



AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

February 2008

Temple Craig Moore Sr. Passed Away

*Donations sent to the ACA
on behalf of the China-
Burma-India Veteran*

LT/Gen Temple Craig Moore, Sr. (RET), 97, of Roanoke, VA passed away on November 13, 2007.

After attending VPI, managing his families insurance business, and working for General Motors, he volunteered for the U.S. Army in 1942. After graduating from OTS as a 2nd Lt., he served as an Intelligence Officer for the 10th Fighter Squadron, 50th Fighter Group. He then volunteered for the First Air

See **TEMPLE** pg. 3

Lt Gen Wooley Praises AFSOC and Its Bold Warriors

AIR COMMANDOS,

As I look back on the last 3 years I've spent at AFSOC I wanted to tell you how proud I've been to be your commander. With my active duty career coming to a close I think of the thousands of great Americans I've been blessed to work with over the past 35 years - and you are among the finest people in the Air Force. It's been an incredible honor to serve with you.

When you took the oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States, you accepted the possibility that you may be called upon to defend freedom with your life. Because our special operations mission is uniquely suited to the long war combating terrorism we find ourselves at AFSOC being called on time and again to go the extra mile - and put ourselves in harm's way in service to our great country. You're answering that call with tremendous courage and professionalism.

It's truly astounding to look back at everything we've accomplished in the last couple of years, everything from the dramatic expansion of our capability to our lethal effects on the battlefield. None of it would have been possible without the outstanding work you put in day in and day out and



Lt. Gen Michael W. Wooley

the sacrifices you make to keep our country the strongest in the world.

Our aircrew, Battlefield Airman, maintainers, loggies, medical, intel, comm. and admin personnel - active duty, civilians and contractors - are all doing a phenomenal job performing our mission. So too are the magnificent men and women serving in our Guard and Reserve units, and I'd like to especially thank you for your many contributions to special operations. Whether at home or deployed, people throughout this command continue to perform heroically - making our world safer, freer and America stronger.

Every day we're becoming more capable simply through your bottom-up initiative and innovation toward the way we do business - the hallmarks of an Air Commando. Whether it's improving our ISR and operational TTPs or finding more efficient ways to maintain and support our aging fleet and bring new aircraft online, our Air Commando spirit is going strong.

We were able to stand up squadrons for AFSOC's first-ever CV-22s, MC-130Ws, U-28As and MQ-1 Predators, as well as stand up the 11th Intelligence Squadron to process, exploit and disseminate intelligence from the Predator. Meanwhile, we've been working to double the strength of our non-standard aviation and our aviation foreign internal defense capabilities as well as expand SOF lift. And thanks to the innovation resident here in AFSOC our Battlefield Airmen have better technology than ever to bring to the fight - including lighter equipment and more advanced unmanned aerial vehicles.

We recently added Cannon AFB into our command, and I was delighted to welcome Cannon personnel into our fold during the 27th Wing Re-designation.

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ACA Newsletter

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Editorial:

The Miracle of the Army-Navy Game

Every year, something miraculous happens the first Saturday in December the Army-Navy game. It is one of the most fabled and long-standing rivalries in American athletics. Navy Midshipmen and Army Cadets spend their entire four years of college saying "Beat Army" or "Beat Navy" dozens of times a day. In the weeks leading up to the contest both Academies wage mock war against each other with pranks, commando raids and high jinx. This year a squad of Army Cadets-turned-Special-Forces sneaked from West Point to Annapolis to kidnap Navy mascot, Bill the Goat, then made a hostage video and sent it around the world on YouTube. The day before the game, each Academy sends a game ball hundreds of miles, tucked under the arms of Cadet and Midshipmen marathon runners. On game day the entire Army Corps of Cadets and Navy Brigade of Midshipmen traveled to a neutral city for the battle.

Not only is the Army-Navy game one of the oldest college football competitions in the nation, in many ways it is one of the best. It's not that the football is great, because it's usually not. The young men who play for Army or Navy weren't recruited by the top university teams. They're too small or too light. They aren't semi-professional football stars, living, eating and studying apart from their college classmates. The men who play at West Point or Annapolis major in physics or electrical engineering and spend more time doing homework and marching in drills than at football practice. When they graduate they won't be drafted by the NFL. It is the last organized football game most of them will ever play. In a few months time, they

will be Ensigns standing watch on ships in the Persian Gulf, marine lieutenants flying helicopter reconnaissance missions in Afghanistan, and army lieutenants walking the streets of Baghdad.

So why is the Army-Navy game one of the best in college football?

Because it is a metaphor for what is best about America. It shows us that we are at our best when we fight ferociously in the game but afterwards, no matter who wins or who loses, we come together as brothers.

The finest moment of the Army-Navy game comes after the whistle blows.

Last Saturday, Navy won 38-3, in a game that was closer than the final score suggests. At the end, no fans rushed onto the field. Nor did they head for their cars to get ahead of the traffic. They stood at their seats, took off their hats, and put their hands on their hearts. The entire stadium was silent, respectful, alert.

The players don't do war dances or whoops of victory, either. Both teams walk solemnly across the field and met at the 50-yard line. They shook hands and patted the backs of their opponents. They took off their helmets, tucked them under their arms and walked together to Army's side and, shoulder to shoulder sang the Army alma mater to the entire 4000 Corps of Cadets.

Both teams then turned and walked to the Navy stands and sang the Navy Blue and Gold anthem to the 4000 Brigade of Midshipmen. If you looked up at the stadium screens you could see that many of the players had tears in their eyes. If you looked at your neighbors in the stands, they did

too. Because what everyone in that stadium witnessed was the miracle that is America that after the fiercest of contests we can rise above the victory or the defeat and come together as one nation. Regardless of our religion, family heritage or political affiliation, we are first and foremost, Americans. As much as our differences matter to us, our shared patrimony matters more.

Within a few weeks Americans will begin our presidential campaign ritual. The contests will be fiercely fought, sometimes honorably, sometimes not. But politics is not for the faint of heart. There will no doubt be plenty of times the ref should throw a flag on the play, but in politics the only referees are the voters.

When this campaign season is over, the ballots cast and counted, and the victor declared we should all remember the sight of the Army and Navy football players standing shoulder to shoulder on their field of battle, paying homage to their opponents in the shared belief that what matters more than our partisanship is our brotherhood.

Wouldn't it be a miracle if we could follow their example and, after this next election, lay down our rivalries and animosities and suspicions, and realize that we're in this together - and that what is more important than being a Republican or a Democrat is being an American.

This article can be found at www.FamilySecurityMatters.org
Contributing Editor KT McFarland, the author, was a former top Pentagon official in the Reagan Administration and a frequent television and radio commentator on national security issues and foreign affairs.

Gen. Wooley

Continued from page 1

Acquiring our western base that comes with its own range. Melrose Range is a huge accomplishment and a major milestone for special operations that many people worked very hard to achieve.

We've also been focusing on improving our future operations with new generation gunships advanced communication systems on our FC-130s and adding to our arsenal MQ-9 Reapers, a more lethal version of the Predator.

As we've been revolutionizing our capabilities, our operations in theater have never been more demanding or more deadly to those who wish to do us harm. Surely President Bush's speech is truer now than ever: you are the worst nightmare of America's worst enemies. And for those enemies it's a recurring nightmare that repeats every single night Air Commandos are fighting and winning the war on terror.

In fact, by sheer numbers alone our effects on the battlefield are mind numbing to look at. Since 2004 AFSOC flew nearly 17,900 sorties, expended almost 600,000 rounds of ammunition, moved around 33 and a half million pounds of cargo and had a hand in capturing over 5,000 enemies and eliminating over 3,300 more off the face of this earth. And one of those killed just happened to be the United States' number one enemy in Iraq Abu Mosab al-Zarqawi

Nobody goes to war to win medals, but if we look at the number of combat medals as yet another measure of your valor, service and sacrifice you've racked up over a 1,000 including the Air Medal and Air Medal with Valor, Airman's Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star.

Air Commandos deployed worldwide are also tearing down our adversaries not with bullets but by reaching out and winning hearts and minds. They've done this through MEDCAP missions and through our Aviation FID, helping coalition partners become more capable to combat terrorism in their own back yards - in Africa, Asia, South America, Iraq and Afghanistan.

While eliminating America's worst enemies is what we do best, the reason we do it so well is because we are extremely effective at adapting and responding to the unexpected. For those of us stationed at Hurlburt Field, that's exactly what we've had to do in the face of some unexpected weather patterns, namely hurricanes.

Having to pack up and evacuate in the face of Hurricanes Ivan and Dennis, then come back and pick up the pieces after the storms added to the challenges we've been through together during my tenure. But I'm especially proud of what we were able to contribute to recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Katrina's devastation. We flew 12,677 hours, 528 sorties, hauled 52,600 pounds of cargo and saved nearly 4,300 lives. To top that off, AFSOC personnel built camp big enough to house 1,600 relief workers.

We also came to the rescue in the face of man-made adversities during our support of 111-Lebanon, the largest evacuation of our fellow citizens since the Korean War. To ensure the safety of 15,000 Americans from war-torn Lebanon, we flew 778 hours and 200 sorties and delivered over 117,000 pounds of food water and supplies.

In the midst of all of our demanding contingency operations, we still managed to improve in other areas. The most dramatic

improvement was in safety - going from worst to first. On behalf of the command, I had the great pleasure of accepting the Order of Daedalians General Benjamin Foulois Award for Safety. Thank you once again for everything you did to make us the safest command in the Air Force.

Safety wasn't the only area where folks in our command have been recognized for their great work. In the last couple years alone, some of the Air Force's and DoD's most prestigious annual awards have gone to Air Commandos. These include Outstanding Airman of the Year, the ATA Young Leadership Award, NCOA Vanguard Award, The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs Grateful Nation Award, The Dutch Huyser Award, The Cheney Award, AFA Outstanding Air Force Civilian of the Year, and Outstanding DoD Employee with a Disability Award.

In addition, our maintainers won the General Wilbur I. Creech Maintenance Excellence Award; our US Air Force Special Operations School received the Air Force Organizational Excellence Award; and our headquarters Financial Management Directorate was recognized as USSOCOM's Outstanding Financial Management Organization.

With all the great things you are achieving, we're still doing an excellent job in our stewardship of our bases and the care of our people, including families. It's no wonder that Hurlburt Field was a runner up for the DoD installation Excellence Award this year.

In everything you do, you excel. Your hard work - your teamwork - has allowed you to achieve great things for this command the US Air Force and the United States of America.

We are in this fight against ter-

rorism for the long haul, and winning it won't be easy. But I know that if anyone is able to make a tremendous impact in defeating our enemies and defending God's greatest gift to humanity - our freedom - the Air Commandos of Air Force Special Operations are the ones to do it.

It has been an incredible honor and blessing to be a part of what you do every day to serve our great country. May God bless this nation, the United States Air Force and May God bless you and your families.

Sincerely,
MICHAEL W. WOOLEY
Lieutenant General,
USAF, Commander
Department of the Air Force
Headquarters Air Force Special
Operations Command

Temple

Continued from page 1

Commando Group as head of the Intelligence Unit. He was promoted to Captain and served in the China-Burma-India Theater. He received the Bronze Star Medal and Presidential Citation in 1945. He left the service with the rank of Lt. Col. on 4 October 1947.

He was a successful businessman, first president of the Williamson Road Rotary Club, and an active leader in the First Air Commando Reunions. He loved hunting, gardening, and spending time with his many friends.

As a result of Temple's involvement and dedication to commando units, his family suggested donations to the Air Commando Association. We have received \$1,395 from 21 donors all in memory/honor of Temple Craig Moore, Sr., a member of the greatest generation. The ACA is most grateful and a brick in his honor will be placed on the ACA Wall of Fame in the ACA Building.

Membership News



TAPS

In Memory of:

Gordon F. Bradburn
November 2007

Manson L. Grubbs
March 2007

David Harrington
January 2008

Robert Mayo
January 2008

John R. Pattee
October 2007

John J. Stewart
Unknown

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS

Morris Cutler
Jeffery Fisher
Murray C. Harris
Jeffery C. Mathews
William Riedell
Domingo Sanchez Jr
John D. Shields
Richard Tolfa

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Thomas Boitano
Scott T. Yeatman

CONVERTED TO LIFE

Brian A. Johnson
Charles R. Thompson

LOST MEMBERS

Ruby L. Barton
Eugene V. Becker
Lonnie W. Bryson
Cecelia Ortiz
Dorothy P. Pratt

FOUND MEMBER

Richard G. Schweikhart
2498 Harvest Valley
Elgin, IL 60124

ON THE MOVE

Raymond P. Benkosky
905 Cayman West
Venice, FL 34285

Michael G. Brennan
11855 SW Center St #116
Beaverton, OR 97005

Jessica A. Clark
220 Meals Dr
Carlisle, PA 17015

Terry F. Clark
220 Meals Dr
Carlisle, PA 17015

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1624 Donavan Ridge
Kennesaw, GA 30152

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PO Box 1167
Santa Rosa Bch, FL 32459

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Pensacola, FL 32502

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Lake City, FL 32024

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Novato, CA 94947

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Wyomissing, PA 19610

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Oro Valley, AZ 85737

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Glyndon V. Scott
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Helena, MT 596014

R. Timothy Scott
719 Garden Lake Dr
Garden City, SC 29576

Howard J. Steen
28374 S Shore Dr
Starbuck, MN 56381

Kenneth A. Taschner
1406 Baker Place West #14
Frederick, MD 21702

John Roy Weaver
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Las Vegas, NV 89134

Robert W. Weller
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Valley Grande, AL 36701

James F. Yealy
1007 Shalimar Pointe Dr
Shalimar, FL 32579

Russell H. Yoder II
PO Box 2184
Zephyrhills, FL 33539

MY FELLOW AIR COMMANDOS & LADIES,

On Shirley's (Mis Hap) behalf, thank you for all your caring concern as she medically navigates through the residual aftermath from a horrific fall and resultant injuries she sustained on 28 September 2007. This event also triggered a near fatal heart attack. She continues to improve, but is facing a couple of surgeries to complete the process. Your cards, calls, and prayers have all contributed significantly to her present wellness.

Of particular note, many "atta-girls" to Anne Aderholt, Joanne Bourque, Anita Acreman, Sugie Jones, Dee Roberson, and Gloria Doster.

I will continue to keep you apprised in future newsletters and again, thank you my dear friends.

*With admiration and affection,
Hap*

P.S. We mourn the loss of ACA Board Member David Harrington and send our deepest sympathy and condolences to Joyce and family.

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DAVID H. HARRINGTON
1937 - 2008

David H. Harrington, U.S. Air Force retired, left on his last PCS on Jan 20, 2008. He was born on June 4, 1937, in Bingham, NY. He is now free of pain and anxiety after battling cancer for over six years.

Dave enlisted in the Air Force in July 1954. His assignments were F.E. Warren Air Force Base - Instructor, 58th Fighter-Bomber Wing- Osan, Korea, Formosa with C.A.T. on F86F; Chanute AFB - Instructor to implement the B-58 program for 305 Bomb Wing at Grissom AFB; Jungle Jim at Field 9, 4400th CCTS; Fort Bragg - part of Air Commando team monitoring Cuban Communications during the Cuban Crisis; Udorn, Thailand- loadmaster on C-47 for the "Road Runner" at det 6 Water Pump; Vientiane, Laos-Victor Site on T-28's Nha Trang, RVN - 21st TASS as NCOIC Forward Air Control in 2 Corp with 47 sites; also supporting Special Forces for B50 and B52 camps, Davis-Monthan AFB with U-2R and DC130, Osan, Korea and Thailand with U2R and DC130.

David's decorations included two RVN Cross of Gallantry with Palm Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal and he also holds the 404th membership card from the Skunk Works for Aircraft U-2R339. He was awarded a Green Beret in July 1992 for serv-

ice in RVN with 5th Special Forces and is carried on their rolls at Fort Bragg, NC. While on TDY to Korea he went to Taiwan during the Quamory-Matsu Crisis. He was presented with the Badge of Honor by the Taiwan government.

After retirement David served six years in the Indiana Air National Guard. He presented patriotic programs in schools, from kindergarten through high school, on Americanism and Flag Appreciation addressing more than 15,000 students.

David was on the ACA Board of Directors and a member of the VFW, AL 40/8, DAV, SFA, SOA and many others. His special interests were skiing, swimming, sailing, diving and reading.

He is survived by his wife Joyce, brother, Duane; two sons, Lance and Dale; daughter, Dawn Marie; and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his mother, father and one brother.

Visitation was from 1 to 2 p.m. and a memorial service followed at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2, at Emerald Coast Funeral Home in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

No flowers please. Donations can be made to the ACA Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 7, Mary Esther FL; or Covenant Hospice.

TO ALL ACA MEMBERS & FAMILIES

Many heartfelt thanks to all you wonderful, caring ACA members, wives and widows. I will treasure the cards and condolences for many years. Thank you for bringing in the delicious food for the family. It was a blessing.

As David will never leave my heart, neither will you.

I will be working in the ACA Country Store and hope to see many of you at the 2008 reunion.

Joyce Harrington

Chaplain's Remarks

The demographics of our dear Air Commando Association is a wonderful thing. Race, color, religion, ethnicity, sex, and age have blended for each of us since we first took the oath to serve. Whether it was commissioning, enlisting, or responding to a "Greetings" telegram, we each spurred our horses forward.

Those of the "Greatest Generation" will vividly recall the urgency, confusion and military way of doing things. The screening, classification, and assignment process all seemed a blur, and suddenly somebody was trying to kill you!

Of the sixteen million troops who "strapped it on" in World War II, not everyone was blooded, but every man or woman who took our common oath served well and faithfully. Some I.D. Cards said "indefinite," some said "duration of war plus six months." America called upon her finest youth to protect her shores and freedoms.

Each subsequent generation



has been available and able to meet our nation's call to arms. We welcome and salute Korean, Vietnam, Granada, Desert Storm, Afghan/Iraq and every other campaign veteran who defended us.

The Centurion's faith of Christ's time typifies today's veteran. Faith, family, flag are yours to serve.

May the grace of God be with you all.

Howie Pierson
ACA Chaplain
Commando Clean

COMBAT TALON REUNION

**30 May-1 June 2008 in Ft Walton Beach FL
at the Quality Inn Bayside**

Ok troops it is time to exercise your right to travel to FWB for the first ever **World Wide Combat Talon Reunion**. Buff Underwood of 7th Air Commando Society and Lee Hess of SGI have joined forces to make this reunion something to remember and marvel at for years to come!

If you were assigned to any **Combat Talon** organization we are asking you to show up and share your experiences with your fellow Talon bubbas. We will be working hard to have as many active duty Talon troops as possible in attendance.

The full details of the reunion will be posted in the near future. I know you will all want to book your rooms early so here is the address and phone number of the Quality Inn.

Rooms will be held at the reunion rate of \$115.00 per night until 29 April 2008. Make sure you mention that you are attending the Combat Talon Reunion.

**Quality Inn Bayside, 322 Miracle Strip Pkwy
850-275-4300**

Turning for the Troops



After retiring in March, it wasn't long before Rosemary suggested I get at least a part time job to get me out of the house! With woodworking being a hobby of mine, I was fortunate enough to get a job with a company called Woodcraft. They have around 70 or so stores around the country. They deal in high end woodwork-

ing equipment. For me, it was like working in a big boy's toy store.

On Veterans Day weekend every year, Woodcraft supports a "Turn For The Troops" weekend. We schedule volunteers in three hour shifts to actually turn pens that have the body made of wood. All material is donated by Woodcraft. This is done on a wood

lathe.

Last year Woodcraft sent 6003 pens overseas to Afghanistan and Iraq. This year we set a new record of 10,519 pens turned and sent. Each pen had a card with the turners name and sometimes an e-mail address on it. I was very proud to have turned 18 pens myself on my shift.

The following article came out from Woodcraft and I think it would be nice if all our members could get a chance to read it.

If there are any questions, please don't hesitate to call.

Regards,
Fred Nowak
ACA Member



The Woodcraft Veteran's Day Turn for TROOPS Turn-a-thon has produced results that none of us would have expected, with an amazing 10,519 pens being turned and shipped to the Middle East. What an outstanding response! We increased from 6,003 last year which is over a 75% jump!

Most of them shipped out on November 21, and the remainder followed up on November 27. There have already been at least two stores contacted by email or cell phone from soldiers saying "thank you" so we know they arrived at their destination.

The top quantity honors go to Nashville who had 1,689 to con-

tribute to the TROOPS. This was not an accident, but the result of hard work and determination. Back in April when the Congress was squabbling about troop funding, David took the matter to heart and began visiting clubs and making arrangements. Aaron also visited woodworking clubs and gave demonstrations on turning pens. There was a committed customer who turned over 500 pens himself in memory of a local serviceman who had made the ultimate sacrifice and to honor another that had returned with life-changing injuries.

San Carlos took second place with 1,381 pens contributed. Eric had a different approach and worked with local school departments. He also had local Boy Scout troops get involved turning pens. Working with kids in this way has a double benefit of sorts. First of all, we are getting the pens made for the Troops in harm's way which was the reason for this pro-

gram. Secondly, he was making an investment in the future lives of the kids who were involved. They will long remember the opportunity that Eric gave them.

Boise, Idaho was our third location to exceed the 1,000 mark with a contribution of 1,032. When Monte was asked what their secret was, he said, "We asked. Sorry for the short response, but it was as simple as that. We asked and the people said, ok."

Because there were stores breaking the thousand mark, it does not lessen the impact of the normal turn-a-thons. Every single one of the pens and notes represents an opportunity to show compassion and kindness to a soldier who is far away from home at Christmas, staring death in the face every day for the sake of righteousness and freedom. This year, when we sit down to open gifts from under bright and glittering trees, let's take a minute before starting and say a prayer for the guys on the other side of the world - there for us.

We had some of the very creative and well-represented packaging this year. Here are some of the outstanding packages made:

*Evansville, IN made red, white blue and yellow ribbons tied into bows on each package.

*Jacksonville, FL used patriotic fabric that they had sewn into pen cases. Awesome!

*Greenville, SC made pen holding cases of stitched felt fabric.

*Boise, ID found a bucket-load of individual pen boxes.

One customer sent us a package of bullet shell casings that he had gotten engraved with "September 11, 2001" and "God Bless America" asking for help making them into pens. He really wanted them to go to the troops. Between the manager, Betty, the crew of the Parkersburg store, and some of their customers (and Bill Carroll), they were able to get these figured out and completed.

As you may suspect, we are "exceedingly" over budget on these. You should know that Berea contributed 1,000 kits. The balance of the 9,519 have come from Woodcraft and will be replaced even with this kind of a huge response, well beyond our originally committed cap. We just want to thank each and every participant in this year's Turn for TROOPS campaign. God Bless America!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEFINITION OF A VETERAN:

A Veteran - whether Active Duty, Retired, National Guard, or Reserve, is someone who at one point in his or her life wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America" for an amount "up to and including my life." That is Honor of the highest order.

Membership Dues



**If you pay annually (\$20),
please do so now
for 2008 or consider life
membership for \$150.**

Thanks!

Letters

DEAR AIR COMMANDO ASSOCIATION,

Thank you so much for awarding me with the Charles Hicks ACA Scholarship. I am so grateful to you and my grandfather, James Harper, for entering me into this contest. I am working as I attend Brigham Young University in the pre-nursing program to help pay for school. This scholarship will go towards my tuition for next semester, and receiving this scholarship has relieved a lot of stress for myself.

I also want to say, thank you to all of those wonderful men and women who make this scholarship and ones like it possible, it is definitely a great investment into our country's future.

And last, I want to say thanks to all of those men and women who gave their time and their lives in service to our country through the armed forces, they are the ones who have helped make it possible that we retain our sacred freedom. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Heidi Cohen
188 Fugal Hall
Provo, UT 84604

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HELLO HAP,

Been keeping up with all the great work the ACA/MTF has been doing since I'm still a member of the TLCB Assistance Committee although not Chairman. I'm Vice Chairman now and after ten years on the job wanted a chance to have another trained and doing the job. Never know when health issues will prevent anyone of us from doing the job and a replacement is a great back up.

Anyway, long story short; occasionally I've left messages and

also tried to contact Heinie by phone to keep in touch but have not been able to reach him; nor have I had any return phone calls. I know we have been good friends and Nancy and I would like to continue to keep in touch. Please let him know we have not forgotten him and have been trying to reach him. He can reach me at 603-770-5826 most all the time.

Would appreciate keeping in touch with you also and want to thank you and John Grove for great write ups and pictures, brochure and fund raising drive to aid the children of Thailand. Hope to hear from you soon and hope your doing well.

John Sweet
38 SEABROOK VILLAGE
SEABROOK, NH 03874
Member # 2924

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ATTN: JIM BONEY

I would like to join the Air Commando Association and become a part of the team.

I was a member of the Det. 75, Combat Weather Team, at England AFB, later sent to Hurlburt in 1969. I served in Laos in 1967-1968 at Lang Thien, Savanakheth, Pakse, and Attapou. I attended the Swamp Rat course at England AFB, La, and the other courses required at that time and served with the 1st Air Commandos.

I retired in 1995 and now live in Texas. Hope I can join the team, I am enclosing a check for Twenty (\$20.00) dollars for membership.

I would like to impose on you for a favor. Can you check and let me know if the PX handles the Combat Weather Patches, the Combat Weather Badge, and Air Commando patch (Any Time Any Place).

I wish to thank you if you can

help me find the items. Please call me if you wish at (956) 437-5963.

Domingo Sanchez Jr
Ret Tsgt USAF
12 Luis Martinez Ln
Rio Grande City, Tx
78582

Ed Note: Welcome to the ACA. Will check on availability of patches.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

The following obituary is submitted for consideration. It relates to Colonel Gordon F. Bradburn who passed away on Nov 24th of this year. He had served as the Wing Commander of both the 1st Air Commando Wing and the 14th Air Commando Wing during the 1960s.

He enlisted in the Army in December 1941 and was commissioned in the Army Air Corps in 1942. His service career included command of an Air Rescue Squadron in Alaska, Executive Officer of a B-29 Squadron, Adjutant of the 2nd Heavy Bombardment Wing, staff officer at HQ USAF, Chief of Plans and Programs of the Air Command and Staff College, Air Attache' in Taiwan, Vice-Commander of the 314th Troop Carrier Wing, Commander of the 1st Air Commando Wing and the 4410 Combat Crew Training Wing.

In Vietnam, he organized and was the first commander of the 14th Air Commando Wing; which was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. He was next assigned as Chief, Special Warfare Division HQ USAF and then Chief, Global Plans and Policy Division with his last position as Deputy Chief, Middle East, Africa and South Asia Division in the Office of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff.

His military career was punctuated with several historic high points including a rescue effort at the North Pole in the early 1950's; which was later highlighted in Life Magazine and served as the basis for a movie. In 1966 he was shot down in Laos and lived through a dramatic escape and evasion; which culminated his over 300 combat missions during the Vietnam conflict.

He retired in 1970 credited with 30 years of service. His service medals include the Legion of Merit with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross with 1 OLC, the Air Medal with 13 OL's, the Purple Heart, and both Army and Air Force Commendation Medals with clusters. He also earned a Parachutists Badge as well as being a Command Pilot with nearly 6000 flying hours.

We thought certain Air Force personnel might be interested in the fact that he has recently passed away.

We thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Bruce G. Bradburn (son)
The Bradburn Gallery
P O. Box 250253
Atlanta GA 30325
(404) 355-8624
www.bradburngallery.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SEA VETS,

Having previously co-authored a book on the B-26 Invader, I am currently assisting with some research for a book on the T-6 Texan.

The intention is to include photos illustrating the T-6 in the markings of each country it served with,

See **LETTERS** pg. 8

Letters

Continued from page 7

which is proving somewhat difficult. Problem countries include South Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

If anyone can help out with photos of T-6s from these countries in particular, I would sure appreciate hearing from you.

Thank you,
Leif Hellström
Norrskensbacken 13
SE-146 46 Tullinge
Sweden
Email: leif@leifhellstrom.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR SAM:

I recently received the "Community Initiative" brochure spelling out the work of the MTF in Thailand. I am very impressed with this brochure as it so beautifully explains and illustrates the work in progress. It is a tangible explanation of what the MTF is, the purpose and goal of a dedicated group of people who don't seek glory or recompense - but from heartfelt feelings and physical strength - yearn to help others who are less fortunate.

"Col Mac" was very emotional when the Board of Directors came to our house to announce the decision that was made to honor his efforts in the infancy of starting a humanitarian program within the ACA, by affixing his name to the foundation. He died shortly thereafter knowing the work would be on going. He felt very humble to be honored in this way by his colleagues. I am grateful to them.

It is my privilege to contribute to the Foundation and I would like to ask for some extra copies of the brochure to share with friends. Two of my children are active in work among the Thais. Having spent four years there in the 60's we feel a close affinity for the Thai

people. I wish I lived closer so I could share the "hands on" experience. Please convey my warmest regards to all the gang at ACA.

All the best-
Mary Lou McCoskrie
2345 C Via Mariposa W
Laguna Woods, CA 92637

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR AIR COMMANDO ASSOC

I wish to express my utmost gratitude for the scholarship you have awarded me this year. I am currently in the Jerome Fisher Program in Management and Technology at the University of Pennsylvania, earning two undergraduate degrees, one from the Wharton School of Business and the other from the School of Engineering and Applied Science. It is only through scholarships and financial aid that I am able to attend this amazing university and your contribution is immensely helpful. I am so proud of what my grandfather and men like him have done for my country, which makes this scholarship all the more special to me.

Thank you so much.

Derek Ondrusek
11343 30th Cove East
Parrish, FL 34219

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

I've had these manuals in my library since the 1960's, when I acquired them during my stint in the USAF, and they pretty well cover my AF career. Neither of my sons are interested in aviation, historically or otherwise, so when I die the books would probably get tossed in the trash. I'd rather see them available to a museum or whatever, where perhaps someone

could get some use of them. If the ACA museum can provide a home for them, all well and fine. If not, please send them on to someone who can use them.

The T-28-1 and A-26-1 were "liberated" from the 432 AEMS Comm/Nav shop at Udorn RTAFB in 1967 while I was a member of Detachment 1, 606ACS (Waterpump). The C-47 came from the 33rd Air Division (Ft. Lee AFS) flight section while I was assigned there in 1969.

One of these days when I've got some money I'll happily renew my ACA membership.

Robert A. Fogarty
Sgt, USAF
(1961-69)
Email: bob.fogarty@gmail.com

Editor's Note: Robert, thank you for the books, and your membership has been renewed by a generous anonymous member.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOWDY, BIRD DOG DATA

I assume that you took notice of my request for info that was in the Nov 07 issue of the Air Commando Newsletter. I am hoping to locate a copy of the POI and/or documented information concerning the FAC training that was conducted at Hurlburt Field (Aug #9) and Holly Field during the 1960s.

I did locate several FACs that went through the O-1 qualification. They have described the course, but I have not located an official document that describes the training. If you have any specific data concerning the O-1 FAC training, I would like to discuss it with you and obtain a copy of your data.

I found a near "dry hole" when

I visited the HQ SOS History Office in Oct of this year. I visited with BG Aderholt while I was in the FWB area. I also visited with Jim Boney at the ACA office, and he suggested that a notice in the newsletter could help generate contact with someone who might have specific info.

My research concerns a book project that addresses the operational history of the O-1 aircraft while it served in SVN. I have delivered the first draft of the manuscript to the publisher, and I'm currently awaiting a review of the submission.

HOWDY ONCE AGAIN,

Thanks for the "inline comments". If you do come across information dealing with the actual training (classroom and/or O-1 aircraft qualification), please contact me; and I will try to insert it into my manuscript. I turned my first draft into the publisher during the second week of Dec.

Another note; the Air Force (USAF) did not "take over" the O-1 business from the USA. The Army had a total of 11 company/squadron size units in SVN; whereas, the gray flyers had four (the 19th, 20th, 21st 22nd) in SVN and one (the 23rd TASS) that operated out of NKP in Laos. The Army also had twice the number of Bird Dogs then the "boys in blue" (at least two Bird Dog companies in each Corps area vs only one TASS per Corps). The Army's flight crews also did more than the FAC's mission (which we could also do). The O-1 Bird Dog was the perfect aircraft for the Army's direct support observation sorties; and the Army stayed with the Bird Dog versus replacing it with O-2s & OV-10s.

Let me hear back from you, if

See **LETTERS** pg. 9

Letters

Continued from page 8

you have useful and accurate information or data.

Thanks for the response to the request in the ACA Newsletter.

Bob Woolley, USA (Ret)
4007 SW 325th St
Federal Way WA 98023
Email: Bjdbu@aol.com

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JIM, ALL ACA'ERS!

Your card, note and enclosures were welcome. The Lord has continued to reveal purpose and direction in my life. It has taken a lifetime (80) to know there must/will be something better when we go PCS!!

You got my last "blurb" I guess, here's another one.

A clash with next year ACA and AF FAC Memorial Dedication at Colorado Springs, 1-5 Oct. Our ACA may be a week later, please call/advise Jim. (I had committed 2 years ago).

Post the enclosed A3 was application to our newsletter, many qualify (I am its Chaplain also.)

In His grip,
Howie & Gil
145 Oakshade Ln
Novato CA 94945-3432
415-893-1862

Editor's Note: Howie, I am pleased you received my card. There is no scheduling problem, 2008 ACA reunion is Oct 9-12. You are expected to be present. According to Heinie, failure to show could reflect in your next O.E.R.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Enclosed you will find my check in the amount of \$100.00 for a commemorative brick in memo-

ry of my late husband, Howard R. "Bill" Cody who is still listed as KIA-MIA. We have always held onto the hope this designation would change but after 44 years it is becoming more and more hopeless. Our family would like to honor him by having his name placed on the Air Commando Wall of Fame. If there was ever one person who loved flying (maybe besides his son) it was him and he really believed he was doing a worthy job for his country.

Thank you,
Myrna W. Cody
139 Perry St
Gulfport MI 39507

P.S.

I am also enclosing and additional \$20.00 for the A-26 Gorski prints as shown in the November 2007 Air Commander Newsletter.

Note: Requests have been processed, Thank You!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR JIM,

Thank you again for such great photos.

I do hope to come to Florida for "good reasons" and perhaps that will be at the 2008 reunion! I'd love that!

Love Connie
(Geno Valentine's sister)
1915 Mariposa St
Seaside CA 93955

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SAM,

As briefed, the ACA reunion was great. You all plan and execute each event in a 1st class fashion.

Thank you for the trust and confidence in me. I count it a high honor to be our chaplain.
Boney had a few snaps of our

reunion - Hurlburt waitress = 30 years, Wow!

I'll come to serve as ACA chaplain whenever I can. Happy Holidays, Any time - Any place,

Howie Pierson, Commando Clean
ACA Chaplain
145 Oakshade Ln
Novato CA 94945-3432
415-893-1862

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

JIM,

I am writing to thank you for publishing the article about my new book, The Nimrods, in the November 2007 Newsletter. I flew more than 180 combat missions with the A-26 Nimrods in "The Secret War in Laos" in 1967-68. I felt so strongly about the experience that I wrote The Nimrods (published by AuthorHouse in September 2007) to honor the A-26 Nimrod pilots and navigators who flew those intense nighttime missions in Steel Tiger, Barrel Roll, and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail some forty years ago. I also wrote the book to honor the members of their families, and to honor the maintenance and armament personnel, who "flew" with the Nimrods on each and every mission. And importantly, I wrote the book to discuss "lessons learned" in the Vietnam War (and World War II and the Korean War), and to advocate that Americans and our allies apply those lessons learned to the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to the War on Terror.

Thanks to patriots like you, and to organizations like the Air Commando Association, the word is getting out that The Nimrods exists and that it can be purchased at www.authorhouse.com and www.amazon.com. For readers interested in finding out more

about the book, I suggest that they check out the book at books.google.com and amazon.com. Simply type the name of the book in the search function and click on the search button. I would be happy to mail interested readers a signed copy of the book (hardcover for \$25 and paperback for \$22). I would also be happy to correspond with interested readers by email. Thank you for a great newsletter!

Roger D. Graham
Colonel, USAF-Ret.
(770) 419-0703
Email: grahamfivega@aol.com

P.S. After I retired from the U.S. Air Force, I worked for twelve years with Lockheed Martin Corporation as the F-22 Program. I am excited about the F-22 joining our current combat forces. It's an incredible airplane!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR BGEN ADERHOLT

My compliments to Sir! I have just learned that you have a "NEW WIFE" named Anne. Information obtained from latest edition of China Post Poop Sheet (December 2007).

Terribly sorry that we did not have the news earlier. However, please accept our belated congratulations to you, and your new bride. Many, many happy years for your long life ahead.

Ever since my eight month stay in the US Navy Medical Center (Balboa Hospital) in 2002, I am still on the road to a full recovery. I was in a coma for seven weeks. I now have reduced the hospital visits down to once a week, or two. Have been on a cane for over a year now. Recovery is slow, but progressive.

See **LETTERS** pg. 10

Letters

Continued from page 9

As you may already know, if it had not been for my beloved wife Julie, I would be in Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery as she did not give her permission to remove my

life support systems, TWICE. The team of Navy doctors call me the walking miracle.

I am still in the process of completing my "Memoirs" and am

still trying to collect background photos of early life, etc. At 80 years of age, the past "is hard to find"!

Frankly Heinie, I miss the "good old days". My 12 years in the Far east and SEA, are burned forever in my heart. Still have some contacts over there. Took Julie to Okinawa, Bangkok and Hong Kong to see some of my old places. Also visited Singapore, really the best now days.

Julie is from England and a former London Ballet dancer; Follies and Moulon Rouge of Paris, etc., so I had to show her the former "Crown colonies", i.e., Hawaii, Hong Kong, Singapore! Been married for 18 years now, and she is better than ever!

Best regards always, and best wishes for the holidays. Stay healthy,

Jim & Julie Baker
1250 5 AVE #501
CHULA VISTA, CA 91909

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HEY HAP,

I was going through some clippings my mother saved and saw these with some people you may remember.

One article refers to the 60th ARS Itami Japan. A spring off from 61st & 62nd at Stead after the 8th ARS left Colorado Springs and split.

The other of course is at Clark when I was there with Dean, Pipes, Little Joe and Lynn, whose first name I had forgotten. Joe Hall got there shortly before I left.

I miss FWB and all the troops but it is much easier for Kris when I have my bad days, which aren't too many.

Kris and I get out once or twice a week for lunch or brunch which helps cause this is not a five star

chow hall.



Give Shirley my best and tell everyone "Hey" for me.

For now,
George Rosenstrom
Apt 326
10790 Saint Augustine Rd
Jacksonville FL 32257

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR ACA,

We have lost David Harrington, another in a line of Great Commandos. The hope for all of us is that among the young troops that are active today we will find some qualified to fill those boots. Dave will be long remembered and sorely missed.

Fred Platt
Raven 47

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DEAR LT/COL SAMBOGNA,

On behalf of the entire 1st Special Operations Wing, I would like to thank you for your support of Hurlburt Field's Quarterly Awards Breakfast. Without your support the breakfast would not have been a success. Once again, thank you for your continued support of the military in the area.

Marshall B. Webb, Col, USAF
Commander

Robert E. "Bob" Mayo

1935- 2008

Colonel Bob Mayo, US Air Force retired, flew west on his last flight on 29 January 2008 with a destination Heaven. He was born in Washington DC to Ed & Elva Mayo on 8 June 1935.

Bob graduated from The Citadel as an electrical engineer in 1957 and was commissioned in the Air Force. He married the love of his life, Glenda, on Christmas eve that year. He completed fixed wing pilot training and then helicopter pilot training in 1959. He served as a pilot instructor for the South Vietnam Air Force in the early 1960's. His other assignments included Korea, the Pentagon, Quantico Va. Headquarters Tactical Air Command (now Air Combat Command) at Langley VA., plus Reno, NV., Selma, Al. Pennsylvania, and Ft Walton Beach, FL. Bob was selected as the first Commander of the reconstituted 20th Special Operations Squadron in 1976. It was during this time he was instrumental in forming the policies and procedures and training the crews for that famous squadron.

Bob retired as Vice Wing Commander at the 1st Special Operations Wing, Hurlburt Field Fl, on 30 Nov 1983 with 26 years 6 months service, much of it in Special Operations where he held leadership positions at several levels. His numerous awards and decorations include

Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal, AF Commendation Medal, AF Outstanding Unit Award, and Viet Nam Service award to name a few.

After retirement Bob worked for Connelly Engineering of Raleigh NC and then the Eglin AFB engineering support companies of VSE Inc, RMS technologies, Semicor Inc, and Titan Corp.

His career revolved around the helicopter world and his significant contributions to the combat rescue and special operations missions. His life revolved around his family.

He is survived by his wife of 50 years and one month, Glenda of Fort Walton Beach Fl. and his children and grand children. He is survived by a son David Mayo and wife Lauri and their sons Drew and Jared, and a daughter Beth Ann and her husband Bill Tasillo and their daughter Lauren and son Will. He is also survived by a brother George Mayo of California and a sister Camille Nentzer of Orlando, FL.

Bob was a life long Methodist and was a member of the Shalimar United Methodist Church.

Services with Full Military honors were held at the Shalimar United Methodist Church on 2 Feb 2008 with Rev Larry Vyers officiating.

A reception followed in the church. Emerald Coast Funeral home was entrusted with arrangements.

The A/B/RB-26 Reunion

The ACA Newsletter Editor,
Please consider the following article for inclusion in the next ACA Newsletter. You should have the group photo provided by Al Shortt to accompany the article.

Thank you, Jim.

Gary Pflughaupt

The 26 Reunion coordinator



Maury Bourne, Featured Speaker

Nostalgia filled the Hostility Suite like Cordite filled the cockpit after a burst of .50 calibers and the 2007 biannual "26's of the '60's" reunion was underway. It was held in conjunction with the annual ACA reunion October 4-7. Paul Tobey hung his A-26 painting by Harley Copic on the Hostility Suite wall and it was admired by all. The Ho Chi Minh trail was moved back to Laos from its current politically correct location inside the Vietnam borders so no one got lost while telling their stories

The Sunday morning memorial service paid tribute to our lost



"Crazy" Poteet, Paul Marschalk, and Jay Norton

comrades. This years list, read by Paul Marschalk, included John Cook, Calvin Nay, Bob Geurtz,

Earl Richards, and Geno Valentine. After the service, group photographs were taken at the A-26 in the air park. Some how, Al Shortt managed to get the unruly crowd close enough together for some great pictures.

The Sunday evening banquet was well attended with over ninety aircrew, ground crew, family and friends. Several children attended to learn more of their father's experiences and meet their friends. After toasting those absent from our midst, Tom Wickstrom was



Rita and Lee Griffin

The featured speaker, Maury Bourne, brought back memories of the Bien Hoa era. Recalling the design features of the older 26's which brought out the importance of the Navigator and the singing

The A-26 Invader and The Nimrod Crews



inducted into the "Wall of Shame" It was not explained was distracting the pilot when the engines stopped but to do so would probably make one wonder why a woman is in the cockpit in the first place. With Tom's selection, a committee has been formed with Ken Spring, last reunion recipient of this prestigious award. Future selections will be left in their able hands

Don Volger, son of Charlie Volger, gave a presentation on the A-26 Legacy Foundation and the acquisition of an A-26 for restoration.. More on this project and updates can be found at www.A-26legacy.org

of old favorites like "He Stood on the Steeple" delighted the group.

General Aderholt's lovely wife Anne assisted in the drawing for door prizes and did a great job in keeping things moving.



L-R: Unknown, Jessup, Leon Poteet., Tom Wickstrom, Dick Geron, seated in front is Mimi Poteet

Jay Norton, Paul Marschalk, and Leon Poteet entertained the crowd with their unforgettable presentation of "What the Captain Means" (or should that be forgettable?).

The open mic continued the humor and capped the entertain-



ment. Paul Marshalk removed the evidence of the ice bucket torture as usual and after a few closing "Hims" the banquet concluded.

Following the banquet, an ad hoc committee of Nimrods found a volunteer for the 2009 reunion. After he was found hiding under a table, Leon "Crazy" Poteet agreed to head up the activities. He will be assisted by Gary Pflughaupt who will maintain the contact list



Jay Norton on the right

and seek counseling If you move or change e-mail address contact Gary at garypflughaupt@sbc-globlal.net or 15 Cardinal Valley Drive, Sherwood, AR 72120 so you will not be lost.

Our thanks to all who helped make this years reunion a success. The Bien Hoa boys, Tom Smith,

See 26 REUNION pg. 13



BOOK REVIEW: *The Nimrods*

Review by Col. Jimmie H. Butler,
'63 (Ret.)

Nimrods will transport many grads back 40 years to the sights, sounds, and emotions of the Secret War over the Ho Chi Minh Trail. For the uninitiated, Colonel Roger Graham treats readers to a view of what life was like, night-after-night, among a band of heroic and dedicated warriors who flew A-26's during the Vietnam War.

Night combat sorties in Southeast Asia were among the most stressful and dangerous fly-

ing missions. For those who flew only part of a combat tour in the dark, finishing the last night-mission felt almost like getting a ticket home. The Nimrods were night fighters, living their entire tour in a world where flashes of light triggered adrenaline— and lines of tracers flashed up from massed antiaircraft artillery virtually every time a Nimrod attacked. Some readers may wonder if the dangers Graham describes have somehow grown in memory over four decades. My answer to that ques-

tion is “no.”

Graham has chosen a unique approach to telling his story of dangers in the Vietnam War, then coupling lessons-learned to dangers facing America 40 years later. He intertwines his experiences as a professional combat aviator with the personal challenges many of us faced in leaving loved ones behind as we ventured into an unknown future in battlefields half way around the world. He has chosen from his more than 180 combat missions in the A-26 to tell short tales of flights into the dark skies over Laos. Readers will meet many crewmen he flew with as part of the brotherhood of men in combat. In telling us these vignettes, he illustrates what most combat veterans learned long ago: Sometimes the good guys die—and we and their families carry the memories with us the rest of our lives.

The last few weeks of my combat tour as a Forward Air Controller at NKP overlapped Col. Graham's first few weeks. I felt a kinship with the Nimrods, and I know Graham's tributes to his fellow fliers are well deserved. Many Vietnam vets who still enjoy life in America avoided being listed on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall because the bullets with their names on them never arrived in South Vietnam. Many of those bullets were incinerated in fire rained down from the darkness by a Nimrod swooping over a truck-filled Laotian road.

Having experienced a war in which American servicemen and women were undercut by a national media that misled the American people and by ambitious politicians who didn't understand the meaning of duty, honor, country,

Graham talks about the parallels that Vietnam veterans see in today's media and politicians. As I read his list of what Americans need to do today to win this generational War on Terror, I agreed with each item—as most combat veterans would. Unfortunately the list won't convince those who deny that America is faced with such danger. I fear the list is more of a blueprint that a united America finally will apply after the next major attack on American soil kills tens or hundred of thousands.

Graham provides great war stories (and pictures) and a well-based historical perspective on the deadly challenges of today and tomorrow. If you've ever wondered what it was like to fly at night through deadly, flack-filled skies, climb aboard an A-26 under the call sign Nimrod and share Graham's view from the cockpit.

The Nimrods is available at www.amazon.com, and at www.authorhouse.com

Personal insights about the men who flew under the call sign, Nimrod.

During my combat tour in Thailand, the Nimrods squadron lost five of its 12 A-26s and nine brave crewmen. Col.(Ret) James L. McCleskey, '61, was one of only two Nimrods to survive those five losses.

Colonel Graham mentions the loss of two American heroes the morning of Feb. 22, 1967. I still remember that morning. As I approached the Tactical Unit Operations Center to brief for my eleventh combat mission over the Ho Chi Minh Trail, I witnessed sheet-draped stretchers being

See **NIMRODS** pg. 13

THE NIMRODS

A-26 Nimrods and the Secret War in Laos...
Timeless American Courage in Combat

Lessons Learned for the Wars in Iraq and
Afghanistan, and the War on Terror



Written by Roger D. Graham
Colonel, USAF-Retired



Nimrods

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removed from the ambulance and taken into the dispensary. The heroic actions of Capt. Dwight S. Campbell and Capt. Robert L. Scholl helped save the lives of McCleskey and Leonard Scruggs. Thirty years later I dedicated A Certain Brotherhood to Captains.

I remember sharing a few minutes in August 1967 with Nimrod Squadron Commander, Lt Col Bruce Jensen, as I gave him a

ride to what was to have been his next-to-last mission briefing. It turned out to be his last briefing and illustrates that the combat commanders at NKP routinely took the same risks as the rest of us. Less than a week earlier, Maj. Burke Morgan, '61, had gone down on an A-26 in the same area of Northern Laos, and he remained missing for nearly 40 years.

When I flew night missions over the trail, I was very happy whenever an A-26 joined up as we hunted trucks carrying war supplies to the battlefields of South Vietnam. Whenever I had a Nimrod circling in the dark overhead, the bigger convoy we could find, the better. We'd drop the first flare, put a marking rocket near the lead truck, then hold off to the side and watch the Nimrod make pass after pass until all the trucks were burning or had disappeared into the darkness. The Nimrods were the best truck killers in Southeast Asia until the AC-130s became fully operational in the late 1960s.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Lighter Side

AGE SEX

One night an 87 year old woman came home from Bingo to find her 92 year old husband in bed with another woman. She became violent and ended up pushing him off the balcony of their 20th floor assisted living apartment, killing him instantly.

Brought before the court on a charge of murder, the judge asked her if she had anything to say in her defense. She began coolly, yes, your honor, I figured that at 92 if he could have sex...he could fly.

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



"An Air Combat First"
by Keith Woodcock GAVA ASAA GMA
Air America Bell 205 vs Attacking North Vietnamese Air Force An-2 Colt
Captain Theodore H. Moore and Flight Mechanic Glenn R. Woods
12 January 1968 at Lima Site 85, Phou Pha Thi, Laos
Air America Won.



G. R. Woods



President George H. W. Bush signing "An Air Combat First" prints

September 2007 marked the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Central Intelligence Agency. To commemorate the occasion a series of paintings were commissioned to illustrate important milestone moments in that history. For many of those 60 years, CAT and Air America played an historic role. "Earthquake's Final Flight," 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.

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. Email: dan.gamelin@air-america.org

Cost is \$100 plus \$13 for shipping

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

The Air Commando Association Headquarters received a print as a gift in honor of Glenn R. Woods, Flight Mechanic and Shooter in the Huey, who was Killed In Action August 14, 1969 and remains forever buried at Udonthani, Thailand. From Steve Stevens, Marius Burke, Herman Jackson and Judy Porter.

Editor's Note: This amazing story was printed in its entirety in the August 2007 ACA newsletter.

26 Reunion—

Continued from page 11

John Sodergren and Gary Pflughaupt.

Editor's Note:

With the extra pictures of Paul Marschalk the office staff voted on the best looking picture of Paul. See results below:

Paul #1



Paul #2



And the winner is Paul #2 hands down!! Your comments?

The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation Update

By John Grove

What It Takes

The Crew

The packing and shipping of stuff to Honduras is a group effort of many commandos and others. The shipping does not just happen, the loads have to be planned and coordinated and then there is lots of heavy lifting. The planning stages are done by Bless the Children of Clearwater FL and BKA logistics of DC. The coordi-



nation is with Knights of Malts and George Mealer of Pronino. Lots of others have a part of the process.

The packing is a Commando effort, here are a few who helped on the Dec 2007 and Jan 2008 loads; Asa Stackhouse, Jerry Gilbert, Dave Freeman, Lisa McDaniel and her children, Walter and Carrie Heidmous, Pic Ferrell, and the EOD personnel of Eglin AFB.

The loading is a demanding fast paced effort. Loaders include: Jerry Gilbert, Steve Connelly, Bob Smith, Jim Connors, Tommy Hull, Bob White, John Grove, Gene Correll, Dennis Barnett, Craig Dock, Dan Weimer, Bill Vano, Dave Freeman, John Easley and Jeannie Krzan. The loaders also included six, 2 L-T's from the 20th SOS. Nice to have strong young help.

It might seem like we have lots of help but we can always use

more able bodies as we try to clean out our storage areas. Call John Grove to volunteer help.

MTF Christmas

The support folks at your MTF have two great Christmas programs we support. First is the Eglin Airmen's Attic Toy distribution and the other is the Christmas Wish Honduras program of the 1st SOW. Bob White has been the main stay of the Eglin program. He starts the year prior by collecting tons of toys and then about Christmas shopping time in Nov and Dec he has a giant give away for the children of Airmen who can not afford the gifts for their children. This year he distributed nearly 3,000 toys in two days of giving. He already has collected many new toys for the 2008 program.



The Christmas Wish of the 1st SOW had its 15th trip to the orphanages of north central Honduras. This year the wing had prepared over 850 gift boxes for the children. Each year our super star worker from the wing, TSgt Norman Padillacruz, (yes a

Spanish descent man named Norman) gets the names from the orphanages along with the clothing sizes and ages, then the base



squadrons all chip in to buy new gifts. Lots of useful items along with some play items are placed in plastic 20 qt bins for each child. Santa then travels on a C-130 sleigh to the bases near the kids.

Both programs are a great effort from your MTF local laborers and reflect another effort your Air Commandos do to promote our organization.

Winter Clothing

Helping our own

During our ACA general membership meetings several commandos have asked why and how we can support Americans. We have found a way thanks to Frank (helicopter pilot and OV 10 dude) and Penelope Gray and their contacts in Rogersville Tennessee. Frank is a native from that area and has contacts in the United Way and other helpful organizations.

The MTF generates lots of winter clothing from donations of people who move south and adopt the Ft Walton area, never to return to the snow country. The Rogersville area is one of the poorest areas in the US. Frank and Penelope have the contacts and Jim Connors had planned a trip to that area in November. All this came together and we transported about 12,000 pounds of clothing, blankets and other 'stuff' for that

area. It was a great trip until Jim's truck blew a turbo and needed 6 weeks of repairs. John Grove has a much more reliable truck and had to pick up his slack. We made 2 trips and three trailer load deliveries to the area and thanks to Jim he paid for the gas and motel rooms. Great deal for our ACA/MTF. Better deal for Rogersville.

A gracious thank you letter was received from the United Way of Hawkins County Tennessee.

Thailand Initiative

Your ACA/MTF is working hard to support the NKP Thailand area. We have so much more to do. We have for the past year been working with the TLC Brotherhood (Thai Laos Cambodia) by providing funds to buy materials to rebuild schools within 20 kilometers of NKP. Most are one room all grade schools that need lots of repairs and support. The envelope contained in this newsletter explains the program, the needs, and gives you an idea of what we plan for the future with your help. Please review the brochure and donate, any amount will be of great use. If you wish to donate a large sum of say \$2,000 or more we can arrange to have the project named for you just as we have done for 4 other Air Commandos.

Helping the VA

Our local VA nursing home is in Panama City, FL near Tyndall AFB. Our board member Capt Karen Kramer is stationed at the base hospital there. She has made several trips to Ft Walton to pick up the many paperbacks, books, games, puzzles and tapes for delivery to Sims VA Nursing facility. Just another way your MTF is helping Americans.

Bound for Thailand... again

The McCoskrie Threshold Foundation was named after Colonel "Mac" McCoskrie when he passed away. Colonel Mac played a key role in the establishment and functioning of the MTF early on. His wife and family members were so pleased with the naming of the Foundation after their husband and father that they continue to support the MTF with

thousands of dollars. Many of us had the pleasure of meeting most of the family members when they all came to the reunion several years ago when Colonel Mac was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Colonel Mac served as Air Force Attaché with the U.S. Embassy in Thailand and also served as commander of the 56th SOW at NKP. Colonel Mac and Mary Lou's old-

est daughter Maile and her husband Brian Lindley have a special place in their heart for the Thais. The following article in the Newport Beach newspaper explains the humanitarian work Maile and Brian are doing in Thailand. Great folks doing great things.

Sam

a greater risk of becoming involved in the sex-tourism industry instead.

The Lindleys first discovered R35 on a trip to Thailand in early 2006 through International School Bangkok where Maile graduated high school in the '60s. Her father was the Air Force attaché with the United States Embassy at the time.

The couple visited the school last January and returned in July for four months, working around the campus by reading books, organizing the school's disheveled library and more.

They stay in a hotel near the school and finance all aspects of the trip by themselves.

While at home this winter, they've been working hard on creating a yearbook for the students of R35, in addition to planning for the future of equipment and facilities upkeep at the school. They will leave once again next week and plan to return in March.

Maile Lindley said volunteering at R35 has given her and her husband a greater appreciation for the things they have.

Before her last trip, she held a "Taste of Thailand" fundraiser and collected \$11,000 for the school's waste disposal system.

Lindley said people with money often don't understand what life is like without it and, in



Maile Lindley reads to a group of students in the library at R35 school in Ban Bang Sak, Thailand.

Photo COURTESY OF MAILE AND BRIAN LINDLEY

the case of the Thai children, having no money often means they live without dental care, sufficient clothing and a healthy diet.

With the couple's next trip coming up soon, Lindley said she is often asked why she and her husband are going back to volunteer. Her answer is: "Because we can."

"A lot of people would like to do this but can't. A lot of people would do this if they even thought about it, but haven't. I'm very aware of the situation and to not do something would be reprehensi-

ble," she said.

"I don't have to do it all day long, every day. I can come home for Christmas; I can take my kids to Disneyland. I can do the things that work in our culture, but I can also participate in that one."

Did you know?

The Ft Walton library provides the MTF with used books, several have ended up in the ACA library, the others go to the VA hospitals.

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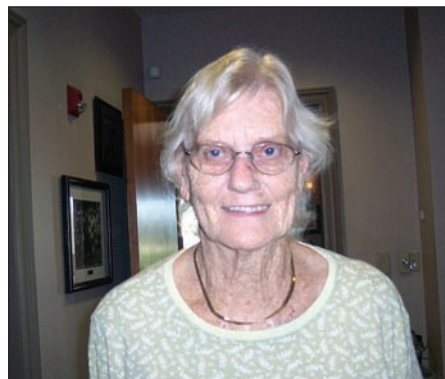
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ACA Christmas Party 2007

February 2008



ACA Country Store

Joyce Harrington, Country Store Manger



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



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



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



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

See the Country Store price list for a full list of items and prices. If you have questions on any of the items please call Joyce Harrington on Wednesdays 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.



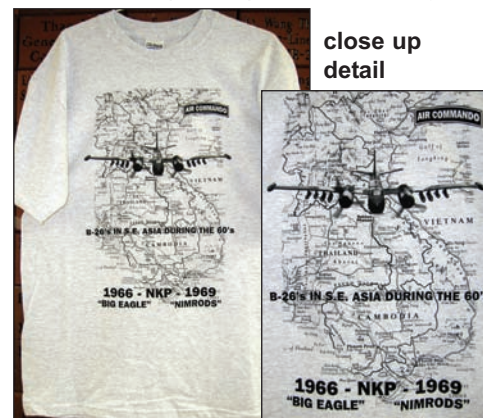
Ball Caps - \$10 (ACA lettering or crest)
Available in Navy, royal & light blue, black, white, gray, denim, camo



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



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



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

close up
detail



Genuine Thai
wallets \$8.00



ACA Decal 4"x5"
2 for \$1.00



Lapel Pin - \$4 (sm/large)



Beer Mugs - \$10



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



Golf Towel - \$8



Window Decal - \$3.00 8" wide



Bumper Sticker - \$2.00



NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /blue



NEW Lic Plate - \$12 /white



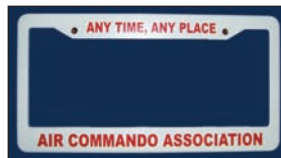
Lic Plate - \$10 /white



Aircraft Lic Plates
Son Tay Raiders - \$10



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



Lic Plate holder- \$4



Aircraft Lic Plates
Nimrod over Laos - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates
A1-H Hobos - \$10



Aircraft Lic Plates
B-26 - \$10



NEW



Gorski Prints of Ho Chi Minh trail -
unframed set for \$20.00 (22"x 28")



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



Travel Cup - \$10

NEW

What Happened to Gene DeBruin?

How Hollywood Robbed an American POW

By Debbie Schlusel

What if your dear brother was Missing In Action while working on behalf of America in a war zone? How would you feel, if Hollywood--adding insult to injury--portrayed your brother as Charles Manson in a widely acclaimed movie?

That's what the makers of "Rescue Dawn" did to a great American.

I picked "Rescue Dawn" as the best movie of 2007. But now that I've learned more, that praise comes with a major asterisk. Actually, with a dark stain.

It's no secret that Hollywood distorts reality. But what the makers of "Rescue Dawn" did to the memory of Eugene "Gene" DeBruin is unforgivable. And an outrage.



In "Rescue Dawn," the story of Navy Pilot Dieter Dengler's escape from a Laotian POW camp, DeBruin is portrayed as a crazy Charles Manson-esque fellow POW. In the movie version, he tries and threatens--at every step--to turn in Dengler and the other POWs to their barbaric Pathet Lao captors.

To make the point, DeBruin is played by actor Jeremy Davies, who played Manson in the TV movie, "Helter Skelter." In the film iteration, Dengler shoots the prison guards and stages the escape, and DeBruin is portrayed as a spaced-out, lazy, uncaring person who fails to do his part and then asks Dengler, "What will I do

now?"

But that's not what happened. And it's not the kind of person Gene DeBruin was. It pains his brother Jerry DeBruin and DeBruin's other family and friends--including the one surviving member of the POW camp escape--to see this fiction, this great defamation of a POW who was actually a hero and is still missing.

Reality's Gene DeBruin did not sabotage Dieter Dengler's escape from Ban Houei Pathet Lao Prison in 1966. He helped plan and implement it. But he heroically stayed behind to care for a sick fellow POW who could not make it. That was his "crime." That was his "Helter Skelter."

The real Gene DeBruin was spoken of highly by Dieter Dengler, the movie's hero. He spoke of DeBruin as a strong leader and peacemaker when differences threatened their escape plan, NOT the man who sabotaged it in the silver screen story. In real life, Pisidhi Indradat--the only living, free survivor of the camp--calls this silver-screen "Charles Manson, "The finest man I have ever met." He believes that Dengler would be appalled by "Rescue Dawn," had he lived to see it.

DeBruin's family and friends repeatedly tried to reach out to "Rescue Dawn" Director Werner Herzog to get the story straight. But they were blown off. Ditto for Indradat, who was actually there. And while Herzog claimed he was loyal to his friend, Dengler's story, his movie is starkly at odds with the Dengler's own words--his letters, his book, "Escape From Laos," and this statements in the

Herzog documentary, "Little Dieter Needs to Fly."

The real story is at www.rescuedawnthetruth.com, a site compiled by the friends and family of Gene DeBruin.

Since Mr. Herzog would not tell the truth, I will. I feel a special responsibility to do so, since I gave such accolades to a film, I now know defamed not only an innocent American POW, but a heroic one.

Gene DeBruin was a Staff Sgt. in the Air Force for four years and obtained his pilot's license. After being honorably discharged and graduating from college, DeBruin ultimately became a smoke jumper and a cargo "kicker" for the CIA's secret airline, "Air America," in Laos. He and his crew were shot down over Laos, while they were delivering rice and buffalo meat to the people there. They were sent to several brutal POW camps, and repeatedly tortured.

DeBruin was shuffled to a fifth prison, where he spent 2.5 years before Dieter Dengler ever arrived. He and fellow prisoners spent that time formulating an escape plan and storing rice in bamboo tubes in preparation. In the movie version, DeBruin is not only against any escape, but it is Dengler who comes up with the idea to store rice in the tubes (and DeBruin who tries to eat it beforehand).

In the movie, DeBruin is cold, callous, and inhumane. In real life, DeBruin taught his cellmates English, shared his blanket with them on cold nights, and shared his food with them.

DeBruin was every bit a part of the attack on the guards and the escape. And by the way, the prison

guards were killed by fellow POW Indradat, NOT Dengler (as in the movie version).

DeBruin was healthy and could have escaped through the jungle with Dengler. But he chose to stay behind to care for Y.C. To, whom he knew was too ill to make it without help. Dieter Dengler, himself, testified that DeBruin shook his hand after the escape, shouting, "See you in the States," and returned to help To. Truthfully depicting that act of courage on-screen would not have taken away from "Rescue Dawn." It would have enhanced it.

As DeBruin's brother, Jerry, points out, it is false to say that only those who successfully escaped the POW camp are heroes. Gene DeBruin was every bit as heroic to give up his chance at freedom to help a sick, helpless fellow POW. Maybe even more so. It is that sacrifice, that humanitarianism that helps make America great, sometimes to our detriment. Dieter Dengler's escape from the POW camp and survival in the Laotian jungle is certainly still heroic. But there was no reason to devalue and defame DeBruin to tell Dengler's story. If Herzog was so intent on twisting events and characters for dramatic purposes, he could have used fake names for fake personas. There is no decent explanation for giving an honorable and decent man--a hero, no less--the undeserved persona of Charles Manson.

Eugene DeBruin is still Missing In Action. If he is still alive, he is 74 years old. His family has not given up on him and wants to bring him home. Photos of him in a Pathet Lao prison and

A story about one of the true Great Men of America



Eddie in France with his SPAD plane- WWI

When the 1st Wing moved to Hamilton -late '69 & '70, I was 1st CAM sqdr CC, when an old story of Capt Eddie came with them, of his Eastern Airlines, preparing to receive their first jet aircraft (1960's, the DC-8's -I think?). His outfitting team were gathered to decide a new aircraft paint scheme, interior outfitting, colors,

carpeting, seats etc, etc. Capt Eddie, suddenly poked his head in the conference room, to ask about progress, and the group leader said all was going well but just the seats were left to be decided on. He asked Eddie what he'd like to see on the new jet's seats. To which Capt Eddie replied, "ASSES" (good focus, always good focus).

Eddie Rickenbacker wrote a superb book by the way, published in 1967, called "His Own Story," and well illustrated. Very well worth reading by all Americans, but especially fighter pilots, young and old alike.

Below is beautiful story about Eddie Rickenbacker that bears telling.

A Beautiful Story

It happens every Friday evening, almost without fail, when the sun resembles a giant orange and is starting to dip into the blue ocean.

Old Ed comes strolling along the beach to his favorite pier. Clutched in his bony hand is a bucket of shrimp.

Ed walks out to the end of the pier, where it seems he almost has the world to himself. The glow of the sun is a golden bronze now. Everybody's gone, except for a few joggers on the beach. Standing out on the end of the pier, Ed is alone with his thoughts....and his bucket of shrimp.

Before long, however, he is no longer alone. Up in the sky a thousand white dots come screeching and squawking, winging their way toward that lanky frame standing there on the end of the pier. Before long, dozens of seagulls have enveloped him, their wings fluttering and flapping wildly. Ed stands there tossing shrimp to the hungry birds. As he does, if you listen closely, you can hear him say with a smile, "Thank you. Thank you." In a few short minutes the bucket is empty. But Ed doesn't leave.

He stands there lost in thought, as though transported to another time and place. Invariably, one of the gulls lands on his sea-bleached, weather-beaten hat - an old military hat he's been wearing

for years.

When he finally turns around and begins to walk back toward the beach, a few of the birds hop along the pier with him until he gets to the stairs, and then they, too, fly away. And old Ed quietly makes his way down to the end of the beach and on home.



Eddie Rickenbacker with his Medal of Honor.

If you were sitting there on the pier with your fishing line in the water, Ed might seem like "a funny old duck," as my dad used to say. Or, "a guy that's a sandwich shy of a picnic," as my kids might say. To onlookers, he's just another old codger, lost in his own weird world, feeding the seagulls with a bucket full of shrimp.

To the onlooker, rituals can look either very strange or very

empty. They can seem altogether unimportantmaybe even a lot of nonsense. Old folks often do strange things, at least in the eyes of Boomers and Busters. Most of them would probably write Old Ed off, down there in Florida.

That's too bad. They'd do well to know him better. His full name: Eddie Rickenbacker. He was a famous hero back in World War II. On one of his flying missions across the Pacific, he and his seven-member crew went down. Miraculously, all of the men survived, crawled out of their plane, and climbed into a life raft.

Captain Rickenbacker and his crew floated for days on the rough waters of the Pacific. They fought the sun. They fought sharks. Most of all, they fought hunger. By the eighth day their rations ran out. No food. No water.

They were hundreds of miles from land and no one knew where they were. They needed a miracle. That afternoon they had a simple devotional service and prayed for a miracle. They tried to nap. Eddie leaned back and pulled his military cap over his nose. Time dragged. All he could hear was the slap of the waves against the raft. Suddenly, Eddie felt something land on the top of his cap. It was a seagull!

Old Ed would later describe how he sat perfectly still, planning

his next move. With a flash of his hand and a squawk from the gull, he managed to grab it and wring its neck. He tore the feathers off, and he and his starving crew made a meal - a very slight meal for eight men - of it. Then they used the intestines for bait. With it, they caught fish, which gave them food and more bait.....and the cycle continued. With that simple survival technique, they were able to endure the rigors of the sea until they were found and rescued. (after 24 days at sea...)

Eddie Rickenbacker lived many years beyond that ordeal, but he never forgot the sacrifice of that first lifesaving seagull. And he never stopped saying, "Thank you." That's why almost every Friday night he would walk to the end of the pier with a bucket full of shrimp and a heart full of gratitude.

Credit to: Max Lucado, In The Eye of the Storm

Eddie was also an Ace in WWI and started Eastern Airlines back in the 30's.

The Eisenhower Interstate System requires that one-mile in every five must be straight. These straight sections are usable as airstrips in times of war or other emergencies.

Courtesy - Static Line

Country Store Items from page 17

ZAP Patch.....	\$3.00
Original Air Commando Group Patch	\$3.00
ACA Cloth Patch	\$3.00
ACA "AIR COMMANDO" Cloth Tab.....	\$3.00
ACA Challenge Coin (Bronze).....	\$5.00
NEW! Thai Wallets (available in black or brown leather)	\$8.00
Pens with "Air Commando Association"	\$1.00
ACA Bumper Sticker	\$2.00
"AIR COMMANDO" 8" decal car window display	\$3.00
ACA Decal (4"x 5")	2/\$1.00
Golf Towel (24"x16" with ACA Logo)	\$8.00
ACA Lapel Pin (Large & Small)	\$4.00
NEW! B26 and Truck Gorski Posters	\$20.00
50th Poster (full color) (20"x 24")	\$1.00
ACA Glass Mug	\$10.00
NEW! ACA Travel Mug	\$10.00
POW/MIA Flags	\$12.00
POW/MIA Decals	\$2.00
Aircraft License Plates	
B-26 "Over the MeKong"; B-26 "in SE Asia in the 60's"; B-26 "Nimrod Over Laos"; "Son Tay Raiders"; "A1-H Hobos".....	\$10.00
NEW ACA License Plates, white or blue	\$12.00
ACA License Plates, white.....	\$10.00
Printed Plastic License Plate Holders	\$4.00
ACA Ball Cap (navy, royal & lt blue, black ,white, gray, denim, camo, & red) ACA logo or lettering	\$10.00
Air Commando Bush Hat- Firm Only (M, L, XL)	\$20.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (S, M, L,XL).....	\$10.00
ACA T-Shirt (white only) (XXL)	\$12.00
ACA Golf Shirt (misc colors, white, red, royal blue, waffle weave, with crest) (navy and black with lettering).....	\$15.00
Denim long sleeve shirts (Ladies M, L, XL• Mens M, L, XL, & XXL)	
available with lettering or crest.....	\$20.00
Jackets - (M to XXL- Tan, Navy, Black, Royal Blue)	\$35.00

ORDER FORM

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

Qty	Color	Item	Size	Unit Price

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

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

DeBruin

Continued from page 18

subsequent sighting reports are all proof that he is a Pathet Lao prisoner, and that they should be held accountable for his fate. September 5th will mark 44 years since he was shot down by the Viet Cong-allied Pathet Lao.

Says Jerry DeBruin, "My basic fear is that the makers of movies such as "Rescue Dawn" will prey upon both released and missing POW/MIA family members, purporting untruths, and dragging them through what our family is going through today."

Let's hope that, some day soon,

Gene DeBruin is brought back home to America alive. And that his reputation is brought back with it.

Director Werner Herzog and his Hollywood friends tried to take that away from him. But they cannot take Gene DeBruin's honor and heroism.

"Escape From Laos" is available in the ACA library.

Debbie Schlusel is a political commentator; this blog appeared on her website www.debbieschlusel.com in August 2007.

COMMEMORATIVE ACA BRICK



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

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

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

LARRY MOORE

311 ACS 67-68

SMSGT RETIRED

A Soldiers Last Words

"Victory at all cost. Victory in spite of all terror. Victory no matter how long and how hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival"

Winston Churchill

May 13, 1940

Hope you will take time to read this extraordinary commentary by a very young and very mature American Warrior....

A Soldier's last words,

SGT. Edmund John Jeffer's last few words were some of the most touching, inspiring and most truthful words spoken since the tragedy of 9/11 - and since our nation went to war.

SGT. Jeffers was a strong soldier and talented writer. He died in Iraq on September 19, 2007. He was a loving husband, brother and son. His service was more than this country could ever grasp - but the least you can do for the man who sacrificed his life for you ... is listen to what he had to say.

Hope Rides Alone

By Eddie Jeffers

I stare out into the darkness from my post, and I watch the city burn to the ground. I smell the familiar smells, I walk through the familiar rubble, and I look at the frightened faces that watch me pass down the streets of their neighborhoods. My nerves hardly rest; my hands are steady on a device that has been given to me from my government for the purpose of taking the lives of others.

I sweat, and I am tired. My back aches from the loads I carry. Young American boys look to me to direct them in a manner that will someday allow them to see their families again... and yet, I too, am just a boy.... my age not but a few years more than that of the ones I

lead. I am stressed, I am scared, and I am paranoid... because death is everywhere. It waits for me, it calls to me from around street corners and windows, and it is always there.

There are the demons that follow me, and tempt me into thoughts and actions that are not my own...but that are necessary for survival. I've made compromises with my humanity. And I am not alone in this. Miles from me are my brethren in this world, who walk in the same streets...who feel the same things, whether they admit to it or not.

And to think, I volunteered for this... And I am ignorant to the rest of the world...or so I thought.

But even thousands of miles away, in Ramadi, Iraq, the cries and screams and complaints of the ungrateful reach me. In a year, I will be thrust back into society from a life and mentality that doesn't fit your average man. And then, I will be alone. And then, I will walk down the streets of America, and see the yellow ribbon stickers on the cars of the same people who compare our President to Hitler.

I will watch the television and watch the Cindy Sheehans, and the Al Franken's, and the rest of the ignorant sheep of America spout off their mouths about a subject they know nothing about. It is their right, however, and it is a right that is defended by hundreds of thousands of boys and girls scattered across the world, far from home. I use the word boys and girls, because that's what they are. In the Army, the average age of the infantryman is nineteen years old. The average rank of soldiers killed in action is Private First Class.

People like Cindy Sheehan are ignorant. Not just to this war, but to the results of their idiotic ramblings, or at least I hope they are.

They don't realize its effects on this war. In this war, there are no Geneva Conventions, no cease fires. Medics and Chaplains are not spared from the enemy's brutality because it's against the rules. I can only imagine the horrors a military Chaplain would experience at the hands of the enemy. The enemy slinks in the shadows and fights a coward's war against us. It is effective though, as many men and women have died since the start of this war. And the memory of their service to America is tainted by the inconsiderate remarks on our nation's news outlets. And every day, the enemy changes...only now, the enemy is becoming something new. The enemy is transitioning from the Muslim extremists to Americans. The enemy is becoming the very people whom we defend with our lives. And they do not realize it.

But in denouncing our actions, denouncing our leaders, denouncing the war we live and fight, they are isolating the military from society...and they are becoming our enemy.

Democrats and peace activists like to toss the word "quagmire" around and compare this war to Vietnam. In a way they are right, this war is becoming like Vietnam. Not the actual war, but in the isolation of country and military. America is not a nation at war; they are a nation with its military at war. Like it or not, we are here, some of us for our second, or third times; some even for their fourth and so on. Americans are so concerned now with politics, that it is interfering with our war.

Terrorists cut the heads off of American citizens on the Internet...and there is no outrage, but an American soldier kills an Iraqi in the midst of battle, and there are investigations, and some-

times soldiers are even jailed...for doing their job.

It is absolutely sickening to me to think our country has come to this. Why are we so obsessed with the bad news? Why will people stop at nothing to be against this war, no matter how much evidence of the good we've done is thrown in their face? When is the last time CNN or MSNBC or CBS reported the opening of schools and hospitals in Iraq ? Or the leaders of terror cells being detained or killed? It's all happening, but people will not let up their hatred of Bush. They will ignore the good news, because it just might show people that Bush was right.

America has lost its will to fight. It has lost its will to defend what is right and just in the world. The crazy thing of it all is that the American people have not even been asked to sacrifice a single thing. It's not like World War Two, where people rationed food, and turned in cars to be made into metal for tanks. The American people have not been asked to sacrifice anything. Unless you are in the military or the family member of a service member, its life as usual...the war doesn't affect you.

But it affects us. And when it is over, and the troops come home, and they try to piece together what's left of them after their service...where will the detractors be then? Where will the Cindy Sheehans be to comfort and talk to soldiers and help them sort out the last couple years of their lives, most of which have been spent dodging death and wading through the deaths of their friends? They will be where they always are, somewhere far away, where the horrors of the world can't touch them. Somewhere where they can complain about things they will

See **LAST WORDS** pg. 22

Klingaman contribution to Special Operations recognized

Jerry Klingaman whom many of you know retired from civilian service yesterday, 11 Jan 08, at Hurlburt Field, Florida. Jerry spent approximately 22 years in the Air Force serving much time in the Air Commando field followed by some 23 years working to rebuild Special Operations to its current state. So respected was Jerry that 4-Star General Norton A. Schwartz presided over the retire-

ment ceremony.

Jerry (among others) was instrumental in rebuilding Air Force Special Operations. Today, we have a cadre of well trained young Warriors which may never have occurred were it not for persistent hard working people like Jerry.

Jerry had the opportunity to gain firsthand experience and insight into the radical side of evils

in which the world faces today from his assignments in several remote locations such as in Laos. I have not always agreed with Jerry; but, he did accomplish far more meaningful and enduring results than I. For that I have been and will be forever grateful to Jerry and men like him. He has and will always be an admirable and accomplished "Warrior" in my book....!!!!

The goals, missions, and objectives of Special Operations will always be ever-changing in this very unsettled world and will continually require bright young people of Jerry's calibre to step into his shoes and continue to improve our forces and their capabilities.

A well deserved "Atta Boy" goes to Jerry from each and every Air Commando....!!!!

Submitted by Robert Downs

Last Words

continued from page 21

never experience in their lifetime; things that the young men and women of America have willingly taken upon their shoulders.

We are the hope of the Iraqi people. They want what everyone

else wants in life: safety, security, somewhere to call home. They want a country that is safe to raise their children in. Not a place where their children will be abducted, raped, and murdered if they do not

comply with the terrorists demands. They want to live on, rebuild and prosper. And America has given them the opportunity, but only if we stay true to the cause, and see it to its end. But the country must unite in this endeavor...we cannot place the burden on our military alone. We must all stand up and fight, whether in uniform or not. And supporting us is more than sticking yellow ribbon stickers on your cars. It's supporting our President, our troops and

our cause.

Right now, the burden is all on the American soldiers. Right now, hope rides alone. But it can change, it must change. Because there is only failure and darkness ahead for us as a country, as a people, if it doesn't. Let's stop all the political nonsense, let's stop all the bickering, let's stop all the hatred and bad news, and let's stand and fight!

Eddie's father, David Jeffers, writes:

I'm not sure how many letters or articles you've ever read from the genre of "News from the Front," but this is one of the best I've ever read, including all of America's wars. As I was reading this, I forgot that it was my son who had written it. My emotions range from great pride to great sorrow, knowing that my little boy (22 years old) has become this man. He is my hero, now more than ever. Though Eddie is no longer with us, you can help to let his voice be heard. God Bless and have a good day!

Note: We at the ACA cannot verify if this is a true story or not, but we felt this to be a beautiful touching story and wanted to share the sentiment with our members.



I am a Member of the Air Commando Association

by Felix "Sam" Sambogna

I am proud to have served or are serving in an air commando/special operations unit.

I am proud to serve my country and continue to pledge my allegiance to God, country, special operations, and my comrades.

I will strive to perpetuate the air commando traditions and history.

I support recognizing those who have made significant contributions to special operations.

I will honor all those who make the supreme sacrifice in the fight for freedom.

I will support as best I can my comrades and all our widows.

With freedom as our goal, I will continue to support our great nation.

Generals/Editors

"It appears we have appointed our worst generals to command forces, and our most gifted and brilliant to edit newspapers!

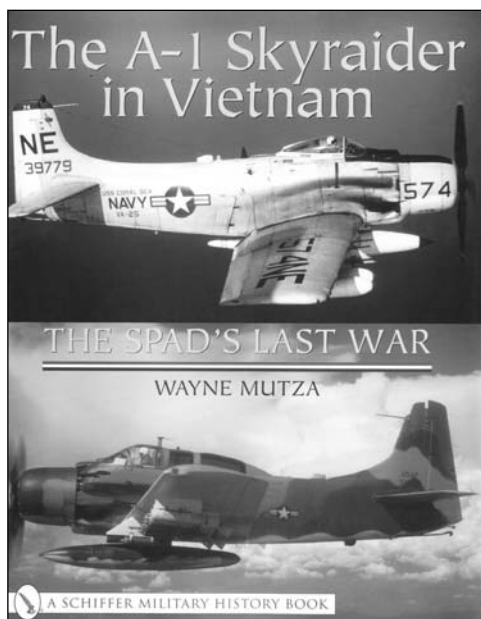
In fact, I discovered by reading newspapers that these editor/geniuses plainly saw all my strategic defects from the start, yet failed to inform me until it was too late.

Accordingly, I'm readily willing to yield my command to these obviously superior intellects, and I'll, in turn, do my best for the Cause by writing editorials - after the fact."

~ quote by Robert E. Lee ~

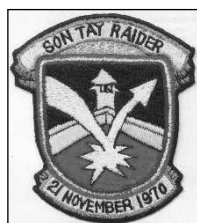
Submitted by Frank Glunn

The A-1 Skyraider



Through its remarkable service during the war in Southeast Asia, the Skyraider became legendary. It served with distinction in the hands of U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and South Vietnamese Air Force pilots, who took the war to the enemy, often at low altitude and in the face of devastating anti-aircraft fire. And it suffered heavy losses. The Skyraider's versatility and the mettle of its pilots were unmatched. This book takes not only a look at an old airplane, but at the warriors who flew and maintained the machine they

called the "Spad." This volume captures the essence of combat in the Spad, and explains the broad range of Spad operations. The text, which is rich with the narratives of Spad pilots and ground crew, is complemented by over 300 original photographs, seventy emblems, and detailed listings of every Skyraider that flew in the war, and the colorful units to which they were assigned. This fascinating volume is a must for aviation enthusiasts, history buffs, and modelers alike.



The A-1 Skyraider in Vietnam Preface

Most are graying, balding, paunchy, and wear glasses. Some are slightly stoop-shouldered. But mention the word "Spad" and a gleam comes to their eye. They straighten a bit and set their jaw. The gleam turns to fire as their memory becomes energized with images of decades past. The grin speaks volumes and makes me wish I too could see the glowing orange sunset against the silver sea from a lofty perch, feel the wind through the open cockpit, smell the leather and oil, and feel the awesome power and rapture of controlling the thundering beast.

The next best thing, it seemed, was to research their involvement with the Spad, to tap their rich memories and present fresh insight to their achievements, in their airplane, during their war. They were warriors once. They did not do their job for political ambition or for the treachery of power. They fought for their beliefs, even when some stopped believing they were fighting for freedom. They fought for each other and for their own survival. And they did it superbly.

They flew an airplane military leaders mistakenly assumed had seen its heyday in Korea. Often they were viewed as the bastard children of aviation, for no other reason but that their airplanes had propellers on the front of them. Theirs was a bond of survival and honor that knew no boundaries. Still heard among their ranks are the words from an old song carried over from World War 11: "Throw a nickel on the grass, to save

See **SKYRAIDER** pg. 24



This year the storied 20th Special Operations Squadron will case the flag and the special operations combat Pave Low helicopters will be no more. The squadron is planning a giant send off party in mid October 2008. The plans and exact date will be in the next news letter. If you can hover keep mid October open.

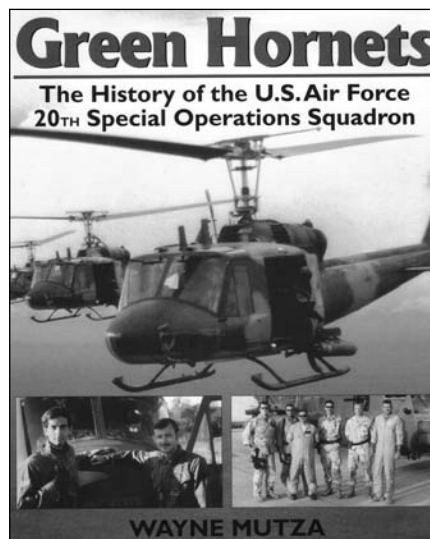
20TH SOS GREEN HORNETS

The primary mission of the 20 SOS is to conduct day or night low level penetration into hostile or enemy territory to accomplish infiltration and exfiltration, aerial gunnery support, and resupply of special operations forces throughout the world. These operations include tactical low-level navigation, night vision goggle operations, airland and airdrop techniques and overwater operations. The unique capabilities of the MH-53M Pave Low allow the 20 SOS to operate from unprepared

landing zones in any type of terrain and in otherwise inaccessible areas.

The SOS was formed as the 20th Helicopter Squadron in 1956, to perform traditional helicopter missions with H-21s for the Tactical Air Command. In 1956, the unit's CH-3E helicopters were transferred in Southeast Asia and the squadron began unconventional warfare and special operations as the "Pony Express." In 1967, when joined by the UH-1F/P heli-

See **GREEN HORNET** pg. 24



Green Hornets:

By Wayne Mutza

In this fascinating, detailed account, Wayne Mutza takes a look deep inside this extraordinary, little-known, but very special unit of the U.S. Air Force. Published here for the first time is the colorful history of the men and their helicopters that made their living with the legendary SOG teams of the Army Special Forces. From secret cross-border

missions during the Vietnam War to current operations in the Middle East. Also included is a special section of Green Hornet emblems, and detailed lists of every aircraft flown by the 20th Special Operations Squadron.

To buy this book on the internet go to: www.schifferbooks.com and search for Green Hornets. The price is \$35.00, shipping and handling fees may apply.

Former A-37 Commander Colonel Louis Weber Passed Away

Retired Air Force Colonel Louis W. Weber, former commander of the 4532nd Combat Crew Training Squadron (TAC) England AFB, LA, passed away on November 19, 2007 in Maryville, TN. He also served as commander

of the 23rd Tactical fighter Wing at England AFB.

In 1967 he was selected to organize and command the 604th Air Commando Squadron at England AFB, LA flying the newly developed A-37 fighter/attack air-

craft. He deployed with the unit under project Combat Dragon to perform the operational test of the A-37 in combat conditions flying out of Bien Hoa AB, Republic of Vietnam. He flew over 300 combat missions and played a key role in demonstrating the capability of this great little aircraft.

While Col Weber was in Vietnam, the follow-on training squadron (4532nd CCTS) was established at England AFB to provide training for USAF and Vietnamese pilots. Many A-37s were provided to replace A-1s that were in short supply for Vietnamese flying wings.

After the 4532nd experienced several flying accidents, Colonel Weber was reassigned to England AFB after returning from Vietnam to revitalize the squadron. Under his command, an excellent safety record was maintained and hundreds of replacement pilots were trained in the A-37 for the Vietnam conflict.

Colonel Weber's career began when he enlisted in the Army Air Corp in 1943 as an aviation cadet. After training, he was assigned to China as member of the Flying Tigers Squadron flying the P-40

and P-51. He separated from the service in 1946 and was recalled to active duty in 1952. He spent a year in Korea flying the T-33 and F-86. Among his many assignments were overseas tours in Korea, Turkey, Thailand, and Vietnam. In addition to the WWII aircraft, he flew the A-37, F-100, F-105, A-7, F-4E, A-10, and C-130 with a total of 429 combat missions in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.

As a personal note, I served with Col Weber in the 4532nd CCTS at England AFB. He was a dynamic and resourceful commander and a friend. His wife Tommye was a thoughtful and inspiring asset to his career and to the squadron. They have two children, David and Dianne. Col Weber was a member of the A-37 Association and attended their reunions. According to Ollie Maier, the spark plug of the A-37 Association and a member of the ACA, Colonel Weber was "a man who led not by his rank, but by his knowledge of the mission and the concern for the people under him." Indeed, a very special person who is missed by so many. I agree. Sam

Green Hornets

continued from page 23

copters formerly assigned to Project Lucky Tiger, they became the "Green Hornets." The Green Hornets continued to do unconventional warfare missions for seven distinguished years until deactivation of the 20th Helicopter Squadron in

Skyraiders

continued from page 23

a fighter pilot's ass." The phrase was used through the years as a salute to fallen comrades - to say, "You are honored and remembered."

You see, they did not preach the brotherhood of man - they lived it. To them this book is dedicated.

To buy this book go to: www.schifferbooks.com and search for A-1 Skyraider. The price is \$49.95, shipping and handling fees may apply.

About the Author of Skyraiders and Green Hornets

Wayne Mutza has drawn from his many experiences an passion for writing to complete a number of books and articles. His military experience includes service with the U.S. Army, during which he served as an airborne infantryman, helicopter crew chief, instructor, and advisor to the Vietnamese Air Force. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management. Wayne and his wife, Debra, have six children and one grandchild, and live near Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

1972.

Reactivated in 1976 at Hurlburt Field, the unit mission remained unconventional warfare and special operations using UH-1N gunships and CH-3Es. The HH-53H Pave Low replaced the CH-3E in 1980 to provide a long range, heavier lift helicopter capability. The crews used the Pave Low avionics to arrive over target, on time, and undetected, where they performed terminal operations wearing night vision goggles. In 1983 the UH-1Ns began two years of outstanding support as part of then Vice President George Bush's South Florida Drug Enforcement Task Force.

In 1988 the HH-53H was upgraded and designated the MH-53J Pave Low III. The new Pave Low "J model" featured new integrated avionics, enhanced cockpit controls and displays, and improved weapons systems. In December 1989, members of the 20 SOS were mobilized as part of a joint task force for Operation JUST CAUSE, successfully restoring democracy in Panama. Among the first to deploy to Operation DESERT SHIELD in August 1990, 20 SOS crew members and aircraft led US Army AH-64 Apaches in the first airstrike of the Gulf War. The 20th was among the first to respond to the tragic events of September 11th, 2001.

Martin B-26 Problems

I just received this and I always wondered why the Martin B-26 had so many problems and we lost a lot of them. Having a 12VDC power system was really surprising but can explain why they had some problems.

One of the problems with the Martin B-26 was that it originally had a 12 volt electrical system. The propellers were Curtis Electric, the prop blade pitch was changed by an electric motor in the hub. One of the last of the pre-take off checklist items was to operationally check the electric

turret by traversing a full rotation. At idle engine power, the generators could not keep up with the load. Then on the take off roll, when the generators kicked in to recharge the battery, a voltage spike would cause one or both props to runaway. This usually happened as the gear was retracting and the aircraft was past the runway end and over the water. The B-26A had about as much wing area as on OV-10, and could not maintain altitude on one engine.

Eugene Rossel

Joe Kittinger's Recollection of the Big Fall

Aviation Record: Breaking the Sound Barrier Without an Aircraft

JOE KITTINGER is not a household aviation name like Neil Armstrong or Chuck Yeager. But what he did for the U. S. space program is comparable.

On Aug. 16, 1960, as research for the then-fledgling U. S. space program, Air Force Captain Joseph Kittinger rode a helium balloon to the edge of space, 102,800 feet above the earth, a feat in itself. Then, wearing just a thin pressure suit and breathing supplemental oxygen, he leaned over the cramped confines of his gondola and jumped--into the

110-degree-below-zero, near-vacuum of space. Within seconds his body accelerated to 714mph in the thin air, breaking the sound barrier. After free-falling for more than four and a half minutes, slowed finally by friction from the heavier air below, he felt his parachute open at 14,000 feet, and he coasted gently down to the New Mexico desert floor.

Kittinger's feat showed scientists that astronauts could survive the harshness of space with just a pressure suit and that man could eject from aircraft at extreme altitudes and survive. Upon Kittinger's return to base, a congratulatory telegram was waiting from the Mercury Seven astronauts--including Alan Shepard and John Glenn.

More than four decades later Kittinger's two world records--the highest parachute jump, and the only man to break the sound barrier without a craft and live--still stand. We decided to visit the retired colonel and Aviation Hall of Famer, now 75, at his home in Altamonte Springs, Florida, to recall his historic jump.

FORBES GLOBAL: Take us back to New Mexico and Aug 16, 1960.

Joe Kittinger: We got up at 2 a.m. to start filling the helium balloon. At sea level, it was 35 to 40 feet wide and 200 feet high; at altitude, due to the low air pressure, it expanded to 25 stories in width, and still was 20 stories high! At 4 a.m. I began breathing pure oxygen for two hours. That's how long it takes to remove all the nitrogen from your blood so you don't get the bends going so high so fast. Then it was a lengthy dress procedure layering warm clothing under my pressure suit. They kept me in air-conditioning until it was time to launch because we were in the desert and I wasn't supposed to sweat. If I did, my clothes would freeze on the way up.

How was your ascent?

It took an hour and a half to get to altitude. It was cold. At 40,000 feet, the glove on my right hand hadn't inflated. I knew that if I radioed my doctor, he would abort the flight. If that happened, I knew I might never get another chance because there were lots of people who didn't want this test to happen. I took a calculated risk, that I might lose use of my right hand. It quickly swelled up, and I did lose use for the duration of the flight. But the rest of the pressure suit worked. When I reached 102,800 feet, maximum altitude, I wasn't quite over the target. So I drifted for 11 minutes. The winds were out of the east.

What's it look like from so high up?

You can see about 400 miles in every direction. The formula is $1.25 \times \text{the sq. root of the altitude in thousands of feet}$. (The square root of 102,000 ft is 319 $\times 1.25 = 399$ miles) The most fascinating thing is that it's just black overhead--the transition from normal blue to black is very stark. You can't see

stars because there's a lot of glare from the sun, so your pupils are too small. I was struck with the beauty of it. But I was also struck by how hostile it is: more than 100 degrees below zero, no air. If my protection suit failed, I would be dead in a few seconds. Blood actually boils above 62,000 feet. I went through my 46-step checklist, disconnected from the balloon's power supply and lost all communication with the ground. I was totally under power from the kit on my back. When everything was done, I stood up, turned around to the door, took one final look out and said a silent prayer: "Lord, take care of me now." Then I just jumped over the side.

What were you thinking as you took that step?

It's the beginning of a test. I had gone through simulations many times--more than 100. I rolled over and looked up, and there was the balloon just roaring into space. I realized that the balloon wasn't roaring into space; I was going down at a fantastic rate! At about 90,000 feet, I reached 714mph. The altimeter on my

wrist was unwinding very rapidly. But there was no sense of speed. Where you determine speed is visual--if you see something go flashing by. But nothing flashes by 20 miles up--there are no signposts there, and you are way above any clouds. When the chute opened, the rest of the jump was anticlimactic because everything had worked perfectly. I landed 12 or 13 minutes later, and there was my crew waiting. We were elated.

How about your right hand?

It hurt--there was quite a bit of swelling and the blood pressure in my arm was high. But that went away in a few days, and I regained full use of my hand.

What about attempts to break your record?

We did it for air crews and astronauts--for the learning, not to set a record. They will be going up as skydivers. Somebody will beat it someday. Records are made to be busted. And I'll be elated. But I'll also be concerned that they're properly trained. If they're not, they're taking a heck of a risk.

www.flightmuseum.com/kittinger.htm

ACA member Binnicker recognized

Leaders from the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin Air Force Base made a surprise visit to the Air Force Enlisted Village in Shalimar Jan. 2.

Although airmen from the wing frequently volunteer at the charity, which provides a home to the surviving spouses of military members, this visit had a different purpose. Members of the unit wanted to express their appreciation to Air Force Enlisted Village President and CEO Jim Binnicker for his work helping military spouses.

To that end, Col. Russell Handy presented Binnicker a lithograph

featuring the F-15C Eagle aircraft, with a brass plate that read, "To Our Community's True 'Angel of Hope'"

"Receiving the artwork of the F-15 from The 33rd Fighter Wing Commander was a huge surprise and much appreciated," Binnicker said. "The thought behind the gift was even more inspiring, as it represents the awesome enlisted men and women of the 33rd Fighter Wing. The trust between the crew chief and the pilot is the same as the trust between our residents and our staff."

An Article From The President Of LHAC

Dear Members and friends,

This is the fifth newsletter I have seen out since March of 2006. Every three to four months,

I have sent out and will continue to send out a newsletter informing our members and friends of important news in regard to the coalition

and other important news.

On November 17th, 2007 we held our election for President of Lao-Hmong American Coalition.

We had three excellent candidates in the election, Paul Lo of Colorado, Joua Long Yang of Michigan, and me. I'm glad to report that I have been re-elected for another term. Thank you to the candidates and the members who mailed in their ballots. And a special thanks to the membership who voted to re-elect me. I have a couple of goals which I hope to accomplish in my next term. Without the support of the members and friends of LHAC, I will not be able to accomplish anything, but with your support we will be able to accomplish some things that will be beneficial not only to LHAC but to the whole Hmong community.

We, the Hmong, are fortunate to be in the United States where we are given opportunities that our fellow Hmong in other countries such as Laos, Thailand, and China can only dream about. We must seize these opportunities to make our lives here better and to be productive and law abiding citizens of this wonderful country. We must encourage our children to young adults to take their education seriously. This is their part to a better future. It is our children and grandchildren who will get to live the American dream for those of us who sacrifice so much during the secret war in Laos.

Lucien NaoPao Lee



MICHAEL YON : ONLINE MAGAZINE

COMBAT JOURNALIST

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

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

[HTTP://MICHAELYON-ONLINE.COM](http://MICHAELYON-ONLINE.COM)



AUTHOR

BLOGGER

PHOTOGRAPHER

Email Etiquette

Please be considerate when sending email to the Air Commando office. Over 100 plus emails are received DAILY and can be quite time consuming to sort through. If a member could send something of Air Commando or personal history or recollection, it would be more useful to the assn.

Rossel Report

RAAF AIR MEDALS.

The RAAF Air medals have been signed by the Air Force Personnel center and 103 will be presented to the 35 RTFV on 4 April 2008 in Canberra the capital and will be attended by the US Ambassador and Australian politician and military. It will be a big event with the major TV, radio, newspapers and other media in attendance. I will attend the presentation and any ACA members are invited to attend. The 35RTFV flew with the 315 ACW and 315 SOW as well as some other derivatives of the 315. Col David Fleming, who was the DO in Special Air Warfare Center was a commander of the 315 derivatives in Vietnam during the 35RTFV tenure in Vietnam. Col Fleming now lives in assisted living at 7300 Greenboro Dr, West Melbourne, FL 32901, tel 321-674-3084. The 18 Australian FACs will receive their Air Medals on 23 April in Canberra just before ANZAC day on 25 April. Gen Aderholt was very helpful in getting these Air Medals through. The Secretary of the Air Force handling the finalization of the 121 Air Medals was Col Galipeau an old Special Operations C-130 pilot.

ACA WEB PAGE

The ACA web page has been given a facelift after being one of the oldest and first vet sites built 10 years ago. It was built with tools available at the time. It has needed an upgrade and now we have the initial stage. Check it out at www.specialoperations.net Some tweaking and peaking is needed and for some reason after I downloaded some old files the members email page reverted from the Oct 2007 data to the July 2004 data. I am still trying to recover the Oct 2007 page but if I can't I will have to rebuild it starting with the 2004 data. If I haven't changed it by 15 Jan 2008 please send me your data again if you can't find yourself on the page.

BGEN BENJAMIN KING

During the 2007 ACA reunion business meeting it was unanimously voted by members to have the ACA submit a formal request to Hurlburt to rename a building on base to honor BGen King, the modern father of the Air Commandos and Special Operations organizations. Several of us are going to put the memorialization package together for the President of the ACA to submit to the base. It was pointed out that the auditorium at Eglin was named after King for his work at Eglin as required by the Eglin base regulations and that the Memorial in the part is dedicated to the Jungle Jim personnel.

JUST CHECKING IN

Gene, Thank you for including me on your email! I am glad to hear that you are recovering well from surgery. I was also really excited to see that you'll be going to Australia for the Air Medal presentation. I know my part was a small one but I'm glad I was in the right place/right time to help effect the outcome.

Looks like I'm going to be given one more shot at command this summer. It's not an AFSOC position but I have been selected to be the CC at the 612th Theater Ops Group at Davis-Monthan. Looks like I'll be able to fight the war on drugs and spread the AFSOC gospel at the

same time!

I'll be at this email address until some time in the summer and you can always find me at talon1nav@yahoo.com if I can be of any service. Douglas Galipeau, Col, SAF/MRBP, Email: Douglas.Galipeau@Andrews.af.mil

FROM THE FACNET

Below are comments from my UPT classmate, Bill Gruber, a BS bomber pilot in 68 at Danang.

Jim: The 0-2B's were the BS bombers. Painted in standard gray. Not FAC's for the most part, just making orbits with loud speakers and occasionally dropping a few leaflets (our C-47's did the big leaflet drops, since we didn't have much capacity in the 0-2.) Our unit was the 9th ACS hq in Nha Trang.

Bill Gruber, Here's some data on the O-2B

www.marchfield.org/o2b.htm.

Thanks, Jim Wilkes, Email: bilk24@yahoo.com

THORSTEN SCOBEL, KIA by Cambodian T-28 21 Mar 64.

Scobel and I were in the USAF ROTC Program together at the U.Md (He was in the Scabbard and Blade and I was in the Pershing Rifles). On his first day in VN we met in the Rex Hotel bar Nov 63, during the night of the Diem coup, (I was in country 3 months). With cannon shells raining on the Palace across the street and fire fights throughout Saigon, he asked if it was always this bad? With a straight face I said this was nothing! We kept in touch and when he was shot up by Cambodian AF T-28s, while FACing in an unarmed O-1A. I went to see him at the hospital in Saigon. At first they said he died of pneumonia and was not a combat casualty but, his girl friend told me his chest was filled with bullets or shrapnel! No official complaint was lodged against Cambodia and the incident was covered up. Later he was listed as "dying in the service of his country" but, you can find little about the circumstances. Posted by: Edward Mark Dunker, Major USAF Ret.

The T-28D was even instrumental in the only uncontested Cambodian air-to-air victory, scored on 21 March 1964. That day a patrol of two T-28Ds explosion down a VNAF O-1 over the border South Vietnam.

Ken Hinks

In April of 1964 several of us arrived in Vietnam to be Forward Air Controllers Capt. Bill Whatley (assigned to Kontum), Capt Franklin D. Peschel (assigned to Ben Cat), and me, Capt. Vandy M. Powell Jr. (assigned to Baria) primary duty FAC (5th Div) DAFSC 1111Z with III Corps ALO/FAC 1300700. After about 11 days in Saigon at the Metropolis Hotel we were given orders to report to Bien Hoa where we met our commander Lt. Col. Mellish.

He was a fine officer and he had a Vietnamese driver who drove his jeep exceedingly fast in and out of traffic and was given the name Barney (for Barney Olfield)

We were issued an AR 15 and offered a 38 revolver which I believe all of us refused because we had brought our own Browning 9 MM, 14

Rossel

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shot automatic revolvers.. We were also issued a very thick flak vest which they said would not stop a bullet. My first two times wearing the vest I broke out in heat rash so from then on I sat on my vest.

We were given an orientation ride in the O-1. The tail dragger was no problem. I had learned to fly an Aeronca Champ when I first got a pilots license. The ride became an area orientation ride. And then I believe there was another to check me out on firing rockets. I learned how to draw a grease pencil line across the windshield for my high tech rocket aiming gun sight. , how to dive for more accuracy and was told to stay above 1500 feet. This was a great adventure for me. I had flown the T-34, the T-37, the T33 and the T-29. Now I was firing rockets. No ordinance training, no fighter training. Did I have a lot to learn! They said here is your O-1 , (I was to fly out of Vung Tau) and if you need rockets or maintenance or when you have 25 hours on it, bring it back to Bien Hoa. I don't know how or why I was selected as a FAC, Those were some of the early days and I soon learned a lot about FACing When I arrived in Vietnam I was told that there were only 55 FACs in country but that changed dramatically during my year there. At the start I was responsible for 3 provinces. Phuoc Tuy, Bien Hoa, and Xuan Hoc. As more FACs came in my area of responsibility thankfully shrunk.

I was given the small diamond shaped patch which said F-19 and I thought we FACs should have more than that so I designed a patch for those I knew to wear. I seldom saw another FAC so I had five or six made at a small tailor shop in Saigon. I kept a couple and passed out the others. MOT (one) MINH (person) KHONG (not) SO (afraid) I kept the F-19 designation and added MACH .2 (MACH point two) I remember only 3 or four times I flew with someone in the back seat and only once with a Vietnamese observer. Hence, the translation -Alone and Unafraid.- I saw one being worn at the Fort Walton reunion and was surprised that the patch had survived at least for a while. Vandy Powell, Python 1, April 64-65, Email:VandyP@aol.com

Neat Site

Jimmie Butler aviation history site. It is a very neat site.

www.jimmiebutler.com/index.htm

Ken Hinks, Email:khinks01-02@comcast.net

MSGT. JAMES H. CALFEE

Dear Col Arnau,

I am seeking further information on my uncle, Msgt. James H. Calfee, killed at Lima Site 85, 3-11-68. I have been reading some of your papers on the TTU Vietnam Archives and wonder if you have ever heard of a book or article that says the radar from LS85 was dismantled and shipped to Moscow. If you have any proof or documentation of this statement, could you please forward to me!

Thank, Debra Morris, Fourth Grade, A.P. Beutel Elementary

Submitted by Bob Arnau, Email:rra@earthlink.net

OREN B. (OB) HARNAGE PASSED AWAY

The Passing of a Hero. This morning I received an email from his

son Rob, that Saturday evening at 10:22 pm. Some of you may not recognize the name but all of you surely would recognize his photo for he was the "man on the roof" shoving people into the Huey on 29 April 1975 in one of the most famous (or infamous) photos of the Vietnam War. What many of you don't know....is anything about him. That he served in the US Naval Amphibious Force in WWII where he saw combat in the Philippines and on Okinawa where he was wounded. That he then served in the Korean War with the US Air Force. Then in 1960 he was selected for a special assignment with the CIA and assigned to the 1129th Special Activity Squadron in Nevada to work on the SR-71 Black Bird program until his retirement in 1965 as as Master Sergeant. He then served in the Vietnam War with Air America serving a total of 7 years in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos in a number of capacities. His final Vietnam assignment was as the ranking Air America Air Operations Officer at the US Embassy and was instrumental in the planning and evacuation of many, many people in those hectic final hours of our decade long involvement. In addition to his many citations and awards for service to his Country in the Navy and the Air Force, he was also awarded the CIA's coveted Intelligence Star award for his heroic actions during the evacuation of Saigon. I just thought some of you may want to know that a hero passed away last evening. A true hero, one that you will probably not hear about on the TV or radio, nor read about in the newspaper. A true hero nonetheless. May he rest in peace.

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

JUNGLE JIM MASCOT

The 623 Air Operations Center (AOC) just raised to flag today at KHRT. Our unit history traces back to 1962 with AFSOF, the 4400 CCTS, and the Jungle Jim program. We are looking for a unit mascot and the question came up about Jungle Jim. Did the original Jungle Jim participants have a mascot based on the 1930s cartoon Jungle Jim, or the 1950's B-movies Jungle Jim? Does anyone have a patch or drawing of what this mascot looked like? The AFSOC Historian's office has the unit patches but that's about it. They told me they don't do mascots. We'd appreciate any help you can be in this. We're very interested in keeping the Air Commando history alive. Thanks for your time. LARRY M. WOOD, Maj, USAF (Ret.), GS-13, DAFC, Chief, 623 AOC/STO, 884-3951. Email:Larry.Wood@hurlburt.af.mil

The 4400 CCTS, Jungle Jim and the Air Commandos at Hurlburt never had a mascot except an occasional pretty girl. The only mascot that I know we had was an ocelot which Det 3, later the 605th ACS, had in Panama and I have a picture or two of it laying around. The little cat was wild and I never liked to get too close to him. I have a picture somewhere showing Gen Sweeney (old TAC Commander) visiting us at the 605th getting friendly with the cat. There was individual mascots which members had such as a monkey in Laos and other animals local to the area where we were stationed. I know of no official mascot for the original Air Commandos in WWII. Go to this page www.specialoperations.net/Patches.html and almost all of the Air Commando patches used

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are shown there. The first patch we developed for Air Commandos in Vietnam was the ZAP patch. I came in the organization late 61 and most of the organizational patches are on the page above. I don't recall any cartoon drawing of Jungle Jim or movie character. I will check a few others but we weren't like the Jollies because most of our people wanted to kill commies.

STOLEN THAI C-47

Thai C-47 used by an A-1E Expediter to make a run for the US. In 1967 do you remember an A-1E Expediter who stole a Thai C-47 and was taxiing with some B-26. He got airborne but the vertical stabilizer was locked and he became inverted and crashed. The base supposedly hushed it up. Any of you have any info on this? Jim Boney, 1967 NKP

Yes, I was there then. I was told it was a Thai C47 and that the Sgt had received a dear John letter from his wife, The story put out the next day that it was suicide and that he deliberately caused the plane to crash. One of the people who was at the site said he actually could be heard screaming and that he burned to death. I was working that night and someone came by and told me a C47 had crashed. Jim Stampher, Email:stampher@innernet.net

A COMEDY ABOUT CHECKOUT IN AN F-86

www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQL9Kxxd88s

This is odd...pure slapstick and insanity, but thought you'd enjoy some of the old pictures. Looks like a neat airplane. Watch for the shot under the overpass or bridge...worth the whole thing.

Creativity didn't start with Youtube! I was in this movie, which was made in 1952 at Ramstein AFB Germany, when we received our new F-86E's. We had a ball making this film which obviously is still entertaining. We had made an earlier movie about the F-84 which is even funnier than this one. Our fighter wing (86TFW) went from the P-47 in Nov 1950 to the F-84E (November 1950) to the F-86E in March 1952. Our Squadron Commander was Lt Col Jones E. Bolt a former Acrojet Performer (F-80's) which was the predecessor of the Thunderbirds. He was a great commander and fighter pilot. It was a great squadron, flying great aircraft. We had a blast.

Joe Kittinger, Email:ACOLJOEADV@aol.com

INTERESTING OBSERVATION. MY REPLY TO THE NAVY/USAF DEBATE

As a former USAF F-4 driver who had a Navy exchange IP, I think I kind of have a handle on the differences. In the Navy the carrier is the weapon, a national treasure to be protected at all costs. The airplanes are bullets and are expendable. In the USAF the airplane is the national treasure and is to be protected at all costs. In the Navy they tell you "don't do this, don't do that, everything else is fine". In the USAF it's "do this, do that, don't do anything else". For instance written policy in the F-4 while maneuvering was never get below 250 KIAS or else you "might" depart. In the Navy they told you to intentionally depart the aircraft in your first couple flights. (Although I did depart twice in training

and was talked into it by an IP that knew I needed to know how to recover. For you civilians, and I was one of them too, it's the same as do we teach stall/spins and then recovery or just stall/spin avoidance). Joseph Holden, Email:aceusaf@earthlink.net

AF PILOTS DON'T PUT ME IN DRONES

There was an interesting article in the local paper yesterday. The title was "Military relies more on drones in Iraq". It went on to relate that recently 120 USAF pilots were transferred to drone duty. I knew they were flying them out of California but they are adding North Dakota, Texas and Arizona. This begs all kinds of questions, if you are a drone pilot can you log "drone" flying time? If you fly the "drone" over a combat zone do you get combat pay? and do you still have to get four hours a month in a real airplane to get flight pay? These are all things to ponder, in the meantime, I'm happy I was in the AF when the only things you had to sweat were being assigned to the B-47 or GCI, I got suckered into GCI but managed to weenie out after a brief assignment. Joseph Holden, Email:aceusaf@earthlink.net

AGENT ORANGE

VVA veteran magazine Sept/Oct 07 reported Eglin using A/O from 1961-1970. Stationed at Fld 9 from July 67-Oct 68 in 4410 OMS. Worked on B-26/A1E/T-28. Do you have any more info on this report? Thank you.

ACA life member. Donald B. Wright. Email:drdrity1@verizon.net

Please add my name to the e-mail addresses.

We will ask about this. I will add you to the email list.

1ST AIR COMMANDO, BURMA

Inspired by the success of the 1st Air Commando's light plane force in WWII, I am evaluating a plan to begin flying medical re-supply and evacuation missions in support of relief operations currently underway in Burma. I hope that I might be able to contact any pilot that flew L-1s or L-5s in the Burma campaign. Any advice or information that they could supply regarding the use of light planes for re-supply and evacuation in the jungle environment would be very helpful. I would be grateful if you could supply me with appropriate contact information or pass my information on to the appropriate persons. My contact information is: phone 336-644-9322. Email:tpvandyke@yahoo.com. Thank you, Dr. Thomas P. Van Dyke.

I will put this into the ACA Newsletter

VFWS IN THAILAND

There's a new post up Chiang Mai way: <http://vfw-chiangmai.org>. Udorn's is at: <http://members.tripod.com/vfw10249>. Bangkok's is at: <http://www.geocities.com/vfw9951>. Pattaya's at: www.vfwpost9876.org. Korat's??? VFW Post 10217 Used to have a web site but now Google can't find it, or at least my fast finger's can't. Problems up there? And,

Rossel

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of course, AmLeg China Post 1, "An official meeting is held when a minimum of two (2) members manage to get together, although no binding official business can be passed."

FRANK MARSH, Email:thearmyguy.09@cox.net

JUDGE DAVID O. CARTER

The Speech he gave at the Khe Sanh Memorial on 21 Jan 2008.

It was good to see you Eugene, and thank you for your service to our nation. Were you able to obtain the marvelous speech from Judge Carter? My late father was in the Vietnamese Air Force's 2nd Fighter Squadron which was formed in 1961 with the help of Farmgate. www.phamvanhoa.com

He was very proud of his service and his USAF affiliation. As one of the first 15 US-trained South Vietnamese pilots, he was winged in 1959 at Reese AFB in Lubbock then flew T28s, A1s, C47s, AC47s, C123s, and C130s and was a graduate of the Air Commando School at Hurlburt in 1966. I have a picture of Judge Carter and my father from 1999 at his citizenship ceremony in LA, a proud moment in his life as he was grateful to America for taking care of his family while he survived 12 years in reeducation camps. Regards, Quang X. Pham, Maj USMC Reserves, Monarch Staffing, Inc., 949-373-7287. Email:gpham@monarchstaffinginc.com

C-123S IN SEA REUNION/MEMORIAL DEDICATION

We are having a reunion at Dayton, OH, 5-9 May 2008. At the reunion we will be dedicating a memorial bench honoring those who flew, maintained, and supported the C-123B/K airlift mission in SEA, 1961-1972. Units include Mule Train, Saw Buck II, and the 19th, 309th, 310th, and 311th Air Commando Squadrons. We're looking for historical records on those listed Air commando Squadrons during that period. Joe Jackson will be speaking at the reunion.

Can you help us with the ACS histories? Bill Kehler, Colonel, USAF, RET (Former Spectre) Email:bbkeehler@aol.com

We will put it in the ACA Newsletter.

RANK HAS ITS PRIVILEGES.

Gene: My first assignment in Vietnam was with a MACVSOG dedicated organization at Nha Trang, called "First Flight Detachment". In actuality it was Det. 12, 1131st USAF Special Activities Squadron. We flew specially equipped C-123F aircraft with 1 USAF pilot and 9 Chinese Air Force crewmembers from Taiwan. We lived on the beach, 5 miles north of the airbase, in a rented Catholic Church compound. Long story to get to the point, but in our Officer's Club, upstairs in our quarters, we had hanging over the bar a 4 foot by 4 foot picture of a monkey making love to a duck. The monkey was staring at the camera and grinning very big when one of our guys took the picture. One day we had a surprise visit from the son of the famous General Stilwell. The son was also a general. When he saw the picture he said it was his and took it. We weren't too worried because the guy who took the picture had just rotated back to the states, so we wrote him and asked him to send us the

negative so we could have the picture duplicated and re-hung over the bar. We never heard from the guy and never got our picture back. We were all kicking ourselves for not having pictures made when we had the chance. For your information, that monkey made love to several ducks every day in our compound. Al Brashear, Email:Reperek@Hughes.net

TONY POE "ANTHONY POSHEPNY"

by William M. Leary Coulter Professor of History, University of Georgia

A little more about The Death of a Legend Tony Poe "Anthony Poshepnny" died peacefully during the morning of June 27, 2003. The news was hard to accept. It is still difficult to imagine Tony dying peacefully or even dying at all. He seemed indestructible. Having survived Japanese and NVA bullets, and the consumption of enough alcohol to fill a large swimming pool, Tony kept going like the Energizer Bunny.

Tony was a good friend of Air America. More than one pilot has told me that if he ever had been shot down, he would have wanted Tony to lead the rescue effort. Tony would have given 110 percent. A problem for some of his senior bosses in the Agency, no one ever questioned Tony's loyalty, courage, or commitment to the cause of freedom. He was a true warrior and a true patriot. His friends at the Air America Association extend their deepest condolences to his wife and daughters. John Sweet, Email:nkpman69@hotmail.com

DOOLITTLE RAIDERS 66TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

to be held in Dallas Luncheon, presentation and book signing to be held April 17.

More info at www.flightmuseum.com/doolittle_luncheon.htm

A brief history of Doolittle Raid at

www.flightmuseum.com/doolittle_history.htm

Other events at the Frontiers of Flight Museum:

February 26, 2008 - Col. Joe Kittinger, USAF (Ret.)

Record-setting Pilot / Balloonist / Parachutist

www.flightmuseum.com/kittinger.htm

PANAMA RIOTS

The San Antonio Express mentioned the Panama riots that started in 1964. It brought back a lot of memories. And you might recalled the so-called "Panahoochies". I remember that we almost set the town on fire when we started dropping flares that night and they started drifting towards the slum areas. I flew on the U-10, with Capt. Leo Fortschneider monitoring the crowd. Lots of good memories... early morning drills, two-mile runs, empanadas, and creative stuff--like stuffing toilet paper on the cannon that was fired by the marines on a daily basis. Will try to make the reunion this year. It will be nice to see you again. Juan Bazan, Email:bazanj@gvtc.com

Juan, you really brought some memories back with your email

Rossel

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which is below. I thought the Panama riots started on 14 Jan 1964 but I may be wrong. I got a call from my Panamanian girl friend about 7 PM that day and she told me not to come down tonight because the students were rioting in Panama and were entering the Canal Zone off 4th July Ave and going up the hill to tear the American flag down. It was getting bad. I called the boss; Col Gleason and told him what was happening in the CZ and I must have sounded like an over-reacting Lt and he said thanks for the information and I knew I wasn't getting through. About 20 minutes later Col Gleason called me and said to get down to our hangar right away because they were rioting in the CZ. For the better part of valor I said "yes sir" and rushed down to our hangar. We had T-28s, B-26s, U-10s, C-47s and C-46s. I believe we armed the T-28s and probably the B-26s also. The Army sent their Paratroopers Lts and several people to man the sandbag emplacements on the hill overlooking the 4th July Ave which separated the CZ from Panama. They gave them M-1s, without ammunition, and PRC-10s. Those guys kissed sandbags all night as the Panamians rushed up to the sandbag emplacements and fired into the sandbags. Scared the hell out of these guys. The Panamians were firing into the CZ and the Army called up their crack rifle team to clean out the Panamanian shooters from the hotel overlooking the 4th July Ave. They were given a half hour to clean out the shooters which they did very quickly and efficiently (there were about 21 Panamians killed that day and I think 1-2 Americans). We had a number of American cars trashed and burned.

Panama was off limits for Americans for the next 7-9 months. It was terrible. the Panamians could come on base and go down to the beach at Howard with a mobile van of rupture which calmed the restless paratroopers. We could not go into Panamanian City and the military was sending families home. About 4 months into this confinement, a couple of us-Cook, Veryl Weber, a lanky B-26 navigator, and an reserve Navy Lt on duty with the Navy for 2 weeks from the states decided after a number of drinks at Howard O'club that we would go downtown and visit the biggest off-limit place in Panama City--Villa Amore. It was a 4 story Disneyland which you would get an article 15 if you were caught in it by the Panamanian National Guard and our MPs. We always wanted to see this infamous place. It was about 2300 hours when we arrived and in a short time our Navy Reservist, who was in a hurry, left with one of the beauties. Veryl was standing by the bar talking to a young lady--it seemed like there were some 100 young ladies in the bar area and a number of drinking Panamanian men when one of the Panamanian threw a beer glass at Veryl and shouted kill the Gringos. Well our hearts almost stopped as everyone started to rush out the door.

After that incident we never went back into Panama City until peace was declared and we were permitted to return.

I remember the cannon which the Army fired every morning when they raised the flag. I thought the CCTers put pool table balls into the cannon and when it was fired the hard balls hit the side of the wooden gym on base and put a big hole in it. There was an investigation but no guilty persons were found but it ended this prank.

Panama was a great place to be assigned to a great outfit like the 605th Air Commando Sq. The experience was worth a million dollars.

We would Get the Panamanian girls with us to go into orbit when we passed under the Panamanian flag hanging on the Bridge of America (connecting the two sides of the CZ) and ask what that rag was doing flying over the Canal. The Zonians were a great group to associate with but the Panamians had pains with them. The parties we had were just great. Cheap booze and a lot of women made all our parties the envy of the Isthmus. Great restaurants and the Hilton Hotel grand organ as well as the guy who entertained on the boat on the Canal. Can't remember all the names but they were memories to cherish.

Gene

Eugene D. Rossel Tel/FAX 909-591-7342

E-mail aircommando1@earthlink.net

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

ACA Newsletter

It costs approximately \$2,400 to layout, print, and mail the newsletter each quarter. We can afford to continue to do this. However, as another cost saving initiative we could save some of the printing and mailing cost if members elected to receive the newsletter electronically, via email.

Currently, it is posted on our Web Site www.specialoperations.net.

Printing and mailing cost for each copy is approximately 71 cents. Therefore, if 100 members agreed to receive it electronically, we would save \$71, for 200 the savings would be \$142, and so on.

Please call or email us and let us know if you are willing to receive the newsletter electronically. We will not change the current procedure until we review and consider the responses to this request.

Sam

President

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Airman's Attic, is able to obtain numerous donated items. He has so many contacts. We place the donations (toilet items, playing cards, hard candy, pens, paper, notebooks, etc.) in plastic bags and add an ACA sticker. This is a neat way to support the troops without incurring postage expenses.

Generals Secord and Aderholt, Dick Geron, Hap Lutz, and I attended Colonel Bob Gates 89th birthday at the Widows Enlisted Home where a building is named

in honor of Colonel Gates. He is a tremendous supporter of the Enlisted Home. When he spoke he mentioned that 2007 was a great year for him and one of the reasons was that he was inducted in the Air Commando Hall of Fame. I felt good about that comment.

Thanks again to our board members and volunteers who keep this association on track. Let's have another great year. Stay well.

Sam



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February 2008

President's Corner

By Felix "Sam" Sambogna

is so evident.

The next significant event I attended was the Warrior Foundation's annual banquet at the Conference Center in Fort Walton Beach. This dynamic organization raises an incredible amount of money to provide scholarships for the children of special operators killed in training or combat. This extraordinary event was well done, and it attracted community leaders as well as military folks. It was reported that over 200 special operators were lost since the Warrior Foundation was founded. As a result of the scholarship program, 119 young men and women have graduated from college and 112 are still enrolled. Many of our members support and serve on the Foundation including John Carney, George Ferkes, and Wayne Norrad.

Our Christmas Social on the 16th of December was a joyous occasion. Our folks were in the Christmas spirit, the food was great, and we had fun. As is the custom, folks were asked to bring food items that would be delivered to Sharing and Caring. The response was great - a significant amount of nonperishable food items were delivered by Hap. In the spirit of giving, it was mentioned that the MTF "gives" all year long as thousands of pounds of items were shipped to Honduras

and thousand of dollars were sent to Thailand for special projects. John Grove and his band of volunteers plus all the folks who donate were given a round of applause. John Connors was presented with a plaque for his recent three-year service as a board member. It was mentioned that John has served in all ACA positions except treasurer, and he has agreed to continue to serve on three committees. Thanks John for all you have done and all you do for the ACA.

The MH-53, Pave Low, helicopter was added to the beautiful Hurlburt Air Park. A special retirement ceremony for the aircraft was held and hundreds of folks turned out for the occasion. The decommissioning of this special aircraft is a significant event because of all the great crews who flew the Pave Low and the very special missions it was used for. Maj Gen Comer was the guest speaker and Lt Gen Wurster, AFSOC Commander, and Col Webb, 1st SOW Commander, also made remarks. Many of the Pave Low crewmembers will transition to the CV-22.

Gene Rossel has updated the Web site. I encourage folks to look at it. There is a ton of info on it, and we are grateful for Gene doing this task. He, too, is dedicated to the ACA.

We have established the fol-

lowing 2008 goals:

- Continue to improve our administrative and accounting procedures
- Continue to improve memorabilia displays in our building
- Activate more committees - get volunteers
- Publish an excellent newsletter on schedule
- Maintain/improve our building
- Arrange a 2008 reunion as good as possible
- Continue ACA briefing at leadership school as part of recruitment and support for the 1st SOW
- Continue with recruitment efforts
- Prepare and distribute an ACA flyer
- Support the 1st SOW Quarterly Awards Program
- Continue to advertise "bricks." Make more space available, if necessary.
- Acknowledge receipt of brick requests
- Promote the Hall of Fame. Solicit nominations.
- Support our widows and veterans in need any way possible
- Support the MTF

Board member Bob White's project to provide "goodies packages" for Hurlburt folks as they pass through the deployment processing line is a huge success. Bob, who also is the volunteer manager of the Eglin AFB