

# C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 1, Issue 18

Newsletter

September 2003

## Charleston, Here We Come!

This year we are holding our annual C-7A Caribou reunion in the beautiful and historic city of Charleston, South Carolina. This should be a really great reunion. A good many members have already signed up. And the weather in Charleston in November should be about perfect.

Our fun officially starts on Wednesday the 5<sup>th</sup> and ends with our banquet on Saturday night. Arrive early enough Wednesday to check in to the hotel, register and then join everyone in the war room. But don't stay up all night Wednesday night because the activities start early Thursday morning.

Thursday starts with a grand tour of Charleston AFB. We will have a mission briefing and a tour of the C-17. This event should prove to be very interesting. We should learn what roll the 437<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, played in Operation Enduring Freedom. Hopefully we can climb aboard the C-17 and possibly sit in the cockpit and try to imagine landing or taking off from Bagdad International, making all of the zig-zag turns while climbing out so as to avoid RPG's. And there are some pretty harrowing tales of the C-17 flying into Afghanistan.

And of course any grand tour of an Air Force Base includes a BX run.



*C-17s from Charleston AFB and McChord AFB are here ready to deploy in support of the war on terror. CAFB was established as the stage location in January for C-17 missions. The base is hosting more C-17s than ever before, and at one point, more than 40 planes were on the CAFB flightline. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Corey Clements)*

The welcome reception is Thursday evening. According to Wayne Delawter, there should be ample snacks and goodies to suffice for dinner for most of us.

Guided bus tours start at 0945 Friday. You will be shown historical Charleston's Battery, Slave Market, The Citadel and beautiful old homes before being dropped-off point for your choice of the Fort Sumter tour, Aquarium, IMAX or continue to the market area for lunch, shopping, etc. Later everyone who desires will be bussed to The Citadel for their dress parade.

And of course Charleston is where General Beauregard's army fired the first shot of the Civil War on Fort Sumter. If you have interest in the civil war or Charleston, you might want to

search Google for some very handy and interesting information on Charleston, Fort Sumter, General Beauregard and the Civil War.

Friday evening is reserved for some story telling (and a lot of retelling!) of the many heroic acts and brave deeds so many of us performed while doing our duties to keep America safe and comfortable for us to enjoy in our retirement years. And "show and tell" is a special event for the evening. Be sure to bring your pictures, orders, or whatever, to share with the rest of us.

Saturday morning there are more tours of Middleton Place Plantation or Charleston. There is the all important business meeting at 1400 hours. Then the banquet at 1830 hours followed by more fun in the war room. It will be a long and happy day.

Sunday morning we will awake and have our coffee and say our goodbyes for yet another year. We should all look forward to our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in Midland-Odessa Texas, hosted by Tiny Malm. Tiny is billing the 15<sup>th</sup> as a super reunion.

See you all in Charleston in a couple of months.

## Is This A Good Deal, Or What?!

Value that you won't find anywhere else!

When an organization like ours books their event in a city like Charleston, the planner is deluged with tour company phone calls, brochures and letters seeking our business. Like all businesses they are attempting to be com-

See **Good Deal** on page 6

### In This Issue

Association Business .....	Page 2
Reunion News .....	Page 5
Hutch on Intercom .....	Page 8
Mail Call .....	Page 9
War Stories .....	Page 13

The C-7A Caribou Association Newsletter is the official publication of the C-7A Caribou Association.

**C-7A Caribou Association Web Site**  
**www.C-7Acaribou.com**

### Officers, Board Members, Committee Members

**Wayne Delawter** - President/Board Member  
 458th 66

**Peter Bird** -Vice President/Board Member  
 535th 71

**Earl Reynolds** - Treasurer/Board Member  
 537th 66

**Jim Collier** - Secretary/Board Member/Roster Chairman  
 537th 67

**Bob Dugan** - Chairman of Board  
 537th 68

**Stoney Faubus** - Board Member  
 458th 68

**Rick Patterson** - Board Member  
 459th 69

**Bill Avon** - Recruitment Chairman  
 537th 68

**Dave Hutchens** - Newsletter Editor  
 459th 69

**Peter Bird** - Webmaster  
 535th 71

**Bob Davis** - Chaplain  
 457th 69

**Bob Markham** - Bereavement Chairman  
 459th 69

**Wayne Delawter** - Reunion Advisor  
 458th 66

**Nick Evanish** - President Emeritus  
 457th 66

**Christine Phillips** - Reunion Coordinator

Please advise the Association of any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address. Send your changes to:

Jim Collier  
 5607 Jolly Ct.  
 Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707

Dues are payable annually. Enclose your check with your registration form for the annual reunion or send your check to Jim Collier.

I would like to encourage members who might have a humorous incident, interesting anecdote, or an exciting story, to share it with all members of our association. E-mail, snail mail, airmail, or pony express mail it to me, & I will see that it gets published. Pictures are welcome. I will return the originals if specified.

Dave Hutchens (918) 272-3518  
 17916 E. 96<sup>th</sup> Street North Printhat@aol.com  
 Owasso, OK 74055

## Association Business

### Proposed Agenda

#### 2003 General Membership Meeting

**November 8, 2003**

**Assemble 1355 –1400**

**Room: Ashley II**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1400—1410   | <p><b>Call to Order</b><br/>         Welcome and Introductions (officers/board members)<br/>         Collection of proxies<br/>         Establishment of Quorum<br/>         Approval of Agenda<br/>         Rules of order with defined limit of speaking duration</p>   |
| 1410 – 1415 | <p><b>Old Business</b><br/>         Approval of 2002 General Membership Meeting Minutes<br/>         Follow-up of Action Items</p>  |
| 1415 – 1425 | <p><b>Financial Report</b><br/>         Results of the audit. by Pat Dugan, Norma Savage, Sherry Allison<br/>         Treasurer's explanation of the financial report<br/>         Financial Discussion</p>   |
| 1425 — 1445 | <p><b>Review of Past Years Board Issues</b><br/>         Frequency of future reunions<br/>         Boardmember assignments<br/>         Improving boardmember's work distribution<br/>         Selection of Bereavement Chairman<br/>         Search for a Chaplain<br/>         Alcohol policy<br/>         RFP criteria<br/>         Merchandise between reunions</p> |
| 1445 – 1515 | <p><b>Break (only if deemed needed)</b><br/> <b>New Business</b><br/>         Motions (TBD)<br/>         Future reunions<br/>         Nominating Committee<br/>         Elections</p>   |
- Announcements: Where, when & how we will take reunion pictures

During training exercises, the lieutenant who was driving down a muddy back road encountered another car stuck in the mud with a red-faced colonel at the wheel. "Your jeep stuck, sir?" asked the lieutenant as he pulled alongside. "Nope," replied the colonel, coming over and handing him the keys, "Yours is."

## From Our Vice President and WebMaster

As we approach four years with a web site, I note that the hit counter is approaching 50,000 or over 1,000 per month. For those of you who haven't been following



*Vice President  
Peter Bird*

things too closely, there is now a Missing Man page for our brothers who have passed on. I have also added a Retiree Info page, mostly with information for retirees, but it also has general interest articles. Through a lot of hard work on Dave Hutchens' part, we now have just about a complete archive of past newsletters. I have removed the open page with the complete Roster as a precaution against web crawlers looking for email addresses. As usual, I am behind on getting photos posted due to my limited time. We continue to get a slow trickle of new members through the site, as a

search on Google for "C-7A Caribou" comes up with our site as the first hit. Any suggestions or corrections to the information on the site are always welcome.

Peter Bird, Webmaster



I have had an interesting year as the Vice President of the C-7A Caribou Association. Other than the usual duties of working with Wayne Delawter and the rest of the Board, I made one original contribution. I mailed out postcards to members who had forgotten to pay their dues over the past several years. Much to my surprise, about 50% of the dues collection to date was generated by those cards. I will be following up with another mailing to members even further out of date. I am looking forward to the best reunion yet for our Association. See you all in Charleston!

*Peter Bird, Vice President*

## WORKERS REQUIRED!!

In the past, additional workers were not required to run the Caribou Association because it was a one-man show - Nick Evanish. He put out the News Letter almost all by himself, he did all the planning and execution of the reunions, and only when he got to the reunions themselves did he need a lot of extra help.

This all changed in 1997 at the Biloxi reunion, when it was voted that Nick needed more help. Several of us 'old timers' would help him in various ways - we manned the sign in and material sales tables when Nick needed a break. This is history...not the present. Our present method of administration requires that we have more manpower resources to insure that when help is needed, it will be available with just a click of the mouse. For about the past five or so years, there has been a more or less 'dedicated core' of individuals who have carried all the responsibilities on their backs. Because most of them are the older members, it is only to be expected that some of them are approaching what we call "burn

out". Just like you experienced back in Vietnam, we need to import a constant number of "FNGs" to keep things flowing smoothly, and we could use 'new blood' and new ideas all the time. If we don't get this, the alternative is surely going to be our Association moving to the Every-Other-Year (EOY) method of reunions. In fact, about 52% of the membership voted to have the EOY type of reunion in both 1998 & 1999.

The officers and board members have put their heads together and have identified and realigned the duties we need help on. A major improvement will come with all future board members assuming major responsibilities, project and/or chairmanships.

One of the greatest reunion workloads is borne by the Reunion Planner. Wayne Delawter has agreed to be our reunion planner if we go to an EOY reunion. He will accept continuation as President if the board members share equally the major responsibilities or chairmanship positions. Pete Bird has agreed to continue as VP, with the additional

duties of being in charge of our website, as roster chairman, and as vice chairman of the Bereavement Committee. Bob Markham voluntarily accepted the Chairmanship of the Bereavement Committee. Bob Dugan is stepping down from his role and will not run for any other position. Earl Reynolds has agreed to accept our dues and take over the banking duties, so he will henceforth be known as the "Tax Collector" (in jest), and as an attorney, he will also act in our behalf to keep us out of trouble. In the loss column, Dave Hutchens is giving up his position as Editor of the Newsletter. Jim Collier is shedding his duties of Secretary. Bob Davis is stepping down from his role as Chaplain, and Bob Dugan is stepping down from his role and will not run for an other position. We have an ordained minister accepting the Chaplain duties for this year, at least.

So when all is said and done, we need working board members for the following:

Workers from page 3

To continue with reunions every year after 2004 we need another trained **Reunion Planner** able to plan and coordinate the reunions every year.

**Secretary** - takes the minutes at business meetings, reports board votes, and is our official 'letter writer' when called upon.

**Newsletter Editor** - must have a working knowledge about putting together a good informative newsletter.

**Election Chairman** - must be willing to screen, interview and aid in selecting viable candidates for all elected positions.

**Recruitment Chairman** - must be willing to follow up on all leads, regardless of their origins, in an attempt to build the membership of the organization.

**Historian** - a relatively new position. Must be willing to dig through "mountains" of information and have a feeling for separating the wheat from the chaff and format this into an interesting and informative format suitable for inclusion in our newsletters and website.

Gentlemen, it's time to take your turn and not just come to the reunions and sit and drink with your old buddies. People like this abound, but I know there's a lot of members who would like to have a hand in our decisions and in what's going on.

Give yourselves and us a chance...volunteer for some satisfying work.

Bob Dugan, Board Chairman

If you'r not attending the reunion and wish to allow someone to represent you by proxy at the general membership meeting, fill-in your name and the member's name that will hold your proxy.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby designate one of the following members my proxy, with the power of substitution to vote for me at the 2003 C7-A Caribou Association Membership Meeting, or at any adjournment thereof, with all powers I would possess if present.

*If you wish, you may select by checking one of the board members below or writing-in a person's name.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Wayne DeLawter	<input type="checkbox"/> Peter Bird
<input type="checkbox"/> Bob Dugan	<input type="checkbox"/> Jim Collier
<input type="checkbox"/> Stoney Faubus	<input type="checkbox"/> Earl Reynolds
<input type="checkbox"/> Rick Patterson	
<input type="checkbox"/> Write-in _____	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
e-mail this form to Christine Phillips [christielee52@yahoo.com](mailto:christielee52@yahoo.com) who will take it to the reunion. If you don't have e-mail, you may mail it to: Christine Phillips, P.O. Box 143, Folcroft, PA 19032.

## Squadron Historians

Some of the Caribou Squadrons had historians appointed to record their unit's history or daily events. Earl Reynolds was his squadron's historian during his tour [537, 66]. Someone recorded the 459<sup>th</sup> history during the 69-70 period. If anyone has any knowledge of the recorded histories, or the people who recorded the histories, please attempt to get the histories or information back to Dave Hutchens. He will preserve them for our next historian who should be appointed soon.

## Hangar Flying With Grandpa

Col Wilbert Turk, our third Commander of the 483<sup>rd</sup> TAW, 30 September 1968 – 3 September 1969, has collected over twenty-nine years of Air Force memories in his new book titled "Hangar Flying With Grandpa." His assignments carried him to the WWII Pacific Theater, Europe, Middle East, Arctic, Antarctica, Vietnam, and other important areas of the world. Although it seems that Col Turk's first love was the C-130, he stresses that the 483<sup>rd</sup> assignment and the C-7 Caribou were a very important part of his career. He uses a full chapter to describe his year in Vietnam.

Col Turk dedicated this book to his beloved wife and grandchildren. He sent me a copy to first read and then place in the archives of the C-7A Caribou Association. He signed the book with the following comments: "To the brave men of the 483<sup>rd</sup> Wing and other USAF and Sister forces, I say you fought one helliva war while politically restrained from destroying the enemy opposing us. Some call it war – I call it slaughter of 58,000 Americans who died in a hopeless cause. Signed: W.T. 12/19/2002."

What a beautiful gift Wilbert leaves to his grandchildren, and to everyone else who picks up the book and follows Wilbert through his long and distinguished service career. "Hanger Flying with Grandpa" is a very good read.

The book may be purchased on the Internet at: 1<sup>st</sup> books.com; amazon.com; your favorite bookstore, or from the author at [wilkayT@netscape.net](mailto:wilkayT@netscape.net).

## IMPORTANT!!

If you are planning to see the Charleston Aquarium while others do the Fort Sumter tour, please notify me of this. We've just learned that we can get you a discount rate of \$10 only if we make your booking in advance. Contact me about this via email or include a note on your registration form along with the \$10 for your ticket if you haven't sent it in yet. Christine

[christielee52@yahoo.com](mailto:christielee52@yahoo.com)

## Reunion News

**C-7A Caribou Association**  
**14<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion**  
 Radisson Hotel Charleston Airport  
 591 Rivers Avenue  
 Charleston, SC 29406  
 November 5 - 8 2003

### Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>

1400 – 2300 Registration and socializing in the War Room

### Thursday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

0945 – 1500 Charleston AFB Tour  
 1700 - 2300 Welcome Reception in War Room

### Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>

0945 – 1730 Guided Tours around Charleston  
 1700 – 2300 War Room Open (Be sure to bring your show-and-tell stuff.)

### Saturday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>

0900 – 1300 Charleston Tours  
 1400 – 1530 Business Meeting  
 1630 Group Pictures  
 1730 Cocktail Hour  
 1830 Banquet  
 2000 – ??? War Room Open



## REGISTRATION & CANCELLATION INFORMATION FOR 2003 REUNION

To keep the cost of everything at the lowest price we are providing tours, transportation and banquet meals at our cost. When a service is contracted they typically require that 2 days before the event we give them the number of attendees. They need this for their planning purposes and they will charge us for that number.

If you must cancel out from the reunion after pre-registering we will refund any monies that were paid if you call us with your cancellation before we are locked-in.

My home phone # is 610-522-5981. Please use this number until Saturday, November 01, 2003.

From Sunday, November 02 – 08, 2003 you may call 484-410-8035, which is my cell phone number. If you call and leave a message on my cell phone and don't hear from me within a day, please call the hotel and ask for Christine Phillips room. You need to speak directly to me about tours and banquet cancellations and you need to call the hotel to cancel your room reservation at 1-843-744-2501.

On the other hand, I am asking that all Registration forms and Checks be received by me NLT October 15, 2003. I believe that most mail is delivered in 5-7 business days so please allow enough time for your registration to reach me in PA.

This is only 3 weeks before the reunion and we need it for our planning.

**If for some reason you must register after October 15<sup>th</sup> please call me to register at 610-522-5981 as tours may be limited.** *Christine Phillips*

### Show and Tell...

*Friday Evening at 1700 hours is Show & Tell time in the war room. This is the time to bring all of your old pictures and memorabilia, articles and artifacts, maps, logs, orders, or what ever you have that you can share with the rest of us. Orders are interesting. Sometimes you can find old buddies names on someone elses orders. It could be a good place to start looking for new members. Squadron patches are hard to find as well as squadron articles. As a matter of fact we need good copies, scans or pictures of squadron patches to add to our collection on the web site. Remember that our membership represents a span of about six years in Viet Nam. A lot changed in those six years. It will be fun to share our experiences.*

## Early Bird Registrations

As of this date the the following members and wives and guests have registered for the reunion. It looks as though we are going to have a very good turnout in Charleston this year. **Remember, first timers will be wearing blue name tags. Let's be sure to give them a hardy welcome and show them that we are happy to have them aboard.**

Aubray & Judy	Abrams	Phil & Lynn	Molohoski
Max & Shirley	Allison	John & Pat	Mood
Peter & Pattie	Bird	Robert & Iola	Neumayer
James & Barbara	Bisard	Tom & Cheryl	Neutzling
Bob & Eveyln	Bowers	Harry Norton	
Pat & Lesley	Brooks	Arthur & Pat	Oxley
Arthur Candenquist		Rick & Antionette	Patterson
William Clarke		Bob & Yong	Payne
Jim & Betty	Collier	Bill Perry	
Tom & Chantel	Collins	Paul & Christine	Phillips
Robert Cooper &	Mary Furrie	Terrell & Mae Rene	Presley
Al & Shirley	Cunliffe	Gery Putnam &	Alta Andrews
Dick & Maria	Darvas	Ralph Renfro &	Gabrielle
Wayne & Patty	Delawter	Swofford	
Bob & Pat	Dugan	Harry & Maggie	Rexroad
Roy & Burma	Dunn	Earl & Pam	Reynolds
Stoney & Melva	Faubus	Russell & Sue	Riggleman
Huey & Mary	Frye	Keith & Opal	Ryland
Tom Gaston		John Sams	
Don & Sue	Griffin	Rex & Norma	Sanford
Jim Hagler		Larry & Lee	Schiff
George & Rebekah	Harmon	Allen & Karen	Shanahan
Bob & Eula Mae	Hopkins	Bobby & Wynell	Slade
Dave & Jill	Hutchens	William & Ann	Smith
Richard & Mary	Kent	Don Spanks	
Jim & Sandy	Laney	Bob & Sondra	Taylor
Steve & Sandy	Lentz	Curry Taylor	
Bob Markham		John & Elaine	Teske
Dave & Kaye	Mellert	Lee Waite	
Robert & Janice	Miller	Clyde & Judy	Wilson

### Good Deal from page 1

petitive but yet make a reasonable profit. What our reunion's planner attempts to do is provide events that duplicate and are as enjoyable as those of large tour companies and convention centers.

An example of the value of making the arrangements ourselves is most apparent by looking at the cost of our Friday transportation and tour guides. The commercial tour companies charge \$42 per person for a tour of historic Charleston and The Citadel. We've been able to offer the same tour that provides more flexibility, options and events for \$11. Is that a great deal or not? The savings per couple for the day would pay a member's annual dues (Caribou Tax) for 6 years and still have change left-over.

Another way we've reduced the cost of a reunion is by intense negotiations with the hotels and caterers. It is difficult to reach agreements with hotels that will let us bring in our own snacks and drinks. The cost of snacks and drinks would again be more than triple what our \$1 per drink will be if they were sold to us by the hotel. So when you pay your \$1 for each individual drink, remember that this is a heck of a deal.



## Radisson Hotel Reservations

The Radisson hotel will hold a block of rooms until **October 7, 2003** at 1500 hours. You are responsible for making your room reservation as described on the registration form. After this time any rooms remaining in the block will be released for public sale. Individual calling after the 30-day release date will be sold on a space available basis at the group rate. The discounted group rate is valid five days before and after the reunion dates. Check-in time is at 3:00 p.m. and check-out time is at noon. Extensions can be made in advance if available.

On some air bases the Air Force is on one side of the field and civilian aircraft use the other side of the field, with the control tower in the middle. One day the tower received a call from an aircraft asking, "What time is it?" The tower responded, "Who is calling?" The aircraft replied, "What difference does it make?" The tower replied, "It makes a lot of difference. If it is an American Airlines flight, it is 3 o'clock. If it is an Air Force plane, it is 1500 hours. If it is a Navy aircraft, it is 6 bells. If it is an Army aircraft, the big hand is on the 12 and the little hand is on the 3. If it is a Marine Corps aircraft, it's Thursday afternoon and 120 minutes to "Happy Hour."

## From Our Reunion Coordinator

So far we have 15 new reunion attendees this year that will join us in Charleston, South Carolina November 5-8, 2003. The 537 Squadron has been working very hard with 6 new attendees. It is early so I am sure we will have a great group of first timers in South Carolina.

537 Squadron- Aubray and Judy Abrams  
 537 Squadron- James and Barbara Bisard  
 537 Squadron- Tom and Chantell Collins  
 537 Squadron- Dave and Kaye Mellert  
 537 Squadron- Gery Putnam and Alta Andrews  
 537 Squadron- Keith and Opal Ryland  
 536 Squadron- Jim Hagler  
 535 Squadron- Arthur Candenquist  
 535 Squadron- William Clark  
 535 Squadron- William and Ann Smith  
 483 Squadron- John Sams  
 459 Squadron- Patrick and Lesley Brooks  
 459 Squadron- Larry and Lee Schiff  
 458 Squadron- Robert and Janice Miller  
 458 Squadron- Harry Norton

We also have from the 457 Squadron John and Pat Mood coming all the way from Hawaii this year.

We have several first time attendees as well as some of our very dedicated caribou members who have volunteered to help.

Patrick and Lesley Brooks  
 John and Kaye Mellert  
 Robert and Iola Neumayer  
 Wayne and Patty Delawter

I want to thank everyone who volunteers to help during the reunion. I enjoy working with all the Caribou Family and I look forward to meeting our newest Caribou members. *Christine Phillips*

## Bereavement Committee

We of the C-7A Caribou Association Bereavement Committee would like to extend our thanks to those who have notified of the loss of a loved one. It is our small way to express our deepest sympathy and condolence from the Caribou association.

We would like to direct your attention to the web site [www.c-7acaribou.com](http://www.c-7acaribou.com), missing man section. This section is in Honor of our recent lost comrades.

*Bob Markham, Chairman Bereavement committee*  
 838 Chestnut Ave., Redlands CA 92373 (909)792-0848  
[markhambob@juno.com](mailto:markhambob@juno.com)

## Veteran's Bar

Four retired Air Force vets were walking down the street window shopping. They turned a corner and saw a sign that said "Veterans Bar" over the door of an establishment that didn't look all that well kept. They looked at each other with much skepticism, but then they went in.

On the inside, they realized they did indeed "judge the book by its cover." Then the old bartender hollered across the room, "Come on in, gents, and let me pour you one! What'll it be?"

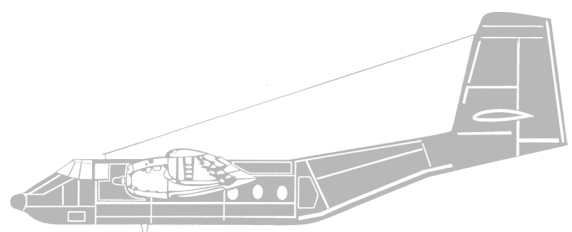
There was a fully stocked bar and the men all asked for a martini. In short time the bartender served up 4 lovely iced martinis - shaken not stirred and said, "That'll be 40 cents, please." The four men stared at the bartender for a moment then looked at each other - they could not believe their good luck. They paid the 40 cents, finished their martinis and ordered another round. Again, four excellent martinis were set up and again the bartender said, "That's 40 more cents, please." They paid the 40 cents but their curiosity was more than they could stand. They each had two martinis and so far they'd spent less than a dollar.

Finally, one of the men said, "How can you afford to serve martinis as good as these for a dime a piece?"

The bartender replied, "No doubt you've noticed the decor in here. And the outside ain't nothin' to write home about either. I don't waste money on that stuff. But, here's my story. I'm a retired Master Chief Boatswain's Mate and I always wanted to own a bar. Last year I hit the lottery for \$45 million and decided to open this place for real veterans. Every drink costs a dime — wine, liquor, beer, all the same."

"Wow! That's quite a story" said one of the men. The four of them sipped at their martinis, but couldn't help noticing three other guys at the end of the bar who didn't have a drink in front of them and hadn't ordered anything the whole time they were there. One man finished his martini and gestured at the three at the end of the bar without drinks and asked the bartender, "What's with them?"

The bartender said, "Oh, those guys are retired Marines. They're waiting for happy hour!"



## Hutch on Intercom

With this being my last issue of editing the Newsletter I want to let everyone know how much I have enjoyed my stint as editor.

When Jim Collier approached me during the Tucson reunion in 1999 and asked me if I would *help out* with the newsletter I of course agreed to help. But I had no idea of what I was getting into. Jim evidently knew that I had owned a printing business and he obviously thought he saw a quick way to put to bed a burden (publishing the newsletter) which had been born by Nick Evanish for so many years. Wayne Delawter had published the newsletter prior to the Tucson reunion, and Jim surely did not want to shoulder the job himself. For my part, I imagined that someone else would write the newsletter and that I would help in the way of maybe typesetting, printing and mailing it. That is the kind of stuff that we did in the printing business. But I had never in my life written an article for publication, and creative writing was not my forte. But I thank you Jim for thrusting me into the wonderful job of editing the Caribou Association Newsletter.

Fast forward to September 2003, nine newsletters later. I want to truly thank each and every one of you who have sent in articles, e-mails, letters, large envelopes full of good stuff, phone calls, and for the many conversations and suggestions discussed during our reunions and get togethers. Those contributions are the only things that keep a newsletter alive. One person runs out of ideas, things to write about, and stories to print very soon after he starts.

I well remember the first articles that I received. Jerry Presley e-mailed me four stories, "Orders for Nam" (Issue 12); "Phase Dock Maintenance" (Issue 13); "KP at the Officers' Mess" (Issue 14); and "Augmentee Duty" (Issue 16). The stories were truly funny and brought back many, many memories, and I

was really anxious to share the stories with all of you. I was so thrilled that I would have some good stories to place in the newsletter. Only after I thought about it for a while did I resist the temptation to place all four stories in the next issue. I exercised *extreme discipline* and printed only one story per newsletter issue. I didn't have any idea what would be available for the next issue so I needed to ration out the stories. And about that time a lot of you guys started sending in more of the good stuff that is the real meat of a newsletter.

But now it is time for change. Change for the sake of change does have beneficial results. New formats, new content, and new input are all beneficial. As of this writing we have not identified a new editor. Hopefully someone will step forward and accept the challenges and responsibilities that this assignment offers. The rewards are gratifying in that you know that you are providing a service for so many people. If one of you is moved by the call to duty, Wayne or I will gladly discuss the opportunity with you.

In order to provide continuity during a change of editors I will continue to act as a collector or receiver of articles and information until a new editor is appointed. Continue to send your good stuff to me until we advise further. I will offer all the assistance that I can to the new editor. I have a pretty extensive file system both on paper and in the computer to hand over to the next editor.

I can't emphasize strongly enough the importance of continuing to feed the newsletter your stories and anecdotes. There must be a bazillion of them out there. Really, everyone has one. And from the feedback I receive all of our members are overly anxious to read them. A new editor will need all the help you can give him. And most importantly, the newsletter is yours and will only be as good as the input that all of you provide.

I have given the job my best shot. It has been my real pleasure to serve.  
*Dave Hutchens, [459,69]Outgoing Newsletter Editor*

---

## The Aviator

I am not a Charles Yeager,  
And I'm sure not Richard Bong;  
In fact most things that I attempt  
In airplanes turn out wrong!

But I love the smell of ADI,  
And engines that are round.  
And I love to hear the big-bore bird.  
With it's deep, unbridled sound.

And I love to go to Reno,  
And I love to watch them fly.  
Tho it breaks my heart to see  
A fellow aviator die.

But I know they'll go on flying.  
And I know that so will I.  
For nothing short of death will ever  
Keep us from the sky.

And I'll never know what makes us so,  
Were we just born to fly?  
Or did we get hooked the first time we  
saw  
An airplane in the sky?  
Now some men feel a three piece suit  
Is proof they've passed the test,  
Or driving a Mercedes Benz,  
Or a Rolex on their wrist.

I shall be forever grateful.  
That He chose me from the rest,  
To spend my life in uniform,  
And brother to the best.

And when my life is over.  
And it's time that I should die;  
I hope He'll let me join the crowd  
In His hangar in the sky.

And there, we'll raise another glass  
And re-tell all those lies,  
About our mis-adventures  
Way up yonder. in the skies,

By **Michael J. Larkin**

---



Dave,

I went through some of my footlocker full of memories and collected some stuff you might be able to use (or get to someone that can. I don't need any of this back.)

1. The roster of Class 70C-5

2. Somebody sketched the "Caribou Mafia" on a Dyess O'Club bar napkin. It didn't copy very well so I included the original. Dyess Officers Club had a rule that they would not close the club as long as a full colonel was present. (I think they changed that after our class left.) Our class was split into groups for flight training in the Bou. Under the leadership of Col. King all of us "Old Guys" flew in the afternoon so we slept-in in the morning. The "Old Guys" frequently gathered in the O'Club around the piano to sing hymns and other stuff to while away the evening hours.

3. Enclosed is an original of the full lyrics of Col. King's favorite hymn, Rock of Ages (as handed out at our graduation gathering).

4. The color picture of the Yellow Tail on the ramp at Can Tho is from the Can Tho website <http://www.cantho-rvn.org>.

5. Two volumes of the series, "The United States Air Force in Southeast Asia: Tactical Airlift," and "Development and Employment of Fixed Wing Gunships: 1962 - 1972." offer some interesting references (the official version and what happened!).

6. My only copy of the Caribou Clarion is Vol. I No. 14. And I have a spare copy.

Of the members of 70C-5, Johnnie Johnson, Jerry McCannon, John E. "Jack" Thorne and I all came out of KC-135's at Fairchild AFB.

Don "Tiny" Malm found out we had met before when he was up in North Idaho visiting his sister back when I was still in high school. One night we had a big drag race and he still can't remember that I won.

I can remember all the faces but

## Mail Call

not many of the names of the guys in the 536<sup>th</sup>.

Along with the 536<sup>th</sup>'s "Ice-Machine" saga I guess my only other noteworthy accomplishment was when I was in the little "Special Snack Bar" at Bien Hoa (the one that had all the goodies brought in by the commercial airline crews from the States: good bread, cold cuts, snacks, etc.) Anyway, we were getting a load from Rocket Alley to haul to Song Be. But back to the snack bar. While I was in the snack bar I found out there freezer was broken and their supply of stateside frozen Pizzas were in jeopardy. I made them an offer they couldn't refuse for a few cases (all that they had). We took them up for the guys at Song Be (at cost) since I knew they had this great electric oven and nothing to cook in it. I coulda run for mayor there. I also drew 2<sup>nd</sup> shift Santa Bou on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve, for the 536<sup>th</sup>. That was a magical experience.

Nuff for now. Jerry Zierdt [536, 70]

*Jerry, I have all of the goodies and will be holding them for the next historian. What's with the 536<sup>th</sup>'s "Ice-Machine" saga? Ed.*



20 February 2003

I am one of the four (4) founders of the Army Otter & Caribou Association that was founded here in Columbus in 1985.

I was invited by Nick Evanish to come over to Warner Robins, GA AFB to talk to your members during your second (2nd) annual reunion. Nick mentioned he wanted to hear about some of the problems we encountered when we were just getting started in hopes you folks could avoid some of these problems. I must say I really enjoyed the day with your members at that reunion. The President of our Association at that time attended the reunion with me and

both of us joined your Association that day. Our President died a few years after we attended your reunion, but I have continued my membership during the ensuing years.

I want you to know that I have watched your Association grow through out the years since your 2nd reunion and I am so proud of what you folks have been able to accomplish. I was so pleased to see that you had finally got down to some serious business and started running it like a business by electing officers, getting your by-laws together and spreading the work load around to others who were willing to help move your Association forward.

One of the improvements I am so pleased about is your Newsletter. It is obvious that your folks take time to put this information together in a form that makes the members happy. I look back at some of the LOG-BOOKS our Association published in our early years and break out and laugh. But, on the other hand it just shows how much our means of getting information has improved.

I've just read your February 2003 Issue #17 and thoroughly enjoyed every page of this Newsletter. I know Dave Hutchens must be very proud of what he is doing for his members.

I'm aware that my dues are paid for 2003, but I want to stay ahead because at my age 76 I have a tendency to forget when some important things need to be paid, and I don't want to miss a single issue of your Newsletter. Enclosed please find my check #7328 in the amount of \$30.00 to cover an additional three (3) years of membership with you folks.

Sincerely, Bill G. Hooks



Some weeks prior to the seige of Dak Seang I was giving Msgt Dale Christensen a check ride. We were delivering from Pleiku.

On landing at Dak Seang we broke a wheel on the right main landing gear. While waiting for a new wheel to arrive Chris and I had a grand tour of the camp. I could not believe what I was seeing. The Grunts lived in holes in the ground, the walls were supported by anything they could scrounge. Some of them had aircraft aluminum pallets for walls that I was told the Air Force wanted returned, but of course I never saw any of this.

During this tour Chris made one statement that has been with me for well over thirty years. "THIS WOULD BE A HELL OF A PLACE TO DIE FOR" and as most of us know Chris, along with Lt Train and Lt Suprenant, were the first to be downed on April 2 -1970.

Ed Hardy  
537 Phu Cat 69 70



### ARRIVAL

We, (I say "we" because my memory is not as good as it was thirty plus years ago) about ten flight engineers from C-5's and C-141's, left California on 1 July, 1969, then stopped over at Clark A.B. for a week or so for a little jungle survival. We arrived at Saigon around the middle of July.

We were taken to a barracks that seemed to be a hundred yards long with double bunks about ten inches in between. The place smelled like a dumpster. We decided this place was below our standard of living so we headed for Base O.P.S. As we entered ops, a captain was leaving and wanted to know what we were doing.

Well, he was a C-130 pilot leaving for Da-Nang and was glad to drop us at Vung Tau, Cam Ran, and Phu Cat. I thanked the captain and deplaned just as the sun was coming up over my new home, Phu Cat A.B. RVN.

### DEPARTURE

We scheduled to leave exactly one

year after leaving California, so five air medals, one D.F.C. and many close calls later we boarded the 490 Phu Cat to Cam Ran two days early.

Arriving at housing at Cam Ran, to my surprise the housing officer was Lt. Col. Edward Kondziolka my old friend and boss as my crew commander of Titan II missile launch crew. Col. Kondziolka evicted some guys not on flying status and gave us air conditioned quarters for two days.

If I had learned one thing in the last year it was that there are a lot worse smells than the barracks we avoided in Saigon.

### GRENADE

On the seventh of April, 1970 we departed Phu Cat, picked up a load of RVN troops (can't remember where). Before we reached their destination we were diverted to Plei Ku to take part in air drops into Dak Seang.

After the RVNs deplaned I found a phosphorus grenade between the buffer board and skin of the aircraft. The pin was pulled. I notified A.C.P. and E.O.D. arrived in less than five minutes. A C-130 was waiting to take the R.V.N.s out but they had not boarded. I tried to get A.C.P. to have them reboard the C-7, and take their same seats. I was told there was not time. If I had not found the grenade they would have surely downed one C-7 and killed three people. If they had reboarded the C-7 I would have killed three people (the one above the grenade and one on each side).

I often wonder how many people died down the road because of A.C.P.'s decision.

### HOG WILD

Hank Bell came to our room and said he needed some help so I went with him to the crew van which was backed up to a bunker. In the van "on foot" was a hog weighing around three hundred pounds. We were going to roast a pig.

Hank Bell and a couple more guys

dressed with flack jackets, steel pots, M-16's and side arms went to the small town of Phu Cat. For trade they carried a 100k bag of rice. Most of the large bags of rice had Crowley, LA - Houston, TX stamped on the bag. They returned with half the crew van full of charred wood (used as charcoal).

A day or two later Lt. Grimes (now Lt. Col. Retired) butchered the hog. Lots of guys had a hand in the turning the whole hog on a spit day and night. After about three days they decided that wasn't going to work so they cut the hog into several pieces and after a couple more days we had a party.

### WANT SUGAR WITH THAT COFFEE?

The word was passed around one morning before takeoff that we were running short on coffee and sugar. That evening after all flights were in we divvied the loot consisting of forty "40" pounds of coffee and sixty "60" pounds of sugar. I didn't ask what was traded. I didn't fly that day so this did truly happen on my day off. TSgt. Edward Hardy, [537, 69]



Good Evening Jerry and Dave.....

My name is George K. Turnes, stationed at CRB Nov 67 to Nov 68 with the 458TAS. Worked their Squadron Ops as an A2C. My Supervisor, when he finally arrived was Sgt Jim Linstrom, OPs officer was LtCol Bascom P Smith followed by LtCol Lionel Fasolas (sp), LtCol Scudder was commander. I believe his date of rank for LC was 1955.

As I read Jerry's Presley's article in the Feb 2003 Newsletter it brought back many memories. Jerry, I think you and I knew each other - Somewhere.

A little of my history. Scott AFB (Base Ops) and Travis AFB (22nd AF Command Post) before the 458<sup>th</sup>, and

then Mc Guire after that (Base Command Post). Discharged in Feb'70. Joined NY Air National Guard in '72 (109th TAS...ski C130's) transferred to 174th TFS (A-10's then F 16's) in '80. Retired in December '96. Mobilized for Desert Storm and deployed to El Karge AB, Saudi Arabia. The sand at CRB was a much better texture. Time in the Air Guard was split between Disaster Preparedness and being a First Shirt to a Logistics Sq.

Now some CRB memories. KP and cold showers were wonderful things. You mentioned the out houses - 6 stallers as I remember. One day when the Vietnamese were not permitted on base for whatever security reason I got the pleasure of being picked to burn the end product of those facilities, a little JP4 and a lot of smoke. That was a *very memorable* experience. I have four grown children now but when my oldest daughter, who is now 25 and a teacher, came home with a homework assignment about one of her parent's most memorable trips, my trip to Vietnam was it. Her next question was what was my most memorable remembrance of that trip. Well guess what I told her. She and my wife didn't think that was appropriate for her project. It sure was very memorable to me.

Some other memories... Soon after I arrived the wing lost a bird (# unknown to me now) and they were looking for Search and Rescue volunteers. Well I spent a few hours lying on my belly in a C-7 with a tie down strap tied around my waist looking out the rear end of a C-7. My first Flight.

Visits to my squadrons mission site at the 5th Special Forces site in NaTrang and visits to the city. Told not to get gas in the site Commanders jeep at the AF Base there because the OD jeep with army numbers wasn't really an Army Jeep. The 5th had a great club that all the 458th was welcomed at.

Our Squadron Pilots Personal

Equipment guy, A1C Hokie Adams, had really good connections in the city.

I Remember Bob Hopes visit - Rachel Welch - very nice memories of that show along with about a million others at the show. Bob Hope had a lot of bad sand trap jokes about CRB. I was also there for LBJs visit. I have some bad pictures from that.

We built the Red Tail Inn for something to do. First Sgt Earl Churchill ran that little project, I think. Built a nice little bar between hoochs, about 20 by 30 with porch, upper deck and lower deck. Think the materials came from the 5<sup>th</sup> SFG, with bar, bar stools and assorted black felt paintings from the Philippines, by way of planes returning from major maintenance overhaul. Wing Commander Mason cut the ribbon at the grand opening.

I also found out about the trips off the base with Civic Actions group and went along whenever I could. We mostly helped deliver rice to those in need.

A good article that talks about the Caribou mission is in the October '68 Airman magazine titled "Vietnam Airlift" by Capt Robert P. Everett. We were Front Page on that issue.

Well enough for now...hoping to make Charleston SC this November Write back if you get a chance George Tunes [458, 67]



Dave,

I found newsletter #6. May have some more - will keep looking.

Your last newsletter was the best. My wife and I read it from cover to cover. I learned that Dick Scobee flew C-7's in Vietnam the same time as I did. I knew Dick here at Edwards AFB. My son dated his daughter. Wish I had known he flew C-7's, we could have told each other some good stories. Thanks, Dan Yost [537, 68]



Dear Dave,

Responding to your call in the recent Newsletter for amusing incidents, here is one you might find news worthy.

I was Chief of Maintenance for the two C-7A squadrons at Vung Tau in 66-67. We were tenants on the Army Air Base. The Army operated one or two companies of aircraft that had a secret mission of some sort. It was pretty hush-hush. Anyway, their aircraft (can't remember the designation) were twin-engined propeller driven.

One day a company commander was demonstrating the capabilities of the aircraft, one of which was a safety feature that prevented retraction of the landing gear on the ground as long as the weight of the aircraft compressed the oleo struts sufficiently to keep the retract circuit open.

The PSP taxiways and parking areas were not all that smooth. As the pilot was taxing at a pretty good rate and bouncing along, he put the retract switch in the "up" position (to demonstrate the safety feature) and sure enough, the system worked as advertised. The gear came up, the plane went down, on its belly, both props chewing up the PSP, etc, etc. Enough said. Red-faced pilot?

On a personal note... during Tet I was driving through town en route from the base to my BOQ when a brat of a kid threw a lighted firecracker into my open jeep. It exploded and of course I thought I had been bombed. But luckily, no harm done. No physical harm, that is, but it blew my mind for a little bit. As I say now, that was the closet I came to enemy fire.

Anyway, the Newsletter is great. Keep up the good work. Fraternally, Gerald (Jerry) Ottem, [536, 66]

**Subject:** Info on 535th/536th TAS

Don't know if this is any help, but during 1967-68, I was a Tactical Airlift Laison Airman (TALA, the officer was designated TALO) with the call sign of Tamale 09 Alfa. My assignment was the 9th Infantry Division at Bearcat, which was the Division basecamp during my tour (I understand Division Headquarters later mover to Dong Tam). I worked for the 834th Air Division, then located at Ton Son Nhut, coordinating the airlift requirements between the Army and the ALCC. My "office" was a jeep with a radio pallet, I believe it was a MRC-107, but not sure.

Either the 535th or 536th TAS at Vung Tau (or both) supplied an aircraft and crew everyday for our routine "milk runs" from Bearcat (Long Than), Dong Tam, Tan An, and return, making as many runs as they could between sun up and sun down.

Activity increased during Tet 1968, requiring me to request additional aircraft (or "scrounging" the Black Horse bird from the 1st Calvary if they didn't need it). I remember one of the C7A crews telling me they had set an airlift record during this time for the Caribou, but I never saw anything official on it.

**Some other notes:**

We started a daily shuttle between Vung Tau and Bearcat for short in country R&R (the planes always came in and left empty each day, so it followed naturally). My customers included 9th Infantry Div. guys and the Thai "Queens Cobras" attached to the 9th Div. I seem to recall it was a Thai Captain who first approached us about it. We could put a lot of Thais on the Caribou, "combat loaded", using a cargo strap across their lap. Never did break them from "bribing" me with beer and Thai whiskey each time they flew to Vung Tau, although I did try. Even I could not go through a case of beer and a bottle of whiskey in three days (I would need at least four days!). Anyway, I just donated it to the hooch resources.

I remember one crew who went off the end of the runway at Dong Tam on a rainy day (the runway was PSP). The Army used an APC with chains connected to the main gear to pull them back onto the runway. No harm done I ever heard of and they completed the day without incident. (The problem was the prop reverse lever was sticking, so they said, so we squirted a little WD-40 on it and everything was O.K. after that).

I started refueling operations with an Army fuel truck to increase the sortie rate, which worked fine except for one instance. My daily Caribou came back from Dong Tam/Tan An with Bingo fuel about sundown, planning to refuel at my site. Problem was, the Army had not told us they were out of AVGAS. The crew did not have enough fuel to go anywhere, so the Army organized an armored

column to escort the fuel truck to Long Binh and back, returning to the airfield about ten that night. This was after TET started, but before the Army upgraded the airfield, so we were hanging out in the dark. No one there but the crew and us (myself and an Army SP4 assigned as my assistant). We refueled without lights and the crew fired up and departed, using the landing lights on the Caribou.

Sorry I can't help with any names of the crews, but I have trouble remembering some of the guys I bunked with during that time from the ALO detachment (19th TASS, Bien Hoa).

(I finally managed to get on flying status, flying the last thirteen years of my career as an Airborn Radio Operator. Started in the SAC/PACCS (EC-135L/C/G), migrated to NEACP (EC-135J, E4A/B), and ended up flying VC-135 and C9A aircraft in the 1st MAS/89 MAW at Andrews AFB, Maryland).

Got to go for now. You have a really good site and I will be visiting you again.

Thanks,  
Melvin "Charlie" Steadman  
USAF, Retired  
cb.steadman@verizon.net

**Let's Tell The World . . .**

Larry Schiff is one of our proactive members who thought of a good idea for advertising our reunion. He placed an announcement in his local newspaper. If every one of our members who get the newsletter did the same it would pretty well blanket the nation. It is possible that some unknown ex-Caribou type who hasn't heard about our crazy outfit might be out there and see it. Please become proactive and follow Larry's lead with something like the following in your local paper:

**C-7A CARIBOU ASSOCIATION**

The USAF C-7A Caribou Association will hold a reunion November 5th through November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003, in Charleston, SC.

All Caribou squadron members, and/or anyone who supported their mission, are invited.

For information, write our Reunion Coordinator, Christine Phillips at P.O. Box 143, Folcroft, PA 19032 (610-522-5981) or E-mail christielee52@yahoo.com, including your unit and dates of assignment.

## War Stories!

Dak Seang

### Pleiku ALCE 'sweats it out' Along With Caribou Crews

.....  
**Editor's note — The following story was written over a month ago during the busiest part of the Dak Seang airlift operation. The author spent five days and nights living with the men at the Pleiku ALCE and so well described the mood during that tense, difficult period that it is worth reading even though that moment has now become history.**  
 .....

By: Sgt. Richard P. Leifer

PLEIKU AB — A studied calm seems to settle over the U.S. Air Force airlift control element (ALCE) office at Pleiku AB with the approach of a new series of sorties.

Used as the command post in a resupply operation to air-drop supplies into Dak Seang, a Republic of Vietnam Civilian Irregular Defense Group camp 14 miles northwest of Dak To in Kontum Province, the office has been the site of increased activity during the past week, a week that saw three C-7 Caribous downed by enemy ground fire.

**But there is a feeling of almost enforced peacefulness as more sorties begin.**

Strewn about is evidence of the last eight days — an abundance of used coffee cups, combat gear piled here and there waiting for owners to return and newspapers left scattered about open, half-read, left for more pressing matters.

And people mill about quietly wearing signs of too little sleep, too much strain and coffee.

**The pilots for the nex missions talk animatedly trying to "psych" themselves for the job they will soon have to do.**

Lieutenant Colonel Loris L. Dorris

of Highland, Calif., the ALCE commander, takes time to read a letter and answer it.

The man heading the operation, Colonel R. P. Larivee of Lafayette, La., is away getting a shave, a shower and a well deserved steak. He'll be back.

U.S. Special Forces Warrant Officer John Tatalajski — called Mr. T. to avoid tied tongues — is at his compound and will return later. He is in charge of rigging the supplies for the airdrop.

**Those left in the ALCE make small talk, discussing the co-ordination involved in making an airdrop and repeating the old saying about waiting being the worst part etc.**

One mission monitor gets up from his desk muttering, "Why does your pencil break in the middle of a war?"

**Meanwhile, the first few aircraft are on their way to their target. Then the word comes, an excited unprintable synonym for, "Right on target." The pall of tension lifts and held breath is released.**

Before long the plane is home, its performance to be repeated shortly in eight other sorties as C-7 crews place 27 pallets into Dak Seang without serious incident.

*(The above piece is printed from THE VIETNAM AIRLIFTER dated May 1970)*

I was ferrying a Caribou to Vietnam and when I contacted Cam Ranh Approach Control (about 50 mi. off-shore), they asked me if I could authenticate (by giving the secret password of the day). No, I couldn't. They then scrambled the alert F-4s to come out and identify us. I was on the same radio frequency as the F-4s as they came to intercept. They were test fir-

ing their guns and whatever else they do. My co-pilot just knew they were going to shoot us down. I knew they wouldn't and tried to console him but to no avail.

Suddenly the two F-4s came screaming by from our 6 o'clock position and just above the cockpit. They got our attention. We were doing about 110 knots and they must have been about 350 knots. The lead F-4 asked his wingman: "Did you get his tail number?" Wingman replied: "No, he's too slow." Lead said "Well, let's go around and try it again." I just had a great idea. I asked the co-pilot for full flaps. I was going to slow down to 55 knots and have some fun with the F-4s. The co-pilot begged me not to. He is still terrified they will shoot us down.

There goes the F-4s again. They had flaps and everything hanging to slow down but they were still too fast. Same conversation between the F-4 pilots.

I saw a small cumulus cloud ahead and decided to go into the cloud and orbit at 55 knots with full rudder. I'm sure I appeared on their radar to be hovering. Now they are really confused. I still had not said anything to the F-4s. One of the F-4s said that he was bingo (low) fuel and had to return to base. The other F-4 said, "We can't until we get his tail number. I don't know what to do. Nothing in the book about this." To ease their predicament, I asked them if they wanted me to give them my tail number so they could go home. They said yes and were ever so thankful. As they left us, they did aileron rolls as their flaps came up. Approach Control instructed us to land at Cam Ranh and report to the Base Operations Officer. We did and he read me the riot act. He informed me that he could make me pay for the fuel the F-4s used. All because I didn't know the secret password. I apologized profusely and finally got out of there. I looked up the F-4 pilots later and we had a good laugh over it all. Another successful mission.

*Larry J. Laverne [457, 66]*

## How It Was...

Performing duty in a combat zone caused a lot of changes to be made in the way jobs were accomplished. The working and living environment changed. No, not just the weather. Heat, rain, sand and dust did make a real difference. But there were no longer the modern and orderly maintenance buildings, offices and dining facilities like back in the States. In a combat zone a lot of aircraft maintenance got performed under tents and out in the rain and with mud floors to work on, and often performed at night under the headlights of trucks and jeeps, or even flashlights. Maintenance shops were set up under tents and in metal roofed hoochs. Engine changes were made out in the boonies at austere landing strips and ramps. Meals were prepared out of mess tents and out in the open over gasoline-fired grills. Dishes and mess kits were washed by their owners in G.I. cans of hot water heated with gas burners. Some latrine facilities were made out of 55-gallon drums. Those were all big changes in the working environment. But yet the daily jobs all got done in outstanding ways that kept the fighting machine in top form.

Perhaps that described the earlier days of our tours in Vietnam. After about 1966 engineering companies constructed many newer maintenance facilities, office buildings, dining facilities, living quarters and longer, dual runways. But not much changed in the sky. The flying environment, compared to the States, remained somewhat of a maze to negotiate each day.

The following article written by Pete Bird is a vivid description of the flying conditions in the airspace over Vietnam. Hopefully many of you will have stories or articles that you will share with the rest of us on how you coped with unique situations. In the June 2001 issue of the Caribou Newsletter Manson Polley [483,66] de-

scribed his first job working for the 483<sup>rd</sup> Wing in Vietnam. "I became part of the initial cadre sitting on wood boxes, using wood boxes for desks, etc., trying to write wing intelligence regs for 6 squadrons that I could only imagine what their requirements would be. VERY interesting year to say the least."

*(I know some of you can give us some good stories. Ed.)*



## Flying In Vietnam

Contrary to what I would have believed before arrival, the greatest danger presented to the military aviator in South Vietnam was not the enemy. He was always there and would not hesitate to shoot at you if you provided the opportunity, but he was not the biggest problem. The real issue was the tremendous amount of air traffic, the confused air traffic control and communications system, and artillery and naval gunfire. The situation changed minute by minute and it required a high degree of awareness to avoid disaster.

The Republic of Vietnam, claiming itself to be a sovereign state, chose to operate the civil air traffic control system. When we flew under Instrument Flying Rules (IFR), we filed a flight plan with the Vietnamese air traffic controllers. Unfortunately, they were not yet well enough trained to do the job. At the larger airfields, like Tan Son Nhut in Saigon, there was rarely a problem, while at places like Nha Trang, just north of Cam Ranh, you were literally taking your life in your hands to depend fully on the controllers. Consequently, whenever we flew IFR, we would use one radio to maintain contact with the air traffic controllers and a second to talk to the nearest Ground-Controlled Intercept (GCI) site. GCI was normally used to provide extremely accurate navigation for aerial strikes (the B-52's used it

to put their bombs exactly where they were needed), but they had the best radars in-country and took pity on fellow Americans at the mercy of the civilian air traffic control system. They would follow our flights and advise us of any nearby traffic so we could take our own evasive action.

Most of the time we were VFR (Visual Flight Rules) or "Special VFR" (this tended to be a euphemism for IFR without a flight plan and clearance) and we did not interact at all with the Vietnamese air traffic controllers. We depended on our eyes to avoid other aircraft. Remember that we had the civilian Vietnamese traffic (mostly Air Vietnam), civilian international air carriers (all operating IFR), the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marines, the U.S. Navy, the Australian Air Force, as well as the VNAF (Vietnamese Air Force) all operating more or less independently at the tactical level. Compartmentalization of information was routine and necessary in the military, so we had no idea what missions the Army or the Navy might be running and, likewise, they had no idea what we were doing. It paid to be attentive.

Now add the grunts on the ground to the equation. They played with some really nasty toys like howitzers. A howitzer is nothing more than a large rifle, but it can chuck a high explosive projectile over 10,000' high. Since 10,000' was our maximum operational altitude, our only choice was to avoid the launch site and impact site of those projectiles and all points on the line between. To facilitate this, the Army set up a network of "Arty" (short for artillery) command posts and sectioned off all of South Vietnam into regions. Before entering a region we called up the Army Arty site and asked for current firing information. To add to the confusion, the Army used arcane FM radios which operated in the 30 - 50 MHz range for these communica-

tions. That type of radio is unique to the Army, so our aircraft were retrofitted with them. They were among the least reliable communications devices we had. The Army would also change their frequencies often so as to keep the enemy guessing, but it also quite often kept us guessing. One learned early in the game what a “marking round” looked like. A marking round was a projectile that produced a thick column of white smoke on impact. This was to allow the artillery spotters (sometimes in light aircraft) to determine the exact impact point and relay instructions to the gun crew if adjustments were necessary. More than once we saw marking round impacts in areas we thought were clear. One of the most painful photographs I have ever seen was posted in all the Caribou operations areas — it was a picture of a C-7A Caribou immediately after it had been hit dead center by a 105mm HE round. The aircraft was still in the air — in two separate pieces. The picture was a reminder to check for artillery before entering a new sector. A further complication of the artillery problem was that the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) rarely participated in warning people of their intentions. They just rolled out the guns and started shooting.

The U.S. Navy also got into this game, but they had even nastier toys. The Navy often set up their ships off the coast and fired inland. A naval rifle, as it is properly called, can achieve a projectile altitude of over 20,000' and their projectiles could be as big as a small car. Fortunately, the Navy was very efficient at informing us of its intended firing areas in our pre-mission briefings every morning, so we could give these areas wide berth.

I guess the postscript is that you also had to fly the airplane from time to time. Without a doubt, the best part of flying the ‘Bou was the landing. The shorter the field and the

rougher was all the better, for that was what this aircraft was designed for and thrived on. In a short field approach, the Caribou had a decidedly nose-low attitude. Those huge full-span flaps saw to that. Airspeed over the runway threshold could be as low as 42-43 knots and a huge pitch change was necessary to accomplish the flare preparatory to the touchdown. When there is less than 1,000 feet of dirt in front of you, you don't play around trying to get a “grease job” landing. You plant the mains, reverse the props, lower the nose, and get the beast stopped with brakes, reverse thrust, and always a great cloud of red dust. Properly done, this could be accomplished in under 200 feet if you had the luck to have any decent headwind, and never more than 500 feet in the worst of conditions. I think everyone took great pride in his ability to put 14 tons of aircraft exactly on the money and get it stopped in the shortest possible distance; I know I did!

The second best part of flying the ‘Bou was cruise. Here, at 105 knots and with no pressurization or air conditioning, we flew with the cockpit side windows open and the rear cargo door open. That provided a great breeze and also allowed you to hang your elbow (or your whole arm) out the window. The view from the “greenhouse” cockpit was superb and we were low enough to do a lot of sightseeing in our scheduled rounds. From that vantage point, Vietnam was a very beautiful country. On the ground, the inside of the aircraft was like a furnace, but as the aircraft climbed, the temperature dropped at 2 degrees C for every thousand feet. We welcomed the cool air at cruise and the opportunity to get some relief from the heat and humidity and often cruised at 9,000 or 10,000 feet (depending on our heading) just to get the maximum benefit from that standard atmospheric temperature lapse rate.

The takeoffs were always the time for extreme care. The Caribou, especially at high gross weights and the high density altitudes typical of a hot, humid climate, had very marginal single-engine performance. In a full STOL takeoff configuration at max weight, in fact, the best single engine rate of climb we could expect was - 50 feet per minute! In these situations, from the time you passed your refusal speed until you accelerated and got the flaps retracted, you were entirely at the mercy of Pratt & Whitney. The most likely time for an engine failure was at the initial power reduction from Takeoff Power to METO Power. Never has an engine been treated so gently as during those initial power reductions! Fortunately, both of my Caribou engine failures occurred at cruise altitude and presented no great problem.

Pete Bird, [535, 71]



On another sunny day in Vietnam, I was enroute from a Montagnard area in the Central Highlands (where we had just airdropped some pigs) to Pleiku. A desperate English speaking voice came up on 121.5(VHF guard). “Caribou over Kontum, Caribou over Kontum, do you read me?” I immediately answered as I wanted to help if I could. A thankful voice from an Army unit replied “We had four ‘ladies of the evening’ flown in from Pleiku to spend a few days with us and we were just advised by a friend at HQ that Gen. X is enroute to our location in a Huey for a no notice inspection. We have to get these ladies out of here right now. Can you land and take them to Pleiku? Please.” I told him that I was low on fuel and didn't see how I could do it. He begged. He pleaded. I landed.

Lavern from page 15

We made an engine running onload of the four Vietnamese lovelies. They were smiling and happy but confused as to why they were leaving early. As we were taxing out, the General was landing. I took the ladies to Pleiku. I'm sure the guys at Kontum were eternally grateful and I hope they passed their inspection. Another successful mission. *Larry J. Laverne [457, 66]*

## "The Blue Baron" Does It Again.

*The following article is taken from "The Tiger Rag," the squadron newsletter published by the 535th Troop Carrier Squadron. It is Issue 8 dated 17 May 1967.*

"The Blue Baron" has truly lived up to his name once again. His unusual knack of arriving at unforeseen circumstances and overcoming them was proven again on 9 May 1967.

Shortly after touch-down (approx 100 ft roll.) at Due Hoa, a loud noise was heard. The "Baron" looked at his co-pilot and said "My God, did I set her down that hard?" It was at this crucial point it was discovered that the right landing gear had struck a land mine planted on the runway by Charlie (or maybe it was SNOOPY".)

By sheer ability (and possibly some fright), the Baron kept the "Bou" rolling straight ahead and stopped it in the minimum amount of feet. To keep the aircraft on the runway was imperative; parked adjacent to the runway on the right side were several helicopters and disaster was evident if the aircraft should veer toward them. The Baron's control of the damaged aircraft prevented this.

Upon inspection, the two right tires were found to be blown off, and the right wing and starboard engine were riddled with shrapnel, aileron shot away and the starboard side of the fuselage completely peppered with shrapnel, all but two of the windows shot away and the cargo door was laying on the runway. Even the horizontal stabilizer was hit. Of the ten barrels of fuel being transported, not one had a hole in it. The crew and passengers escaped injury. The Baron's comment: "Gimme another plane."

On another occasion, the "Baron" was credited with outstanding flying ability when he successfully landed his aircraft which was fully loaded, after losing one engine immediately after take-off.

Of equal importance is the fact that on both of these occasions, no injuries were sustained, a definite result of the Baron's flying ability.

To the Baron, we all say "Well Done."  
*(Reportedly the "Baron" is one Captain Harl V. Piety. There seems to be no trace of the Baron, no records, and he is not a member of our association. If anyone can identify him, or locate him, please get him to our next reunion and I will personally buy him a drink. Ed.)*

## Big Round Engines

*Dedicated to all who flew behind round engines!*  
We gotta get rid of these turbines, they are ruining aviation. We need to go back to big round engines. Anybody can start a turbine. You just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START", and then remember to move it back to "ON" after a while. My PC is more difficult to start. Cranking a round engine requires skill, finesse and style. On some planes, the pilots are not even allowed to do it. Turbines start by whining a while then give a small lady-like "poot" and start whining louder. Jet engines? just light the fire and go. Round engines give a satisfying rattle-rattle, click-click, BANG, more rattles, another BANG, a big macho puff of smoke or two, more clicks, a lot more smoke and finally a serious low-pitched roar. We like that - - it's a guy thing. It's kinda like starting a big ole Harley Davidson, or Indian of yesteryear.

When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and you can concentrate on the flight ahead. Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan; Useful, but hardly exciting.

Turbines don't break often enough, leading to aircrew boredom, complacency and inattention. A round engine at speed looks and sounds like it's going to blow up at any minute. This helps to concentrate the mind. Turbines don't have enough control levers to keep a pilot's attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights.

Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman lanterns. Round engined planes smell like God intended flying machines to smell. Big round engines require "mag checks." The sound of a big round engine goosed up to about 1800 rpm at the end of the runway and listening vicariously to the pilot completing the "mag check," and being able to tel, even from a half mile away that the engine is good to go, is a lost art.

We haven't even explored the subject of "carb heat"! Gerald Garner 459th 'bouman [459, 68]  
*(Gerald, can we count on another dissertation on "carb heat" in our next newsletter? Ed.)*



Can You Name This Place?



## “A BOLT OF RIBBONS WINS MANY BATTLES”

Bob Bowers

....Napoleon Bonaparte

There is often a strange chemistry at work that alters events after they have happened, making them less or more important than they had seemed at the time they occurred. As I think back and apply this concept to that period of time some thirty-seven years ago I am remembering the brave volunteer acts of some of the best and most dedicated people with whom I have ever served or known.

As the Caribou Line Chief in the 61st Aviation Company and later the 536th Tactical Airlift Squadron, I am speaking of the aircraft crew chiefs, assistant crew chiefs and flight line mechanics. Also, the aircraft specialists....engine, prop., aircraft electric, fabrication, instrument and communication men.

In the fall of 1966, and during the transition period of the CV-2, later the C-7A, our flight line people stood ready to deploy with little or no notice to jungle airstrips some with nothing but dirt or grass runways. They were called on to make repairs and recover caribou aircraft due to breakdowns, ground accidents, or damage from enemy fire. Most of these acts were volunteer deployments into remote and isolated areas considered insecure and in very close proximity to Viet Cong or North Vietnamese forces. It was necessary to airlift the maintenance troops back and forth from their home stations daily. Several of these flights became involved with actual contact with enemy gunfire with resulting damage to the aircraft. Ban Me Thuat, Dian, Tay Ninh, Lai Khe, and Bear Cat in particular were places to be avoided at all costs at night time.

I recall one time when TSGT's Goodfellow and Center, both caribou crew chiefs, were dispatched out to several jungle air strips in the delta area. Their job was to search for of all things, cargo tie down straps. They

were in short supply and critically needed for successful air cargo handling and air drops. As the flight mechanics and flying crew chiefs will attest, we went through thousands of these items. Goodfellow and Center didn't have much luck in finding any but as a last resort they wanted to check out a wrecked C-123 downed by ground fire in a jungle clearing near Tay Ninh City War Zone "D". In spite of U.S. Army warnings not to go into the crash area these guys, utilizing a "borrowed" weapons carrier, managed to come away with a treasured batch of tie-down straps. They even arranged shipment of them to Vung Tau Army Airfield.

In order to meet the increasing demands for operational aircraft on a seven day per week schedule most of the aircraft flight line maintenance had to be done at night. We had no lighting! During the Army-Air Force conversion, the army had taken all of the portable lighting units. For us it was flashlights and jeep headlamps. The rumor was there was available mobile lighting in storage out between the runways at T.S.N. in Saigon. Armed with a half dozen jugs of good whiskey we searched out a previously identified U.S. Army Corporal who worked for an Army warrant officer in charge of a huge storage yard. The yard was surrounded by a mine field at T.S.N. Acting unofficially and off the record, we "negotiated" our needed lighting and in addition to that, a twelve foot by six foot walk-in beverage cooler. It weighted over 1200 pounds, and we had it ear-marked for our sixty-five (65) man barracks in an old French villa, located off the beaten track in the village of Vung Tau. The cooler was delivered by a C-123 aircraft, at night to the far end of the ramp at Vung Tau Army Airfield. It was then loaded onto a five ton Army truck

(personal vehicle of chief Master Sergeant George O. Crain, (my first cousin). He was a W.W.II veteran, and better known by his friends as Go-Go. The vehicle was driven by TSGT Pete Petricci, 536TAS, and Go-Go's personal driver.

In early 1967, we heard another rumor about a warehouse full of Caribou 780 equipment. It contained pieces, parts, and components, all needed and useful for our caribou operation. Apparently there had been an Army CV-2 Aviation Company operating from Don Maung Air Base in Thailand. All that remained there was an Army major, a caribou pilot who was in charge of the warehouse. Equipped with a name and building number I arrived at Don Maung, which shared a portion of the Bangkok International Airport. It was truly a huge and sprawling facility. Within a few minutes after arrival I met a couple of Air Force NCOS from the 834th Air Division, Saigon. Supply types, who had just missed their flight back to the T.S.N. A chief Master Sergeant and a Master sergeant. They had a couple days to kill so they offered me their assistance in finding the Army Major and his digs. We found him to be a very jovial fellow (a pipe smoker) and eager to turn the whole warehouse over to us so he could go stateside and retire. My division buddies, having some source of power and authority behind them, quickly and conveniently arranged for pick up and air delivery of all the contents of the warehouse to Vung Tau Airfield. The needed items arrived there before I did proving good things can happen to good people.

A couple of our flight line supervisors, Gene Baxter and Master Sgt. Baniciki, both having personal friends with the near-by U.S. Navy, heard of a couple of 1966 Ford pickup trucks that had been fished out of the South China Sea. Apparently they had fallen in shallow water while being unloaded from a ship. The

trucks were only slightly damaged and we desperately needed them for flight line expediter vehicles. The Navy ship bound officers and chiefs would give anything to get souvenirs and collectibles that were native to Viet Nam.. Items like blow guns, montanard cross-bows, K-bar and Camillus knives, M-1 carbines, and hand made items were all highly prized. Our sources were of course the flight mechs, crew chiefs and the 5th Special Forces troops. Our guys came away with two good pick-ups plus mobile two way radios, all of which so improved and modernized our flight line operations we thought we were back stateside.

My attempts at remembering and writing these accounts are basically to show that all the pride, the kudos, even the bragging about how we had outdone the Army and set all those new airlift records (*see box lowere right hand corner this page*), (and we were proud of that), was made possible by the extra and volunteer efforts of our flight line troops. Men who with very few exceptions demonstrated they were head and shoulders above "...the summer soldier and sunshine patriot who at times will try men's souls and will in crises shrink from the services of their country." (From the *CRISIS* - Dec.1776 Thomas Paine). I do not intend to demean or put down anyone's service during our ten years of war in Viet Nam. However, it is my intent to show the vast difference between those who safely served and those who really put their "hides on the line." I can only speak of those whom I observed daily and our flight line people did just that on a daily basis. Most aircraft maintenance is routine stuff. The aircrews would accept the airplane with no reservations. Other times after major maintenance was performed, test flights or in-flight checks were necessary following repairs or replacement of engines,

props, landing-gear or major flight control maintenance. Several times I observed a pilot expressing some doubt or mild reservation about the air worthiness of the aircraft (even after being assured the aircraft was safe). Some would challenge the crew chief or even the specialists who did the work on the plane to fly with them. Think about it caribou driver—did anyone of these flight line troops ever refuse to go?

Crew chiefs didn't have to fly, but they did because in many cases the mission required it, particularly early on and during the Army/Air Force transition period. SSGT Troy Shankles didn't have to fly, but he was awarded the Purple Heart and Air Medal because he did fly. TSET Bill DuVall didn't have to fly, he was an engine mechanic. However he did fly on every test flight after engine change or major engine maintenance. Marshall Goodfellow and Bud Center didn't have to fly, but they did. For a whole year anytime they were needed they were on board. They were always mission ready and first in line.

Were any of them given special recognition? No, special recognition was in short supply. Troy Shankles' volunteer efforts were recognized...but he had to be wounded first to receive it. He was hit in the chest by ground fire while assisting the loadmaster making an air cargo drop.

Goodfellow, Center and DeVall were recommended for the Air Medal but thirty-five (35) years later they still don't have them. The 7th Air Force approved the awards but

they were never presented to them. I personally wrote up several flight-line troops for the Air Force Commendation Medal before I left South Viet Nam in December of 1967. I wonder if any of them received their medals? We as supervisors and superintendents, were not informed that these commendation medal recommendations could have included the "V" for Valor devise which several of the young guys would have qualified for, as they came under enemy fire. I am not looking for an excuse for my ignorance but supervisors during those times didn't know anything about a "V" devise. How sad and pathetic I feel now. Our guys deserved those awards at that time and still do.

Marshall Goodfellow wrote me after 35 years, reflecting on his year in Viet Nam, "I never received any FRUIT SALAD at all." I was crest fallen, I really was! I've wondered ever since, how many more can say the same thing?

I picked up an unofficial document at the St Louis reunion last year, giving inclusive dates for the award of the outstanding unit with "V" devise to our wing. Also the 483rd T.A.W. may have been awarded the Republic of Viet Nam Gallantry Cross. Does anyone know, or care? I have inquired about these awards at the Military Records Section in St. Louis but have not heard from them. Maybe our good brother in arms, Steve Kelly can go in there and face them down. He lives in St. Louis. Their shredder probably works overtime. Sorry to be so windy...thanks for indulging me. See you all in South Carolina in November '03. *Bob Bowers, [536, 66]*

Year	Sorties	Flying Hours	Passengers	Cargo Tons
1966	128,545	83,715	718,027	90,498
1967	155,825	99,863	1,075,196	95,565
1968	176,394	120,809	1,303,142	105,825
1969	177,524	125,037	1,076,075	100,906
1970	144,748	111,187	597,873	84,936
1971	107,046	88,147	595,148	43,372

From *Tactical Airlift* by Ray Bowers

## Tom Thompson's Story

*Dong Ba Thin, Army-Cam Rahn Bay, Air Force, and the Caribou: 9/66-9/67*

I read the article in the Caribou News letter that was written by Jerry Presley about his visit to Cam Rahn Bay, Viet Nam. While he arrived there about one year after I left he still described CRB pretty much as I remembered it. There were a few notable changes for the better that he identified. Good job Jerry.

My adventure with Viet Nam and the Caribou started while I was stationed at Travis AFB, CA. When I received a notice that I had been selected to join my comrades some where in Viet Nam. The location was not indicated on my orders or any where else in the ensuing instructions. However, I was instructed to report to Ft Benning, GA for counter insurgency training and training on the weapon system that I would be responsible for while in country. This weapon turned out to be CV-2 Caribou which was owned and operated by The US Army at that time. I was a SMSgt., and was destined to become the Propulsion Branch Superintendent responsible for maintaining the R 2000 reciprocating engine and related systems in support of the mission of the caribou in Viet Nam. Any how as best as I remember I spent about a month in training at Ft Benning, GA before getting my marching orders to proceed on to Saigon VN where I would receive further instructions concerning the exact location that I would be assigned to once I arrived in country. That was about Sept. of 1966 and at that time as far as I know there was only one way in and out of VN and that was through Saigon. On my arrival there I was required to do a certain amount of processing in country, such as personnel records, finance and yes the old shot of Gamma Goblin in the tush. I don't remember where or who, but some where in my tour through Personnel I was directed to where I would find out where my assignment in country would be. I located the little shack I had been referred to down by the flight line. The shack was manned by a Lt. Col. and Chief warrant officer that were waiting for people like me. After a brief introduction they pulled out a list of bases where the Caribou was currently stationed through out the country and gave me a general idea where they were, and told me they had openings for my rank at just about all of them and instructed me to select one. I did not have any idea where or what any of them were about so I chose a place called Dong Ba Thin which turned out to be in land from Cam Rahn Bay about 15 miles give or take a few. I asked how do I get there and they told me that was not their problem. They did tell me that the only way any one traveled in VN was via a US Air Force plane and the closest place to my base of choice was CRB. So armed with that information I headed for the flight line

early the next AM where I found a lot of planes being pre flighted for take off, so I went from one to another until I found a C-130 that was headed for CRB and they told me I was welcome to fly with them. I guess that was when I first found out that the book sometimes rode in the back of the plane while being operated in a war zone. The starter was apparently not working on number three engine because they could not get it started. They told me not to fret, that they would start it by windmilling it as they race down the runway? Which they did and for what ever reason the engine started and the next thing I knew we were looking out the back of the plane as the run way disappeared below and behind us. Either the back door of the C-130 would not close or they just like to fly with it open. It was on that flight to CRB that I met Msgt. Jack Wimble who was going to the same Sqdn. that I was assigned to, which turned out to be an Army Aviation unit designated F-Troop. As it turned out Jack and I would be hooch buddies for most of the year we were in country. A long with his professional talents Jack had exceptional abilities in procurement of certain survival materials such as food items, but that is another story for another time.

It was late in the day when we arrived at CRB so when I called the Dong Ba Thin Army base to come pick me up, the First Sgt told me that I would have to hang out at CRB until the next day because the road out of the swamp was not safe at night. That made me feel warm and fuzzy. Any how after about an hour I found a transit hooch and two sheets and a sand laden G. I. issue bunk and after very little sleep for the last few days that bunk worked fine for me.

The next day about 10AM my ride showed up for my trip inland to Dong Ba Thin where I was greeted by an Army First Sgt who introduced me to my first home in VN. A Slab of cement with 4 foot high Plywood and screen wire about another 4 foot high for walls and a canvas cover built up over the cement foundation. The GI bunks had netting over them and I found out why real soon. They caned the camp out of a swamp and the mosquitoes were damned near big as the Caribou. Like most of the rest of Viet Nam I guess, the temperature at Dong Ba Thin seemed to average about 90 to 100 degrees day and night with a heavy humidity. I don't know if there is a certain time of the year that is established for the Monsoon season but I think it was going on when I arrived there. I found out early on not to leave shoes or clothes on the cement floor of my hooch especially at night because they would float off while you were attempting to sleep. That was my first encounter with what it is like in a tropical war zone in a swamp to survive without any plumbing including water. Each hooch got a 5 gallon Jerry can full of water a day which was used for drinking and shaving

and for hooch maids to store their lemons and oranges in each day. I personally never could get into the hooch maid thing and they figured that out and decided it was best to stay away from me and the hooch while I was there. I guess the first hurdle I had to overcome at Dong Ba Thin was the fact that the Army messing Facilities were only capable of feeding ranks up to E-5. Every one else got paid a little extra funny money (Script) which was not edible. This was a factor that E-6's and above had to deal with in a self imposed crash training program as food was still necessary for survival even in the war zone of Viet Nam. As the time went on I figured out that the art of scrounging food was a favorite pass time or even hobby of just about every GI that passed through Viet Nam. Any how it did not take long to adjust to that art of survival. In the mean time, they did not waste any time putting me to work as it was rapidly approaching time for the AF to assume command of the Army C-V2 and redesignate them as the C-7A. The flight line, taxiway and run way were all built out of Pierced Steel Planking (PSP) and I think they forgot to drain the swamp before they laid the runway. Every time a Caribou took off water squirted out both sides of the runway. Each night an Army CH-46 helicopter would hover slowly over the swamp area to disburse the mosquitoes. By the time I arrived at Dong Ba Thin the Air Force had just about fully staffed at least the propulsion shop which was being managed by Msgt Roger Lessin so at his request one of my first duties was to fire the Armies engine personnel which I did. By that time we were only about 2 months away from taking the Caribous from the Army and relocating the entire squadron from the Swamp over to the Beach front base at Cam Rahn Bay. The Army was a proud bunch and I think they even made a few bets with us Fly Boys that we would fall on our tush trying to move the whole squadron and meet the daily mission requirements all in the same day. I guess those Army boys did not realize that the Air Force often moved whole squadrons just on a whim on a regular basis. Any how on 1 January 1967 the Air Force flew the CV2's out of the Army base at Dong Ba Thin and landed at Cam Rahn Bay on completion of their mission that same day as Air Force C-7A's and did not miss a stroke. That same day we assumed our own entity as the 483rd Wing Propulsion Branch.

Now to the similarities that Jerry Presley alluded to at CRB. When the Air Force started preparations to move to CRB those plywood, screen wire living quarters were just a stack of do it your self building materials with a hammer, saw and sack of nails sitting on them. Sand bags came later. I also witnessed the erection of the 12 hole out house that had the half barrels under the holes. Every morning about the time that the day shift left for work

the Vietnamese workers would pull the half barrels out from under the holes and I might add they did not advise those that may be making a deposit into the barrels that they were going to remove the barrel and if some airman was hanging a little low into the hole the jagged edge of the barrel was known to draw blood. Any how, with the half barrels removed the VN workers would pour something like diesel fuel into the barrels and burn the con-



tents. This would result in a heavy layer of black smoke laced with the aromatic odor of human waste floating at between 4 and 10 feet above the entire base especially in the living and administrative areas of the base. The Squadron urinals were a bit more sophisticated. Through some ingenious effort someone figured out how to cut the bottoms out of two 55 gallon barrels and weld them together with one on top of the other. These barrels were buried vertically in the sand with the top of the barrel being flush with the surface level of the sand. Both barrels were filled with rocks and covered with a metal grate. There was a privacy fence built about three quarters of the way around the urinal which allowed one or more to access the urinal at the same time. Over a period of time it became evident



by the discoloration of the sand that not every one made it all the way to the barrels. This urinal was located right in the middle of the squadron area between the rows of hooches.

As for the mess halls they were a bit more primitive during my tenure. For the most part the mess attendants cooked the food out side of the mess hall on open air propane ground level burners. Each and every person assigned to CRB carried their own metal mess tray usually hanging off their belt by a welding rod which had the metal knife, fork, spoon and canteen cup hanging on the same rod. After using the mess tray and utensils, we had to exit to the back of the mess hall where there were five 55 gallon barrels filled with water and each had a submerged hot water heater in the barrel. To operate this do it your self mess tray cleaning system one had to completely lower their tray and utensils into each barrel. This successfully left a film of grease on the tray and utensils which immediately became covered with a fine layer of sand which was an accepted aid to the digestive system. The clanging metal of the eating equipment bouncing off the troops behind became an irritating but accepted noise. (I still have that metal mess tray hanging in the war room of my house). Actually for us troops from Dong Ba Thin it was a nice improvement. As I mentioned earlier the mess hall at the Army base at Dong Ba Thin would not feed anyone with the rank above E-5 and no, there was no other military eating facilities. That was where and when the word "scrounge" took on a whole new meaning and care packages from home became labeled "survival packages."

Any how Jerry described the showers as they were when I was there. Just a pipe sticking out of the wall with a temperature control that was designed for one temperature that fits all. That varied some times depending on the ambient conditions of the area. Like the out house it to was a community shower.

The electrical power for the living quarters was furnished by a portable generator sitting in the hooch area. If the care taker forgot to service the generator or the thing broke down so went the lights and any other appliance that may have been operated by the generator. The up side of this power source was when we went under an attack alert at night and lights out were ordered we did not have to worry about someone not getting the lights out message. We just turned off the generator. As for the beach, I have never laid eyes on a prettier white sand beach then the one at CRB on the China Sea. However, if I may had been tempted to wet my tush in the pretty waters that rolled up on that white sand the temptation was totally removed when I head the horror stories about the poison jelly fish that resided in the shallow waters of the beach.

Not to mention the first time I went to the beach there was a helicopter circling about 50 yards off the coast over the water with someone hanging out the door shooting a machine gun into the water. When I inquired as to why the guy was wasting ammunition shooting into the water, it was explained to me that they were beating the sharks back from the swimmers? Enough said on that.

As for the R&R program, I had the pleasure of enjoying the ultimate R&R. When the Air Force accepted the Caribou weapon system it did not come with a Tech Order library required by the Air Force. So the 483rd Wing organized a crew that represented the various systems of the Caribou and sent the crew back to TAC HDQS. in the USA to assist in writing the Tech Orders. I was selected to represent the Propulsion aspect of the Caribou. The plus of the TDY was about a two week R&R at home with my family before I had to return to CRB.

Most of the entertainment to be had during my stay at CRB was created by the troops. They were America's finest and could find humor in most all aspects of life there including work activities as well as off duty activities. The amazing thing about all that was no matter how rough it got or how bad the conditions got the troops were always able to maintain the highest degree of morale and professional service to the war effort in VN. And yes the huge crude out door movie screen (board) in the sand lot was built by those same troops and as time permitted the troops could attend the nightly movie. You either brought your own chair or just flopped down in the sand and either enjoyed the movie or just killed an hour or two until bedtime. For the regular attendees, when they left VN they knew the movie theme song melody by heart as they played the same one every night, "Down Town."

As I said earlier on when I came in country every one came in and left out of Saigon. Needless to say I was very pleased to monitor the progress of the terminal being built at CRB while I was there and I was even more pleased when I saw the first Freedom (Bird) Jet land there at CRB a short time before I was scheduled to bid farewell to all my friends and all those outstanding facilities there at CRB. One of the first things I did when I arrived in country was initiate a Short Time calendar that I maintained on the inside door of my locker. There was times that I knew I would never check off all the blocks on the calendar until I woke one morning and there was no more unchecked blocks left. With my bags in hand I bid farewell to my friends and CRB and will never forget the feeling that I experienced when I heard the loud cheer that echoed throughout that freedom (Bird) plane as we lifted off the runway at Cam Rahn Bay and Viet Nam started to fade into a distant memory.

*Troy (TOM) Thompson, 483 Propulsion Branch [483,66]*

## The USO in Vietnam

The USO was created by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1941 to meet the morale needs of the servicemen and women during World War II.

The USO was composed of six member agencies who gave financial and personnel support to assist the role of the USO. These agencies were the YMCA, the YWCA, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Salvation Army, Travelers' Aid, and National Catholic Community Services.

To staff the clubs, run the canteens, sew the buttons on uniforms, be mother /girlfriend, women from all walks of life signed up to be "VICTORY BELLES."

Vietnam had its share of "Victory Belles", but they were called Associate Directors and Directors. The role was the same: bring a touch of home to our soldiers wherever they go, wherever they are. As the USO logo says: "A Home Away From Home."

Vietnam may have been a different war, with all front and no rear, but the danger was the same. Not only was it a messy war and increasingly controversial, but it required the USO's civilian activities to become a vital arm of the national organization.

General William C. Westmoreland realized this way back in 1963 when he told the Department of Defense that there was a need for USO Clubs in Vietnam.

The first club, the Saigon USO, opened in April of 1963. It was to be an alliance that stretched eleven years to 1974, when all the women with USO Clubs left Vietnam. It is to be noted that USO shows and USO Clubs were totally separate functions of the national USO.

As the war escalated, so did the need for USO Club staffers. Many young women were recruited directly from college campuses with degrees

in theatre, broadcasting, and recreation. Knowing the risk, these young women signed up anyway and for the longest tours in Vietnam, 18 months.

They were not required to wear a uniform. Civilian clothes only. In this case, the mini dress. Many of the women ordered clothes from the Sears Catalogue or purchased them on R&R's in Bangkok. No slacks were allowed. Perfume a must.

They were told upon arrival in Vietnam that the men were never to see them cry. Sam Anderson, the Executive Director of the USO in Vietnam, told everyone the same thing: "Your job in Vietnam is to be happy. Never let the men see you cry."

Maybe that's why the USO gave its USO Club staffers a week R&R every three months. The stress could get to you otherwise. The housing for the women could be in a BOQ, a villa or a quonset hut.

Since the request for volunteers was granted by the Department of Defense, all orders were cut by said agency. Each volunteer was given the rank of GS-10 or Captain. Her airfare was paid by the national USO. However, if the volunteer wanted out of her assignment earlier than her eighteen months tenure, she would have to pay her own way home.

At the peak of the war, the USO had 22 clubs in Vietnam. As the war dwindled, the clubs did likewise to 17. Each club was self-supporting; snack bars, barbershops, gift shops, overseas telephone line, photo labs, and hot showers .

Many of the clubs were on the beach as in the Da Nang and Vung Tau areas. The main clubs were the previously mentioned Saigon USO, the four in the vicinity of Da Nang: the China Beach USO, the Freedom Hill USO, the Golden Gate USO, and the Liberty Center, and three clubs at Cam Rahn Bay: the Cam Rahn Bay #1 USO, the Aloha USO and the Coffee Bar USO.

All clubs had three volunteers at all times for the duration of the war. To cheer military personnel in the remotest areas or on warships in the China Sea, the USO Club women brought programs to them: a Christmas party, a rock group, a Texas-style barbecue. Since many civilian communities in 'Nam were off limits to uniformed personnel due to the danger of terrorist attacks, the USO Clubs offered the only safe and sane diversion.

The familiar red, white and blue USO sign, with its six stars depicting the six agencies, marked the place where a fast-food snack and a milkshake, a chess game with a buddy, or just reading hometown newspapers that were there for everyone.

Through all this and more, the USO women stuck it out. Although most civilians at home came to know the USO only through televised replays of the Bob Hope Christmas Shows, the real unsung heroes were the staff people who put everything they had into the Vietnam effort, round the clock, month after month, year after year. The morale of the USO Club women never wavered.

Sam Anderson says of the women who staffed USO Clubs: "All the women did a wonderful job in Vietnam. By far the women were the bulk of the USO staff. They did marvelous work. Our role in Vietnam could not have been accomplished if not for these completely unselfish women. They were always in great danger." Anderson said no USO Club staffer was killed in Vietnam.

*GoldEagle4@webtv.net .*

### Squadron Commanders

We are attempting to compose a list of successive squadron commanders for each of the six squadrons plus the 4449th. There will be a form available in the war room to write down those that you remember. Scratch your head a little before the reunion and let's see how many we can come up with.



*KNOW YE BY THESE PRESENTS, THAT THE BEARER,  
**AIRMAN FIRST CLASS GEORGE K. TURNES**  
 Is a Charter Member of the Greater Cam Ranh Bay Chapter of  
 The Royal Order of Redde Tailers, Four Hundred and Fifty  
 Eight Tactical Airlift Squadron, Light, (Troop F);*

*Dauntless Warriors who spritely arise in darkness to  
 Greet the fog on upland slopes, unerringly and splendidly  
 Maneuvering their humble craft to circumvent friendly artillery,  
 Fighters and hostile fire, urging their unpredictable Little  
 Beasts around tortuous circuits, puckering conscientiously;*

*Further, who delight in performing rugged sport on short,  
 Earthen strips adjoining Special Forces Camps in unlikely  
 Places, Proudly carrying ammunition, wire, cement, CIDG  
 Troops, camp followers, fresh provisions on the hoof, Coca  
 Cola, and sundry things unheard of in the annals of tactical  
 Airlifting;*

*Moreover, who wear bibs to protect their flak vests from  
 C-Ration crumbs, who, on occasion, and on the slightest  
 Provocation, will recount the most harrowing exploits, all  
 True; Who measure their days in microseconds and nights in  
 Fifths, Their DEROSes in Digits that Fidget; a Daring Breed  
 Of Aeronauts, loyal to a man, one and all;*

*Therefore, the Incumbent being a Gentleman Airman of said Order  
 Will be honored upon presentation of these credentials, and is  
 Entitled to one cut-rate brew together with free employment of  
 His Caribou Priority to interrupt any war story whatsoever, and  
 Tell his own, then dee-dee out at his convenience.*

Given this 10th Day of November 1968

CHIEF SCRIBE:  
 Truong Ban Ho  
 So Van Phong



Number 016

## Typical Mission

A typical mission (If there was such a thing) was rice hauling. One fine day I was assigned to take 4 pallets of rice from Saigon to a Michelin rubber plantation north of Saigon. After landing at a nearby dirt strip I was met by a very polite but business-like Special Forces team. The NCO in charge asked what I was doing. I didn't feel like it was any of his business but I told him. He said "I can't let you offload that rice." He explained how the plantation workers were rubber workers by day and VC by night and they had killed two of his men the previous night and he sure as hell wasn't going to let the US feed the bastards.

Since the French rubber plantations were off limits to US people, he could not fire into them or give chase into them for fear of "upsetting our diplomatic relations with France" (It didn't matter that the French supported North Vietnam as evidenced by the French ships in Haiphong harbor.) I explained to the Sgt. that I just had a mission to do and that I could not get involved in the politics of the situation. (however I did agree with him).

I then told the loadmaster to offload the rice. The Sgt. pulled his .45, placed it to my head and said he would kill me first. I told the loadmaster not to unload the rice. What a mess. I got on the radio to the office at Tan Son Nhut and advised them of the situation. The Sgt. and I were ordered to off load the cargo and were told not to meddle in foreign policy. Since the Sgt. was of the persuasive type, I rightfully agreed to leave with my rice. I took it back to Tan Son Nhut and unloaded it on the ramp. As it was late in the day, not many people were around and didn't care anyway. I didn't care either. I parked the airplane and went home. Never heard any more about it. *Larry Laverne [457, 66]*

Q: How do you know if there is a fighter pilot at your party?

A: He'll tell you.

\*\*\*\*\*

Q: What's the difference between God and fighter pilots

A: God doesn't think he's a fighter pilot.

\*\*\*\*\*

Q: What's the difference between a fighter pilot and a jet engine?

A: A jet engine stops whining when the plane shuts down.

### You Might Be a Crew Chief If...

1. You've ever slept on the concrete under a wing
2. You've ever said, "Oh yes sir, it's supposed to look like that."
3. You've ever sucked LOX to cure a hangover.
4. You know what jet fuel tastes like.
5. You've ever used a grease pencil to fix an overworn tire.
6. You have a better bench stock in the pockets of your coveralls than the supply system.
7. You've ever used a piece of safety wire as a toothpick.
8. You've ever had to say, "My boots are still black!"
9. You refer to a pilot as a "control stick actuator."
10. You've ever been told to go get "some engine wash and a yard of flight line."
11. You've ever worked a 14 hour shift on an aircraft that isn't flying the next day.
12. You've ever said "as long as she starts every other try you'll be fine sir."
13. You believe your aircraft has a soul.
14. You talk to your aircraft. (In your head still counts.)
15. You've ever said, "That nav light burned out after launch."
16. You've ever used a wheel chock as a hammer.
17. The only thing you know about any city is where the good bars are.
18. You know more about your coworkers than you do about your own family.
19. You've ever looked for pictures of "your" aircraft in aviation books.
20. You can't figure out why maintenance officers exist.
21. You ever wished the pilot would just say, "Great aircraft!"
22. You take it as a badge of honor to be just called "a Crew Chief."
23. You relieve yourself more often outdoors than indoors.
24. You can't comprehend why everyone doesn't want to be a crew chief.
25. You think everyone who isn't a crew chief is a wimp....
26. You can sleep anywhere, anytime, but as soon as the engines shut down you are wide awake.
27. You've ever stood on wheel chocks to keep your feet dry.
28. Used dykes to trim a fingernail
29. Wiped leaks immediately prior to crew show
30. Worn someone else's cover to chow
31. All you care about is the flying schedule and your days off
32. Wondered where they keep finding the idiots that keep making up stupid rules
33. You've ever had to defuel your aircraft an hour after refueling it
34. You tell your peers you are getting divorced and the first thing they ask is, "selling anything?"

### When A Soldier Dies

It's impossible to put a value on a human life, but financial worries are a big issue for military families, especially in wartime. What happens if a loved one is killed? His or her family receives \$6000, plus rent-free housing or tax-free housing allowances for 180 days. Burial costs of up to \$6900 are provided. In addition, a spouse gets \$948 a month and \$234 a month for each dependent child until age 18, plus Social Security benefits. (Service members also are eligible for \$250,000 in life insurance if they elect to pay the premiums.) Children and spouses also may qualify for education grants from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Some benefits change or end if a surviving spouse remarries. Visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for more information about benefits.

*From Parade Magazine, May 4, 2003.*

Dave:

I got back to Cam Ranh Bay on 20 November, after a two week TDY to the mission site in Bangkok. (Tough duty, but someone had to do it) We were notified of an approaching typhoon that night, and departed with all of our flyable aircraft the next day for Long Thanh Army Airfield. We (the 457<sup>th</sup> and 458<sup>th</sup>) flew mission from there for four days, working day and night under combat situations

The Army base commander was not real happy with 32 C-7s sitting on his ramp. We filled the ramp as well as parking nose to tail on the taxiway. He ordered outgoing artillery (105 & 155MM) as long as we were on his field. The takeoffs were made max effort with an immediate left turn to avoid small arms fire at the end of the runway. We slept in our planes and ate C-rations. We also found out that one 50 lb CO2 fire extinguisher will cool down 2 cases of beer. They did not have a good extinguisher left on the base when we departed.

I brought the Squadron commander and his jeep in on my aircraft 62-4160. We used the jeep to move the planes around on the flight line. We were the first in and the last out.

Stoney Faubus

Crew Chief 62-4160, [458, 68]





Bob Dugan received the following letter from Colonel Mascot about March of 2002. The letter was written in response to Bob's request for a transcript of Colonel Mascot's talk at the 1998 Caribou Reunion at Wright Patterson AFB.

3/23/02

Note: The following anecdote was obtained from Col Paul J Mascot, who was the Commander of the 483<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam on 03 Aug 67, the date of the accident.



*Col. Mascott*

The tail number of this C-7A Caribou was 62-4161. The Aircraft Commander was Capt Alan E Hendrickson, Pilot was Capt John D Wiley and Flight Engineer was TSgt Zane E Carter. They were members of the 459<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron based at Phu Cat AB, Vietnam. All the names are real with the exception of the Army officer, whose name was changed for personal privacy reasons...Nothing else was changed. This is an exact reproduction of Colonel Mascot's letter.

#### **A STRANGE EVENT AT THE BALCONES COUNTRY CLUB**

Every now and then a day comes along, in a person's life, when something happens that reinforces his belief in God's mercy. The 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1992 was such a day for me.

My golfing partners and I were getting ready to play a round of golf, at the Balcones Course, of the Balcones Country Club, in Austin, Texas and one of our usual foursome had been unable to join us that day.

Since we were one man short, at the first Tee, we invited a single player, who was there, to join us. He accepted our invitation, and we played our round of golf. The golfer, who was completely unknown to any of us, rode with me in my golf cart. His name was Michael Hubbard.

Throughout the round, we had casual conversation about the Military Service, and I learned that Michael had served in Vietnam, about the same time as I had. He was, it turned out, a Battery Commander of 155 Howitzers, there.

As we drove up to the Pro Shop, and were about to separate, I mentioned the words, "C-7A Caribou". When I said those words, Michael looked at me with an odd expression, on his face and said, "Paul, during my last day's of service in Vietnam, my 155 Howitzer Battery shot down an Air Force Caribou. It happened at a Fire Base at Ha Than, and I haven't spoken about this to anyone, in more than twenty years". When he said those words, the hair on the back of my neck literally stood up!

I looked at him and said, very quietly, "I know about that happening, Michael, that was one of my Airplanes and one of my Crews. I was the Wing Commander of the 483<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing when that happened, and that Crew and that Airplane belonged to my Wing".

Michael stared at me with wide open eyes and a look of complete disbelief on his face. Then he started to tell me the rest of the story. He said that he had received clearance to fire and had passed on the order to his Battery. At that moment, an Air Force Caribou appeared, from just over the hill, in the direction his Battery had aimed. He said he had watched, in horror, as a round from one of his guns struck the C-7A, blowing off the complete tail assembly. The Airplane crashed only a few hundred yards from his Battery position, and he and a Corpsman, ran to the wreckage, to try to help any survivors. He said, "Paul, both the Pilot and Co-Pilot had died, instantly, but a Crew Member in the Cabin was still alive, however he died, in my arms, as I held him, while trying to give him mouth to mouth resuscitation". Then Michael said, "When I was back in the Base Area, later on, my Battalion Commander ran up to me and called me a murderer. He said that I had murdered that Air Force Crew"!

I looked at Michael and said, very quietly, "I know about that, Michael, Ron the Officer, who I had sent to investigate the accident, my Deputy Commander of Operations, Col Norm Lawrence, reported this, to me upon his return to the Wing Headquarters, at Cam Ranh Bay. He happened to be there at the time and witnessed it. Norm Lawrence and I were both surprized, at the reaction of your CO. We both were shocked over the loss of the Crew and the Airplane, but we knew that it wasn't caused through a deliberate action, on anyone's part, but was a terrible accident. No one could fire a 155 Howitzer, at an Airplane, in flight, with any serious hope of hitting it. Such an event could only occur by accident".

As we got out of the golf cart, I asked Michael to come with me, to my house. I live only a half mile from the Pro Shop, so he followed me home in his Pick-Up Truck. We both entered the house and went to my Den. There on one of my walls, next to my desk, is a framed picture of that same C-7A Caribou, falling from the sky, with it's tail section separated from the fuselage. I said, "Michael, is that the Airplane"? Michael's face paled and tears came to his eyes, as he looked at the picture. Then he said "Yes it is Paul", and asked, very quietly, whether he could borrow the picture to have it reproduced. I told him it wasn't necessary, as I had a spare copy, and would be glad to give it to him. He thanked me with a low voice.

At this point, I was feeling very strange, indeed. I looked at Michael and told him that regardless of his Battalion Commander's remarks to him in Vietnam, nei-

ther I, my DCO, nor any of my Caribou Pilots or Crewmen, believed him to be a murderer. I told him that these things happen in war, in spite of all the precautions taken to prevent them, by responsible people, when real fighting is going on. I said again, "Michael, I don't think you are a murderer, you didn't murder that crew! It was an accident"! Michael answered me quite emotionally, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Thank you Paul, you have taken a weight off of my heart, that has been there for more than twenty years. I don't know what to say". Then he headed for his Pick-Up and as he got into it to leave, he turned to me and said, "God Bless you Paul". I replied, "God bless you Michael, He already has Blessed me".

I retired that evening pondering over this strange turn of events, and I wondered if I would ever hear from Michael Hubbard again. I found that I would, as I received a phone call from him early the next morning. He said, "Paul, after I left your house yesterday, I went directly to my home and called my Daughter, who lives in Phoenix. I told her what had happened, and how it seemed that after all these years, a great weight had been removed from my heart. My Daughter was very quiet, then she said softly, to me, "Dad it was the hand of God that touched you. He has decided that you have carried that burden long enough." I said, "Michael, your Daughter is right. I have no doubt, in my mind, that it was the hand of God that touched us. What are the odds that you and I would meet, in Austin, Texas some twenty five years after an event in Vietnam, where an Air Force Crew and a C-7A Caribou with which both of us were vitally connected, were lost? Your Daughter is a wise young Lady". Then I thanked Michael for calling and asked him to keep in touch with me, if he could, the wished him well and said goodbye.

I saw Michael Hubbard a few more times. We played some golf together and had several more conversations about the war in Vietnam, then one day he was gone. Later I learned that he had gone to Phoenix, to be near his Daughter and to work as a Greens Keeper on one of the many Golf Courses there. One of the things I will always remember, was the depth of feeling that Michael Hubbard exhibited in my house that day in October. Indeed, God does work in strange ways!

---

## Roy Sams

After 3 months at Can-Tho I was transferred along with the C-7A aircraft to the 457th TAS at Cam Rahn Bay about 1 Jan 1967. This was at that time considered to be almost as safe as in the States. I was assigned to the 483d Consolidated Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

We turned in our weapons and settled down too a pretty

much routine life, working 12 hours on and 12 off 6 days a week. I was a Maintenance Controller and worked in Job Control the same job I had at Can Tho except that at Can Tho it was a one or two man job but at Cam Rahn Bay there were 6 or more of us. We controlled and scheduled all work on the C-7A aircraft. The C-7A aircraft came to Cam Rahn Bay from other bases in Vietnam for major maintenance and 2 Sqds, the 457th and 458th were assigned there.

F-4s were also on the base. They were strafing and bombing lots of times within sight of the base so it was not uncommon for the same plane to fly several sorties in one day. Helicopters were constantly on the move and it was not unusual to hear small arms fire at night and at first it made sleeping difficult but you got used to it.

We lived in plywood 8 man hooches with a canvas roof that leaked every time it rained which was every day during the monsoon season, Sep. To Dec. But we got rain the year round to some degree and since the daytime average temp. at Cam Rahn Bay was in the high 80s during the summer the humidity was very high. Before we tiled the roof we kept a poncho on our bed to keep it dry. Everything made of leather and not and regularly cleaned and polished mildewed and turned green.

I think about April or May 1967 we replaced the canvas roof with tile. Each man had a metal bunk, wall locker and a foot locker there was a small refrigerator in each hooch kept locked during the day with a chain and padlock, this was used mostly to keep beer and soda in. We also could buy booze at the BX very cheap which we kept in the hooch, we were all NCOs T/Sgts in my hooch, Samms, Thrasher, Patton, Larson, Rodgers, Banton, Calo, and Smith. I was the hooch chief I don't know if the lower ranking airman were allowed to live this way or not. We were the first occupants of these hooches, they didn't even have doors when we moved in, so we were required to do most if not all the improvements including putting on the tile roofs, in some cases and painting the hooch as well as building the sand bag bunkers that were just outside each hooch. We also built a plywood deck out the back door that served as a place to relax and party. We had a Bar-B-Que and often had steak that had been procured in some fashion from someplace, I think the Navy. Much of our off duty time was spent working on our hooches and filling sand bags. Toward the end of summer in 1967 there was much talk and rumors about a big V.C. push coming up, Most likely during Tet and the higher ups wanted more sand bags around the hooches, so it was back to filling sand bags again. I don't remember going to a NCO Club or seeing a movie the whole time we were there, if there was such a thing maybe I was just too tired

## Engine Fire at Phu Cat

Hi Dave -

This is a re-type (by me) of a photo copy I obtained from the Air Force History Support office at Bolling AFB. It goes into fine detail of crew actions from the first detection of smoke to the wheels-up landing at Phu Cat.

Larry Schiff [459, 66]

At 0905 hours on 14 Mar 1967, Major Dubberly as Instructor Pilot, First Lieutenant Jach as Co-pilot and Staff Sergeant Wolpert as Flight Engineer in a C-7A took off from Holloway Air Field, RVN, with seventeen passengers. As the aircraft was climbing through 4500 feet, approximately 1500 feet above the ground, a slight smoke odor was noticed by the crew members. All instrument and circuit breakers were monitored with no abnormal indication noted. The side cockpit windows were closed and the smell diminished.

The climb was continued with level off and cruise power established at 7500 feet. Approximately ten minutes later an acrid smoke odor was again detected. All instruments and engines were scanned and Major Dubberly left his Co-pilot's seat, he was acting as Instructor Pilot, and tried to assist the flight engineer, SSgt Wolpert, in locating the source of the smoke.

Smoke in the cabin was now affecting the passengers eyes, an all effort to locate the source was ineffective. Because the intensity of eye irritation was increasing, SSgt Wolpert opened the aft cargo door to help alleviate the smoke. First Lieutenant Philip E. Jach, flying from the left seat, had started a descent toward Phu Cat Air Base, RVN, as Major Dubberly was strapping himself into the right seat. While descending through 5,000 feet and approximately 10 miles from Phu Cat Air Base, the number one engine fire light for zone two and three illuminated. Engine inflight fire procedures were accomplished but the propeller would not feather. Both fire extinguisher bottles momentarily diminished the now blazing fire. Fire was seen to be burning well aft of the firewall and back toward the left wing. Maximum power was applied to number two engine and a three to four hundred foot per minute descent was the best performance attainable. Major Dubberly advised the Phu Cat tower of his emergency, had the passengers briefed and continued his descent for a straight-in approach to Phu Cat Air Base. At 1,000 feet, attempts to lower the landing gear proved unsuccessful, the gear controls had been burned away by this time. Still with maximum power on number two engine, number one propeller windmilling and zero flaps, Major Dubberly and Lt Jach continued the approach. By now number one engine had burned many pieces off the nacelle and flames were engulfing part of the wing. Bring-

ing all his flying experience to bear, Major Dubberly took control of the aircraft from Lt Jach, crossed the end of the runway and touched the aircraft down on the fuselage. The aircraft slid 657 feet and came to a rest on the center line of runway 01. All aircraft power was turned off and the 17 passengers and crew of three evacuated the still burning aircraft. The base fire fighters quickly extinguished the fire. Subsequent investigation cited enemy action as the cause of the fire.

Because of both Major Dubberly's and Lt Jach's crew coordination, pilots skill and professionalism during a critical emergency, and SSgt Wolpert's outstanding ability in rebriefing and controlling the passengers, all aboard escaped without injury. For their part in this harrowing emergency, all aircrew members were nominated for the Air Force Well Done Award.

"A True Copy"

/s/Edward j. thielen

EDWARD J. THIELEN, Lt Col, USAF, Commander

/s/joseph r. brand

JOSEPH R. BRAND, Captain, USAF, Historical Officer

---

### Roy Sams from page 26

to go. We did go to the beach a few times but the French had used that area for a garbage dump so you had to be careful not to step on broken glass ect. I think some of our people were detailed to clean it up when we first got there and think it was an on-going project. However the beach at Cam Ranh Bay was much better than the Waikiki beach in Hawaii where you had the coral to contend with.

We were allowed a phone call home I think once a week, it was like talking on the radio you had to say over after every sentence then wait for a reply then the party you were talking to would say over and so on. The lines for the phones were so long I think I only called home a couple of times. Im not much of a letter writer but I did manage to get a few lines off to my wife each day.

A Mama San was assigned to each hooch to do laundry and clean up each morning we paid her a fee for this service. The mama-sans did the laundry in the shower room by scrubbing by hand on the shower floor or outside on the board walk-ways, we had to supply the soap, my T-shirts and shorts that had been white when I went to Vietnam were so stained by the time I got home my wife said they were not worth saving. The shower room was a 16 X 16 ft. enclosure with wood slats on the floor with 8 shower heads cold water only. The latrine was a similar affair with 6 to 8 holes, 55 gal drums cut in half were used to contain the you-know-what and each morning they would be removed through outside doors and the you-know- what burned with the aid of diesel oil.

**Continued** on page 28

*Continued from page 27*  
 The chow hall was a large building with louvers and screen on the upper sides like most of the buildings that were made of plywood. We carried our tray or mess kit and eating utensils with us to and from work and the hooch, we washed them in large cans that had a water heater in the can the first can was the garbage can then the scrub can it had a brush hanging on a string to use for this purpose then there were 2 rinse cans, the water was near boiling so you had

to use extreme caution.

We were given a R & R leave after 6 months in country. I elected to take mine in Hawaii where my wife joined me for one great week. I arrived first and Mary Le 4 hours later, after checking in at the hotel I spent about 2 hours in the shower trying to get rid of Vietnam and just enjoying hot water. The week was up all to soon and after tearful goodbys, but greatfull for the time we had together, boarded the plane to return to Vietnam.

Thirty days prior to our tour being

complete we became what was called a short timer and started a FIGMO chart, each day was crossed off with great joy and usually toasted with the beverage of choice, by this time mine was scotch and water. About 1 Oct 1957 my big plane to the land of the big B.X. and round eyed women arrived. Just a few months before the 68 Tet Offensive. My next duty assignment was Dyess AFB Texas.  
*Roy Sams [457, 66]*

**VITAL STATISTICS:** September 2003

Check your vital statistics and mail label to insure that the information is correct. Send changes to:

C-7A Caribou Association  
 Attn: Jim Collier  
 5607 Jolly Ct.  
 Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707



TAX YEAR	SQUADRON	ARRIVAL YR.	RANK	AREA CODE	TELEPHONE
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL			
STREET ADDRESS					
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE PLUS 4	E-MAIL ADDRESS		

**Important reminder: Please make sure you mail your reunion registration forms to Christine NLT 10 October. We cannot guarantee transportation and tours for registration forms received after the 15th. Make hotel reservations by October 6.**



ASSOCIATION

VIETNAM

5607 Jolly Ct.  
 Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707  
 jascoll@pacbell.net

Address Service Requested

Non Profit Org.  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Tulsa, OK  
 Permit No. 1957