not. I

always smarted from the stupidity of pretending that the North Viets didn't know what was going on. When I first got there I started having the Thai pilots telling me they couldn't go to a target because it was too "Dangerous", I tried to get Sullivan to let me lead flights when I got objection, I was refused permission but told I could go to Udorn, get an airplane and rendezvous, yeah that would work well. I did manage to get a U-17, have Air America install an armament capability with rocket pods and FAC them. I never had a problem again.

On the humorous side the CIC (supposedly insuring the neutrality of Laos) had a white helicopter which would fly over the T-28 ramp, I instructed all my troops to turn their back to the chopper and give them the middle finger salute. We sometimes socialized with the Canadians who were on our side of the CIC and they got a kick out of the one finger salute. And by the way, the North Vietnamese Embassy was right behind the AOC.

Joseph Holden, aceusaf@earthlink.net

GREAT WEB SITE!

I've been away from the fold since retirement but am catching my breath and trying to re-connect. ACA Member # 2178 Michael D. Wernette Sr., email: wernette1@mac.com

SUBJECT: ERAWAN

Mr. Wiren, just finished your book (the one you gave to the Air Commando's) and found it most interesting, I was on Project 404, Lima site 39, 71 and 72 and a couple of trips north to 20A and south to Pakse. Made a trip back to Svkt in 99 to see what it all looked like, not much had changed...sadley after all these years. Vientiane was much the same, the vertical runway still stands proudly though, ha.

Again, thanks for the memories, would enjoy an autographed copy of your book, be happy to pay you for it. Sincerely, Roger L. Klair, USAF, Ret., 224 Thomas Ct, Ft Walton Bch, Fl. 32548. email: RKLAIR404@aol.com

PICTURE OF CAPT BERNARD LUKASIK

To: "Mark Lukasik" martar@mindspring.com

As the grandmother of Christine Lukasik, who we cannot locate, the Finnish need some pictures of Capt Bernard Lukasik--which was in the ACA Newsletter. Jari Salo, is the Finnish person who is working on the memorial and documentation of their USA SF Larry Thorni and want to include Bernard's picture in the history of Larry. Could you help us find some pictures for Jari and also pass this on to your granddaughter Christine.

Dee Roberson, droberson1@verizon.net

To Jari Salo

Re: Bernard Francis Lukasik, VN 1964

Bernard Lukasik was my father. 2LT Christine Lukasik is my daughter.

Attached is a picture of Capt. Bernard F. Lukasik in his F-86 which he flew while stationed in Ohio prior to flying the T-28 in Vietnam.

Rosel

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Also, here is a link to the Vietnam Memorial Wall page (the Wall is in Washington DC... on this page you will find a tribute to my father. www.arlingtoncemetery.net/bflukasik.htm

LAO VETERANS OF AMERICA-LVA

www.laoveterans.com. USA-Country wide - 11,000 members strong. How's Heinie doing? Please keep us posted.
E-Mail: laovet@hotmail.com

He is doing fine and we'll put this in our Newsletter.

GOOD JOB ON THE WEBSITE

I like the additions to the web site and the fact that it seems to be updated more often. Keep up the good work and I hope to see my fellow Spookies at this year's reunion
Wa, rickertw@open.org, Dallas, OR. ACA Member Yes

EXCELLENT WEBSITE!

ShadowSpear Special Operations, www.shadowspear.com
Boon, email: admin@shadowsspear.com

FRIEND OF CAPT CANTER

Personal friend of Capt. Rom M. Canter 603rd ACS KIA 8 Dec 1965. Would like to get in touch with anyone who served with him.
Thanks, Harold Davey, h.davey@tx.rr.com, DFW, Texas

We'll put it in the ACA Newsletter.

JUST CHECKING IN

Sergeant, USAF Served 1968-69 until moved to Tuy Hoa. Served Under Colonel D. and Colonel Sparks. Jim Bedingfield and Frankie Trupiano my closest Friends. God Bless you all....
Bob Combs, email: paulaheisey@aol.com, Nha Trang AB, RVN

Thanks for the email and we will put it in the ACA Newsletter.

HAVE PICTURES I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE

C INSTRUMENT SPECIALIST, 1968-69 SEA, KORAT , NKP. TAKHLI. Larry Shaffer (SHAF),
email: larryncandy.shaffer@yahoo.com ACA Member NOT YET

We'll pass this along in our ACA Newsletter and we'll try and make you a member.

WAS A GUNNER IN AC47, 4TH ACS 1965-66

Leigh Conner, Arizona email: pappaconaz@earthlink.net

COOL SITE

I was in the 317th at England AFB 68 69. I went to VN (Clark) end of 69 flew with Col Shadick (sp) in U10's also was loadmaster on

C-47's. I was just surfing cool site. Not much on the 317th. I went to RTU school then to C-130's TAC 774th. Then to Edwards (NAF El Centro) when I got back. Dan Hayes, email: Dphayes@hotmail.com

Send me some information on the 317th and I will put it on the site.

ACA INSIGNA

Where can I find the ACA insigna to download and put on a business card.. Thanks Ed Davenport, Louisville, KY.
email: airlekd@yahoo.com
ACA Member life member 3453

I will send you one.

JUST CHECKING IN

Flare kicker 1966 Nha Trang 310th Air Comandos. Ret SmSgt USAF.
Gary Thomas, veter3@sbcglobal.net

Thanks for the email

HOPE TO HEAR FROM THE 4TH SOS

I Served with C flt, 4th SOS. Phu Cat AB, 1968. Would like to hear from anyone in that timeframe from the 4th. Ronald Rogers, email: spookygunner@wcoil.com ACA Member - I was, but not now.

We'll have to get you to rejoin again.

TRYING TO FIND SGT LOU BRABHAM

I was a rigger with the 82nd Abn Div. 1967-70 sent tdy to the Charleston AFB for one year. Great bunch of people. I am trying to find Sgt.Lou Brabham, Lt.Thall or any of the guys from that era at Charleston. Call me 612-309-7569. Thanks, Steve Hoyt, Victoria, MN
email: sahoyt@core.com

We'll put it in our Newsletter.

YOU HAVE A GREAT WEBSITE

My dad, Concy Phimphavong, talked about your organization and people he served with in Laos all the time. You have a great website. Andy Phimphavong, email: aphim@yahoo.com

Thanks for the comments.

GOOD JOB GENE

Just checking. It looks great. Good job Gene.
Harry Bishop, harryibishop@aol.com, Sumter, SC. ACA Life member.

JUST CHECKING IN

Comments: Just checking in to see what's new. Greg Eanes, Crewe, VA
eanesgreg@hotmail.com

Rossel

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JOHN CANNING - UDORN 1968-1969

I was looking to find a way to add my dad's name to the list of veterans that have passed in hopes of finding some links to him. He just passed away 3 weeks ago and I am sure some men there will know him. His name is John J Canning and served 1968-1969 432nd TRW. Please pass this on and if anyone knew him I would appreciate hearing from them.

Stephen Canning, email: examiner@cfl.rr.com

ADDRESS CHANGE

I am moving and my new address has changed from P O Box 1502 Sutherlin OR to: 512 North 55th St., Springfield, OR 97478. Thank you, Bob Lewis, Member # 4081, email: bobblewis@msn.com

Thanks Bob for the information

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION

A military historian & historic aviation archaeologist who is always looking for information. Thomas Jennings, tjennings@pta-crm.com

INFO FOR VETERANS LEGACY FOUNDATION

Thanks for sending the message regarding the Col. Day/ John Kerry case on to others---but I did not receive the email address nor the mailing address for making contributions ???

You may wish to re-send your message with that vital information.

Warm regards, MG Carl Schneider, email: dukesch@aol.com

P.S. I visited with Col. Day at the F-86/F-100 reunion in Las Vegas last week and he sincerely appreciates all of the efforts!!!!

The email address is: <http://www.vvlf.org/donate.php> (That is v v l f) and the snail mail address is: Vietnam

Veterans LegacyFoundation,

P.O. Box 95000-1655, Philadelphia, Pa 19195-1655

LONG TIENG ASSISTANCE TRIP, 4-9 MARCH 2007

Mac & Sunee Thompson made a road trip up to Long Tieng, LS-20A, on behalf of the TLCB to deliver school supplies the week of 4 March. Must say, it's a somewhat grueling trip, at least portions of it on the highways and byways of Laos

Sunday 4 March was taken with the drive from home, just north of Bangkok on up to Nong Khai, left my van in secure parking there and we went across the Friendship Bridge to Lao Immigration and on to Vientiane.

Monday was shopping. We had a TLCB Assistance Committee budget to work within so needed to identify what would fit. Checked out some expendable school supplies, writing pads, pens and pencils, and such, sports equipment, soccer balls, badminton sets, etc. Didn't really look like we'd be able to get enough to cover the three schools, Long Tieng Primary, Ban Na Ngua Primary and Secondary. So thought about

school books that could be used by all the schools over a period of time. Talked to a tuk tuk driver outside our hotel who was quite helpful, he took us over to a quasi government printing house, the Education Printing Enterprise. Talked with the staff there, explained the program, number of kids by grade in school, and the budget. They explained that most public schools only received new text books every five years so I figured this would be a good investment. I also included a number of English language primers. They went to work with their pencils and came up with quite a list of books that fit within the budget. These are for 1st through 9th grades. Told us to come back later in the afternoon to pick things up from the warehouse. Did so and delivered them to the outfit from which we rented a 4x4 pickup, with driver.

Tuesday 0700 hrs hit the road, headed out of town on Rt 13S, downstream towards Paksane. At about km 92, Thabok aka Thaphabath, turned north on a very good dirt road which later turns to decent pavement on up to the E-W road between Xaysomboun and Rt 13N, near Vang Vieng. From here it's a bit of a butt buster on the road travel. Stopped for coffee at what I call the Gold Mine Junction where an Ozzie company, Phu Bia Mining, is in operation, then headed north again for two hours to the gate at Long Tieng itself, about 7+ hours one way drive.

The gate guard quite properly, I guess, wouldn't let us in but he did phone up to HQ and a military police captain came down to see what's up. He wasn't real happy to see us but when I showed the receipts for some kip 4,700,000 of school books he agreed to let us through to talk to the "boss" whom I'd met the year before on the trip with Roger Warner. The boss, Bounsouk, seems to be a pretty good sort.

Sunee & I explained what we were doing this trip and Bounsouk called up the head school master for the valley. We then went over to the two schools at Ban Na Ngua to explain to the teachers there what we were up there for and agree to a meeting the next day. Back to Long Tieng and the primary school, same deal with the staff.

I had also wanted to drive over Skyline Ridge to the Sam Thong, LS-20, valley where I was based spring of 1969 with the USAID refugee program but Bounsouk said there'd been a heavy rain a couple weeks prior and the road was still blocked. Will try again next trip.

We asked about RONing at Long Tieng but this was denied so two hours back to the Gold Mine Junction and a not-too-fancy guest house for the night. Good enough restaurant attached, tho, with plenty of cold Beer Lao (www.beer-lao.com). Up early the next morning, and back to Long Tieng, two hours on the rough road.

Distributions made to the schools followed by a meeting with Bounsouk, who is also the chief of "development" for the area, and the school headmaster. We had some discussion about possible future school projects that the TLCB might be able to assist with depending, of course, on budgets and on cooperation of the participants, the people of Long Tieng. First on the list is a 4-hole toilet facility for the Long Tieng Primary School which has none at present. There are also requests for roofing sheets for one building along with wood siding, with is looking pretty sad at present. This is the building where we had our meeting, it also includes two classrooms. Replacement school furniture was also mentioned as much of what they have isn't in good shape.

Note that the Long Tieng Primary school is still housed in the buildings

Rossel

Continued from page 28

built back in the mid-to-late 1960s, the wood building and two out of the three rock and concrete buildings.

A few notes about Long Tieng these days:

No electricity but hope to have it perhaps as early as later this year, the line from the south is just 10 km short of Long Tieng now and poles have been dropped along side the road.

They do enjoy Thai TV much more than the stuff on the Lao channel(s), more movies, soap operas, sports and news. Run the TVs off of car batteries. Sunee joked with them about when she was a kid out at Sa Keo, east of Bangkok, same deal in her village, watch the TV picture scrunch down as the battery runs down.

The large proposed dam, Nam Ngum 3, on the Nam Ngum river, seems to be on hold for the moment. Funding?? Environmental impact statement lacking? This'll be quite an economic shock for the valley if/when it comes off. There's probably 1,000 people living there now, the dam construction crew could be up to 2,000 more, with a number of foreigners amongst them.

There's now daily "bus" service between Xaysomboun, LS-113, and Long Tieng. The "bus" being either an open top 6-wheel truck, or a beat up van.

Saw several cell phones up there but I couldn't get a signal on my Lao SIM card so asked about this. Reply, "they couldn't either but they were handy for taking photos." Good signal tho at the Gold Mine Junction area and all along the E-W road.

That's it for now, hope to be able to make another Long Tieng Run in the future. MacAlan Thompson, mactbkk@gmail.com
Thailand, Laos, Cambodia Brotherhood, www.tlc-brotherhood.org

HI GENE

Last time I saw you was at Chino where I have spoken two times in the last several years on the Early Days in Vietnam. I really enjoyed the articles in the current newsletter on T-28s. I was surprised when I pulled up the web site for the 1ACS and discovered that my book "For Love of Life and Country" was not listed nor mentioned as it contains lots of information about the T-28 operations from late 1963-64. There is a copy of my book in the library there at Hurlburt. I met Tom Schornak before he left Vietnam, and he had a concern about T-28 # 53364 "Barney Cochran's favorite plane." I flew that machine a number of times in Feb and March and May of 1964, and it truly was a great plane! I did fly 53-8638, but never saw 8369! I was also on Bernie Lukasik's wing when he went in on Feb '64. I had to ID the remains the following day at the morg in Ton Son Knut - not a pleasant task! Also, on your article on page 21 of the Newsletter - I was also on Jerry Shank's wing when he went in south of Soc Trang on March 24th. We were never certain that his wing came off. Both Captain Andy Anderson who was leading the flight that day, (Jerry was number 2, while I was #3) watched in horror as the accident occurred. We straffed the VC positions until we ran out of ammo then went back to Soc Trang, jumped into a "Dust-Off" Huey and went back to the scene of the crash. We conducted a diligent

See **ROSSEL** pg. 30

Oh What A Way To Teach That Very Important Lesson *A lesson many need to learn!*

Back in September of 2005, on the first day of school, Martha Cothren, a social studies school teacher at Robinson High School in Little Rock, did something not to be forgotten. On the first day of school, with permission of the school superintendent, the principal and the building supervisor, she took all of the desks out of the classroom.

The kids came into first period, they walked in, there were no desks. They obviously looked around and said, "Ms. Cothren, where's our desk?" And she said, "You can't have a desk until you tell me how you earn them."

They thought, "Well, maybe it's our grades."

"No," she said. "Maybe it's our behavior."

And she told them, "No, it's not even your behavior."

And so they came and went in the first period, still no desks in the classroom. Second period, same thing. Third period. By early afternoon television news crews had gathered in Ms. Cothren's class to find out about this crazy teacher who had taken all the desks out of the classroom.

The last period of the day, Martha Cothren gathered her class. They were at this time sitting on the floor around the sides of the room. And she says, "Throughout the day no one has really understood how you earn the desks that sit in this classroom ordinarily." She said, "Now I'm going to tell you."

Martha Cothren went over to the door of her classroom and opened it, and as she did 27 U.S.

veterans, wearing their uniforms, walked into that classroom, each one carrying a school desk. And they placed those school desks in rows, and then they stood along the wall. And by the time they had finished placing those desks, those kids for the first time I think perhaps in their lives understood how they earned those desks.

Martha said, "You don't have to earn those desks. These guys did it for you. They put them out there for you, but it's up to you to sit here responsibly to learn, to be good students and good citizens, because they paid a price for you to have that desk, and don't ever forget it."

My friend, I think sometimes we forget that the freedoms that we have are freedoms not because of celebrities. The freedoms are because of ordinary people who did extraordinary things, who loved this country more than life itself, and who not only earned a school desk for a kid at the Robinson High School in Little Rock, but who earned a seat for you and me to enjoy this great land we call home.

"We live in the Land of the Free because of the brave" Remember our Troops...

This story has been verified true on www.truthorfiction.com.



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search of the area looking to see if indeed the wing might have come off before ground fire from the VC caused us to ziggy out of there. The search provided us with some interesting things - you might want to check out the first chapter of my book for details!

I am a Docent here at the Palm Springs Air Museum and recently a Capt Tony Markl called me around 1700 and wanted to talk to me about Jerry Shank. Seems when he checked into Bien Hoa he was issued a pillow with Jerry Shank's name on it. He was an A1-E driver, and it turned out that I had given him his in-country check ride. We agree-ed that it was a small world! If I can be of assistance in any way, please do not hesitate to call or ask.

Cheers Dean Hunter, 760-341-5188 or Bearflt@aol.com.

5TH AIR COMMANDO SQUADRON

I am the webmaster for the 5th Air Commando Squadron Homepage. This page was developed several years ago in memory of the personnel who served in the 5th ACS/5th SOS during its brief history in Vietnam, and to provide a vehicle to regain contact with those personnel. I would request that our site be linked to the Air Commando Association page with other Air Commando units.

I was assigned to the 319th at Hurlburt as an IP in C-46 and C-47 aircraft from 1962 until 1965. Upon returning from a Operation Sandy Road in Ethiopia in 1965, I was selected for TDY duty to Nha Trang with two other crews to establish a Psy War capability until crews could be trained and deployed to form the 5th ACS. Before the TDY crews deployed, I received PCS orders to the 5th ACS as a U-10 pilot. Bill Thomas, who was going to command the Detachment at Forbes to train crews for the 4th and 5th ACS units asked me to go to Forbes with him as a C-47 IP and had my orders changed to join the 5th ACS as a C-47 pilot rather than a U-10 pilot. After completing the training, I ferried one of the 20 C-47 gun-ships to Viet Nam and then proceeded to join the 5th ACS at Nha Trang in November 1965. Upon completion of my tour, I was assigned to the Directorate of Operations for Special Warfare at Headquarters TAC, working with Joe Vaden and John Patee. I consider my days in Special Operations to be the highlight of my 30 years in the USAF and the people that I knew were the cream of the crop.

Richard N. Larsen, Col. USAF (ret.) ACA Member #0622, email: rlarsen@sc.rr.com

GREAT AIRCRAFT SITE

This info is something all the flyers might like to have. You'll want to keep this email forever, lots of informattion. If it ever flew, or you flew it, there is probably a picture of it here. www.1000aircraftphotos.com.
Chucker

THE GUNSHIP'S CREATOR

Letters to the Editor, AFA Magazine, Feb. '07 , Vol. 90, No. 2
www.afa.org/magazine/feb2007/0207letters.asp

The Gunship's Creator

The article in your December issue, like many others about AC-

130's, fails to give credit to the individual who fathered this "hare-brained idea" [December, "The Night Shift," p. 44].

I was a test engineer at Eglin in the mid-60's when my boss called me in and told me that some strange captain named Ron Terry had flown in from Wright-Pat with a C-131 and was trying to find a gun he could mount sideways and fire out the bailout door. My project at the time was the SUU-11A gun pod which mounted the first mini-gun installation, so it seemed like that might work. To make a long story short, we managed to work our way through an aircraft mod package and a range safety review in about two weeks. Since I was flying with Test Ops at the time and was familiar with the range control and safety procedures, and also with the gun system, I was nominated to go along as the first lateral firing gun mechanic. We used up about 1,500 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition shooting up a barge in the Gulf using various tactics like low-level flybys and pylon turns. Ron captured pictures of this with a modified gun camera looking through the gun sight and used them as part of his report back at Wright-Pat.

These convinced the powers that be that this weird idea might work, and maybe six months later he showed up at Eglin again with a C-47 modified to mount multiple M-60 machine guns firing out through the windows. They turned out to not work too well, so he stole my pre-production test articles and the lieutenant who worked for me, Ralph Kimberlin, and took everything to Vietnam. That was where a new legend of "Puff the Magic Dragon" was born.

Of course bigger is better, and longer range is safer, so the lateral firing standard changed from AC-47 to AC-119 to AC 130 over the years, with larger weapons and newer equipment, but the fact remains that without "that crazy captain from Wright-Pat" the Gunships would probably never have come to be. Ron Terry deserves the credit for having had a vision and seeing it through.

Lt. Col. John F. Harvell, USAF (ret.) Merrimack, NH

ARTICLE ON AC-130 GUNSHIPS

I hope you were able to see an article on the AC-130 Gunships that appeared in the Air Force Association magazine in December 2006. It was very well done. www.afa.org/magazine/dec2006/1206night-shift.pdf

The article prompted a Letter to the Editor which gives credit to, then Captain, Ron Terry for being the genius and driving force behind the Fixed-Wing Gunship force. I first met Ron at AC-130A training at Lockbourne AFB and we immediately became friends. Following my one year AC-130 Gunship combat tour, I was chosen by Ron to be the Gunship guy in Air Force Ops. in the basement of the Pentagon. It was an honor and privilege to be associated with Ron's ASD Gunship SPO during the acquisition and modification of an additional 11 AC-130's plus the improvements to all existing A model Gunships. I view my 5 years in Gunships as the highlight of my 30 year USAF career. Cheers, Charlie Charles F. Spicka, Col., USAF (ret.), Oceanside, Calif.

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MORE ON LARRY THORNE

To: Kenneth Lengfield, lengfield@cox.net

Following his secret cold war missions Larry Thorne commanded Special Forces camp A-734 at Tinh Bien near a famous Viet Cong stronghold called The Seven Mountains area in the Mekong Delta. He developed the "border camp" concept during his 1964 tour in Vietnam. His camp became both the first successful example of pacification and the model for SF efforts to shut down the enemy supply lines through Cambodia and Laos. In 1965 Thorne was back in Vietnam with MACV-SOG. The character "Korn" in Robin Moore's popular book The Green Berets is loosely modeled on this real life hero who was legendary among SF vets, but unsung beyond those circles. Do you remember what SF camp it was, near where you landed? And do you remember seeing Green Berets and maybe Larry Thorne?

Jari Salo, email: jarisalo@netikka.fi

Hi Jari,

I think that the name of the Special Forces camp was "7 Mountains". It is located in the SW part of Viet Nam near the Cambodian border. It was north of a town called Rach Gia. I can't be sure of the name of the camp and I don't recall any of the names of the guys I met there. One thing that I do remember very well though. They gave me an ice cold bottle of Tiger beer. It sure tasted good. I was only in the camp for an hour or two until a chopper came in and picked me and my VNAF up and took us to Bien Hoa. I do remember that they were a great bunch of guys and we hit it off well. We had worked with them on many operations but this was the first time I got to meet them other than on the radio. The picture that you sent looks very much like my old bird. I'm sure that the background is the 7 Mountains.

Kenneth Lengfield, lengfield@cox.net

WITH GREAT GOOD FORTUNE AND SKILL,

Maurice Bourne, Pilot

Maury and I were stationed together in the Air Commandos flying B-26's. In 1964, Maury was the Navigator on a B-26 while on a live bomb training mission at an Eglin Range. Upon release a 100 pound bomb blew up as soon as it cleared the aircraft and literally blew the aircraft from the sky. At a very low altitude Maury bailed out and as soon as his parachute opened he realized that his lower leg was blown off. He took off his belt and made a tourniquet to stop the flow of blood. This saved his life. Unfortunately, the pilot died in the crash.

The next time that I saw Maury was at NKP in Thailand in 1966 where he was on a stop over flying some little guys in an Air America C-46. I don't think that the passengers knew that he had a wooden leg. He probably didn't tell them. When the thing was over in SEA he returned to Texas and got into the crop dusting business.

He is a very accomplished pilot and a very good writer. He is one hell'va guy.

He occasionally attends the annual meetings of the Air Commandos at Hurlburt AFB, Fort Walton, FL.

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Biography of Major General Clay McCutchan

Major General Clay McCutchan entered the Air Force in 1972 via the Junior and Senior Reserve Training Corps programs. He served as a VIP airlift pilot, training officer, and public affairs officer at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, United Kingdom, and Little Rock AFB, AR, prior to transferring to the Reserve in 1975. He flew as special operations pilot and served as a command post controller, historian, and executive officer at Duke Field, FL. The General participated in worldwide AC-130A Spectre Gunship operations to include the Caribbean, Honduras, Colombia, and Peru. He flew combat missions in Panama and Kuwait, and commanded a gunship during operations over Haiti. General McCutchan also flew AC-130A counter-drug missions and commanded MC-130P Combat Shadow tanker deployments to Italy for operations into Bosnia.

He served as a historian at the Air Force Historical Research Agency and then as mobilization assistant to the Air War College Commandant, Maxwell AFB, AL. He also served as one of the Headquarters, AFSOC Crisis Team directors at Hurlburt Field, FL, during combat operations in Afghanistan. For five months, General McCutchan was on

active duty at Shaw AFB, SC, during combat operations in Iraq. During this time he worked as special assistant to the Commander, Ninth Air Force, and as Vice Commander and then Commander, Ninth Air Force (Provisional).

In 2005, he served AFSOC as a Safety Board President for the MC-130H Talon crash in Albania, and was the Accident Board President for the Iraqi Air Force Comp-Air crash in Iraq. He then led a team of U.S. experts on behalf of the CENTAF Commander, to write a report and then brief possible counter insurgency aircraft to the Iraqi Air Force leadership. The General currently serves as the Mobilization Assistant to the Eighteenth Air Force Commander, Scott AFB, IL.

General McCutchan's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, and the Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster. He is a Command Pilot with over 4,600 military hours. General McCutchan resides in Milton, FL, and is the Chief Historian at Eglin AFB, in a civilian capacity.



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May 2007

President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

Hall of Fame (HOF). Last year we had no inductees and this concerned some of our members. Once again, I encourage the submission of recommendations for the HOF. There are folks out there that should be honored. The procedures are included in this newsletter. We also present awards at the banquet to members who have done special things for our association.

On a sad note, "Geno" Valentine passed away. His obituary and other comments are included in this newsletter. In addition to his many talents, Geno was dedicated to the ACA. He truly loved his involvement with the association and was a great president from 1981 to 1983. When I first served on the Board and before Geno was admitted to the Veteran's hospital, he would attend our Board meetings. After each meeting, Geno, his good friend John Connors, and I would go to dinner. He was an absolute delight with his wit, stories, and advice. A touching memorial service was held in the Hurlburt Chapel. John Connors gave a wonderful eulogy and family members made meaningful comments. I think Geno appreciated the service.

Thanks to Hap, Roger Klair, and Willie Hall our wall of bricks has been revitalized. Since our

notice in the last newsletter, we have received 15+ requests. We have located additional space on the wall and a new provider for the bricks. This is a special way to honor an air commando or friend. When folks visit our magnificent building, they spend a lot of time looking at the names on the wall. In our continuing effort to bond with the active duty at Hurlburt Field, we had a social at the Soundside Club on 13 Apr 07. It was BG Aderholt's idea, and we invited the active duty folks. BG Aderholt, whose health continues to improve, encouraged the active duty folks to join the ACA. A good time was had by all.

The local flying area had new visitors this month. V-22s from a Marine Squadron were here flying day and night. This unusual appearing aircraft drew lots of comments from the locals. I am sure the 1st SOW is anxious to get their full compliment of CV-22s to enhance their mission capability with this special aircraft.

We have so many special folks in our association. On 7 Mar 07, several of us attended the promotion ceremony in honor of member Clay McCutchan who was promoted to Brigadier General in the U. S. Air Force Reserve. In a civilian capacity, he is the Chief Historian at Eglin AFB. The 1 SOW Wing Commander, Colonel Brozenick,

was also selected for promotion. He is a supporter of the ACA, and we wish him continued success in his career

Another of our members who continues to make significant contributions to the welfare of enlisted widows is Jim Binnicker, Air Force Enlisted Village president and CEO. On active duty, Jim was the number 9 Command Chief of the USAF. Bob White continues to manage the Eglin AFB Airman's Attic and works hard to help young airmen and their families. Recently, he received the volunteer of the year award at Eglin AFB for his service. Our service contractor Jeanette Moore continues to help us in so many ways. In addition to laying out the newsletter, she has helped streamline our administrative tasks and has enabled Joyce Harrington, country store manager, to computerize her accounting system. Jeanette's enthusiasm and spirit has inspired some of us old timers. And then there is John Grove, who is the driving force of the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation. He has dedicated his time and resources to this humanitarian effort. It is truly amazing to note all that he does. And there are many more!

Stay well, plan on joining us at the reunion, and cheers,

Sam