

C-7A Caribou Association



Volume 20, Issue 2

20th Caribou Reunion Rocked in Branson

by George Harmon [537, 69]

We enjoyed our 20th Reunion at the most “veteran friendly” city on earth, Branson, Missouri, from 2-6 September 09. The accommodations for our 105 members and 88 guests were the best that I have experienced in my ten years of attending reunions. Pam Brown’s reunion planning group, Gatherings Plus, helped us plan our reunion and then was responsible for the operations during the reunion. Pam, her staff of Norma, her Mom, and Jodie and the hotel staff of Yvonne Costales and Kenny did a superb job of ensuring that our accommodations were excellent and that our transportation to and from the shows was comfortable and on time. We didn’t even wait in line to enter the theaters since we filed in as a group after debarking from our buses. Gatherings Plus actually ran everything

except for our business meeting and banquet which were conducted by our VP, Pat Hanavan.

On Wednesday, September 2, our members started arriving for the reception which was held in our well-appointed War Room with seating for 300. The reception was well attended and continued from 1900 to 2100. The War Room was well stocked with beer, wine, soda, and snacks during all 4 days and stayed open until midnight daily. Alicia Hanavan set up and restocked the War Room several times each day and she and Pat ran our very popular memorabilia room.

On Thursday, 39 of our members and guests attended Clay Cooper’s Country Music at 1000, and 90 were thrilled with the Dixie Stampede at 1730. At 2000, 102 of us walked across the street to the Hits of the 60’s. The music certainly awakened some old memories, and so did the 3 minute Caribou video that the owner of the show produced from Caribou action footage filmed in 1969 by George Harmon and Mike Riess.

On Friday at 0900, 58 of us rode two WWII DUKW’s (Ducks) on Table Rock Lake and toured the local area. Our drivers were skilled, informative, and funny. At 1500, 67 of us attended Legends in Concert. The impersonators were great! At 2000, 145 of us boarded the “paddle-wheeler” Showboat Branson Belle for a great show of singing and dancing theme songs from 29 musicals, and a ventriloquist who performed with his live “talking” dogs. We laughed until our sides ached! For all

of us “Welcome to Walmart” now has a new meaning. The on board dinner was also excellent.

On Saturday afternoon at 1400, 75 of us enjoyed the legendary singing and showmanship of Andy Williams with his new Variety Show. At 1700, it was group picture time in the lobby, masterfully organized by Al Cunliffe and his crew of volunteers. Saturday night, our banquet started at 1900 with Pat Hanavan as our M.C. The colors were posted by the Junior AFROTC from Branson High School, who did a very nice job and then joined us for a delicious meal of prime rib and shrimp. Pat and Curry Taylor conducted our Memorial Service for the Caribou Association members who passed away in the past two years. Chaplain Jon Drury said grace and we enjoyed our fine meal with red and white wine selected by Pat.

Instead of a guest speaker, we were treated to the talent and patriotism of Dr. Dale’s American Kids who performed 30 minutes of patriotic and religious songs. We’re still allowed to do that in Missouri. They were an inspirational group of 10 to 19 year olds. We passed the hat after their performance and collected \$624 for them – the largest sum ever donated to them after a performance. Way to go, Caribous!

Editor’s note: We just signed a contract with the Marriott City Center in Macon, GA to be our headquarters for Reunion 2010. The banquet will be “Under the Wings” at the *Museum of Aviation* at Robins AFB. I hope to see you at Warner Robins from **25-29 Aug 2010**. More details are on the website.

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

Elected Officers and Board Members....

President/Chairman of Board - Peter Bird [535, 71]
Vice President/Board Member - Pat Hanavan [535, 68]
Treasurer/Board Member - Mike Murphy [537, 68]
Secretary/Board Member - Al Cunliffe [458, 68]
Board Member at Large - Jerry York [537, 67]
Board Member at Large - Fred Dimon [535, 68]
Board Member at Large - Bob Neumayer [459, 69]

Appointed Positions

Bereavement Chairman - Jay Baker [535, 66]
Chaplains - Sonny Spurger [537, 68], Jon Drury [537, 68]
Historian - Robert Blaylock [457,70]
Newsletter Editor - Pat Hanavan [535, 68]
Newsletter Editor Emeritus - Dave Hutchens [459, 69]
Reunion 2009 Planner - George Harmon [537, 69]
Reunion Advisor - Wayne DeLawter [458, 66]
Webmaster - Peter Bird [535, 71]
President Emeritus - Nick Evanish [457, 66]
Chaplain Emeritus - Bob Davis [457, 69]

Squadron Representatives...

457th Royal Moulton [457, 66], phone 540-720-7092
 457th Mike Thibodo [457, 70], phone 651-483-9799
 458th Lee Corfield [458, 69], phone 724-775-3027
 458th Al Cunliffe [458, 68], phone 334-285-7706
 459th Bob Cummings [459, 66], phone 865-859-0888
 535th Cliff Smith [535, 69], phone 804-453-3188
 535th Mike Messner [535, 70], phone 321-453-0816
 536th Dana Kelly [536, 70], phone 407-656-4536
 536th Chuck Harris [536, 68], phone 325-465-8096
 537th George Harmon [537, 69], phone 951-695-0630
 483rd Gary Miller [483, 68], phone 262-634-4117
 4449th Bill Buesking [535, 70], phone 210-403-2635
 18th AP Bill Buesking [535, 70], phone 210-403-2635

All members are encouraged to communicate with the Editor of the Association Newsletter. Please send any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address to:

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 San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
 pathanavan@aol.com
 210-479-0226 (home), 210-861-9353 (cell)

\$10.00 dues are payable each January. Send your check to

Mike Murphy
 2036 Trailcrest Ln Apt 2r
 Kirkwood, MO 63122-2263
 MikeM53@earthlink.net

President's Corner

It hardly seems possible that another year has gone by. They say that time flies by when you are having fun, but I think perhaps there is a time compression associated with advancing years. I haven't even got the photos posted from this year's reunion and we are already well into the 2010 reunion planning. Although things worked out well with the last-minute change in the location for the 2009 reunion, that is far from how we like to plan things. I am therefore very pleased to report that we have a hard date for 2010 (25 to 29 August), a signed hotel contract with the Marriot Macon City Center Hotel, and a contract for a Dinner Under the Wings at the Robins AFB Museum of Aviation. We will also be dedicating the Memorial Bench that is already in place at the museum (see <http://www.c-7acaribou.com/memorial/robins/Robins.htm> for photos). Start making plans!

Pat Hanavan has been working on a project to document the significant awards and decorations of our members and in the process of researching the records at Maxwell AFB, he has also



added several hundred more names to our Roster. If anyone would like to help out with either tracking down the new names we have found or assisting Pat in his research, please let us know. Pat and I also worked to integrate the awards data into the Roster so that the data can be accessed more easily. I have a basic

search form up on the web site, but I will be adding more features as time goes on.

We found that we have a huge amount of data related to the Caribou, its people, and its operations; far too much to place on the web site. Currently, I am laying out a three DVD set that we plan to make available to members at a nominal cost. This is a large project with no logical end, so be patient. If anyone has old manuals, documents, or other related data that you would like included, please let me know.

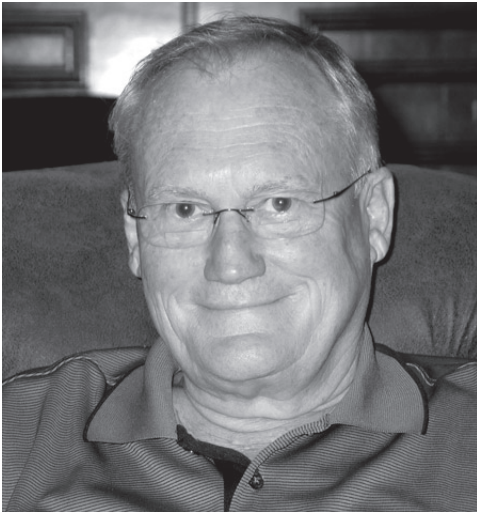
Meanwhile, have a wonderful holiday season and I hope to see you all next August in Macon, Georgia.

2009 Reunion: First Time Attendees

Brown, Lawrence and Karilyn	Kottak, Joseph and Nita
Christen, John and Kathy	Lehman, Eugene
Del Monte, Denis and Pamela	Patrick, George and Suzanne
Dick, Edward and Carole	Selvidge, George and Rusty
Finck, George and Jan	Shankles, Troy and Byron
Hedrick, Richard and Debbie	Tidmore, Billy and Carol
Hensch, William and Shari	Toon, David and Dianne

New Board Member

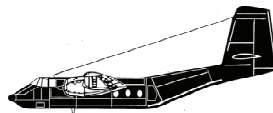
Pat Phillips [535, 68]



Pat Phillips is in private law practice in Orlando, Florida. He received his B.S. degree in economics in 1966 from the University of Florida. After graduation, he entered the United States Air Force and flew C-7A Caribou aircraft in all areas of Southeast Asia, including 850 combat hours in Vietnam. Later, while flying as an Aircraft Commander and Instructor Pilot on Lockheed C-141 Starlifter Aircraft, he flew in virtually every nation in the free world. He is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force Reserve, Retired. He holds an Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) rating, a current FAA flight and ground instructor certificate for both single and multi-engine airplanes and instrument, an FAA Airframe & Powerplant mechanic's certificate, and an unlimited ground level aerobatic waiver.

Mr. Phillips received his J.D. degree from Cumberland School of Law in 1975. He has been intensively engaged in the practice of law in all areas of civil and criminal litigation in all federal and state courts and is Florida Bar Board Certified in Aviation Law. He is a founding member of the National Transportation Safety Board Bar Association, and has represented numerous professional pilots, mechanics, aircraft operators, charter services, flight schools and fixed base operators before the FAA and National Transportation

Board Administrative Law Judges. He is an AOPA Panel Attorney and is a member of the Florida Bar Aviation Law Board Certification Committee. He is a regular presenter at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Flight Instructor Refresher Course and other aviation related seminars sponsored by institutions of higher education. Mr. Phillips is Co-Chair of the EAA Legal Advisory Counsel and EAA Government Relations Committee. He is a Board Member of Orlando Youth Aviation Center, The Rotary Club of Orlando and Sun'n Fun Fly In, Inc. He sits as a member of the Orlando-Orange County Airport Zoning Board of Adjustments and the West Orange County Airport Authority.



Caribou Reunion

25-29 Aug 2010

Macon-Warner Robins, GA

Our 2010 reunion will be in Macon, GA from 25-29 Aug. Our headquarters will be at the Marriott City Center Hotel in Macon.

Possible activities include:

- day trip to Andersonville National Historic site (<http://www.nps.gov/ande/index.htm>)
- lunch enroute to Andersonville at a quaint Amish restaurant
- tour of historic homes in Macon (<http://www.historicmacon.org/>)
- visit to the Museum of Aviation (<http://museumofaviation.org/>)
- dedication of our memorial bench at the Museum of Aviation
- tour of Robins AFB
- banquet "Under the Wings" at the museum on Saturday evening

Watch our web site for more details

http://www.c-7acaribou.com/reunion/2010/advance_plans.htm

Awards Project Status

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

The project began some time ago when I began asking members to send me their citation for significant awards (e.g., Air Force Cross, Silver Star, DFC) during their C-7A assignment in Vietnam. As these citations started coming in, some also included the 7th Air Force Special Order, which gave clues about awards to other Bou guys. In a little while, I had nearly 30 citations and Peter Bird implemented a way to include them on our web site.

A search of the web sites of the DFC Society and the Air Force Cross Society, led to an ever increasing list. The citations began to unfold a unique picture of Caribou operations from 1966-1972 when viewed alongside the history accounts of significant battles, especially attacks and sieges of Special Forces camps.

A friend of mine is the historian and newsletter editor of the Air Weather Reconnaissance Association. He told me about his research into records held by the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell AFB.

The possibility of finding many more awards led me to include a side trip to Montgomery, AL when my wife and I visited Florida for a conference I needed to attend to maintain one of my engineering credentials.

Wow! Talk about striking gold. In a day and a half I doubled the number of DFCs we knew about. Two subsequent trips have raised the totals to: 2 AFCs, 24 SS, and 384 DFCs. In addition, I found 695 names to add to the roster. We don't know where these Bou guys are today, but we may be able to find them.

So far I have examined about 8,000 of the 22,600 Special Orders at AFHRA and also found wing and squadron histories which will add much more detail to our history records. Next data gathering trip is planned for January.

Minutes of 2009 Business Meeting

Al Cunliffe announced at 10:04 AM that with approximately 88 members in attendance that a quorum was present.

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Vice President Pat Hanavan.

The pledge of allegiance was followed by an invocation by Jon Drury.

A motion to adopt the agenda as published was made by Larry Gill, seconded by Al Rice, and unanimously approved.

Officer and Committee Reports:

Secretary's Report – Al Cunliffe reported on the motions considered and passed by the Board of Directors for the previous year:

October 2008:

20081002a: Election of Peter Bird as Chairman of the board of Directors.

20081002b: Change the check signing authority for checks drawn against the Association's Bank of America checking account to Pat Hanavan and Mike Murphy.

20081002b: Purchase of a refurbished laptop PC with Windows XP Pro, Norton Anti-Virus protection, and wireless Internet connectivity to run the QuickBooks application and be dedicated to the use of the Association Treasurer, cost of \$690.64.

20081007: Motion that Sgt Maj Ed Komac, USA, Ret. be added to the roster as a FOA with annual Bou Tax waived as long as he is still with us.

20081029: Add the Caribou DVD to the list of Memorabilia Stocked Items and to increase the limit on inventory value from \$5,000 to \$6,000.

December 2008:

20081213: Designate Branson, MO as the location for Reunion 2010.

January 2009:

20090101: Approved the sum of \$500 to be donated to: Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, One Intrepid Square, West 46th Street and 12th Avenue, New York, New York 10036. The source of

the donation will be the "C-7A Caribou Association" and it shall be in memory of Lieutenant Colonel James L. Collier, USAF (Ret.).

February 2009:

20080209: Approved the expenditure of \$4850 (bench and shipping included) for a memorial bench (duplicate of the one we installed at the NMUSAF) by contracting with Dodd's Monuments in Xenia, Ohio for the construction and shipping to the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB, GA.

April 2009:

20090416: Appointed Stoney Faubus, Marty Hillman, and Rick Patterson as the 2009 Nominating Committee.

June 2009:

20090607: Approved the formation of an audit committee to review the C-7A Caribou Association books for calendar 2008. The volunteer members are Jesse Cogley [535, 68], Dale Spence [483, 71], and Don Harz [536, 67], assisted by non-voting member Pat Hanavan [535, 68]. The committee will make its report to the members at the 2009 reunion.

August 2009:

20090810: Added Caribou Association Decal to Memorabilia Inventory.

Earl Reynolds pointed out that the registration packet did not contain the motions passed by the Board since the last reunion. This was requested at the last Business Meeting, but it was overlooked during the construction of the registration packet. Pat Hanavan took an action item to ensure that this item is added to the checklist for the registration packet.

Bereavement Committee Report

Jay Baker provided a report of the previous year's activities, which consisted primarily of providing a letter of condolence or suitable condolence card to the deceased's family, and an offer for the widow to become an Honorary Associate Member of the C-7A Caribou Association if they so desire. We have lost 21 members since the 2008 Dayton reunion.

Reunion Report – George Harmon and Pat Hanavan

A post reunion survey was handed out to the attendees.

Report on the Roster - Pat Hanavan

We have 2400 names listed on the roster of which approximately 800 are current with their "Bou Tax."

Audit Committee Report

Audit committee: Jesse Cogley [535, 68], Don Harz [536, 67], and Dale Spence [483, 71]

The audit committee selected Don Harz to be their chairman and reviewed the Association financial records for 1968. Records included the 1968 Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss report, Bank of America statements, list of Board approved suppliers, monthly Treasurer reports, QuickBooks reports, etc. using the Association's audit checklist. Pat Hanavan was present at the meeting to provide additional information as needed. The chairman initialed each audit item when all members agreed that the item was satisfactory. Two items were not completed at the meeting so the committee requested more information which was provided to each of them by e-mail. The additional information satisfied the committee and the audit checklist was completed by the chairman. The committee recommended that several QuickBooks reports be redesigned to enable an audit team to do their work more efficiently.

Treasurer's Report – Mike Murphy

The Association's 2008 Balance Sheet and P&L were provided in the registration packet.

C-7A Caribou Association

Balance Sheet

As of August 31, 2009

ASSETS

1101-C-7A Chk Acct 7827	\$5,026.09
1310-CD 1036 Risk Free	\$10,669.89
1320-CD 0930 Promo	\$22,587.14
1600-Memorabilia Inv.	\$4,796.04
1700-Postage/Pkg pre-paid	\$1,195.55
TOTAL ASSETS	\$44,274.71

LIABILITIES & EQUITY*Long Term Liabilities*

3800-Advance Dues \$4,971.19

Equity

Equity Reserve (Adv Dues) -4,971.19

Opening Bal Equity \$39,744.67

Retained Earnings \$2,346.70

Net Income \$2,183.34

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY

\$44,274.71

Note: Adv Dues Liability formula in Board policy 20071231.

Nominating Committee – Stoney Faubus

The C-7A Caribou Association Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) consisting of Stoney Faubus, Marty Hillman and Rick Patterson started on 22 April 2009. We queried the current officers and board members. Except for Jerry York all current Board members and officers were agreeable to serving for another year. The committee requested a group e-mail be sent to the membership requesting volunteers for open officer or board member positions. No positive responses were received. Several suggestions were received for possible replacements. After asking the suggested individuals if they would be willing to serve the following names are presented as nominees for the Board of Directors for 2009 – 2010:

Pete Bird – President, Pat Hanavan - Vice President, Mike Murphy – Treasurer, Al Cunliffe – Secretary, Members At Large - Fred Dimon, Bob Neumayer, Pat Phillips

Old Business:

Our *Memorial Bench* has been delivered and installed at the Museum of Aviation at Robins AFB, GA. The location is at the entrance to Hangar 1 which serves, temporarily, as the Vietnam War hangar. The bench was inspected by Doug Lewis after its installation and found to be undamaged during shipment.

Awards and Decorations citations (Air Force Cross, Silver Star, DFC, Vietnamese awards) are being posted on the web site. If you have one of

these awards, please send the citation to our newsletter editor. Research at the Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB is planned for late September.

New Business:*Board Motions* – none*Member Motions* – none*Floor Nominations* for Board Nominees – none*Election of Board members*

Randy Smith moved that the proposed slate of Board members, as presented by the Nominating Committee, be elected by acclamation. The motion was seconded and it was passed unanimously

New DVD: Additional materials, e.g., Technical Orders, training materials, maps, TADs, C-7A art work, newsletter editions, Caribou Clarion editions, are available and a new DVD may be put together in 2010 or 2011.

New memorabilia items: Round Engine t-shirt, inside decal, license plate holder, etc. are items which may be considered as additions to our memorabilia or replacements for current memorabilia.

Questions and Issues raised by Randy Smith:

1. Crew Duties of the Secretary may not be consistent with the By-Laws.

2. Motions passed by the Board should include the \$ amount.

3. The motion passed at the 2006 Business Meeting was to have 4 non-Board members on the audit committee, but only 3 members have served on the last two audit committees.

4. It is not clear that the Board is following the Check Writing procedure.

5. Are competitive bids sought for printing and mailing the newsletter?

6. Is there a limit on an expenditure by the Board without approval of the members?

Pat Hanavan took an action item to look into items # 1-4 above and initiate corrective action, as needed.

Answer to #5: Competitive bids were explored in 2007 and the existing suppliers were found to be considerably

less expensive than their competitors. Our non-profit permit is at an Oklahoma post office and Dave Hutchens is on-site to assist, if needed. The newsletter editor tracks detailed expenditures for printing and mailing which are reviewed when any significant change happens, e.g., change in postal rates. The size of the newsletter and the manner in which it is prepared for mailing were changed recently in response to changes by the Postal Service in order to improve the cost effectiveness of the newsletter production.

Answer to #6: There is no limit on the amount of expenditure(s) by the Board without member approval in the By-Laws or the Crew Duties. An expenditure of \$500 or more requires Board approval.

Informal discussion by members:

Future reunion locations were discussed: Warner Robins 2010. Others: Seattle; Spokane; Addison, TX; Ft. Walton Beach, FL; Dover, DE; Windsor Locks, CN; Fairfield, CA; Ft. Campbell, KY.

Fourteen free room nights were available. Drawing was held prior to the business meeting.

Tour of Vietnam: Aubray Abrams reported on his research into a possible tour of Vietnam.

Adjournment

Randy Smith moved for adjournment at 1135. All present concurred.

Pat Hanavan adjourned the meeting at 1136.

2009 Reunion**Attendance by Unit**

457 Member/Spouse	10/6
458 Member/Spouse	15/12
459 Member/Spouse	9/7
483 Member/Spouse	5/3
535 Member/Spouse	18/12
536 Member/Spouse	24/14
537 Member/Spouse	25/21
4449 Member/Spouse	1/0
AFAT2 Member/Spouse	1/0
908 TAG Member/Spouse	1/1
Guests of Members	21
Total	206

2009 Reunion Attendance by Name

Abrams, Aubray and Judy
Allison, Max and Shirley, and guests
Richard and Shirley DeVries
Anderson, Andy
Ardoin, Rich and Shelby
Bailey, James and guest
Susan Morgan
Baker, Jay and Diane
Beck, Frank and Maggie
Behr, Yogi and Judy
Besley, Dick and Linda
Bowen, Brian
Bowers, Bob and Evelyn and guest
*Bernie Bowers
Boyd, Lloyd and Yolanda
Brethouwer, Rich and Marilyn
Brooks, Pat and Lesley
*Brown, Lawrence and Karilyn
Brunz, Wayne and Joyce
Buesking, Bill and Mae
Campbell, Larry and guest Jim Hafley
Cathell, Allen
*Christen, John and Kathy
Collins, Tom and Chantell
Combest, Bill
Comer, Dennis and Diana
Crafton, Stuart and Cathy
Craig, John and Nadine and guests
Ron and Theresa Kelly
Craig, William
Cunliffe, Al and Shirley
DeLawter, Wayne and Patty
*Delmonte, Denis and Pamela
*Dick, Ed and Carole
Drury, Jon and Beverly
Dugan, Bob and Pat, and guests
Bob and Wynell Slade
Duvall, Bill and Edeltraud
Erchinger, Ralph and Ellie
Faubus, Stoney and Melva and
guest Gary Faubus, Jr.
Fillmore, Kenneth and Sandy
Finck, George and Jan
Foster, Don and Muriel
Fox, Gary and Sharon
Garrison, Larry and Tricia
Golart, Milt and Marjorie and guest
Carole Golart
Graetch, Joe

Grissom, Kelly and Susan
Haigler, Steven and Mary
Hainkel, Tom and Cheryl
Hamilton, Robert and Sarah
Hanavan, Pat and Alicia
Harmon, George and Rebekah and
guests Helen Follmer and
*Anna Marie Harmon
Harris, Chuck
Heard, Wyatt and Annell
*Hedrick, Richard and Debbie
Helterbran, Glenn and June
Hensch, Bill and Shari and guests
Larry and Judy Frick
Hines, Joe and Mary Anne
Holman, Paul and Pamela
Hopkins, Robert and Eula Mae
Jackson, Donald and Susan
Kelley, Steve
Kimseau, Kenneth
*Kottak, Joe and Nita
Kowalski, Dave and Christine
Korose, Bob
*Lehman, Eugene and guest
Ramona Flowers
Lipscomb, Robert and Dodie
Madigan, Ed
Manire, Bill and B.J.
Mannion, Patrick
Martwig, Larry and Marva
Mascaro, Ken
McCorkle, Ronald
Messner, Mike
Miller, Gary
Moore, George and LuAnn
Mosiman, Tom
Murphy, Mike and guest
Suzy Schoonmaker
Neumayer, Bob and Iola and guests
Jack and Jane Thompson
Nevins, Chris and Eileen
Owens, Stan and Carolyn
Pacholka, Ken
Passero, Frank and Susan
*Patrick, George and Suzanne
Patterson, Byrd ("Pat")
Phillips, Patrick and Barbara
Piercy, Jeff and guests
Ann Lisa Percy and Jeanne Perez
Reynolds, Earl and Pam
Rice, Al and guests Dian Durham,
Esther Minner and Dan Headlee
Riedner, Steve and Mary Beth

Riess, Michael
Ryland, Keith and Opal
Schmitz, Chuck
Schuepbach, John
*Selvidge, George and Rusty
*Shankles, Troy and Byron
Smith, Randy and Christine
Snodgrass, Tom and Kathy
Strickland, James
Tanner, Ray
Tawes, John and Fran
Taylor, Curry
Terrell, Otto and Wanda
Thurstenson, Dave
*Tidmore, Bill and Carol
*Toon, David and Dianne
Wayland, Roger and Tara
Wever, Gary and Restie
Witthoeft, Paul and guest
Mary Buenrosto
Woznicki, Franklin
Yamashiro, Rich and Vicki
Zahradka, Joe

* indicates first time attendee



Rolling A Caribou by Manny Kimball [536, 68]

Two weeks before my rotation back to the world, I was on a maintenance FCF due to a couple of engine changes. We did our shutdowns and restarts at eight thousand feet as prescribed, after which the pilot said "let's roll this b****."

He did, and we bottomed out at about three thousand feet. The Bou stayed in one piece, but that's not the end of it.

Six months after my rotation back to my new assignment, I ran into a crew chief and we shot the bull about Vung Tau, and the 536th in particular.

The conversation turned to a particular tail number that would never fly straight, stay trimmed up, and flew "cockeyed." It was the same tail number I was on during the "roll." We must have bent the wing box structure.

Stupid things you do when your young and bored.

Harley-Bou

by Wayne Tuck [537, 70]

After 15 years participating in “Rolling Thunder,” it was time to create a moving tribute to the Caribou with a custom airbrush paint job on my 2002 Harley Davidson Road King Classic.

The national media gives little coverage to the annual Memorial Day weekend “Rolling Thunder” event, but it is probably the largest annual protest demonstration held in our nation’s capitol. Motorcyclists from as far away as the west coast leave weeks in advance to participate. As many as 400,000 bikes gather in the Pentagon parking lot to ride the parade route.

Most bikes carry the rider and a passenger and the parade route is packed with well wishers cheering the riders on, waving flags, and holding up signs – it has a very large following. The ride ends at the Vietnam war memorial where guest speakers demand better treatment for our veterans and more efforts be made to account for MIAs.

After seeing hundreds of other motorcycles painted with various themes, I brought up the idea of the Harley-Bou to Brian Schofield of “Lines and Letters,” owner of a professional sign shop located in Bridgewater, NJ. Brian was excited about the idea and after pouring through hundreds of great photos posted on the C-7A web-site, it was decided that renderings of “in flight” scenes would be painted on the tank, saddle bags, side covers, and fenders.

Of course, an orange tail and KN designation is standard as well as POW/MIA insignia, American flag, 537th patch, and Caribou Association logo.

In order to get started, Wayne acquired a full spare set of sheet metal using “smokey gold metallic” as a base color. The project is complete. If you are ever in the Washington D.C. area on the Sunday before Memorial Day, the parade starts at noon and be sure to look for the Harley-Bou.

I hope to make it to the 2010 reunion with the Harley-Bou.

Emergency Resupply

by Gary Seymour [536, 70]

In the spring of ‘71, the sharply honed combat pilots of the 536th “Cobra” squadron began 3-day TDYs to Can Tho. We would land at Binh Thuy and were driven to Remain Over Night (RON) in Can Tho, right across the street from the most well stocked bar I have ever seen, the Air America club. Having befriended a lot of their pilots, I was allowed free access to the Chivas Regal bottle.

Taking a page from the Greyhound bus lines, the Pentagon decided we should become Bou bus drivers. One Caribou would fly southeast around IV Corps with about 8 stops and another Caribou would fly southwest doing the same.

At the end of the day, we were back at Binh Thuy. You could almost tell which camps were going to get a little action by the number of ARVNs with families and chickens that got on board.

After 3 days in the Bou busses, it was nice to fly back to Cam Ranh empty and enjoy the trip. Normally, we would head for Vung Tau and make a left turn to proceed “feet wet” to the base by the bay.

One time, I was almost to Vung Tau when we got an “emergency resupply” message. We were ordered to fly to Bien Hoa, pick up the cargo, and fly to Phan Rang.

At this time Phan Rang was an F-100 base and I couldn’t imagine what was going on at the base. We were pretty tired and wondering if we could make Cam Ranh Bay by dark. An “emergency resupply” is top priority and very special so we turned toward Bien Hoa.

Upon landing there and taxing to the cargo ramp, what do we behold? Two pallets of Betty Crocker cake mix to be delivered to Phan Rang, because the wing commander was DEROSing the next day. Would you believe?



Vietnam Veterans

- 9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the Vietnam Era (Aug 5, 1964-May 7, 1975).

- 8,744,000 GIs were on active duty during the war (Aug 5, 1964-March 28, 1973).

- 2,709,918 Americans served in Vietnam, this number represents 9.7% of their generation.

- 3,403,100 (including 514,300 off-shore) personnel served in the broader Southeast Asia Theater (Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, flight crews based in Thailand, and sailors in adjacent South China Sea waters).

- 2,594,000 personnel served within the borders of South Vietnam (Jan. 1, 1965-March 28, 1973). Another 50,000 men served in Vietnam between 1960 and 1964.

- Of the 2.6 million, between 1-1.6 million (40-60%) either fought in combat, provided close support, or were at least fairly regularly exposed to enemy attack.

- 7,484 women (6,250 or 83.5% were nurses) served in Vietnam.

- Peak troop strength in Vietnam: 543,482 (April 30, 1968).

DRAFTEES VS VOLUNTEERS

- 25% (648,500) of total forces in country were draftees.

- 66% of U.S. armed forces members were drafted during WWII).

- Draftees accounted for 30.4% (17,725) of combat deaths in Vietnam

- Reservists killed: 5,977

- National Guard: 6,140 served: 101 died.

- Total draftees (1965 - 73): 1,728,344.

- Actually served in Vietnam : 38%

- Marine Corps Draft: 42,633.

- Last man drafted: June 30, 1973.

WINNING and LOSING

- 82% of veterans who saw heavy combat strongly believe the war was lost because of lack of political will

- Nearly 75% of the public agrees it was a failure of political will, not of arms.

Mail Call

by Dave Hutchens [459, 69]

Dave, I did some more research on C-7A and C-7B aircraft. I think this letter from Brett Stolle, Manuscript Curator at Wright Patterson AFB, sums it up and ends my research into the matter unless someone can come up with more Info. We know that there is such an Aircraft as a C-7B. But no one seems to be able to supply the who, what, why, when, or where that we need to flush out the answers. So, that's it in a nutshell.

Dave Kowalski, [908, 75]

Dear Mr. Kowalski,

Thank you for contacting the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Our exhibit aircraft DeHavilland C-7A "Caribou" S/N 62-4193 carries the following nomenclature on its data-plate:

Type DHC4, Model No CV-2B, Ser No 138, Date Aug 63

There is apparently some confusion within the aviation community as to the designation of C-7A and C-7B airframes. The best publicized production breakdown is cited in John M. Andrade's book "U.S. Military Aircraft Designations and Serials, 1909-1979." This production breakdown is repeated in other secondary sources.

CV-2A-DH (ex AC-1-DH): 56 built, became C-7A in 1968
--s/n 60-3762/3768; 60-5430/5444; 61-2384/2407; 61-2591/2600,

CV-2B-DH (ex AC-1A-DH): 103 built, became C-7B in 1968
--s/n 62-4144/4196; 62-12583/12584; 63-9718/9765

Official US Air Force records on hand contradict this source, identifying CV-2B aircraft as C-7A rather than C-7B airframes. These **official sources** include:

- (1) C-7A Standard Aircraft Characteristics Sheet (AFG 2, Vol-2, Addn 49), March 1971.
- (2) TO 1C-7A-4-1 (TM55-1510-206-20P), Illustrated Parts Breakdown Army CV-2B, USAF Series C-7A Aircraft.

All available official records pertaining to our exhibit airframe identify our aircraft as a C-7A. This is reflected in all original maintenance records and in the official deployment history for the airframe. Despite these facts, our aircraft S/N 62-4193 remains listed within the production series of C-7B aircraft as noted in "U.S. Military Aircraft Designations and Serials, 1909-1979," though our exhibit aircraft was never tracked by the US Air Force as a C-7B.

At this point, it is not clear under what circumstances the US Air Force adopted the nomenclature C-7B [*if it ever did*] for some improved C-7A Caribou aircraft. It is clear that the Andrade's production breakdown for C-7A/B aircraft does not correspond with information obtained via available USAF records.

If you have any questions or comments please contact me at (937) 255-5145. I look forward to your comments. Good luck with your continued research and have a great day!

Brett Stolle

Manuscript Curator NMUSAF/MUA

Research Division

Editor's note: Hopefully, this puts to rest confusion about a C-7B. Official USAF records do not refer to a C-7B. Only manufacturer records and unofficial sources refer to a CV-2B, not a C-7B.

I may hold a unique distinction, I believe I made the last "unofficial" landing of the last American Caribou in Vietnam. The "official" last landing was at Tan Son Nhut and flown by the squadron commander in the morning. I landed late in the afternoon to tattered celebration decorations, all sweaty and no beer!

Everybody else had gone home. The remaining Caribous were to go to the Vietnamese – last seen in footage of the North Vietnamese overrunning the base. I will have to dig around in my records a little. Cheers!

Tom Smith [458, 71]

I only had one flight aboard a C-7A, I was surfing tonight and found your site. After Tet, DaNang needed additional Public Affairs people and I was sent for an 89 day TDY to the Gunfighters Information Office. The flight I made was on the Cam Ranh Bay Caribou that went into Hue carrying refugee supplies that had been gathered up by the VNAF. It was an interesting experience.

Rick Fulton, Pittsburg, Kansas
(former SSgt, 7AF DXI-C, 67-69)

Several weeks ago in Wrangell, AK, the priest mentioned "We need to welcome back our soldiers unlike our Vietnam experience." After Mass, I thanked him for the comments about our soldiers which led to his Vietnam experience. I told him I was a C-7A pilot and he recalled a flight where the main wheel was shot off (his words) which resulted in a crash landing.

I replied that I was the pilot and he was the Army Captain who helped prepare for the pending crash. Earlier in the day, we landed on a strip next to the Cambodia border and spent several hours on the ground. During takeoff, we were "stitched" with ground fire. A round split the olio strut so the gear would not come down. We crash landed at Bien Hoa. We shared lots of stories about that day. Meeting this priest reminds us of our small world.

John Seines [536, 68]

Biplanes in SEA

by Lawrence E. Pence
Col., USAF, Ret.

In mid-1967, as a junior Air Force Captain, I was detailed to 7th AF Hq in Saigon as an Air Technical Intelligence Liaison Officer, short name: ATLO (the “I” gets left out, as people look strangely at anyone who calls himself an ATILO, thinking he is somehow related to Atilla the Hun). My job was to provide 7thAF and the air war the best technical intelligence support that the Foreign Technology Division of AF Systems Command (my parent organization) could provide, in whatever area or discipline needed. Also, I was to collect such technical intelligence as became available. This was a tall order for a young Captain, and this assignment provided much excitement, including the Tet Offensive.

At that time, Operation Rolling Thunder was underway, the bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. The weather in NVN was often lousy, making it difficult to find and accurately strike the assigned targets, so a radar control system was set up to direct the strike force to their targets.

This system was installed in a remote, sheer-sided karst mountain just inside Laos on the northern Laos-NVN border. The site could be accessed only by helicopter or a tortuous trail winding up the near-vertical mountainside, so it was judged to be easily defensible.

The mountaintop was relatively flat and about 30 acres in size. On it was a tiny Hmong village called Phu Pha Ti, a small garrison of Thai and Meo mercenaries for defense, a helicopter pad and ops shack for the CIA-owned Air America Airline, and the radar site, which was manned by “sheep-dipped” US Air Force enlisted men in civilian clothes. Both the US and NVN paid lip service to the fiction that Laos was a neutral country, and no foreign military were stationed there, when in reality we had a couple of hundred people spread over several sites, and NVN

had thousands on the Ho Chi Minh trail in eastern Laos. This particular site was called Lima (L for Laos) Site 85. The fighter-bomber crews called it Channel 97 (the radar frequency), and all aircrews called it North Station, since it was the farthest north facility in “friendly” territory. Anywhere north of North Station was bad guy land.

The Channel 97 radar system was an old SAC precision bomb scoring radar which could locate an aircraft to within a few meters at a hundred miles. The strike force would fly out from Lima Site 85 a given distance on a given radial, and the site operators would tell the strike leader precisely when to release his bomb load. It was surprisingly accurate, and allowed the strikes to be run at night or in bad weather.

This capability was badly hurting the North Vietnamese war effort, so they decided to take out Lima Site 85. Because of the difficulty of mounting a ground assault on Lima Site 85, and its remote location, an air strike was planned. Believe it or not, the NVNAF chose biplanes as their “strike bombers!”

This has to be the only combat use of biplanes since the 1930’s. The aircraft used were Antonov designed AN-2 general purpose “workhorse” biplanes with a single 1000hp radial engine and about one ton payload. Actually, once you get past the obvious “Snoopy and the Red Baron” image, the AN-2 was not a bad choice for this mission. Its biggest disadvantage is that, like all biplanes, it is slow. The Russians use the An-2 for a multitude of things, such as medevac, parachute training, flying school bus, crop dusting, and so on. An AN-2 recently flew over the North Pole. In fact, if you measure success of an aircraft design by the criteria of number produced and length of time in series production, you could say that the AN-2 is the most successful aircraft design in the history of aviation!

The NVNAF fitted out their AN-2 “attack bombers” with a 12 shot 57mm folding fin aerial rocket pod under each

lower wing, and 20 250mm mortar rounds with aerial bomb fuses set in vertical tubes set into the floor of the aircraft cargo bay. These were dropped through holes cut in the cargo bay floor. Simple hinged bomb-bay doors closed these holes in flight.

The pilot could salvo his bomb load by opening these doors. This was a pretty good munitions load to take out a soft, undefended target like a radar site. The mission was well planned and equipped and should have been successful, but Murphy’s Law prevailed.

A three plane strike force was mounted, with two attack aircraft and one standing off as command and radio relay. They knew the radar site was on the mountaintop, but they did not have good intelligence as to its precise location, It was well camouflaged, and could not be seen readily from the air. They also did not realize that we had “anti-aircraft artillery” and “air defense interceptor” forces at the site. Neither did we realize this.

The AN-2 strike force rolled in on the target, mistook the Air America ops shack for the radar site, and proceeded to ventilate it. The aforementioned “anti-aircraft artillery” force – one little Thai mercenary about five feet tall and all guts – heard the commotion, ran out on the helicopter pad, stood in the path of the attacking aircraft spraying rockets and bombs everywhere, and emptied a 27-round clip from his AK-47 into the AN-2, which then crashed and burned.

At this juncture, the second attack aircraft broke off and turned north towards home.

The “air defense interceptor” force was an unarmed Air America Huey helicopter which was by happenstance on the pad at the time, the pilot and flight mechanic having a Coke in the ops shack. When holes started appearing in the roof, they ran to their Huey and got airborne, not quite believing the sight of two biplanes fleeing north.

Continued on Page 10

Biplanes (from Page 9)

Then the Huey pilot, no slouch in the guts department either, realized that his Huey was faster than the biplanes! So he did the only thing a real pilot could do – attack!

The Huey overtook the AN-2's a few miles inside North Vietnam, unknown to the AN-2's as their rearward visibility is nil. The Huey flew over the rearmost AN-2 and the helicopter's down-wash stalled out the upper wing of the AN-2.

Suddenly, the hapless AN-2 pilot found himself sinking like a stone! So he pulled the yoke back in his lap and further reduced his forward speed. Meanwhile, the Huey flight mechanic, not to be outdone in the macho contest, crawled out on the Huey's skid and, one-handed, emptied his AK-47 into the cockpit area of the AN-2, killing or wounding the pilot and copilot. At this point, the AN-2 went into a flat spin and crashed into a mountainside, but did not burn.

It should come as no surprise that the Air America pilot and flight mechanic found themselves in a heap of trouble with the State Department "weenies" in Vientiane. In spite of the striped-pants, cookie pusher's discomfort at (horrors!) an international incident (or perhaps, partly because of it) these guys were heroes to everybody, USAF and CIA, in the theatre. They accomplished a couple of firsts: (1) The first and only combat shoot down of a biplane by a helicopter, and (2) The first known CIA air-to-air victory.

Editor's note: The NVA built a road from NVN into Laos, aimed directly at Lima Site 85. Permission to destroy the enemy force was denied by the ambassador. The resulting attack killed 12 USAF and CIA personnel. Only 7 survived. A good friend of mine, Maj. Donald E. Westbrook, was shot down and presumed dead in his A-1 while searching for survivors after the site was overrun by the North Vietnamese on 11 March 1968.

Vietnam Air Losses

by Chris Hobson
Midland Publishing, 2000

Two Caribous arrived overhead at Dak Seang in the early morning of the 2nd to drop ammunition to the besieged defenders of the camp. The aircraft approached the camp from the east under the guidance of a FAC who was also directing strikes by fighter aircraft on enemy positions. The first aircraft dropped successfully, but reported ground fire as it made a steep right hand turn after delivering its load.

The second aircraft, flown by 1/Lt Train, made a left-hand turn to try to avoid the ground fire, but was hit by automatic weapons fire at an altitude of 400 feet. The Caribou flew off to the south, possibly trying to make for Dak To, but it burst into flames and crashed about five miles from Dak Seang, killing the crew.

After the Caribou was shot down at Dak Seang on the 2nd the airlift was briefly suspended by the Air Force, but was resumed at the insistence of MACV and a fleet of 18 C-7's was assembled at Pleiku. Eleven more drops were made later in the day on the 2nd and although three aircraft were hit, none were lost. A total of 31 more sorties were made on the 3rd and the 4th but another aircraft was lost and 13 others damaged.

A five-aircraft drop was being made in the afternoon when the fourth aircraft in the formation was hit by heavy ground fire shortly after releasing its load. The aircraft crashed two miles from the camp killing the crew.

The resupply of Dak Seang continued on the 5th when seven Caribous successfully made airdrops, although very few of the loads could be recovered. On the 6th the last of three Caribous to be lost during the siege of Dak Seang was shot down by ground fire as it was pulling up from its dropping run. The aircraft burst into flames and crashed close to the camp killing the crew.

Six Caribou sorties were flown on the 6th but, again, most of the loads could

not be recovered. The next night three successful drops were made by Caribous in conjunction with an AC-119 gunship that provided spotlight illumination during the final moments of the run in. This technique was used successfully for 68 drops over the next five nights, which enabled the defenders to hold on until the situation improved enough for daylight drops and then landings to be made at the camp.

Personal Account

by Bill McLeod [458, 69]

We lost several Caribous in that operation, one of those lost was on my wing at the time. We made successful drops into Dak Seang and reformed South of there for our flight back to base. Each of us had taken several hits, but did not think any of them were serious, mostly in the fuselage.

Unknown to us at the time, one aircraft had some hits in the wing outboard of the starboard engine and a trickle of fuel followed, an aerodynamic wind path led into the engine cowling and evidently lit off, causing catastrophic damage to the right wing and they spiraled in to this day I sometimes hear the copilot on that plane ...

Well, that is a story to be told over at least a 6-pack.

License Plates

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

Some states, e.g., Texas, Georgia, Washington, offer special license plates for veterans who have received certain awards and decorations, e.g., Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Prisoners of War. In some cases, the veteran is exempt from the state's annual renewal fee.

Check with your state's appropriate vehicle registration office to see what the rules are and how to apply.

The First Team

by Billy Tidmore [483, 66]

I was assigned to the 134th Aviation Company in December 1966 when the Army still had control of the C-7A. We were about 50-50 Army/Air Force at that time and were supposed to transition the aircraft to Air Force control on 1 Jan 1967. I did maintenance on Army Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE), which eventually was sent on to Cam Rahn Bay, painted olive drab instead of highway yellow. I did all the Army things, like standing guard duty on top of the hotel in downtown Can Tho, as well as the perimeter of the base. Being an Army brat, it wasn't that big a deal for me, but some of my Air Force buddies thought they had been drafted into the wrong branch of service. Most of us had no idea what was going on with the politics and logistics of the C-7 issue, we just went where they told us and did what we were told. We did figure it out in a week or two, after we arrived at CRB.

On 1 Jan 1967, I was assigned as a guard on the "deuce and a half" used to transport wall lockers and other equipment to a Navy LST (Landing Ship Tank) docked on the river. We finished the job late in the day and boarded the last Caribou out of Can Tho. We touched down at Cam Ranh Bay a couple of hours later, the longest and softest landing I have ever experienced. I was at Cam Rahn until July of 1968, 18 months total, having extended for 6 months because I was having so much fun. I was in the AGE shop the entire time.

One thing I remember, which others may also, is that the original Squadron sign in front of the orderly room said 6483rd CAMS for the first week or two, when it was changed to 483rd CAMS. I always wondered what that was about.

Editor's Note: 7th AF SO G-988, 11 Nov 66 attached the 6252nd Ops Sq to the 483rd Troop Carrier Wing for operational and administrative control.

A Quick Trip to SEA

by Dan Clancey [535, 69]

As 1968 rolled to a close, I checked out a brand new set of orders that suggested that the Air Force would be especially happy if I wouldn't mind leaving for Southeast Asia on December 31st, New Year's Eve. Well, at least I managed to spend Christmas at home and was very grateful for that.

Travis AFB was the departure point and arriving there on the 31st was an eye opener to say the least. People and duffle bags everywhere and I forgot my teddy bear. But, I did manage to run into an old Alabama boy, Bob Dunbar, so it seemed that there was an up side. Bob and I decided to hoist a few in the holiday spirit and somehow, we managed to miss our flight. This did not count as a tour. The folks at Travis had two first class seats reserved for us on the next one out and it was bye bye USA.

On the way to "Snake School" at Clark, I reviewed a letter that I had received earlier from W.D. Smith – Billy Don to most of us. He was already checked out and flying for the 535th TAS at Vung Tau. He told me that Vung Tau was a great place to be based, enclosed his APO number, and hoped I would end up there. Unfortunately for me, his APO number and the one on my orders didn't match up. More on that later. He also mentioned that the Aussies had a Caribou unit in Vung Tau. Good information.

Clark was kind of a hoot. You couldn't play in a pot limit poker game 24 hours a day so, once in a while, as we were waiting for survival school to start, we'd venture off base. I'll leave it at that.

All good things must come to an end, so it was off to Vietnam. My plane landed in Saigon and taxied to the gate, something I would do many times later. We grabbed our gear and headed for the terminal to pick up flights to various locations in country. On the way to the terminal I saw, what had to be a sign from God – a kangaroo painted on the

tail of a Bou. Never up, never in, as they say in golf, so I figured I'd ask one of the Aussies if they might possibly be headed to Vung Tau. "Hop in mate" and off we went. I arrived at the aerial port in Vung Tau, picked up a phone and called the 535th looking for a ride across the field. If I thought this little action was akin to "Run For Your Life," a very popular TV show at the time, imagine my surprise when the Lieutenant Colonel squadron commander to whom I reported for duty was Richard Kimball. He said: "You're not supposed to be here" and I replied, "Sir, you know that and I know that, but I'm here and I would really like to fly for you." It worked. Thanks, Billy Don.

Pirate Bous

by Manny Ramos

When Caribous were handed down to Army aviation, which then sent them to the Army Guard units, I was in one of those, the Puerto Rico Air National Guard Aviation Section at Isla Grande, Puerto Rico. We were activated during the Contra years and sent to central America to operate under the U.S. Air Force. We flew many combat missions and non-combat too.

We were ghosts operating side by side with the DC-3 operated by "The Company," which flew at night while we flew day missions. We flew so many missions that we borrowed aircraft from other units throughout the U.S. like the Fresno Army Guard unit and from Gulfport, Mississippi. We were never recognized for serving in combat. They called it training when we were taking the Contras in and out and the Army pathfinders and Marines to Isla Pirañas, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Panama. We did all major maintenance at Howard Air Base in the Canal Zone from 1982-1985. Great Memories! I was the only non-Vietnam veteran in the outfit at the time.

Maintaining the Bou

by Jay Baker [535, 66]

It all started in April 1966 when my wife received a call from CMS Skip Horan, Line Chief of the 1612th Organizational Maintenance Squadron, McGuire AFB, NJ. I was a 25 year old 1st Lieutenant aircraft maintenance officer at the time. Chief Horan asked my wife if he could speak to me. "He's not at home" my wife said, while holding our 10 month old daughter in her arms and keeping a watchful eye on our 2 year old son. "Can I take a message, Sgt. Horan?" "No ma'am, I need to talk to him. Have him give me a call when he gets in. If he can't reach me, have him call Personnel." My wife instinctively knew that this was the dreaded Vietnam call. When I returned home she met me at the front door with "THAT look" on her face.

I called CMS Horan immediately and he confirmed my wife's fears. The next day, I went to Personnel and they gave me the news. I was selected as part of a 36 man maintenance officer contingent to report to Ft. Benning in August 1966 for training on the Army CV 2 Caribou, which was officially being transferred to the Air Force on 1 January 1967.

In July 1966, our family moved from McGuire AFB to Springfield, IL (where my wife was raised) and I drove to Ft. Benning where we trained on the Caribou systems with a DeHavilland tech rep. I returned home and a few days later left from Chicago for a one night stay in San Francisco where I connected with a few of the guys I had met at Ft. Benning. We prowled a few of the bars that night and even watched Carol Doda (now there's a trivia question for you) descend from the Whiskey-A-Go-Go ceiling on a Grand piano. It wasn't worth the \$3 per person cover charge.

The next day, we departed Travis on a "Flying Tiger" cattle car and transited Alaska and Yokota on our way to Vietnam. Arriving at Tan Son Nhut at 0630, we were provided the standard in-country briefing prior to being dispatched to

a large screened in hooch.

The next few days were spent in-processing and waiting. Warrant Officer Jefferson, the unit admin officer, announced that 36 maintenance officers were not needed to man the six Caribou units. The number was reduced to 24. Luckily, I made the cut and our unit assignments were soon announced. I would be attached to the 57th Aviation Company at Vung Tau. I had no idea where Vung Tau was, but I soon received a hint of its desirability when one of the other maintenance officers, who apparently had done his homework, offered me a fairly large sum of money if I would switch assignments.

I may not be smart, but I'm not a fool. After seeking out Mr. Jefferson and asking him a few pertinent questions, I respectfully declined the offer. The next day it was on to Vung Tau on my first Caribou ride. I remember the short takeoff with a couple of Army Warrant Officer pilots, ferrying us the 50 or so miles to Vung Tau. The cargo door was wide open (by the way, they had a habit of falling off on landing and I eventually found out why when one of my sharp eyed senior maintenance NCOs put two and two together) and I got my first look at the beauty of the Vietnam country side from about 2,000 ft.

Soon after landing, I met my new commander, Lt. Col. Leo Ehmann, and his Army counterpart, Major Maynard Austin. I believe I was the sixth Air Force officer to arrive and be assigned to the 57th Aviation Company. Several more would follow and I formed several friendships with the young pilots, including my roommate, Dave Lithgow, who arrived after me. Perhaps some of those friendships were because, as the Maintenance Officer, I was the only junior officer with a jeep and many times it was used as a shuttle to the beautiful Vung Tau beach or as the French called this resort town, Cape St. Jacques.

My experience with the 57th Aviation Company and eventually the 535th was very positive. I had, for the first time

in my Air Force career, a job which involved responsibility of managing and leading approximately 85 dedicated NCOs and Airmen in maintaining a fleet of 16 aircraft. What a great ride and one I shall never forget. By the way, two months into my tour the number of maintenance officers was trimmed down to 18 (so much for planning). Once again, I made the cut and was thankful I did.

You Might Be An Aircraft Maintainer, If ...

You ever wished the pilot would just say, "Great aircraft!"

You take it as a badge of honor to be just called "a Det Hound."

You can't comprehend why everyone doesn't want to be a Maintainer.

You think everyone who isn't a Maintainer is a wimp.

You wondered where they keep finding the idiots that keep making up stupid rules.

You consider "Moly-B" fingerprints on food an "acquired taste."

You've ever been told to "go get us some prop wash, a yard of flight line, or the keys to the jet."

You have ever jumped inside an intake to get out of the rain.

You consider TDY a paid vacation.

The phrase "Oh, by the way..." makes your eye twitch.

Little yellow ear plugs are all over your house.

You have ever preflighted in really bad weather only to learn that the flight was canceled hours ago.

Your spouse refuses to watch any aviation shows or attend air shows with you!

The refrigerator in your barracks room is stocked only with beer!

You have ever looked for pictures of "your" jet in aviation books and magazines.

You know that you are the best maintainer in the military and your plane is the best in the fleet!

C-5M Sets 41 World Records

9/14/2009 - Dover AFB aircrew flying a C-5M Super Galaxy, named *The Spirit of Normandy*, unofficially set 41 world records in a single flight, taking off from the base before dawn Sept. 13, 2009.

The results are pending certification by the National Aeronautic Association and should be finalized in about a month, said Kristan Maynard, the NAA official observer who documented the world record attempt. The NAA is the record-keeper for U.S. aviation.

The crew, composed of eight 512th Airlift Wing reservists and four 436th AW active-duty members, was led by Maj. Cory Bulris, the aircraft commander and 436th Operations Group Program Integration Office chief for the C-5M.

With a payload of about 178,000 pounds, the C-5M climbed to 12,000 meters in less than 28 minutes, setting the altitude, payload, and time-to-climb records during the one-and-a-half-hour flight. Because they were successful, the records “trickled down” to the lighter payloads and lower altitudes.

“We are very proud of this accomplishment, and it displayed the capability of the C-5M, the Air Mobility Command’s newest airlifter,” said Major Bulris, who added that planning for this mission began almost two months ago.

To prepare for the record-breaking run, NAA officials weighed the aircraft, its fuel and cargo on Sept. 11.

Mr. Maynard said he was impressed with the aircraft’s record-breaking capability.

“This doesn’t happen very often ... not in one flight,” he said.

One of the records broken during the flight was previously held by the Russians who set it in 1989 with a Tupolev Tu-160 aircraft, said Mr. Maynard. It’s one of the more significant records broken: the altitude attained in horizontal

flight.

The C-5M crew also set a new record for the greatest mass carried to 2,000 meters, set by a C-17A Globemaster III in 1993. The crew also broke six other records previously held by the C-17.

A C-5M, which was used for the record-breaking flight, is a C-5 Galaxy that has received a modernized glass cockpit and avionics upgrade as part of the Avionics Modernization Program and new engines through the Reliability Enhancement and Re-engining Program.

The C-5 Galaxy, one of the world’s largest aircraft, has been the backbone of America’s strategic airlift fleet since the late 1960s. However, years of wear and tear impacted the reliability rates of the C-5. Yet testing revealed the C-5 fleet had 80 percent of its structural service life remaining. Rather than doing away with the aircraft, Lockheed Martin officials proposed a plan in September 1998 to update the C-5 Galaxy fleet with new avionics and engines.

These improvements are predicted to raise the aircraft’s reliability levels.

“This aircraft is capable of significantly shorter take-offs than the previous (C-5) aircraft,” said Lt. Col. Mike Semo, 709th Airlift Squadron pilot and C-5M Program Office chief. “We are able to take more cargo farther distances with greater reliability. They’ve also vastly improved to a glass cockpit, which results in greater situational awareness for the pilots. There are upgrades to navigation, safety equipment, communications, and a new autopilot system. This really is a modern aircraft for a modern Air Force.”

Current Air Force plans call for Lockheed Martin to deliver 52 C-5Ms by 2016. Dover currently has three C-5Ms.

While it is *The Spirit of Normandy* that is set to go down in the record books, future C-5Ms are sure to make a name for themselves as they continue to carry supplies and combat-ready military units around the globe at any time.

Bou Drops Cargo 2 Miles From DMZ

Caribou Courier
483rd Troop Carrier Wing
June 1967

Con Thien Special Forces Camp is located only two miles from the DMZ. If you happen to land there you can expect small arms and automatic weapons fire on any approach. After landing you can expect a few rounds of 81mm mortar or a couple of 105mm howitzer rounds – anyway, it’s somewhat “hot.”

On 12 May 1967, Maj Charles Beardley, 1st Lt Raymond Valentine and SSgt Lewis Shedd, 459th TCS, departed Danang AB loaded with ammo for Con Thien. They were to air drop the load.

They arrived at Con Thien and established drop configuration and altitude. Now flying a drop pattern at 500 feet sometimes invites problems. It did.

On the first pass, two .50 calibre rounds with explosive heads hit the rear section of the aircraft – one round tearing a hole approximately eight inches wide on top of the fuselage. The other round creased the exterior skin of the tail section. Sgt Shedd said, “I moved closer to the front of the aircraft.” In addition, the load hung up so another pass was required.

On pass two, “Charlie” improved. One round came in behind the cockpit, one round blasted another hole on top of the fuselage cutting both mixture cables and missing the control cables by inches.

The drop was successful and the crew turned their ventilated “Bou” toward home. Because of required maintenance, [the] Bou was returned to Phu Cat. The crew jumped out, looked casually at an occasional hole here and there, pre-flighted another aircraft and departed for Danang. “Another day, another 118 piasters” called one of the crew.

Note: Kenneth Karnes was also on this crew. All crew members were awarded the Silver Star for this action, see 7th AF SO-1984, 13 Nov 1967.

Serendipitous Altruism

by Jean-Marc Liotier

The US often hears echoes of worldwide hostility against the application of its foreign policy, but seldom are they reached by the voices of those who experience first hand how close we [French] are to the USA. In spite of contextual political differences and conflicting interests that generate friction, we do share the same fundamental values – and when push comes to shove that is what really counts. Through the eyes of a French OMLT (Operational Mentoring Liaison Teams) infantryman you can see how strong the bond is on the ground. In contrast with the Americans, the French soldiers don't seem to write much online – or maybe the proportion is the same, but we just have less people deployed. Whatever the reason, this is a rare and moving testimony which is why I decided to translate it into English, so that American people can catch a glimpse of the way European soldiers see them. Not much high philosophy here, just the first hand impressions of a soldier in contact – but that only makes it more authentic.

American troops in Afghanistan through the eyes of a French OMLT infantryman

“We have shared our daily life with two US units for quite a while – they are the first and fourth companies of a prestigious infantry battalion whose name I will withhold for the sake of military secrecy. To the common man it is a unit just like any other. But we live with them and got to know them, and we henceforth know that we have the honor to live with one of the most renowned units of the US Army – one that the movies brought to the public as a series showing “ordinary soldiers thrust into extraordinary events.” Who are they, those soldiers from abroad, how is their daily life, and what support do they bring to the men of our OMLT every day? Few of them belong to Easy

Company, the one the TV series focused on. This one is named Echo Company, and it is the support company.

They have a terribly strong American accent – from our point of view the language they speak is not even English. How many times did I have to write down what I wanted to say rather than waste precious minutes trying various pronunciations of a seemingly common word? Whatever state they are from, no two accents are alike and they even admit that in some crisis situations they have difficulties understanding each other.

Heavily built, fed at the earliest age with Gatorade, proteins and creatine – they are all head and shoulders taller than us and their muscles remind us of Rambo. Our frames are amusingly skinny to them – we are wimps, even the strongest of us – and because of that they often mistake us for Afghans.

Here we discover America as it is often depicted: their values are taken to their paroxysm, often amplified by promiscuity and the loneliness of this outpost in the middle of that Afghan valley. Honor, motherland – everything here reminds of that: the American flag floating in the wind above the outpost, just like the one on the post parcels. Even if recruits often originate from the heart of American cities and gang territory, no one here has any goal other than to hold high and proud the star spangled banner. Each man knows he can count on the support of a whole people who provides them through the mail all that an American could miss in such a remote front-line location: books, chewing gums, razorblades, Gatorade, toothpaste, etc. in such way that every man is aware of how much the American people backs him in his difficult mission. And that is a first shock to our preconceptions: the American soldier is no individualist. The team, the group, the combat team are the focus of all his attention.

And they are impressive warriors! We have not come across bad ones, as strange as it may seem to you when

you know how critical French people can be. Even if some of them are a bit on the heavy side, all of them provide us everyday with lessons in infantry know-how. Beyond the wearing of a combat kit that never seem to discomfort them (helmet strap, helmet, combat goggles, rifles, etc.) the long hours of watch at the outpost never seem to annoy them in the slightest.

On the one square meter wooden tower above the perimeter wall they stand the five consecutive hours in full battle gear and night vision goggles, their sight unmoving in the directions of likely danger. No distractions, no pauses, they are like statues, night and day. At night, all movements are performed in the dark – only a handful of subdued red lights indicate the occasional presence of a soldier on the move. Same with the vehicles whose lights are covered – everything happens in pitch dark even filling the fuel tanks.

And combat? If you have seen Rambo, you have seen it all – always coming to the rescue when one of our teams gets in trouble, and always in the shortest delay. That is one of their tricks: they switch from t-shirt and sandals to combat ready in three minutes. Arriving in contact with the enemy, the way they fight is simple and disconcerting: they just charge! They disembark and assault in stride; they bomb first and ask questions later – which cuts any pussyfooting short.

We seldom hear any harsh word, and from 5 AM onwards the camp chores are performed in beautiful order and always with excellent spirit. A passing American helicopter stops near a stranded vehicle just to check that everything is alright; an American combat team will rush to support ours before even knowing how dangerous the mission is – from what we have been given to witness, the American soldier is a beautiful and worthy heir to those who liberated France and Europe.

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Altruism (from Page 14)

To those who bestow us with the honor of sharing their combat outposts and who everyday give proof of their military excellence, to those who pay the daily tribute of America's army's deployment on Afghan soil, to those we owed this article, ourselves hoping that we will always remain worthy of them and to always continue hearing them say that we are all the same band of brothers."

Loading Cargo

by Edward Breslin [537, 67]

It had been a normally trying day, with operations that sent our little transport aircraft on a variety of different types of sorties. We had started out the morning with a quick flight to An Khe. From there, the Army sent us to LZ English to pick up a load of cargo. After touchdown at English, which had a 3,000 foot dirt and oil runway, 60 or so feet wide with two 6 foot high embankments running most of the length of the runway, we taxied into the parking area. The young sergeant who was the Army rep came running up to the ramp.

"Guess what just landed here?" he asked. "A C-130!"

"No way," I replied.

"No s*&t!" the boy said. "They just took off again when they found out they landed at the wrong airfield!"

Years later, in a conversation with one of my neighbors, this story was confirmed by an Air Force FAC pilot who had been working out of English when this happened.

As soon as we heard we had cargo, the pilots shut down the engines and we set to work with all three of us hustling to reconfigure the aircraft to haul cargo, instead of the passenger configuration we were in. This procedure entailed folding up all the troop seats, and removing the tiedowns from roller conveyors, which were normally stored under the troop seats and strapped to

the floor with 5,000 tiedown straps. Then the rollers had to be secured to the floor using roller clamps, and the short rollers had to be secured to the ramp door.

The roller assemblies were comprised of two sets of parallel aluminum rails between which ball bearing mounted roller wheels (about 2 inches in diameter) were suspended on bars that acted as axles between the aluminum rails. The main floor roller assemblies were about 9 feet long and there were four sets of them. The cargo door roller assemblies were about 3 feet long and there were 2 sets of these. One person could easily lift any of these pieces.

After the rollers were secured to the floor, the tail stand was put in place. The tail stand was a pipe-like device with a swivel plate attached to the bottom end. The stand was suspended under the tail of the aircraft by a steel pin inserted through spring fittings in the stand and through a fitting attached to the bottom of the aircraft. If the pin was lost, which it usually was, a number 2 pencil was often substituted to hold the stand in place. This substitution worked remarkably well, since the pin was not designed to be weight bearing, but simply to position the stand.

The stand was used anytime the load was cargo and the engines were shutdown. It was also used whenever the load on the ramp was to be 1500 pounds or more, whether or not the engines were left running. The purpose of the stand is to prevent the aircraft from sitting down on its tail when a very heavy load is placed on the ramp. This day, the stand went in because we were shut down.

Just as we got ready to accept cargo, the Army guys brought out the biggest forklift I had ever seen. Suspended from the forks by chains was a sheep's foot roller. This is a piece of road construction equipment used to pack down loose dirt. It is a cylinder about 5 feet in diameter and about 10 feet long. It has small cylindrical tubes, or sheep's feet, welded onto the surface of the

drum. It has a screw-in plug which is removed so the roller can be filled with a huge amount of water to make it weigh more.

I asked the Army troops how much that large roller weighed. "Fifteen hundred pounds," was the totally predictable answer. "Well," I said, "put it down and let's see if we can lift one end."

Needless to say, both of us couldn't budge one end of the thing. Then, I asked four soldiers who were standing around to see if we could lift one end with them helping. Nothing. That great roller just laid there on the ramp and defied us to move it.

So, I asked to have the plug removed. From somewhere, the forklift driver produced a Ford wrench and took out the plug. A great stream of water issued forth from said roller. The thing was still full! It probably weighed 6,000 pounds, at least! Load rejected!!!

Wisdom of Thomas Jefferson

"I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered." [1802]

"The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government."

"All, too, will bear in mind this sacred principle, that though the will of the majority is in all cases to prevail, that will to be rightful must be reasonable; that the minority possess their equal rights, which equal law must protect, and to violate would be oppression."

"An enemy generally says and believes what he wishes."

Katum

by Sam McGowan

If there was a name that struck fear in the heart of airlifters in Vietnam, it would have to be Katum. Even though Khe Sanh, A Luoi, Kham Duc, and An Loc were the scene of major events where C-130 and C-123 crews were forced to call on resources deep inside themselves, Katum was one of those places that was there all the time. It was a place whose name on a mission frag order instantly put an airlift crew into a sober and somber mood, especially if the order read “Bien Hoa – Katum, Shuttle X” which meant “Shuttle as required” between the two bases.

The airfield at Katum was constructed during Operation Junction City in the late winter of early 1967. The site was the drop zone for the paratroopers of the 173rd Airborne Infantry who jumped over it in the only major American airborne operation of the war. Airborne engineers constructed two airfields in the same general region of their objective area. Tonle Cham, the other airfield, along with Katum was one of the two most dreaded forward airfields in South Vietnam. In short (and they were!) they were the kind of airfields that combat airlift is all about. They are the kind of place where airlift is crucial, and where it is doubtful a commander in his right mind would ever send an airplane as expensive as the C-17. The problem at Katum was that it lay very close to the Cambodian border, so close in fact that North Vietnamese artillery across the border in South Vietnam’s “neutral” neighbor could shell the airfield at will. It was also close enough that the Communists could transport crew-served weapons across the river and position them off the approach end of the runway and shoot up landing aircraft whenever their little hearts desired. It was because of this that Katum was a name that caused men who were scheduled to go into there to search their hearts and souls. I very vividly remember a spiritual conversation I had

with my maker on a day when my crew got one of those “Bien Hoa – Katum Shuttle X” frags!

Sometime in 1968, a C-130E crew from the 314th wing was on approach to Katum when they suddenly started taking hits after taking off. Lt. Fletcher Hatch and his crew went into Katum to take in a tire for another C-130 that suffered a flat. As they were climbing out, a burst of .50-caliber fire ripped into the left wing of their airplane and set it on fire. Number one engine erupted in flames. The crew shut down the engine and fired the bottle, but the fire still burned. Hatch turned the airplane toward Tay Ninh City, which featured a longer runway and was not far away. The fire, as it nearly always does on C-130s, burned up the hydraulic fluid and rendered the hydraulic systems useless. The flight mechanic, SSgt Joe Basillisco, went in back to help the loadmaster, A1C Jerry Willard, crank down the gear. They were only able to get the left main gear “down and locked” before the airplane reached Tay Ninh. Hatch called the crew up front to strap in for landing.

The fire in the left wing was spreading and the wing itself was beginning to bend. The aileron had been shot way while the elevators were useless due to lack of hydraulics. The young pilot – Hatch was only 24 – fought to keep the plane as close to level as possible as they approached the runway. The left gear hit, and then the right side and nose. The wreckage slid off and alongside the runway for 3,000 feet before it came to a halt and exploded, so much for the theory that jet fuel will not explode! Miraculously, the flames receded as the crew escaped from the cockpit escape hatch and ran away. They not only lived through a disaster, but everyone on the crew escaped with only minor injuries. The incident is very impressive because of the age and experience of the crew. Hatch was 24, the copilot, Lt. Lee Blaser was 25, the navigator, Lt Jon Alexander was 23 – it was an all-lieutenant crew. Loadmaster

Willard was 20. At 32, the engineer. Basillisco, was the oldest man on the crew. The crew survived because of the emphasis upon crew coordination that was a part of Tactical Air Command C-130 training. Contrary to popular belief among ill-informed civilians, the Air Force was stressing crew coordination decades before the aviation training industry coined the phrase “Cockpit Resource Management.”

Another crew was involved in a similar ordeal over Katum later that year. The aircraft commander, Major Curtis Messex, wrote about the story in an article that was published in Air Force Magazine and reprinted in a special book they put out called Valor.

Messex and his 21st TAS crew from Naha, Okinawa were on an airdrop mission to Katum on August 26, 1968. The camp was cut off and an emergency airdrop had been requested. They were dropping under a 1,200 foot ceiling. On their first pass, the crew missed the airfield due to the low clouds and visibility after a vector from Paris, a GCI site controlling the area. Messex and his navigator decided to make the second attempt on their own. They went back out and established their position with a radar fix from Black Virgin Mountain, a prominent landmark near Song Be, updated their doppler. (Yes, Virginia, there are ways of finding drop zones without a combat control team, ground radar, GPS, INS, or AWADS). They planned their descent to break out of the clouds sooner, now that they knew the bases were lower than reported.

As the C-130A was a minute out, they started taking hits. Hydraulic fluid shot out of one of the cargo compartment lines and instantly ignited, becoming a blow torch which set the load on fire. They started losing hydraulic boost. Messex told the flight mechanic to shut it off. The load was on fire, as the wooden boxes containing artillery fuzes began to burn. They were only five seconds from the drop zone so

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Katum (from Page 16)

Messex elected to drop on target in hopes that troops on the ground would be able to salvage most of the ammunition. The nose of the airplane pitched up to allow the bundles to roll out, but as Messex tried to lower it again after the drop, it would not go! The flight controls were locked! The hydraulic system was starting to fail. With the nose raised to a high attitude, one of the bundles caught at the rear of the cargo compartment and broke open, scattering 2,000 pounds of artillery shells in the cargo compartment.

The flight engineer went back to help the loadmasters pour hydraulic fluid into the reservoir. The system would surge and die, then surge and die again as the cans momentarily filled it, only to be pumped overboard from a damaged system. The pressure surges did allow the pilots to get the nose back down to avoid a stall. Messex wrestled the airplane onto a heading for Bien Hoa, mainly by allowing a low wing to turn it then using physical strength to hold the heading. The pilots used the electric trim to level the airplane, but without feedback it was a hit and miss function. Fortunately, the fire was all in the load and while the airplane was filled with smoke, they were at least free of that danger. They still had the one pallet on board, but at least it was not on fire.

Eventually, the crew got the airplane under control. As the supply of hydraulic fluid began to dwindle, Messex told the crew to slow down the rate at which they were pouring it into the system. They decided to lower the gear while they still had fluid. The gear started down and eventually extended as the loadmasters and engineer added more fluid. The crew began considering options when they ran out of hydraulic fluid. They had drinking water – and the contents of their bladder! Messex thought about the problem and decided that the fluid was being pumped out through the return line. He hit on the idea of pouring fluid in with the system

off in hopes it would stay there. They tried it and it worked. By this time, the crew had put in all of the airplane's supply of extra hydraulic fluid along with most of the engine oil and a case and a half of propeller oil.

The weather at Bien Hoa was marginal VFR, with a 1,000 foot ceiling and 7 miles visibility. Bien Hoa GCA would bring them in. To compound their problems, one of the main gear tires appeared to be flat. Without the hydraulics to boost the control, the pilots had to use trim and brute strength to keep the airplane pointed in the right direction. As they came over the approach lights, Messex ordered the hydraulic system turned on. It was just enough to allow him to position the airplane for a landing before the system shut down. They landed safely. Messex and his crew loadmaster, SSgt Bernie Brown, each received the Silver Star for the mission. The rest of the crew, including a Stan/Eval navigator and loadmaster who were assigned for the drop, were awarded the DFC.

Katum continued to be a dreaded word through 1969 and into 1970. On June 23, 1969 a C-130B from the 772nd TAS at Clark was shot down while landing there. By this time the terror of Katum was caused by a truck-mounted quad-fifty antiaircraft gun that the NVA moved around in the vicinity of the airfield. Just before the loss of the 772nd airplane and crew, I went in-country with was shot-up over Katum, though I was not with them at the time. I had been selected to checkout in the Commando Vault C-130 bombing mission which was just beginning. Although I was in the 29th TAS, I was sent in-country for a checkout with a 774th TAS crew whose loadmaster was already qualified. MacArthur Rutherford and I had known each other since basic, and had cross-trained together at Pope. We had gone separate ways, but ended up in the same wing again at Clark. I was only with the crew to have my lesson plans signed off to drop the big bombs. After two days

of bombing the crew was put on the airlift schedule. Originally, I was going to go with them, but I had my guitar with me and the night before the mission somebody kept buying me drinks in the all-ranks club on Herky Hill. I decided to pass on flying the next day since I had no need for another cargo flight. Mac said it was okay with him, so I slept late and went to the beach. I waited around the barracks at about the time he and the engineer should have been back, but they were late. Finally, I saw them get out of the shuttle bus by the barracks. I thought to myself, "My, Mac looks white as a sheet!" They told me what had happened – they were on approach to Katum when the gun opened on them. The airplane took 12 hits. Fortunately, no one was hurt and they made it to Tan Son Nhut.

My day of reckoning with Katum came later. We flew in and out of Katum all day without incident, though I certainly did a lot of soul-searching before the first flight! Eventually the Army was able to locate the quad-fifty and a pair of helicopter gunships took it out. Just because the gun was gone did not mean that Katum was any picnic – they didn't call C-130s "mortar magnets" for nothing!

It was largely because of Katum and a few other airfields in that vicinity that President Nixon authorized the "invasion" of Cambodia in the spring of 1970. Though the Cambodian incursion brought rioting in the US, including the Kent State episode, our ill-informed peers in the United States were out-of-touch with what was really going on in Vietnam. After more than three years of enduring artillery and antiaircraft from NVA units in Cambodia, airlifters in Vietnam praised the move and were not in the least in sympathy with the protestors. I landed at Katum a few days after the Americans and South Vietnamese went into Cambodia and we actually shut down our engines and got out of the airplane and walked around!

Note: Caribou crews also faced the dreaded flights into Katum.

WASPs Loved To Fly

by SSgt Matthew Bates
Defense Media Activity
San Antonio, TX

When Betty Jo Reed was introduced to flying, it was love at first sight.

She was 6 years old and her father paid \$1 for her to take a ride in a Ford tri-motor airplane at a local fair in 1929. Once airborne, Ms. Reed was hooked.

"I remember feeling free and happy, and loving the whole experience," she said. "From that point on, I knew that I wanted to fly."

It was a good time to be infatuated with flying. Flight was still new and romantic. Airplanes were starting to roll off production floors at a steady rate and pilots were stretching the limits of flight and teasing the imaginations of children and adults on a regular basis.

Some of these pilots even made an impression on a young Betty Jo.

"Charles Lindbergh was trying to make the first trans-Atlantic flight, and every time I heard an airplane flying over our house I would run outside, waving and yelling, 'Hi Lindbergh,'" Ms. Reed said.

She doesn't do much running these days. At 85, her flying days are also behind her. But, while time may have taken her ability to move fast or sit in the cockpit, one thing it left untouched is her love affair with flight – a love affair that drove her to become one of the first women to fly a military aircraft.

Betty Jo, whose last name then was Streff, was a member of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, a unique corps of women pilots who were trained by the Army Air Forces to fly military aircraft during World War II. The training took place at a small airfield called Avenger Field in Sweetwater, TX.

"I was part of the seventh class of 1944," Ms. Reed said. "We were a tight-knit group of girls, too."

In all 1,074 women graduated from this training and earned the WASP title – a title that carried considerably less weight in those days than it does now.

"I was assigned to a unit in Mississippi," she said. "Right from the start, the boys there made it pretty clear we weren't wanted."

This didn't bother Ms. Reed too much, though. As far as she was concerned, every day she was able to climb into the cockpit and take off was a good one.

"Flying was freedom and I loved flying," she said. "I loved my job and I wouldn't have wanted to do anything else."

She spent her time in Mississippi performing maintenance flights. Once an airplane was repaired, she would take it up and make sure the plane worked the way it should.

It was a great time and she was happy.

Then, just as fast as the program was started, the program was deactivated and the WASPs were told to go home in December 1944.

"That was so disappointing," Ms. Reed said. "Some of the men were returning from the war and the Army decided it didn't need us anymore."

But the service couldn't deny the fact that these women had performed tremendously. During the war, WASP pilots flew more than 60 million miles of operational flights from aircraft factories to ports of embarkation and military bases, towing targets for live anti-aircraft artillery practice, simulating strafing missions and transporting cargo.

Between September 1942 and December 1944, more than 50 percent of the ferrying of high-speed pursuit aircraft in the continental United States was carried out by WASP pilots. The women also flew all 77 aircraft in the Army Air Force arsenal, either in training or while in service.

Few people know these statistics; fewer still realize how important the WASPs were to the military at that time. Still, the WASP program showed the world that women could sit in the cockpit and fly just as well as their male counterparts – war or no war. And in a

career in which the door was typically slammed shut on women, a crack had suddenly appeared. The WASP program had opened the eyes and hearts of people across the country, and women everywhere began idolizing WASP pilots and looking to them as heroes.

Ms. Reed doesn't see it that way, though.

"Oh, they call us pioneers and heroes, but I don't feel like either," she said. "We were just doing what we loved to do and jumped at the opportunity to do it. We weren't thinking how we would impact the world, just that we'd be flying some real fun aircraft. We didn't feel like heroes at all."

History disagrees with her though. History books tell the tale of Ms. Reed and her WASP sisters, painting them as pioneers, even legends. Air Force officials, too, recognize their contributions to the service and even include a section about them in the Professional Development Guide, a book used by enlisted Airmen to prepare them for promotion.

But, aside from a few words scattered across the pages of history books and the personal accounts of these women, there was little recognition. No shrine to honor them, no place where the WASP pilots were immortalized, no building that housed their memory so reverently sought to keep their legacy alive.

Then, in 2005, that all changed.

Nancy Parrish, daughter of WASP Deanie Parrish, set out to create a museum dedicated to her mother and all the other WASPs. With the help of local residents and city government officials, the National WASP World War II Museum was officially opened in May 2005. Fittingly, the museum was housed where it all began – at Avenger Field.

Located in a 1929-style hangar, the museum is full of WASP memorabilia. Old uniforms, model aircraft, a recreation of the women's living quarters and training equipment used by the

Continued on Page 19

WASPs (from Page 18)

women are all on display, surrounded by hundreds of photos and memories so real they almost seem to come alive.

This is fine, though. Keeping memories alive is the main reason the museum exists.

“The museum seeks to educate and inspire every generation with the history of the WASP, the first women in history to fly American’s military aircraft, and who forever changed the role of women in aviation,” said Marianne Wood, the museum’s director.

So now Ms. Reed and her fellow WASPs have a shrine, a place to honor them and to keep their spirit, their dedication and their accomplishments alive forever.

Ms. Reed can’t run these days, but if she could, she would run through the museum, from photo to photo, and reminisce about “the good ol’ days.”

Time may have taken her legs, but it has not touched her heart – and her heart belongs to flight. (Courtesy of Air Force News Service)

Exercise for People Over 50

1. Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.

2. With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.

3. Each day you’ll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer.

4. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags.

5. Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (I’m at this level.)

6. After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

To Be Six Again

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, observing his wife, looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off he asked what she’d like to have for her Birthday.

‘I’d like to be six again’, she replied, still looking in the mirror.

On the morning of her Birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Lucky Charms, and then took her to Six Flags theme park. What a day!

He put her on every ride in the park; the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Monster Roller Coaster, everything there was.

Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down.

He then took her to a McDonald’s where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate shake.

Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a soda pop, and her favorite candy, M&Ms. What a fabulous adventure!

Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed, exhausted.

He leaned over his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, “Well, Dear, what was it like being six again??”

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed. “I meant my dress size, you dumbo!”

The moral of the story: Even when a man is listening, he’s gonna get it wrong.

2009 Reunion Attendance by State

AL - 8	MD - 1	OH - 7
AZ - 3	ME - 1	OK - 12
CA - 9	MI - 6	OR - 5
CO - 4	MN - 1	PA - 3
CT - 4	MO - 14	SD - 1
DE - 4	ND - 1	TN - 6
FL - 15	NE - 6	TX - 28
GA - 10	NH - 2	VA - 3
IL - 9	NJ - 2	WA - 4
KS - 5	NM - 4	WI - 7
KY - 6	NV - 4	WV - 2
LA - 8	NY - 4	England - 1

Tet Offensive ‘68

by Jerry Smith [537, 67]

During the Tet offensive of 1968, we were on alert for about 10 days and flew a lot of TacEs, (Tactical Emergencies). I was flying the C-7A, a two engine, high tail STOL (Short field Take Off and Landing), that could carry 30 battle dressed GIs and, with practice, I could land and stop in about 350 feet. Needed about 1000 feet of gravel or PSP (Pierced Steel Planking) runway to take off, because the Caribou R-2000 engines were grossly under powered.

We flew many support missions into Army outposts that got ammo, food, and supplies only from our aircraft. Most were “Hot,” meaning you had to get through the Army outgoing howitzer fire and a lot of VC ground fire.

Back to Tet, I had a TacE to Ban Me Thout one day. We tried to land at Ban Me Thout East, the new runway outside the village, but, at the last minute, we got a call that they were already overrun by the VC and our “survivors” were at the downtown airstrip. On short final approach to the runway, I saw many black pajamas (VC) coming through the periphery fence.

I called the Terminal frequency and told them I would taxi in (high speed), open the cargo door and ramp on the back of the airplane, but I would not be stopping – the 15 souls would have to run like Hell to climb in as I taxied back to the runway. I did, they did, and although I couldn’t use all of the runway without a lot of ground fire, I was able to drag it off the runway before I got to the rice paddies. Just another day at the office.

Enlisted Milestones in USAF History

MSgt Wayne Fisk is the first AF enlisted selected as one of the US Jaycees Ten Outstanding Young Men of America. (Sept 1982)

The American Thinker

The Legacy of Tet

by J. R. Dunn

It was with Tet '68 that the American media first knew sin. Anyone seeking to understand the character of consistently negative media coverage of the Global War on Terror must understand Tet.

The Tet offensive of February 1968 is widely regarded as one of the turning points of the Vietnam War – though not for the customary military reasons. Tet had its origins in the plans of North Vietnamese commander Vo Nguyen Giap, a competent general given to flights of overconfidence. Giap decided to throw all available assets, both PAVN (People's Army of North Vietnam) and Viet Cong, against every major target across South Vietnam. He anticipated a massive revolt by the South Vietnamese populace, who would overthrow the government, set out the welcome mat for their Communist liberators, and leave U.S. and allied forces sitting high and dry. The attack was scheduled to begin on the night of January 30, the beginning of Tet, the Vietnamese New Year. Tet was normally considered a truce period, when the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) was at its lowest level of alertness.

The result of all Giap's efforts was a total rout. The South Vietnamese, utterly horrified by the prospect of a Communist takeover, sat tight while U.S. and government troops crushed the attack in a matter of days. The sole holdout was the old imperial citadel at Hue, which required three weeks to be retaken. The government stood firm, the ARVN, once recovered from its initial surprise, did a creditable job. The Viet Cong, on the other hand, were ruined as a military force, their rural infrastructure left in tatters. They never fully recovered, forcing the PAVN to take over the bulk of combat duties. Giap, his reputation saving him from the usual fate of failed generals in communist societies, went back to

the drawing board. (Though not very fruitfully – his next scheme was a "mini-Tet" in April, which ended much the same way.)

But that's not how the U.S. public saw it.

American readers and viewers were presented with a disaster nearly beyond comprehension, with U.S. forces hanging on by their fingernails, ARVN troops tossing guns aside and running for safety, government officials given over to complete panic, Viet Cong and PAVN forces running wild with no losses to speak of, while General Giap, the 20th century Napoleon, nodded in approval at seeing his plan unfold. Tet ended up being a major success for communist forces after all. It was the first time in history that the news media overturned a victory won by forces on the ground.

One observer struck by the dichotomy between what occurred and how it was reported was a journalist named Peter Braestrup, chief of the Washington Post's Saigon bureau. Braestrup had also worked for Time Magazine and The New York Times. In later years he became a fellow of the Smithsonian's Woodrow Wilson International Center and editor of The Wilson Quarterly. Not the *Cirriculum Vitae* of any sort of conservative, and in fact Braestrup was an establishment liberal of the type that scarcely exists any longer. But he was also the kind of reporter who treats a story as personal property. After ten years work, Braestrup produced his book *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington*, an analysis of every major news report concerning the Tet Offensive, along with the military, political, and social results that ensued.

Big Story is *sui generis*, a book as remarkable as the event it describes. The book punctured not only the myth of Tet, but the myth of the news coverage surrounding it, revealing exactly how the national media acted as a catalyst for

the loss of a war. Braestrup portrayed a press corps living a privileged, near-aristocratic existence in Saigon, feeding off of gossip and rumor, cynical about the country, the government, and prospects for victory. Most were ignorant of military affairs. None could speak Vietnamese or had any deep knowledge of the country. When the attack came, the press corps responded with shock. The first stories were written in a state of panic, expressing reporter's own confusion rather than anything occurring in the quotidian world. As the picture began to coalesce – a picture that completely contradicted early dispatches – most of the journalists, out of stubbornness, fear of looking foolish, any mixture of human frailties, stuck with their original reports, aided and abetted by editors back home who knew a great story when they saw one.

Many of the names involved are still well-known today. The New York Times' Charles Mohr, once a supporter of the war effort, was among the first to cast doubt on claims of Allied success. The Washington Post's China expert Stanley Karnow wrote a front-page appreciation of Giap as a "military genius," followed a few weeks later with another piece claiming that the offensive had "scored impressive gains." His Post colleague, Ward Just, played the "unidentified official" angle to draw pessimistic conclusions. Hanson Baldwin, the Times' resident military expert, consistently overrated North Vietnamese capabilities while downgrading allied forces. Even Robert Novak (at that time partnered with Rowland Evans) added his bit of alarmism from 10,000 miles away.

Braestrup was the first to identify Peter Arnett as a serial prevaricator. Arnett was the source of the story that became emblematic of the entire offensive: that the Viet Cong had shot their way into the U.S. Saigon embassy and held it overnight. In truth, the VC sappers who penetrated embassy grounds were quickly dispatched before entering any

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buildings, a fact that went unmentioned by Arnett and many later histories of the war. Shortly afterward, Arnett reported a quote from an American major concerning operations in the town of Ben Tre:

“We had to destroy the town in order to save it.”

Nobody, not Arnett, not the reporters who accompanied him, not his employers at the AP, were ever able to produce this “major,” which didn’t prevent the line from becoming the leading catchphrase of the antiwar movement. (Braestrup’s research uncovered the fact that the phrase was already in the air – almost identical words were used by the Times’ James Reston in an editorial appearing the same day as Arnett’s report.) Alternately, all reports calling the disaster narrative into question were downplayed. A mid-February analysis by counterinsurgency expert Douglas Pike concluding that Communist forces had overextended themselves and been badly whipped was either ignored or dumped onto the back pages.

Media coverage of Tet destroyed public confidence in the war effort.

The antiwar movement, until then little more than a freak show, exploded in size and influence. Various rebel Democrats began scheming. The Johnson administration, already off-balance, was effectively shattered. Within weeks, Walter Cronkite, speaking *ex cathedra* from his CBS anchor’s chair, pronounced judgment on both the war and the administration, prompting Lyndon Johnson, with the spinelessness of a lifelong bully, to withdraw from the 1968 presidential campaign.

Of course, after the offensive was put down and calmer days returned, the papers and networks examined the reports, uncovered the facts, disciplined those responsible, issued corrections, and instituted procedures to assure that such a situation would never recur.

Actually, no.

There are errors so vastly wide-rang-

ing that they can’t ever be admitted to, and Tet was one of these. No such actions were ever taken. Quite the contrary – the type of distortion so evident during Tet became standard procedure for Vietnam reportage. Within a few months, the battle of Khe Sanh, a hard-fought, undeniable U.S. victory which accounted for something on the order of 40,000 North Vietnamese casualties, was reported as a defeat of American arms.

As the years passed, Giap-worshiper Stanley Karnow achieved fame as author of the war’s standard history. Ward Just became noted for topical, well-written, and extraordinarily dull political novels. Arnett pursued a long and varied career until events caught up with him in the form of the Tailwind scandal, appropriately involving lies concerning a U.S. operation in Vietnam. Braestrup was reluctant to draw any conclusion as to reasons behind the media distortion. He did not buy an ideological explanation, and found claims that media coverage led to allied defeat to be “highly speculative.” As is true of most historical events, a single explanation is unlikely to be adequate. A list could start with cynicism, an embrace of the anti-authoritarian ethos of the period, journalism enduring a period of decadence as every human endeavor eventually does), and continue from there. It scarcely matters at this point.

What does matter is that the Tet style became accepted practice. Journalism was becoming “professionalized” at the time, with the press thinking itself an elite, and the attitudes and procedures surrounding Vietnam reportage were institutionalized. Virtually every military confrontation since 1968 has been covered from the same adversarial stance that marked the Tet reports. (And not only wars – Katrina coverage was just as distorted, hysterical, and harmful as any recent war reportage.) Big Story is not considered suitable for Vietnam scholarship and is very rarely referenced or even mentioned. College

students studying the era are rarely if ever exposed to its contesting of the conventional wisdom. But it remains one of those rare volumes that actually does a service, by identifying a malady, giving its origins, and listing its symptoms. It is a book of value, and will eventually find its place. Not the least of its virtues is how much light it sheds on events in Iraq. To read Braestrup is to understand fully why current war reportage is so relentlessly downbeat. Why stories in the legacy media are at such variance with sources such as war blogs or Iraqi websites. Why reporters appear to take on the role of advocate for the enemy. Why Cindy Sheehan and Jimmy Massey – both almost pure media constructs – get the coverage they do. Why bogus issues involving Guantanamo Bay, prisoner interrogation, and “torture” receive such attention. Why Coalition successes go virtually unmentioned. Why the unfolding of a political miracle, an Arab democracy, has been greeted with near-indifference.

And why the media will never again play a useful role until the legacy of Tet is eradicated.

Note: Among many other things, J.R. Dunn was the editor of the International Military Encyclopedia for twelve years

Bon Mots

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. – George Burns

Santa Claus has the right idea. Visit people only once a year. – Victor Borge

Be careful about reading health books. You may die of a misprint. – Mark Twain

By all means, marry. If you get a good spouse, you’ll become happy; if you get a bad one, you’ll become a philosopher.

– Socrates

Air American Ops in Southeast Asia

Times-Republican (Iowa)
by Jeff Carlton, Associated Press
16 April 2009

Former naval aviator, Don Boecker, isn't too proud to say he was scared out of his wits on that July 1965 day in Laos when he dangled by one arm from a helicopter while enemy soldiers took aim below.

Boecker had spent the longest night of his life in the thick jungle, evading capture and certain execution while awaiting rescue. The Navy aviator had ejected after a bomb he intended to drop on the Ho Chi Minh trail exploded prematurely.

His rescuers that day, however, weren't from the American military, who couldn't be caught conducting a secret bombing campaign in Laos. They were civilian employees of Air America, an ostensibly private airline essentially owned and operated by the CIA.

Boecker (USNA class of 1960), now a 71-year-old retired Rear Admiral, plans to tell the story at a symposium intended to give a fuller account of an important outfit that [CIA] alumni say is still misunderstood by the American public.

The University of Texas at Dallas event coincides with the CIA's release of about 10,000 previously classified Air America records, which will become part of the school library's extensive aviation collection. The CIA declassified the documents following a Freedom of Information Act request by UT-Dallas.

"These Air America documents are essential to understanding a large untold history of America's involvement in Southeast Asia," said Paul Oelkrug, a coordinator at UT-Dallas' special collections department. He said they speak to "the covert side of the Cold War." The records consist mainly of firsthand accounts of Air America mis-

sions and commendation letters from government officials, said Timothy N. Castle, a historian at the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence.

Included are accounts of the chaotic evacuation after the fall of Saigon in 1975, the investigation into a mysterious 1964 plane crash apparently caused by sabotage, and a letter from President Richard Nixon commending employees for their bravery in Laos.

More documents detail the rescue of the wounded from a mountainous Air Force radar station in Laos known as Lima Site 85, where a North Vietnamese raid in 1968 killed 11 Americans. It was the largest single loss of Air Force personnel on the ground during the Vietnam War, Castle said. The survivors were rescued by Air America.

Such operations were the norm for Air America pilots, and the inspiration for the title of the symposium: "Air America: Upholding the Airmen's Bond." Between 1964-65, Air America personnel rescued 21 downed American pilots. Detailed records weren't kept after that, but "we know there were scores and scores more (rescues) through the years," Castle said. "That's the airman's bond. There is another airman who is down. Everything stops until you try to rescue them, because if it were you, you knew they would do it for you, too."

Air America's public face was that of a passenger and cargo airline that operated in sometimes dangerous places. It formed after World War II under the name Civil Air Transport, and did contract work for the Chinese Nationalists. Control of Air America eventually shifted to the CIA, which set up shell companies to disguise its true ownership.

Planes kept flying scheduled passenger flights out of Taiwan, but they also began flying covert missions in Laos and South Vietnam to supply anti-communist forces. Air America also had numerous government contracts, and was involved in humanitarian work though a deal with the State Department. One

of Air America's finest and most iconic moments was evacuating American and Vietnamese civilians after Saigon fell in 1975. A famous photograph shows an Air America helicopter atop an apartment building as a long line of people wait to board it.

Brian K. Johnson, a former Air America helicopter pilot and past president of the Air America Association, said flight crews would race to be the first to pick up downed military personnel. These untold stories of the Vietnam War, he said, could help change Air America's image. Johnson laments that the perception of Air America is more about heroin than heroism, due largely to the 1990 movie "Air America," starring Mel Gibson and Robert Downey Jr. The film depicts the company as corrupt and its pilots as drug runners. It remains a sensitive topic among former employees. "We have done everything we can to change that perception, and I think we are getting there," Johnson said. The liberal Air America talk radio network brought new confusion, he added. UT-Dallas was chosen by the Air America alumni group as the site of a Vietnam Wall-style plaque listing the names of the roughly 240 fallen employees. "Most people don't even know it occurred. It was a secret society," said Boecker. "They flew in all sorts of danger ... flying every day in terrible wartime conditions. They did a beautiful job."

Laws of the Natural Universe

Law of Coffee: As soon as you sit down to a cup of hot coffee, your boss will ask you to do something, which will last until the coffee is cold.

Law of Close Encounters: The probability of meeting someone you know increases when you are with someone you don't want to be seen with.

Law of the Theatre: At any event, the people whose seats are farthest from the aisle arrive last.

Burma Shave Signs

DON'T STICK YOUR ELBOW
OUT SO FAR
IT MAY GO HOME
IN ANOTHER CAR.
Burma Shave

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD
TO GAIN A MINUTE
YOU NEED YOUR HEAD
YOUR BRAINS ARE IN IT
Burma Shave

DROVE TOO LONG
DRIVER SNOOZING
WHAT HAPPENED NEXT
IS NOT AMUSING
Burma Shave

BROTHER SPEEDER
LET'S REHEARSE
ALL TOGETHER
GOOD MORNING, NURSE
Burma Shave

SPEED WAS HIGH
WEATHER WAS NOT
TIRES WERE THIN
X MARKS THE SPOT
Burma Shave

THE MIDNIGHT RIDE
OF PAUL FOR BEER
LED TO A WARMER
HEMISPHERE
Burma Shave

AROUND THE CURVE
LICKETY-SPLIT
BEAUTIFUL CAR
WASN'T IT?
Burma Shave

NO MATTER THE PRICE
NO MATTER HOW NEW
THE BEST SAFETY DEVICE
IN THE CAR IS YOU
Burma Shave

Remember Luscombe?

<http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-air-support/vietnam/luscombe.htm>

Little Girl

A little 10-year-old girl was walking home, alone, from school one day, when a big man on a black motorcycle pulls up beside her.

After following along for a while, turns to her and asks, "Hey there little girl, do you want to go for a ride?"

"NO!" says the little girl as she keeps on walking. The motorcyclist again pulls up beside her and asks, "Hey little girl, I will give you \$10 if you hop on the back."

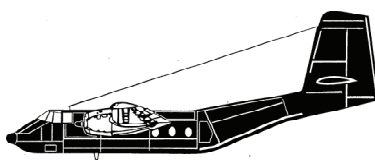
"NO!" says the little girl as she hurries down the street.

The motorcyclist pulls up beside the little girl again and says, "Okay kid, my last offer! I'll give you 20 Bucks and a Big Bag of Candy if you will just hop on the back of my bike and we will go for a ride."

Finally, the little girl stops and turns towards him and screams out ...

"Look Dad, you're the one who bought the Honda instead of the Harley!"

"YOU RIDE IT!"



Flying with the Army

by Dick Schimberg [535, 66]

Two interesting things about flying with the Army:

They liked to fly low and if they came home with leaves in the undercarriage, that was really great.

The other was their lack of supplies, especially spark plugs. On my first flight, the needle almost dropped out of the cockpit when doing the mag check. The IP said not to worry for the fouling would burn out by time we got to Saigon.

Sure enough it did, but we had back-firing all the way. That problem existed until AF supplies started to arrive.

Bumper Stickers Seen on Marine Cars

- "Marines – Providing Enemies of America an Opportunity To Die For their Country Since 1775"

- "Except For Ending Slavery, Fascism, Nazism, and Communism, WAR has Never Solved Anything."

- "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Anyone Who Threatens It"

- "U.S. Marines – Certified Counselors to the 72 Virgins Dating Club"

- "Artillery brings dignity to what would otherwise be just a brawl"

- "A dead enemy is a peaceful enemy – Blessed be the peacemakers."

- "Interrogators can't water board dead guys."

- U.S. Marines – Travel Agents To Allah"

- "Stop Global Whining"

- "Happiness Is A Belt-Fed Weapon"

- "My kid fought in Iraq so your kid can party in college."

- "It's God's job to forgive Bin Laden – It's our job to arrange the meeting."

- "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem." – Ronald Reagan

- "When the people fear their government, there is tyranny; when the government fears the people, there is liberty." Thomas Jefferson

- "When in doubt, empty the magazine" Naval Corollary; "Dead men don't testify."

- "The Marine Corps – When It Absolutely, Positively Has To Be Destroyed Overnight"

- "Death smiles at everyone – Marines smile back"

- "Marine sniper – You can run, but you'll just die tired!"

- "What do I feel when I kill a terrorist? ... A little recoil"

- "If you can read, thank a teacher. If you can read it in English, thank a veteran."

Nice Formation, Mates!



The End of An Era

Don Melvin [18Sqn, 70]
Group Captain, RAAF, Ret.

Over the first weekend in Aug. 2009, a reunion was held at Coffs Harbour, on the New South Wales north coast, to celebrate 45 years of operational service of the C-7 with the RAAF. The aircraft entered service on 8 Aug 64 and all remaining aircraft will be withdrawn from service by late this year.

It was a great occasion with about 250 attendees, including wives and partners. It was also attended by our Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal (Lt Gen) Mark Binskin and his wife. He authorised two aircraft to deploy to Coffs Harbour from their base in Townsville, over 1000 miles away, for the occasion. It was great to crawl over the beautifully presented old birds and to see how much – and indeed how little – had changed. When I was flying them, I'd have killed for the GPS which is now installed! It was a sobering moment when we were informed that at least three aircraft have passed the 20,000 flying hours mark! What a great tribute

that is to our maintenance troops.

However, the “icing (or should that be frosting) on the cake” was when he authorised a last ride in them for those who wished – as passengers of course. Wives/partners were included and there was many an incipient tear in the eye as we enjoyed our one-hour flights, up and down the coast, low level, ramp open, in absolutely perfect weather. The sound of thousands of rivets rattling in unison was music to our ears. There was also a “first” for many of us – one of the aircraft was captained by a female Flight Lieutenant!

The only disappointing note was that he could offer little encouragement on the subject of a C-7 replacement. Current policy is that a replacement will be “looked at” in the next two to four years. The heartening news was that one aircraft will be preserved at the RAAF Museum at Point Cook, Victoria, and another at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. A proposal that at least one of the “youngest” birds be allocated, together with a host of spares, to an Aviation Museum to be kept in flying condition is being considered and

stands a very good chance of success – here's hoping!

The picture above was taken over the ocean off Townsville on 11 Nov 09 – doesn't it look great? The ship in the centre bears the tail flash of 35 Sqn (an orange stylized wallaby) specially painted for the occasion. This was adopted after the squadron came home from Vietnam and kept until the squadron was disbanded.

When I was Commanding Officer (1974-75), it was superimposed on a broad horizontal stripe, but this was considered too much for the Australian tropical camo scheme when it was adopted in the late '70s. The other tail flashes are 38 Sqn (a blue heraldic creature called an Ensign – body of a lion, talons of an eagle, head of something) – not real stuff like a wallaby!

We RAAF people do not take inter-service rivalry too seriously! Mark Binskin was a pilot with the Royal Australian Navy, an exchange pilot with the RAAF, transferred to the RAAF when our Navy eliminated carriers and fixed wing aviation. He also had a tour with the USAF, flying F-16s at Luke AFB.

A “Different” Caribou Tour

Don Melvin [18Sqn, 70]
Group Captain, RAAF, Ret.

Hopefully, someone will recall the RAAF Squadron Leader who haunted Dyess in the early ‘70s to grab the odd C-7 flying hour. During my first and only visit to 18 TATS in an IG capacity, I flew with Maj Ralph Fitzgerald. As a consequence, the Wing Commander of the 516th TAW contacted my boss, Brig Gen Robin Olds, extending an invitation for me to visit and fly on a regular basis. I know that some I got to know very well indeed are no longer with us – LTC Monty Montgomery, LTC Ed Gaudin, Maj Dale Erickson, and Capt Howie Berube.

However, among others, I do have a Capt Evanish in my Flying Log Book as the AC on a trip from Carswell to Dyess after a horde of Bous were diverted there for an RON by what I believe is called a “Blue Norther” in Dec 1970. To show how small the world is, Peter Bird has informed me that he was also involved in that diversion! I would like to say at this juncture that Jacqui and I enjoyed our tour with the USAF immensely. After 39 years, we still remember with great affection the warmth with which we were received.

You already know I did not serve in Vietnam, although as you have seen it was not for the lack of trying. I have read the articles in the Newsletters with a great deal of interest and admiration and, while I have no interesting Vietnam episodes to relate, my time with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) would be outside the experience of most, as it contains some “interesting” twists.

The British had long experience seconding people to foreign armed forces, largely as a result of the breakup of the Empire during the last century. So it was with the RMAF at that time – Chief of the Air Staff (AF Chief of Staff), squadron commanders, and se-

nior flying positions were all Royal Air Force (RAF) officers; most of the senior pilots were Brits as were most of the maintenance Senior NCOs. A few other RAAF pilots had been serving with the RMAF for some months before my arrival, but they were all based in Kuala Lumpur and in squadrons commanded by RAF officers with quite a few RAF pilots and maintenance troops.

All the Australians flying in squadrons, including me, were of Flight Lieutenant (Captain) rank and generally were older and much more experienced than our RMAF equivalents. I was the only one there in my capacity as a QFI (IP).

In early 1966, Canada was presenting a half-squadron of Caribous to Malaysia, but would provide only basic training in Canada. The Australian Government was requested by Malaysia to second an instructor to train the squadron. This was still a very new ball game for the RAAF and I was soon to become aware of the vast difference between “secondment” and “exchange.”

My awakening began when I was sent to RAAF School of Languages for a “crash” course in Malay – six weeks, eight hours a day one-on-one with a Malay tutor and then a couple of hours of “homework.” The irony was that I found that all the pilots and most maintenance troops spoke good English – the Flight and Tech Manuals were in English!

The air force logistics and army enlisted personnel were a different kettle of fish and much of the non-technical paperwork was printed in Malay, so some knowledge of the language was required. A plus was that, initially at least, I was able to barter in the shops in their language, albeit that I had to modify the very correct form I had learned to the so-called “bazaar” Malay ... the more cynical might suggest that what I already spoke was “bizarre” Malay!

Next, I was required to wear RMAF uniform with nothing to identify me

as Australian or RAAF. The green uniform included shorts, long grey socks with blue tabs at the top and of course a “songkok” (the pillbox-type cap Malays and Indonesians wear). It was not a pretty sight!

Unlike the RAAF and USAF, the RMAF did not wear “wings” on their shirts, so I was not able to do even that. My uniforms were made at a “tailor” shop in Kuala Lumpur using an allowance that was inadequate. I had a great deal of trouble convincing him that even after 15 years of service, I still had no medals or ribbons.

In the RAAF at that time, even a Long Service Medal was not awarded until 20 years of service and then only if at least 10 of those years were in enlisted ranks. An officer could serve 20 years and still not be entitled to wear a ribbon. This has been amended to 15 years of service in any rank.

Although seconded RAAF officers were paid by Australia at our rates of pay (good), at the same time we were required to pay Income Tax to the Malaysian Government (very, very bad). Because our rate of pay was so much higher than their norm, their Taxation Department really stuck us. Additional allowances to compensate for the high tax rate were also promptly taxed.

At the same time, the large number of RAAF personnel serving in Malaysia in our squadrons at RAAF Butterworth (Penang) naturally paid their tax to the Australian Government and also received generous tax deductions by virtue of their being on overseas service, thus being far better off financially. Three years later, this taxation arrangement was to be of great significance specifically to me.

Finally, because Malaysia and Indonesia were engaged in armed conflict at the time (“Konfrontasi”), I received a special briefing from Air Force Intelligence. It was already known that the squadron was to be deployed to Borneo (more correctly Malaysia Timor) as

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soon as possible in support of ground forces fighting the Indonesians. I was greeted with the comforting news that, because I was a serving RAAF officer, but wearing RMAF uniform and flying RMAF aircraft, my status was roughly that of “mercenary.” Their advice? Stay away from the Indonesian border and combat areas. How the hell could I do that? I think that Intel weenies must be the same the world over!

On arrival in Malaysia, I received information that the Caribou outfit was to be the first “all-Malaysian” squadron, i.e., from CO through to all the enlisted troops, except for little old me that is. However, I was wearing their uniform so perhaps nobody would notice. I was left in no doubt that in many respects I was expected to be more-or-less “invisible.”

Despite that warning, it was really difficult not to explode when the Canadian High Commissioner held an official reception for the squadron after its arrival in Kuala Lumpur and I was directed that under no circumstances was I to attend. After all, it was the first “all-Malaysian” squadron. The same instruction was given on the occasion of the Sultan of Selangor holding a Dining-In Night at the Istana (palace) before our departure for Borneo.

I was the only C-7 pilot authorised to fly VVIPs. On one occasion I flew the Prime Minister, Tengku Abdul Rahman, for a number of days around Borneo and I was required to be in the cockpit before he arrived and to not leave it until he was out of sight. On no account was I to wear a uniform to any reception or to indicate that I was the aircraft captain. Although I was not subject to RMAF Military Law, quite clearly I was duty-bound to uphold military discipline. The ability to smile through clenched teeth became an essential skill on many occasions!

That having been said, I hasten to add that I was welcomed and treated most warmly by the squadron members.

The numerous directives that caused the most angst were issued from “on high.” The up-side was that I never appeared on a parade in nearly three years. Despite their working week including Saturday mornings, the personnel ethnic mix of Malay, Chinese, and Indian at least provided numbers of religious holidays. That mix also meant that, in fact, many were trilingual and happily I encountered only the odd case of ethnic friction.

Initial training was done at the RMAF base at the capital, Kuala Lumpur, but I checked in before the aircraft arrived from Canada. In my official appointment as “Pegawai Latehan” (Training Officer), I opted to start preparing a training programme to be ready for their arrival and, assuming that their system would have already stocked some Flight Manuals, I asked where I might obtain one. I was duly informed that I was expected to produce all the Check Lists, etc.!

The RAAF was at that time using the US Army -10 Flight Manual for the CV-2B, and a wonderfully understanding US Army Colonel at your Embassy in Kuala Lumpur acquired a number for me.

Not nearly enough pilots had flown the C-7A to any extent in Canada (the Canucks ferried them out with RMAF co-pilots), but most had experience flying the Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer and Single Pioneer. Both were horrible aircraft, check them out, in roles similar to those to be performed by the Caribou. Their experience and ability varied widely. Some were very good indeed, but others required a fair amount of work to gain an acceptable level of proficiency on the aircraft.

The “loadmasters” also had to be trained and the RMAF adopted the quaint RAF designation of Air Quartermaster (AQM) for them. Maintenance troops faced a learning curve just as steep and formidable. We certainly had our problems. Fortunately, a DeHavilland of Canada Tech Rep was on hand for the first critical months. Our paths

crossed again five years later when Ralph Fitzgerald and I flew a Caribou to Birmingham, AL for a Flight Manual conference at Hayes International.

After about three months of training and a recce trip to check out the strips in Borneo by the CO and myself, the squadron deployed to Labuan, a small island which, incidentally, was the site of a major amphibious landing and significant fighting by Australians in WWII. On short final to the runway is a sizeable Australian War Cemetery. My standing joke was that if I ever crashed and burned on approach at least I’d be among friends!

The Labuan you will see now on Google Earth bears absolutely no resemblance to what was there in 1966. A smallish village with a couple of indigenous “kampongs” was about it. Since that time, oil has been discovered under the surrounding shallow seas and “boom time” arrived.

Not long after becoming operational, the overt conflict with Indonesia ended and hostilities gave way to more of an “uneasy peace.” However, there were still a number of battalions based along the border and they had to continue to be supported. Air supply was the only option. The RAF operated Westland Whirlwind helos, Twin Pioneers, and the Blackburn Beverley (only in the air drop role) from our base. They just could not believe what the old Bou could do in and out of those same strips.

The RAF elements deployed back to the UK after a few months, leaving three RMAF squadrons there with me as the sole Caucasian in the whole wing. By this time the Twin Pioneer and Alouette helo squadrons had also been “Malaysianised.” I’m most assuredly the wrong guy to start complaining to about minority groups! Perhaps the most immediate effect of the RAF withdrawal was that the Malaysian Army took over responsibility for in-flight rations. They quickly had to be

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A Different... (from Page 26)

convinced that cold rice and cold deep-fried fish was not the easiest, nor most desirable, to consume when airborne. In-country weather was probably just like Vietnam. The north-east monsoon was followed by the south-west monsoon with oppressive heat and humidity, so high density altitudes were the operating norm. The strips were short with some virtually carved out of the jungle and checking guys into them was an adventure – probably also just like Vietnam, but without someone shooting at you.

Probably the biggest difference was that we operated with almost complete lack of navigation aids, which is not great in monsoonal weather. HF was used often when in-country. There were no radars or landing aids whatsoever – even at our base – and no navigation aids other than the odd Non-Directional Beacon scattered along the coast.

Fortunately, the RMAF Bous were equipped with an excellent Collins colour radar, when it was working. It was used almost as much for navigation as it was for weather, even to the point of using “radar shadows” of high ground on occasion. Circumstances dictated mainly VFR flying, of sorts, creeping along the valleys under the cloud and, because of the poor quality of the available maps, “local knowledge” was a valuable asset which had to be acquired quickly. Demanding and challenging flying, but enjoyable none-the-less.

Since I was the sole QFI/ Stan Eval/ Instrument Rating Examiner in the squadron, my re-qualification checks were carried out by RAF Transport Command Examining Unit, who came out from the UK regularly to carry out checks at the RAF bases in Singapore.

The COs of that unit claimed for themselves the trips across to Borneo on those occasions and both spent a number of hours with me savouring the delights of the Caribou. They were mightily impressed by its capabilities

vis-à-vis the types being operated by the RAF in the tactical transport role.

I mentioned that the taxation issue became significant later and applied only to me. Soon after our return to Australia, I was hit with one final whammy. The income tax arrangement had been renegotiated and tax was no longer payable to Malaysia.

However, the deal was made retrospective and I was the only one who had returned home during that interim period. I received a demand from the Australian Taxation Office for 11 months of back taxes and their response to my explanation that I had already paid it to Malaysia was a threat to garnish my salary to recoup the “amount owing, plus a penalty.” I pointed out that I had to obtain clearance from their tax authorities before I was cleared to leave the country, but to no avail.

The RAAF, to put it mildly, was less than helpful in trying to obtain redress and in effect “hung me out to dry.” It was not until I submitted in writing that we were left with no option other than Jacqui contacting our Member of Parliament that there was a flurry of activity and the matter resolved. Following our return, seconding of further RAAF personnel ceased. An RMAF officer eventually filled my position.

You probably have noted that I used the words “our return.” Jacqui went with me to Kuala Lumpur and joined me in Borneo soon after cessation of hostilities. That saved my sanity, but it certainly was very taxing for her over that 27 months, especially when I was away. Even swimming in the sea was prevented by the plethora of sea snakes and other lethal marine creatures. It certainly was not an “idyllic tropical island paradise.”

Once the RAF withdrew, life for us was greatly changed, especially in regard to the variety of available food as the stocks of frozen meat, etc. held by the local providers was exhausted, our diet changed dramatically. Both times we managed to have a short break in Singapore, we found ourselves suffer-

ing from “stomach bugs.” We were unaccustomed to such rich fare! It became harder for her as the small number of ex-pats holding various positions in the community also rapidly dwindled and by the time we came home, the total European populace was about six.

A memorable experience for both of us to say the least. We now often laugh over various episodes, but it was difficult to see any humour in the situation at the time.

I believe that it would be safe to say that it would be highly unlikely that anyone else has flown the C-7A while on active duty with three different Air Forces.

I’ve heard it said that many pilots learn what pure flying is really about when converted to Caribou. I couldn’t agree more. In my RAAF career spanning 35 years, without doubt the majority of my most memorable experiences were within that ten years flying the “Jolly Green Gravel Truck” – the old Bou provided me with flying that was challenging, interesting, extremely satisfying, and thoroughly enjoyable. I’m sure that you all feel the same way.

Time Is Running Out!!

Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show “2010” or later, then it is **TIME TO PAY** your Caribou Tax or this will be the **last** newsletter you will receive.

If you aren’t up to date, you may have:

1. changed your address and the last newsletter went to an old address
2. just sent in your check
3. forgotten to send your check

DO IT TODAY.

Write your \$10 check to the C-7A Caribou Association and send it to:

Mike Murphy
2036 Trailcrest Ln Apt #2
Kirkwood, MO .63122-2263

12402 Winding Branch
 San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
Address Service Requested



Non Profit Org.
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Memorabilia

MEMORABILIA ORDER FORM

Contact Jim Meyer at jsmeyer3019@sbcglobal.net to check availability of items.

Fill out this form and mail with a check to: **C-7A Caribou Association, c/o Jim Meyer, 3019 Oneida, San Antonio, TX 78230.**

1. Polo Shirt*	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$18.00	Total: _____
2. Colored T Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$15.00	Total: _____
3. Round Engine T Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$10.00	Total: _____
4. Denim Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$25.00	Total: _____
5. Denim Hat	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ \$13.00	Total: _____
6. Baseball (white) Hat	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ \$13.00	Total: _____
7. 457 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
8. 458 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
9. 459 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
10. 535 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
11. 536 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
12. 537 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
13. 483 rd Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
14. Caribou Lapel Pin		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
15. Caribou Poster (12" x 18")		Qty. _____ @ \$5.00	Total: _____
16. Caribou Challenge Coin		Qty. _____ @ \$8.00	Total: _____
17. Caribou DVD – 1:10 long (NEW ITEM)		Qty: _____ @ \$5.00	Total: _____
18. Caribou decal (outside)		Qty: _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____

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

Total: _____

Note: Each amount above includes cost of purchasing item and domestic shipping. Any excess funds are a donation to the Association.

Photos of items can be seen on the web site: <http://www.c-7acaribou.com/memorabilia/memorabilia.htm>