



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2008

Airmen honor fallen heroes



Col. Timothy Leahy, 27th Special Operations Wing commander, looks over the names of service members who have given their lives since Vietnam at the Cost of Freedom Memorial. Photo by Airman 1st Class Liliana Moreno

CANNON AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. "The freedoms (the young) enjoy are only theirs because of the sacrifices of others," said Col. Timothy Leahy, 27th Special Operations Wing commander. "And their sacrifice will never be forgotten."

See *HEROES*, pg. 3



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The Gathering of Eagles

Brigadier General Aderholt to be Honored

By Felix (Sam) Sambogna

The Gathering of Eagles is a special event that traces its origins back to 1980 when retired Brigadier General Paul Tibbets was invited to the Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) to share his experiences with the students, faculty, and staff. As a result, a group of faculty and students developed an aviation heritage program designed to provide a means for distinguished aviators to share their experiences with members of ACSC classes.

The first "Gathering" in 1982 included Jimmy Doolittle, Curtis LeMay, Joe Foss, "Chuck" Yeager, Robin Olds, Mike Novosel, and many more. The Eagles who followed included legendary figures "Pappy" Boyington, "Robbie" Risner, George Bush, and "Bud" Day.

In June 2008, our very own Brigadier General Aderholt will be so honored at Maxwell AFB. Numerous events are scheduled on 3 June through 7 June. General Aderholt will relate his extensive special operations experience to members of the class through teaching interviews and contact with the students during several social events.

Each year the graduating class commissions an original oil painting for display in Spaatz Hall.



A lithograph of the original painting is pencil signed by each Eagle next to their individual portrait. The side panels frame a center panel depicting the Eagle's aircraft and is signed and numbered by the renowned aviation artist, Mr. Jay Ashurst.

Sales of these lithographs are the primary source of funding for the Gathering of Eagles program, which is borne almost entirely by the student body. Anyone interested in purchasing a lithograph should contact the ACA office for details.

Get Ready for Reunion 2008

By Ken Lengfield, ACA VP

Okay Guys and Gals it's time to start planning for the 2008 reunion Oct 9 through Oct. 12. As usual, the center of activity will be the Hospitality Suite at the Quality Inn in Ft. Walton Beach. Check in will start on Thursday, 9 Oct 2008 from 1300 to 2000. There will be a First

Nighter's Social at a location yet to be finalized, though likely at the Soundside Club. Our very popular fish-fry will be starting at 1600 on Friday at the Quality Inn. On Saturday we will have our annual business meeting at the Special Tactics and Operations building

See *REUNION*, pg. 3

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(U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) had Cadet Tomczak's essay read into the Congressional Record, and at a meeting of the Air Force Academy Board of Visitors he presented Cadet Tomczak with a framed copy of the essay.)

Heroes

Continued from page 1

Cannon Airmen had the opportunity to view a testament to veterans’ service March 13 to 19 as the American Veterans Traveling Tribute stopped in Clovis, N.M., at the Clovis High School.

The memorial travels across the country as a tribute of honor, respect, and remembrance to those who served.

It features various memorials dedicated to service members from conflicts as far back as the Civil War up to the current Global War on Terror.

The centerpiece exhibit is an 80 percent replica of the Vietnam

Memorial with all the names of those who died in the conflict.

Airmen from the 27 SOW contributed in a number of different ways. Colonel Leahy was a keynote speaker March 15, which was military appreciation day.

“We are surrounded by the memories of patriots,” said Colonel Leahy. “Many...many... have made the ultimate sacrifice. They have fallen in the defense of our nation and our way of life.”

Capt. Mae-Li Allison, 27 SOW Public Affairs office, read the names of 44 servicemembers from New Mexico who gave the ultimate

sacrifice in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.

The tribute was open 24 hours a day and was guarded during the evenings by military personnel devoting their time for those that came before them. Enlisted Airmen and company grade officers all volunteered their off-duty time.

“My dad was in Vietnam, so I wanted to be a part of his history,” said Senior Airman Heather Wagnon, 27th Special Operations Mission Support Squadron. “I wanted to thank all those who passed on for being able to have my father here with me today.”

Free and open to the public, it attracted people from across eastern New Mexico and the Texas panhandle to come out and show their respects.

The AVTT is based in Minnesota and the Traveling Wall, which was constructed in 1998, began traveling the country in the same year.

Reunion

Continued from page 1

at 0900 hrs with a related briefing to follow. There will be a wives’ luncheon at the Air Force Enlisted Village Saturday afternoon as well, the time has not yet been finalized. Our ACA banquet at the Hurlburt Soundside Club with a social hour at 1800 and dinner at 1900 to 2130 will wrap up Saturday. The ACA Open House will start at 0900 the morning of Sunday October 12 until 1100, come visit our building. Our Sunday Memorial Service will begin at 1200 at the Hurlburt Field Air Park. Make sure you come and enjoy the annual BBQ and silent auction at the Quality Inn at 1300-1630 on Sunday as well. The reunion will come to a close after the auction. More information will follow in the August newsletter when plans have been finalized. Block out these dates on your calendar now and get started on your war stories. Can anyone beat Hillary’s Bosnia story?

Ed. Note: GOLFERS take note. If you plan to play golf at Hurlburt Field on Friday, 10 Oct. please let me know ASAP. We need a minimum of 20 players. Other than enjoying golf you’ll be spending 5 hours on your old base - Hurlburt Field.

The Early Days At Hurlburt Field!

In 1964, our base commander issued a base wide contest. Whoever won a white glove inspection, would get to watch our Air Commando Unit put on a nighttime air strike on a simulated Viet Cong compound.

I, (A/IC Murray C. Harris) and my roommate (A/IC Kenneth Bashford) won the contest. We were allowed to sit in the reviewing stands with members of the President’s Cabinet and other high-ranking U.S. Air Force officials. Dignitaries from other countries were also present.

This for us was our first glimpse of what our Unit had been training for. It was truly an honor to be seated with such distinguished guests. We all witnessed an awesome show of power that night.

Later on, my roommate and I were asked if we wanted to participate in the next nighttime air strike demonstration. We both looked at each other and emphatically said yes!!!

On the day of the demonstration, we were bussed out to the location to get set up and for last minute instructions.

The Army Green Berets had set

up a mortar and was zeroing in on a dug out pit. As we learned later, the pit would be filled with JP4 (Jet Fuel) and would be ignited by a mortar shell fired by the Green Berets. This would start the air strike.

As night fell, we were given flashlights with 6-inch to 8-inch cardboard cones placed on the end of our flashlights.

Then we were placed at integrals along the 2,000 foot long by 75 foot wide dirt runway.

At a specified and predetermined time we were commanded to turn on and place our flashlights (cone attached) at a 45 angle in a given direction.

In the distance and in total darkness, we heard the distinctive and familiar sound of a C-130 approaching. Before we knew what was taking place, a C-130 landed between us with no landing lights, reversed props and stopped.

Every one of our distinguished guests were off-loaded, put on buses and transported to the viewing stands a safe distance away.

The C-130 then used J.A.T.O. to exit the runway in a hurry. As soon as he was clear, a second C-130

landed and all were off loaded and bussed to the stands. And as the first one, he left in a hurry. The airmen on the ends of the runway and in between really got dusted. Ha!

By then all the guests were seated and were informed of what was to take place. Then on signal, the Army Green Berets dropped a mortar shell into the pit filled with JP4. Huge explosion and all heck broke loose!!

Flares were dropped, then the A-1’s, T-28’s and the B-26 Invaders unleashed their lethal barrage of destruction on the simulated V.C. compound.

One of the B-26s was making a bomb run when the left wing came off, outboard of the engine, and went through the tail section, the B-26 crashed in a huge explosion, killing everyone on board. We later learned the B-26 still had 1200 lbs. of frag bombs on board at impact. Many of us were close enough to the impact area to be knocked off our feet from the concussion of the explosion.

Later the Green Berets and our F.A.C.’s did a night jump. After

See *EARLY DAYS*, pg. 6

Membership News



TAPS

In Memory of:

Robert J. Gow
January 2008

Donald Frye
February 2008

George A. Rosenstrom
February 2008

Raymond H. Beaty
March 2008

Robert J. Bendus
March 2008

Dorothy Delbridge
March 2008

Dick Givens
March 2008

Joseph P. Luce
March 2008

Ray E. Stratton
March 2008

Anthony J. Mankewitz
2007

Anthony C. Pronier
November 2006

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Donald Barbieri
Robert C. Bryant
Fred N. Chitwood
Kerry Hanes
Ronald E Hook
David A. Woodworth

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

John Measley
Mark A. Steetle
Michael F. Walsh

NEW ASSOC LIFE MEMBER

Christopher Smithson

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Jeffrey M. Bunts
Gary M. Craft
Joseph F. Cubeiro
Ed B. Dearborn

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Dan Foster Jr.
Charlie E. Glentz
Dean A. Hall
Jerome M. Hall
Kenneth T. Lengfield
Michael D. Lindhorst
Bruce H. Maine
K. Dwayne McAntire
Carl L. McPherson
Robert E. Monroe
Jack S. Pate
Todd W. Pennington
David M. Vardaman

LOST

Renate Jones
Horace M. Matthews
Regan E. McClurkin
Al Rasheed

FOUND

Eugene V. Becker
314 North Hampton Cir
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32547

Norman A. Bild
1216 S Missouri Ave # 226
Clearwater, FL 33756

ON THE MOVE

William Becker
28490 Oasis View Cir
Menifee, CA 92584

Edward J Bernard
6600 Pacifica Dr
Poland, OH 44514 4227

Ralph M Bird
125 Ariana Ave
Auburndale, FL 33823

Joseph D Clem
1970 Proctoridge Ct
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32547

Kevin J. Cook
156 Scottsdale Drive
Clovis, NM 88101-2739

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2214 Longs Peak
Canyon Lake, TX 78133

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P.O. Box 610
Gilmer, TX 75644

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1112 Oakridge Dr Ste 104 #52
Fort Collins, CO 80525

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4920 Woodmar Dr #217
Roanoke, VA 24018-1649

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PO Box 1154
Destin, FL 32540

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Po Box 554
Montgomery, LA 71454

June Givens
5156 Keystone St
Pittsburg, PA 15201

Patrick V Kennedy
2740 Alandari Lane
The Villages, FL 32162-2009

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512 N 55th St
Springfield, OR 97478

Carol Lockett
2804 Topaz Dr
Navato, CA 94945-1544

Christine Lukasik
53 Robys Dr #8
Mary Esther, FL 32569

Connie J Lutz
212 Strawberry Field Dr
Johnson City, TN 37604

Dean M Mckee
7759 Silver Bell Rd #18104
Tucson, AZ 85743

Nicholas Morris
2431 Pond Rd
Kailua, HI 96734-4853

Travis L Norton
33 B Falk Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89115

Franklin G Owens
1001 Mar Walt Dr
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32547

Todd W. Pennington
38 Bassett Street
Fort Bragg, NC 28307

Leon J Poteet
203 Wagon Way
Bastrop, TX 78602

Joan Seifert
818 Charcoal Ave SE
Palm Bay, FL 32909-4629

Steven Vautrain
216 E Goettler St
Scott AFB, IL 62225

David G White
109 Nicklaus Nook
Lancaster, TX 75146-3601

James L Wytttenbach
Po Box 1542
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32549-1542

Scott Yeatman
153 Palmetto Ave
Mary Esther, FL 32569-3303

Michael C Yerxa
W6723 Charleen Ln
Greenville, WI 54942-9672

CORRECTIONS

In our last newsletter, we incorrectly printed William F. Riedell as new annual member, William is actually a new life member. Sorry about that William.

Membership As of February 2008

Life	1744
Assoc. Life	65
Annual	490
Associate Annual	17
Widows	305
Honorary	26
Total	2647

ACA Newsletter Advertising Rates

FULL PAGE	\$160
HALF PAGE	\$90
QUARTER PAGE	\$60

Frequency discounts available.

Quarterly Deadlines:
15th of each Jan, April, July & Oct

Checks must accompany copy unless prior approval. Mail copy and disk to
Ad Manager - ACA
P.O. Box 7
Mary Esther, FL 32569

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 verify 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 name tag will be presented during induction.

A brass nameplate will be mounted on the HOF memorial display maintained in the ACA building.



Col Bob Gates (RET), 1st Special Ops Wing Commander and his son Bob Gates II visited us last week. Col Gates was most impressed with our facility, and the "Hall of Fame" display. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in Oct 2007.

Hap's Comments



On 3 March, Shirley (MisHap) underwent open heart surgery (9 hours – 5 bypasses). Following rather extensive occupational and physical therapy, she came home on 25 March. Her health continues to improve and she gets stronger daily.

I again want to thank all of you

for your cards, calls, and prayers. All have undoubtedly contributed to her present well being. And a special "atta-girl" to Rosemary Nowak, Joyce Harrington, and Helen Blair, in addition to those previously afore mentioned special "atta-girls."

For those of you that may not have heard, our newsletter editor, Jim Boney, was on the same hospital floor as Shirley. Jim underwent successful colon cancer surgery in fine fashion. He's back to work already!

We are hoping to see all of you at some social function down the road. 'Til then, our very best to all.

Hap Lutz

Royal Australian Air Force Vietnam Veterans Finally Recognized

By Felix (Sam) Sambogna

From 1966 to 1972, the RAAF contributed with squadrons of transport aircraft, helicopters, bombers, and FACs to our effort in Vietnam.

For many years there was an initiative to authorize the award of U.S. Air Medals to this

distinguished group of Vietnam veterans. Initially, the Australian Government would not permit the award of U.S. decoration to their service men. Later the policy changed and a group including Gene Rossel and BG Aderholt worked for nearly ten years to ensure proper recognition of our

fellow warriors from Australia.

As a result of this effort, 105 Air Medals were presented to airman in the 35th Royal Transport Flight and 22 were presented to the Australian FACs during ceremonies on 4 and 24 April 2008.

Gene Rossel, who played a significant role in this superb

accomplishment, attended the presentations in Australia. In the August newsletter, we will include a special report covering the event.

Well done BG Aderholt and Gene Rossel.

Early Days

Continued from page 3

their jump, our Unit dropped necessary equipment & cargo into the darkness. I remember running around in the dark retrieving and securing the cargo & equipment.

We heard that one of the Green Berets landed in the viewing stand, another in the parking lot, and another in the outhouse close by.

Needlessly to say, it was quite

a show, quite a night and quite an experience for a couple of young airmen some 45 years ago! Many good airmen gave their lives in the early days of training in hope that what we did would perhaps save a life of someone else at a later date.

That day came all too soon in Viet Nam, Thailand, Laos, and

Cambodia. Since then our Unit has served with valor and distinction all over the world. And I will always be very proud to say I was and will always be an “Air Commando”!

Yours Truly,
Senior Airman
Murray “Chad” Harris
Member 4133

Treasurer’s Report

Felix “Sam” Sambogna

In 2007 our financial status increased by approximately \$12,000. Our CD rates were good, we sold 72 bricks, made a profit in the country store, received an unusual amount of donations, and had a profitable reunion because of the good turnout.

Balance sheet as of Dec 31, 2007
Total cash & CDs 288,148.53
Country Store12,449.53
Deposit (Water).....40.00
Real property.....194,528.00
Total assets\$495,166.06

Even though we have over \$275,000 in CDs it is important to remember that the interest on these CDs is one of our main sources of income. Our annual operating costs are significant.

Below is our 2008 budget. We anticipate a slight deficit that we can handle because of a decrease in CD rates and an increase in occupancy costs.

Bottom line – we are in great financial condition.

EXPENSES

Occupancy7,000
Country Store5,000
Print & Publications6,000
Postage4,800
Reunion12,000
Donations8,000
Services Contract9,980
Telephone1,600
Equipment/Mx2,000
Supplies (Incl Bricks) ...3,300
Miscellaneous240
Total59,920

INCOME

Annual Dues8,800
Interest13,000
Donations2,500
Newsletter Ads60
Country Store8,000
Reunion14,000
Life Dues7,200
Bricks5,000
Total58,560

Reasons for the projected small deficit: reduced CD rates, increased occupancy and insurance costs.

Notes: Estimates based on 3-year averages and adjustments.

Ways to Identify a Stroke

During a BBQ, a friend stumbled and took a little fall -she assured everyone that she was fine (they offered to call paramedics) ... she said she had just tripped over a brick because of her new shoes.

They got her cleaned up and got her a new plate of food. While she appeared a bit shaken up, Ingrid went about enjoying herself the rest of the evening. Ingrid’s husband called later telling everyone that his wife had been taken to the hospital - at 6:00 pm Ingrid passed away. She had suffered a stroke at the BBQ. Had they known how to identify the signs of a stroke, perhaps Ingrid would be with us today. Some don’t die... they end up in a helpless hopeless condition instead.

A neurologist says that if he can get to a stroke victim within 3 hours he can totally reverse the-effects of a stroke... totally. He said the trick was getting a stroke: recognized, diagnosed, and then getting the patient medically cared for within 3 hours, which is tough.

Recognizing A Stroke

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer severe brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the symptoms of a stroke.

Now doctors say a bystander can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

S--Ask the individual to SMILE.
T--Ask the person to TALK or SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently -i.e. It is sunny out today)
R--Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

New Sign of a Stroke --Stick out Your Tongue

Ask the person to ‘stick’ out his tongue. If the tongue is ‘crooked’, if it goes to one side or the other, that is also an indication of a stroke.

Submitted by Connie Perry

ACA Letters & notes

Dear Air Commando

DEAR ACA BOARD:

My name is Chris Smithson and I am interested in an associate membership in the ACA. My father was Lt. Michael Smithson who served in the 4th ACS as an AC-47 pilot. He was stationed at Pleiku, RVN from 1968 to 1969. When the AC-47's were phased out, he was sent to SAC where he flew B52's until his discharge with the rank of Captain in 1973. He died December 25th 2006.

As a tribute to him, I started a website last year dedicated to him and the mission of the AC-47. The address is www.chrissmithson.com/Spooky

Through the website, I have come into contact with many Spooky flight and ground crews. One of your members, Al Sproul, told me about your association and your reunions.

Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Sincerely,
Chris Smithson

Ed Note: Welcome Chris! Your membership has been approved.

DEAR AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

I am gathering information on behalf of my father, Ray Tieman. He is 86 years old and is filing a claim with the VA for benefits. This is his first claim with the VA and I have found the paperwork to be very overwhelming.

Ray was a member of the WWII Air Commandos. In 1972, he wrote a short history of his life. In that history, he writes that in 1941 he was a member of the 2nd field battery in the Canal Zone. Later that he transferred to the Air Corps and then the war started. He was transferred back to the army because he was "jungle trained" and all these men were put in a special unit for

jungle warfare and island offensive tactics. Ray then volunteered for the 1st Commando Group. "This unit was to operate behind Japanese lines (in Burma) to harass the enemy." He trained in "Kalicunda, India" for glider drops. In May 1943, Ray states that he was captured and spent the next two years in a Japanese POW camp in Rangoon, Burma. He was released in June 1945.

This is my problem - Ray's DD214 from 1945 does NOT show that Ray was a POW or that he fought in Burma. It does show his Unit as being 328th Airdrome Squadron - which I now know was part of the 2nd Air Commando Group.

Identifying Ray as a WWII POW can greatly effect his VA benefits. I have no reason to doubt that his story is true.

Do you have any information on the soldiers who were members of the 1st and 2nd Air Commando Units? Do you have any information on Japanese POWs? Can you assist me in validating Ray's story?

Due to age, dementia and health issues Ray does have some difficulty communicating. But I will do whatever I can to get him the recognition and benefits he needs and deserves.

Thank you!
Diane (Tieman) Weston
RVnChick@gmail.com

Dear Diane,

In reference to your letter regarding Ray Tieman, I could find no reference in my records that he served in the 328th Airdrome Sqdn. Our 2nd Air Commando Group was organized in April of 1944 and went to India and Burma in Nov 1944.

When our two Fighter Sqdns went to Burma in Jan 1945 for combat against the Japs the 328th remained in Kalaikunda, India

with only a few going to Burma. We had only one pilot captured by the Japs and interred in Rangoon, and that was Lt. Col. Roger Pryor. He returned safely at the end of the war.

Ray Tieman must have been in the 1st Air Commando Group because the group did have action behind Jap lines and could have been made a POW while fighting with the 1st A.C. Gp.

I am sorry that I could not help you further. My best to you and wish you success in your quest.

Sincerely,
W. Robert Eason
Col. USAF (Ret) Former Sec/Treas
WWII Air Commando Assn.
4920 Woodmar Dr #217
Roanoke, VA 24018

GENTLEMEN:

I'd like to buy a "brick" to commemorate my wife's uncle, SSgt Vernon A McIninch, who was a B-25 flight engineer in the 1st Air Commando Group during WWII. On a historical note, Vernon, or Buckshot as he was know to the family, was the flight engineer on the B-25 carrying Maj Gen Orde C. Wingate on his last flight and died with him in the crash of that aircraft. The crew and Maj Gen Wingate are buried at Arlington.

I was the 23AF/AFSOC DCS Logistics '89-'92.

Bill Whitaker
11803 Hobbiton Trl.
Austin, Texas
WLW@flash.net
AL-0095

Your brick is on order and we will notify you when it is installed.

HI JIM

My dogs have been very successful this year. "Ch My Thai Girl Friday" is the #1 Lhasa for

the year, and she is going to Madison Square Garden and shows on the 2nd Monday in February. Her sister "Ch My Thai La Sen Hal-lelujah Chorus" won the grand national futurity this past Oct.

Joe (Col Joe Vaden) is the one that started me in the dog business as he knew we had champion horses so he suggested dogs, and so I did. I know he never expected me to got this far, but I always liked a winner.

Mary Vaden
13515 Beltway Dr
San Antonio TX 78217

Ed Note: Mary has been supportive with the ACA as the wife of L/C 'Doc' Pepper and Col Joe. During reunion 2002 she purchased the "Steel Ball." She also contributes to the MTF. Thanks Mary and congratulations on your champion dogs.

HELLO JIM,

Just a note to let you know that I thoroughly enjoyed your letter.

I just finished autographing the books for Wendy and Dona and will mail them to Rita and Lee Griffin tomorrow.

Thank you for sharing the photo of the F-84 crash that almost took your life. I'm sure you are thankful to have survived that crash. That helps me understand why you were such a good-natured host at the ACA Reunion golf outing. Adversity brings appreciation for life doesn't it?

I hope to get to know you better during future Air Commando reunions.

Best regards,
Roger Graham
Colonel, USAF-Ret.
(770) 419-0703

Letters

Continued from page 7

DEAR GENE

I got some bad news. Just talked to Richard Givens' wife, June, and she told me that Richard died today due to an allergic reaction to medicine used during an operation. This is very unexpected. Richard was planning to go to Colorado to visit family and had recently been here in FL. On his birthday a few Saturdays ago he fell at home in Mary Esther and hurt his back. He returned to PA where he entered the hospital because of pneumonia and then was scheduled for the operation on his back.'

Richard flew the B-26 for the Air Commandos in Vietnam and also helicopters throughout his USAF career. He also was a general's aid and was a provost marshal.

Sorry to have to pass on the bad news. Richard was 77 years old.

Bob Brady

DEAR HAP

These pictures have been posted in the 76 Mall in Branson, Missouri. Hope they will be of some help to you and I thought they would help advertise the Air Commando's if anyone is ever in Branson they might go to the 76 Mall and look at these.



Sorry to read about Dave Harrington passing away. Please give Joyce my condolences.

Hope to see you in October for the reunion.

Bob Folsom
7208 Bobby Woods Rd
BAUXITE, AR 72011

Life Member 1827
blueeyes2times@yahoo.com

Dear Bob,
A big thank you for thinking of the Air Commando Association and sending us the photos of the patches that are in the 76 Mall. We are very happy to see the group patch and the ZAP patch so proudly displayed in such a prominent position. Looking forward to seeing you at the reunion as well.

Sincerely,
Hap

DEAR ACA,

Hello, as always I thoroughly enjoyed the recent newsletter. I am a new member, William F. Riedell, # 4129. On page 4 of the February 2008 newsletter you had me listed as a new annual member which is incorrect as it should reflect a life membership. I'm not complaining, I just wanted to make sure that your records show me as a life member.

Thank you.
William Riedell
1718 N Parkdale St
Wichita, Ks 67212

Note: We have put a correction notice on the membership page of this newsletter. Thank you for letting us know.

HOW GOES IT JIM?

What a nice and great surprise to hear from you today.

You always have an open invitation to come and visit me when ever you come south to Crystal River. I will be e-mailing you info that I have concerning my accidental discovery of the RB-57 on display at Lackland AFB with Marty Jester and myself memorialized on a plaque near the plane entitled, "RB-57...An Enlisted Story"

Don't know how long it's been there however, it had to be after

we were decorated at the Air Commando reunion in 1997. Give my best to Pete, Hap, and the all the gang keeping things going at the (ACA) office.

"Blue Skies Always" Jim

Gene Traczyk
278 West Chase St.
Hernando, FL 34442

DEAR ACA,

Paulette and I are visiting her mom in Savannah late next month and plan to drive over to visit you folks and friends in Panama City. When is spring break weekend so we can miss the crowds?

There used to be a Holiday Inn just across the bridge on the way to Destin. Is it still there, or any recommendations?

We are redoing our wills. Isn't there a fund for families of special operators killed or seriously injured in action? I used to see it in the CFC literature when I was still employed. I realize the McCoskrie fund is an option.

Thanks.
Bud Britain
19445 Upper Skyline Dr
Eagle River, AK 99577
geezer@mtaonline.net

Bud,

The various schools & colleges have different times for their spring breaks, but most of them will be over by 18 April 08.

If you want to leave a donation to the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation (MTF) I assure you it would be put to good use. Currently, the favorite project for the MTF is supporting various projects in Thailand. We send funds to our reps over there who then use the funds for projects we approve. General Adherholt and John Grove spearhead this worthy project.

The Warrior Foundation provides scholarships to the children

of special operators killed in combat or training. They raise millions of dollars and are a high-powered organization. A worthy cause. If you want more info just contact our office.

Hopefully you read about the MTF in our newsletter. There is info in each newsletter publication.

Come visit our building during your trip.

Sam

GENTLEMEN,

I served in the 1st SOS at NKP during the year of 1969. All of my uniforms were lost in a move in the seventies. On page 23 of the last newsletter, I see a black and white copy of a Hobo patch. I tried to buy the book mentioned in the article, but couldn't find it at Schiffer books. If you have any information about where I could find a Hobo patch or a color photo of one, please let me know. Thanks for your time and efforts.

Yours very truly,
Jim Norris
826 Hwy 618
Winnsboro, LA 71295

Ed Note: Jim Yealy says he has one and will send you a picture of it.

DEAR SIRs,

I had a tourist visit our center yesterday and brought me a brochure from your museum which I understand is located just past Hurlburt Field.

The brochure states you are open from 9 to noon Monday through Friday.

Could you please call me at 850.609.5386. I would like to speak to you about the museum and the possibility of having some information here at the Okaloosa

Letters

Continued from page 8

County Visitors Center.

Thank You,
Cindy Fuller
Okaloosa County Visitors Center
1540 Miracle Strip Parkway, SE
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548
Phone: 850.609.5386

Note: Thank you for your interest in the ACA, the brochures have been sent.

SAM AND ACA MEMBERS,

Sadly reporting the death of Homer P. Harrison, Phyllis’s father. Born in 1924, one of the fading Greatest Generation members; 25 missions in the B-24 (from Tibbenham Royal Air Force Base) during WWII; Farmgate planner/staffer in early Vietnam era; Air America employee, Saigon and Udorn; and proud Air Force veteran of nearly a quarter of a century. Homer P. Harrison made his final flight on 19 April, 2008, after bravely dealing with lung cancer more than a year. Jim Boney reported that his memorial brick will soon be in place. Many thanks to you, Jim, for all that you do for us ACAers. You have been a steadfast, supportive friend of Patty Gochnauer. Goch (AKA Sky King) would be proud of you, as I am.

Thanks, Larry K. Harwood
Waterpump Tiger 45

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

My initial assignment in 1968 was a Flight Surgeon to the 603rd So Sq at England Air Force Base in Alexandria, the late Col Dean Crane was the squadron commander. I was sorting through some boxes recently, and came upon a “dash-1” for the A-26A, (B-26K), which I used in learning the aircraft. It is complete, and in excellent condition.

Is there a spot in the museum

for this manual, or are there any A-26 historians who may be interested in having it. I would hate to discard it without asking. Let me know at your convenience, and I will be happy to ship it to you or to any other interested organization or person.

Sincerely,
Griffith E. Quinby MD
9758 Via Elegante
Wellington FL 33411-6557

Ed Note:
Dear Grif,
Thanks for your letter. Our library has several A26A/B26K books but no “dash 1’s”.
We would greatly appreciate receiving the “dash 1”. It will be placed on the shelf with other B-26 books and manuals.

DEAR “HEINIE”,

My husband, Jack Byrne, served with the Candlesticks in NKP and received the following plaque with these words: “To Jack Byrne from the Candlesticks for outstanding service flying over 80 night combat missions and 334 combat hours in Southeast Asia”.

Jack passed away on March 1, 1999. He surely would have contributed to helping the people of NKP. I had the honor of visiting him and meeting so many dedicated people stationed at Nakon Phenom. It was in 1970 that the base commander’s wife organized a trip to NKP and I joined all the other wives.

So, in Jack’s memory, I am happy to help the people of Thailand and Cambodia who need help for schools, water, and so forth.

Sincerely,
Doris C. Byrne
2 Adriatic Ave
Hampton VA 23664-1902

DEAR ACA,

The article “A Beautiful Story” in the February 2008 edition of the Air Commando newsletter was such a touching tribute to one of America’s heroes. It brought me to tears. I truly appreciate the ACA for publishing it.

That story also piqued my interest. In the ACA, is there a member who is an expert on Eddie Rick-enbacker? I ask this for selfish reasons. A number of years ago I purchased a collection of firearms. One pistol in the collection was a 1911 Colt automatic in a military holster with belt and ammo pouch. On the inside of the belt and ammo pouch, stenciled in black letters was “94th AERO SQD 32” and the back strap of the pistol was stamped #32. This pistol had been used by someone in the 94th Aero Squadron after it was sent from Colt to the government in 1917.

Do any ACA members have knowledge of the 94th Aero Squadron which may help me identify to whom pistol #32 was issued? I am honored to receive the Air Commando Association newsletter and enjoy each issue.

Michael Shyne
P O Box 1705
Alamogordo, NM 88311-1705
(505)-437-0220
Fax (505)-437-0042
E-mail: e3@netmdc.com

CAPT. DAVID A. KREBS, III

Capt. David A. Krebs, III was designated an Air Force pilot Dec.14, at Corpus Christi Naval Air Station, Texas.

Krebs made the Commodores list and graduated first in his class. He will be assigned to Hurlburt Field upon completion of survival school. Simultaneously with pilot training he completed his Master of Science degree. Krebs is a 1997 graduate of Fort Walton Beach High School, Fort Walton Beach, FL and received his civil engineer-

ing degree from Embry Riddle in 2002. David is the son of David Krebs Jr. of Destin FL and Laura Mills of Foley AL.

Note:
David’s granddad, David Sr., is a lifetime member of the ACA and a former Air Commando pilot. David Jr., is an honorary member of the ACA. The Krebs have provided, free of charge, much of the fish we enjoy during the annual reunion. They are tremendous supporters of our association.
We congratulate David III and wish him continued success in his career.

MR BOWMAN,

Thank you for the notification of this years Air Commando dues. My husband is currently deployed, but I know he would want to renew his membership, so I am enclosing a check for lifetime membership.

I also want to let you know that we recently moved from Okinawa, Japan back to the states.

I would really appreciate if you would update Todd’s membership with our new information.

Thanks so much,
Michelle Pennington
38 Bassett St
Fort Bragg NC 28307

DEAR SIRs,

I enjoy reading your newsletter. I have noticed you have been publishing more articles in the newsletters on the C-123. I flew two tours in the C-123. The first was in 1965-1966 with the 309th Air Commando Squadron in Saigon (with Commando Clean- Howie Pierson) and the second with First Flight at Nha Trang (The Black Birds with no markings) in 1968-1969.

Would you be interested in publishing a condensed version of the

Letters

Continued from page 9

enclosed articles? If so, give me a ball park figure for the desired word count. I also have a copy of the photo shown in the Air Force Times article that could be used.

Sincerely,
James R. McCarthy
Brig/Gen USAF (Ret.)
5100 John D Ryan Blvd, Apt 346
San Antonio TX 78245
(210)-677-8360

Ed Note -
Your most interesting article "BIZARRE FLIGHT" is printed in its entirety in this edition on page 25. My apologies for not being able to print it in the February newsletter. I corrected the spelling of Howie's name. Met Howie in 1954 at Biggs AFB. He was a co-pilot in the 95th B-Wg B-47s. I was a co-pilot in the 9th B-Wg B-36s (3 years) not really a pilots airplane. The feeling was more like a truck driver.

Howie and I keep in touch. He had throat cancer last year; operation was successful (He is cancer free). He is also the ACA and FAC chaplain. As I write this he is in Australia celebrating the presentation of the 127 air medals to Vietnam Veterans (some 40 years late).
Jim Boney

DEAR SAM AND ALL WHO VOLUNTEER AT THE ACA,

You can only guess at our delight to return from Thailand to find the beautiful article that you published in the ACA February newspaper about Brian's and my project at BangSak Beach. What we are doing has left us with a great sense of satisfaction that our small efforts can help to uplift the spirits of the children at R 35. To know that work that is just as uplifting is going on north of us in the name of the McCoskrie Threshold Foundation is equally wonderful

to us. It sounds from what you are doing and what we are doing over time we will have McCoskrie Threshold Foundation Toilets and Maile and Brian Lindley Garbage House - small improvements that go a long way to making life easier for people half a world away.

We are home in California until we return to Thailand in early August, our plan is to go twice a year for a long time to come. If ever any ACA folks are touring in Thailand and want a visit to the old Thailand beaches that have NOT been developed let me know and I can give them information or if luck would have it they may be in country when we are.

Today I am busy working on the all classes reunion for ISB (International School Bangkok) where I graduated in 1967. It will be in San Diego and we are expecting over 500 who attended as early as the 1950's to graduating in 1998. I serve as the MC and it terrifies me but I recall how Col. Mac used to do this and I just focus on that and start talking.

Again, thanks for the great press.

Sincerely,
Maile McCoskrie Busby Lindley

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

We are sending you a donation of \$50.00 to help with your SOG program. We have a member who tells us about your program to help



with calling cards and such for soldiers and we would like to help by giving a donation from our post.

Sincerely,
Jim Watkins, Post Adjutant

The American Legion
Beaverhead Post NO. INC. 20
P O Box 146
Dillon MT 50725

Note: We appreciate your contribution to the ACA.

HI PETE,

Received your invoice today. Here's my 2008 dues. Hope I'm not late. Been under heavy duty chemo therapy for the past five years for two different types of cancer. Can't seem to remember much anymore. Lost my wife to cancer last May 9th and haven't been quite myself since. Any time, any place.

Joseph Obin,
Member #73602
2132 W 4950 S
Roy, UT 84067

Dear Joe,
Wish you well, sorry to hear about your wife. God Bless.

SAM,

Your "oath/view" to the ACA is great Sam! Also, Terry's retirement article was fitting. He worked for Heinie at Mag Thai '71-'72 of BKK when I met him.

Shirley remains in our prayers. The ACA took a hit when Dave went.

We are abundantly blessed to be a part of such a unique band of brothers and you head us up Sam.

He is Risen!
Howie & Gil Pierson

MR. FELIX SAMBOGNA

We want to personally thank you for supporting this year's Chief Master Sergeant Recognition Ceremony. We were honored to have you there and your sponsorship ensured our Air Commandos and their families had a wonderful time. Promotion to "Chief" comes

from years of hard work and is the final step in an enlisted Airman's career. We truly appreciate your help making this event so special.



Again...."Thank You" for your support. You continue to shine as one of Hurlburt's top Community Partners and we are truly grateful!

Respectfully,
Raymond T. Farrell, CMS, USAF
President, Hurlburt Chief's Group
606 Cruz Ave
Hurlburt Field, FL 32544

HI ALL,

Clyde Howard just left Thailand and plans on returning. Please give Roger Clair my condolences on the passing of his wife.

All things here are going well. My new wife, Nat, does not have the hots to go to the USA so we may put that off till 2009.

Miss all of you. Tell Hap, Sars (Mr. "T") and so on I said hi.

Dave
Hua Hin, Thailand

TO ALL ACA MEMBERS

There will be a homecoming honoring the Doolittle Raiders here at FWB. Seven of the remaining 13 raiders will be here for several events that include a lunch on Friday, 30 May, 2008, at the Emerald Coast Conference Center and a banquet on Saturday, May 31, also at the Conference Center. There will be book signings.

Tickets and further information are available at Beach Community Bank and the FWB Chamber of Commerce. website: www.fwbchamber.com, or call 850-244-8191. Our very own Ed Horton will participate.
Sam

Surprise! Two Air Commandos Memorialized at Lackland

Gene Traczyk was certainly feeling surprised when he stumbled upon this plaque of Marty Jester and himself along side an RB-57 while searching the internet. Both Marty and Gene feel very honored to have been recognized in a memorial at Lackland AFB and Marty plans to visit the site during his annual bike trip out West.



Tracy English, Chief, History & Research 37th Training Wing has been working on the USAF BMT Flight Photo Project Site that is responsible for the plaque. Tracy was kind enough to send the following inscription from the plaque, it reads:

AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
MARTIN JESTER
AIRMAN 2ND CLASS
EUGENE TRACZYK JR.

On the evening of Nov. 1, 1964, most aircrews were bunked out in their “hooches,” their aircraft parked in neat rows on the ramps at Bien Hoa AB, South Vietnam. Shortly after midnight, Viet Cong mortar shells began raining down. Airmen Jester and Traczyk, both Air Force firefighters, dodged bullets and exploding bombs in their attempt to reach a line of RB-57 bombers that seemed to be one of the primary targets. The bombers were fueled, armed and ready for their morning missions, a deadly recipe when sprinkled liberally with mortar rounds. The two airmen gathered firefighting crews and equipment and doused bombs the heat threatened to explode. Their success was marked by silence rather than a



blast. At one point, the airmen began stripping off their clothing to plug fuel leaks that threatened to spread the conflagration. People and aircraft were dying. For their selfless actions, Airmen Traczyk and Jester earned the Silver Star for heroism. ■

Gene Traczyk and Marty Jester were presented the Silver Stars from BGen Aderholt during the 26th ACA reunion in 1997, and if memory serves correctly, it was a very moving event with standing ovations afterwards.

Farewell to a True American Hero: Admiral Thomas Moorer

15 August 1973: Performance of Duty

Upon the termination of the longest and in many respects the most difficult period of combat in our nation’s history, I give you my personal salute for a job well done. The tremendous sacrifices and, in particular, the supreme effort by our comrades who were lost during the war have not been in vain. We were called upon by our nation’s leaders, as we have been in the past, to carry out orders in furtherance of national policy and objectives. Few can argue against the common will and determination shown by our armed forces while attaining these objectives. You have performed superbly. Your spirit and élan have remained steadfast throughout. The human qualities and greatness handed down from past military generations have remained undiminished.



Admiral Thomas Moorer 1913-2004

Now the long conflict has come to a close, but our tasks remain. In coming months we must make every effort to account for those still missing in action, while we prepare ourselves for the future. As we move ahead, I have every confidence that when your accomplishments are chronicled in the

pages of history, it will be written that you performed second to none, in the longest, most difficult and in many cases, the most frustrating and complex war in the history of our nation.

The following is courtesy of the Washington Post
Saturday, February 7, 2004

Navy Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, 91, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during crucial years of the Vietnam War who advocated aggressive force to win the conflict, died February 5, 2004, at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda after a stroke.

A tall, soft-spoken and stern southerner, Admiral Moorer was considered a master strategist often called on to handle tense and fragile situations. He occupied a series of increasingly prominent positions from the beginning of major military involvement in Vietnam

until its end. He was commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet during the disputed Tonkin Gulf clash between U.S. and North Vietnamese sea forces in 1964. The crisis led Congress to authorize President Lyndon B. Johnson to take all measures to protect U.S. forces and “to prevent further aggression.” This gave Johnson free rein to bomb North Vietnam and commit U.S. ground forces to the conflict in South Vietnam.



Zorros – The Original AT-28 Group at NKP

Felix “Sam” Sambogna

Recently I have received requests for an article on the AT-28 Zorros. Several years ago I wrote such an article. Some of it is re-printed below along with the picture of the great AT-28, some of the original Zorros and their super crew chiefs. I wish others would submit articles on their experiences for the newsletter.

~~~~~

Over the years I have read many interesting “war stories” in the ACA Newsletter. I don’t recall an article about the original Zorros at Nakhon Phanom (NKP), Thailand.

Most of us who became the first group of Zorros were in jet operations, i.e., fighter or training units. I was an instructor in Air Training Command. Having applied for any fighter to go to VN, I was surprised and confused when I received orders to report to Hurlburt Field, FL for AT-28 training. Where was Hurlburt and what was the AT-28?

Don Moody, an ATC instructor with me at Webb AFB, TX, received the same orders with an earlier reporting date. Neither of us knew what kind of end assignment would result. Well, in 1966 Hurlburt was a lovely little base and training site for many of the prop aircraft that were to perform so well in SEA.

The AT-28 training program at Hurlburt was a delight. No formal ground school, a smattering of manuals and instruction guides, and the commando attitude of lets just get in the aircraft and do it. That is probably where Nike got their trademark commercial. We quickly learned that the AT-28 was a great little aircraft and an absolute joy to fly in the air-to-ground mode. Some of our guys got really good and the range scores were outstanding.

While in the short training program we learned we were part of a program named “Lucky Tiger” and our destination was NKP, Thailand. The powers to be kept it super secret and the regular jocks didn’t know what it was all about. We just



**AT-28 (Zorros) at NKP; some of the original pilots and crew chiefs.**

wanted a shot at some type of combat operations. Our initial group also included Huey helicopter and C-123 crews and civic action folks. In June 1966, we were loaded on a C-130 at Hurlburt with NKP as our destination and no overnight stays included. A very long and boring flight and quite uncomfortable as we had a max load of passengers. After several stops at the islands in the Pacific to change the C-130 aircrew in compliance with crew rest criteria, we finally landed on the PSP runway at NKP. Jerry Nohe (ACA member now deceased), a member of the advance party and one of our AT-28 pilots, greeted us as we unloaded into the hot humid air of beautiful Thailand.

In June of ‘66, NKP consisted of a PSP runway and a few hooches surrounding it. One hootch was the O’Club and that was our first stop. I asked the lovely Thai bartender for a gin and tonic and she said, “ice, no have.” To this day, we laugh at that frequently heard expression.

On the ramp there were a few O-1’s and C-123s. Where were our AT-28s? We finally found out that they were on a ship enroute to Bangkok. What a disappointment! A bunch of pilots and no aircraft

presents a miserable situation. Our leaders seemed confused, our pilots were angry, and life was temporarily not very good. Well, some of the folks that trained in the AT-28 just before our group were sent to Udorn for Project Waterpump. They had a group of AT-28s for that training program that involved many air commandos over several years. We convinced our leaders that we should be permitted to go to Udorn and fly Waterpump aircraft to stay current and out of trouble. Don Moody, one of the pilots at Udorn, was most helpful in getting permission for us to fly their aircraft.

Finally, our aircraft arrived in Bangkok. A couple of us were placed on functional test orders and flew the required test hops before ferrying the aircraft to NKP. There was still confusion as to what our mission really was. It all cleared up when then Colonel Aderholt became the commander of our wing, the 56th ACW. We immediately started attacking trucks on the Ho Chi Minh trail along with the A-26 crews who had arrived at NKP. In addition, we sent mobile training teams to Ubon, Udorn, Ching Mai, and Lopburi to train Thai AT-28 units in night flying and air-to-

ground operations.

The trail work was exciting and challenging in a total night operation. As one can imagine, Colonel Aderholt was “gung ho” and proud of the “truck count” that we accomplished. He frequently informed the senior officers of the success of the A-26 and AT-28 on the trail. Whether or not this operation was a success and had a significant impact is for someone else to determine. We killed many trucks, lost some great guys doing it, and that was our mission. It seemed to make more sense to attack the trucks massed up north rather than wait for them to hit the trail. But that was not our call.

We had to develop our own tactics. Tom Deken, another ACA member deceased, and a truly dedicated air commando, was our tactics officer. We quickly learned that the 50-cal. machine gun was the most effective weapon while attacking at low altitude in the mountainous terrain. In ‘66, our search/attack team of an O-1 spotter and an AT-28 attack plane was most effective. A back-seat crewmember in the O-1 with a starlight scope could spot the trucks and drop the initial flare for the attack. If ad-

See ZORRO page 13



# OSS Veteran Kept It All a Secret

November 15, 2007  
By Rob Gutierrez

For nearly 60 years, Walter L. Mess lived a quiet life in Falls Church. He was engaged in community life; he had a successful real estate business; and he had a loving family. No one knew that during World War II he had been a spy.



Walter L. Mess from an interview the Library of Congress Veteran's History Project conducted.

"I'm in my mid-90s, and what I did back then doesn't count," he says. "There are few people who want to know what really happened."

The Library of Congress hopes to change that. Through March, it will focus on the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II in its Veterans History Project, an online undertaking that documents the wartime experience of veterans through audio and video recordings.

"People know about the war in Europe and in the Pacific; we wanted to illuminate World War II through a part of the war that is not as well known," said Tom Wiener, a historian at the Library of Congress working on the Veterans History Project.

The stars of the China-Burma-India Theater include the Flying Tigers, a group of American volunteer fighter pilots, and the guerrilla fighters known as Merrill's Marauders.

Mr. Mess set up covert operations on the shores of Thailand and Burma. He thinks he was recruited by the Office of Strategic Services

— the precursor to the CIA — because his record was easily accessible to the Washington intelligence community since he had grown up in the District and received a law degree from Catholic University.

During his interview in 1938 with recruiters from the OSS while in law school, Mr. Mess said they asked him only one question, "Are you lucky?"

"They took people who were independent, and I just happened to fit their mold," Mr. Mess said.

Started by Congress in 2000 as a way to preserve the memories of American servicemen and women, the Veterans History Project has collected more than 50,000 items so far, most gathered by volunteers at the grass-roots level.

"A lot of veterans haven't talked to their families about their time in war, and this project allows a veteran's family to fill that chapter of their loved one's life," said Robert Patrick, director of the project for the Library of Congress. "The project allows for a inter-generational connect as volunteers see what other generations experienced."

There are about 17 million living wartime veterans, and the Library of Congress hopes to add each voice to its collection. Mr. Patrick said the collection continues to expand with voices from World War II and plans to eventually concentrate its efforts on the experiences of veterans who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The Veterans History Project has been able to digitize more than 4,000 items of the collection, which will all be available online indefinitely. Past projects have included D-Day, women in World War II, and World War I.

Last month, the Veterans History Project got a boost from Rep. Jon Porter, Nevada Republican, when the House passed his resolution to designate a National Veterans History Project Awareness Week.

"Designating a week, hopefully,

will really focus the public's attention on documenting a veteran's story from someone's family or community," said Matt Leffingwell, a spokesman for Mr. Porter.

Organizers of the Veterans History Project knew that this year predominately would be a World War II exercise, since they were partnering with filmmaker Ken Burns after the release of his new documentary, "The War."

Mr. Mess returned home in 1946 and started his new life. He kept his vow of silence and did not reveal his involvement with the OSS until about five years ago, when he told his wife. She didn't speak to him for a month, Mr. Mess joked.

"Somewhere along the way, I got some Bronze Stars and a lot of other fancy things, but none of that really matters," Mr. Mess said, "I had a good time. The reason I had a good time was because I lived on the edge for a while. I was not young when I left for the war, I was 28. I got lucky — I survived."

This article was from [www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com)

For more interesting history and interviews visit the Library of Congress' website: [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)

## Smiles Across The Miles

By Bob White

Our program to provide care packages to Hurlburt Warriors as they deploy continues in full swing. We just completed our 4th shipment. This latest effort of "Enjoyment for the Deployment" was given a stab-in-the-arm by John Grove who mysteriously came up with thousands of pens and razors.

Our troops deploy constantly, and we want to thank them in our own special ACA way. Please help us by donating items for care packages. We need: Toiletry items (men and women); hard candy, gum, and mints; munchies (nuts, jerky, any-

## Zorro

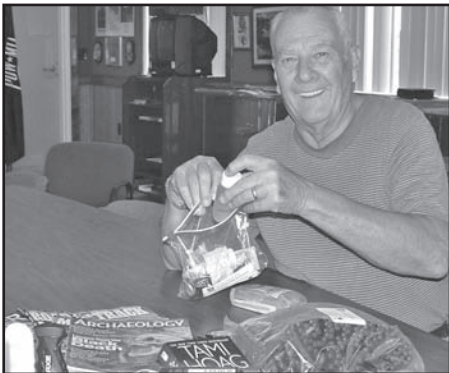
*Continued from page 12*

ditional light was needed, we drop flares from the AT-28 and also called for the ever present C-123 or C-130 flare ship.

In the one-year we were at NKP, we watched the base grow with leaps and bounds. Before long we had air-conditioned quarters, air-conditioned officers and NCO clubs, swimming pool, BX, etc – the American way. I recall asking the base commander why we were building a swimming pool when we were still living in the hooches around the runway and needed so many operational facilities, and he said it was most important to get the swimming pool while the money was available.

NKP continued to grow and many other pilots carried on the AT-28 Zorro mission. When I visited NKP in the early 70s, the base had grown significantly and contained many operations. The AT-28s were replaced by A-1s.

The Zorros were a great bunch of fighter guys who learned to love the AT-28. To this day I still don't know who came up with the cool call sign of Zorro. It was so appropriate for our mission.



thing that won't spoil or go stale); books, magazines, puzzle books, cards, stationary; music CD's.

If you would be interested in helping put together the care packages please contact the ACA office at 850-581-0099 to sign up.





## Dear Mr. Grove,

I am a social worker with the Children's Special Services Program with the Tennessee Department of Public Health. This week, Frank Gray gave our program nine large containers of clothing that you had brought to him. I was delighted to get them especially as they were such attractive and well cared for items. There is a great need for clothing now, particularly since we have seen such a rise in fuel, heating and food costs.

Frank told me about you and the MTF's mission and it is remarkable to me that you and so many others have been so giving and selfless with your time, money and energy. You are truly an exceptional person and we thank you so very much for the bounty you have provided.

Warmest Regards,  
 Patricia Hayes  
 Care Coordinator  
 Children's Special Services  
 Greene County Dept of Health  
 P.O. Box 159  
 Greeneville, TN 37744

## Clothing to Appalachia

John Grove delivered another giant load of clothing to the Rogersville Tenn. area. Air Commando Frank Gray and his bride Penelope have distributed them through the United Way, habitat for humanity and other relief organizations in a very poor two county area. This looks like an great ongoing project for the ACA/ MTF and Frank.

## Honduras Trade School

MTF plans to assist the El Progreso Honduras area by supporting a new trade school. We now provide support for the elementary

and high school education. What is really needed for these kids is a trade. We are thinking welding, auto body, plumbing, electrical, barbers, cosmetology and seamstress for starters. Our contacts in Honduras are looking for the building or land for one. Once the building is in place, the school will start almost immediately. It is a big need. You can help by donating to the MTF general fund or if you live near Ft Walton and have tools to donate let us know.

## Clyde Returns

Clyde Howard just returned from a month in Thailand checking on the projects we have funded. He also talked to Mac Thompson about Laos and Dr John Middlewood about the next school projects near NKP. He is impressed with the progress on what we have funded to date. He did go to several projects still to be funded, they really need our help. Clyde, like all of our volunteers, does this on his own dime and provides photos and a detailed report on all the projects. Great work funded by the Air Commandos and great work from Chief Howard. His after action reports are about as good as any I have seen while on active duty.



**Unfunded school kitchen project at Nong Bua Nung Gao. Termites have nearly destroyed this school roof.**

## Thailand Fund Drive

The last news letter had an appeal for funds for the schools we help rebuild in the NKP area. You were generous and donated just over \$14,000. Slightly over 10% of you opened your wallets and helped. We have spent \$4,900 of these funds already on 2 water projects and one school rebuilt. WE HAVE ABOUT \$50,000 IN UNFUNDED PROJECTS ON THE BOOKS. If you can donate please open the check book and send any amount to MTF, PO Box 67 Mary Esther, FL 32569.



**A completed school project at Nong Yao Thailand. New kitchen and dining facility, and a McCoskrie Family Funded tiled Kindergarten classroom floors.**



**BAN CLUEY- Funds are needed to complete this school rebuild.**



**NONG YAT- currently an unfunded project, the school needs a new roof, floor and desks are needed.**

## Laos: A New MTF Project

The TLC Brotherhood and Mac Thompson have had several successful trips to North Central Laos. Mac has helped fund a school and bath room and delivered supplies. The TLC is dedicated to helping the area near Long Tieng and Mac has been the point man. TLC is strapped for cash and since many of our ACA members worked at or went to 20A in our vacation in SEA we might help. Please send funds to MTF PO Box 67 Mary Esther, FL 32569 and we will get them to Mac and the TLC for the next Laos project.



**Laos: Inside the classrooms we saw the next serious need—desks. What they have now were made by local families and are an odd assortment of wooden tables and benches. They are designed for two students each, but in fact they have to put at least three and sometimes four to a table.**





# Air Commando Association Membership Application

## Membership is open to:

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

## Type of Membership you are requesting:

☐ \$20 Annual Regular

☐ \$150 Life Regular

☐ \$20 Annual Associate

☐ \$150 Life Associate

☐ Widow (No Dues)

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

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

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

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell:(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

## Air Commando/Special Operations Service:

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Return application to:

Air Commando Association  
P.O. Box 7  
Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

For Office Use Only: Membership Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Ck #: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Entered in Membership Database ☐ Welcome Package Sent

# Eglin Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) Open for Business



**VA Gulf Coast Outpatient Clinic opens at Eglin AFB. Just outside the Main Gate. Planned services are Primary Care, Mental Health, Laboratory, Pharmacy, Dietitian and Radiology sharing with Eglin AFB Regional Hospital. The Clinic is expected to have some 7,200 enrollees. It will provide quality, expanded care for veterans in the local service area. Located at 100 Veterans Way, Eglin AFB, FL 32542 Phone number: Toll Free at 1-866-520-7359 or local 850-609-2600.**

*By Mladen Rudman, Northwest Florida Daily News*

Cane in hand, Fort Walton Beach’s Jim Fuller surveyed the new facility he plans to use regularly.

The disabled Vietnam War veteran with bone cancer attended the grand opening Friday of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Eglin Community-based Outpatient Clinic.

“My first impressions are very, very good,” he said. “Everything is well designed. ... It should have been here years ago.”

Scores of people gathered outside the main entrance to hear brief speeches and watch the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The clinic and nearby Eglin Regional Hospital will share some staff and equipment to reduce costs and wait times.

Maj. Gen. David Eidsaune, commander of the Air Armament Center at Eglin, said the cooperative agreement between VA and the base was a benchmark that could serve as a model for similar arrangements elsewhere.

He added that the clinic was badly needed.

“I know this clinic with its dedicated staff will provide exceptional service to veterans for years to come,” said Eidsaune.

U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller, who has been credited with helping get the

clinic built, thanked the builders and the facility’s staff. He also had glowing words for the men and women who will use it.

“To those of you who have



**Col. Rick LoCastro, 96th Air Base Wing Vice Commander, salutes the American flag as the American Veterans Post 78 Color Guard post the colors at the VA Clinic. Photo:Staff Sgt. Stacia Zachary**

served the nation so well, we will never be able to thank you enough,” said Miller, R-Chumuckla.

The guest speaker was Albert H. Linden Jr., adjutant for the Disabled American Veterans Department of Florida.

Linden, a Vietnam War helicopter pilot who lost his lower right leg to a machine gun bullet during a combat mission, had America’s most recent veterans on his mind.

The \$5.5 million, 16,700-square-foot clinic will offer primary medical care, mental health services, laboratory work, a small pharmacy and nutrition assistance. It’s open to veterans accepted as VA beneficiaries.

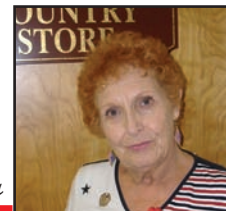






# ACA COUNTRY STORE

Joyce Harrington, Country Store Manager



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



Bush Hats **Firm Only!** \$20



ACA Embroidered Cloth Tab \$3



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



Jackets M - XXL \$35



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



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



B-26 T-Shirt  
All Sizes  
\$10



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



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



Golf Towels (w/ACA Logo) \$8



Assorted Patches \$3 each

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



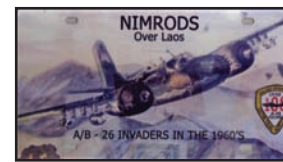
Ball Cap - ACA Crest or Lettering  
(Navy, Royal & Light Blue, Black,  
White, Gray, Denim, Camo, & Red)  
\$10



New License Plate Blue \$12



Son Tay Raider Plate \$12



Nimrods Plate \$12



New License Plate White \$12



Over Mekong Plate \$12



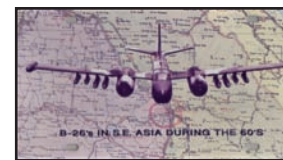
A1-H Hobo's Plate \$12



Traditional ACA License  
Plate \$10



Printed Plastic License  
Plate Holder \$4



B26 in SE Asia Plate \$12



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



ACA Glass Mug \$10



ACA Coin (Bronze) \$5



ACA Bumper Sticker \$2



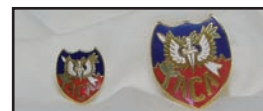
ACA Decal  
(4" x 5")  
2/1.00



POW/MIA Flag \$12



ACA Car Window Decal \$3



ACA Lapel Pin  
(Small or Large)  
\$4

Please see the Country Store price list on page 18 for a full list of available items. If you have questions on any of the items please call Joyce Harrington at 850-581-0099 from 10am-12 noon. The ACA will try to accommodate all orders but we cannot guarantee availability on all products. If the item is no longer available we will gladly refund your entire purchase.



# Commemorative ACA Brick

LARRY MOORE  
311 ACS 67-68  
SMSGT RETIRED

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



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| Qty | Color | Item | Size | Unit Price |
|-----|-------|------|------|------------|
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|                         | Sub Total |
| 20% Shipping & Handling |           |
| Grand Total             |           |

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



# A tribute to the C-47 / Douglas DC-3

By Michael Williams

It's carried more passengers than any plane in history but now the DC3 has been grounded by health and safety rules

'It groaned, it protested, it rattled, it ran hot, it ran cold, it ran rough, it staggered along on hot days and scared you half to death.

'Its wings flexed and twisted in a horrifying manner, it sank back to earth with a great sigh of relief. But it flew and it flew and it flew.'

This is the memorable description by Captain Len Morgan, a former pilot with Braniff Airways, of the unique challenge of flying a Douglas DC-3.

The DC3 served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam and was a favorite among pilots.

For more than 70 years, the aircraft known through a variety of nicknames - the Doug, the Dizzy, Old Methuselah, the Gooney Bird, the Grand Old Lady - but which to most of us is simply the Dakota has been the workhorse of the skies. With its distinctive nose-up profile when on the ground and extraordinary capabilities in the air, it transformed passenger travel and served in just about every military conflict from World War II onwards.

Now the Douglas DC-3 - the most successful plane ever made, which first took to the skies just over 30 years after the Wright Brothers' historic first flight - is to carry passengers in Britain for the last time. Romeo Alpha and Papa Yankee, the last two passenger-carrying Dakotas in the UK, are being forced into retirement because of - yes, you've guessed it - health and safety rules.

Their owner, Coventry-based Air Atlantique, has reluctantly decided it would be too expensive to fit the required emergency escape slides and weather radar systems required by new European rules for their 65-year-old planes, which served with the RAF during the

war. Mike Collett, the company's chairman, says: "We're very saddened."

The end of the passenger-carrying British Dakotas is a sad chapter in the story of the most remarkable aircraft ever built, surpassing all others in length of service, dependability and achievement. It has been a luxury airliner, transport plane, bomber, fighter and flying hospital and introduced millions of people to the concept of air travel. It has flown more miles, broken more records, carried more passengers and cargo, accumulated more flying time and performed more "impossible" feats than any other plane in history, even in these days of super-jumbos that can circle the world non-stop. Indeed, at one point, 90 per cent of the world's air traffic was operated by DC-3s.

More than 10,500 DC-3s have been built since the prototype was rolled out to astonished onlookers at Douglas's Santa Monica factory in 1935.

With its eagle beak, large square windows and sleek metal fuselage, it was luxurious beyond belief, in contrast to the wood-and-canvas bone-shakers of the day, where passengers had to huddle under blankets against the cold. Even in the 1930s, the early Dakotas had many of the comforts we take for granted today, like on-board loos and a galley that could prepare hot food. Early menus included wild rice pancakes with blueberry syrup, served on bone china with silver service.

For the first time, passengers were able to stand up and walk around while the plane was airborne. But the design had one vital feature, ordered by pioneering aviator Charles Lindbergh, who was a director of TWA, which placed the first order for the plane. The DC-3 should always, Lindbergh directed, be able to fly on one engine.

Pilots have always loved it, not



just because of its rugged reliability but because, with no computers on board, it is the epitome of "flying by the seat of the pants." One aviator memorably described the Dakota as a "collection of parts flying in loose formation," and most reckon they can land it pretty well on a postage stamp.

Captain Len Morgan says: "The Dakota could lift virtually any load strapped to its back and carry it anywhere and in any weather safely."

It is the very human scale of the plane that has so endeared it to successive generations. With no pressurization in the cabin, it flies low and slow.

And unlike modern jets, it's still possible to see the world go by from the cabin of a Dakota. (The name, incidentally, is an acronym for Douglas Aircraft Company Transport Aircraft.)

As a former Pan Am stewardess puts it: "From the windows you seldom look upon a flat, hazy, distant surface to the world. "Instead, you see the features of the earth - curves of mountains, colours of lakes, cars moving on roads, ocean waves crashing on shores and cloud formations as a sea of popcorn and powder puffs."

But it is for heroic feats in military service that the legendary plane is most distinguished. It played a major role in the invasion of Sicily, the D-Day landings, the Berlin Airlift and the Korean and Vietnam wars, performing aston-

ishing feats along the way. When General Eisenhower was asked what he believed were the foundation stones for America's success in World War II he named the bulldozer, the jeep, the half-ton truck and the Dakota.

When the Burma Road was captured by the Japanese and the only way to send supplies into China was over the mountains at 19,000ft, the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek said: "Give me 50 DC-3s and the Japs can have the Burma Road."

In 1945 a Dakota broke the world record for a flight with an engine out of action, traveling the 1,100 miles from Pearl Harbor to San Diego, with just one propeller working. Another lost a wing after colliding mid-air with a Lockheed bomber. Defying all the rules of aerodynamics, and with only a stub remaining, the plane landed, literally, on a wing and a prayer.

Once, a Dakota pilot carrying paratroops across the Channel to France heard an enormous bang. He went aft to find half the plane had been blown away, including part of the rudder. With engines still turning, he managed to skim the wave-tops before finally making it to safety.

Another wartime Dakota was rammed by a Japanese fighter that fell to earth, while the American crew returned home in their severely damaged - but still airborne - plane and were given the distinction of "downing an enemy air-

See *TRIBUTE* page 20

# Tribute

Continued from page 19

craft.” Another DC-3 was peppered with 3,000 bullets in the wings and fuselage by Japanese fighters. It made it back to base, was repaired with canvas patches and glue and then sent back into the air.

During the evacuation of Saigon in 1975, a Dakota crew managed to cram aboard 98 Vietnamese orphans, although the plane was supposed to carry no more than 30 passengers.

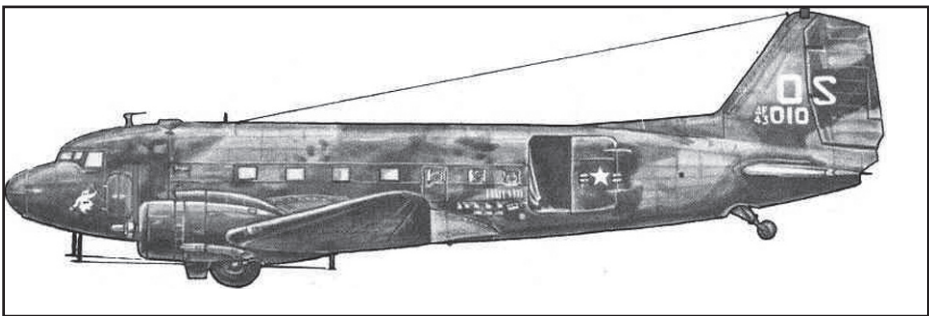
In addition to its rugged military service, it was the DC-3 which transformed commercial passenger flying in the post-war years. Easily converted to a passenger plane, it introduced the idea of affordable air travel to a world which had previously seen it as exclusively for the rich. Flights across America could be completed in about 15 hours (with three stops for refueling), compared with the previous reliance on short hops in commuter aircraft during the day and train travel overnight.

It made the world a smaller place, gave people the opportunity for the first time to see previously inaccessible destinations and became a romantic symbol of travel.

The DC-3’s record has not always been perfect. After the war, military-surplus Dakotas were cheap, often poorly maintained and pushed to the limit by their owners. Accidents were frequent. One of the most tragic happened in 1962, when Zulu Bravo, a Channel Airways flight from Jersey, slammed into a hillside on the Isle of Wight in thick fog. All three crew died and nine of the 14 passengers, but the accident changed the course of aviation history. The local radar, incredibly, had been switched off because it was a Sunday. The national air safety rules were changed to ensure it never happened again.

“The DC-3 was, and is, unique,” wrote the novelist and aviation writer Ernest Gann, “since no other flying machine has cruised ev-

ery sky known to mankind, been so admired, cherished, glamorized, known the touch of so many pilots and sparked so many tributes. “It was without question the most successful aircraft ever built and



even in this jet age it seems likely the surviving DC-3s may fly about their business for ever.” This may be no exaggeration. Next month, Romeo Alpha and Papa Yankee begin a farewell tour of Britain’s airports before carrying their final passengers at the International Air Show at RAF Fairford on July 16.

But after their retirement, there will still be Dakotas flying in the farthest corners of the world, kept going with love, dedication and sheer ingenuity. Nearly three-quarters of a century after they first entered service, it’s still possible to get a Dakota ride somewhere in the world.

I recently took a DC-3 into the heart of the Venezuelan jungle - to the “Lost World” made famous in the novel by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

It is one of the most remote regions on the planet - where the venerable old planes have long been used because they can be maneuvered like birds in the wild terrain. It’s a scary experience being strapped into a torn canvas chair, raked back at an alarming angle (walking along the aisle of a stationary Dakota is like climbing a steep hill) as you wait for take-off. The engines spew smoke and oil as they spudder into life with what DC-3 fans describe as “music” but to me sounded like the hammering of a thousand pneumatic drills. But

soon you are skimming the legendary flat-topped mountains protruding from the jungle below, purring over wild rivers and the Angel Falls, the world’s highest rapids. Suddenly the ancient plane drops like

a stone to a tiny landing strip just visible in the trees. The pilot dodges bits of dismantled DC-3 engines scattered on the ground and avoids a stray dog as he touches down with scarcely a bump. How did he do it without air traffic control and the minimum of navigational aids?

“C’est facile - it’s easy,” he shrugged.

Today, many DC-3s live on throughout the world as crop-sprayers, surveillance patrols, air freighters in forgotten African states and even luxury executive transports. One, owned by a Houston lumber company, had mink-covered doorknobs while another, belonging to a Texas rancher, had sofas and reclining chairs upholstered with the skins of unborn calves. In Jaipur, India, a Dakota is licensed for flying wedding ceremonies.

Even when they have ended their aerial lives, old Dakotas have become mobile homes, hamburger stands and hen houses. One even serves as a football team changing room. Clark Gable’s private DC-3, which once ferried chums such as John and Bobby Kennedy, Marilyn Monroe, Frank Sinatra and Ronald Reagan, is in a theme park in San Marino.

But don’t assume it won’t run again. Some of the oldest hulks have been put back in the skies. The ancient piston engines are re-

placed by modern turboprops, and many a pilot of a modern jet has been astonished to find a Dakota alongside him on the climb away from the runway.

So what is the enduring secret of the DC-3?

David Egerton, professor of the history of science and technology at Imperial College, London, says we should rid our minds of the idea that the most recent inventions are always the best. “The very fact that the DC-3 is still around, and performing a useful role in the world, is a powerful reminder that the latest and most expensive technology is not always the one that changes history,” he says.

It’s long been an aviation axiom that “the only replacement for the DC-3 is another DC-3.” So it’s fortunate that at least one seems likely to be around for a very long time to come. In 1946, a DC-3 on a flight from Vienna to Pisa crashed into the top of the Rosenlauri Glacier in the Swiss Alps. The aircraft was not damaged and all the passengers were rescued, but it quickly began to disappear as a blinding snowstorm raged.

Swiss engineers have calculated that it will take 600 years for it to slide down inside the glacier and emerge at the bottom.

And, it wouldn’t be surprising to discover that it’s still in perfect working order!

# Military

A monthly magazine for veterans, written by veterans, covering WWII, Korea, Viet-Nam & Today.

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# Kittinger Wins National Air and Space Museum Trophy

The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum Trophy, the museum's highest honor, has been awarded this year to balloonist Col. Joseph W. Kittinger Jr. in the category of Lifetime Achievement.

The 2008 winner will receive his award in a private evening ceremony at the National Air and Space Museum building in Washington April 3. Established in 1985, the award recognizes outstanding achievements in the fields and history of aerospace science and technology. As in past years, trophy winners receive a miniature version of "The Web of Space," a sculpture by artist John Safer.

**Col. Joseph W. Kittinger Jr.**

Kittinger exemplifies the finest traditions of American aviation. While participating in U.S. Air Force high-altitude balloon research programs in the 1960s, he parachuted from 102,800 feet. This world record for the highest parachute jump and longest free fall still stands today. In 1972, while commanding the 555th Tactical Fighter Squadron on his third combat tour in Southeast Asia, Kittinger downed a MiG 21 before being shot down and captured. He spent 11 months as a prisoner of war. Retired from the Air Force in 1978, he remains an active balloon and fixed wing pilot. A four-time winner of the Gordon-Bennett balloon



trophy, he completed the first solo balloon crossing of the Atlantic in 1984. Kittinger is one of the nation's most distinguished and honored aviators.

The Trophy 2008 case will display the James Gordon Bennett Trophy (Kittinger won the James Gordon Bennett Balloon Race in 1982, 1984, 1985 and 1988.); the flight jacket and scarf Kittinger wore on the first solo balloon flight across the Atlantic Ocean; the hunting cap he wore on each of his high-altitude balloon flights; the bag issued to prisoners of war for their personal items when they were released by the North Vietnamese; and a POW bracelet worn by a citizen during his captivity.

For more information, visit the official Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum website at [www.nasm.si.edu](http://www.nasm.si.edu).

## High Flight

*"Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth  
of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things you  
have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and  
swung high in the sunlit silence.  
Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and  
flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.  
Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue I've topped the  
windswept heights with easy grace where never lark, or  
even eagle flew...."*



John Gillespie Magee was born in 1922 in Shanghai. His father was a U.S. citizen and his mother was British. They were serving as missionaries in China.

In 1939, John won a scholarship to Yale. However, after completing his freshman year there, he wanted to do his part to resist the Nazi threat. In 1940, he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, was trained as a pilot, and in 1941 was sent for combat duty in England.

During a flight one day in late summer, he scribbled "High Flight" on the back of an envelope, and later sent a copy to his parents.



On December 11, 1941, his Spitfire collided with another plane and the 19-year-old pilot crashed to his death. He was buried two days later.

*"...And while with silent lifting mind I've trod  
the high untrodden sanctity of space,  
Put out my hand and touched the face of God."*

NEW!

SILENT AUCTION

at the 2008 ACA Reunion

Thursday - Sunday in the Hospitality Room.

Donations Needed!

Items-of-Value only please

Memorabilia, Books, Pictures, Models, etc.

Call the ACA office or stop by with your donated items before Oct 9th.

Contact Joyce at the Country Store at 850-581-0099 if any questions.

# Vietnam-Era Vet Reports for Duty

by Kathy Lohr

Army Spc. Tom Owens first joined the military during the Vietnam War when he was 17. He earned two Bronze Stars before leaving the service in 1992.

But nearly two years ago, when the Army raised its enlistment age limit to 42, Owens decided to sell his landscaping business and volunteer to serve his country again — at age 55.

The Army allows soldiers to subtract their years of prior military service from their age. In Owens' case, he had 14 years of active service. In the Army's eyes, this made him effectively 41 and qualified him to re-enlist as long as he passed the medical screening and fitness test —which he did. Now, Owens is assigned to the 802nd Ordnance Company, a reserve unit in Gainesville, Ga.

"You know I'm a survivor, I'm young," says Owens, who wants to be deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. "I stood tall in a place of hell with other Americans doing a job that nobody else wanted to do. I have no regrets. Do it all over again, you know? That's what it's all about."

On a recent Saturday morning, he and about three dozen soldiers

dressed in Army fatigues were standing at attention. Many of the



Tom Owens (Photo by Jonathan Hollada)

soldiers are in their 20s, a few are in their 30s; Owens is the only 56-year-old recruit in the bunch. The soldiers are about to be tested on their physical fitness and Owens — who lost 20 pounds to get ready for his new Army stint — is ready.

Owens, who has lived in the Atlanta area most of his life, jokes with everyone about how many push-ups and sit-ups he can do — only he's not really kidding. Within four minutes, he completes 47 push-ups and 60 sit-ups.

"I'm not gonna say anything about his age, but he's in very, very good shape," says Sgt. First Class Deborah Vincent. "And to come back in after all these years, you

know, I commend him for that."

After the first part of the test ends, the soldiers head out for a two-mile run. Owens finishes in 17 and a half minutes — two minutes faster than the requirements set for his age — does an additional 25 push-ups for good measure and runs back to encourage others who've yet to finish. Owens admits that some of the younger soldiers tease him and call him "grandpa," but they also know he can outperform many of them.

"The younger soldiers look up to him," Vincent says. "If he can do stuff, they can do it."

Initially some recruiters told Owens, who never married and has no children, he wouldn't make it back in the Army. That only made him more determined.

"Tell me I can't do something and I will do it," he says. "When people said I couldn't go in the Army, I said 'I will go in the Army.'"

When battalion commander Lt. Col. Dave Johnson found out Owens was in his unit, he drove three hours to personally congratulate him.

*Courtesy of [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org).*

## When a Veteran Retires

This was sent to me from a friend and says so much about all our members who have been down this road and most of all says so much about the Air Commando Assn. I don't think there is a single member that would disagree with this. Just thought I would share with all of you that I say "Thank You" to for defending our freedoms that we all seem to take for granted.

*Sugie Jones*

When a good Veteran leaves the "job" and retires to a better life, many are jealous, some are pleased and others, who may have already retired, wonder if he knows what he is leaving behind, because we already know.

We know, for example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, it will remain as a longing for those past times. We know in the Military life there is a fellowship which lasts long after the uniforms are hung up in the back of the closet. We know even if he throws them away, they will be on him with every step and breath that remains in his life. We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart still is.

These are the burdens of the job. You will still look at people suspiciously, still see what others do not see or choose to ignore and always will look at the rest of the Military world with a respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing.

Never think for one moment

See *VETERAN* pg 23

# Recognition for Special Operators

For over 20 years I have attempted to have what I perceive to be an injustice corrected. Many special operators and especially Air Commandos, have fallen through the gaps where decorations are concerned.

Some missions, since declassified or non-classified, resulted in either visible or non-visible injuries.

These missions were/are not considered 'combat related'. When members are either killed or injured, they do not receive the same consideration for decorations, compensation, etc. that others do.

As in the case of my mates/self at Desert One, in-country time was not considered combat. Those killed/ wounded were not 'killed

or wounded in action'. They were considered to be 'injured' just as those in 'training accidents'. They were sometimes not decorated, but awarded medals in recognition. They didn't qualify for the Purple Heart as those were who were 'wounded' in a disco bombing, etc. 4 Air Commandos were considered for the MOH (which has been denied since by the USAF, but was stated in person to myself and others). Instead, the highest non-combat award, the Airman's Medal was presented. (The separate award of a 10 percent determination in increase in retired pay for the MOH. Were you aware of that stipulation? - didn't come until 10 years later after I fought the USAF over

the Board of Civilian Review).

To make a short story long... there is an inequity still where members may be awarded non-combat status vs. combat. It isn't about getting more or personal recognition, it is about justice for all. Attached below is a link to an org that you may not be aware of, as well as their website. I ask that you visit it and possibly pass it on to members thru the newsletter.

As for the situation I described above, I will continue to work on this myself on the behalf of others until I receive satisfaction. There are too many members who may have slipped through the cracks

See *RECOGNITION* pg 23



# New Direction for the War on Terrorists: Send Vets Over 60

I am over 60 and the Armed Forces thinks I'm too old to track down terrorists. You can't be older than 42 to join the military. They've got the whole thing ass backwards. Instead of sending 18-year olds off to fight, they ought to take us old

## Veteran

Continued from page 22

you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping the "job" and merely being allowed to leave "active" duty.

So what I wish for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you never forget for one moment that "Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called children of God," and you are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

### Civilian Friends vs. Veteran Friends

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Get upset if you're too busy to talk to them for a week. VETERAN FRIENDS: Are glad to see you after years, and will happily carry on the same conversation you were having the last time you met.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Have never seen you cry. VETERAN FRIENDS: Have cried with you.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Borrow your stuff for a few days then give it back. VETERAN FRIENDS: Keep your stuff so long they forget it's yours.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Know a few things about you. VETERAN FRIENDS: Could write a book with direct quotes from you.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will leave you behind if that's what the crowd

guys. You shouldn't be able to join a military unit until you're at least 35.

**For starters:**  
Researchers say 18-year-olds think about sex every 10 seconds.

is doing. VETERAN FRIENDS: Will kick the crowds' ass that left you behind.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Are for a while. VETERAN FRIENDS: Are for life.

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Have shared a few experiences... VETERAN FRIENDS: Have shared a lifetime of experiences no citizen could ever dream of...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will take your drink away when they think you've had enough. VETERAN FRIENDS: Will look at you stumbling all over the place and say, "You better drink the rest of that before you spill it!!" Then carry you home safely and put you to bed...

CIVILIAN FRIENDS: Will talk crap to the person who talks crap about you. VETERAN FRIENDS: Will knock them the hell out OF THEM..... for using your name in vain.

A veteran - whether active duty, retired, or national guard, or reserves - is someone who, at one point in their life, wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America," for an amount of "up to and including my life."

From one Veteran to another, it's an honor to be in your Company. Thank you Veteran!

Old guys only think about sex a couple of times a day, leaving us more than 28,000 additional seconds per day to concentrate on the enemy.

Young guys haven't lived long enough to be cranky, and a cranky soldier is a dangerous soldier. "My back hurts! I can't sleep, I'm tired and hungry." We are impatient and maybe letting us kill some ass hole that desperately deserves it will make us feel better and shut us up for a while.

An 18 -year-old doesn't even like to get up before 10 a.m. Old guys always get up early to pee so what the hell. Besides, like I said, "I'm tired and can't sleep and since I'm already up, I may as well be up killing some fanatical SOB.

If captured we couldn't spill the beans because we'd forget where we put them. In fact, name, rank, and serial number would be a real brainteaser.

Boot camp would be easier for old guys. We're used to getting

## Recognition

Continued from page 22

over time, just as the disabled veterans I work with locally, to receive their due compensation, have slipped through or are turned away by the VA, and are worthy.

I thank you for your time.  
Jim McClain

Silver Star Families of America  
525 Cave Hollow Rd.  
Clever, MO. 65631  
[www.silverstarfamilies.org](http://www.silverstarfamilies.org)  
Email: [stevenewton69@hotmail.com](mailto:stevenewton69@hotmail.com)  
Chief Steven J. Newton (ret)  
Founder

*This site relates the story about the Silver Star Families, military members who are WIA/KIA and how they are being recognized.*

screamed and yelled at, and we're used to soft food. We've also developed an appreciation for guns. We've been using them for years as an excuse to get out of the house, away from the screaming and yelling.

They could lighten up on the obstacle course, however. I've been in combat and didn't see a single 20-foot wall with rope hanging over the side, nor did I ever do any pushups after completing basic training. I can hear the Drill Sgt. In the "New army" now, "Get down and give me ... ER ... One."

Actually, the running part is kind of a waste of energy, too. I've never seen anyone outrun a bullet.

An 18-year-old has the whole world ahead of him. He's still learning to shave, to start up a conversation with a pretty girl. He still hasn't figured out that a baseball cap has a brim to shade his eyes, not the back of his head.

These are all great reasons to keep our kids at home to learn a little more about life before sending them off into harm's way.

Let us old guys track down those dirty rotten coward terrorists. The last thing an enemy would want to see right now is a couple of million pissed-off old farts with 'attitude' and automatic weapons who know that their best years are already behind them.

If nothing else, put us on border patrol....we will have it secured the first night!



# Man’s best friend receives top honor

Working dog and fallen K9 handler tribute was held at the AF Armament museum on Eglin AFB on February 16, 2008. A monument will feature a bronze casting of a German shepherd and will serve to honor all working dogs, their handlers and trainers from all branches of service, past, present, and future.

One dog in particular was the center of attention. Lex, a German shepherd military working dog veteran, received a commemorative Purple Heart medal for the injuries he sustained in combat. Nearly a

year ago his handler, Marine Corps Cpl. Dustin J. Lee, was killed while Lex was critically wounded in a mortar attack March 21, 2007, in Fallujah, Iraq. Never leaving his fallen master’s side until battlefield medics separated the pair, Lex survived the attack but still has shrapnel in his back. While deployed, Lex’s primary role while serving in the Global War on Terror was a bomb sniffer.

Lex was allowed to retire when his partner was killed in Iraq. He is the first Marine Corps Military Working Dog to ever be retired into the care of the deceased handler’s family.

“These dogs are the greatest tool to have on the front lines,” said Tech. Sgt. Gary King, 96th Security Forces Squadron military working dog handler. “They save so many unsuspecting lives because they can tell where hidden caches of weapons are or hear an enemy hiding just steps away. They truly are heroes in every sense and I am proud to be a handler.”

Military working dogs have been officially in service since World War II under the Dogs for Defense program and more than



ACA Country Store Manager, Joyce Harrington is pictured above with a K9 handler and his dog who were attending the ceremony for the handlers and their courageous dogs on Eglin AFB



Lex, a German shepherd, received a commemorative Purple Heart medal for the injuries he sustained in combat in a ceremony honoring all working dogs at the Air Armament Museum today. Photo:Staff Sgt. Stacia Zachary

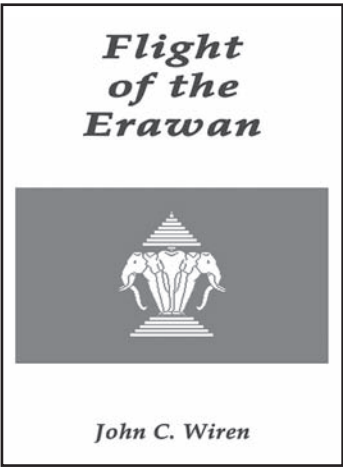
100,000 have served in the defense of the United States of America.

## FLIGHT OF THE ERAWAN

by John C. Wiren

### Historical Fiction:

From offices fronting for the Central Intelligence Agency in Washington, D.C. to the jungles, mountains and plains of Southeast Asia, the author draws the reader into the “Secret War” of the Sixties in Laos. While the action centers around the maneuverings by Air America in support of the Laotian anti-communist forces against the Pathet Lao and, at that time, the North Vietnamese threat, the author explores the various locales, from Bangkok to Vientiane, from Saigon to Taiwan, and from Japan to Korea that form the background for the “Secret War.” If you saw a recent movie that depicted Air America operations, now read a novelized account from someone who was really there, in the air and on the ground.



### About the Author:

John Wiren was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa and raised in Omaha, Nebraska. He played two years of professional baseball before entering the military service as a naval aviation cadet. Upon graduation, he was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps and served a total of four and one-half years of active duty, followed by service in reserve squadrons at Olathe, Kansas while returning to the University of Omaha to complete his education. He later served in the Secret Service in Dallas, Texas

prior to his involvement with Air America in Southeast Asia. He also holds a B.A. in foreign trade. Following his service with Air America, he flew for Inter-Mountain Air on Alaska’s North Slope, J.C.A. Biafra, Global Associates on Kwajalein Island, Areo Union, Dominicana Airlines, Air Yemen, Singapore Airlines, for Saudi Intelligence as chief pilot, personal pilot for Jordanian prime minister, Raffic Harriri, personal pilot for Prince Walid bin Talah. He ended his aviation career with the Federal Aviation Administration, first as an inspector and then as an instructor at the FAA Academy in Oklahoma City. Following his retirement, he now resides with his wife, Carolyn, in Mountain Home, Arkansas.

For an autographed copy send \$20.00 (shipping included) to John Wiren, 295 Sycamore Springs Trail, Mountain Home, AR 72653 or go to: [www.ebookstand.com](http://www.ebookstand.com) and search for Flight of the Erawan.

## Air Force Launches Retiree Website

The U.S. Air Force has a new Web site just for its retiree community that is full of news and information, plus it is easy to access and navigate.

The Air Force Retiree Services site is located at [www.retirees.af.mil](http://www.retirees.af.mil).

This public Web site offers the retirees family community in-depth information on the Survivor Benefit Plan, plus a list of Air Force Retiree Activities Offices worldwide, and various other resources. There also are sections dedicated to the Afterburner and Air Force Retiree News Service.

Visitors can access the sections by using the top navigation bar on the home page. The home page also features the latest Air Force headline news and video clips. There is even a special icon for quick access to the Combat-Related Special Compensation information page.

Subscribing to the electronic version is now much easier: just click on the word “Subscribe” found on the top navigation bar: find “Afterburner/AFRNS” near the top of the second column and click in the circle to subscribe; enter the required email address; and then click on the submit button.



# Ten feet of palm in the wing and six tons of oil in her belly, it was a..... BIZARRE FLIGHT

The top ten feet of a palm tree stuck fast to the Fairchild C-123 Provider's wings as Air Force Maj. James R. McCarthy, 35, of Ormond Beach FL, struggled to keep the aircraft from settling into the Gulf of Siam off the Vietnam coast.

A1C Steve Bailey, 23, of Breaks VA, the loadmaster, after a hurried okay to dump six tons of oil drums, had 45 seconds to jettison the load before the C-123 would slam into the sea.

It was only after the first 55 gallon drum rolled out of the plane that Major McCarthy felt he had a reasonable chance of saving his five-man crew and badly damaged C-123.

In the struggle with the crippled aircraft, the aircrew experienced one of the most bizarre flights of the Vietnam war.

Hours earlier they had left Tan Son Nhut AB outside Saigon, flying fuel oil to a small U.S. Army Special Forces camp.

The camp's 1,500 foot strip would give Major McCarthy plenty of space to make an assault landing and drop off the oil. He had put the low-slung Provider into shorter places before.

Once unloaded, the plane could take off with no difficulty.

But when the 309th Air Commando Squadron aircrew landed, they were in for a near-fatal surprise.

As the transport rolled to a stop, armed Viet Cong ran out of the surrounding woods and began shooting at the plane.

Major McCarthy had 20 seconds to make up his mind whether to try taking off overloaded or jettison the cargo.

"I chose to risk a shorter takeoff run, one that we normally would never attempt with a heavily loaded aircraft as I knew to stay long enough to jettison my cargo would have meant certain death," Major McCarthy recalled.

Even as he made his decision,

Major McCarthy—pilot of 600 combat missions in Vietnam— began turning his aircraft around. He had the added problem of a flat nose-wheel tire which had blown when he landed.

With a 12,000 pound load aboard every bit of the 1,500 feet of runway was needed. Now with the nose gear tire flat, the extra drag meant even more space was necessary.

As the twin-engine transport lumbered along the rock strip, a second band of Viet Cong charged from the jungle midway down the runway.

As the enemy fired from both sides a bullet tore into the right wing.

At the end of the runway, the plane broke from the ground. Capt. Frederick D. Hutchinson, 29, of Bryan OH, the copilot, retracted the landing gear as Major McCarthy tried to lift the plane high enough to rise over a barrier of 20 foot palm trees. But the big plane weighed too much, slamming into a palm just outboard of the left wing landing light well.

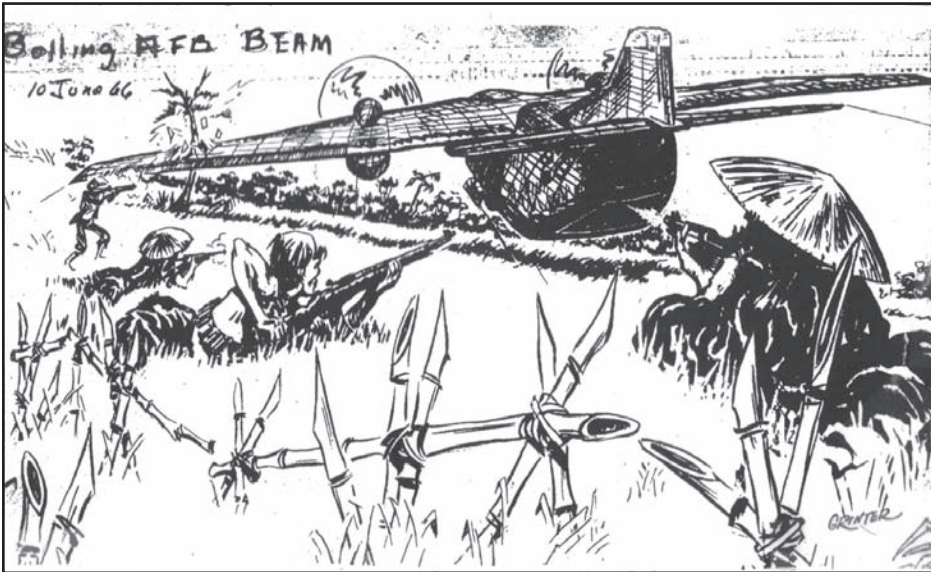
Instead of shearing and falling away, the top 10 feet of the tree stuck in the wing.

The hole and the palm which now seemed to sprout from the wing unsettled the planes control surfaces. The plane dipped on its left wing.

Major McCarthy reduced power to the right engine to level the wings so the plane would not cart-wheel if the wingtip should hit water or the beach now under him.

Because of reduced power, the plane began to sink.

Never more than 15 feet off the ground, the C123 was now down to about three feet above the water. Flight mechanic TSgt Rogerio Molino of Rio Grande City TX, adjusted engine power settings as needed, freeing Major McCarthy and Captain Hutchinson to fly the aircraft.



Displaced air over the wing surface set up a vibration. The flaps were still in full down position, but Captain Hutchison—a qualified C-123 aircraft commander – was gently maneuvering them to the up or standard flight position.

The pilots now had the plane in a slight nose-high position to help the jettison work going on in the cargo hold.

As Airman Bailey slipped the first knot on the cargo tie-down straps, Maj. Vernon J. Rood, a 41 year old native of Amarillo TX, who was along as an extra navigator, pitched in to help.

The crew navigator, Capt. Jack G. Donovan, of Tulsa OK, also came back to help roll out the heavy drums.

As each barrel rolled away, the plane climbed slowly. Major McCarthy turned toward Binh Thuy AB 80 miles away.

With the aircraft at 2,500 feet, the crew began testing to see if it could be landed. They found it could, but they would have to go in faster than design specifications.

It was then Major McCarthy began to think of having the crew parachute. The control tower reported a secure area adjacent to the base, but any drift from a particular spot would carry the crewmen into enemy hands.

Major McCarthy elected to bring the plane to Binh Thuy with the crew aboard.

He wanted the runway covered with greasy foamite, a mixture used to smother fires. This would give him a slick surface and prevent sparks from igniting his aircraft should his nose gear fail because of unusually high landing speed.

After laying a strip of foam down the runway, fire trucks stood by to cover the landing.

They weren't needed. Major McCarthy and his crew landed safely.

Major McCarthy said the only reason he and the five Air Force men with him are alive is that the crew displayed the highest degree of discipline.

"Each crew member," he said, "did exactly what he should have done in the exact sequence required. It was the result of the excellent crew training they have received and their own individual professional competence." (AFSN) – Appeared in Air Force Times, June 1966—

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FREEDOM LOST

"A government big enough to give you everything you want is strong enough to take everything you have." - Thomas Jefferson

Rescue on the Plaines des Jarres Painting

Last year the Air America Association commissioned an original oil painting by Keith Woodcock, a noted British aviation artist. The past president and a former R/W Chief Pilot put up the funds personally to insure the project was finished in time for display at the Nashville Reunion. Association staff members Dan Gamblin and Patricia Sherman handled the sale, handling and shipment of the prints to mostly regular and associate association members.

The original work was presented to the CIA Headquarters - Intelligence Art Gallery where it was unveiled at a ceremony in July, 2007. President Boyd Mesecher and Marius Burke unveiled the painting. A senior member of the Agency received the painting and spoke to a large group of invited guests and Agency staff.

The painting depicted an encounter between an Air America helicopter and North Vietnamese AN-2 'Colt' biplanes in the vicinity of Lima Site 85. Former President George H.W. Bush personally signed 75 of the prints.

The Air America Association wishes to continue its endeavor to ensure the CAT/Air America history remains accessible to current and future defenders of our liberty, as well as historians and those who participated during this period in aviation support to the interests of our nation's efforts in Asia.

President John Wiren, in consult with the officers of the Association and many R/W crew members, has chosen a scene which is a representation of many events from 1964 through 1973 where US military aircrews were rescued after encountering enemy anti-aircraft fire. The location of this rescue is on the Plaine Des Jarres in north central Laos, but could have been anywhere in the Kingdom. The AF A1-E crew of two is about to board an H34 assisted by the F/M, while the pilot is watching and ready to pull pitch. Enemy troops and vehicles are shown in the distance with a Lao T-28 aircraft, flown by Air America Pilots, engaging the enemy. A 'Raven' O1 is also shown observing the action.

Many of the prints will be signed by Brigadier General Harry C. Aderholt who commanded the Air Commandos and was instrumental in developing the STOL program in the early days of Air America activity in the Kingdom of Laos. The PDJ with several of the Jars in the background was chosen to give absolute validity to the location. Also signing the prints will be many of the R/W pilots who were involved in similar actions throughout the years of operational activity by Air America in SEA.




Additionally, all of the surviving Air America 'Tango Pilots' will autograph the prints.

The cost of the signed prints will be \$150 including shipping, if required. Unsigned prints will sell for \$120 including shipping. These prints will be available to Air America Association members, as well as Raven and Air Commando Association members. It is expected that there will be a special website created to offer these prints, along with other previous aviation art works that celebrate the history of aviation, to the general public. However, numbers are limited and once sold there will be no further prints available. Orders may be placed by sending a check or money order to:

Patricia Sherman, P.O. Box 307, Spring Lake, NC 28390 . ptrsherman@yahoo.com

L. Michael Kandt, General Secretary



ACA Scholarship Application

Student's Name: _____

Student's ID# _____

Relationship to ACA Member: _____

Student's Age: _____

College: _____

Address of College: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Member's Name: _____

Member's ACA Number: _____

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

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

Decorated Vet G.I. Joe Dies At The Zoo

On June 6, 1961, G. I. Joe, a decorated war veteran, died at the Detroit Zoo.

Joe was a pigeon. The bird received the Medal of Gallantry from London's Mayor and recognition from the U.S. Congress for carrying a message 20 miles that alerted the British that a planned air attack would endanger 1,000 British troops.

Both the Allies and the Germans used carrier pigeons to carry messages during World War II. Pi-

geons entered the US Army when they were 28 days old and able to fly. They received basic training, a serial number and service records. GIs trained the birds in platoons of 30.

Pigeons successfully crossed the English Channel to England in the heavy gales that followed D-Day.

G. I. Joes became the subject of a children's book, "Pigeon Hero!" By Joe Grimm.

Courtesy the "CARPETBAGGER"

ROSSEL'S REPORT

DID YOU KNOW MY UNCLE BUCK?

Let me first say thank you for serving our country. My name is Hunter Johnson and my Uncle (who has been more of a father) was there with you he was a Col. (USAF) at the time and was a Commander at Bein Hoa from 62 to 63 retuned to head Special Warfare Div. JCOS Wash D. C. and then back to Vietnam in 65-68 and was heavily involved in Special Ops. His name is Coleman O Williams Jr (Ret Brig.Gen USAF) also went by "Buck" please let me know if you have any information which could help my cousin and I put his story together for him he is 83 now. Sincerely, Hunter H Johnson III, Email: sapphhj@bellsouth.net

Some information is in question but we will try and find some information for you.

AN INTERESTING CONVERSATION.

Jim Cash worked for me twice, once as the Wing Commander at MacDill when I was 9th AF/CC, and again as a Command Director in Cheyenne Mountain when I was CINC NORAD. He was a very fine officer, but not competitive enough to compete successfully for his second star. I certainly agree with his comments about LBJ and McNamara.

Even worse for the guys flying Thuds and Phantom IIs up in Route Pack 6, I heard the Secretary of State Dean Rusk answer a question after the war about letting NV know what targets were going to be struck the following day. I expected a denial, but the response was, "Yes we notified the NV government through the Swiss Embassy the targets to be struck the following day". When asked why the U.S. government would do such a thing? Dean Rusk's response was, "Well we didn't want to hurt the North Vietnamese people, we just wanted to demonstrate that we could strike key targets anywhere in the country, so we gave them the target list so they could keep the workers home."

Of course they didn't seem to comprehend the NVs moved their mobile guns to defend the targets and alerted the SAM Batteries where the planes were going. I can remember intell briefings that informed us that NV only had a few thousand 37 and 57 mm guns, but it always seemed like all those guns were defending the targets we were attacking. When I heard the Sec State make these remarks, I understood why that was the case. Vietnam was a great tragedy in many ways. Paul Schueler, Email: peschueler@hotmail.com

IS THERE AN ORGANIZATION OF C-123 PILOTS

Hi - got this site from Bill Kehler. I flew the Bookies with the 311th out of Da Nang 1969-70. Started out with orders to the Air Commandos but they soon switched to TAC Airlift.

I was wondering if there is an organization of C-123 pilots or crewmembers.

I know several other folks up here in New England that have SEA time in them and many of us flew them stateside with the AF Reserves. I am interested in any information that you might have. Thanks -Brig. Gen. Anthony Liguori, Email: anthony.liguori@faa.gov

MR. EUGENE ROSSEL,

I have been communicating with Allen Cates in order to get his feedback for correcting some of the errors in my short story about Bob Mock. He gave me your e-mail address.

Recalling events from thirty-six years ago can be a little hazy, especially for someone in their seventies. So its nice to have some help to set the record straight. We are not complaining, just grateful to hear from those who have been there to make a much better story. It's too good to

screw up. I met Bob Mock at our Dadaelian meeting a couple years ago and we have become good friends. When I retired from flying I turned my attention to writing, especially short stories concerning aviation, both military and commercial. Ive been published in several flying magazines and am confident that this story will be published also. At one of our dinners Bob told me about his being shot down in an RF-4C. I couldn't forget it. I approached him several times requesting that he let me interview him for writing his story. He finally said okay. Hindsight being 20/20, I was a little pre-mature in putting it on the web site, however, the attention it received is working to our advantage. Sometimes you're the dog, and sometimes you're the fire hydrant.

I like Bob Mock. He's an honorable man with a great military record and has no need to exaggerate his exploits. We got together after receiving some damn good feedback and made changes which have really improved the story. We can thank you and Allen Cates for that.

Please read the latest: <http://denver.yourhub.com/~pilotwriter> and contact me for any comments. Michael R. Daciek, USANA HEALTH SCIENC, 303-470-0341 home office, 720-323-9668 cell. <http://daciek.usana.com>, www.explorefreedom.com/mikedaciek

A TYPICAL LATE-WAR MISSION

A typical late-war mission, flown on May 10, 1972, consisted of thirty-two bombers escorted by twenty-eight fighters to defend against MiGs and twenty-seven escorts (jammers and Wild Weasels) to defend against SAMs.

That's the day Roger and Bob were shot down. The mission was the Paul Doumer Bridge in Hanoi. Jeffrey Ethell and Alfred Price wrote a book about it, "One Day in a Long War: May 10, 1972, Air War, North Vietnam." (copyright 1989, no longer in print). Roger has a whole chapter in it, Chapter 8, Man on the Run." We had a lot of input into that chapter, and it's probably the most accurate account of his E&E escapade.

Two things, Gene: First, I forgot to mention that this quote, "if I can make seven to ten miles a day escaping and evading, that would take about twenty to thirty days to get home, almost a month," sounds like it could have been taken from Roger's debrief!

Second, I also meant to tell you but forgot, when Roger was down, I forget how many days it was after his shoot down, Bob Mock heard a beeper. I didn't hear about this until Roger was rescued, and then Bob told me, "See, I TOLD you guys I heard a beeper up in that area, but you didn't believe me." (or something to that effect) I got really upset that nobody told ME about it, and that they just disregarded what he told them. I think most people in the wing had given him up for dead, but I knew in my heart that he was alive. In fact, he was also a Laredo FAC, and one day, not long after he and Bob Lodge were shot down, "Broadway Joe" started to clean out Roger's Laredo locker. I demanded to know what he thought he was doing. He said something like "Roger's dead." And I said he is not, and you'd better not clean out his locker. I guess I put the fear of Peppermint Patty in him, because he didn't clean it out (at least that's how I remember it!)

Patty "Peppermint Patty" Locher, (former Intel Officer at Udorn, wife of Roger Locher who escaped from the North in 37 days after getting shot down in his F-4) Email: P2equinelover@aol.com

TRYING TO CONTACT COL VIC VISCARRA

I received a forwarded e-mail that you sent about a chopper rescue in Viet Nam. In the e-mail a reference is made about Vic Viscarra. I was Col. Viscarra's First Sgt, at Myrtle Beach AFB, SC in the early 1980's. If

Rosel

Continued from page 27

you could/would know how to get in touch with him, would forward this e-mail address to him? Or send his info to me so I may contact him. My name is MSGT USAF (Ret), 842-215-4232. Any and all help in contacting Col Vic is appreciated. William (Bill) Dickey

BRANDING

Your branding comment makes me wonder just how long this practice goes back. I know our Aussie's were known for stenciling their Kangaroo Icon on foreign aircraft. And, the Crickets/Nails were diligent about plastering the Cricket Icon on every aircraft that landed at NKP. Does anyone know if this goes back to other eras, i.e. WW I, WW II, Korea? C3B Bob Green , numba1cc@crosslink.net From the FACNET

Prince Andrew (when he was in the Royal Navy) was known to zap an aircraft on the ramp and then write underneath it "By Royal Appointment"

★★★★★★

From the FACNET

PRINCE HARRY (BRIT FAC) ON HIS GROUND FAC-ING IN IRAQ

"It was a memorable sortie, even without knowing that was Prince Harry," Donberg said. "No kidding. We were impressed by his proficiency level." Harry, he said, kept his composure despite the "adrenaline and stress" in his voice. Harry, the equivalent of a second lieutenant, conducted at least two or three F-15E strikes with the 336th Fighter Squadron in the following weeks, Donberg said. Was wondering when someone would comment on Harry being a ground FAC for the Brits. I think it's pretty neat -- as well as commendable. g.l.knight@comcast.net

WOULD HARRY LIKE TO JOIN ?

BTW, was the Bonny Prince a Fast FAC? Or a down in the mud slightly above the tree tops FAC? We do have our standards. Harry was a mud FAC (as in feet in the mud or dust), and not a FAC in the Royal Air Force. Harry was in the British Army as a member of the Blues and Grays Regiment. (Harry went to Sandhurst which is the equivalent of the US Military Academy at West Point.) What he did would be more the equivalent of a US Army fire support officer (FSO) or artillery forward observer (FO) controlling an airstrike -- not exactly the same as one of our Air Force ground FACs or ETACs.

The US Army has always wanted their FSOs and FOs to be qualified to request and control airstrikes. The US Air Force has always resisted that mightily except in a few exceptional cases such as Delta Force, and some Special Forces units. During Desert Storm, US Army Special Forces were assigned to coalition forces (such as the Syrians and Egyptians) and were allowed to control airstrikes because of their language capability. The other NATO countries are more lenient about letting ground force fire support officers and artillery observers control airstrikes. Yes, we do have standards. If Harry were to be eligible to join, it would open the door to all the Army FSOs and FOs as well as the Marine Corps ANGLICOs.

Regards, Gary Dikkers, "Mike 57"

THE DANGER OF BEING A FAC.

I recently have found a report from an ALO to Air Force to MACV Wherein the following instances were noted. There were times when FAC's and Fast Fac's were NOT notified in a timely manner, during which time the FAC's and Fast FAC's were beneath the B-52's thus being shot at essentially from below and above. Who says they want to be FAC's NOW.? There were instances of Night Fac's working around a FB and requested Illumination Rounds with Max Altitudes given Only to have the ARVN's shoot em higher than Max thus illuminating and making them prime targets. No Wonder I have always smiled when I told others of whom I had worked. They would never believe the audacity of those days nor the spirit of gonna get me some. God Bless All you FACER's

★★★★★★

AF OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD

Gene, Thanks for this info. As a member of the 315th ACG for 14 months, I was not aware that the unit had received the AF Outstanding Unit Award and the Presidential Unit Award. I remember flying several flare drop missions with the Aussies on their Caribou aircraft, and have great respect for them. How can I be included as a recipient of both of these awards? I have AF paperwork on my assignment to the unit at Tan Son Nhut AB, but never received notification that the unit had received the awards. Thanks, Gilberto Flores, Email: flrgil@sbcglobal.net

I will try and get the orders for these awards.

A LITTLE HISTORY OF GENERAL TWINING

F-86 Museum Piece—Not an F-86L, but fairly close. This F-86D is on display in Twining Park in Monroe, Wisconsin. Monroe is the hometown of General Nathan F. Twining who served as both COS USAF and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in the 1950s. Interestingly, he had a brother, Merrill Twining, who became a four-star in the USMC. Two four-stars from the same family. (And they had an uncle who was an admiral in the Spanish-American War.) Regards, Gary Dikkers "Mike 57" Email: skycowboy@aol.com

LAST F-4 MISSION OVER CAMBODIA/LAST COMBAT OPERATION

I flew the last western civilian airplane out of Phnom Penh on 10 April 1975. It was a CASI C-46, N337CA, on Embassy Support. I flew the same airplane on the last evac flight out of Long Chieng on 14 May 1975. Again, the same airplane was the last western civilian airplane out of VTE on 25 May 1975. An attempt to bring out "Company" cargo. The cargo was "The property of the Laos People" according to the students who held up the airplane for 2 1/2 hours while the powers that be negotiated our release. Told "never come back to Laos again" by my boss. He did not need to tell us that, my Thai crew and I decided that we had hung it out enough times. The two previous trips into VTE were to smuggle CASI Nationalist Chinese(20 May 75) and Filipinos (25 May 75) out of Laos. They were not being permitted to leave by the PL.

I missed the evacuation of Saigon. I was in Singapore having an engine changed on my C-46. I say "my C-46" cause I was the sole operator of C-46 N337CA from late December 74 until July 75. In between there I

Rosset

Continued from page 28

did ferry a Twin Beech or two and some Porters out of Laos to UDN. One Porter to BKK evacuating Pop Buell from Laos on 10 May 75. It was an interesting end. From excitement to unemployment!
Les D. Strouse, Email: loongles@gmail.com

LAST F-4 MISSION OVER CAMBODIA

Interesting info from the web. Don't know much about ACIG but they have a great site. This article appears to have been written by someone who spells in British English rather than American.
www.acig.org/artman/publish/article_412.shtml
The US Pull-Out

With the US pullout it was generally expected that Lon Nol's regime would collapse almost immediately. However, what happened was exactly the opposite. Especially the KhAF even if not completely developed, and most of its crews lacking training and experience was in high spirits and ready to continue the war. Already by the end of August its T-28s flew no less but 700 combat sorties, while the new C-123s flew 94 transport missions. Some mistakes could were not corrected, however: the KhAF was still using the old operations centre in Pochentong, and therefore flew mainly missions against fixed targets instead of using the FAC-tactics. Consequently the T-28 were often too late to find their targets, or missed sometimes by kilometers.

All US military operations in Cambodia ceased on 15 August 1973. Sensing the victory at hand, the Khmer Rouge launched an all out offensive against Phnom Penh with over 75 000 men. Lon Nol requested a last minute effort from the US airpower, and in response all the USAF aircraft still deployed in South East Asia - including over 400 B-52s, F-4s, F-111s and A-7Ds - launched repeated strikes against enemy targets on the outskirts of the capital. At times, crowds gathered on the west bank of the Mekong River to watch them hit Khmer Rouge targets on the opposite shore. This massive air campaign thwarted the Communist offensive. At one point, when it appeared the Khmer Rouge might block river traffic again, the USAF launched an emergency C-130 airlift from U-Tapao to Phnom Penh's airport. It delivered munitions, rice, and military equipment. The USAF transports also parachuted supplies to several towns under siege by enemy. By mid-August 1973, the C-130s had flown some 666 sorties.

As the deadline drew near, the USAF was involved in a tragic accident. On 6 August 1973, a B-52 mistakenly dropped 20 tons of bombs on the friendly city of Neak Luong, 38 miles southeast of Phnom Penh. The town was situated on the Mekong River bank and served as an important base for both the Cambodian and South Vietnamese Navies. The raid killed or wounded more than 400 people.

The last US air strike in Cambodia occurred on the morning of 15 August 1973 with a last bombing mission carried out by a flight of A-7Ds. According to official statistics, the USAF had flown some 39,999 tactical sorties from March 1970 to August 1973 in Cambodia, dropping 78,154 tons of bombs. The B-52s flew an additional 5,979 sorties during the same period, and dropping 125 706 tons of bombs. Exact figures about USN operations over Cambodia remain unknown, but it is known that the carrier USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) made a combat cruise in the Gulf of Siam, in 1973, and that her aircraft flew combat sorties over Cambodia as well.

The US fixed-wing losses in Cambodia were considerable too: the USAF alone lost 39 aircraft, including eight F-4 Phantom IIs, one F-111A, six F-110s, two A-7Ds, and five A-37Bs. Numerous reconnaissance aircraft were shot down as well, including two RF-4Cs, six OV-10As, six

O-2As, and two O-1s. A lone USAF C-123K was also destroyed while in Cambodia.
Dhusmc@aol.com

KAMPONG CHAM

I was down there in Po Chen Tong in my C123-K to pick up Lao's Embassy official and students evacuees, couldn't remember exact date, and there were T-28s bombing and AC-47 with .50 cal (not 7.62 mini gun) strafing just a few miles (3-5 miles) outer perimeter of the airport. I felt very uncomfortable but manage to shop at the market (CRS the Name) and get off at 4:00 PM without any incidents. That was my only trip to Phnom Penh. Few of my colleague were Mercenaries Pilot down there, I was recruited by (my God Father) Col. Sangouane one of the unorthodox pilot transfer from the FAN (Force Armee Neutral) but I refused due to personal reason (just married and could not left pregnant wife). My buddy Sone Kasingto escape from some airport in Cambodia in the last minute when it was over ran in 75, ran out of gas over Khong Island and singled engine landed at Pakse or L-11. Joined back with new PLAAF and make a daring escape alone from Vientiane to Udorn in C-46 early 77, which resulted me ended up in reeducation camp (as the Squadron Commander and many friend escapees.)
Kham CPK Red. Email: KManiT28FB@aol.com

C-123S IN SEA REUNION

I was with 4408th CCTS at Hurlburt 66-69 and 19th SOS 69-70. There is going to be a C-123 in SEA Reunion 5-9 May 2008 at Wright-Pat. Please respond no later than 31 Mar to:
Bill Kehler, 2718 Gray Fox Lane, Jacksonville, AR 72076.
Thank you, Bob Rudd, Email: bkrudd@hughes.net, Akron, OH

JUST CHECKING IN

I served with the 4413th Combat Crew Training Sqd. @ Lockborne AFB 67-68. And with the 19th Special Ops. Sqd. in Viet Nam 68-69
Kenneth W. Fanty, Email: fantyk@dishmail.net

HOW CAN I GET A SQ. YEARBOOK

I was at NKP from Nov. 67 to Nov. 68. I was with the 21st Helo Sq. Dust Devils. I joined the Sq. at Shaw AFB in S.C. in July 1967 and stayed with them until I went to Myrtle Beach after returning home. I lost my Sq. yearbook and would like to get one to show my kids and grand kids. If anyone knows where I could get a copy please let me know.
Thanks, Jim Crumpton, ACA member no, but would like to join.
Email: jwcrumpton@bellsouth.net, Columbiana, AL.

THE WORLD'S BEST AIRPORTS

It is hard to believe that José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport in Guayaquil, Ecuador is included in this list.

My fondest memories of the Guayaquil airport, is that the airport manager would always impound our aircraft every time we landed there. Everybody suspected that he was communist, but in actuality he was just trying to collect late payments for fuel he had dispensed to 605 ACS aircraft. The problem was with the U.S. Embassy in Quito. They would sit on the fuel claim vouchers for months on our aircraft, yet pass thru on all other U.S. military aircraft. I never did find out exactly why, but suspected that it was USAFSO, who wanted control of the 605th, but we were under TAC. To get our aircraft released we would get on our HF radio and call the Military Mission in the Embassy, who in-turn would call

Rossel

Continued from page 29

the local Ecuadorian military commander in Guayaquil, who would call the airport manager and tell him to give us back our aircraft. It was a lot of fun. If we wanted to spend some time in Guayaquil we would wait till late afternoon to call the Military Mission in the Embassy. They would then be unable to contact the local Ecuadorian military commander until the next day. Col. Gleason solved the problem by telling all the aircraft commanders to get an American Express credit card to pay for airport expenses. He got the Base Finance office to reimburse us immediately when we got back to Howard AFB, so we could pay our credit card bill as soon as it came in. Worked perfectly.
Al Brashear, Email: Reperek@Hughes.net

WHY AREN'T CREW MEMBERS LISTED AS KIA OR MIA?

I was interested in your list posted at www.specialoperations.net. I noticed under USAF KIA in Laos is Capt. Dewey A Keithly Jr. What caught my eye was the date, 12/28/56. It was posted as 28/12/56 so I searched the internet with his name to verify the date. I found there was entire crew lost on that date. The other members of the crew are not listed in KIA or POW/MIA section.

I was curious why their names were not included. Here is the web site with the crew data, www.awra.us/gallery-may05.html
Randy Mauterer, Son of Oscar Mauterer, Email: mauterer@att.com

PERSONALIZED TRIBUTES TO THE FACS KILLED IN ACTION

Hi Gene, You asked about listing the FACs that were Killed In Action. We'd like you to link our information from our website. The link is shown below. If you use any verbage, please give recognition to the FAC Association on your website. www.fac-assoc.org/memorial/memorial02a.html
Dennis Crouch, Email: denniscrouch@earthlink.net, President of the FAC Association,

VISIT THE CCT HISTORICAL WEBSITE

Visit the CCT Historical Website at
<http://combatcontrolteam.wordpress.com>
Sincerely, Gene Adcock, CMSgt, USAF (CCT) Retired, Email: gadcock@tacsurv.com

THE NEW VIRTUAL WALL

Here you go, sir. <http://go.footnote.com/thewall>
John Monroe, JMONROE@1105govinfo.com

MORE INFO ON C-47 CRASH AT NKP

As I was reading the last news letter and your column I noticed that Jim Boney had asked about the C-47 crash at NKP, I was the night line chief on the A-26 line and was there that night driving the line truck, This was during the time that the taxi way was being rebuilt and we had moved down the hill to the ramp in front of base ops.
We had made the early launch and were in the bread truck tooling up and down our ramp in front of the birds that were being uploaded for the late launch and the troops were sleeping, grab-assing and talking when one of the two stripers hollers up "Sgt Anderson look in the rear view mirror" which I did and all I could see was the belly of a C-47 and the roar of its engines as it went over head. We had been on the main taxi way and the acft went right over and dug the left wing tip in and ground

looped between the runway and the taxiway.
After we went and changed shorts, we found out that Tsgt. David Berube had stolen the Thai flare bird with a full load of flares and had tried to take off on the taxi-way as he got to full power he apparently saw the pile of PSP that was on the taxi way blocking anyone from coming down the hill so he horsed it off, Cleared the pile and I guess that was when he decided he couldn't keep it in a straight line, even with full trim and it rolled off to the left and clobbered in.

I knew Tsgt Berube for about 10 yrs as I was stationed with him at the old Orlando AFB, Where he was attached to the Photo Mapping Hqtrs, and was one of the Goon engineers. I got the story from one of his troops in the NCO Club the next night which is to the best of my recall as follows: Tsgt Burbe had been working all morning and at noon made mail call and got a letter from his wife in which she had told him Dear John: etc, etc and he had lost it at the post office and had started drinking and feeling sorry for himself and by the time the troops got off work he was fried. His people got him to the hooch and thought he was out for the night, but no, he got up about six and went and started drinking again and was telling his troops he was going home, he took off and his guys thought he had gone back to the hooch. But he had gone to the Thai flight line and told the Thai guard he had to run the aircraft up for maintenance got the aileron locks off, and the elevator locks but missed the rudder, cranked it up and taxied out. The rest is pretty much what you had.

I hope I have brought a little more to the story as Dave was a fine NCO.
PS: There was about fifty tons of HE on the trailers and on the birds that were to fly.
TSgt Richard (Andy) Anderson (Ret.) ACA L0553

Edit Note: We have also received a brief message from Sherald C. Watkins (Security Police NKP 67-68) he agrees pretty much with Andy Anderson. Sherold writes, "Sgt Berube was a great guy, such a waste. Hope his wife enjoyed her new boyfriend."
Al Gummerson wrote on this story as well. He states the name of the stick and rudder guy in T/Sgt Anderson's version is incorrect. It was not T/Sgt Berube, it was S/Sgt David Ali. I positively know that.

Eugene D. Rossel, Tel/FAX 909-591-7342
E-mail aircommando1@earthlink.net, www.specialoperations.net

Pleiku AB Reunion Sept 17-21, Fredericksburg, VA

Calling all who were assigned to the 6th Air Commandos from March 1968 to 1969! This year the Pleiku Air Base Association will hold their reunion on Wednesday, September 17 thru 21. There is a planned memorial service at the new Air Force Memorial near Arlington Cemetery along with other planned activities throughout the reunion.
Call 1-800-682-1049 Fredericksburg Hospitality House and Conference Center, in Fredericksburg, VA for reservations and mention Pleiku Air Base Association to get our group rate.
Please contact Harry Beam at 724-745-9129 for more information or check out our web site at: www.pleikuab.com

Air Force Century

(In reference to “The Air Force Century 1907-2007: List of Ten, “September, p.69):

I expect you will have many reactions to your lists of 10. Regarding key airplanes, I submit the B-24 Liberator as an important candidate.

Castle Air Museum, In Atwater, Calif., celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2006. When the museum was created, it inherited the traditions of the 93rd Bomb Group and its outstanding record in World War II. The B-24 made an immense contribution to victory in WWII. Castle Air Museum is proud of have one of the rare examples of the B-24 bomber at the entrance to the museum.

The B-24’s greatest strength was its versatility and capacity to adapt to a variety of operations, including bombing, transport, submarine patrol, reconnaissance, and many special missions.

The B-24 Liberator participated in many air battles over Europe with Eighth Air Force, resulting in the loss of thousands of airmen from 1942 to 1945. Jimmy Stewart

flew 20 combat missions as command pilot of a B-24 with Eighth Air Force, and he was reported to say, “I think most of those who flew the airplane have a very soft spot in their hearts for the machine.”

More than 19,000 B-24 aircraft were produced during World War II by many different manufacturers. This aircraft served in many theaters of war in a wide variety of missions and many airmen lost their lives in this aircraft. It is incredible that any vestige of the immense contribution of this aircraft to victory has almost disappeared. Today there are only two B-24’s still flying and only a few available anywhere in the world on static display.

This historic aircraft is a proud symbol of victory for all who served in World War II. To celebrate its 25th anniversary, Castle Air Museum has recognized the B-24. Liberator’s historic contribution with a special pin with the image of the aircraft Castle Air Museum.

Col. Edward R. Nacey,
USAF (Ret.)
Atwater, Calif.
From Air Force Magazine, Nov/07



AFJROTC Update

Major Teofil Sluschewski of one of the Ft Walton ROTC units and Bob White are collaborating in supplying the students with used AF uniforms.

★★★★★
Lt Col Walt Heidmous (Mouse), ROTC dude at Ft Walton High, has provided tons of books from that school to be sent overseas in the MTF programs. Maybe Belize?

@ Pilots Requiem

I hope there’s a place way up in the sky,
where pilots can go on the day that they die.
A place where a guy can buy a cold beer,
for a friend and a comrade, whose memory is dear.
A place where no doctor or lawyer can tread,
nor an FAA type would ere be caught dead.
Just a quaint little place, kind of dark, full of smoke,
where they like to sing loud, and love a good joke.
The kind of a place where a lady could go,
and feel safe and protected by the men she would know.
There must be a place where old pilots go,
when their flying is finished, and their airspeed gets low.
Where the whiskey is old, and the women are young,
and songs about flying and dying are sung.
Where you’d see all the fellows who’d flown West before,
and they’d call out your name, as you came through the door.
Who would buy you a drink, if your thirst should be bad,
and relate to others, “He was quite a good lad.”
And then through the mist, you’d spot an old guy,
you had not seen in years, though he taught you to fly.
He’d nod his old head, and grin ear to ear,
and say, “Welcome, my son, I’m pleased that you’re here.
For this is the place where the true flyers come,
when their journey is over, and their war has been won.
They’ve come here at last to be safe and alone,
from the government clerk, and the management clone,
Politicians and lawyers, the Feds and the noise,
where all hours are happy, and they’re all good ole boys.
You can relax with a cold one, maybe deal from a deck,
“This is Heaven my son... You’ve passed your last check!”

-Author Unknown-

Courtesy - The “MOHAWKER”

• • • • •

HUMOR

FIRE DOG

A nursery school teacher was delivering a station wagon full of kids home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog’s duties. “They use him to keep crowds back,” said one youngster. “No”, said another, “he’s just for good luck.” A third brought the argument to a close: “No, they use the dogs to find the fire hydrant.”

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May 2008

President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

traditional auction on Sunday afternoon was not very successful. We did not have enough items to auction and there was little participation. This year we hope to do better. Therefore, we need folks to donate items, and we are also considering a silent auction.

For the last two reunions we assigned table numbers for the folks attending the banquet. We have tried several different systems and this seems to be the best one to ensure all know where they are sitting and to preclude the scramble for seats. A few folks have stated they do not like the table assignment system. I am sure that someone will complain no matter how we arrange seating at the banquet. We remain convinced that assigning folks to numbered tables is the most efficient and orderly procedure. If you prefer to sit with someone all you have to do is to so indicate on the form used for reservations. We will accommodate requests as much as possible,

While Pete was recovering and Hap is tending to Shirley, I learned many of the things these two great volunteers have done for so many years. We all owe them a great thank you for their service. Pete continues to recover nicely and is back at the office. Hopefully Shirley will fully recover and Hap will return. Our dedicated editor Jim Boney had surgery recently and is recovering nicely. He is back at work.

In the February newsletter a request for funds to support projects in Thailand was included. The response has been great. Please see the MTF comments by John Grove. Each time we request funds I am overwhelmed by the generosity of our members. I know that in today's world we receive requests from all kinds of agencies, most of which are for good causes. The MTF Thailand project is a good cause, and I suspect the response has been so good because so many of us were stationed in Thailand and learned to appreciate these wonderful people who have so little. I also think ACA members are so generous because they understand the following: "For remember, you don't live in a world all your own. Your brothers are here too" – Albert Schweitzer.

Often members contact me and ask why articles about their aircraft or specialty are not in our newsletter. The answer is simple – members need to write about their experiences. I recall past president Robert Downs' frequent requests for articles, one that inspired me to write an article about the original AT-28 Zorros. So folks, send in the articles and we will gladly include them. So many of you have had interesting experiences that we should share. That is one of the main goals of our newsletter. Recently, we received two great articles by Murray "Chad" Harris recalling his experiences at Hurl-

burt Field many years ago. Thanks Chad.

It is time to submit names for the annual scholarship drawing. See the details in this newsletter. The \$1500 scholarships can help in a small way with college expenses.

It is also time to submit nominations for the Hall of Fame. The cut-off is 31 July 08. There are many deserving folks not yet in the HOF, so take the initiative and nominate someone truly worthy of this prestigious honor.

In our last newsletter we asked folks who are willing to accept the newsletter electronically to contact us. We received only four responses to date. We received more comments about my new picture than responses to our request.

As I write this column our Editor-at-Large Gene Rossel is in Australia. Gene and BG Aderholt played key roles in an enormous effort to award Air Medals to our Australian companions who fought with us during the Vietnam War. With incredible persistence and patience, Gene worked on the process for nearly 10 years. There will be more about this superb effort in a future newsletter. Gene and BG Aderholt made us proud.

Stay well, stay in touch, and plan on joining us for the reunion.

Any Time, Any Place

Sam

In October 08, my second two-year term as your president will be over. According to the by-laws, a president is limited to two consecutive terms. The good folks who wrote the by-laws did a great job and certainly understood the need for new blood and new ideas, hence the limitation. It is time for folks to step forward and get on the ballot for the October 08 election. Our association needs someone who will be more than a figure-head, someone willing to spend a little time to ensure the ACA continues to serve the membership and promote the goals for which it was established. We have so much talent in the area. Please consider serving and let us know so we can prepare the ballot.

Initial planning for the October 9 - 12 reunion has started. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. We need a good turn out to keep the commando spirit alive. If you have any special comments or ideas about the reunion, please let us know. The handout in this newsletter shows the events currently planned. There will be more details in the August newsletter.

During our last reunion, the