

# C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 17, Issue 1

Newsletter

January 2006

## The Latest Information On Pigeon Forge, Tennessee Reunion April 9<sup>th</sup> through April 12<sup>th</sup> 2006!

We have a fantastic reunion planned in East Tennessee during Dolly Parton's Festival of Nations! Nestled in the foothills of the scenic Smoky Mountains, Pigeon Forge is a small town that's BIG on fun. It is home to lively entertainment and talented performers, a five mile long parkway lined with over 50 rides and attractions and six outlet malls with over 200 stores offering everything from designer clothing to home furnishings. So there is something for "just the ladies" too. This is the finest hotel we've used for a reunion site which is hard to believe considering the cost of the rooms. The reunion registration fee of \$35 covers your banquet dinner and free run of the War Room that will be stocked with snacks, soda, beer, and wine.

### General Information

**War Room:** The "War Room" will be stocked with snacks, soda, box wine, and beer throughout the reunion and coffee and donuts/Danish in the mornings. The War Room will be locked during off-hours for safekeeping of "show and tell" articles brought to the reunion, but use some discretion about what you leave there, as the hotel accepts no responsibility.

**Transportation:** Busses will be scheduled for those flying into Knoxville (TYS) on Sunday for \$11 per person each way (50 minute ride). If you want to arrange your own limo or taxi the cost will be \$57 + \$2 for each additional person. If your flight schedules change you need to advise Wayne DeLawter, coyatee@charter.net or 865-408-0171. After you get to the hotel there is a trolley system that for 50 cents will take you just about anywhere in Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg from the hotel. So if you fly in, a rental car won't be needed if you come on Sunday and depart on Thursday. Does it make sense to use your own car when you can ride the trolley for 50 cents?

**Restaurants:** There are many restaurants and dinner theaters where the shuttle can take you. Adjacent to the hotel's property is a Ruby Tuesday restaurant.

**Attractions:** Prepaid tickets will be distributed upon your arrival. All optional events are based on group rates. In the event that fewer than required for group rates sign up for any paid attraction, you will be refunded your prepayment and you may attend on your own. Transportation to attractions are included in each stated cost.

### Schedule of events

**Sunday:** Registration in the War Room from 1500 to 1700, then again resuming at 1900. At 2000 there will be welcome remarks with an explanation of the week's activity schedule.

**Monday:** War Room will be open all day with donuts and coffee from 0700 to 0815. The time of year for this reunion was selected because of Dollywood's Festival of Nations. This is a highly recommended venue. For those who register to go to Dollywood for the day there is a shuttle to take them there that departs every 20 minutes from the hotel. It runs throughout the day.

**Tuesday:** Coffee, tea and pastries will be available in the War Room from 0700-0815. At 0830 we will have the business meeting. Following the business meeting or later in the day there may be presentations by the Texas Tech Archive. There may also be a TRN rep who can present the benefits of attending their reunion seminars – we want the people to learn about the aspects of planning and executing a reunion. Coupled with this may be some convention visitors bureau representatives from cities that are interested in military groups like ours to make short presentations on what they have available. This is an evening that we recommend that you take in a dinner theater or other attractions.

**Wednesday:** Open again during the day for area attractions with the War Room open all day with donuts and coffee from 0700 to 0815. Picture taking will take place beginning at 1600 and should finish by 1800. The dinner area will be open for seat selection at 1815. The pre-dinner program will begin at 1840 and the entrees will be served at 1900. After the dinner we will adjourn to the War Room. We would have music and dancing but our canes, crutches and walkers would make it chaotic. **(Continued on Page 5)**

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

### Elected Officers and Board Members....

**President/Board Member** - Bob Markham [459, 69]  
**Vice President/Board Member** - Chris Nevins [458, 69]  
**Treasurer/Board Member** - Jim Collier [537, 67]  
**Secretary/Board Member** - Wayne DeLawter [458, 66]  
**Chairman of Board** - Al Cunliffe [458, 68]  
**Board Member at Large** - Terry Obermiller [537, 69]  
**Board Member at Large** - Kelly Grissom [537, 67]

### Appointed Positions...

**Bereavement Chairman** - Bob Markham [459, 69]  
**Chaplains** - Sonny Spurger [537, 68], Jon Drury [537, 68]  
**Historian** - Robert Blaylock [457, 70]  
**Parliamentarian** - Wilson Petefish [535, 68]  
**Newsletter Editor-In-Chief** - Dave Hutchens [459, 69]  
**Reunion Planner** - Wayne DeLawter [458, 66]  
**Assistant Reunion Planner** - Huey Frye [457, 70]  
**Reunion Advisor** - Earl Reynolds [537, 66]  
**Webmaster** - Peter Bird [535, 71]  
**President Emeritus** - Nick Evanish [457, 66]  
**Chaplain Emeritus** - Bob Davis [457, 69]

### Squadron Representatives...

457th Jim Fairweather  
 458th Steve Lentz  
 459th Bob Markham  
 535th William Buesking  
 536th Russell Riggleman  
 537th Kelly Grissom

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  
 jascoll@pacbell.net

\$10.00 dues are payable annually. Send your check to Jim Collier, 5607 Jolly Ct., Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707

All members are encouraged to communicate with the editor of the Association Newsletter. Write, call or e-mail to:

Dave Hutchens  
 17916 E. 96th Street North  
 Owasso, OK 74055  
 printhut@aol.com  
 918-272-3518

## The Editor's Corner

I have undertaken a lot of projects on behalf of the Caribou Association, but this one has turned out to be a real challenge.



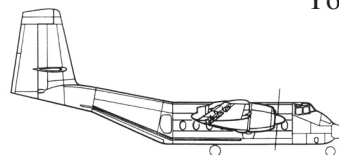
*Your editor, a long time ago, in a galaxy far away, sitting by the front gate of the Special Forces camp at Plateau Gi. (I don't know where that hat went!)*

Our Editor-In-Chief, Dave Hutchens has been doing this job for years and he has been trying to find a replacement for about two years. We thought we had one a year ago, but things just didn't work out. I took on this issue and the reunion flyer to give Dave a much-needed break and to give the Board some additional time to find a volunteer. There must be a few of you out there who have the time, inclination, and ability to do a little creative writing! The biggest problem with doing a newsletter is not the technical details of how to lay it out; it is the text content. Dave used Adobe PageMaker to do the layout and I am using Adobe InDesign CS. These are both professional page layout tools that are not to be undertaken by the faint of heart. The point is that I could see my way clear to doing layouts if I had some help with the content, both text and photos. Dave is also ever-ready to offer helpful advice. This is just not a one-man job; it is too much work to expect of one person on a twice a year basis. So there's the challenge: do we have a few good men who will produce some articles for the newsletter? Don't worry about your spelling or grammar — that's what they make spelling and grammar checkers for! We just need new and original material of general interest to the membership that can be massaged into place in these pages.

OK, enough of the hard sell, but please give it some thought. This is not the *New York Times* and we are not looking for Pulitzer prizes; just some good Caribou or Vietnam stories.

Your newsletter editor

Peter Bird  
 535<sup>th</sup>, 1971



## From the President

This has been a busy year for the Board. There have been lots of motions, and action Items. I'm sad to tell you that Peter Bird had resigned from the position as Vice President. The Board has elected Chris Nevins as Vice President until the next General Election at Pigeon Forge. From the number of e-mails, Wayne DeLawter is in the final planning stage for the 17<sup>th</sup> C-7A Caribou Reunion at Pigeon Forge TN. I hope all of you that have been affected by the hurricanes have been safe. I know Nick Evanish and my son are OK. I hope Nick can put a stronger roof on his house! This is the second time he has trees thought his roof.

Bob Markham  
President

## Bereavement Committee.

We still need your help in letting the Bereavement Committee know when there is a loss of a member or spouse. It has been sad, but an honor, to list our lost Members on the Missing man section of the Web site.

Bob Markham  
Bereavement Chairman

## C-7A Caribou Merchandise store

This online merchandise store is a service to our members. The sales of the items stocked in the store have been outstanding. We have had to restock the store three times. From the comments I have received from the members, they are pleased with the selection and quality of the merchandise. I would like to thank all of you for making the project a success.

Bob Markham  
Merchandise Chairman

## Chris Nevins, Your New Vice President

Your current interim VP, Chris Nevins has been infatuated with aviation since a young boy. Born and raised in Westchester County of New York he grew up in that area with a very positive image of the military and military aviation. While the Boy Scouts were the focus of his attention during his early teen years, it was his uncle, as Commander of the White Plains, NY Civil Air Patrol, that got him focused on aviation. A first flight in a CAP J-3 Cub proved pivotal even though the pilot "tipped" the aircraft. Having survived the ordeal without getting sick, he knew that he might possibly even have a career. While the thought of an appointment to the Naval Academy danced through his head, the reality of mediocre but acceptable grades proved to be the cold shower of reality. Since he did not have to bribe a congressman to get into ROTC, he applied to colleges that supported AFROTC. While Fordham in the Bronx of NYC welcomed him, it was Parks College of St. Louis University that became the most appealing since it was not close to home.

The Trimester system at Parks meant only three years of the academic grind which left much time to inspire the co-eds at local schools not only with his newly learned oratory skills from Speech Class but with heroic stories as he earned his private pilots license through the AFROTC flight program at Parks. As graduation time approached and his 1-Y college deferment was wearing thin he knew big things were in store for him. Graduation day was also AF Commission day and these simultaneous events proved to be important events since there were no longer co-eds to impress but drill sergeants!

Moody AFB in Valdosta, Georgia was definitely a turning point in his life. Early AM cokes and candy bars didn't kill him but constant activity allowed him to grow up quickly. Also, how could anyone south of New Jersey

be so nice even to a Yankee! To a 21 year old bachelor Valdosta State proved to be an oasis of civility and an opportunity to once again practice his oratory skills. Graduation day was a big moment for him and his family when his wings were pinned on by his CAP uncle. But where to from here? In 1969 90% of UPT graduates were going to some place called Vietnam and a UPT assignment to an airplane called the C-7A Caribou was in store. Oh No! A stud pilot flying an airplane at 129 knots! Life is too cruel! Or is it?

Vietnam was another growing up period. It wasn't about the pilot anymore it was about the mission. The importance of the mission and a focus on nation started to develop during this period. The more these issues disappeared back home the more they seemed important at Cam Rahn Bay. Lot's of memories of missions into both long field and short field strips. It's amazing how you can make friends with total strangers. Hooch mates (Tom Neutzling his favorite) and squadron mates made for a memory of friends and moments of sadness when we lost some of them (Jim Gray). Trash haulers? Maybe. But definitely we were one of many (two million) servants to our nation. With a "fini" flight in May of 70 it was time to go home and train on the KC-135. After Castle AFB in Ca. there was an assignment to Griffiss AFB in upstate New York. More growing up with TDYs to Thailand (Young Tiger), England and Spain. Good God he even met Eileen (Ike to those in the know) his bride of 33 years there!

But all good things come to an end and it was on to the airlines in 1973. Delta Airlines called in March and a new career was in the making. Oh the thrill of it all, finally a stud pilot! But not really. Something called a fuel crisis intervened. Gratefully he had also applied to the 170th TAG, New Jersey ANG during this period and was able to get hired (Continued on page 22)

## Former Chief of Staff, General John P. Jumper Speaks About The Changing Air Force Mission

by Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez, Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — The Air Force's top-ranked officer first donned a flight suit more than 39 years ago — before 83 percent of active-duty Airmen had even been born.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John P. Jumper has seen a lot of changes during his time in uniform, but he said one thing remains the same — the dedication of Airmen to the job they are sworn to do.



*General John P. Jumper, former Air Force Chief of Staff and former member of the 459<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron*

“The thing that marked my generation in Vietnam is that we all did our duty,” he said. “We answered the call, we did what our nation asked us to do, and we were all very dedicated to what we were doing. If you look at this generation of Airmen we have today, it is the same thing. They are every bit as committed and patriotic as you want them to be.” Though the dedication of Airmen to their mission has not changed over the years, General Jumper said the Air Force mission itself has changed dramatically.

“We have gone from the days (where) we were prepared to deal with Cold War dynamics — to deploy over to Europe or the Pacific and prepare for the great monolithic war against the Warsaw Pact — and made a shift into a world

where you don't know what is coming next,” he said.

That change in mission and focus forced the Air Force to adapt the way it does business, to develop into a force that is leaner, more flexible and more responsive. That new way of doing business, embodied in the air and space expeditionary force concept, was adopted quickly by the Air Force and has changed the Air Force in big ways.

“To be able to project our force into an AEF force, to be able to deal with contingencies on a rotational basis, to be able to surge our AEF to deal with something like Operation Iraqi Freedom -- all of these things are remarkable transitions to the kind of agility we never had when I was a young captain,” General Jumper said. “It shows us we do have the strength to change our culture and stay the best Air Force on the planet.”

That transition to a more agile and responsive force has put new demands on the Airmen who do the mission. “We have asked all Airmen to be expeditionary Airman now,” he said. “That's a lot different than spending your career at Holloman Air Force Base (N.M.) or MacDill AFB (Fla.). If you go to a Balad (Air Base, Iraq) or one of the airfields we have in (the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility) where Airmen are stationed today, it is a different life. Expeditionary Airmen have to be able to live in an expeditionary setting. They have to be able to defend the airfield and generate sorties or do their job in the face of mortar attacks or the face of fire, and we have to be able to fall in with the other services to do our job.” The Air Force has even asked Airmen to change their personal fitness to align themselves with the new role the service plays, the general said. “The fitness program is going to make sure we have Airmen who are fit enough to walk around in the 30-pound Kevlar vest or wear a chemical suit when they have to,” General Jumper said. “We have a different outlook now.”

Airmen have changed the way they work to adapt to an Air Force that has changed its mission in response to a changed world. But one thing about Airmen remains as true today as it did when General Jumper became an Airman — their dedication to whatever mission it is they are asked to do.

“The longer you are around, you realize that every generation has more in common than they don't have in common,” he said. “When exposed to the right kind of leadership, the right kind of motivation, and most of all, a sense of pride, this generation of Airmen is no different of any generation that has ever served.”

General Jumper retired in September after a long and distinguished career and with any luck, will join us for our 2007 reunion! ❖

## The Latest Information On Pigeon Forge, Tennessee Reunion 2006 — April 9<sup>th</sup> through April 12<sup>th</sup> (Continued from Front Page)

### Schedule of events (continued)

**Thursday:** For those flying out of Knoxville (TYS) we will probably have 2 runs scheduled during the morning. The times of departure from the hotel will be determined by the scheduled times of your flights. Be sure that you fill in the flight times on the association's registration form.

### Additional Notes

**Deadlines:** The deadline for registering with both the association and the hotel is March 1, 2006. You must make your own hotel reservations with the Music Road Hotel by calling 1-800-429-7700. Advise them that you are with the Caribou Association to get the \$66 rate. There is no guarantee of room availability after March 1st.

**Surcharge:** There is a \$3 per person per day assessment for attendees who don't register with the hotel as being with the Caribou Association. The reason for this is that the number registered under the hotel's Caribou Group designation determines the hotel's charge to the Association for the amenities, meeting rooms, coffee, etc. To make it fair to all, those not registered as with the Caribou Association in the Music Road Hotel or Inn will incur a surcharge of \$12 (\$3 pp for the 4 days of the event).

**Attractions:** For information about more area attractions, check the web at: <http://www.mypigeonforge.com/theater>

**Dollywood for Festival of Nations**, Monday, the web address is: [http://www.mypigeonforge.com/theater\\_schedule.asp](http://www.mypigeonforge.com/theater_schedule.asp)

Note: Requires moderate walking between theaters within the park

**Smoky Mountain National Park Bus Tour**, 1300 –1630 hours, Tuesday

**Black Bear Jamboree Dinner and Show**, 1700 – 1915 hours Tuesday

**Tennessee Museum of Aviation**, 1300 – 1600 hours Tuesday

**Eighteen theaters** to choose from in Pigeon Forge (there are others in nearby Gatlinburg). To view all of the theater schedules, check the web at: [http://www.mypigeonforge.com/theater\\_schedule.asp](http://www.mypigeonforge.com/theater_schedule.asp). For more information e-mail or call Wayne DeLawter, an East Tennessee-transplanted Yankee.

After we have received all of your registration forms, Wayne DeLawter will coordinate the transportation that will take the people flying in to Knoxville to the hotel. Please insure that you list your e-mail and phone number so that he can get back to you with the scheduled departure times based on you landing times. It is possible, depending on the various landing times that you may have to wait a while for the bus or van departure. During this wait time you may have time for a pre-reunion social hour with other members who are waiting too.

If you didn't get the Reunion Flyer in November, the dog chewed it up, or you can't remember where you put it, you can download and print it from the web site at: [http://www.c-7acaribou.com/reunion/2006/advance\\_plans.htm](http://www.c-7acaribou.com/reunion/2006/advance_plans.htm). If all else fails, contact any one of the Association Officers and they will rectify the situation.

Your completed Reunion form should be sent to: **Wayne DeLawter**  
**221 Coyatee Shores**  
**Loudon, TN 37774-3177**

Remember, you must make your own hotel reservation. Don't forget to let them know you are with the Caribou Association — that will both ensure that you get the right price and count toward the Association's room commitment.

(See Page 25 for the last-minute update)

## The 535<sup>th</sup> Is Back.....

It's finally official! The 535<sup>th</sup> was reactivated this past April. Here is the official announcement from Hickam:

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### 535<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron Activation 18 April 2005

On Monday, 18 April 2005, Team Hickam moved another step closer to bedding down C-17 Globemaster III airlifters in 2006. In a ceremony at the 15<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing headquarters building, the 535<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron activated, bringing a tradition of airlift excellence from the past to a unique airlift mission in the near future. This squadron of C-17s will be the first based outside the continental United States.

Officiated by 15<sup>th</sup> Operations Group Commander Colonel Jeffrey L. Fraser, the ceremony placed Lieutenant Colonel Christopher O. Davis in charge of the 535<sup>th</sup> AS as its first commander. Lt. Col. Davis, formerly commander of the 15<sup>th</sup> Operations Support Squadron, said, "Our challenge will be to continue the tradition of airlift excellence demonstrated by the previous 535<sup>th</sup> members."



*Lieutenant Colonel Christopher O. Davis, the new commander of the squadron, speaking at the activation ceremony for the 535<sup>th</sup> Airlift Squadron on 18 April 2005.*

The squadron first activated as the 535<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron in 1943 in Richmond, Virginia. Redesignated the 535<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Squadron in 1952, the unit again redesignated as the 535<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron in 1967. Flying the

sturdy C-7 Caribou in Vietnam, pilots of the 535<sup>th</sup> provided airlift of routine cargo, supported special forces operations, medical evacuations, emergency supply, airdrop of paratroops and cargo, and other combat missions.

During the Vietnam War the 535<sup>th</sup> TAS earned three Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards with Combat "V" device, two Presidential Unit Citations (Vietnam), a Navy Presidential Unit Citation, and a Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross with Palm.

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### There's Always A Little More To The Story

Steven Diamond, Chief, 15<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing History Office, contacted the C-7A Caribou Association after finding our web site. We are pleased to report that the Association was instrumental in helping to find a Caribou aircraft that can be transported to Hickam for static display in front of the 15<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing Headquarters. The one we found was in storage at Edwards AFB, CA and was the property of the AF Museum. There were no other plans for it, so the paperwork is moving along to transfer it to Hickam.

We were also directly contacted by the new 535<sup>th</sup> Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Christopher O. Davis, who was keenly interested in the history of the squadron, particularly in Vietnam.

Here is what Lt. Col. Davis had to say in the message: "My name is Lt. Col. Chris Davis and I'm the lucky one who got picked to be the 535 AS/CC. I saw the Caribou Association had their annual convention and I almost invited myself. Unfortunately a TDY aborted my plan. I'd love to connect with you or any of the other 535<sup>th</sup> members to get a feel for some of the things the unit did.

A couple items I'm working on as we stand up the new unit are a motto and any information on traditions etc the unit may have had. Additionally, we have a "Heritage" room designated in our new facility and am interested in any thoughts to commemorate the C-7 days in Vietnam.

I attached the electronic version of the patch. [*reproduced, below — ed*] Do you have any info on the background of the tiger? As a side note I believe this is the best looking of all the C-17 units."

Our own Jay Baker was able to provide Lt. Col. Davis with the information on the origin of the tiger, as he was there when it was created! Here is Jay's recollection:

"I'll do my best to give you an account of the genesis of the "Blue Tiger" patch. Others may refute or add to my remembrances (one who might be of some help is Dick Shimberg). Dick was a Major when I first arrived at the 57<sup>th</sup> Aviation Company in late August 1966. He acted as the Operations Officer under Lt. Col. Leo Ehman who was the transition Commander. Dick was one of the initial cadre of Air Force officers who arrived in Vung Tau. He had a great disposi-

tion and helped with the smooth transition with the Army.)

I wrote him an e-mail recently and requested that he become an active member of the Association which he did. I believe his e-mail address is available.

Anyhow on with the Blue Tiger. Leo Ehman was a politician and a morale builder as opposed to his counterpart in



*This black and white reproduction of the new 535<sup>th</sup> AS simply doesn't do it justice! It retains the tiger motif of the Vietnam-era patch while showing the global reach of the new squadron.*

the 536<sup>th</sup> who lacked Ehman's charisma and drive. Ehman was always looking for an edge over the 536<sup>th</sup> but did it quietly, ergo his political skills working to his advantage. Harlan "Van" Piety arrived in Vung Tau possibly in November or December 1966. He was a nice guy and boisterous. He had a talent for art and Ehman immediately put to good use. I'm not sure where the Tiger came from but the "blue" part was obvious. Soon there was a painting on plywood of a blue Tiger hanging on the front of the Bung Lai hotel where we were quartered. Amazingly the Blue Tiger's face took on the physical characteristics of one Van Piety hence the Blue Baron. Van had a round face and sported a bushy mustache. (I believe I sent you a picture of the Bung Lai with the Blue Tiger overhead). Soon the Blue Tiger showed up as nose art on the 535<sup>th</sup> assigned aircraft. This was a feather in Ehman's cap as far as morale was concerned because the 536<sup>th</sup> had nothing to match it. Eventually 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force Muckety Mucks complained about the fact that nose art was against regulations and the famed Blue Tigers were summarily removed. I am not sure why the Blue Tiger on the old patch is so skinny but Van Piety and Leo Ehman started it all." ❖

## Life's Laws

1. The two most common elements in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity.
2. If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
3. Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.
4. Psychiatrists say that 1 of 4 people is mentally ill. Check three friends. If they're OK, you're it.
5. Nothing in the known universe travels faster than a bad check.
7. A truly wise man never plays leapfrog with a unicorn.
8. It has recently been discovered that research causes cancer in rats.
9. Always remember to pillage BEFORE you burn.
10. If you are given an open-book exam, you will forget your book.
11. Corollary: If you are given a take-home test, you will forget where you live.
12. The trouble with doing something right the first time is that nobody appreciates how difficult it was.
13. It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
14. TJ's Law: You can't fall off the floor.
15. The average woman would rather have beauty than brains because the average man can see better than he can think.
16. Clothes make the man. Naked people have little or no influence on society.
17. Vital papers will demonstrate their vitality by moving from where you left them to where you can't find them.
18. Law of Probability Dispersal: Whatever it is that hits the fan will not be evenly distributed. ❖.



## Trivia Quiz

### Pilots:

- a. On the pre-takeoff engine checks, what manifold pressure was set for the magneto check?
- b. What RPM should have been noted?
- c. What was the normal and maximum RPM drop with one mag switched off?

### Maintenance:

- a. What engine sling was used to hoist an R2000 powerplant?
- b. To what PSI was the nose gear blow-down bottle serviced?
- c. What was the designation of the Caribou prop?

(Answers can be found on another page)

## A MISSION OF LOVE NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FLORIDA

'BOU CREW AT WORK AT  
NEW

SMYRNA BEACH, FLORIDA

By William R. "Shaky Jake" Upton  
*[William Upton is the editor of the Logbook, the AOCA newsletter. He has also written a book of his experiences in Vietnam. The title of the book is "Pizza and Body Bags." This entire article appeared in the July Logbook]*

*There are strange things done in the  
Florida sun*

*By the men salvaging Caribou Two.  
And the tales they tell as they sit a spell  
They will always swear they're true.  
The New Smyrna climes have known  
queer times*

*But the queerest that they ever knew  
Was the week we toiled  
as the hot sun boiled*

*And we tried to save Caribou Two.*

The old girl has proud history, Caribou 61-2389. Purchased in 1962 from de Havilland of Canada by the U.S. Army, re-designated a CV-2 and assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Avn. Co. at Ft. Benning, GA. She served in Korat, Thailand and later in Vietnam with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Avn. Co. In 1967 she was transferred to the USAF and later loaned to Air America for CIA operations in Laos before another stint in the Air Force.

The proud plane ended its illustrious career carrying skydivers over New Smyrna Beach, FL, where she now sits, idle, eroding away like a sand dune on the Florida shore. Her final owner is the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation. Though she may "pass on," parts of her will remain alive when attached to the only flyable Caribou painted in Army colors in North America, Legacy '49.

I first saw her on Easter, 2005, sitting crippled on an airfield parking pad with three derelict sea planes and another Caribou, rudderless, prop-less, which had placed second in a championship level fight with hurricane Charley. '89 had also been in the hurricane fight, but had fought to a draw, suffering only minor cuts and bruises. She had only been pushed back to the perimeter fence by the ferocious

winds while dragging a ton of concrete block she'd been tied to. Slowed her down. Kept damage to a minimum.

A fortnight earlier, Denny Toasperm, "J. Willy" Williams, "Papa 'Bou" Carr and Don "Left-Seat" Oglesby were on scene to air up tires, chain her to the bumpers of two pickups and drag her forward and onto the hard surface where she could be worked on. They tried to start the port engine, but only succeeded in clearing a hydrostatic lock. They tried to open the cargo door only to have it, sadly, jettison itself onto the ground. They all agreed this would be no "band-aid" fix.

When I got to New Smyrna Beach, I walked around, cursorily inspecting the plane. My first impression that Easter Sunday was that the old bird had flapped her wings for the last time. I told that to an optimistic Denny Toasperm. "We need to put her to rest," I said. Denny raised his eyebrows and waited for me to go on. I did. "They shoot horses over a broken leg, don't they? Just look at her, two flat tires, collapsed starboard main strut, flap and aileron hinges that turn to powder and crumble at the slightest touch, over-extended nose strut, rust everywhere and a ton of water in every place that can collect it." Denny shrugged and walked away leaving me to my musings.

I looked over her paint. Green, black and white and all mottled with moss and stained by industrial pollutants. Still, in the back of my mind, and as I scanned her veteran lines against a majestic, bright blue Florida sky, I hoped she might make one more flight. Back to the Army Aviation Heritage Foundation's (AAHF) Tara hangar where she would meld her usable parts into Legacy '49. I snapped a few pictures, talked to a few guys and we reminisced. It was at this point that Denny came back up to me and said, "Look, it's our job to try to fly her out of here if at all possible. Now, stop gawking and talking and get your hands dirty." I snapped to, saluted our truculent team leader, yelled YES SIR! like a recruit in basic training and gave him yet one more salute (to his back) as he walked away.

On Monday, officially day one, noth-

ing earth-shattering took place, unless one considers the miracle of love that flowed from the assembled Army and Air Force aviators, crew chiefs and mechanics. They came from Washington, North Dakota, Texas, New York, and all places between simply for one more chance to be around the plane they all flew and loved at one time or another. That day, we all worked hard just trying to get a handle on the problems or conditions that would have to be resolved before flying '89 from New Smyrna Beach to Tara Field. We weren't worried so much about the flap hinges, they could be strapped into place for a one time flight. We were worried about the powdery aileron hinges so necessary for safe flight that would undeniably ground us unless made functional. We were worried about the tail section and rudder controls. We were worried about the engines. We were worried about the landing gear. So, crews were set to work checking out the "worry" items.

While one crew dropped leading edges of wings, another packed wheels and made tire repairs and yet another pulled spark plugs, checked vibrators, and boost pumps and turned the engines over just to see if they would. While all that was going on another crew pulled landing gear doors and two wives, Pat Toasperm and Pat Carr sat about the necessary task of feeding a crew that would be very hungry at lunch time.

All day Monday, an east wind buffeted the Caribou and a decision was made to turn the plane into the wind to lessen the buffeting. Near disaster. As we were pulling the plane forward with J. Willy's truck, the tow bar slipped off the hitch. The plane kept rolling, almost crushing Ed Fodor's leg. After we finally and safely, got the plane turned into the wind, a fuel truck came out and added fuel necessary to start the engines when everyone was ready. That time came near the end of the work day. It was an exciting time and everyone waited with anticipation as a fire bottle and the APU were rolled into place. Guess what? The APU didn't



work until Jack Lewis fixed it.

The crew count at the end of the first day was over twenty, a testament to Denny's leadership. On hand were: Floyd Burks, Art Candenquist, John Williams, Jack Lewis, Bob Schrader, Chuck Hadley, Bill Upton, Don Oglesby, Denny and Pat Toasperm, their nephew, Ryan Toasperm, Darryl Neidlinger, Glenn and Pat Carr, Richard Hufschmid, Richard Hufschmid, Jr. [483<sup>rd</sup>, '69], Ed Fodor, Tom Dawkins and family, Frank Mays, and Lee and Jennifer Maynard. Bruce Silvey, EVP of the Army Otter Caribou Association, wasn't there, but he loaned his pickup to the effort. While everybody on the above list deserves special recognition, two guys, crew chiefs, deserve to be noted. "Dakota" Bob Schrader and Chuck "Joker" Hadley. Not only did they drive all night hauling a load of necessary supplies and equipment from Tara Field to New Smyrna Beach, they stayed up all that first day and worked.

The next day or two was spent with more engine prepping, parts running and scavenging whatever was useful from the hurricane damaged 'Bou. A crew was assigned to remove the leading edges of both wings, a job made near impossible by some logic-impaired former mechanic who secured the bottom piano hinges with soft steel wire which had rusted to the point of being damn near impossible to remove. The crew persevered slowly and laboriously and was finally successful. We finally got the engines running, reconnected the nose wheel steering arms and performed steering and taxi tests. Cheers of delight went up from excited onlookers as the old bird performed up to snuff in spite of a still collapsed main gear. During the taxi test it was noted that the controls were stiff and hard to operate. We sprayed WD-40 on every cable and pulley from tip to tail which alleviated much of that problem.

By the end of the week, both engines were running clean and smooth, the starboard gear was charged and standing tall, the leading edges of the wings were reinstalled and everybody felt

good about their work. Engine starting was always a hoot. On one start, flames shot out of number two engine about four feet. On another we ran out of gas. But, in spite of '89's still rough appearance, she ended up looking like a wounded veteran on the mend. Still, I doubt she will fly. Mainly because of the crumbling hinges and uncertainty over the flight controls. My best guess is that she will be carefully dismantled and carried, piece by piece back to Tara on assorted trucks and trailers. No matter, many parts of that grizzled old veteran will live on when attached to Legacy 49.

During the week we booked rooms at the Nocturne Motel, a clean, nicely situated facility, owned and operated by Rick and Emma Miller. Rick retired from the Army as a Warrant Officer. We were treated very well and Rick even cooked barbecue chicken for one of our lunches. And every morning he treated us to hot coffee and sweet rolls as well as a war story or two. Lastly, the glue that held our symbiotic group together all week long was Denny and Pat Toasperm. Without Denny's leadership and Pat's dedication to her husband and to the rest of us, the week wouldn't have been anywhere near as successful. Thanks to Denny for his hard work and to Pat for keeping us in food and drink. And thanks to everyone else who came for their willingness to help preserve our aviation heritage.

And a very Special AAHF, AOCA and C-7A Salute to Army Veteran, Caribou, 61-2389 for her service to our country. She never complained and was always there when we needed her. We're going to miss you, Old Girl..

Another very special thanks goes to our own Richard M. Hufschmid Sr. [483<sup>rd</sup>, '69] and Art Candenquist [535<sup>th</sup>, '70] for participating in this herculean effort and for representing the C-7A Caribou Association in the attempt to save one of the few remaining Caribous on the planet. Thanks, Dick and Art, we're proud of you and thank you for your selfless effort to save a Caribou. ❖

## 62-4149 Suffers Another Indignity

Aircraft 62-4149, formerly of the 536<sup>th</sup> and 457<sup>th</sup>, has been beautifully restored to its original 135<sup>th</sup> Avn. Co. condition by the Army Aviation Historical Foundation (AAHF). It was tied down at its home base of Tara Field, south of Atlanta when Hurricane Cindy and her accompanying tornados came through in early July. John P. Woodward of the AAHF reports the following:

"Sadly, the CV-2 broke loose from its moorings and suffered extensive damage to the area above and behind the aft cargo door under the horizontal stabilizer. We were very lucky in the respect that when the storm started the Caribou was facing west next to the hangar. After the storm passed, the Caribou was facing north. In the finest of military traditions, having ripped loose from its moorings, the CV-2 executed a perfect right face with only the tail striking a semi-trailer. As it came to rest, the vertical fin remained about eight feet from the hangar. We are still in the recovery stage, and the full extent of damage is unknown at this time." ❖

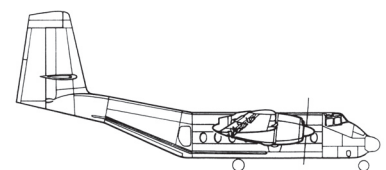


62-4149 after her "right face" at Tara Field

### Notable Quote

*Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former*

— Albert Einstein



## Google Earth See The World On Your Computer Screen!

If you haven't found it in your web surfing yet, go to the Google home page ([www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com)), click on "More", and look for **Google Earth**. It is a big download and requires a broadband connection and a fairly recent PC (sorry, no Macintosh version yet), but you will be amazed at what it provides.

What you will find is satellite photographs of just about all of the Earth and an indexing system that lets you "fly" to a location of your choosing and zoom in. The runways at Cam Ranh are visible, as are the ones at Vung Tau, Phu Cat, and Saigon. Amazingly, even the old triangular special forces camp at Plateau Gi is visible.

This is a new Google product and it is in its early stages. Their gazetteer of place names is somewhat lacking; for example, Shemya Island and Thule, Greenland produce no results, although you can manually "fly" to them. Some areas, particularly large cities, have incredible detail, with individual cars visible, while most areas leave you wishing you could see just a little more detail.

It also has a feature that allows you to change your viewpoint. The default is looking straight down as though from a satellite, but you can also set the perspective so it looks as though you are looking out a cockpit windshield! Google has cleverly merged the individual satellite images into what seems to be a continuous image of the entire planet.

The best part is that it is completely free (at least for now). You should be aware, however, that it can become addictive and waste vast quantities of time! In any case, enjoy! ❖



## Caribous In The Indian Air Force Adapted from a story by Sanjeev K. Sharma

Caring for history is as important as ex-servicemen for the nation. This was reiterated recently when the Indian Air Force reconstructed an historical Caribou aircraft and presented it to the Air Force Museum, Delhi. The presentation ceremony was held at Palam Air Base. Air Marshal MB Madon, AOC-in-C, Western Air Command (WAC), presented the memento to Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy, Chief of the Air Staff.

Speaking on the occasion, Air Chief Marshal Krishnaswamy said that history is very important for generating awareness among the people about the Air Force and its different types of aircraft. He urged more and more people to join hands for the reconstruction of national heritage.

Air Force Museum has many aircraft that served the Indian Air Force except the Caribou, even though it was in service until 1987. Eastern Air Command located the fuselages of two Caribou aircraft; one each in Jorhat and Walong. It reconstructed one of the aircraft to place in the Air Force Museum. Eastern Air Command formed a project cell for reconstruction work under Gp Capt CS Sohoni. After a careful evaluation, it was decided that the reconstruction work on BM 774, lying at Jorhat, should be attempted first.

A team of one officer and eight airmen worked for more than two months for the reconstruction of the aircraft. The frame for the entire 32-foot long wing was fabricated by using MS angles and MS square pipes. Aluminium ribs were fabricated to provide the leading edge contour. The tail portion of the aircraft had deteriorated extensively. The horizontal stabiliser and rudder were missing. These were fabricated with aluminium sheets. The missing nose cone was completely refabricated and fitted. In addition, all windows and windshields of the cockpit and doors, which were missing, were fabricated

and fitted. Panels of cargo compartment, which were also missing, were reconstructed using aluminium sheets. After repairs, the aircraft was airlifted by IL-76 to Palam. The parts of the aircraft were then reassembled and the whole aircraft was painted and brought to display standard.

The Caribou (also known as DHC-4) was developed by de Havilland of Canada. The construction of the aircraft began in 1957 and the first prototype flew on July 30, 1958. Initially five Caribous were delivered to the US Army in 1959. The US Army handed over the Caribou to the Indian Air Force in January 1963, for evaluation in the Himalayan terrain. The aircraft successfully demonstrated its capability to operate on short length runways. The Indian Air Force subsequently placed an order for 20 more Caribous.

Caribous, on induction, were involved in casualty evacuation after the Chinese aggression. Since then it had been operating in the difficult terrain of the North Eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland, and the Mizo Hills. The Caribou had been of great value for transporting men and material for construction of border roads in the Northeast. It was also utilised during the counter-insurgency operations in Zonga in the Mizo hills in 1966.

During the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, Caribous took part in Bangladesh operations for supply-dropping missions as well as decoy drops at Tangail. It also had the distinction of carrying out bombing missions over targets in the erstwhile East Pakistan. This aircraft was privileged to fly in Sheikh Mujibur Rehman from Calcutta to Dacca and fly out Gen Niazi from Dacca to Calcutta. Caribous also dropped nearly 160 tons of food for Bangladesh refugees under operation Annapurna. After a faithful service of over 24 years, the Caribou was phased out of service on March 31, 1987. ❖

## The Other End Of The Spectrum

### Story by Bill Weaver, Lockheed Test Pilot

Among professional aviators, there's a well-worn saying: Flying is simply hours of boredom punctuated by moments of stark terror. And yet, I don't recall too many periods of boredom during my 30-year career with Lockheed, most of which was spent as a test pilot. By far, the most memorable flight occurred on Jan. 25, 1966. Jim Zwyer, a Lockheed flight test reconnaissance and navigation systems specialist, and I were evaluating those systems on an SR-71 Blackbird test from Edwards AFB, Calif. We also were investigating procedures designed to reduce trim drag and improve high-Mach cruise performance. The latter involved flying with the center-of-gravity (CG) located further aft than normal, which reduced the Blackbird's longitudinal stability.

We took off from Edwards at 11:20 a.m. and completed the mission's first leg without incident. After refueling from a KC-135 tanker, we turned eastbound, accelerated to a Mach 3.2 cruise speed and climbed to 78,000 ft., our initial cruise-climb altitude. Several minutes into cruise, the right engine inlet's automatic control system malfunctioned, requiring a switch to manual control. The SR-71's inlet configuration was automatically adjusted during supersonic flight to decelerate air flow in the duct, slowing it to subsonic speed before reaching the engine's face. This was accomplished by the inlet's center-body spike translating aft, and by modulating the inlet's forward bypass doors. Normally, these actions were scheduled automatically as a function of Mach number, positioning the normal shock wave (where air flow becomes subsonic) inside the inlet to ensure optimum engine performance.

Without proper scheduling, disturbances inside the inlet could result in the shock wave being expelled forward — a phenomenon known as an "inlet unstart. That causes an instantaneous

loss of engine thrust, explosive banging noises and violent yawing of the aircraft — like being in a train wreck. Unstarts were not uncommon at that time in the SR-71's development, but a properly functioning system would recapture the shock wave and restore normal operation.

On the planned test profile, we entered a programmed 35-deg. bank turn to the right. An immediate unstart occurred on the right engine, forcing the aircraft to roll further right and start to pitch up. I jammed the control stick as far left and forward as it would go. No response. I instantly knew we were in for a wild ride. I attempted to tell Jim what was happening and to stay with the airplane until we reached a lower speed and altitude. I didn't think the chances of surviving an ejection at Mach 3.18 and 78,800 ft. were very good. However, g-forces built up so rapidly that my words came out garbled and unintelligible, as confirmed later by the cockpit voice recorder. The cumulative effects of system malfunctions, reduced longitudinal stability, increased angle-of-attack in the turn, supersonic speed, high altitude and other factors imposed forces on the airframe that exceeded flight control authority and the Stability Augmentation System's ability to restore control.

Everything seemed to unfold in slow motion. I learned later the time from event onset to catastrophic departure from controlled flight was only 2-3 sec. Still trying to communicate with Jim, I blacked out, succumbing to extremely high g-forces. The SR-71 then literally disintegrated around us. From that point, I was just along for the ride. My next recollection was a hazy thought that I was having a bad dream. Maybe I'll wake up and get out of this mess, I mused. Gradually regaining consciousness, I realized this was no dream; it had really happened. That also was disturbing, because I could not have survived

what had just happened. Therefore, I must be dead. Since I didn't feel bad — just a detached sense of euphoria — I decided being dead wasn't so bad after all. AS FULL AWARENESS took hold, I realized I was not dead, but had somehow separated from the airplane. I had no idea how this could have happened; I hadn't initiated an ejection. The sound of rushing air and what sounded like straps flapping in the wind confirmed I was falling, but I couldn't see anything. My pressure suit's face plate had frozen over and I was staring at a layer of ice. The pressure suit was inflated, so I knew an emergency oxygen cylinder in the seat kit attached to my parachute harness was functioning. It not only supplied breathing oxygen, but also pressurized the suit, preventing my blood from boiling at extremely high altitudes. I didn't appreciate it at the time, but the suit's pressurization had also provided physical protection from intense buffeting and g-forces. That inflated suit had become my own escape capsule.

My next concern was about stability and tumbling. Air density at high altitude is insufficient to resist a body's tumbling motions, and centrifugal forces high enough to cause physical injury could develop quickly. For that reason, the SR-71's parachute system was designed to automatically deploy a small-diameter stabilizing chute shortly after ejection and seat separation. Since I had not intentionally activated the ejection system — and assuming all automatic functions depended on a proper ejection sequence — it occurred to me the stabilizing chute may not have deployed. However, I quickly determined I was falling vertically and not tumbling. The little chute must have deployed and was doing its job.

Next concern: the main parachute, which was designed to open automatically at 15,000 ft. Again I had no (cont p16)

## RAAF Caribous: The Tango Charlie Option

The Royal Australian Air Force remains the last military operator of the de Havilland DHC-4 Caribou. Their 38 Squadron has some of the finest examples of the Caribou still flying in daily use. They are still flying because



*A recent photo of an RAAF Caribou from the 38 Squadron flying over Australia. It sure was a long trip from Vung Tau for this old "Wallaby".*

they fill a niche in the aviation world that is hard to fill with a replacement. The RAAF sees a continuing need for the Caribou into the foreseeable future, but their fleet, now at more than 30 years old, needs some help.

Two recent articles in *Defence Today* provide some insight into the problems facing the RAAF as regards the continued use of the Caribou. For over 20 years, the Australians have been grappling with the problems of how to replace the aging Caribou fleet with a newer equivalent. No matter how they analyze it, they always come to the same conclusion; since the Caribou and its stronger cousin, the Buffalo, have left production, there has not been any similarly-sized aircraft fielded that can come close to their short-field capability (but then we already knew that, didn't we?). Even former Air Force Chief of Staff General John Jumper remarked recently that what our Air

Force needs is another aircraft with the STOL capabilities of the Caribou. His comment was a reflection of the difficulties in supplying remote areas in Afghanistan and Iraq; a task that has been largely relegated to helicopters. While helicopters certainly have similar lift capacity, they are also much more expensive to maintain and have more limited range. There is much talk

in our own military about the helicopter "burn rate", although we have not yet taken the need as urgently as has the RAAF, which has been looking at this problem with increasing urgency for the past 20 years.

In its quest for a replacement, the RAAF has looked into a variety of options. Lockheed Martin Alenia Tactical Transport Systems' (LMATTS) C-27J



*Antonov An-74T-200*

'Spartan' and the Spanish CASA (now EADS CASA) C-295M were evaluated and both are ten-ton class airlifters, but neither has the Caribou's short field capability. These two aircraft are approaching the load capability of the C-130, which itself was passed over for

lack of short-field ability. They all need 3,000 feet or more of runway.

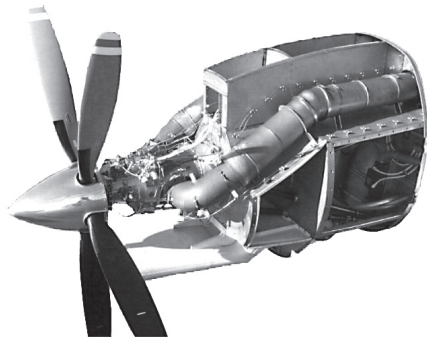
Another unusual candidate was the Antonov An-74T-200, a twin turbo-fan design with the engines mounted above the wing. Although the Antonov outperforms its competition, it is still lacking in runway length requirement and also brings with it the uncertainties of a former Soviet Union aircraft. The RAAF has gone so far as to examine the possibility of an An-74 with Rolls-Royce or General Electric engines. That would entail both the uncertainties of the aircraft itself combined with the problem of designing, testing, and certificating an engine retrofit.

Next on the list is the V-22 Osprey, which introduces other problems. Obviously, the Osprey can easily meet the runway length criterion, but there have been the "vortex-ring" effects noted in rapid descents as well as the almost overwhelming complexity of the machine. It remains to be seen how the V-22 program in the U.S. will turn out. Thinking back on the environment in which the USAF operated the Caribou, it's a little unsettling to think about taking a complex machine like the V-22 in to that same milieu.

Leaving no stone unturned, the RAAF has even taken a hard look at the British Advanced Technologies Group SkyCat Lighter Than Air (LTA) vehicle. The LTA option is actually appealing, but the SkyCat will not undergo its first test flights until 2007, with certification close to 2008. The SkyCat is little more than a glorified blimp, but has the advantage of being very resistant to small arms fire with its segmented gas bag system. It is even resistant to RPG-like weapons, although it does present a larger and slower target.

Having looked at all the other alternatives, attention now turns back to the original Caribou design and an analysis of its drawbacks and advantages. The Caribou is the only aircraft in the RAAF military inventory that uses avgas. This does present certain

logistical problems. Taking another view, however, the Caribou operates in remote areas. Any small civil airport has avgas, while many are not likely to have turbine fuel. A Caribou can thus “live off the land” for extended periods. The relative simplicity of the Caribou, combined with a maintenance-qualified flight mechanic crew member lends itself to operation in primitive areas for extended periods of time. With the exception of the flaps and the gear, a Caribou has completely mechanical flight controls and has none of the modern electronic/computer-assisted control systems. The Caribou is a design from the 1950s, when such modern contraptions were not even available. What then is the weakness? In a word, the aging Pratt & Whitney R-2000 powerplant. What may have been the greatest joy of the Caribou to us old-timers is becoming its greatest liability now. The engines are getting old and maintenance on them is getting to be more and more expensive. The elderly engines, running on current 100 octane gasoline do not perform up to their original factory specs. (Remember that 115/145 avgas we used in Vietnam?) If memory serves, a USAF C-7A with 1000 hours on an engine was cause for some concern and care. At 1100 hours, one exercised extreme



*The Pratt and Whitney PT6A-67T fits neatly in the place of the R-2000 with the additional benefit that what used to be augmentor tubes can now be used for long exhaust ducts fitted with infrared suppression devices.*

care, especially in that first power reduction from takeoff power to METO power. By the time they got to 1200 hours, the engines were simply an

engine failure waiting to happen. It is quite certain that the R-2000 has not improved much with another 30+ years on the clock.

Into this picture steps Pen Turbo of Cape May New Jersey. Pen Turbo bought up many of the mothballed Caribous from Davis-Monthan when they were declared surplus. As sacrilegious as it seems, Pen Turbo’s concept was to



*A Pen Turbo conversion Caribou with its five-blade Hartzell props flying near Cape May, New Jersey..*

rebuild the aircraft and replace the venerable R-2000 with a Pratt & Whitney PT6A-67T turboprop engine. Just out of sheer coincidence, the power rating of the PT-6 is almost exactly the same as the R-2000 and the engine fits nicely in the original nacelle. Normally, a re-engining attempt like this would be considered a high-risk project, but with Pen Turbo already flying the conversions with Supplemental Type Certificates from both the U.S. FAA and Transport Canada, the conversion is a proven and certificated path to extending the life of the Caribou.

Although the engine power ratings look very similar on paper, the PT6A engines are considerably lighter and, of course, perform to their paper specifications. With the combination of lighter engines and full power output, the turbo conversions give the Caribou a 30% greater payload, combined with a 30%

better time-to-climb, and a 10% better cruise speed. Fitted with a five bladed Hartzell HCB5MA3M/M11691NK prop of smaller diameter than the old Hamilton-Standard 43D50-651 props of the C-7, the Caribou gets a prop better-suited to rough field operation and one that produces a smaller thrust cone and lower stresses on the tail section. The Hartzells are rated at 1600 BHP, which

meshes nicely with the 1560 SHP emergency rating of the PT6A. (Wouldn’t that extra margin have been nice on those short-field takeoffs in the C-7?)

The other outstanding factor in favor of the PT6A is its proven 6,000 hour TBO record. In fact, the RAAF believes that the overall increase in reliability of a turbo Caribou would be about 25%, bringing the 38 Squadron to an availability of 96%..

The RAAF has calculated that the payback period for the conversion would be only 5 - 8 years against current operating costs with the R-2000 engines and extend the life of the Caribou out to 2020 or better. At that rate, the Caribou may outlast many of us!

Who knows what the RAAF will finally decide, but one thing is for sure: the Caribou is one very unique aircraft with which we all had the pleasure of becoming intimately familiar! ❖

# Nostalgia Time — The Tactical Aerodrome Directory

DOD  
 SPECIALIZED FLIGHT INFORMATION PUBLICATION  
**TACTICAL  
 AERODROME DIRECTORY  
 SOUTH VIETNAM**

This Directory is Issued MONTHLY

**15 JANUARY 1970**

Next Issue 15 Feb 1970

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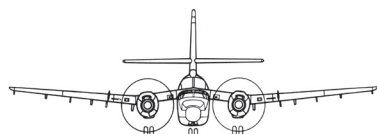
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*The cover of the 15 January 1970 Tactical Aerodrome Directory. All the information a Bou driver could ever want!*



Remember this? With its more than 400 pages, *The Tactical Aerodrome Directory* had information on just about any place you could land an aircraft or helicopter in South Vietnam. The 7651<sup>st</sup> Aeronautical Chart and Information Squadron had its work cut out for it trying to keep this document up to date. Whenever the frag order showed some place or Victor number you had never heard of, this was the first place to look.

Although the large fields with nav aids, like Cam Ranh Bay, shown at the right, had just runway drawings, almost all of the forward fields had actual aerial photographs, along with a bearing and distance from a reliable nav aid. The



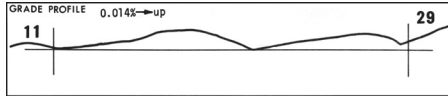
*Gia Nghia (VA2-202) aerial photo from page 225 of the Tactical Aerodrome Directory.*

photos were not always the greatest, but they did the job. South Vietnam was probably one of the foremost places you didn't want to land in the wrong place; it could do serious damage to your health as well as your reputation.

Those guys from the 7651<sup>st</sup> had to be another group of unsung heroes in Vietnam. In addition to compiling all the gross aerodrome information, they also went out into the field and actually surveyed them. This provided the pilots with a detailed grade profile and grade cross-section for many of the runways. We use the word "runway" loosely, as many of the runways were little more than clearings in the jungle

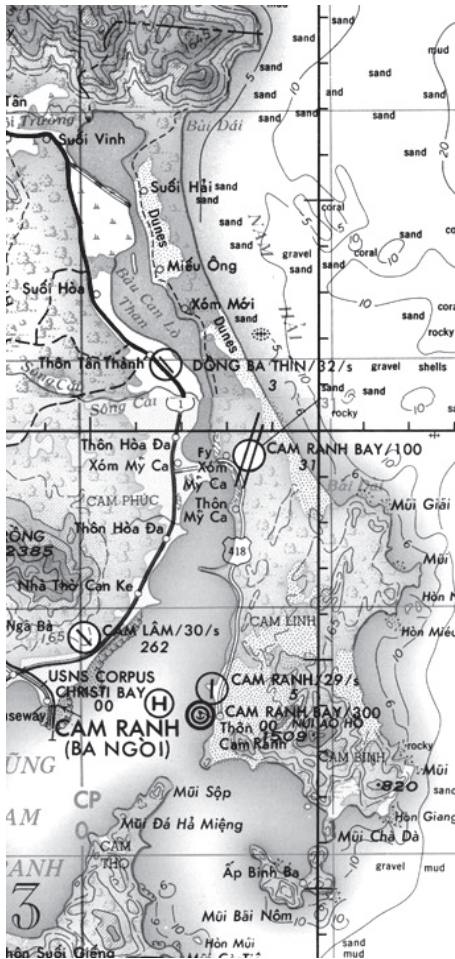
Page 215 — Cam Ranh Bay — VA2-192

with some slippery PSP in the touch-down zones.. Truc Giang is one of the more amusing grade profiles in the *Tactical Aerodrome Directory*.



The grade profile shown for Truc Giang in the TAD. This looks more like the plans for a roller coaster than a runway profile!

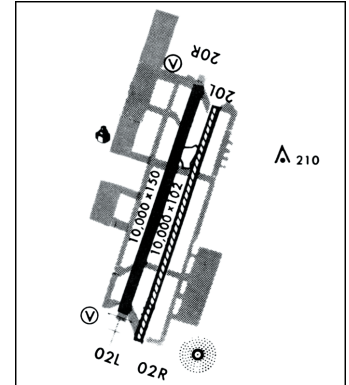
The full page for Cam Ranh Bay is shown at the right. There will be a test after you finish reading it!



Cam Ranh Bay chart.

Perhaps in future newsletter editions we can publish the pages for Vung Tau (VA3-5) and Phu Cat (VA2-213). In fact, if there is interest, perhaps we can take requests for publishing the pages of your favorite airfields. ❖

CAM RANH BAY VA2-192



❖ CAM RANH BAY, VIETM CP066261 12°00'N 109°14'E (VVCR)

AF 37 L5, 6, 7⊙, 8⊙, 9⊙ H100(CON) 150 02L-20R (S-100, T-220, TT-318)  
100(AM-2) 102 02R-20L

FUEL - A+, J4, SP, Presair, O-128, O-133, O-148⊙, LOX JASU - M32A-60

A-GEAR

RWY 02L BAK-12(B), BAK-13(B) \_\_\_\_\_ BAK-13(B), BAK-12(B) RWY 20R  
(1040') (3500') (3500') (1040')

**AERODROME REMARKS** - US controllers on duty 24 hrs dly. All F/W acft inbd to Dong Ba Thin AAF ctc Cam Ranh Bay twr prior to entering Cam Ranh Bay Control Zone. CAUTION: Reduced Rwy separation standards are in effect. CAUTION: Parallel twys E and W may be mistaken for rwys. No tran maint. Extv const. Acft on PAR to Rwy 02L/02R can expect VFR transition to 02R/20L dur VFR wx. VFR and IFR tfc delays dur tactical recoveries. Tfc ptn 360° overhead Rwy 02L, 02R left hand; Rwy 20R, 20L right hand. Rectangular ptn 02L, 02R rgt hand; Rwy 20L, 20R left hand. Ptn alts 1500' jet, 1000' convl and turboprop. VIP arr ctc PTD 15 min prior to touchdown. Rwy edge lgts lctd 35' fr usable rwy surface. Acft will not enter W ramp without FOLLOW ME vehicle assistance. All acft avoid transmitting when flying low over gravel pit lctd 112', 3.2 NM fr Chan 71 TACAN, possibility of detonating blasting charges. Acft should avoid ldg on BAK-12 cables lctd 1000' fr app ends of Rwy 02L-20R. Helis destined for hospital heliport ctc hospital before ldg. Only helis with offl bus will land on hospital helipad. Hvy vehicular tfc on twys and ramps. Navy acft requiring cstms ctc NAF Ops 15 min prior to landing. Rwy 02R-20L unusable for large cargo or jet fighter acft ex emerg. No ovrn aval on Rwy 02R and 20L. No thld lgts on Rwy 02R. SEE VIETNAM SPECIAL NOTICES AND PROCEDURES. ⊕ Ltd other types AVOIL aval. ⊕ Rwy 02L only. ⊕ Rwy 02L-20R only.

COMMUNICATIONS (PTD 372.2)

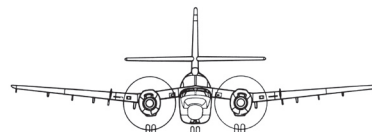
⊕APP CON - 241.2 135.9⊙ 34.2x  
TOWER - 225.4 131.2 34.2 (E)  
NAVY OPS - 299.3 NAVY RESPBERRY CAM RANH BAY 6724.5 (6723) HF/SSB/USB  
AIRLIFT COMMAND POST - 349.4 128.0 HOSP PAD - 364.2  
GND CON - 286.3 134.9 ⊕DEP CON - 273.3 119.0  
ALCE - 291.8 139.9 4677 USB 8134 USB PFSV: METRO -

RADIO AIDS TO NAVIGATION

TVOR(T) CRB 112.4 At Field  
(H)TACAN⊙ CRB Chan 71 At Field  
RBN⊙(H) (A1) IL 310 At Field  
RADAR - SEE RADAR MINIMA SECTION

**RADIO/NAV REMARKS** - ⊕Unusable beyond 30 NM below 5000' 355-030 RAD; below 3000' 050-110 RAD; below 6000' 110-190 RAD; below 7500' 190-210 RAD; beyond 25 NM below 11,500' 230-290 RAD; below 14,000' 290-310 RAD; below 9000' 310-355 RAD. ⊕ Unusable beyond 30 NM btwn 190°-360°. ⊕ Unrel beyond 60 NM.

Page 215 of the *Tactical Aerodrome Directory*, depicting Cam Ranh Bay AB and its facilities.



## The Other End Of The Spectrum (Continued From Page 11)

assurance the automatic-opening function would work. I couldn't ascertain my altitude because I still couldn't see through the iced-up face plate. There was no way to know how long I had been blacked-out or how far I had fallen. I felt for the manual-activation D-ring on my chute harness, but with the suit inflated and my hands numbed by cold, I couldn't locate it. I decided I'd better open the face plate, try to estimate my height above the ground, then locate that "D" ring. Just as I reached for the face plate, I felt the reassuring sudden deceleration of main-chute deployment. I raised the frozen face plate and discovered its uplatch was broken. Using one hand to hold that plate up, I saw I was descending through a clear, winter sky with unlimited visibility.

I was greatly relieved to see Jim's parachute coming down about a quarter of a mile away. I didn't think either of us could have survived the aircraft's breakup, so seeing Jim had also escaped lifted my spirits incredibly. I could also see burning wreckage on the ground a few miles from where we would land. The terrain didn't look at all inviting — a desolate, high plateau dotted with patches of snow and no signs of habitation. I tried to rotate the parachute and look in other directions. But with one hand devoted to keeping the face plate up and both hands numb from high-altitude, subfreezing temperatures, I couldn't manipulate the risers enough to turn.

Before the breakup, we'd started a turn in the New Mexico-Colorado-Oklahoma-Texas border region. The SR-71 had a turning radius of about 100 mi. at that speed and altitude, so I wasn't even sure what state we were going to land in. But, because it was about 3:00 p.m., I was certain we would be spending the night out here. At about 300 ft. above the ground, I yanked the seat kit's release handle and made sure it was still tied to me by a long lanyard. Releasing the heavy kit

ensured I wouldn't land with it attached to my derriere, which could break a leg or cause other injuries. I then tried to recall what survival items were in that kit, as well as techniques I had been taught in survival training. Looking down, I was startled to see a fairly large animal — perhaps an antelope — directly under me. Evidently, it was just as startled as I was because it literally took off in a cloud of dust.

My first-ever parachute landing was pretty smooth. I landed on fairly soft ground, managing to avoid rocks, cacti and antelopes. My chute was still billowing in the wind, though. I struggled to collapse it with one hand, holding the still-frozen face plate up with the other.

"Can I help you?" a voice said. Was I hearing things? I must be hallucinating. Then I looked up and saw a guy walking toward me, wearing a cowboy hat. A helicopter was idling a short distance behind him. If I had been at Edwards and told the search-and-rescue unit that I was going to bail out over the Rogers Dry Lake at a particular time of day, a crew couldn't have gotten to me as fast as that cowboy-pilot had. The gentleman was Albert Mitchell, Jr., owner of a huge cattle ranch in northeastern New Mexico. I had landed about 1.5 mi. from his ranch house — and from a hangar for his two-place Hughes helicopter. Amazed to see him, I replied I was having a little trouble with my chute. He walked over and collapsed the canopy, anchoring it with several rocks. He had seen Jim and me floating down and had radioed the New Mexico Highway Patrol, the Air Force and the nearest hospital. Extracting myself from the parachute harness, I discovered the source of those flapping-strap noises heard on the way down. My seat belt and shoulder harness were still draped around me, attached and latched. The lap belt had been shredded on each side of my hips, where the straps had fed through knurled adjust-

ment rollers. The shoulder harness had shredded in a similar manner across my back. The ejection seat had never left the airplane; I had been ripped out of it by the extreme forces, seat belt and shoulder harness still fastened. I also noted that one of the two lines that supplied oxygen to my pressure suit had come loose, and the other was barely hanging on. If that second line had become detached at high altitude, the deflated pressure suit wouldn't have provided any protection. I knew an oxygen supply was critical for breathing and suit-pressurization, but didn't appreciate how much physical protection an inflated pressure suit could provide. That the suit could withstand forces sufficient to disintegrate an airplane and shred heavy nylon seat belts, yet leave me with only a few bruises and minor whiplash was impressive. I truly appreciated having my own little escape capsule.

After helping me with the chute, Mitchell said he'd check on Jim. He climbed into his helicopter, flew a short distance away and returned about 10 min. later with devastating news: Jim was dead. Apparently, he had suffered a broken neck during the aircraft's disintegration and was killed instantly. Mitchell said his ranch foreman would soon arrive to watch over Jim's body until the authorities arrived. I asked to see Jim and, after verifying there was nothing more that could be done, agreed to let Mitchell fly me to the Tucumcari hospital, about 60 mi. to the south.

I have vivid memories of that helicopter flight, as well. I didn't know much about rotorcraft, but I knew a lot about "red lines," and Mitchell kept the airspeed at or above red line all the way. The little helicopter vibrated and shook a lot more than I thought it should have. I tried to reassure the cowboy-pilot I was feeling OK; there was no need to rush. But since he'd notified the hospital staff that we were



inbound, he insisted we get there as soon as possible. I couldn't help but think how ironic it would be to have survived one disaster only to be done in by the helicopter that had come to my rescue. However, we made it to the hospital safely — and quickly.

Soon, I was able to contact Lockheed's flight test office at Edwards. The test team there had been notified initially about the loss of radio and radar contact, then told the aircraft had been lost. They also knew what our flight conditions had been at the time, and assumed no one could have survived. I briefly explained what had happened, describing in fairly accurate detail the flight conditions prior to breakup. The next day, our flight profile was duplicated on the SR-71 flight simulator at Beale AFB, Calif. The outcome was identical. Steps were immediately taken to prevent a recurrence of our accident. Testing at a CG aft of normal limits was discontinued, and trim-drag issues were subsequently resolved via aerodynamic means. The inlet control system was continuously improved and, with subsequent development of the Digital Automatic Flight and Inlet Control System, inlet unstarts became rare.

Investigation of our accident revealed that the nose section of the aircraft had broken off aft of the rear cockpit and crashed about 10 mi. from the main wreckage. Parts were scattered over an area approximately 15 mi. long and 10 mi. wide. Extremely high air loads and g-forces, both positive and negative, had literally ripped Jim and me from the airplane. Unbelievably good luck is the only explanation for my escaping relatively unscathed from that disintegrating aircraft. Two weeks after the accident, I was back in an SR-71, flying the first sortie on a brand-new bird at Lockheed's Palmdale, Calif. assembly and test facility. It was my first flight since the accident, so a flight test engineer in the back seat was probably a little apprehensive about my state of mind and confidence. As we roared

down the runway and lifted off, I heard an anxious voice over the intercom.

"Bill! Bill! Are you there? "Yeah, George. What's the matter? Thank God! I thought you might have left." The rear cockpit of the SR-71 has no forward visibility — only a small window on each side — and George couldn't see me. A big red light on the master-warning panel in the rear cockpit had illuminated just as we rotated, stating, "Pilot Ejected." Fortunately, the cause was a misadjusted micro-switch, not my departure.

Bill Weaver flight tested all models of the Mach-2 F-104 Starfighter and the entire family of Mach 3+ Blackbirds — the A-12, YF-12 and SR-71. He subsequently was assigned to Lockheed's L-1011 project as an engineering test pilot, became the company's chief pilot and retired as Division Manager of Commercial Flying Operations. He still flies Orbital Sciences Corp.'s L-1011, which has been modified to carry a Pegasus satellite-launch vehicle. An FAA Designated Engineering Representative Flight Test Pilot, he's also involved in various aircraft-modification projects, conducting certification flight tests. ❖



## San Antonio 2007

Through the untiring efforts of Bill Buesking, Wilson Petefish, and Pat Hanavan, the 535<sup>th</sup> is proud to announce the first squadron-sponsored reunion! The San Antonio El Paseo Del Rio will be the setting for our September 2007 Reunion. (See [www.sachamber.org/visitor/riverwalk\\_history.php](http://www.sachamber.org/visitor/riverwalk_history.php) for detailed information) The Holiday Inn River Walk Hotel, located on one of the quiet and serene stretches of the River Walk, will be the place. Yet it is very near the unique sites, sounds, and entertainment of the many boutiques, nightclubs and restaurants that line the river. The nearly three miles of winding cobblestone and flagstone pathways, which border both sides of the river some 20 feet below the street level, is shaded with towering cypress trees and features picturesque footbridges and native landscaping. Activities along the river feature Rio San Antonio Cruises, the river's floating transportation system, which provide a novel method of sightseeing and people-watching in downtown San Antonio. Groups can also dine aboard open-air cruisers as they wind their way along the scenic waterway.

The San Antonio River Walk has been the central focus of the city ever since the first settlers in the area took up residence along its river banks. It flows through the Convention Center, the River Center Mall with its IMAX Theatre, the Arneson River Theatre which schedules shows adjacent to the historic district called La Villita, the King William area, and many other historic landmarks of old San Antonio. Just a short walk away, HemisFair Plaza features the Tower of the Americas with its revolving restaurant located about 500 feet above the Convention Center, and offers a 360 degree panoramic view of the city while dining. Market Square, or "El Mercado" is the largest Mexican style market place outside of Mexico patterned after an authentic Mexican market with 32 different shops. The Buckhorn Saloon and

(Continued on Page 22)

**Trivia Quiz Answers**

**Pilots Answer:**

a. Field Barometric Pressure  
 b. 2200 ±50 RPM  
 c. Normal drop: 50 to 75 RPM, Max drop: 150 RPM  
 (Source: T.O. 1C-7A-1)

**Maintenance Answers:**

a. That would be engine sling  
 PW4917  
 b. That was 1500 PSI  
 c. Hamilton Standard 43D50-651, 3-blade, full-feathering and reverse-ing, hydraulic prop assembly  
 (Source: AFM 4AMF43171-12-1, 3750<sup>th</sup> Technical School)

## Senior Profiles

*“Senior Profiles” is an ongoing attempt to recognize our senior members that have service dating back to World War II. This issue’s honoree is retired Colonel Robert S. (Hop) Hopkins. Here is his amazing story...*

### Robert S. (Hop) Hopkins



When Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was a high school student in my senior year. I took the aviation cadet exam and was sworn into the enlisted reserve corps and told to return to school and wait until I was 18 to be called for active duty, which they did on my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday as I was cutting the cake. I was sent to Keesler Field for basic training and with only a high school education, they sent me to Mississippi State College for one semester with the 64<sup>th</sup> CTD (college training detachment). Later, pre-flight at San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center, primary at Sikeston, Mo. Basic at Waco, TX, and advanced single engine at Aloe Field, Victoria, TX. Upon graduation I was sent to P-47 transition at Foster Field.

When the war ended I elected to get out of the service and attend college at Virginia Tech for four years while still flying with the reserve and later with the Virginia Air National Guard which at the time was flying the P-47 Thunderbolt. After college I accepted a job as a chemist at the Radford Arsenal and continued to fly with the guard on weekends.

After the outbreak of the Korean War the guard unit was called to active duty. When the war ended I was assigned to the Air Defense Command flying all weather interceptors. ; F-94C aircraft with the 96 FIS, F-89/D aircraft with the 57th FIS, and F-86 D/L aircraft with the 47th FIS. The F-89 assignment meant a year in Iceland.

In 1957 the Strategic Air Command was rapidly expanding and they needed experience pilots as aircraft commanders. I was drafted from fighters to Sac’s B-47 bombers. But I went like a man, bound and gagged. In addition to regular missions, I flew many “reflex” missions to England and several secret missions near hostile forces.

At this time SAC, much to their objection, was having ICBM missiles thrust upon them and needed personnel to man the launch control centers. For the next five years I felt like a mole, spending more time under ground than above. Four years with the Atlas E system and one year with the Minuteman II missile at Vandenberg where my deputy and I launched the first Minuteman missile.

In 1966 I was given orders to go to Fort Benning, Georgia which I questioned saying that is an Army installation, not Air Force. Once at Fort Benning, all the “grunts” didn’t salute because they couldn’t tell whether we were postmen or greyhound bus drivers. But, there I learned about the Caribou.

My year in Vietnam seemed to go quickly flying almost every day and logging a total of 1200 hours with normal missions and several TAC emergencies. One, at night, three Caribous flew 100 ARVN strikers to Bu Dop to reinforce the camp. We later learned that the camp had been overrun with no survivors.

As my tour ended, I looked forward to a new assignment that did not include sitting alert as I did in SAC and ADC. I was in shock to learn that I was on my way to Castle AFB for B-52 training. Only two years back from Vietnam and I found myself on my way back to SEA flying arc light B-52 missions as a select crew. We flew mostly lead missions and I served as an airborne commander.

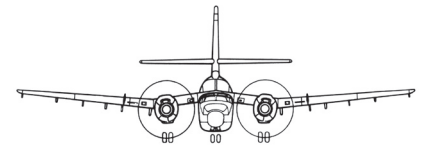
In 1971 I was selected to go to the joint strategic target planning staff (JSTPS) at SAC Headquarters. This was a joint operation with army, navy,

marine and air force personnel and a fixed five-year tour. There our paths crossed with Col Bob Cooper (our Bob Cooper) that I had flown with in the 458<sup>th</sup> TAS.

Finally in 1981 I decided it was enough and I retired with 31 years of active duty, six years of reserve and air national guard, and a total of 10,149 hours logged in fighters, bombers, Caribous, and other aircraft.

Military decorations include:

Silver Star  
Distinguished Flying Cross  
Bronze star  
Air medal with 12 OLCs  
Combat Readiness Medal  
Joint Service Commendation Medal  
Meritorious Service Medal with OLC  
Air Force Commendation Medal with OLC  
Distinguished Unit Citation  
AF Outstanding Unit Award  
with 6 OLC and the “V”  
World War II Victory Medal  
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal  
Vietnam Service Medal with 4 Battle Stars  
Vietnam Campaign Medal  
Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry  
with the gold star  
Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with palm  
12 other medals and ribbons of lesser importance ❖



### Notable Quote

*If ye love wealth better than liberty,  
the tranquility of servitude better  
than the animating contest of free-  
dom... go home from us in peace.  
We ask not your counsels nor arms.  
May your chains set lightly upon  
you and may posterity forget that  
ye were our countrymen..*

— Samuel Adams, 1776

## Katrina you Russian Bitch!

### Nick Evanish's Experience in Gulfport

Hmm...; a couple days before the hurricane we have Myrna and Shannon puttering and pondering. I was forced to board up her downtown first story apartment windows to assure some protection of her goodies. I reasoned that her rental landlord should do this but my thinking has little to do with actual practice here in Gulfport MS. Shannon's apartment was south of the railroad tracks in downtown and sorta North of the Yacht Harbor. Anyhow, Myrna had previous hurricane experience a few blocks from where we now live near the Gulfport airport. You have heard of Hurricane Camille? Camille was the benchmark grandmother of all recent U.S. hurricanes; lots of wind, lots of water damage toward New Orleans all the way to Biloxi. Shrimp boats were up over Highway 90 in Biloxi and a good reference for the high water mark then...1969, that is. A couple ocean going freighters were up on the docks here in Gulfport. Big time high water...

So with that experience we filled the cars with gas and accumulated a couple chests of ice as we usually do and I watch \$5.00 worth of ice usually last for a couple days after the hurricanes meekly pass, as they usually do. So with this one breathing down our necks we took the Bimmer and daughters' Volvo to the local downtown concrete multistory bank parking garage for the overnight. The wind was already up to about 30 or so. This was free parking and all it cost was a half a tank of Volvo gas because some sleaze was looking out for himself before the 'cane. Nobody has figured how to tap the Bimmer especially with the siren, horns and lights going off. I noticed a buddy had already put his 1937 Cord convertible into this 'safe' parking area.

Back home and it was continue preparations on the home front. I already whipped up minimal slap up window protection that seemed to work

in past times. With aluminum windows I cannot screw, bolt or nail stuff to the window frame so I prop the protection panels against the window with long 2x4s and spike them into the ground.

So we are back home Sunday night, the night before the morning landfall. Winds are coming up a bit. At the request of the lady of the house I 'saved' a tub of water for various necessities should the water go out... the water did not go out for more than a couple days with H. Camille so should be no problem. Rather than save a full tub I got away with half a tub and saved the cost of about 25 gallons of water. Bad choice! I already had a hoard of gallons of water from various good sources... all drinkable.

With everybody now in bed I monitor the happenings till I fall asleep about 2 or so, then wake up with the full blow upon us about 0700 in the morning. A pinecone hitting the roof seems like a sledgehammer; branches were a bit louder. There is a mysterious thump followed with thumps. Sounds like a frozen body hitting the roof then flopping off. I later noticed it is a piece of bark about 15 inches long and three inches wide. It hits hard and then with wind assist flips down the roof making quite a noise.

MORNING: Hurricane has gotten stronger... like the 140 mph peak promised which is not particularly calm but a good 50 MPH less than benchmark Camille.

Now everybody is up. We are rather blind to the outside because of the window protection but it is clear there is lots of activity with the wind. The trees are flailing beyond belief. No lightning in this area.

OK. The hurricane tracked up the LA-MS boundary 40 miles to the West of us. It is about 40 miles to the apparent location of the eye or the edge of the eye of the cane. Much of the little towns and structures there are just washed and whipped away; Pearl-

ington, Waveland, for examples. Bay St Louis had about 6 feet of water in town. The I-10 bridge was impassable after the storm.

Getting toward 10:00 the wind keeps whipping up. We peek out and see trees snapping off at about 18 feet above the ground. It takes lots of power to break a full size 14, 16 and 24 inch pine tree. It was an awesome demo of power.

This kept up till about 4:00 in the afternoon and I was getting antsy. Let's see. One of the first trees attacked us and our house infrastructure. It knocked out the phone, which is still not fixed 4 weeks later. It terminated the cable. Now I figured we can do some quality leisure and listen to the radio. I couldn't find the spare battery radio. Finally, we got some wind speed reduction so I could go outside with minimal risk and look around before dark. It was still raining a bit. I noticed the tree on the roof as if I was not aware when it hit. This was a full size 90 foot pine tree... just nailed the hip roof. When 7000 pounds of wandering wood hits the roof you know something just happened. Lots of cars in the driveway survived with only minor scrapes and lots of tree sap.

OK back to the inside of the house. Lots of bumps, etc. Breakfast was offered and accepted. Lots of looking. Finally the pine tree leaning toward the house snapped and fell on the house. Not much impact though it is hard to keep a straight face. The main branch that penetrated the roof came thru the fold up stairwell. We caught a quart of the two quarts of water that assaulted our upstairs.

First day after: We just came out and looked around. All roads were blocked with trees. Power lines were down; ditto phone and cable. The water pressure was now zero so we began roughing it. Not out of choice mind you.

I ended up with about 6 trees down in the yard and was host to several of the neighbor's biggies. (Cont. on page 20)

(Continued from page 19)

One pine tree top was at my back door and I had to buzz a path just to get in and out of the laundry room. One very large tree, about 2.5 feet in diameter, fell square in front of a back building I built several years ago. It missed the building and an old VW bus I curate for old time's sake. A hit to either would have been curtains. Another very large pine missed the building to the North of the building so for that I am grateful. Now hear this. I externally paneled the two story building with aluminum backed Styrofoam and nailed it about every 6 inches all around. Then the entire building was wrapped with tarpaper. Heavy version. The entire South side and each end of the building were stripped of this stuff. It is standing with the 2x6 studs exposed upstairs and down. It did not seem to blow much out of the building. I attempted to better the 115 MPH building code when I build the shed. They want the wood bolted to the slab and straps of metal nailed to hold the studs and stuff. I bettered this by tying the 4 corners of the building to the slab with ½ inch rebar. The roof beams are thus welded to the slab so that helped keep things in place under big time wind trials.

Beyond that there are just tons of pine boughs and pine cones in the yard. I haul wagon loads to include branches and pieces of tree and now three weeks later still don't see the end in sight of the basic debris removal. What a pain in the ass! It is relentless. I am extremely fatigued in the oppressive heat and until air conditioning got back with us it was brutal.

So basically, I was not really hurt; big time inconvenience, maybe. Oh, Shannon almost got washed away in her Second Street apartment. She was on the ground floor a block off the almost universally destroyed beach and her rather nice collection of stuff was flooded big time. I think she was guarded by the Small Craft Port that reduced the impact of the big wave actions but notice the ground floor of the

local church was gutted, walls and pews and altar and that was a mere block away toward the water. So with my stuff to worry about we pitched in and helped her get her stuff out as best as we could. She had 4 feet of water and mud and such but there was no water for clean up. Anyhow, the better solid furniture eventually washed up and was sterilized and will likely be refinished compliments of her renters insurance. She will add on things like computer, sewing machines, fabric, clothes that were just soaked in mud and sludge. Nobody wants a down filled comforter that was in infested seawater so that and a fine mattress will be candidates for insurance. She may break even. A boy pal won a lot of points as he volunteered to put up her plywood over the windows. I relented and helped since it seemed unfair to burden the guy with all the work. He had an electric screwdriver and really snugged the buggers on tight. The inside of the place was a complete mess. Stuff floats and seems stirred. Refer floated then overturned. You get the idea.

So all in all we eked by with minimal damage. A couple of my Daedalian pilot friends who lived on the Back Bay of Biloxi were washed away. A one star Admiral and nice guy is likely no longer residing on scenic Highway 90-Beach Drive home in Pass Christian, MS. The only hope is that his pair of Slave Quarters in the French Quarter remain for lodging for the guy.

One of Myrna's good local friends has a magnificent ranch style house on the bayou near the electric Power Company. She saw water in her yard and did some hasty preps. She tossed a few things into her attic. Next look was water half way up the windows, water pouring in the doors, windows breaking in the bedroom and the girl exited to the attic for the next 10 hours or so. The water got up to the ceiling which would be of interest to the casual observer. Her sister and her husband at their house on the same property treaded water up to the ceiling for hours. A few

family units were flooded out.

Now let's talk about the Beach. There is a railroad that runs down the middle of the sort of peninsula that starts with Biloxi and goes West to Pass Christian. Then there is a bridge to the town of Bay St. Louis. Camille passed over this bridge and wiped Pass Christian in '69. It was wiped again. In fact in general terms everything (everything) south of the railroad was about 90 percent destroyed from Biloxi to Pass Christian. That is where all the rubble came from. It is full of nails. I stepped on a rusty one and put me in for a week of pain walking. Got a shot the third day. Nothing for the pain. Nurse noticed welts on my upper bod. It looked like I had just spent a weekend in a Thai house of ill repute whatever that brings. I don't have any idea but have to add something of literary value to keep your interest. The rash got worse daily and went away when we went finally got back to air conditioning. Myrna looked like a creature from the black lagoon with the rash and she too got better after a couple days of AC.

First and Second day we were virtually marooned. Gulfport airport was still a lake. Couldn't drive out past either end. I have not determined the runway was underwater but it was close. We were within a few feet of taking on area water. People in our block but slightly lower had water in their homes. That is a bitch. The fancy mansions and great homes on the Beach Front were about 90% destroyed. The guy with the Cord was wiped out. I am still trying to figure if his '41 Lincoln Continental survived. His house washed a couple blocks back to the railroad...in pieces.

The motel we stayed at for the Caribou Reunion here a few years ago is wiped away. Casino barges were on Highway 90 in Biloxi and one blocked both directions of traffic here in Gulfport. They detonated it a couple days ago.

A large shipment of frozen chicken destined for Russia did not make it but floated up a block or two North of the port; mostly still in OTR freight trailers. The damage across the board was great.

Lots of the highway is washed out. It is like that from New Orleans to Mobile. This must be what a tsunami must be like but we have greater resources to start with and I think the feds, George and Co. got goodies down here in jig time. The water was (typically) declared undrinkable but it was not running so no problem there. Lack of good water could be a serious plague. Thirst is relentless. The feds, Red Cross and several others provided unlimited bottled water. Then they provided lots of ice pretty quickly which took the edge off without air conditioning. I noted a pond down the ditch from my house. I was dipping water for an occasional flush. Looked closer and noticed nice clean water oozing thru the sand. I informed a water guy passing by and a broken 8 inch line was repaired by nightfall. I took a dipper and had a splash bath before they showed to fix that one. It was very hot and we were taking two quart baths at night. A neighbor buddy came up that night and told me there was a bit of water flow. He detailed how he had the 8 inch line across the street repaired. This was two 8 inch water lines broken within 100 yards. Big trees overturn, uproot and just pull a chunk out of the water system. This must have happened 100 times over the city. I have no complaint with the response but remember this area is almost a sideshow. New Orleans was the tragedy of the days after. That was an accident waiting to happen and it did. Seems their famed pumps don't work without electric power. The entire electric power system was disabled for 100 miles. Hattiesburg, MS and Meridian even got winds approaching 100 mph. Think of it. No back up pumps or electric in New O. They have to be idiots.

I had visions of putting this stuff out on a daily basis but I approached drop dead on a nightly basis and waived the opportunity. Plus, for about 7-10 days, I had no electric and thus no computer to peck on.

Bimmer is absorbing a daily dose of pinesap and I wipe it with gasoline. The daily grind was to keep pecking at the yard, check on some older friends

who needed things like ice, water and MREs. About the third day both Myrna and Shannon ventured out in two cars. They each returned with several bags of ice, a couple cases of water for drinking, a mini rinse for bathing, and tooth brushing etc. It was the basic hunter-gather instinct, I guess. Anyhow we gave the excess ice to neighbors and eventually various people would go out and come back with an occasional bag of salvation. God it was hot!

The heat was relentless. Well into record 90s daily, no rain, (thank God but a rain cools things a bit temporarily) and feels like temp was 105 or more on a daily basis. Sweat poured and attached to my long sleeve fatigue uniform. My personal heat factor temperature was probably 115 or 120 inside the wet fatigues. Even my shins would sweat and wet the pants. Guzzle water, inhale water, float kidneys and still suffer cotton mouth. I still have not found any Tang. (I have spent most of my life looking for Tang)

About the seventh day Michael arrived from Tulsa with a van cubed out with goodies. Power generator, some gas, lots more water, some milk, tissues, wipes, cereal, beer,

Canned stuffs, pasta; you name it and I will eventually pay for it. Michael helped Shannon a couple days and they lugged a few choice pieces of furniture across the rubble field. There was rubble from level with and on her porch to level with the porch across the street and it was like that all over Gulfport south of the railroad tracks. Former houses and churches underfoot.

Shannon's upstairs guy has been a family friend for years, and a former schoolteacher. We were delighted he was living there when she found her apartment. His Honda got soaked in the flood so like a champ when I commented; he donated the Honda to the Nick. It will take some effort to get the ignition firing, gas and oil drained but it should run OK. In fact, I really needed a bagger walk behind mower to fine tune a few spots on my lawn. He walked away from lots of garden tools,

axe, extension cords etc. that I promptly gave a home, after a Clorox soaking.

The use of Clorox is not unusual to us. When in Iran we learned that the locals were not particularly hygienic in their BR habits so there Myrna soaked the veggies in Clorox to ward off the Moslem Revenge. We remained pretty healthy while there. One day I noticed that a radish was white and commented. Seems it was a red radish and she had been generous with the bleach disinfectant and bleached the radish. When we got back to the states I noticed that I had to occasionally splash Clorox on my salads just to get the flavor of Old Persia.

Back to Shannon's upstairs guy. His upstairs apartment was like a museum. He has lots of fine stuff so he wrapped it in plastic so nothing was even wet. The roof blew off the house and all that was up there were the sticks to attach the old fashioned roofing. He even wrapped his pictures on the wall. The guy cried when Shannon came to see her downstairs apartment. It was stirred in water and muck.

Anyhow, like I said, aside from lots of unwelcome work cleaning up and really being leaked about losing the trees, the shade, etc., we pretty much skated. I lost 10 pounds in the last four weeks. I haven't missed any meals and slept in a dry bed that was unfortunately somewhat hot for the first couple weeks. Damn outside temps were hitting record highs and though it would cool at night; i.e., past midnight. The inside temp was 5 to 10 degrees hotter. Life is a bitch in the fast lane. Have no pity for us. There are many that were washed away and left with nothing. Zero, zip. WW II B-17 buddy, former SR-71 pilot, etc. each lost everything in Biloxi. Many went for the attic and that was their last mistake. Still others stayed with their shoreline homes and were washed inland with them. Then there is New Orleans. That was a disaster. Don't forget Western South Mississippi. It took a bad hit. Then the next Hurricane Rita ate the lunch of those West of New Orleans. Some counties (they call them Parishes) there were (**cont. on page 22**)

(continued from page 21)

flooded 30 miles inland with that one. I intend to move to higher ground one of these days.

Thanks for the thought and interest. Most of my hood are pretty well off and aside from the lack of basics, running water for a week or so, electricity for a couple weeks, air conditioning, regular commissary runs, the oppressive heat, cable until today, lots of work picking up trees, branches, twigs, leaves, needles, pinecones and the ever present stuff off my patch plus what the neighbors trees added...a few trees etc...few suffered. We had lots of resources for starters. Then there was a bit of scare about lack of gas. We filled beforehand but did not stock generator fuel. 5 gallons a day sucks it up fast. I waited and watched the several block long gas lines and just put it off. When I decided to buy gas I pulled in with no wait. Keesler was over flooded from the front beach, (over the railroad) and from the Back Bay of Biloxi. The water met in the center. All operation ceased. Damage was estimated in the 900 million class at Keesler. The commissary and BX had 7 or 8 feet of water in them. The O Club had 5 feet. Navy also had problems here in Gulfport. Big installation well north of the railroad. Not too much water damage but lots of wind damage.

I want to get this out but now a month after the big blow, I do not have a phone line working, so no computer. I will try to get this out one way or another.

For the Caribou guys, Buck Andry was located a week ago and he was apparently on high enough ground that his house was not flooded. He lives on the north shore of that big lake that is just north of New Orleans. OK, I can't spell it. It starts with a P.

I have not heard from Jack Saux who lived sorta near the MSY airport. Jack, if you are there say hello. Needless to say, phone came online today.

FINAL THOUGHT: Buy the high ground. Leave the high water low rent land to the peasants. (I was about three feet from feet wet) ❖

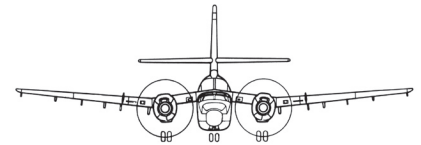
## Chris Nevins (Continued From Page 3)

at the same time as Hugh Wilson (future Wing Commander). He was beside himself flying the "Bou" in peacetime. It was hard to imagine he was actually flying this plane along the highways and byways of New Jersey with no one shooting at him and he still got paid! It was a great period for him as he was able to fly with and grow with such great pilots as Col. Jim Young, Col. "Bump" Hanley, Col. Neil Kennedy and Chiefs such as Mike Carroll and George Fusco. But the guy he loved the most was Jim Davis, future Group Commander. Now there was a guy who could fly the "Bou"!

From New Jersey, as luck would have it, he transferred to the New Hampshire ANG where a conversion to KC 135s was taking place. Since he and his bride lived only 20 minutes from Pease AFB, this was indeed a good deal. He missed his NJ friends but hey, a 20 minute commute was now a reality! Thirteen more years and Bingo!, it was time to retire. More great memories of a professional unit that anyone would be proud to be a part of. His scheduler when he walked in was Capt Ken Clark and now Lt. Gen. Clark is the Adjutant General of the State of NH.

Oh yes, the airline career. Many ups and downs were experienced but the bottom line was that he was able to experience what many were not. The first 15 years were difficult but the next 15 flowed much more smoothly. His military experience allowed him to comfortably and safely fly many, many passengers on Delta's DC-9, B-727, B-757, B-767 (and B767ER), L-1011 and MD-11. Reliving his flight into Vietnam as a young lieutenant he was able to fly our young troops of today on "CRAF" (Civil Reserve Air Fleet) mission from Rome, Italy to Kuwait. What a reward to see that these young people were not only as good as us but probably better. They definitely had a "can-do" attitude! The CAP cadet had

finally made it! How many can say that. While his beloved industry is in turmoil he is grateful that at least one of his sons has a shot at it and is now flying the same schedules his dad did 30 years ago! Three sons, one grandson, daughter-in-law and a great bride who has stuck through it all, thick and thin, have made the voyage a great one. ❖



## San Antonio 2007 (Continued from Page 17)

Museum provides a display of artifacts from Texas history and other world record specimens in a wild west atmosphere. There are many attractions but the Alamo is the best known and most popular. It is only a small part of the original Mission San Antonio de Valero, constructed in 1718, and the first of five missions built south along the San Antonio River for what is now a popular Missions Tour.

San Antonio possess a charm like no other city in the world and yet is one of the largest cities in the United States. Many visitors come each year to attend one of the hundreds of conventions hosted in the city. Others simply visit to enjoy the world class attractions of a Top 10 tourist destination. Join us at our 2007 Caribou Association Reunion in San Antonio.

Anyone who wishes to help out or obtain more information may contact Bill Buesking (wbuesk@earthlink.net). ❖



## The Last Fringe Benefit

### By Bob Markham, President

A question most of us want to avoid yet needs to be given due consideration is where will I (or my remains) be buried when I have passed away? Like financial or other life planning issues just a little bit of preparation now goes a long way to easing the burden of that decision on our loved ones. While you may have already made that decision with your family you may find the following information helpful.

The last military fringe benefits we can access are our VA burial benefits. Both you and your spouse and in most cases a dependant child have the right to be interned in a National Veterans Cemetery. A National Veterans Cemetery by definition is one run by The Veterans Administration. The most famous national cemetery is Arlington National Cemetery but it is run by the Department of the Army. There are currently more than 120 national cemeteries in 39 of our 50 states. In addition to our national cemeteries most all of our 50 states have State Veterans Cemeteries run by the State Adjutant Generals Office. There may be some minor differences between the regulations of national and state cemeteries but they do tend to mirror each other closely. While most state cemeteries have only a few interments in a week some of the larger national cemeteries such as Riverside National Cemetery in California has an average of 45 burials a day and is estimated to become the largest military cemetery by 2040 with over one million internments!

So who is a veteran? Well, anyone who served after September 7, 1980 as an enlisted person or after October 16, 1981 as an officer and had 24 months of active duty would qualify. Well, what about us? Probably all of us served before these dates and so all we need is one day of active duty to qualify! Is there anyone out there who doesn't think they qualify? If you were Guard or Reserve only you

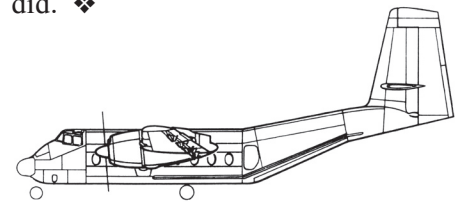
would still qualify if you are eligible for a twenty year retirement. So what are the financial benefits? Internment in a national cemetery is free for you and your spouse. In most State cemeteries you are free but may have to pay a small fee for your bride. If yours was a non-service related death (as most of us will be) your family will be paid up to \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses and \$300 for a plot-internment allowance. All this applies of course even if you wish to be buried in a non-veterans cemetery. A service related death would provide up to \$2000. But remember these are only burial benefits and not full funeral benefits. If you want a mafia casket with twenty hearses you are on your own!

So why should I care about any of this? Primarily because this decision will remove a huge burden from your family in advance. By applying now for acceptance your family will not be burdened to make this decision during a time of great stress. Even if you (or your family) choose not to intern you in a veteran's cemetery at least you would have provided them an option especially if due to a long sickness family funds become stretched to the limit. If you have pre-arranged a veteran's burial benefit they then can choose what option is best for the family. So what should you do? You should pre-arrange of course. By applying and being accepted ahead of time by a national or state cemetery you may have lifted a huge burden from your loved ones. Just explain what you have done to the ones who need to know and add your pre-approval letter to your file with your Will or Trust. You do have a Will don't you? By the way where is your DD Form 214? You do know of course, don't you? If you do so should your spouse or other concerned family member. Keep a copy of this important form along with your will and pre-approval letter. Uh-oh, you say your DD 214 is lost? Well now

is the time to apply for it on the web page for veteran's records. Log on to <http://vetrecs.archives.gov> and follow the directions for replacing this important document.

So where can you go to get the information you need? I strongly suggest going to the [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) web site for general information about veteran's benefits. When on the site just click on "benefits" then "burial benefits" and you will find a wealth of information. Also check your state government web site for information on state cemeteries. What, no computer? All the information you need can be found at your local library. The important thing is not just to talk about doing this but actually doing it. Most all of us feel in great health and feel we will be around for another 20 or 30 years. But we also all know someone we cared for who left this earth sooner than they should have. Why not let their memory be the motivation to prepare for the unexpected?

Shouldn't you start the paperwork process today? You'll be glad you did. ❖



### Notable Quote

*War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of men better than himself.*

— John Stuart Mill

## Essays On Our Times Blame throwing

There's plenty wrong with America, since you asked. (Everybody's asking.) I'm tempted to say, the only difference from Canada, is that they have a few things right. That would be unfair, of course -- I am often pleased to discover things we still get right.

But one of them would not be disaster preparation. If something happened up here, on the scale of Katrina, we wouldn't even have the resources to arrive late. We would be waiting for the Americans to come save us, the same way the government in Louisiana just waved and pointed at Washington, D.C. The theory being, that when you're in real trouble, that's where the adults live.

And that isn't an exaggeration. Almost everything that has worked in the recovery operation along the U.S. Gulf Coast has been military and National Guard. Within a few days, under several commands, finally consolidated under the remarkable Lt. Gen. Russel Honore, it was once again the U.S. military, efficiently cobbling together a recovery operation on a scale beyond the capacity of any other earthly institution.

We hardly have a military up here. We have elected one feckless government after another, who have cut corners until there is nothing substantial left. We don't have the ability even to transport and equip our few soldiers. Should disaster strike at home, on a big scale, we become a Third World country. At which point, our national smugness is of no avail.

From Democrats and the American Left — the U.S. equivalent to the people who run Canada — we are still hearing that the disaster in New Orleans showed a heartless, white Republican America had abandoned its underclass.

This is garbage. The great majority of those not evacuated lived in assisted housing, receive food stamps and prescription medicine and government support through many other programmes. Many have, all their lives, expected

someone to lift them to safety, sans input from themselves. And the demagogic mayor they elected left, quite literally, hundreds of transit and school buses parked in rows to be lost in the flood, that could have driven them out of town.

Yes, that was insensitive. But it is also the truth; and sooner or later we must acknowledge that welfare dependency creates exactly the sort of haplessness and social degeneration we saw on display, as the floodwaters rose. Many suffered terribly, and many died, and one's heart goes out. But already the survivors are being put up in new accommodations, and their various entitlements have been directed to new locations.

The scale of private charity has also been unprecedented. There are yet no statistics, but I'll wager the most generous state in the union will prove to have been arch-Republican Texas, and that nationally, contributions in cash and kind are coming disproportionately from people who vote Republican. For the world divides into "the mouths" and "the wallets".

The Bush-bashing, both down there and up here, has so far lost touch with reality, as to raise questions about the bashers' state of mind.

Consult any authoritative source on how government works in the United States, and you will learn that the U.S. federal government's legal, constitutional, and institutional responsibility for first response to Katrina, as to any natural disaster, was zero.

Notwithstanding, President Bush took the prescient step of declaring a disaster, in order to begin deploying FEMA and other federal assets, two full days in advance of the stormfall. In the little time since, he has managed to coordinate an immense recovery operation -- the largest in human history -- without invoking martial powers. He has been sufficiently Presidential to respond, not even once, to the extraordinarily mendacious and childish blame-throwing.

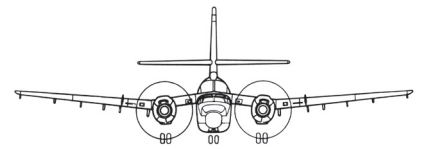
One thinks of Kipling's "If—" poem, which I learned to recite as a lad, and mention now in the full knowledge that

it drives postmodern leftoids and gliberals to apoplexy — as anything that is good, beautiful, or true:

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise...*

Unlike his critics, Bush is a man, in the full sense presented by these verses. A fallible man, like all the rest, but a man. ❖

David Warren  
© Ottawa Citizen



## The Web Site

Last, but not least, here is some information on the web site. Your Board has authorized the renewal of our web hosting contract for another two years. By moving the site to a newer server, we were able to realize substantial savings in the total cost of maintaining the site and at the same time, gain more disk space. We continue to find a few new members as a result of the site and it is always the place to look for the most recent information.

As we enter 2006, the number of "hits" on our home page is edging closer to 100,000. We have one of the largest Vietnam archives on the Internet and we continue to place very high in Google searches for anything related to the Caribou.

For those of you who have not found it, there is also a search facility within the site (look at the bottom of the list of links on the left-hand side of the home page).

We are always trying to think of new ideas for the web site and gladly accept suggestions from members. ❖



## Update from your reunion planner — the latest information! 2006 C-7A Caribou Association Reunion Less Than Four Months To Go! (Continued From Page 5)

There have been a couple adjustments to the flyer that was sent a couple months ago.

**Important!!** On the first line of the registration fees area the member is preprinted for \$35. On the second line it shows: “Spouse/Guest Registration Fee \_\_\_x \$35”. For people bringing only their wife, you would place a 1 on that line and put \$35 in the right column. Thirty-five dollars will hopefully cover the cost for each person’s War Room food & drink, the banquet dinner and administrative costs.

If there are enough people who will be flying into Knoxville on Saturday afternoon, 8 April, a day before the reunion’s official start date, I will coordinate for transportation to the hotel at our group rate. Be sure to list your email and/or your telephone number legibly on the reunion registration form so that we can communicate any changes.

The simplest way to get to Pigeon Forge is from I-40 exit 407 — about 25 miles east of Knoxville. While the names of the hotels are the Music Road Hotel and Music Road Inn they are located on Henderson Chapel Road. This can be confusing because nearby there is a Music Road street. So if you are driving in from exit 407 on the parkway, the first traffic light in Pigeon Forge is designated #0. Between the intersection light #0 and #1 is a Music Road street (don’t turn here). Continue to light #1 and turn right which puts you on Henderson Road. The hotel’s convention facilities are less than 100 yards after making the turn onto Henderson.

The cost of the Pigeon Forge trolley system has gone up a whopping 100%! Each time you board the trolley the cost is 50 cents versus a quarter. If this would be the reason that you wouldn’t come, let us know and we will subsidize your cost on the trolley!

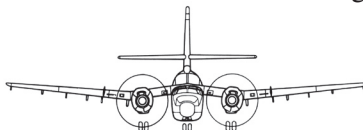
Unreported previously, is that the hotel will provide each morning between 0600 & 1000 a complimentary continental breakfast. This, coupled with our complimentary coffee, tea and Krispy Kreme donuts in the War Room each morning, you will have a choice of how to start your day.

While the hotel doesn’t serve meals other than the complimentary breakfasts there are 71 restaurants in Pigeon Forge. By the way Ruby Tuesdays is the restaurant that is adjacent to the hotel. Cracker Barrel is across the parkway.

The War Room (hospitality room) and banquet area will be in the convention center. It is a beautiful new facility. It is a non-smoking building which is strictly enforced. The management asked me to emphasize that anyone found smoking in this facility will jeopardize our use of it.

There have been several who have made their hotel reservations already. Remember that the early-bird gets the worm. There are only a limited number of rooms with Jacuzzis or fireplaces. Also there are rooms with better views of the nearby mountains. Even if you aren’t exactly sure of when you are arriving, I would recommend making a hotel reservation and mailing your Association Reunion Registration – both can be changed later, right up to March 1st. Be sure to advise the reservations desk that you are registering with the C-7A Caribou Association, if not you will likely be told that there are no rooms available. If you have any difficulty making a hotel reservation, contact me.

We will probably have more updated information emailed to those who are registered as we get closer to the reunion. So if you get something from coyatee@charter.net, don’t delete it without reading it! ❖



Wayne DeLawter  
coyatee@charter.net  
865-408-0171

## Vietnam and the American Fighting Man

Written in June 1967 by Mike Rice

### Dong Ha River Security Group

Vietnam, to the American fighting man here, half a world from home, the name means many things - almost none of them good. It means the farthest place from those he loves. It means the closest place to death. It may mean a rice paddy where he lost his best friend. It does mean a war in which he most surely and quickly lost the last remnants of his own boyhood. It would be cruel enough without war. For Vietnam is stagnant rice paddies, red clay gumbo, prehensile jungle vines, bamboo thickets and 12 foot elephant grass. It is weeks of 120 degree heat and 95% humidity, or drought and monsoon and flood. It is a country of two seasons, hot and dry, and hot and wet. Or mixed, for as one GI complained, 'This is the only place in the world where you can be shoulder deep in mud and have dust blowing in your face at the same time.'

It is the residence of the inch long red ant, the Malaria mosquito, the bamboo flea and the bamboo viper, the Russell viper, pit viper, cobra, banded krait, four inch long cockroach and a couple of snakes that perform under the aliases of Mr. Two Foot and One Step Charlie. Needless to say, all are poisonous.

Spiders, lizards, flies, rats, bats, leeches and a million other insects- no two alike, thrive here. So does Malaria, Jungle Rot, Typhus, Fungus, Immersion Foot, Dysentery, Pneumonia, Sunburn, Heat Prostration, Tuberculosis, Leprosy and a couple of Asiatic ailments we haven't quite put a handle on yet.

They thrive, all of them. But, miraculously, so does the spirit of that amazing being, the American Fighting Man. Every day he meets the challenges of the cruel and agonizing war. He survives. He even triumphs. And what he has to go through, few civilians know. And NO ONE knows who has not been to Vietnam.

General Eisenhower, in another war, once exploded to a war correspondent, 'I get so eternally tired of the lack of understanding of what the infantry soldier endures. I get so fighting mad because of the general lack of appreciation of real Heroism which is the uncomplaining acceptance of unendurable conditions...'

The uncomplaining acceptance of unendurable conditions -- the statement could have waited for a more appropriate war; this one. The numerous muddy front lines in Vietnam may complain, but it is the healthy, time-honored fashion of the GI gripe.

And the GI here does accept the unendurable. He accepts 18 hour workdays with no women, booze or overtime pay. And he accepts the million other little bitternesses of Vietnam... the Halozone tablet in a canteen of rice paddy water, the bites and stings of insects, the grime, the dirt, the dust, the mud, the kind of sweat you bleed. He accepts the facts of rotting wristwatch bands, a 'Dear John' letter, reconstituted milk, canned meat, three salt tablets a day, last choice at the C-rations, and when he can even find it, warm beer. He hears Hanoi Hannah reading our casualty reports each night over Radio Hanoi. Sees his friends fall in battle, and he endures. And he endures the sight of a mortally wounded child, the cries of pain and 'MEDIC' and 'CORPSMAN,' the smell of death and the taste of fear, the prospect of the next patrol, the rawest emotions of the battle, and his own dreams. For Vietnam is these.

And it is mumbled prayers under the sounds of incoming artillery, and learning to laugh at things that aren't really funny. It is the fears and doubts about yourself in battle, because you know if you stop to think about them during battle it could get you killed. It is wanting a war story without hav-

ing to live it, and then living it and not wanting it.

It is the phony war story every man despises and the war story too true to ever be told. It is the fear of cowardice and fear of courage.

The American Fighting Man endures all of these, and performs everything his country asks of him.

For the task, he fuels himself on courage and selflessness and dedication and a camaraderie that no one who shares will ever really find anywhere else again, and he gets along on the most simple and pathetic, most God-awful, seemingly unimportant pleasures. The sweat wrinkled photograph of a loved one, the sight of a saffron yellow mail bag and a letter from home-or mail addressed simply to 'A fighting man in Vietnam', a clear stream with no leeches, or a night's sleep in a real bed. He cherishes hot chow, cold beer or a cool breeze. Or the reminders of home; a USO show, a circled date on a short-timer's calendar, a favorite tune over Armed Forces Radio, or a week old copy of Stars and Stripes reassuring him that America still exists. His satisfactions are a burst of insect repellent on a leech's back or a dry cigarette.

And there is humor, even here, not side splitting humor, but humor that fights the grimness and makes it bearable. 'Didja' hear? A couple of mosquitoes landed over at Danang Air Base the other day and Ground Support pumped 50 gallons of AVGAS into them before they realized they weren't F-4's', or 'Hot Damn! Only 300 days and a wake-up, I'M SHORT'. 'It must be Sunday; they're feeding us Malaria pills again.' And humor sprouts in the signs which GI's brand their whereabouts. 'No one would dare mortar this place and end all the confusion.' On a roadside, 'Drive carefully, the life you save may be your

replacement.’ On the fuselage of an ancient C-47 transport, ‘Trans Paddy Airways’, or outside a Marine’s tent in Chu-Lai, ‘Chu-Lai Hilton, VACANCY’, or on the side of a C-123 used to spray defoliant, ‘Remember, only you can prevent forests’, and a much in evidence bumper sticker, ‘Support your Fighting Men in Vietnam.’

There is a slang in his speech — lots, every other word sometimes. His dangerous, merciless adversary, the Viet Cong (VC or Victor Charlie in military phonetics) becomes simply CHARLIE or OLD CHARLIE. And every little Vietnamese street urchin becomes CHARLIE-SAN though they usually rate the affectionate GI pat on the head with the term, unless one has just run by and stolen your wrist-watch. Then, you grab them by the neck.

Even though billets, hootches and tents are papered with Playboy foldouts, the memory of American womanhood is distant in his mind. To be referred to as Round Eye, Smooth Legged Woman who exists in the Land of the Big PX is about all that is spoken. Air mattresses become rubber ladies, Pias- ters become ‘P’Z’, Military Payment Certificates become Funny Money, replacements become Turtles (because they take forever to get here), and an enemy infested jungle becomes ‘VC National Forest’. Fighting Men are Jet Jockeys, Ground-pounders, Grunts, Snuffies, River Rats, Stump Jumpers, Straightlegs, and Saigon Warriors depending on their unit, rating and/or assignment.

Vietnamese become Slopes, Gooks, Dinks and other assorted epithets. Montagnard Tribesmen become ‘Yards, and the enemy becomes (besides Charlie), Congs, Gooneys, Ho’s Boys or simply ‘The Bad Guys,’ and Charlie gets either Greased, Zapped, Zonked, Massaged or simply Blown-away. Jets are referred to as Birds, Prop airplanes as Spads, Scooters or

Tinkertoys. Snakes are Mr. No Shoulders. And there is the Thousand Yard Stare in a Ten Foot Room and the Million Dollar Wound (just serious enough to earn a ride Stateside).

There is, too, a less imaginative Alphabet Soup of letter abbreviations that lubricate the Language and Paperwork. Samples: WIA (Wounded In Action), DMZ (De-Militarized Zone), LZ (Landing Zone), FAC (Forward Air Controller), and so on...through VC, K’S, PAVN’S, ARVN, MACV, TAOR, MPC’S, and a thousand other combinations and alphabetum. The war has a favorite phrase, in Vietnamese ‘Xin Loi,’ which means ‘Sorry ‘bout that.’ It is employed for every stumble, oversight, injustice, burp, blister or disaster. ‘Xin Loi’ may be the last words Charlie ever hears.

And finally, everything succumbs to a GI rating system of Number ONE (Satisfactory), and Number TEN (UN-Satisfactory). There are no numbers in between. No GI wants any. In a gray, confusing war - a Number TEN War - It’s nice to deal in BLACKS and WHITES again.

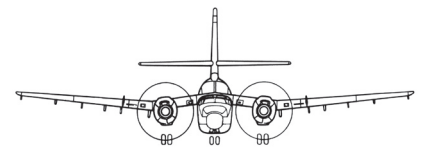
So, WHO is this remarkable American our country has sent to Vietnam? Who is this guy we pay the lavish sum of \$65.00 extra a month and even forgive the trouble of filling out Income Tax forms, for what can only be the most underpaid work in the world? He is, of course, many men, many types, he is the Cool, Mature, professional officer and he is the battle wise non-com on his second tour of his third war. But mostly, he’s a young American (some combat units average 18½ years of age), who would prefer to be back home doing other things, but who by chance of history is here. He volunteered or by lack of a deferment was drafted, but he is here because he loves his Country. By all accounts and opinions, he is the smartest, strongest, best trained, most spirited and competent

Fighting Man our Country has ever sent to war anywhere. He is young but he is old beyond his years because this war is a cram course in Maturity and Survival. Experts marvel at him. ‘In 60 years of Soldiering and watching Soldiers,’ writes Military Affairs specialist S. L. A. Marshall, ‘I have never seen higher morale than that of the U.S. men in Vietnam. The American fighter here can outwit, out-move and out-game anyone thus far thrown against him.

Their main gripe is that the enemy is loath to come out of hiding. Their aggressiveness arises from pride in unit. The bond with their buddies. A wish to get the job over...and an unfaltering belief in the rightness of their task.’

General William C. Westmoreland, Commander of American Forces in Vietnam, calls him flatly, ‘The finest fighting man our country has ever produced.’

There is a Sacred Brotherhood among Combat Vets. There does not have to be speaking or organized gatherings - - there is merely that look, when eyes meet, and you just know. ❖



Ed Note — These last two pages were originally slated to contain the ballot for the 2006 election and the agenda for the business meeting. Your Board was unable to arrive at final versions of either in time for publication, so this article with which we can all find some identification was substituted at the last minute. In any case, we trust that all had a wonderful Christmas and New Year’s celebration and that you all are making plans to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual C-7A Caribou Association Reunion in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee on April 9<sup>th</sup> through April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006! ❖

**MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM**

Fill out this form and mail with your check to: **C-7A Caribou Association Store**  
**Bob Markham**  
**838 Chestnut Ave.**  
**Redlands, CA 92373**

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
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| 2. Color T Shirt                    | Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL | Qty. ___ @ \$15.00 | Total: _____ |
| 3. Three-View T Shirt               | Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL | Qty. ___ @ \$15.00 | Total: _____ |
| 4. Denim Shirt                      | Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL | Qty. ___ @ \$25.00 | Total: _____ |
| 5. Sweat Shirt                      | Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL | Qty. ___ @ \$25.00 | Total: _____ |
| 6. Denim Hat                        | One size fits all              | Qty. ___ @ \$15.00 | Total: _____ |
| 7. Baseball Hat                     | One size fits all              | Qty. ___ @ \$15.00 | Total: _____ |
| 8. 457 <sup>th</sup> Replica Patch  |                                | Qty. ___ @ \$5.00  | Total: _____ |
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| 14. 483 <sup>rd</sup> Replica Patch |                                | Qty. ___ @ \$5.00  | Total: _____ |
| 15. "Doc" Kugler Movie DVD          |                                | Qty. ___ @ \$10.00 | Total: _____ |
| 16. Caribou Poster (12" x 18")      |                                | Qty. ___ @ \$5.00  | Total: _____ |
| <b>Grand Total:</b>                 |                                |                    | _____        |

\*Polo shirt colors: Red, Gray, White, Yellow, and Light Blue (please specify)

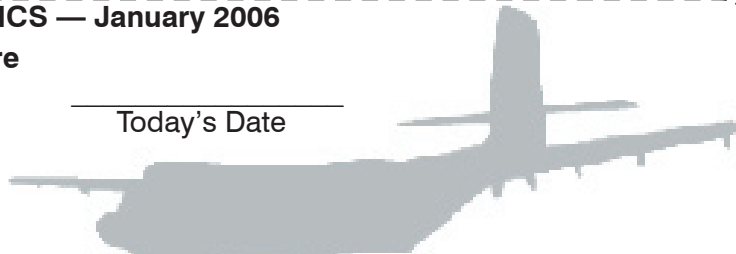
Note: All prices include shipping and photos of all merchandise can be seen on the web site at  
<http://www.c-7acaribou.com/merchandise/merchandise.htm>

**VITAL STATISTICS — January 2006**

**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

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Today's Date



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

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