



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Aug 2007

2007 Reunion Coming Up

by Ken Lengfield
ACA Vice President
and Reunion Chairman

The reunion this year is scheduled Oct 4th through Oct 7th. Check-in is Thursday Oct 4th at the Quality Inn Bayside on Highway 98 in Fort Walton Beach. The hospitality room will open at 1300 on Thursday. Meet dear old friends who are getting older and dearer each year. We are not overly concerned about the threat of hurricanes this year. As you know, our weather is beautiful 363 days a year. OK, the other 2 days it tries to kill us, but not this year.

See **REUNION** pg. 3



Air Force Memorial to kickoff Air Force's 60th anniversary



The Air Force Memorial is nearly ready, as the last remaining section has been installed in preparation for dedication events and the kickoff of the Air Force 60th Anniversary Commemoration, Oct. 14 and 15.

The Memorial, composed of three bold and graceful spires soaring skyward to a height of 270 feet, will be dedicated and given to the nation at an official ceremony, Oct. 14, to honor the millions of patriotic men and women who have distinguished themselves in the U.S. Air Force and its predecessor organizations, including the Army Air Corps.



The weekend will also include an Air Force Open House in Pentagon South Parking, Oct. 14, as well as a wreath-laying ceremony the following day. These events mark the beginning of the Air Force 60th Anniversary Commemoration, which will continue throughout 2007.

America's Airmen -- past, present, future -- and the American people, are invited to attend the dedication weekend's events. Due to space limitations at the Memorial site itself, overflow capacity will be made available in Pentagon South Parking.

National Museum of U.S. Air Force Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, United States military aviators worked persistently for the creation of a separate air force. On Sept. 18, 1947, their efforts came to fruition as the U.S. Air Force was established as a separate service equal to the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy under the Department of Defense.

On Sept. 18, 2007, the Air Force will celebrate its 60th anniversary, and the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force proudly supports the year-long celebration leading up to the event

with this exhibition of official U.S. Air Force art.

In World Wars I and II, the U.S. Army sent artists overseas to record the Army's experiences. When the Air Force became a separate service, the Army transferred about 800 works of art dealing with military aviation to the new separate service. To aid recruiting efforts, the Air Force sponsored 30 artists on a tour of Air Force installations in 1951, and the following year they sponsored artists from the Society of Illustrators of New York.

Pleased with the success of these efforts, the Air Force established its own art program to capture through artists' imaginations the people, equipment, activities, facilities, and other historically significant subjects related to the Air Force and its predecessor organizations.

Drawn from the Air Force Art Program and the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, the works in this exhibit illustrate the 60 years of air and space power history created by the U.S. Air

See **60TH** pg. 3

Inside Features

B/G Robin Olds	pg 22
Editorial	pg 2
Hap's Comments	pg 6
Laos	pg 11
Letters	pg 7
Lima Site 85	pg 14
McCoskrie T.F.	pg 20
Presidents Corner	back page
Reunion	pg 18-19
Rossel Report	pg 29

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ACA Newsletter

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Editorial: Reflections on being a member

My wife and I have decided it is time to look at moving back to Pensacola from south Florida. While I have friends and activities there to keep me busy until I die, I feel I have a responsibility to my parents who just turned 83, and the demographics down there have changed. We can look at having two houses, but only one will be a home.

I have friends telling me I will be giving up flying and other activities, but as I told Gene Rossel, there comes a time where one has to do what one needs to do. Mostly, it is time to reconnect with those who have sacrificed to keep the Assn. going. Some may think that when a person retires from military service it is time to 'get a life', to move on. Some of us do just that, sever all ties. Others return for the reunion. And still others devote more than after retirement than on active duty, being involved. I think it is a matter of choice. (And that is what freedom is all about isn't it?). Someone may 'need' to stay connected person to person, while some are like many of our faithful members, connected by service, memories, and yes, dues. And like many, I am finding that images and memories are being lost as time passes.

I believe that despite all the grumbling one may hear, that deep down at the grass roots level, the

Assn. is a great thing. We all know (or should) what is being accomplished and where support is needed. I believe in the Assn. its leadership, and its members, whether near or far. As long as the foundation is strong, no cracks will develop that can't be repaired. Numbers in membership and funds can be determined by active participation. But the Assn. is more than numbers. It is about heritage, sacrifice, and many times, past deeds that will never be told.

I remember reunions (are they reunions or recharging our batteries?) where several of 'us' gave freely so that 'others' could enjoy the fellowship. I prefer heart to heart photos over grip and grin. As some of our kids mature into being card carrying ACA members, those photos may well be the only times when they will really see a father or mother in a different light. Joe Sheldon and his guitar, then his turn at the BBQ, many others nameless decorating, handing out badges, cleaning up, volunteers all. But as time passes, members age, and the airpark roll call lengthens, who will step forward to carry the Assn. into the future.

We can say that airmen today are either disinterested or uninformed about our heritage, that they either are members of other assn's or don't have time, but what it comes down to, is a matter of reaching out and touching that

place, where an airman feels the meaning of being an Air Commando. We don't need quantity. We've always maintained quality. We take care of our own because our own takes care of our Assn. It's an appeal for members to look at:

- **Membership:** Are you committed, how can you support the Assn. Can you sign up a new member. Not to bring numbers up but to bring someone home. And that person can bring someone else. Not just anyone, but someone who was or is or will be a part of something very few ever will. We don't do this for personal gain, we do it for our country, our air force, our people.

- **Memories:** What do you have to contribute so others can share in our heritage and keep us alive. Yes, you can read books on ops and see memorabilia for sale online. But what will we pass on to others who may ask what an Air Commando is, or was. If you have something and can share, bring it 'home'. I volunteer at a non-profit thrift shop. We get the 'greatest generations' photo albums and uniforms dropped off every day from families who either don't have the love or the interest. I try to send items to active units, military historical museums, etc. before selling them off. If you can, preserve your items in some format for your family or ours.

So, I plan to move back. Start over but not really. I am involved in Civil Air Patrol, Experimental Aircraft Assn, Air Force Assn, Kiwanis, and others. Now it is time for me to volunteer again and help where I can like I did in the past. What I've done doesn't matter to me. It is what I will do in the future that does. I am an Air Commando. I am a member.

Jim McClain

Memorial Day Disgrace on Orca Island

Forty-six flag standards were found empty and another 33 flags were in charred tatters Sunday in the cemetery, authorities said. Swastikas drawn on paper appeared where 14 of the flags had been.

Members of the American Legion on this island off Washington's northwest coast replaced the burned flags with new

ones Sunday afternoon.

The vandals struck again on Memorial Day, the San Juan County sheriff's office said. This time, the vandals left 33 of the hand-drawn swastikas.

"This is not an act of free speech. This is a crime," Sheriff Bill Cumming said in a statement released Monday afternoon.

60th Anniversary

Continued from page 1

Force. In addition to showing people, aircraft, spacecraft, and events, this art displays a common thread-the Air Force's Core Values of integrity, service before self, and excellence.

What's New from the Curator

The following article appeared in the Winter 2006/2007 issue of the Friends Journal, published quarterly by the Air Force Museum Foundation.

The Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps, United States Army was created on Aug. 1, 1907. In 1909, the Wright brothers offered their Wright Military Flyer to the Army and it was accepted as the first heavier-than-air military aircraft. It was not until March of 1912, however, that the requirements for physical and flight examinations for the rating of "military aviator" were established

by the Secretary of War. At the same time, mention was made of the need for some means of identification (medal or ribbon) to distinguish the military aviator as well as suggesting an increase in pay.

The following year, on the initiative of the Chief Signal Officer to the Chief of Staff of the Army, the War Department authorized by General Order #39 the Military Aviator Badge. It was initially made by the Rock Island Arsenal in 14-karat gold and also made, under War Department authorization, by V.H. Blackington Company of Attleboro Falls, Massachusetts. The 1913 Military Aviator badge was in standard usage among ultimately a small number of pilots until Aug. 15, 1917, when the military aviator wing badge in silver was introduced. In photographs of Gen. "Hap" Arnold, you will notice his continued and proud personal wear

of this badge.

An original, authentic 1913 military aviator badge is now quite a rare item to locate. I make an emphasis on "original, authentic" as its rarity has spawned numerous reproductions and fakery. Badges without good historical provenance can be very suspect. We at the National Museum of the United States Air Force hold only one original badge in our collection. It is attributed to 1st Lt. Hollis LeRoy Muller and was donated by his family many years ago. Lt. Muller, originally of the Coast Artillery Corps, went on to have a distinguished career rising to the rank of colonel and also contributing as an author of military texts such as *Techniques of Modern Arms* published in 1940. We have always held this badge as one of our most valued items.

I recently had a pleasant telephone conversation with a lady who is of a later generation in the Muller family. We discussed the earlier donation of the military aviator's badge and then, quite unexpectedly, she mentioned that they had located the original military aviator's certificate from Dec. 19, 1913 which accompanied the presentation of the badge. What a grand offer! Thanks to her and the rest of the family's thoughtfulness, we were able to reunite after many decades the badge and certificate. They are singular examples of this early badge with matching certificate in the collection. What great fortune that they relate to the same individual. We're pleased to share these images with you.

It is certainly our opinion the rarity of original certificates far exceeds that of the badge. One of the very few references to the certificate is in United States Army Air Service Wing Badges

Uniforms and Insignia 1913-1918 by Terry R. Morris. It illustrates a blank example of the certificate.

As the family was so thoughtful and generous in their sharing, we were able to do a high-resolution scan of the certificate and return to them copies that were almost indistinguishable from the original. This has enabled many members to now proudly display a part of their family history. We, also, are now eager to place on display these two items which so symbolically represent those who contributed so much in our earliest years.

*Senior Curator Terry Aitken
National Museum of the
U.S. Air Force*



Congratulations to Heinie and Anne Aderholt, married 11 August 2007.

Reunion

Continued from page 1

The following events are scheduled:

Thursday evening we will have a buffet at Mr. T's restaurant. There won't be a competitive golf tournament on Friday, but arrangements will be made for anyone who wants to play.

On Friday, Oct 5th, we will have the fish fry at the Quality Inn, and on Saturday we will have the annual business meeting, a CV-22 briefing, followed by a burger burn at the 20th SOS. For the ladies, there will be a luncheon at the hospitality room on Saturday.

The banquet will be at the Hurlburt Soundside Club Saturday evening. We will have entertainment by a local high school vocal

group. Our speaker will be 1st Lt. Christine Lukasik, the granddaughter of Capt. Bernie Lukasik who won the Air Force Cross posthumously in Viet Nam. Christine has recently returned from 6-months duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. She will be able to give us a picture of events there that are not clouded by the news media.

Sunday, Oct 7th, there will be a memorial service at the Hurlburt Air Park followed by a BBQ at the Quality Inn. Then an auction and another reunion will be in the books.

Make your reservations NOW and lets make this a great reunion. See you there.

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Membership News



TAPS

In Memory of:

Samuel E Baley
May 2007

Ervin E Davis
April 2007

Grover W Farmer
August 2007

Howard I Halstead
May 2007

Charles H Hubbs
May 2007

Carroll Laizure
May 2007

Sandy Zevin
May 2007

LOST MEMBERS

Yvonne Berstler
Larry G. Porter
Robert V. Von Kleist

ON THE MOVE

Patti Barthel-Moore
548 Mary Esther C/O #221
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32548

Michael L. Custance
13083 Glenwood Drive
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Dennis E. Enfinger
9818 Wagon Train
Converse, TX 78109-1653

George C. Ferkes
304 Chickasaw Circle
Ft Walton Bch, FL 32547

Patrick M. Flood
PSC 37 Box 26
APO, AE 09459-0001

Carl D. Goembel
1288 Riverside Place
Vero Beach, FL 32963

George W. Grill
6904 S.E. Riverside Dr Apt 5
Vancouver, WA 98664

Anthony M. Hotsko
510 Leatherwood Ln
Greenville, TX 75402

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9901 Marquane Dr
Burke, VA 22015

Henry A/ Laurent Jr
7756 Hilham Rd
Cookeville, TN 38506

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1818 W. Francis #205
Spokane, WA 99205

John W. Macdonald
5130 Clearview Way
Missoula, MT 59803

Michael T. McEwen
PO Box 338
Medicine Park, OK 73557

Louis M. Miller
101 Weathersfield Ct
Deland, FL 32724

Marion Reynolds
1018 Fordam Dr
Sun City Center, FL 33573

George B. Rose
119 Will Scarlet Ln
Williamsburg, VA 23185

William M. Runyon
1050 Highland Blvd
Cabot, AR 72023

Howard J. Scheuren
24 Scenic Dr
Belmont, NH 03220

Louis D. Schindler
4004 London Rd #1228
Duluth, MN 55804

Terry R. Silvester
1B Mt Arab Rd
Tupper Lake, NY 12986

Marshall B. Webb
44 Hume St
Hurlburt Fld, FL 32544

Bush Vang Yang
13315 E 37 St
Tulsa, OK 74134

Paul R. Zavitz
594 Florosa Ct
Mary Esther, FL 32569



NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

James E. Finch
Terry H. Fregly Jr
James Gallaher
Chris Hobson
Roy Oberhaus
Jari Salo
Lawrence G. Shaffer
Alfred W. Stone
Kenneth C. Warga
James H. Wellborn
James E. Wright

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Michael K. Mahowald
Robert J. Menard
Peter M. Shilkitus

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Paul L. Harrison
Charles S. Johnson
Kerya. Runyon
William M. Runyon
Richard E. Walker

THE POWER OF PRAYER

Our distinguished Air Commando Association members are remarkable. The care through personal nursing and constant bedside attendance for Heinie was classic Commando responsiveness. Commando One's comeback is nothing short of miraculous.

Chaplain Charlie Jones fought the good fight. Sugie's meticulous reporting of his changing status in the final days allowed us all to stay on Charlie's wing. God's selection process is truly a mystery.

I am humbled to express my deepest gratitude to our Air Commando Family who wrote,

e-mailed, sent cards, called and prayed for my healing. Cancer was defeated. The rehab path leads my wife Gilberta (Nurse Ratchet) and me to Hurlburt in October. Your prayers were answered.

Gratefully,
Howie Pierson
"Commando Clean"
145 Oak Shade Lane
Novato, CA 94945-3432

Ed Note: We all rejoice in your healing Howie and eagerly look forward to our mutual reunion in October.

JULY 4th

ACA Social



Hap's Comments



I had the profound pleasure of meeting and greeting our active duty Hurlburt Representative back from "the sand." That would be 1st Lt. Christine Lukasik. She arrived at 0030 on the 30th of June. Also, she left here as a 2nd Lt. and returned as a 1st Lt. Heinie and I had the high honor of "pinning" her during a dinner engagement at the Bangkok House. Christine has written a unclassified documentary of her interesting travels while deployed and hopefully it will appear in this issue. Additionally, Christine has agreed to be our Featured Speaker at this year's reunion. This will be an enriching experience for us all.

Dear friend Sam Baley passed away on 20 May. I had a call from Martha and she shared the circumstances of his demise. Sam called frequently and we talked at length about just "this and that," and it was always a joy to talk to him. He and Martha had planned to make this reunion, but fate intervened. Martha indicated that she may still try to make it. Our sincerest personal condolences to all family members.

Our Web Master, Gene Rossel, has experienced some quite serious debilitating medical glitches which have precluded him from attending his usual job functions. I don't know the extent of his ill-

ness, but it has precipitated him going on medical leave with view to retirement. My conversations with Gene have revealed that he is slowly recovering and is able to continue his volunteer work with the association.

John and Irma DiBona visited recently from New Hampshire. They were here to attend their grandson's graduation. Their daughter Jean accompanied them during their building visit.

Had a brief chat with Rex Busler recently. He's experiencing COPD, but responding to medication enough to keep him in the comfort zone. He has obtained a motorized scooter for transportation purposes and that serves him well also. When we were operating our medical program in Guatemala, Rex was one the major players on that initiative. He was also one of our Combat Medics that served on Project 404 in Laos.

Past ACA Treasurer Bill Cox fell and broke a hip and is currently rehabbing at Westwood Healthcare Center, FWB. Keep Bill and Barbara in your thoughts and prayers for full and early recovery.

Others experiencing medical glitches are Paul Tobey, Howie Pierson, and Roy Aderholt, all being treated for cancer anomalies. Had a recent note from Howie telling me he's on the mend and he and Gilberta appreciate all the cards, notes, and prayers. Jim Boney received a call and Howie related that he is "Cleared Hot On Life" from his cancer problem. (That means he is cured and over the problem in Howie speak.) Also had a very encouraging note from Paul Tobey which I am sharing with you in the letters column.

Remember them, and all others afflicted with medical insults, in your thoughts and prayers.

By all accounts, the 4th of July Social was the best we've had. "Bim" Barker and his Lawyer, Damon Carroll, down from Union City, TN, did a smashing job on the baby back ribs. Damon is affectionately referred to by "Bim" as his "rib swabber." And Mr. "T" and staff surrounded those ribs with all manner of sides, complimented by our traditional 4th chocolate cake. And the music was slow, easy, and comforting to the ear. Out-of-towners joining the festivities were Robbie and Dee Roberson and JT and Robbye Ivie. Also attending was Ted and Noy Saunders' granddaughter Ashley from Georgia. Ashley is one of our "veteran" decorators and always assists Dee and Robbye in this task.

Highlights of the party were: welcoming Christine back from Iraq and Afghanistan; Bob Trainor receiving a well deserved plaque for years of devoted service assisting the Reunion Chairman at the reunion Hospitality Room, and providing munchies at his expense; meeting Bob White's sponsored Explosive Ordnance Disposal Students from the school at Eglin AFB. They were PV2's Shawn Miller, Chris Shelhams, and John Koerber. This has been a traditional 4th of July deed from Bob and speaks volumes of his generous and uplifting thoughtfulness. Heinie made a special effort to visit their table and welcome Bob's guests to our gathering.

NEWS FLASH; Honorary Member, Joyce Harrington, our devoted Country Store Manager, among many other volunteer initiatives, has fallen off a "home

style" ladder and very seriously fractured her leg while hanging pictures. Her husband David called me last night, and I just moments ago talked with her daughter Patty, about this tragic accident. I will save you the graphic details, but the femur, knee, and ankle are involved. She has undergone initial surgeries and pinning, putting things back together, and other surgeries are already planned in the future.

Joyce is a mainstay in so many activities and just a delightful person to do business with or just be in company with. Her volunteer services in the Country Store alone are unequaled.

I am confident Joyce will bounce back in record time. By my experience in the medical business, she is of the sort that refuses to be held down for very long. I visited her yesterday and even with extent of her injuries, her spirits are high and her outlook is good. You can all brighten her recovery by dropping her a card at: Joyce Harrington, 116 Taylor Circle, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547.

My friend David Spurling of Hua Hin, Thailand, has opened a restaurant at that locale. We casually discussed that possibility when I visited there last September and now he's "got 'er done." It is named the "California Cantina" and he specializes in Mexican Cuisine, Steaks, Hamburgers, Thai Cuisine, and Hearty Breakfasts. So if you travel that way, as I plan to do again someday, drop in.

Reunion reservations are rolling in. If you haven't already done so, do so now. Look forward to seeing 'ya!

Hap

Letters

DEAR ACA,

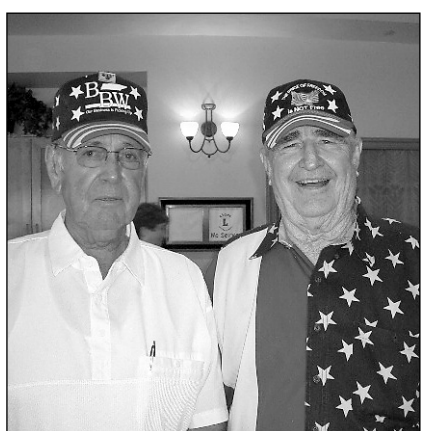
My old and new newsletter mailing labels are enclosed. I have moved to Medicine Park (on the north border of Ft. Sill and east border of the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge) where I will retire next year (I enlisted on 1 July 1966...it's been interesting.)

Please update my data in your records. If there is an easy way for you to let me know of other ACA members in Oklahoma (especially the southwest part) I would appreciate the contact info.

Also, please have my data put into the email list on the Web site. I know that a lot of guys are going email these days.

By the way, my Spec Ops assignments included being Chief of the Terrorism in Low Intensity Conflict Branch at USAJFKSWC during which time (mid '80s) I was frequent guest instructor at USAFOS and Will Elledge talked me into becoming a Life Member after a few beers. I was also then a terrorism intel guy at DIA and my last Spec Ops was the 1/245th Avn Bn (SO) (Abn)...back in the TF 160 days.

In the past years I just been a staff weenie.



Unequaled 4th of July Rib Cooker "Bim" Barker and Hap Lutz at the ACA July 4th Social.

After I retire I hope to get back to the Hurlburt area for a visit.

Shoot low... they're riding Shetlands!

LTC Michael T. McEwen
514 Big Rock Road, PO Box 338
Medicine Park, OK 73557-0338
Ph: (580) 529-3412
michael.mcewen@us.army.mil

Ed note: Pete and Hap are sending you other members names in or near your location Mike.

For Web site inclusion send your data to Gene Rossel at:

aircommando1@earthlink.net.

Come see us when you are unencumbered. "Pipeline Willy" Elledge's latest gig is as an oenologist Mike. That would be grape grower, wine maker, and student of the process!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HI HAP,

Good to talk to you yesterday! Thought I'd put something in writing to confirm our conversation.

Lake Superior is way down this summer due to the near drought conditions and spare snow the last two winters. Heard that SE Florida is finally getting some much needed moisture. Hope it continues.

Two major moves in 3 months will age you some. Almost settled. Sixty degrees at 0600 up here. We may get to seventy degrees sometime today. Thanks for your help.

Lou Schindler
4004 London Road
Apartment 1228
Duluth, MN 55804

Hap Note: Glad to be of help Lou. Keeping track of you has been an experience. Wish others were as

devoted. We lose too many who fail to tell us where they are off to. Send some cool Lou!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR MR. LUTZ,

Thank you very much for the kind letter and wonderful gift you gave me. I appreciate the kindness you have shown my family over the years. I look forward to seeing you in the not too distant future.

2nd Lt. Terrence H. Fregly, Jr.
USAFA Graduate, Class of 2007
P.O. Box 3886
Tallahassee, FL 32315-3886

Hap Lutz Note: Congratulations on your recent graduation from the United States Air Force Academy and your subsequent promotion to 2nd Lieutenant, USAF. It is my profound pleasure to welcome you into the company of USAF Air Commandos, both active and retired, as an Associate Member. Should you ever serve with, or support, Special Operations Forces, your designation will change to Regular Member. I do look forward to meeting you someday.

In the meantime Terrence, I wish you all success in whatever awaits you in your new position.

Hap's Addendum: Met and had a delightful lunch with 2nd Lt Fregly, his mother Joan, and Heinie on 7 July at Two Trees Restaurant. Also had time and opportunity to visit the ACA building. It was a gala event. Lieutenant Fregly commences flying training on the first of August. Should be a breeze as he already has 300 hours jet time!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA COLLEAGUES,

In 1968, low level MIG sorties from "Bullseye" and "Fishbait," ground based rifles, etc., and mid-altitude ack-ack, made EC-47 sorties survival difficult over the Plane de Jarres in the "fish's mouth" area in Laos.

One day at Udorn, Thailand, my crew presented me with a bush hat labeled "Berge's Bandits" as they appeared in identical bush hats. I'm pleased to report that we survived quite a few of those scary missions.

I'd like to honor those crew members with a commemorative brick, if they are still available, and enclose a check.

Sorry I haven't been to a reunion lately.

My dear wife Phyllis began "breaking trail" for us in heaven on 2 November 2006.

Hap, my Air Commando 50th Anniversary poster is framed and hanging on my living room wall. Many thanks.

Yesterday I received four months of mislaid mail. So, please do use my Florida address for the newsletter, etc. Any Time, Any Place!

Kent Berge
87 N. Collier Blvd., Apt. K-5
Marco Island, FL 34145-3741

Ed note: Please accept our sincerest condolences on Phyllis' passing Kent.

Bricks are available and your's will be crafted as you stipulated.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,
Geno Valentine;

I'm sure that many fellow airmen have fond memories and stories of Geno, as do I. I was a young 22 year old navigator when

See **LETTERS** pg. 8

Letters

Continued from page 7

I arrived at Bien Hoa in Sept 1963. I have forgotten how it came to be that Geno took me under his wing but in fact, he did. We had a number of things that were common to each of us: he had been a KB-50 crewman, we had a common religious faith background, he had attended pilot training and I was interested in applying, and being the "old man", I think he enjoyed giving me advice he had learned from the school of "hard knocks".

My pilot was Tom Johnson, an F-84 Utah National Guardsman recalled during the Berlin crisis who stayed on active duty. Tom was a tremendous stick and rudder man, but a renegade in all other ways. He generally went left when ordered to go right. For those who were present, who could forget the Vmax, low altitude wake-up fly-over of the Bien Hoa contonement area at 0500 one morning. A B-26, with the bomb bay doors open, really screamed I was told.

As described by Bill Keeler in the last newsletter, Geno convinced me to get Tom to teach me to fly and land the B-26, "just in case he was wounded". That story now seems familiar. Although I never actually touched down, I'm sure that the Army folks at Phuoc Vinh often wondered why a B-26 kept making overhead traffic patterns and then making a go-around on short final.

Eventually, Tom was sent home. Geno took it upon himself to upgrade me to instructor navigator status on the C-47. That meant I spent a good deal of time TDY at Nha Trang surveying the Central Highlands as we supplied the Special Forces outposts.

I have often thought of Geno over the years, as he was a "spiritual director" to me in a special

kind of way. I'll always remember his kindness and friendliness to me.

Bruce Kramer
bkramer20@comcast.net

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SIR,

Can I request a change of address with the ACA via e-mail? I'm on the move and don't want to miss any issue of your great newsletter. I greatly appreciate all the stories, letters, and editorials each quarter. If I must go about changing my address some other way, please advise. Thank you!

John M. Lyons, Lt Col, (Ret)
1818 W. Francis, #205
Spokane, WA 99205
jml36@comcast.net

Ed Note: Consider the deed done John. Flattery will get you anything...almost!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SIR,

Here are my dues. I had a heart attack last Thanksgiving Day and just now found the letter for my



dues. Sorry it took so long.

Earl R. Lanning
1700 Utah Court
Xenia, Ohio 45385
PH: (937) 374-3034

Ed Note: Sincerely hope your heart problems have resolved by now Earl and that you are back on track.

DEAR JEFF BLACKMON,

In the May 2007 Air Commando Newsletter you "wondered" about what happened to the C-123s left in Nam. Not all of them were left in Nam. There were some in the Philippines and South Korea Air Forces, when exactly they got them I do not know. The draw down had started in 71 so it could have been then.

In 1972, I left Osan AB, Korea, where we had two K's which I used for various USAF support activities. They were eventually returned to the US since they had been "obtained" through questionable means for use in Korea. But that's another story. I'm sure about the return since I flew one of them later in the US.

My assignment in 1972 was as an Active Duty Advisor to the Reserves, specifically a Reserve C-123 unit. There were four units in all, with 16 aircraft each. Two squadrons at Lockbourne, one at Pittsburgh and the one I was assigned to at Hanscom AFB. In mid-73 we moved that unit to Westover AFB. I was transferred in 1977 but, to my knowledge, there were still 123s in the Reserve until 1979 or 80. After that time, the birds went to D-M for storage. Over the years, I have seen several around the country in use by other agencies and/or privately owned.

For the record, I flew the C-123 for 16 years, 6600 hours, all three models---B, J, and K---in several regions of the world. That is why I have tried to keep up with them ever since.

Roger Haneline
rogerdhaneline@bellsouth.net
ACA Life member 1434

HAP AND SHIRLEY,

You two have been so dear and faithful. As I bounce back, the love and prayers get to me. Just as

Heinie made his miraculous recovery, I am also doing so. (Mine less miraculous.)

We are truly blessed to have our beloved ACA. Love to all please.

Howie and Gilberta Pierson
145 Oak Shade Lane
Novato, CA 94945-3432

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

YO HAP,

Just a note to ramble about a couple of things.

I just got home from "Rolling Thunder" in Washington, DC. Huge turn out again this year, and the weather was hot and clear for the parade, but stormy for the National Concert on the Mall.

I stopped and visited the new USAF Memorial. It is awesome! Three spires, 270 feet tall, in the form of a bomb burst. The spires represent the Air Force core values; Integrity, Service, and Excellence. 'Ya 'gotta go visit it Hap!

While visiting Arlington National Cemetery I wondered, "Why don't we have a plaque along a walkway to memorialize the AAF/USAF Air Commandos?" Many other military organizations and associations do. I have a point of contact at Arlington.

After arriving back home in Florida, I found my ACA newsletter waiting (I love it!). Dean Hunter wrote and mentioned Captain Edwin "Jerry" (Gerald) Shank, Jr.

Well, being an old "Det 2 Soc Trang Tiger," I've always been curious about what different opinions and feelings expressed about the T-28 driver in the many articles and stories written about him. Is it still controversial, or has it been put to rest? Back in that day, the Air Force in the Delta was three T-28s and swashbuckling pilots of

Letters

Continued from page 8

the "Terry and the Pirates" genre. Wow! Those were heady days.

Lastly, I sent in the reunion form and made hotel reservations for this year's bash. Can't wait!

Love 'ya brother,

Marty Jester

1220 Weeping Willow Drive
Deland, FL 32724-8049



HAP,

I recently received an e-mail from Mr. Robert Rice, president of the American Air Museum, thanking me for the Spooky memorabilia and the three blood chits you sent me a few days ago. Enclosed is a picture of me, a tired old gunner proudly wearing his Spooky hat, presenting the blood chits on behalf of the Air Commando Association, to Mr. Brooks Petit, Flight Operations Officer of the Spooky Squadron at the Scott AFB air show held on 7th July. I also passed on the applications in hopes they will renew their memberships.

I had a good time at the air show talking to the folks about Spooky and its role in Southeast Asia even though I had to admit several times that the pilots had all the fun in firing the mini-guns.

But more importantly, I want to thank you for the ACA donation of the blood chits, the ACA address labels and the response time in sending me these items in time for the air show!

I have good intentions of making the reunion this fall and perhaps our paths will cross. Many thanks again for your help!

Bruce Maine
204 Britanna Drive
Swansea, IL 62226

Hap's Note: I'm delighted the air show went so swimmingly and that the ACA was able to contribute in a meaningful way. It is because of your efforts in pursuing these initiatives that we get good PR and exposure for past assignments and deeds in SEA.

Ed Note: I have been approached by several Spooky pilots, gunners, and engineers, requesting me to have a Spooky license plate made Bruce. I have told those concerned I would have them crafted provided someone would present me with a drawing or picture depicting precisely what they wanted on same. The offer still goes and I'll act on the request as soon as received.

Dear Marty,

Thank you for your note Marty and great hearing from you. I'll attempt to answer some of your queries.

I guess the reason we don't have a plaque along the walkway at Arlington is because no one has ever addressed having one there. Great item for the general membership meeting in October Marty. Why don't you pursue that initiative and have the "how we do it answers" available for discussion. I'm reasonably confident it will fly.

I'm totally out of the loop as regards Captain Edwin "Jerry" Shank. Accordingly, I can't shed any light on your interest in this matter. I'll leave it to our readers to discern.

I watched the dedication ceremony of the new Air Force Memorial on TV Marty. As you aptly put, totally awesome!

Got your reunion reservations and look forward greatly to seeing you in October.

Love 'ya too brother,
Hap

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

Just thought I'd say "hi" and let you know that since I was in, two of my sons have spent their time, and now my granddaughter is doing her bit in Iraq with the Army no less. At least she's still in the aviation business (Blackhawk helicopters) with the 10th Mtn Division. Keep up the good work!!
Thomas F. Petty
Box 514
Mossy Head, FL 32434-0514

Ed Note: Thank you Tom for sharing your family's noble and patriotic service. It is, indeed, reassuring and comforting to hear of those so devoted, especially in a sometimes climate of anti-sentiment for our brave service person-

nel.

DEAR SAM,

Thank you so much for remembering Bill with your donation to the ACA Scholarship Fund.

Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated at this time.

Nancy Sleight
1243 Shipley Drive
Niceville, FL 32578

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SAM AND ACA MEMBERS,

Thank you for your note Sam. It was such a nice turn-out of the membership.

Also, many thanks for the contribution to the Scholarship fund in Geno's name. We have never appreciated our Commando Family more than now!

Valentine Family
9309 Arborwood Circle
Davie, FL 33328

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SIR,

Please note the passing of Captain Patrick Freeman. His obituary is enclosed.

He was so proud of being part of the Air Commando Association and what you stand for.

Dr. Patricia Freeman Shivers
2112 Manor Road
Knoxville, TN 37920-2832

PS: My brother, USAF Captain Park George Bunker was also an Air Commando. His name is on the Vietnam Moving Wall.

Ed Note: Thank you for sending Patrick's obituary and our sincerest condolences on behalf of Patrick Freeman and Park George Bunker, both noble warriors and patriots.

See **LETTERS** pg. 10

Letters

Continued from page 9

TED SAUNDERS,

I just received my latest ACA newsletter and I am enclosing a check for \$100 for a brick. As always, the newsletter is a great read.

One request for the next ACA newsletter. I sent in a request awhile back for a blurb in the ACA newsletters "Upcoming Reunions" column, but it failed to make the cut time. If you have space in the next newsletter I would appreciate it if you could get this request to the editor to include the following:

The Air Rescue Association and the Pedro Rescue Helicopter Association will hold their next joint reunion, Wednesday 19 September through 22 September 2007 at the Gault House Hotel & Suites in Louisville, KY. For reunion details check the ARA and PRHA web pages or contact Marilyn Nicholas, ARA Director/PR marilynnicholas@sbcglobal.com or John Flournoy, ARA President jflournoy2@comcast.net for more information on the 32nd ARA reunion or Ed Cartwright edlcartwright@yahoo.com for more information on the 3rd joint ARA/PRHA reunion.

Many thanks.
John C. Flournoy Sr.
Col USAF (Ret), President, ARA
6817 Medinah Lane NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111-6419

Ed Note: Thanks for the brick order John and hope this satisfies your request.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
DEAR GANG,

I am life member #1817. My old plastic card finally broke to

pieces. Can I have another one?
Will be glad to pay you for it.
Means as much to me as my big
silver challenge coin and my orig-
inal Air Commando go-to-hell
Australian bush hat!

James Robert (Bob) Edwards
3618 High Pine Church Road
Asheboro, NC 27205

Ed Note: Should have received it by now Bob and always good to hear from our members in the field. We don't charge for such items.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SIR,

Enclosed are some items that might be suitable for the ACA Museum. Feel free to do with them as you please. Enclosed are: B-26 Check List, survival saw, sewing kit, my map of Vietnam, and a CD of the photos I made there. (The saw from my survival kit is opened as kind of a good luck symbol since I did not need it.)

We used our maps for the whole tour because we could not get new ones. We used to try to "bum" maps from the rotation birds. Remember, with Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense we were short of everything except targets.

The photos are annotated. Please make a copy for anyone who wants them. The original slides are at the Vietnam Archives, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX.

In the following, "A Day At Bien Hoa," I tried to relate a typical day.

Thanks for starting and maintaining the museum. I hope I will get to see and enjoy it.

Jack Williams
Det 2A, April to Oct 1963
5378 NW 109th Way
Coral Springs, FL 33076

Ed Note: Many thanks for the Vietnam artifacts Jack. They have been turned to our "Hall of Memories" curator Roger Klair and he will find a niche for them for all to remember and enjoy.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
"COMMANDO CLEAN"
CAME TO OUR HOUSE

Howie (Pierson) and my husband Cal maintained their friendship even after they were no longer in the 309th Air Commando Squadron in Vietnam.

Howie stopped by our house in Tulsa, OK a couple of times, and

always had his Dad with him. Once, Howie confided to me that his Dad was nearly wearing him out.. Every place his Dad wanted to visit or to see, Howie drove him there. His Dad lived to 103, the last I heard. What a loving son Howie was.

A couple of snapshots hang in my husband's study on his aviation wall. Cal was 6 feet tall, and Howie just towered above him.

Sincerely,
Hannah Bass, Cal's wife
6111 S Joplin Avenue
Tulsa, OK 74136-2107

COMMEMORATIVE ACA BRICK



Commemorative bricks are again available for you, a beloved family member, or a devoted or departed friend. The donation remains at \$100 and there are currently only 57 spaces available and are allotted on a first come, first served basis. Roger Klair and Willie Hall are eager to start so please submit your request ASAP. Forward requests to: Air Commando Association, ATTN: Brick, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569-0007

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

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

LARRY MOORE
311 ACS 67-68
SMSGT RETIRED

Laos: *A Personal View*

By Eugene Rossel

Project 404 Aug 1969-Sept 1970

When I was in Grad school at the Air Force Institute of Technology in 1969. I had a choice of either going to the Pentagon and working for a future general or go to this strange place called Laos, which was referred to as the CIA Secret Operating Base. When I was in high school in 1955 I read in the daily paper about this little country and the war that was going on in a small landlocked nation called Laos. All I could think was were was this place and I will never see it in my lifetime. I was interested in the country due to the war, the Communist taking over the North, the story about Dr. Dooley and his efforts to treat the North Vietnamese fleeing to the South mostly of which were Vietnamese Catholics. Since I had been in the USAF Air Commandos/Special Operations since 1961 and had been to Vietnam in 1962 and many of our people had been to Laos during this period and so we did get an inkling of something exciting going on over in this small country. Since the USAF Personnel Center was calling me to volunteer for Laos since I was the only one in the AF at the time who was jump qualified in my particular specialty they wanted me. They promised me if I volunteered that I would get my choice of assignment when I left. With all this in mind I decided that Laos was my choice and did get my choice of reassignment.

The assignment to Laos came under a program called Project 404 and the orders read Dep Chief JUSMAAG and not Laos with civilian clothes authorized. This was a result of the Geneva Accord on Laos. We were to report in with our orders, in civilian clothes and

no military uniform. They advised us when we got to Vientiane we would be issued embassy Ids and our military Ids would be locked up in a safe. Furthermore we would be assigned to the USAF Air Attaché Office called AIRA located in a compound in the middle of Vientiane (capital of Laos). I was to find out there was no jump slot in the program. I arrived in country from Don Muang airport in Thailand in an air conditioned C-47 operated by Air America. This is the first and only air conditioned C-47 that I had ever ridden in and I had the opportunity to ride in quite a few different C-47s.

The country was divided up in 5 military regions, the CIA was running the show, Air America and Continental Airlines would be our air carriers most of the time with the AIRA C-47 and Raven O-1s occasionally available for a lift. The Military Regions were as follows:

Military Region I: Luang Phrabang (Royal Capital)
LS 54 Luang Phrabang

Military Region II: Long Chien(Plaine de Jars)
LS 04 Sam Nuea (Communist Capital)
LS 85 Phou Pha Thi
LS 22 Xieng Khoung
LS 20 Sam Thong
LS 20A Long Tieng

Military Region III: Savannakhet
LS 39 Savannakhet
LS 38 Tchepone

Military Region IV: Pakse (Bolovens Plateau)
LS 11 Pakse
LS 44 Saravane

Military Region V: Vientiane
LS 08 Vientiane

LS 07 Khong Island

Laos surrounded and bordered with the following countries:

Vietnam
Cambodia
Thailand
Burma
China

Some of the people assigned or who worked with us, or places we visited while I was there are listed below:

Art Cal Calloway
Acey
Ambassador Godley
Ben VanWagner-OPS Off AIRA
Bill Yenke
Bill Gill--US AID
Bill Keeler
Bill Blitchely
Bill Highsmith--Asst OPps Off AIRA
Bob Mortenson
Capt Herman Adams
Charley Loucke--Asst AIRA
Col Hayden Curry--AIRA after
Col Gordon L.F. Tyrell
CWO2 K.S. Moir--Paymaster from ARMA
Dick Price--CAS
Don Twedde
Ed Archer--US AID
Eric Lindeman--Asst Ops AIRA
Father Mat Menger OMI-Ran orphanage in Vientiane
Father Bouchard OMI--Fr Luke worked with Hmongs
Fred Seibren
Gil Nieto
Gus Boesse (AA comm)
Jack Strobel
Jack Wallace
Joe Bruno
John Meadows-CAS
John Grovich
LTC Vogel
LTC Ray Lowry Asst AIRA
Monty
Ouan Rathikoun-RLA
Oudone Sananikone
Paul East-US AID

Purple Porpoise
Robert Tyrell-AIRA
Robert B. Midgett
Ross McDowell
Sam Thong
Settha Palace
Skyline
Ted Schwam (TSGT)
Tim Alman--Newspaperman
Tom Cline-CAS 20A
Tom Shera--Asst Ops Off
TSgt Lane
TSgt Garcia
Weird Harol
Geo Stansell

I visited all the Air Operations Centers (AOCs--locations where there were USAF personnel and the Ravens operated from) and they were located at:

Vientiane
Luang Prabang
Pakse
Savannakhet
Long Tieng-20 Alternate

Long Tieng turned out was the one that required most of my time so I got to become familiar with it. It wasn't an easy place to get into since the Controlled American Source (CAS)-a cover name for the CIA-made it difficult to go there. We had to jump through a lot of hoops to go there and I was there probably two times a week. CAS controlled who went there except for the news reporters who did various things to sneak into 20A. Our people working on the flight line in civilian clothes had to hide when newspaper reporters came around.

Gen Vang Pao (VP) was the military Region commander but the real guy in charge who had the money controlled Long Tieng and the power of a general was a young CAS agent by the name of Tom Cline. Our people at the AOC

See **LAOS** pg. 11

Laos

Continued from page 11

took orders from both men and also occasionally from the AIRA who tried to get some input. The AIRA had the power to assign and withdraw personnel from the AOCs, which made him a player in the fiefdom. There was also a USAID unit called Requirements Operations (RO) who did not have a great deal of power but had the bucks for ordnance and other little goodies. They could say no to some things but if someone got a little carried away with his power the chief could resolve it and also reassign or get rid of the few that occasionally created problems due to their assumed power.

Air America used to fly in USAF technicians from Udorn, Thailand each day to maintain the aircraft on a daily basis on some of the AOCs or when the area was in danger of attack. The technicians would be given different names for the aircraft-boarding list each day because of the Geneva Accord. The technicians at 20A lived on site and every 30 days we would rotate them back to Vientiane because Vang Pao had a rule that if you touched one of his girls you had a wife. Everyone believed it. Not that some of the Hmong hill girls weren't good looking; there were other things that did not appeal to the GIs.

Intrigue in the capital and in the field did not just include the Pathet Lao. In Vientiane our residence were guarded around the clock by Lao guards who were contracted but appeared to work for CAS. They kept notes on our every move-when we came and who we came with. The Attaché's communication center went through the embassy communication center, which was maintained by CAS. It became apparent that they were reading our messages in case we were politically incorrect

and their ideas conflicted with what we thought was the truth. The AIRA had to bring in a special intelligence unit to code our messages and send them to Udorn, Thailand to prevent them from reading our operational traffic. Otherwise CAS, outside of listening in our telephone conversation, wasn't bad to work with. It became apparent to me one night while I was meeting with one inebriated CAS man, who was a good friend of mine and was visiting me, that they had been bugging our phones. He was a CAS communication technician and he let it slip that he could only know if he had been listening to our telephone calls. I said you SOB's have been bugging our phones at which point he realized that he compromised himself and he immediately sobered up somewhat and departed our house with an excuse he had to go home.

The AIRA had 95% of the mission in Laos and was run by a full colonel. The Army Attaché (ARMA) was a Lt Col with only about 5% of the operational mission but he controlled the money, the communication center and had us by the balls in many ways. The AIRA complained that the Army was getting USAF operational traffic, keeping it and then briefed it at the Ambassador's morning joint meeting. He caught the AIRA in a number of embarrassing situations since he didn't have the messages or the answers to the Ambassadors questions. He complained to me so I sent out a message back to Hawaii complaining that the ARMA communication center was not supporting AIRA and loaded it with a few choice incidents. Since I was a Capt I knew I had to be gone for a couple of days to withstand the storm which would erupt with the ARMA as well as give the AIRA

the freedom of saying that he knew nothing about it. I gave the message to a USAF communication specialist in the center that evening when everyone else had left with orders to send it out that night and to do it without the knowledge of any of the Army troops. The AF technicians agreed to keep it quiet and not to discuss it with the Army troops. In the meantime I had a 0700 takeoff the next day for a three-day visit down country where it was going to be difficult to locate me. Sure enough it hit headquarters and they were all over the ARMA, who then rained on the Army Communication officer and then went looking for me to have my ass. Three days later when I returned the AIRA called me in with a broad grin, saying nothing about the message, but thanked me for the job I done. The ARMA no longer kept AIRA's messages and the problem was resolved. The ARMA kept his distance from me but the Army Communication's officer, who was a Capt, was visibly excited about the trashing he took on this, and got very belligerent with me over it although we had been good buddies to this point. Since I just got promoted to Major and this green beanie was pretty tough I had to pull rank on him to quiet him down. We were buddies later but he held a grudge over it.

We were supposed to paint all military vehicles white we brought in country and used in Vientiane. The Army communication officer had stolen a USAF communication jeep, which supposedly was lost in combat action, and therefore no one owned it. We were driving in Vientiane when a Russian embassy car passed us-we assumed they were KGB-and they all took almost a 180-degree look to see the vehicle and us. They almost hit a telephone pole but we decid-

ed maybe it wasn't such a good idea to be seen in this vehicle downtown. Anything we brought over from Thailand was in most cases signed for and at the same time a combat loss statement was signed before we moved it to Laos. Anything sent to Laos was in most cases considered a combat loss. This always made me nervous but that is how the game was played.

The Chief of the Royal Lao Military wanted to attend the AIRA morning briefing because we always had the better information. This was done but the briefings were sanitized before they were given to the Lao Military Chief.

The Chinese had a tendency to try and get your picture whenever you attended one of the merchant's parties such as the gold merchants had for us. I had one that followed me around as I tried to get between people so that he couldn't photograph me. I know he wasn't trying to get my picture for a local magazine. This didn't happen often but it did happen. The Russian attaché had parties where AIRA was invited and sometimes those of us in the black (military with embassy ID cards) would also get invited. He served some pretty good vodka and had these beady eyes behind some funny glasses that he looked at you as if he was measuring you for a coffin. He was supposed to be a Colonel in the Russian military but I sure as hell wouldn't want to meet him in some dark alley. When the Chinese were building a road inside Laos, connecting China to Northern Laos the Russian Attaché asked AIRA for pictures of the road. This started some high-level secure telephone calls from AIRA to the White House on what to do. The French, Communist countries and other friendly countries had a pres-

See **LAOS** pg. 13

Laos

Continued from page 12

ence in Laos who were probably spying on everyone they could. Madam Lulu and the madam at the White Rose certainly had informants since they were dallying with all sides.

Long Tieng was located in a bowl between some high hills. The runway was about 4600 ft long and paved. You had to fly the contours of the hills and then had to drop down in order to catch the beginning of the runway. It ran uphill and at the end of the runway there was a large 200 ft high karsts, which would ruin your whole day if you didn't stop in time and didn't have enough speed to fly over it. It was a nasty looking thing and there were a number of old airframes, which found the karsts unforgiving. There were some T-28 and C-123 parts still left lying in front of the karsts to remind the aircrew that it still stood as king. There was a rather large apron on the right of the runway and in front of the karsts where Air America had a small restaurant and some rooms. The apron was used as a logistic base for helicopters carrying ordnance to the troops in contact or to keep them resupplied. It was also used for the unmarked C-130, which would land, and immediately as it made its turn on the apron the rear door of the aircraft would open, rollers would be extended and supplies, equipment etc started to be pushed out. By the time the C-130 made its turn, its load was on the apron, its rollers pulled in, the doors would be closing and the aircraft was aligned on the runway for a rapid departure. It was something like out of a movie. On other days they would have large numbers of Huey helicopters lined up for their turn to have their lift hook connect to a payload of ammo, ordnance, food etc and soon as

they lifted off another helicopter came in to hook-up its load. It was another thing just out of the movies. Of course after they delivered their load some of VP's troops on the hills etc tried to hitch a ride out of danger and this could be very tricky for the Air America Huey pilots to get them off their helicopter. It was said that more than one helicopter pilot who had to leave the troops to defend the

Late Letters

DEAR HAP,

My thanks to you and Shirley for the get well card. Your good wishes and prayers cheered up my spirits.

Before you ask, yes, I will attend the ACA reunion. I sent in my check for the ACA events and reserved a room at the Quality Inn. I will also be departing for Cabo San Lucas on October 10 to attend our daughter's wedding on Oct 13. Jean is leaving on the 8th to help Sandra out with the pre-wedding chores. The 8th is the day I'm driving back to Sarasota from Ft. Walton. We had a big summer scheduled, but that has all gone by the boards. I am now totally focused on getting up to speed for the travel coming up in Oct.

I'm getting better each day, but it is slow going. I thought I'd be doing handsprings and cartwheels down the street by now. I guess it just doesn't work that way. The doctor estimates it will be another three or four weeks before I start feeling more like myself. I'm working on making it absolutely no longer than the three weeks. Probably no active (swing hard) golf until around October 1. Guess I'll be playing in the old farts white tee game for a while. Holy smokes! I just realized I am one.

The question of further treat-

ments etc were later found to have been shot near the site. I was told that the helicopter pilots made good money for this reason.

The Raven FACs operated out of 20A flying O-1s and T-28s. They would control air strikes for General VP's troops in the field bringing in the F-4s, A-1s etc in attacking the Pathet Lao (Lao Communist) and the North Vietnamese (NVA) particularly in

the Plaines of Jars. VP had about 50,000 people living in Long Tieng. VP had his headquarters here and his reported 6 wives. He was both an excellent leader who would give speedy justice on the spot and there is more than one story about how it was done. The Hmong loved him and he had successfully fought for them more than 30 years.

ment for the cancer has not been determined, but I did see my surgeon on July 10 for a follow-up. He told me definitely no radiation and if it was he, no chemotherapy. I liked what he had to say. He's looking at a 70 % chance of cure. He can find no cancer in my body. I hope it stays that way. In my case, he thinks chemo may be more aggravation than it is worth,

but he will leave that decision to a couple of oncologists he has recommended. He set an appt. for me to see one on July 24. I will send out a note on this after the 24th.

Looking forward to seeing you at the reunion!

Regards from your old broken down gun plumber pal,
Paul Tobey



Great link for Edwards AFB Airshow

We would like to pass on this link that ACA member Sugie Jones sent us. This website has great photos and information on one of the best airshows in the world at Edwards Air Force Base in the Mojave Desert. It's a show like no other, held at America's most historic aviation test facility.

The air force's Heritage Flight program commemorates equipment used to defend America in bygone days by putting them in formation with modern equipment, as in the photo above of a world war two P-51D Mustang with an F-16 Fighting Falcon.

www.richard-seaman.com/Aircraft/AirShows/Edwards2005/Highlights

Lima Site 85 "An Air Combat First" Prints Now Available



This year, September 2007, marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Central Intelligence Agency. To commem-

orate the occasion a series of paintings have been commissioned to illustrate important milestone moments in that history. The artwork was donated to the Intelligence Art Gallery at CIA for display at Headquarters and from time to time will be rotated for viewing at the various U.S. Presidential Libraries. For many of those 60 years, CAT and Air America played an historic role. "Earthquake's Final Flight," by now familiar to most of you, was the first in the series. The fifth painting is "An Air Combat First"

illustrating our Air America Huey defending a Top Secret United States Air Force Radar Installation, in Laos, against North Vietnamese Air Force pilots attack in armed Russian-made aircraft.

Keith Woodcock, well known aviation artist in the United Kingdom, was chosen to execute this painting. Marius Burke and Boyd Mesecher financed the project so it would be ready in time for the Air America Reunion at Nashville Reunion last June.

To order prints:

Prints of the signed and numbered limited edition can be ordered from Dan Gamelin.

Please send your check or money order to:

Dan Gamelin,
3117 Via Premio,
Carlsbad, CA 92010.
dan.gamelin@air-america.org
Cost is \$100 plus \$13 for shipping

Artists Bio and Web Site
<http://www.satiche.org.uk/keithw/gallery.htm>

Air America's Singular Aerial Victory

by Timothy N. Castle

On January 12, 1968, four dark green People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN) Air Force AN-2 "Colt" biplanes lifted off from an airfield in northeastern North Vietnam and headed west toward neighboring Laos. According to an official Vietnamese account, the specially modified aircraft and highly motivated crews were on a critical mission to destroy a U.S. radar base that was successfully guiding American bombers in damaging attacks against communist supply depots, airfields, and railroad yards.

Known to the Americans as "Site 85," the radar facility was perched on the southwestern cliffs of Phou Pha Thi and had been in operation only a few months. The 5,800-foot mountain, used for many years as a staging base for U.S. Central Intelligence Agency-directed Hmong guerrilla fighters and American special operations and rescue helicopters, was only 125 nautical miles from the North Vietnamese capital of Hanoi.

Manned by U.S. Air Force volunteers "sheep-dipped" as employees of the Lockheed Aircraft

Corporation - under the code-name "Heavy Green" - the facility provided the United States an otherwise unavailable all-weather bombing capability against North Vietnam. A tactical air navigation aid (TACAN) was located on the mountaintop.

The isolated base was protected by local Hmong guerrillas and Thai contract soldiers under the direction of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) paramilitary officers. Air America, a CIA-proprietary, provided critical aerial support for the facility, the technicians, and the security forces.

At about 1:30 PM the Colts approached their target and split into two formations. While two of the aircraft orbited in the area, the other two planes turned toward the mountain and conducted separate single bombing and strafing passes. John Daniel, a Heavy Green radar operator, was at the helipad just below the radar buildings when the airplanes attacked. "I could see the aircraft very clearly, only a couple of hundred feet above the site. I saw one dropping bombs and a Thai soldier emptied

a full ammo clip at the plane."

The extensive bombing and strafing was confined mostly to the CIA area near the helipad, indicating the pilots may have been attracted to the shiny tin-roofed buildings. Roland Hodge, an electrical power specialist assigned to Heavy Green, was working on a CIA generator near the helipad and

See *LS "85"* pg. 15



Memorial Day

ACA President, Felix "Sam" Sambogna, stands during the National Anthem at Beal Memorial Cemetery at the local Memorial Day celebration in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

The Son Tay Raid: American POWs in Vietnam Were Not Forgotten



By John Gargus

In May 1970, aerial photographs revealed what U.S. military intelligence believed was a POW camp near the town of Son Tay, twenty-three miles west of North

L.S. "85"

Continued from page 14

was slightly wounded by flying debris. Elsewhere, the attack killed four Hmong (including two women) and wounded two soldiers.

Air America captain Ted Moore, flying artillery ammunition to the site, saw the biplanes attack and recalls, "It looked like World War I." Moore and his flight mechanic Glenn Woods began to chase the first Colt as it attempted to head north to the Vietnamese border. Captain Moore positioned the unarmed UH-1D "Huey" above the biplane as Woods pulled out an AK-47 rifle and began firing at the lumbering airplane. The pursuit continued for more than twenty minutes until the second AN-2 flew underneath the helicopter and both airplanes attempted to gain altitude. Moore and Woods watched as the first AN-2, apparently hit by gunfire, dropped and then crashed into a mountain ridge less than two miles west of the North Vietnamese border. Minutes later, the second Colt hit the side of a mountain located some three

Vietnam's capital city. When American officials decided the prisoners were attempting to send signals, they set in motion a daring plan to rescue the more than sixty airmen thought to be held captive.

On November 20, a joint group of volunteers from Army Green Berets and Air Force Special Operations Forces perfectly executed the raid, only to find the prisoners' quarters empty; the POWs had been moved to a different location. Initially, the Son Tay raid was a devastating disappointment to the men who risked their lives to carry it out. Many vocal critics labeled it as a spectacular failure

of our nation's intelligence network. However, subsequent events proved that the audacity of the rescue attempt stunned the North Vietnamese, who implemented immediate changes in the treatment of their captives. They consolidated all Americans from their incarceration in camps to a single downtown Hanoi location where prisoners could take better care of each other. The operation also restored the prisoners' faith that their nation had not forgotten them.

John Gargus not only participated in the planning phase of the Son Tay rescue, but also flew as a

lead navigator for the strike force. In the last few years, he has immersed himself in relevant documents that have been declassified. He has also conducted extensive interviews with others involved in the secret mission. The Son Tay Raid incorporates this wealth of unpublished material-air operations planning and training, ground preparation, interviews, and even North Vietnamese perspectives-with Gargus's own experience.

John Gargus retired in 1983 from a twenty-seven-year career in the U.S. Air Force. Having flown with various Special Operations units in Vietnam, Europe, and the United States, he has accrued more than 6,100 flight hours, including 381 combat hours in Southeast Asia. Inducted into the Air Commando Hall of Fame, Gargus currently lives in Henderson, Nevada.

To order this book go to www.amazon.com.

What people are saying about this book:

"Colonel Gargus succeeds in documenting individual accomplishments of men who planned and executed a daring raid deep into North Vietnam to rescue American prisoners from their brutal captors. Even though they found the prison camp empty, their bold effort proved to the POWs that they were not forgotten. In turn, they did not forget those who risked their lives to rescue them by honoring them during their homecoming parade in San Francisco. Abraham Lincoln said, 'Any nation that does not honor its heroes, will not long endure.' All American citizens should read this book."

--H. Ross Perot

miles further north of the first crash and only a few miles west of the border. The two AN-2 Colts orbiting to the southeast of Site 85 did not take part in the attack and retreated back to North Vietnam.

Within hours a CIA-controlled ground team reached the crashed aircraft and found bullet holes in both. The first airplane had burned on impact and was nearly completely destroyed. The second aircraft, which bore tail number 665, was in far better shape. Three bodies which "appeared to be Vietnamese" were found in the wreckage. Aeronautical charts, which marked the inbound route to Site 85 and a return home, were found along with note books and a Soviet manufactured HF radio.

An examination of the aircraft by a U.S. Air Force intelligence team revealed "that 120mm mortar rounds had been converted to 'bombs.' Dropped through tubes in the floor of the AN-2, the 'bombs' became armed in the slip stream and detonated on impact. The rockets were 57mm, and were carried in rocket pods under the wing of the AN-2." Captain Moore later

estimated that nearly fifty of the mortar "bombs" were dropped on Phou Pha Thi. Clearly, had the pilots been even slightly more proficient in their bombing and strafing, the attack at Site 85 would likely have been costly in both lives and equipment.

Shrouded in the mists of the Annamite mountains, and part of a "secret war," Air America employees Ted Moore and Glenn Woods gained the distinction of having shot down a fixed-wing aircraft from a helicopter - a singular aerial victory in the entire history of the Vietnam war.

Two months later, in yet another unprecedented communist attack, Vietnamese commandos would launch a daring nighttime raid on Site 85. The radar facility was destroyed and Hanoi inflicted the deadliest single ground loss of U.S. Air Force personnel of the Vietnam war.

Timothy N. Castle, author of *One Day Too Long*, the story of Top Secret Site 85 and the Bombing of North Vietnam. Dr. Castle also wrote *At War in the Shadow of Vietnam*.

DEAR HAP,

Just a short note to let you know that my last letter to you requesting assistance about documents about Water Pump resulted in getting a lot of help. Tom Petty sent me a copy of the orders sending us to the project and one of

your troops, Chuck Williams, was ready to provide me with me with a personal certification as to my being assigned to the detachment. Also, I contacted Al Shinkle and he has prepared documentation to request the award of the Vietnam Service Medal, which would be

necessary for me to proceed with my request for reevaluation of my VA disability claim.

It was gratifying to such support from fellow Air Commandos and also great to talk to Chuck and bring back those days of yore. Chuck Williams was a class act in

those days and remains so today.

Again, thank you for your help and hope that you and your family are well.

Joe Coleman (L-1379)
220 N. Owyhee Street
Boise, ID 83706
PH: 208-389-9019
email: cjoeidaho@msn.com

Yo Joe,

I'm delighted to hear you are getting some "high profile" help in satisfying your requests. Give me a nod when the deeds are done.

Hap

Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative

The U.S. Small Business Administration has announced the SBA's Patriot Express Pilot Loan Initiative for veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses.

Eligible military community members include:

- Veterans
- Service-disabled veterans
- Active-duty service members eligible for the military's Transition Assistance Program
- Reservists and National Guard members
- Current spouses of any of the above
- The widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service or of a service-connected disability.

The SBA and its resource partners are focusing additional efforts on counseling and training to augment this loan initiative.

For more information go to www.sba.gov/patriotexpress



MICHAEL YON : ONLINE MAGAZINE



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

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

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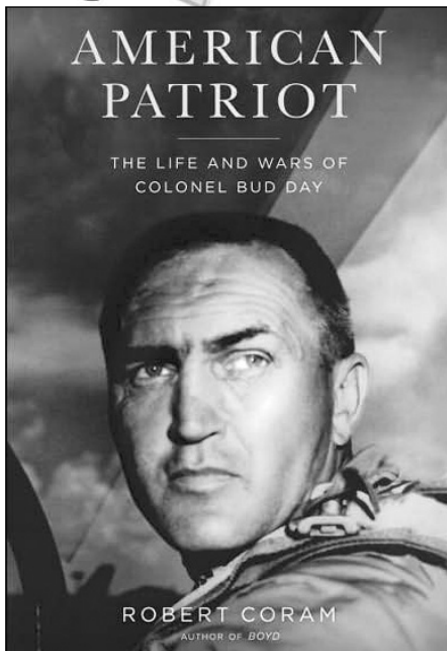
AUTHOR

BLOGGER

PHOTOGRAPHER



BOOK REVIEWS



American Patriot

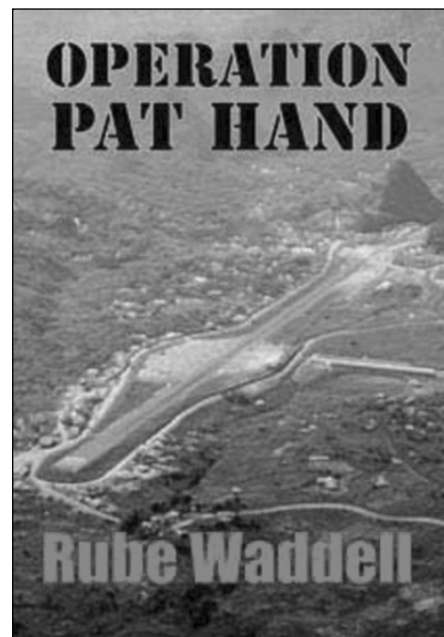
By Robert Coram

In 1942 George "Bud" Day, then a scrawny seventeen-year-old, defied his parents' wishes and went to his local post office to enlist in the Marine Corps. He was 5'2" and tipped the scales at just 116 pounds-4 pounds under the minimum weight requirement-but the recruiter grudgingly granted him a special waiver and swore him into the Corps. And so began one of the most distinguished and remarkable military careers in American history. During the span of his service to his country, through World War II, Korea, and then Vietnam, Day received every available combat medal and escaped death on no fewer than seven occasions. No pilot was more skilled or accomplished than Day, particularly in Vietnam, where the unit he led was renowned for its daring and successful missions into enemy airspace to destroy SAM sites and rescue downed comrades. But on his sixty-seventh raid, Day's F-100F jet was shot down over North Vietnam. He managed to escape from the enemy forces that

discovered him, and after an epic three-week ordeal, he made it to South Vietnam. Just a few miles away from safety and freedom, however, he was recaptured and taken to the infamous Hanoi Hilton, where he quickly became one of the leaders of the Americans held there. Those Americans included such extraordinary figures as James Stockdale, Robbie Risner, Orson Swindle, and John McCain. And it was Bud Day who helped his fellow soldiers survive in the most horrible conditions imaginable, who never broke under torture, who never let them forget that they were Americans.

But Bud Day's story didn't end when he came home from Vietnam. In fact, in some ways, it was just beginning. He became a passionate and indefatigable advocate for veterans' rights, a hero to those who had served their country so bravely and selflessly. And when the Clinton administration cut veterans' medical benefits, Bud Day knew that - however weary his bones, however aged his comrades - it was time to suit up for a new battle, this time against an opponent he had never expected to face: the U.S. government. Drawing upon scores of exclusive interviews and years of extensive research, acclaimed biographer Robert Coram brings into vivid focus the life of the most decorated soldier in modern U.S. history - a hero guided by the truest of moral compasses, a fighting man who traveled to the very edge of hell but managed to return with honor.

Robert Coram, author of the classic *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*, has written four nonfiction books and seven novels.



Operation Pat Hand

By Donald R. Waddell,
Col. USAF, Ret

'Operation Pat Hand' honors a special group of secret undercover pilots. They wore civilian clothes in a secret war in The Kingdom of Laos flying as Forward Air Controllers in the 0-1 Bird Dog aircraft. These one hundred and sixty men were volunteers flying under the call sign Raven and were truly our nation's best. Because their mission was 'Top Secret' their

exploits were unsung. Incurring losses of nearly one in three their history deserved to be chronicled. 'Operation Pat Hand' is the dramatic, although tragic, fictionalized account of one of these men, Raven 45. He was shot down in Laos. The ensuing crash and fire leaves him heavily disfigured. He was taken to North Vietnam as a POW. After a long healing process he escapes and is lost for twenty years. A recovery team discovers him and brings him in as a deserter. His status as a deserter is corrected and he is asked to attempt a final mission. His one last mission into Hanoi is successful. The story gives every pilot who flew in Southeast Asia the opportunity to recall the memories, both good and bad, of his tour. The story also brings to reality the "what-might-have-beens" for those families still suffering the loss of a loved one in a war that shouldn't have been.

Both of these books can be ordered by going online to www.amazon.com and searching under "books".

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REUNION 2007



Schedule of events - October 4-7, 2007

*** Thursday, October 4 ***

1300-2000 Early registration & check-in at Hospitality Suite, Quality Inn
1300-??? Hospitality Suite open for action
1700-2100 Buffet "The First Nighters" at Mr. T's Two Trees Restaurant

*** Friday, October 5 ***

1000-1600 Reunion registration at Hospitality Room
1200-??? Hospitality Suite
1600-??? Fish Fry at Quality Inn

*** Saturday, October 6 ***

0800-0830 Bus at hotel to take folks to Business Meeting
0900-1030 Annual Business Meeting at 20th Auditorium
1030-1400 Burger Bash at the 20th (pay as you go)
1100-1400 Ladies Social at Hospitality Room
1400-??? Hospitality Suite ready to rip
1800-1900 Social hour at Hurlburt Soundside Club
1900-2130 ACA Banquet at Hurlburt Soundside Club

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

*** Sunday, October 7 ***

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

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!! The Quality Inn will be the reunion headquarters again this year. The room rate for our people will be \$73 per night. We have 85 rooms and they will go first come first served. Call Quality Inn at (850) 275-0300 to make your reservations. Please mention you are with the Air Commandos. To get our special rate you must book by September 1, 2007. The reunion tickets must be ordered by October 1, 2007.

Buy Your Tickets Early

The 2007 banquet will feature table service with choice of entrees; prime rib or chicken. Please mark your ticket order with your choice. The banquet facility has a strict seating policy enforced by the base fire marshal. The maximum number of guest seats is 320. No squeeze-in seats for last minute space-A hopefuls. Please buy your tickets early. An accurate head count for planning purposes is very helpful. Thanks.

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

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

We encourage all widows to attend. Also, for those ladies interested there will be a Saturday social at Mr. Ts Restaurant at the FWB golf course. Please let us know if you are interested so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Our speaker for the banquet will be 1st Lt. Christine Lukasik who has recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan. Christine is the grand daughter of the late Bernie Lukasik who was awarded the Air Force Cross for his action in Viet Nam. Christine will be able to give us a meaningful first hand account of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan without the negative bias we get from the news media.

If you still have your name tag from last year and can actually find it - let us know!

DON'T FORGET TO MAIL THIS ORDER FORM WITH YOUR CHECK FOR THE 2007 REUNION!

ACA
PO BOX 7
MARY ESTHER, FL
32569

TEL: (850) 581-0099

2007 Reunion Ticket Order Form

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

TOTAL _____

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

Thursday Night Buffet at Mr. T's Restaurant	\$10.00	_____	_____
Friday Golf	\$50.00	_____	_____
Saturday Ladies Luncheon	\$5.00	_____	_____

TOTAL from both boxes _____

Banquet Meal Selection:	Special Banquet Needs Request
<input type="checkbox"/> Prime Rib and/or <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken (Indicate Number Please) Please indicate what group you want to sit near _____	Please indicate if you need assistance with: <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair <input type="checkbox"/> Early Seating <input type="checkbox"/> Seating near exit across from restrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Special Dietary Requirements. (Please call us)

For Golfers My handicap is _____

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

The above order is for: ☐ Myself ☐ My Spouse _____ (#of) Guests. Please indicate guest names on a separate piece of paper.

Name _____ Spouses Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ ACA Number _____ Email _____

I will be staying at _____

Signature _____



The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation Update

By John Grove



John Middlewood and local Thais show off the latest project at a school.

Thailand Community Initiative

The Commando effort to help rebuild the many small schools in the NKP Thailand area is well underway. We are working with the TLC brotherhood to provide the funds to really make a difference for the people who welcomed many of us with open arms and open hearts. That area of Thailand has not done well, and many schools have fallen in disrepair due to storms or lack of funds. We will make them better.



Local Thai citizens proudly display the sign that was placed over the new water system for their school.

The 4 projects we reported in the last newsletter as being funded have been completed. This is a great start. We just sent funds for 2 more projects. TLC has identified the need for about \$20,000 (US) for just the materials for about 12 more projects. Local Thai citizens



The installation of bathroom facilities for kindergarten classes. The two bathrooms will serve about 50 students.

provide all the labor of putting the materials to use. It is our goal to fund all of these and many more projects.

THE MTF IS A TAX EXEMPT 501-C3 ORG THAT WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THE TAX WRITE OFF AS PROVIDED BY LAW.

Now is the time to help the folks who have been so kind to our troops and us. Look at what we have done so far and just think how much better the lives of these children will be in the coming school years. Give now! See the handout for details. Give a little or give a lot, just give! Heinie will keep after you until you do.

Honduras: We are doing great things

by John Grove

In June 2007 I spent 9 days in Honduras where we send the majority of the shipments we collect for this very very poor country. We are doing great things for that area and what we do is really appreciated. I traveled with my 18 year old granddaughter, Heather, who speaks Spanish, and she was really impressed with the country, the poverty and its needs. It is a beautiful place but very poor. The people are about the happiest folks I have ever met.



Okaloosa Walton United Way mugs used for soup. No electricity, this is the kitchen stove.

The areas we traveled, about 2 hour drive around El Progreso, had lots of our 'stuff'. We saw kitchen items in the mountain schools that had the Okaloosa Walton United Way logo. We saw

clothing with logos of places in N.W. Florida in the towns and villages all around the area. School items we have shipped are in most of the private and public schools.



School desks and chairs from Okaloosa County Schools.

Honduras is now the third poorest country in the hemisphere, and it is the easiest place to ship to hassle free. The great thing about the place we send 'stuff' is the distribution system that George Mealer has set up. George, the only workaholic Honduran in the world, was our host for the trip and he is the heart and work force for all that we send. He is a retired US Army Major and retired US Govt. GS employee. He and his



John Grove, George Mealer, the high School teacher, and local village elder show off the new school sign. The school is growing with 23 students this year.

family have dedicated themselves to help that area of Honduras. He has two very large warehouses to sort and distribute from. The items are unloaded and sorted by category then he contacts the appropriate agency or people for either pick up or he delivers.

I met with two of the Honduran Air Force Wing Commanders. They are so poor that the pilots are only getting about 80 hours A

YEAR. No money for fuel! They need all the help we can give them just to put items in the AF clinics and offices. One base, Goloson, had only 2 computers for the whole base. The tool room was nearly empty, in fact, I carry more tool in the back of my pickup truck.



The Honduran Air Force tool room -they need help.

We went to several hospitals, clinics and feeding areas for babies. They all are in so much need. We Air Commandos who are working these shipments are now working over time to get the stuff they so desperately need. Thanks to the Air Commandos who have worked these shipment for years, we are making a great difference and will continue to make things better. From all I saw we are doing the right thing on this mission. Let's keep up the good effort. We need help packing and sorting in Ft Walton.



Hurlburt has supported this orphanage for 16 years and it has become a wonderful facility with our help.

Loading Horsepower

The last load destined for Honduras was building materials and supplies. The load was all loaded from the ground up, one piece at a time, to the back of the

Spot Light on the 20th SOS and the Green Hornets

The largest and most heavily tasked helicopter squadron in the US Air force is the 20th Special Operations Squadron. Hard work is nothing new for the Green Hornets, they were noted for being over tasked and doing great things during SEA and the cold war. The modern day "Hornets" fly the worlds most technologically advanced helicopter, the MH-53M PaveLow, which has been a primary force in the recent war on terrorists.

The first Helicopter flown by the old 20th was the H-21 way back in the late 1950's, then after deactivation and reactivation for the SEA war they were flying both the H-1 and H-3. The unit was deactivated during the closing years of the SEA war however it was soon reactivated at Hurlburt Field under the new SOF in 1976. The squadron was flying the UH-1N twin engine Huey and the H-3 during the first 4 years under the 1st SOW.

The reorganization of SOF during the period following the failure of the rescue attempt in Iran, operation Eagle Claw, brought the PaveLow into the SOF world in early 1980. SOF needed the long range special capabilities of the PaveLow. Since that time the squadron has been non stop in development of a better aircraft and better tactics. They have flown in all the major conflicts since that time and the record shows they did it well. They have several major awards as a squadron and the crews and support personnel have been awarded many awards from the Silver Star on down.

The 20th has hosted the ACA at several of our last business meetings and will do so this year for the last time. The PaveLow is tired, the airframes are the same ones flown in the late 60's and early 70's in SEA. They will be

retired soon since the rebuild cost is off the finance charts. No other helicopter has been developed that can replace the outstanding capabilities of the old PaveLow. Next year it will be a sad day when the last Pave is flown out and one is put on the stick in the Air Park.



Capt Steve Edwards and crew received many awards for heroic actions in the war

The current 20th SOS commander, Lt Col Vincent Becklund, will have the sad duty to retire the flag and the fleet. Vincent entered the service about 20 years after the PaveLow airframes were first put in service as either rescue HH-53's or special ops CH-53's in the 21st SOS. He is a 1990 AF Academy zoomie and this is his second tour with the Hornets. He has a wealth of war experience as do all the troops in the squadron. They have been deployed non stop, except for one very short breather, since 9-11. They were called to duty at both the World Trade Center and the Pentagon just after the terrorist attacks on our soil. They have the equipment to do great things. This is also true in civilian rescues, as they showed during hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. They rescued 1,395 people just after that storm.

The 20th manages its own scholarship for the children of Air Force Special Ops helicopter fallen troops. This includes the support, maintenance and ops folks for all the spec ops heavy lift helicopter units. They might be the only squadron level Air Force unit

that does this. It is necessary since the losses from all causes are very high.

The modern Green Hornets are proud of the current work against terrorists and they are also proud

AIRMAN'S ATTIC REDEPLOYS

By ACA Director & Airman's Attic Director Bob White

The Eglin AFB Airman's Attic has moved to new digs. We are now at 594 Inverness Street, Eglin AFB, 32542. If the address is familiar to all of you it's because it is located smack dab in the middle of the former Federal Prison Camp.

Our old location was building 20-C, a former mess hall kitchen. We were given an eviction notice as the entire block 20, consisting of three four story dormitories, a mess hall (sorry, they are called dining facilities now), a large courtyard and pavilion, were all scheduled for demolition.

Well in early June the fan got hit hard and we received a short fuse order to move. No time to plan...just move now. Due largely to the efforts of young soldier volunteers from the US Navy Explosive Ordnance School, we

of those who have gone before them in developing such a capable force. When you visit the 20th SOS during this fall's reunion take a look around at the finest squadron in the Air Force.

got moved in record time.

The dormitories and their contents were turned over to a civilian contractor whom I had met when he was looking over the facilities. During our conversation I explained what the Airman's Attic was all about. Low and behold, he gave me authorization to remove any and all furnishings from the dormitories that I could use. We were able to scrounge an unused building in the prison camp, which is without power, and is also scheduled for demolition in the future. Long story short, we were able to acquire over 400 pieces of great furniture which was about to be plowed under. No easy task as a lot of stuff had to be carried down three flights of stairs and all the while we were trying to settle into our new Airman's Attic. We continue to make a difference and help a lot of folks with furnishings they otherwise cannot afford.

MTF

Continued from page 20

semi. To get this kind of work we needed lots of horsepower, and we had it. Commandos like Rich Comer, Maj Gen ret; colonels Steve Connelly, Gene Correll, Tommy Hull, Jerry Gilbert, Ken Sipperly, and Bill Vano and one Chief, Bob White as well as a group of EOD folks from Eglin and several other Air Commandos all helped nonstop for over 4 hours. Jeannie Krzan our Commando protocol emeritus was keeping the inventory straight, as usual. The load arrived in



General Comer and a gaggle of colonels and some peons load the container.

Honduras and George Mealer was overjoyed. Metal roofing and the kinds of building supplies we sent are hard, if not impossible, to get in Honduras.

Thanks to all the packers and loaders who make this kind of load happen. Maybe next load it will not be near 100 degrees.

Remembering Brig. Gen. Robin Olds: fighter pilot extraordinaire

Submitted by Don Moody

"There are pilots and there are pilots; with the good ones, it is inborn. You can't teach it. If you are a fighter pilot, you have to be willing to take risks."

Fighter pilots used to say that there was a glass case in the Pentagon built to the precise dimensions of then-Colonel Robin Olds, who would be frozen and displayed wearing his rankless flight suit, crushed fore and aft cap, gloves, and torso harness with .38 and survival knife. Beside the case, was a fire ax beneath a sign reading: "In case of war, break glass."

It was something of an exaggeration, but it contained an element of truth. Robin Olds was built for war. And he was born to fly. It was imprinted in his genes. Born in July 1922, Robin was the son of the influential airman Robert Olds. As a disciple of Billy Mitchell, the elder Olds became a prominent advocate of strategic bombing and did more than anyone to make the B-17 an operational reality before World War II. Olds' influence was acknowledged by no less an authority than Curtis LeMay.

A big, strapping kid, Robin had drawn attention when his high school football team won the Virginia state championship in 1937. He turned down athletic scholarships in favor of West Point and entered the corps of cadets in 1940, destined for the Class of '44.

Among his classmates was later Colonel William J. Hovde of World War II and Korean fame. Billy Hovde used to insist, "I was Robin's ballroom partner ... because I was the only one in the class who could dance backwards."

At West Point Robin made All-American as a tackle and was

named lineman of the year in 1942. Such was his success that he was inducted into the college football hall of fame in 1985. But more



than anything, Robin wanted to fly-and he wanted fighters. He got his wish. He became one of only a dozen West Pointers to make ace (in comparison to 30 Annapolis alumni).

Robin was commissioned and rated a pilot on June 1, 1943. a 20-year-old second lieutenant. He joined the 479th Fighter Group in February '44, and upon arrival in England that May he had 640 hours total time. Twelve months later he was a Major leading a squadron.

Robin was a team player as long as the team wanted to play. When the leaders were only interested in suiting up, he exercised some initiative. In other words, he went freelancing. In his first two dogfights he was alone with his wingman, having left formation to hunt on his own. As he wryly noted long afterward, "When I shot down my first two airplanes I was relieved to see that they had black crosses on their wings."

Robin used to say that the two best things about World War II were London and Colonel Zemke. When the 479th's first commander was shot down in August 1944,

Hub Zemke moved over from the fabled 56th Fighter Group and rejuvenated the Mighty Eighth's last fighter outfit. Not that Robin needed any rejuvenating, but the group had plodded along in pedestrian fashion.

In a few weeks Zemke turned things around, and added to Robin's already formidable determination to succeed as a shooter and a leader. The group converted to P-51s in September but Zemke's Mustang broke up in a storm over Germany the next month and he became a POW. However, the lesson had been learned and absorbed.

Robin became commanding officer of the 434th Fighter Squadron at age 22, and he never forgot it. Decades later he said, "As a Major I was responsible for feeding and housing my men, training my men, and rewarding or punishing them. As a colonel I had to check with some general for permission to visit the latrine."

Unlike many pilots who regarded airplanes as tools, Robin could be sentimental about his machines. Near the end of the war he was one of six P-51 pilots who attacked a German airdrome and found himself the lone survivor. He nursed his crippled Mustang back to base but found that it stalled at 175 mph, rolling violently. But as he said, "Scat VI had taken me through a lot and I was damned if I was going to give up on her."

Somehow he got the bird on the runway and kept it in one piece.

When the European war ended, Robin had made ace in both the P-38 and P-51, probably the only pilot ever to do so. Postwar After VE-Day Robin returned to the States and reverted to his permanent rank : a 23-year-old Captain. He married Ella Raines, one of the

most glamorous actresses of the era, and got on with his career.

He briefly returned to West Point as assistant football coach but chafed at the thought of missing the new jets entering service. Therefore, he arranged a transfer to March Field, flying P-80 Shooting Stars. He thrived there, becoming a member of the first jet flight demonstration team and that same year, 1946, was second in the jet phase of the Thompson Trophy Race.

Robin went to England as an exchange pilot in 1948, flying No. 1 Squadron's Gloster Meteors. The American Major commanded the prestigious British squadron in 1949, enjoying the high jinks typical of an RAF mess: a mixture of drinking and physicality that appealed to him.

Upon return to the States, Robin commanded the 71st Fighter Squadron at Pittsburgh. He was thoroughly unhappy in Air Defense Command, protecting Steel Town from Soviet bombers when friends were bagging MiGs in Korea.

Almost beside himself, he wrangled a temporary assignment to the Far East, and the world looked good again. As he explained, "I had to go behind my boss's back, but I thought it was worth it. My wife even had induced labor so I could see my daughter before I left, and I was on the way out the door when the phone rang. It was my CO. He said, "Gotcha. If I don't go, you don't go."

The CO was another ETO triple ace, Colonel Jack Bradley, who was equally eager to hassle with MiGs. Robin missed Korea, and he never got over it. He made full colonel April 1953, which made him eligible to command a

See **B/G OLDS** pg. 25

ACA Country Store

Joyce Harrington, Country Store Manger



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



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



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



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



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



NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /blue



NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /white



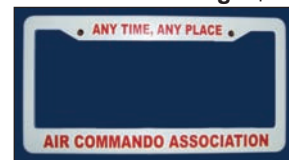
Lic Plate - \$10 /white



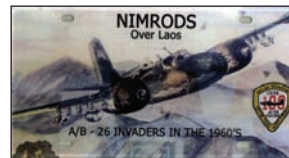
Aircraft Lic Plates Son Tay Raiders - \$10



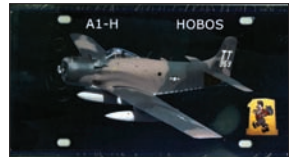
Aircraft Lic Plates B-26 Over MeKong - \$10



Lic Plate holder- \$4



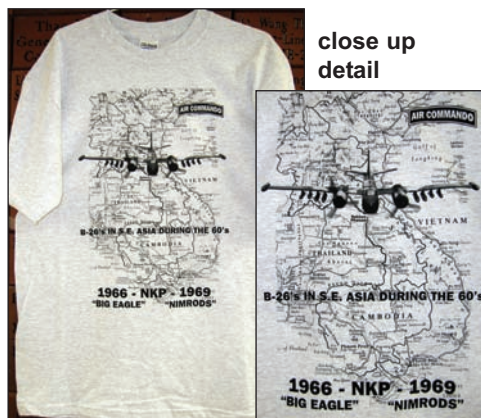
Aircraft Lic Plates Nimrods over Laos - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates A1-H Hobos - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates B-26 - \$10



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



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



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



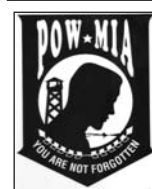
Jackets - \$35 (M-XXL) Blue, Tan, Navy, Black



Golf Towel - \$8



ACA Decal
2/\$1.00
4"x5"



POW/MIA
Decal
\$2.00



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



Beer Mugs - \$10 (Logo or Lettering)



Bumper Sticker - \$2.00



Window Decal - \$3.00 8" wide



Lapel Pin - \$4 (sm/large)



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



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



POW/MIA Flag - \$12

See the next page for full list of items and prices. If you have questions on any of the items you see please call Joyce Harrington on Tuesdays or Fridays from 10am - 12 noon. The ACA will try to accommodate all orders but we cannot guarantee availability on all products. If the item is no longer available we will gladly refund your entire purchase.

Country Store Items Available

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

Aircraft License Plates

B-26 "Over the MeKong"; B-26 "in SE Asia in the 60's"; B-26 "Nimrods Over Laos"; "Son Tay Raiders"; "A1-H Hobos"

NEW ACA License Plates, white or blue

ACA License Plates, white.....

Printed Plastic License Plate Holders

ACA Decal (4"x 5")

POW/MIA Decals

ACA Lapel Pin (Large & Small)

ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering

Air Commando Bush Hat- Firm Only (M, L, XL).....

ACA T-Shirt (white only) (S, M, L,XL).....

ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL)

ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, white, red, royal blue, waffle weave, with crest) (navy and black with lettering).....

Denim long sleeve shirts (Ladies M, L, XL Men M, L, XL, & XXL)..... available with lettering or crest.....

Jackets - (M to XXL- Tan, Navy, Black, Royal Blue)

****50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24").....**

POW/MIA Flags

Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo)

Beer Mugs with logo or lettering "60 years Air Commando"

ORDER FORM

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

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price

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

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



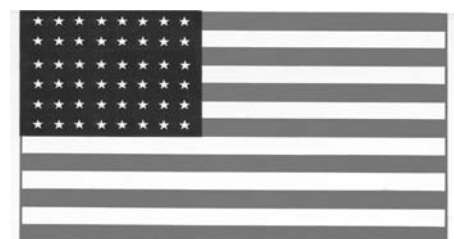
ACA members Willie Hall and Roger Klair work on the Wall of Fame expansion. Our current "Brick Drive" has been very successful, there are only 33 spaces left. If you have been thinking about getting one, now would be the time to do it!

Authentic Blood Chits

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

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

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



Official Korean War Blood Chit
 1951 issue from survival kits

BGen Olds

Continued from page 22

group, but the war was winding down.

Robin served penance in the Pentagon 1958-1962, waging a notably unsuccessful campaign to keep guns in new fighter aircraft. "Missiles were immature technology for years and years after that," he insisted, not without reason. His pet project was an F-102 with bubble canopy and a gun, which came to naught.

Robin also had other ideas.

While visiting an aircraft storage facility he noticed some Navy piston airplanes "with all these lovely hardpoints under their wings." He figured that if the "squids" weren't using all their Douglas Skyraiders, the Air Force should take up the slack. Eventually the Air Commandos were flying A-1s as the fabulous Sandys, providing close air support in South-east Asia.

From 1963 to '65 Robin assumed command of the 81st Tactical Fighter Wing at RAF Bentwaters. There he formed an F-101 aerobatic team, demonstrating the Voodoo's low-level performance across Europe-without official approval.

Accounts vary, but if Robin truly broke regulations as a way of getting kicked out of Europe, it worked. Third Air Force wanted to court martial him, but General Gabe Disosway of USAFE took pity and dispatched him to ponder his evil ways at Shaw AFB, South Carolina.

Robin later said that a rotund star wearer had intoned, "Olds, you're the kind of Air Force officer who should be sent to Southeast Asia." As if that were a bad thing.

Wolfpack Robin got exactly what he wanted: command of an air-to-air fighter wing, hunting MiGs. The disappointment of

Korea drifted a dozen years astern. Robin's arrival at Ubon, Thailand, was uncharacteristically low key. He knew from his own sources that all was not well in the 8th TFW and resolved to see it from the perspective of the FNG-the "freaking" new guy.

He went through the normal in-processing routine like any other newbie, paid close attention and spoke little. By the time he reached the front office, he reckoned that he knew all he needed to. He began cleaning house.

First he cut loose the deadwood, the ticket punchers and careerists who had "sniveled some counters"-missions that counted toward completion of a tour when in fact they had not gone north. Then he began learning the way the Wolfpack did business so he could improve upon it. He stood before the Phantom crews and said, "I'm going to start here by flying Green Sixteen (tail-end Charlie) and you guys are going to teach me how. But teach me fast and teach me good, because I'm a quick learner."

Sitting in the audience was Captain Ralph Wetterhahn, a future MiG killer. Like so many other pilots and WSOs, he was energized by the new CO's press-on attitude. Years later, Wetterhahn compared Olds' arrival with that of Brigadier General Frank Savage (Gregory Peck) in *Twelve O'Clock High*.

The old ways were not only out, they were deceased. A new regime had arisen, and the Wolfpack began showing results.

Under Olds' predecessor, who seldom flew combat, the 8th had eked out a meager kill-loss ratio. Like the rest of the Air Force, it had barely broken even with Hanoi's MiGs, peaking at a 2-1 exchange rate. Under Robin, the Wolfpack shot to the top of the

Southeast Asia league, bagging 18 MiGs, and when he left, the wing's kill ratio stood at 4-1.

Robin entered his second war with over 4,000 hours, mostly in fighters. At 44 he was flying against Vietnamese pilots probably half his age. But he came into his own at Ubon. He ruled over a fiefdom like a feudal baron, enjoying the excitement of the hunt by day and discussing the great game with his men at arms by night. He would have been completely at home in Arthurian England; better yet as an Arthurian legend.

The free-wheeling environment at Ubon fueled morale, and the Wolfpack's was stratospheric. Dedicated consumers of booze and red meat, they reveled in the warrior ethic. In contrast, today's sedate, sober young professionals are superbly educated, highly competent, and terrified that they might say something that somebody would find objectionable. Robin did not want to live in that world.

And he didn't.

Unsatisfied with the restrictive rules of engagement, Robin began seeking a way around them. He found it in the realm of deception and began planning Operation Bolo. On January 2nd, 1967, he led the Wolfpack into an aerial ambush of MiG-21s expecting to jump a formation of F-105s. Instead of bomb laden "Thuds" the Viet-nameese found a passel of hungry Phantoms.

Bolo's seven credited kills exceeded the 8th's tally during all the previous CO's tenure. Robin got one himself, becoming the only pilot to score in WW II and Vietnam. Over the next year he added three more.

Upon return to the U.S., Robin was acclaimed as America's top gun of the war to date, a record he retained for the next five years.

But he was contemptuous of the Air Force's attitude toward air combat, exclaiming, "The best flying job in the world is a MiG-21 pilot at Phuc Yen. Hell, if I was one of them I'd have got 50 of us!"

Despite his MiG-killing fame, Robin was perhaps proudest of the strike against North Vietnam's best-defended target: Thai Nguyen steel mill. In an ultra low-level attack, leaving rooster tails on the paddies behind them, Olds and two wingmen put their bombs on target. He considered it a dangerously wasteful effort, as the mill had been hit repeatedly, but its smoke stacks had remained standing. What he valued most was the courage and skill of his aircrews.

After Vietnam, having promoted Robin to Brigadier General, the Air Force sought a safe place to stash him. For reasons both ironic and obscure, he was assigned as commandant of cadets at the Air Force Academy, where his brand of irreverent individualism could infect hundreds of future officers.

Robin's influence on the cadets was profound. One who became a FAC and author was Darrel Whitcomb, who recalls, "In the fall of 1968, I was a first class cadet at the Academy when he was our commandant. Every Friday evening he would have the first classmen from a different squadron to his house for dinner. I was in Seventh Squadron. The evening of our visit, I was late to arrive because. I had my very first solo. I walked in as he was telling a war story. Seeing me in my flight suit, he asked if I had just had a flight. Needless to say, I had to share my big event.

He listened and then said, 'This deserves something special.' He left the room and came back about five minutes later with one of his flying scarves. It reeked of

See B/G OLDS pg. 26

BGen Olds

Continued from page 25

whiskey and cigars. He put it around my neck and said, 'Well, now we have another new Wolf cub.'

"I was absolutely blown away by his act and felt at that moment, that if he had asked, I would have flown that T-41 to Hanoi for him."

After Colorado Springs, Robin was packed off as Director of Aerospace Safety to finish his career but got an unexpected reprieve. When the Vietnam war heated up again in 1972, his four MiGs remained the U.S. record.

Offering to take a reduction to Colonel for a chance at the fifth MiG, Robin instead was dispatched to learn why the Navy was running up a 12-1 kill ratio while the Air Force struggled to maintain parity. He found what he feared: most Air Force fighter crews "couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag." Commander John Nichols, a Navy MiG killer brought to Udorn, Thailand to teach dogfighting to the Air Force blue suits, saw Robin taxi his F-4 into the chocks after a practice mission. "The canopy came open, followed by General Olds' helmet in a high, lofting arc. He was not happy."

Robin retired in June 1973. With 17 career victories (thirteen in WW II plus four in Vietnam) when he died this year, he was America's third-ranking living ace. The top three now are Walker "Bud" Mahurin (24.25), Alexander Vraciu (19) and Clarence "Bud" Anderson (16.25)

In retrospect, I'll never forget the first time I met Robin in the late '70s. He wore a Nehru jacket with what resembled a peace symbol pendant. Looking closer, I saw that it was a stylized rendition of "the track of the Great American Chicken" that actually said "War."

Robin cultivated image of the warmongering fighter jock, but just beneath the barbarian façade lurked a powerful intellect. In unguarded moments he allowed the esthete to pop up for a quick look-see, before pulling the man-hole cover back over his head.

On one occasion we were discussing history and Robin smiled. "In 416 BC, Hannibal conducted the first recorded battle of encirclement." He looked at me from slitted eyes.

"You know, someday I'd love to tell old Hannibal how Cannae became the basis for Operation Bolo."

That was what detectives call "A Clue." Robin Olds, who some regarded as an alcohol-fueled throttle jockey, had the gray matter to reach back 2,383 years and apply the lesson of antiquity to the jet age.

But there was more.

Far too many military personnel, policemen, and politicians mouth their oath of office as a rote exercise. Not Robin Olds. He thought about the words, absorbed, them, and passed them along. In addressing newly commissioned officers he said, "The airman swears that he will obey the orders of the officers appointed over him. Do you realize what responsibilities that puts on your shoulders? Your orders have to be legal and proper. Think about it, before you give one. But think about how to protect and defend the Constitution. Because do you know what that is? That is by, for, and of The People. It is not the President; it is not the Speaker of the House; nor the Leader of the Senate. It is the People of the United States; who, hope-fully in their wisdom will guide our forces properly."

Robin had been writing a memoir for several years. Says F-4 pilot

and novelist Mark Berent, "It was well written, as you'd expect from Robin, but it wasn't really about him. It was more about people he knew."

Another Air Force officer who read part of the text said that it began as an ethereal discussion with the ghost of Robin's father. Robert Olds had asked his son the status of the U.S. Air Force and got a detailed debriefing on what's wrong with the service. It was a long list.

When he died on June 14, not quite 85, Robin left the work incomplete. The fact that his book remains unfinished represents a major loss to aviation literature. However, I bet that by now Robin has cornered Hannibal in some corner of Valhalla and thanked him for the example of Cannae.

A memorial service was held at the Air Force Academy on 30 June for BGen Olds.

Submitted by Don Moody

Don,

Thanks for this story on Robin Olds; he was one of a kind and holds a "SPECIAL" placed in many a fighter pilot's heart...!!!

And, he was always teaching the younger guys. It is sad that so often our very "BEST" are derailed from making the Air Force greater.

Robert Downs



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21 - 22 Sept 2007

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www.POWRideHome.org

Right to Bear Arms

"No free man shall ever be debarred the use of arms. The strongest reason for the people to retain their right to keep and bear arms is as a last resort to protect themselves against the tyranny of government"

-- Thomas Jefferson

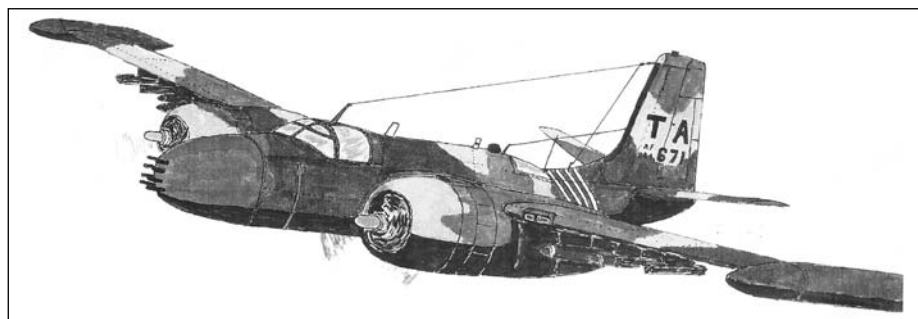
Foundation Hopes To Acquire And Restore Last B-26K Counter Invader

Honoring 609th Special Operations Squadron Of The Vietnam War

Their story was never featured in the nightly news, nor was it broadcast over any radio station. The missions they flew were perilous and were accomplished under extraordinary secrecy in what became one of the first, and possibly most public wars in the modern age. Now, 40 forty years later, their experiences are coming to light and are being honored by the people that their efforts protected; their children.

Few people have heard of the 609th Special Operations Squadron, otherwise coined the "Nimrods" and even fewer have seen their trademark aircraft, the Douglas/On-Mark B-26K Counter Invader, in flight over the United States. The A-26 Legacy Foundation of Jaffrey, NH hopes to buck that trend and bring the last flying B-26K back to the American skies, flying in honor of the "Nimrods" and allowing the public to learn more about the seldom-mentioned, but heroic missions of the 609th.

The time was the mid-1960's... and the place was along the Laotian/South Vietnamese border on the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail. North Vietnamese troops were moving critical supplies and reinforcements down the trail to support their combat forces in South Vietnam. The American response was to station the B-26K Counter Invader and crews of the 609th Special Operations Squadron at a tiny base in Northern Thailand called Nakhon Phanom. From there, they flew risky missions along the trail to disrupt troop and supply



movement under the call sign "Nimrod" in the cover of darkness in complete radio silence.

The aircraft, the B-26K, was a remanufacture of the WWII vintage A-26 Invader medium bomber. Re-equipped in the 1960's to serve as a fast attack aircraft with the capacity of a bomber and the speed and maneuverability of an attack aircraft, the B-26K was unique in an era of jet aircraft. The plane was known for its durability and its ability to carry a hefty amount of ordinance and yet still have the maneuverability to avoid ground fire and low-level fighter attack. Despite it's age, it served valiantly with the 609th.

The operations of the 609th Special Operations Squadron were cloaked in extreme secrecy and even well after the end of the Vietnam War, their efforts were never truly known. No medals were awarded to flight crews lost in combat, no honors for bravery-the service of these veterans was never acknowledged. Even the B-26K was kept out of public hands after their service life ended, with the few remaining examples left in boneyards in Arizona to await their disposal.

The effort to preserve the last flying B-26K Counter Invader

and use it as a flying museum to educate the future generations about the efforts of the 609th is fully underway through the A-26 Legacy Foundation of Jaffrey, NH. Led by the children of the veterans of the 609th, the foundation mission named "Operation Final Flight" is actively fundraising to acquire a B-26K that is currently in private hands in the Western US. Originally saved from government disposal to become a forest fighting aircraft, the B-26K retains most of the original equipment that it would have had in 1968.

The daunting \$250,000 acquisition cost must be fully funded by private donations and the A-26 Legacy Foundation is seeking help from both individuals and corporations interested in preserving this unique aircraft for it's important role. Once the aircraft is purchased, it will be fully restored to wartime condition and will tour the United States to events, airshows, and museums to preserve the legacy of the Nimrods and the missions they flew.

Sponsorship opportunities will also be available for the operation of the aircraft.

FMI: www.a-26legacy.org

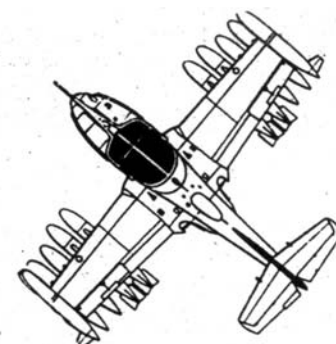


A-37 Reunion Sept 6-9, 2007

At the Hilton Washington
Dulles Airport Hotel in
Herndon, VA during
Sept 6-9, 2007.

(A great place for a memorable vacation at our wonderful nation's capital.)

**"For anyone who flew,
worked on, worked with,
or has a high admiration
for the great little fighter"**



If you give us your name and address, you will receive the A-37 "Reunion" Association newsletter FREE for a year. Why not give it a try.

For more information, log on to www.A-37.org or contact Ollie Maier at 512-353-7432 or OMaier@SWT.edu



A/B/RB-26 REUNION

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

Reunion October 4-7 2007 in Ft. Walton Beach, Fl. Farmgate, 1st Air Commando Sqdn, Big Eagle, Nimrods, Panama, et al.

See **REUNION** pg. 28

AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION 2007 BALLOT

VICE PRESIDENT (VOTE FOR ONE)

() Write in _____

BOARD (VOTE FOR FOUR)

() JIM BINNICKER

Former Chief Master Sergeant (#9) of the USAF, current president and CEO of the AF Enlisted Widows Home. Anxious to get involved with the ACA. Served in Taiwan, and Vietnam as Operations NCOIC with the 22 TASS. Selected for the 33-year extended tenure program.

() TOM BRADLEY

Previous board member. Played a key role in the development of the ACA building. Anxious to get involved again in the ACA. Special Ops experience from 1975-1992 including Commander of 7th SOS, assignments in 1st SOW, 23 AF, and AFSOC.

() DAVID HARRINGTON

Incumbent board member, anxious to continue to serve. ACA representative on the Hurlburt Air Park Committee and volunteer at the Eglin Museum. Served with the 1st Air Commando Group, 21st TASS, Waterpump, and as a Swamp Rat instructor.

() BOB POWELL

Previous board member. Anxious to get involved with the ACA again. UH-1F helicopter pilot attached to the 4408th at Hurlburt Field training folks for the 20th SOS. Jolly Green pilot at NKP.

() TED SAUNDERS

Incumbent board member, anxious to continue to serve. Also an active member of the helicopter association. Instrumental in establishing the ACA email notification system. Served in the 20th and 16th SOS, and 174th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) – helicopter maintenance/sensor operator.

() Write in _____

() Write in _____

() Write in _____

() Write in _____

PLEASE GIVE MY PROXY TO:

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

NAME: _____

ACA # _____

PLEASE RETURN NTL 1 OCT 07.

The Next Time Someone Needs You

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man.

She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened. Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack. He dimly saw the young uniformed Marine standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand.

The Marine wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement.

The nurse brought a chair so that the Marine could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young Marine sat there in the poorly lighted ward, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength.

Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Marine move away and rest awhile. He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Marine was oblivious of her and of the night noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the night staff members exchanging greetings, the cries and moans of the other patients. Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words.

The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night. Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Marine released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited.

Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Marine interrupted her. "Who was that man?" he asked. The nurse was startled, "He was your father," she answered.

"No, he wasn't," the Marine replied. "I never saw him before in my life." The nurse asked, "Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

The Marine said, "I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed."

The next time someone needs you ... just be there.
Stay.

Reunion

Continued from page 25



Crews, both air and ground, family and friends are invited. If you are not on our mailing list, have

been off the planet or otherwise overlooked please contact us for details:

Gary Pflughaupt (501) 835-5162

The26reunion@sbcglobal.net

Tom Smith, email:

tsmith001@ec.rr.com

John Sodergren, email:

jcsod@earthlink.net

Rossel Report

SUB DURAL HEMATOMA OPERATIONS

I want to thank everyone who wrote, called me and prayed for me on my operation of 10 May where they had to drill two burro holes (dime size using a vacuum drill) in my head to drain blood from my brain caused by someone rushing in my office at work and accidentally hitting my head with the door. A titanium plug was put into the two holes and the skin was overlapped to grow shut and seal the plugs in. The operation name is above. The bill came to over \$105,000 thank God for Medicare and TriCare for life. I am in recovery mode right now and I will be at the reunion this year - wouldn't miss it. Gene.

GENERAL GIAP MEMOIRS

The USA dropped more ordinance during "Rolling Thunder" than all the previous wars combined.

"What we still don't understand is why you Americans stopped the bombing of Hanoi. You had us on the ropes. If you had pressed us a little harder, just for another day or two, we were ready to surrender! It was the same at the battles of TET. You defeated us! We knew it, and we thought you knew it. But we were elated to notice your media were definitely helping us. They were causing more disruption in America than we could in the battlefields. We were ready to surrender. You had won!" General Vo Nguyen Giap, North Vietnam (memoirs).

Sounds a little familiar today. What a shame.

Sue King-Marschalk, fruufy@charter.net

RAAF AIR MEDALS.

The Secretary of the Air Force has finally blessed off the 116 Air Medals for the RAAF who supported Air Commando/Special Operations units in Vietnam 15 for the FACS and 101 for the 35th Royal Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV). They are at AFPC to get typed up and shipped to the US Embassy in Canberra, Australia. Tentative plans, subject to Australian changes, are to award them during the ANZAC day celebration in April 2008 at the FAC reunion in Australia at this time. One of the person in the AF Secretary office who really helped getting this through is an old SO C-130 pilot Col Douglas Galipeau. He stuck with me to the end getting this through. Two of the RAAF who are members of the ACA who spent years on trying to get this done was Ron Workman and Garry Cooper. Ron was with the 35th RTFV and flew with the 315 AC/SO Wing and has spent over 20 some years trying to get the USAF recognition for his Caribou mates and Garry who was a FAC (Tamale 35) with the 9th ID (His book "Sock it to 'em Baby" about RAAF FACs) spent over 7 years on this project. I visited Australia in 2000 for their memorial service for 40 US Army Air Force warriors who died in a B-17 crash at Mackay in 1943. I thought the Air Medal was a project that needed to be done after meeting Ron and Garry. BG Heinie Aderholt was a great help with his penmanship for the FAC Air Medals. Other ACA members provided both encouragement and support for this project.

FREE VANG PAO

He was created and used by the CIA. The US Government knew

what he was doing for the last 30 years. Many ACA members proudly wear his ring. The AC/SO warriors partner-shipped with him to fight the war and some are luckily to be alive today due to VP's efforts. The 77 years old Hmong General has been shackled and now humiliated with electronic leg irons by the US Government. Where the hell is he going to go. If Father Brouhard can forgive him why can't the US Government do the same.

Gene Rossel

THOMAS LAFRANCE

While going through boxes of my dad's military stuff, I found copies of the Air Commando Assoc rules. He is dead, or I would ask him about it. I was just curious about it. I didn't if he had been a member. We were stationed there when I was young. His name was Thomas LaFrance.

Suzanne Eppley, suzme93@mchsi.com

I will put this in the ACA Newsletter and we'll try and get you some information.

EXPLORE PA HISTORY REQUEST

Hello: I represent the educational, non-profit project Explore Pa history. Currently we are preparing a story on World War II and Pennsylvanians. We have historical marker essay on Col. Philip Cochran in our story and I would like to include the following article in this story. Milt Caniff, Curtis "Fly Leaf" Magazine and the Air Commando Association newsletter, Fall 2000. www.home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1/CochranLtr.htm. Proper credit will be given to the Air Commando Association both directly underneath the article and in the story credits as well. May we have permission to use this article in our story?

Marie Brown Wilson. Explore PA history Project

www.ExplorePAhistory.com, Partnership of Pennsylvania

Historical and Museum Commission and WITF, Inc., the non-profit public broadcasting organization representing the eight stations of the Pennsylvania Public Television. Work and fax #: 910 253-8411.

Thanks for the email and interest of using some of our history. You can use it.

MOVIE CRITICISM

The Mel Gibson movie Air America is an insult to anyone who worked for Air America. 99% BS! They could have made a history, which they really did NOT. They could have made a farce, which they really did not. Some of the details. The pilots were all in uniform by the time the Porters arrived on the scene in 1965. Actually they were in uniform before I arrived in April 1964. Some pilots moved from helicopter to fixed wing but they did NOT fly helicopters AND fixed wing. Pilots were assigned to one or the other, PERIOD. Most of the flying scenes were BS. One scene where a Porter lands on a ridge line strip is the only really true picture of what we did in Laos. I just hate the movie for the way it portrayed Air America and it's personnel, that is my personal opinion.

Rosset

Continued from page 29

Les Strouse former Air Commando and Air America pilot--Professional Pilot (Ret)/AC and Air America
Too lazy to work Too nervous to steal, loongles@gmail.com

Thanks for this Les.

ADMIRAL TAKES HELM OF SPECIAL OPS COMMAND

by Jim Garamone, American Forces Press Service

TAMPA, Fla. (AFPN) -- Adm. Eric T. Olson became the first Navy SEAL to command U.S. Special Operations Command during a ceremony here July 9.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates presided as Admiral Olson assumed command from Army Gen. Bryan Brown. General Brown had led the command since September 2003. Two of the more conspicuous accomplishments during that time were assuming new missions in the war on terror and assimilating Marine forces into the command. Secretary Gates called Admiral Olson "a true warrior" and a legend in the special operations community. In 1993, Admiral Olson, then a Navy commander, fought street by street through Mogadishu, Somalia, leading a ground convoy to fellow special operators surrounded by thousands of enemy. Admiral Olson is the first Navy SEAL to wear three stars, and now four stars.

JUST CHECKING IN

Don Barbieri, bricklin51@optonline.net, New York
15th. A.C.W 9th. Air Commando Sq. Nha Trang 67-68

Thanks for the email.

EC-47 CREW DOG

I was crew dog (backender) on the EC-47 flying out of Nha Trang from Aug 66 to Aug 67. We nailed the little sob's a many a time - damn shame politics got in the way.
George Brune, Macon, Ga, gbrune@cox.net

Thanks for the email, and for nailing the SOB's.

GOOD WEB PAGE GANG!

Just a few of the USAF Museum sites I can't enter. No problem. Nice and cool up here in Alaska and I miss the heat there in Florida. Hope to be at a future reunion someday soon. ACA Member L1259
Daniel A. d'Errico, danderrico@yahoo.com

Thanks and I will check it out. What are you doing in Alaska?

LOOKING FOR INFO ON MY FATHER

Is there anyone who knew my father in Vietnam, his name was LTC Edwin P. Leonard and he flew C-123's with the 310th Air Commando Squadron.
SMSGT Richard J. Leonard, pwcpig116@verizon.net

I will put this in the ACA Newsletter and someone should recognize the name.

I WANT TO BECOME AN ACA MEMBER

I am interested in becoming an associate member. I enlisted in 1971 and signed up to become a CCT. Unfortunately the war ended and they were releasing some of us to downsize. I never had the chance to become a CCT. Now 25 years later, I would at least like to help support the group. Thanks, Alain Rech, acr@open.org

I will send you an application

LOOKING FOR INFO ON PARARESCUE

Ryan Dehrone, dehrone@usa.net, Palmerton, PA
Would you please send me info.

I will put this in the ACA Newsletter and some PJ members will probably get with you.

JUST CHECKING OUT THE WEBSITE

Joined the Air Commando's at Hurlburt in the late summer of 1962, and was assigned to the T-28 north flight line until 1967, when McNamara decided to build a electronic fence and gave me a set of order, returning me to the regulars and back to South East Asia again. Had the honor to serve with Det 3 & in 1963 and Det 6 in 1964. Track ed down information on the ACA from the V.F.W. Mag. reunion page, last year and joined. Hope to attend a future reunion.
Lemuel J. Hunt, lhunt76@voyager.net, 7110 Lawrence Hwy, Vermontville Mi. 49096-9533

Thanks for the email. This will be put in the ACA Newsletter.

JUST SAYING HI

David Krebs, dkrebs@destin.net, Destin, Fl.
Air Commando 63-66, Air America 66-72. Good looking page keep up the good work

Thanks for the email.

"BRIGHT LIGHT" RAID

My father is currently, MIA...Captain Carl E. Jackson USAF 12th Det. MACV-SOG Special Activities Squadron 1st flight detachment would like to locate any members of this group would like any and all photos of C-123 aircraft. Would like to know any members involved in a "bright light" raid that took place on December 30, 1966.
Alan Jackson , skyjacks@aol.com, Shreveport, LA.

Thanks for the email. This will be put in the ACA Newsletter.

LOOKING FOR INFO ON BOOKS

In reading several books about Air Force Special Operations a

Rosset

Continued from page 30

multi-volume unit history of the 56th S.O.W. is listed as a reference source. I would like to buy these books. Do you know where they are for sale. Jean Fallon is a longtime family friend. My uncle is Lt. Col. Frank Cannon USAF (Ret.); he was squadron commander of the 310th S.O.S. from 1968-1969. He lives in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Although I was too young to have served in the Vietnam War, are associate memberships available in the Air Commando Association? Thank-you for the time involved in processing my requests.

William M. Gardner, WilliamGardner@ARCH2.NARA.Gov, Alexandria, VA

Thanks for the email. This is from an ACA member which may help out. This is a good source of cheap books especially military and air commando spec ops

www.biblio.com/browse_books/catalog/140902/114.html

LIKE THIS SITE

A lot of information about the U.S. Air Commando's. As a para-trooper/pathfinder I'm very interested in all items concerning airborne. Cpt Arie H. Kabbedijk RNLA, bornbeek@pi.net, Netherlands

Thanks for the email.

EXCEPTIONAL WEBSITE

I have been a member in the past and would still like to be, You have done an exceptional job on your web site, you should all feel very praised on this site and structure. God Bless All-- Col C.Griffith USA.RET, cadecha@aol.com

Thanks for the email and appreciate your comments from our sister service.

JUST CHECKING IN

Life member of ACA; served @Hurlburt, England AFB, & Nha Trang w/Air Commando units 1963-1968....an oldie but goodie. Chet Justice, hooschet@aol.com

Chet if this isn't your correct email let me know.

LOOKING FOR EX MEMBERS OF THE 7TH ACS

I was based at Sembach Ger. C-47 crew members. Clarence H Hamilton, wva7979ham@sbcglobal.net, Vacaville CA

We'll put this in the ACA Newsletter.

RICHARD LOVELADY

My father, Richard Lovelady, passed away in Nov 03. He had never talked about his experience in Vietnam. In sorting through his materials I read of his awards for service in Vietnam and letters of recommendation and was very proud. I was glad to see his name listed with

the Spooky crews.

Charles Lovelady, chucklovelady@juno.com, SLC, Utah

Thanks for the email.

YOU IMPRESS ME GENE

Take this from an old ARMA guy, this is a fantastic web site, so much info, you can find almost all you wanted to know about SEA. You impress me Gene. Of course, anyone who can get the madam of the White Rose to sponsor our bowling team, has to have his ducks in order. Tommy A Odiorne (O.D.), odiorneta@charter.net, Stockbridge, Ga.

Please OD, don't let all my dark secrets out.

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP

My father was an AC with Spooky from 66-67. I am a 20 year vet with the USAF and will be retiring in June 2007. I was looking for an AC Bush Hat to get him for Father's Day when I found your site. Now I want to get him a lifetime membership with ACA (he doesn't know about this site). I will call Mary in the morning to see if I can do this for him as a surprise. Thanks to all of you for serving.

Russ Leatherman, leathermanruss@hotmail.com, Moody AFB, GA

Go to www.specialoperations.net and look for the country store.

I LIKE THE ADDITIONS TO THE WEB SITE

Plus the fact that it seems to be updated more often. Keep up the good work and I hope to see my fellow Spookies at this year's reunion. rickertw@open.org, Dallas, OR

EXCELLENT WEBSITE!

Boon, admin@shadowspear.com, ShadowSpear Special Operations, www.shadowspear.com

CHECKING OUT THE WEBSITE

A military historian & historic aviation archaeologist who is always looking for information

Thomas Jennings, tjennings@pta-crm.com

Thanks, be sure you use some of our history in any of your writing.

MEMBER OF THE 4TH S.O.S

I am a former member of the 4th S.O.S., Det. 1, Da Nang AF. I was the Loadmaster assigned to Col. McKenzie's crew. Looking for other crew members. If you see this posting, drop me an e-mail.

Michael Porche, mdp9195@aol.com, Bowie, MD

We'll put this in the ACA Newsletter.

THE RESCUE OF STREETCAR 304

Since a former "Air Commando" (Bill Palank) is featured in my new book, "THE RESCUE OF STREETCAR 304---A Navy Pilot's

See **ROSSEL** pg. 33



Keskiviikko 27.6.2007



Eläköön etämien rikkaus.

ETELÄ-POHJANMAA

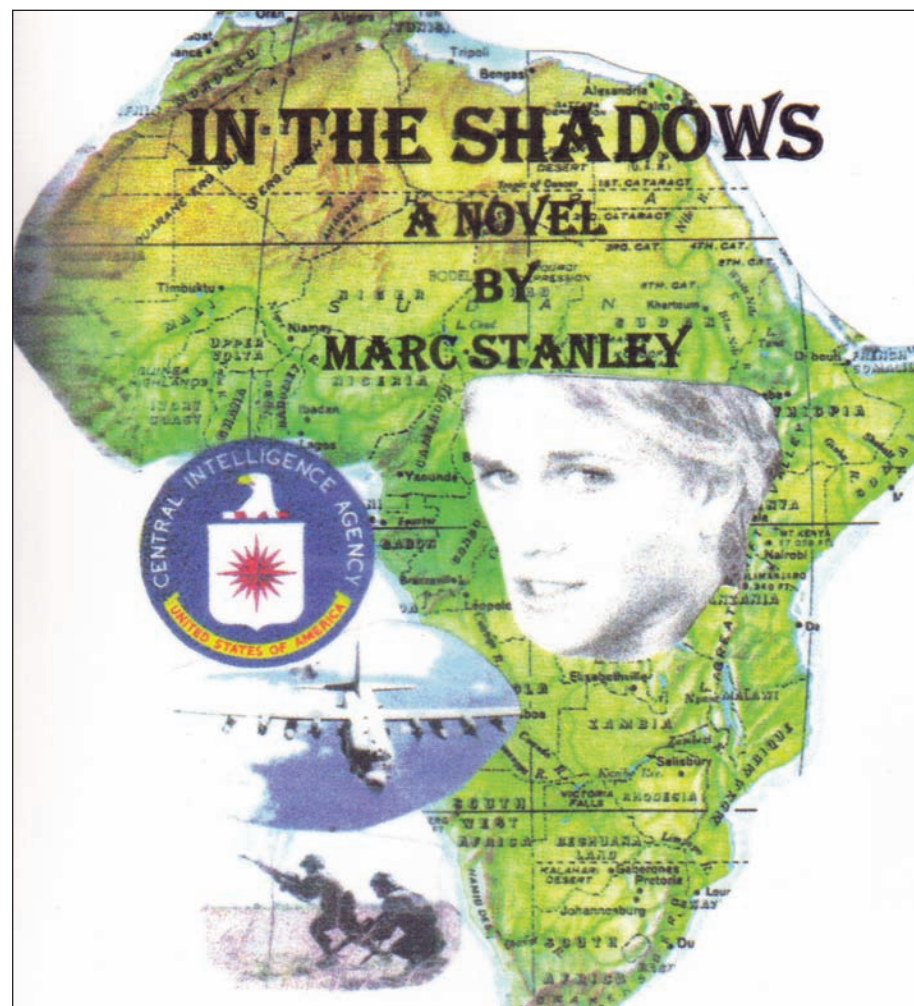
Seinäjokelainen Jari Salo kutsuttiin Air Commandojen kunniajäseneksi



UUVI. Jari Salo esittelee Air Commandoilta jäsenyytensä myötä saamaansa Korean sodan lentäjän kauhuvia.

We often hear of the negative feelings toward our country in Europe and else where. Thankfully this is not a universal sentiment.

This is Jari Salo of Soumi Finland. Jari is a Finish historian with the Finish Guild. Jari has done extensive research on special operations. He has been instrumental in establishing a memorial to honor Maj. Larry Thorne a Finish hero who fought the Soviets in World War II and then emigrated to the United States and joined the U.S.military to continue his opposition to the communists. He was a much decorated Viet Nam war hero who was killed fighting in Laos. He is now buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Jari has made frequent contact with Air Commando personnel during his research. He is fluent in English and very knowledgeable on American customs and history. As you can see from the picture we have a valuable friend in Finland.



In The Shadows

By Marc Stanley

Melissa Lee, physically diminutive but large in character and mental toughness, commits herself to the nation's fight against terrorism. Her core values of integrity, dogged determination, patriotism, have been groomed by loving parents; her physical strength honed on the family thoroughbred racehorse farm. A university education gives depth to an innate compassion for others, and provides her with the historical context of human conflict. In the year 2009, following college graduation, Melissa joins the CIA. Circumstances drive an early covert assignment to develop intelligence on a terrorist operation deep in Africa. While reconnoitering suspected terrorist activity, she is taken captive. Alerted to her abduction, the U.S. undertakes a daring rescue mission. Its outcome is at risk as events challenge the courage, skills, and unique capabilities of those human and technical national assets engaged in the mission.

About the Author

Marc Stanley is the pen name of Marc S. Barthello, Jr. Retired, after 31 years in the U.S. Air Force and 14 as a corporate executive, he and his wife Mary live in rural Maryland. Parents of four daughters (one deceased) and one son, they have eight grandchildren.

"Colonel Marc Barthello is a member of the ACA #1048. He is a Vietnam veteran and a former squadron commander at Hurlburt Field. He is a personal friend of mine and he has written an interesting novel. It is available on www.amazon.com."

Sam



Rossel

Continued from page 31

Forty Hours on the Run in Laos", is available in all book stores, or on-line at www.amazon.com/books.

Kenny Fields, shirfields@adelphia.net

Thanks for recognizing an old Air commando and I will put this in the ACA Newsletter.

FORMER TALON MEMBERS

Sir, The 15th SOS will soon be holding an informal combat dining-in which we hope to focus on our Talon history. Right now we are still in the planning stages, but in addition to trying to find a place to hold it, we are trying to contact any former Talon members who may have been with the 15th SOS in Vietnam and may still be in the local area. We would like to invite them to this shindig to tell their story to our young squadron so we they help tie our heritage to our present and our future; plus just hang out and hoist a few with some current Talon folks. Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated.

Duke Newton, MSgt Duke Newton, 15 SOS Operations Superintendent Hurlburt Fld, FL, 850- 579-3006, Harold.Newton@Hurlburt.af.mil

We'll try to help.

THANKS FOR YOUR "MEMORIES"

WELL DONE!!! Please update your address list with my new e-mail. MAL41@embarqmail.com . . . and retransmit to all ACA.

All of my MAAG support work was in Latin America, but your piece on Laos brought back LOTS of memories. It's a totally different world, and you're right, it really hurts while you're drawing "friendly fire" ...although many of our SEA missions had Top Secret diplomatic "accommodations."

Best to 'ya, Maury Lange, mal41@embarqmail.com

Thanks for the email and we'll change your email address.

MEMORIES OF LAOS

Gene, pretty good read. Parts seemed like yesterday, but how did you remember all those names? I was there twice (65 & 69/70) so I have double the confusion factor. You have caused my mind to flood with memories, and all I can think of to say is how lucky we are to have been a part of that operation. Cheers Bill Keeler, bkeeler041@cox.net

Thanks Bill. I didn't put everything in it and there was some black material I left out.

HEY FELLOW DET 207 GRADS

Just wanted to say farewell! I will be separating after 8 years of service. I start terminal leave this weekend. I have had fun flying CSAR for over 5 years but I am ready for a change. I have job interviews over the next few months, so, I do not know where I will be going. I hope everyone is doing well!

Capt Tim Crainick, Cell 229-834-4510, Crazyv6@gmail.com

Thanks for the email.

7TH SOS REUNION

Being a new member in the Air Commando Association I visited your web site and noticed the reference to the 7TH SOS reunion. I was unable to open that particular area to get additional information. Any information you could forward to me would be greatly appreciated. The following is a little background on me. Upon my arrival at Hurlburt field in 1963 I was assigned to work on B-26B aircraft as an assistant crew chief on a/c 44-34652 eight gun nose. Some of us volunteered to deploy to Sembach AFB Germany in the newly formed 7 ACS in 1964. Shortly after our arrival in Germany I was afforded the opportunity to cross train into the Loadmaster career field and flew C-47/C-123 counterinsurgency operations until my departure in 1967. In 1970 I was selected to serve in the 39th ARRS, RVN I remained in Rescue until my retirement in 1978, flying on HC-130 H/N/P aircraft. My last assignment was as the Chief Loadmaster for Air Rescue and Recovery Service, Rescue HQ Scott AFB. IL. I discovered the 7th SOS shoulder patch on your site, it brought back a lot of memories. I submitted the original design for that patch during a contest held in the squadron in 1964; won and my design was adopted I was granted a three day pass as a reward. Is there a current listing of enlisted association members available for review? Thanks for all your Staffs Efforts.

Al Stone, Facility Captain, Design Standards and Review Services, Office of Facilities Management, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Alfred.Stone@cdcr.ca.gov, 916-322-8508 / Fax 916-322-0887

Thanks for the email and I will try and see what the problem is.

LIMBAUGH AN AIR COMMANDO IN WWII

How many of you knew that Rush Limbaugh's father was an Air Commando in WWII?

1. I usually don't publish information unless I have verified it and/or can provide a source. The book I remember the info is from is the WWII Air Commando history that was published by them thru Taylor Publishing of Dallas TX.

2. Rush Limbaugh's father was a fighter pilot in the CBI Theater with the Air Commandos according to what I've found online and what I remember from the book. I will send a scanned copy of the data when I get home if you remind me in case I forget.

Jim McClain, USAF SOF Ret, banzaigsi@comcast.net

Thanks Jim. I never knew this about Limbaugh but years ago I tried to make him an associate member which bombed out.

AC/SO BOOK SOURCE

This is a good source of cheap books especially military and air commando spec ops.

www.biblio.com/browse_books/catalog/140902/114.html

Jim McClain, USAF SOF Ret banzaigsi@comcast.net

Rossel

Continued from page 33

ACA MEMBERSHIP

Is a big thing in Finland and the VP is mentioned in the Finnish Silvet magazine. The new Silvet mag interviewed me concerning me as a member of The ACA. The story mentions Ken Lengfield and Bernard Lukasik. I can send you a copy of the article if you wish.

All the best, Jari Salo, jarisalo@netikka.fi

Thanks Jari. I received the Silvet Magazine and will send it to the ACA Library.

VIENTIANE AT NIGHT

WOW, did that bring back memories, I first met Monty Banks in Bangkok at a bar just off Patpong, he was an interesting guy and had been working with metal for so long that that he had an uncanny feel for thickness, you could cut a deck of cards and he could feel either cut and tell you how many cards were in it. I ran into him again in Vientiane where he owned a Bar, charged a buck for a Heineken. He was a great story teller. I had a friend who was in Vientiane around nine years ago and he told me that the White Rose had been closed about a week before. When I was AOC Commander I arrived at the AOC one morning and there was Lulu with several of her girls informing me that one of my troops had told her that the Ambassador was going to Bangkok and he would be happy to have her ride along. Somehow I didn't think that would float. I didn't try to find out who did it but suggested that a collection be taken up and Lulu and her girls be taken to the civilian terminal where they could ride in comfort on a commercial flight. Lulu was an apparition, she had bright orange hair and reminded me of the cartoon in Playboy of a grandmother. Thankfully they departed before the Ambassador showed up. In fact the Ambassador was not very strait laced and there was more than one party which he attended at which several of the White Rose girls served as waitresses.

Joseph Holden, aceusaf@earthlink.net

Great story which I know that a lot of old Lao hands will get a chuckle out of.

COL PHIL COCHRAN PICTURES

Dear Mr Rossel--Thank you very much, these are truly superb photos, most I've never seen before. Do you happen to have a photo of Col. Cochran's P-51A? If not, it's not a trouble really, but I'm going to ask my publisher for a specially commissioned color profile of Col. Cochran's plane, so a photo to go with would be perfect, Regards, Tom Szlagor, Poland, tomasz.szlagor@kagero.pl,

C-123's

Here is some info on Florida C-123s. Marvin Juhl (321-403-8462) has "Cat House" at Titusville. From what I understand it has some engine problems, but nothing that a little TLC won't cure. It's a K model, still in Nam Camo paint. In Miami Jim and Tony Robinson (305-687-7174, 305-687-3293) have a B model that is airworthy. Paul Vasconi (321 728-3292), also in Titusville, has a K model, but he's still

in the final stages of restoration. Up in Beaver Falls, PA. The Air Heritage Museum Has "Thunder Pig" a B model in Camo paint that, I think, is ready to go. They had engine problems but I think they finally got one out of the overhaul shop that didn't make metal..The Museum number is 724-843-2820..I believe that's it for Florida and the east coast. Jim McClain, USAF SOF Ret banzaigsi@comcast.net,

Thanks for the C-123 information which will be appreciated by those who flew this bird.

VANG PAO

I concur. I do know Vang Pao - having served at 20A in 1971. I worked directly with VP on a couple of projects that was designed to harass the PL - at night - by dropping pallet-loads of 20 pound bombs from C-47. As it turned out, it didn't work because we couldn't get the leverage we needed to get the pallet safely out the door. But I do still have my VP ring - a gift he gave to all departing Air Commandos that supported his war efforts.

Please note the addition of a new, alternate email address below. Sincerely, Gene Adcock, CMSgt, USAF (CCT) Retired, Tactical & Survival Specialties, Inc. (TSSI). gadcock@tacsurv.com

Thanks for the story and I will try to add this to the ACA Newsletter.

CHINO AIRSHOW 2007 NORTH AMERICAN T-28 TROJAN

The T-28 Trojan was built as a replacement to the well-known AT-6 Texan. The Air Force were the first to purchase them. Before long, the Navy and Marine Corps also established interest in these great trainers. Different models would follow with bigger engines in the B model on up. The C model offered an arresting hook for carrier landings. The D model added underwing hard-points to be able to hang a variety of weapons. The D models were used in Southeast Asia for counter-insurgency missions. The French also ordered a number of T-28s and called them the Fennec.

WEBSITE INFO FOR VIETNAM

This url www.cc.gatech.edu/fac/Thomas.Pilsch/Vietnam.html is a VERY comprehensive portal to anything Vietnam related. Robbeloth, Edward L Mr CIV USAF AFSOC/A2S Edward.Robbeloth@Hurlburt.af.mil

Thanks Ed really enjoyed this site.

WOUNDED NCO'S WILL TO FLY REMAINS UNDAUNTED

Then-Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Jumper visits Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie at Wilford Hall Medical Center in 2004 at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie poses stands next to an Air Force special operations MH-53 Pave Low helicopter July 12, 2003, at

See **ROSSEL** pg. 35

Rossel

Continued from page 34

Baghdad International Airport. Sergeant MacKenzie served as a flight engineer on the helicopter and flew low-level, long-range, undetected missions into enemy territory, day or night, in all kinds of weather, to insert, extract and resupply special operations forces.

Tech. Sgt. Christian MacKenzie was a special operations flight engineer on a MH-53 Pave Low helicopter until he was shot down in Iraq April 13, 2004. Despite losing the vision in his left eye, Sergeant MacKenzie continues to serve on active duty in the Air Force as a flight attendant based at Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

SOUTHEAST ASIA VET

S'pose the VN Vet label is too well engrained in the national psyche for change, but the term Southeast Asia Vet would be more realistic, IMHO. As those who've visited VN know, there never was a "Vietnam War". It's called the "American War" that followed their "French War". 'SpyDoc', Doc' Wagner, av8rdoc@yahoo.com

HELICOPTER TRYING TO REFUEL

Comments from an email showing a picture of an H-3 helicopter trying to refuel and then having his pitot tube cut off by rotor blade.

Not a good day ! I refueled "fling-wings", but never saw this.... however, one time while refueling F-4's between El Toro MCAS and Barbers Point NAS, one Phantom driver got too close to our wing, and slack in the hose started a sine-wave dance that broke off his probe right at the fuselage, and it started sucking fuel out of that opening. He later wound up sitting in JP-4 up to his ankles, and just barely made landfall back at El Toro.

Ahhh, memories....Bob H.

Not uncommon problem with H-3s. More than one H-3 had its pitot tubes on top of cockpit cut off by the rotor blades when an unwary pilot tried to make a rapid stop by yanking on the collective with a nose high attitude. Robert Arnau, rra@earthlink.net

Thanks for the information on refueling problems with helicopters.

USEFUL AND INTERESTING LINKS

This is the CIA World Factbook web site.
www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2187rank.html

Viet Myths Conference www.viet-myths.net

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association www.vhpa.org

POW Research Network Japan www.pownetwork.org/bios.htm

POW/MIA Documents www.homepage3.nifty.com/pow-j/e

P.O.W. Network bios www.pownetwork.org/bios.htm#top

Military Order of the Purple Heart Home Page - Combat Wounded

Veterans www.purpleheart.org

Last Firebase POW/MIA Veteran's Vigil www.lastfirebase.com

MACV-SOG www.macvsog.org

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS ASSOCIATION HOME PAGE
www.marauder.org/marauder.htm

STEP, BACK IN TIME - ONE OF THE FIRST ZEROS WE PICKED UP.

Project 914 Archives (Don Miller collection)

This Zero, an A6M2 Model 21, has come to be known as 'Koga's Zero' after its pilot, Flight Petty Officer Tadayoshi Koga. It was the first Zero to fall into the hands of the Allies more or less intact, and was discovered by a patrolling PBY on the island of Akutan in the Aleutians in July of 1942.

On June 4th, 1942 the airplane took part in a raid on Dutch Harbor and was damaged... an oil line had been severed. Koga undoubtedly knew that he probably wouldn't make it back to his carrier, the Ryujo, so decided to make a forced landing on Akutan. The island had been designated as an emergency landing area by the Japs and there was a submarine stationed nearby to pick up downed aircrew. Koga picked a grassy meadow in which to put the airplane down, and lowered his landing gear... a bad decision for which he paid the ultimate price. When the wheels settled onto that 'grassy meadow' he discovered too late that it wasn't as solid as he had thought. It was quite marshy and the wheels dug in, flipping the airplane over onto its back. Koga's wingmen, like all IJN Zero pilots, were under orders to prevent a Zero from falling into enemy hands at all costs. They should have strafed the aircraft, but did not because they were not sure whether Koga had survived the landing or not. So they headed back to the Ryujo, hoping that Koga had survived and would destroy the aircraft himself. Unfortunately for them, and the rest of Japan, Koga's neck had been broken when the airplane flipped over and he stayed there with his plane until a little over a month later when a USN PBY made what is arguably the single most important discovery during the war against Japan.

Bill Chambers, blc11@cox.net

Eugene D. Rossel

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President

Continued from back page

young folks at our functions.

Once again I encourage all to attend this years reunion. The banquet speaker will be Lt. Christine Lukasik who has served in Iraq and Afghanistan - a view from the working level. We also intend to

have a young musical group perform. We like having young folks at our activities. I am surprised when so many of our "local" air commandos choose not to attend. Let's make this reunion a great and enjoyable success.

Cheers, Sam



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President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

special operations missions in B-24s supporting behind the line activities in several European countries. They dropped hundreds of O.S.S. agents and tons of supplies. They lost 25 aircraft and 208 men. They are working with the 1st SOW in an effort to have a plaque mounted in the Air Park - an effort the ACA totally supports. Often, I think of today's America's Air Commandos who are so involved in the current war on terrorism. Most of them fly, maintain, and support the various versions of some of the aircraft in the Air Park, the Predator, and soon the CV-22. I think of the special tactics personnel who look so fit and portray an excellent commando image: combat controllers, combat weathermen, and pararescue folks - real warriors. It is a different time and a different place but once again air commandos are playing a key role in the war on terrorism and making us proud.

In my last President's corner, I mentioned attending the promotion ceremony of Clay McCutchen. Clay was promoted to Maj Gen and not, as I mistakenly mentioned, to Brig Gen. Sorry General.

The ballot for the October 07 election of board members is included in this newsletter. I encourage each of you to vote. This year we have been successful

in providing choice for the board member positions except VP. The special task of the VP is to manage the annual reunions. We need someone who is dedicated, imaginative, and willing to make our reunions special. Any volunteer or suggestion would be appreciated. I hope the "Guess the Presidents" article stimulated some memories. To date, Dee Roberson is the only one who responded. She identified all the presidents correctly except one. I thought there would be more interest.

Recently, I attended the farewell dinner for Colonel and Mrs. Brozenick and the change of command ceremony. The colonel has been selected for promotion and will be assigned to the Pentagon. The Brozenicks have been gracious supporters of the ACA and we will miss them. The accomplishments of the wing under the leadership of Colonel Brozenick are overwhelming. The ACA sincerely welcomes Colonel Webb, the new commander of the 1st SOW, and wishes him continued success.

In another effort to promote the ACA, I gave a briefing at the Wing Leadership School. We now have a "company" brief using PowerPoint. Although these potential future leaders were attentive, I am not sure they were very interested. As many of you know, it is

difficult to get the active duty folks involved. I understand the reasons and am not concerned. Our membership remains in good shape. I do wish we could find an active duty member who is going to retire in this area and have that person as a board member or VP. Perhaps that would be a good step in ensuring a longer future for our great association.

Our 4th of July Social was the best ever. Well over 100 folks attended and enjoyed a truly outstanding BBQ thanks to Hap Lutz, Joyce Harrington, Bim Barker and his friend Damon, Dee Roberson and the decorating crew, and Mr. T and his staff. Bim's ribs were as good as they could be. We presented a plaque to member Bob Trainor in appreciation of his many years of service in our hospitality room during the reunion. He has been Dick Geron's right hand man and has been a tireless worker in providing the refreshments. Thanks for all you do Bob.

We welcomed member Lt. Christine Lukasik who just returned from a six-month tour in the war zone. Also at the social were Ed Horton, a Doolittle raider, three EOD young men who were guests of Bob White, and MG Secord's grandson who is Ranger. It is always great to have some