

C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 21, Issue 1

40 Years Ago: Dak Seang Remembered

On 11 March 1970, the 5th Special Forces Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp at Dak Seang was attacked once again. The attacks heightened during the night of 31 March. On 1 April 1970, “the balloon went up” as the Commander of Company B, 5th Special Forces requested aerial resupply of the camp. The Airlift Control Center (ALCC) diverted two C-7A missions to support Dak Seang.

After “practice” airdrops on 1 April,

5th Special Forces requested that the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) raise the priority of the Dak Seang resupply operation to one of Tactical Emergency (TE). The ALCC requested airlift assistance from the 834th Air Division, which then tasked the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing, resulting in 18 additional Caribous and 135 aircrew, maintenance, and support rushing to Pleiku to resupply the beleaguered camp.

This began what should probably be considered the most significant, challenging, and heart rending series of missions in Caribou history. Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz once said: “Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue.” This phrase applies equally to the Caribou heroes of the resupply of Dak Seang in April 1970.

Other Caribou operations were also significant at Loch Ninh, Ben Het, Khe Sanh, Plei Mei, Duc Lap, LZ English, LZ Litts, Bu Dop, Lang Vei, Con Thien, Ban Me Thuot, and Ha Thanh, to name a few. For the Bou fraternity, those names bring back memories of long days, tough flights, difficult loads, and the sense of a job “well done.”

Dak Seang is memorable along with the other locations named and it is etched in our memory by the names of 39 brave aviators who gave their lives to support our troops on the ground.

This year is the anniversary of the Dak Seang missions and we will gather at the Museum of Aviation, Robins AFB, GA to dedicate a memorial bench to our fallen comrades.

We hope that the dedication ceremony at the Museum of Aviation on 28 August will bring together a diverse gathering of veterans of the siege at Dak Seang: C-7A, Special Forces, F-100, and AC-119.

See pages 4-10 for the report of the 483rd TAW Mission Commander for the Resupply of Dak Seang and other facts about those Caribou missions. Jim Icenhour (F-100 driver) recounts his support of the Caribou air drops on pages 22-23.

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Reunion 2010

Macon-Warner Robins, GA
25-29 August 2010

25 Aug: registration and reception
26 Aug: day trip to Andersonville National Historic Site with lunch enroute in Montezuma, GA
27 Aug: tours of Robins AFB (C-27J Spartan and JSTARS) and the Museum of Aviation
28 Aug: business meeting, tour of historic Macon homes (ladies), dedication of our Memorial Bench at the Museum of Aviation, squadron and group pictures; banquet “Under the Wings” in the Century of Flight hangar of the Museum of Aviation
29 Aug: depart for home

Reunion hotel:
Marriott City Center, Macon, GA
Call 866-882-4465 and ask for the C-7 Caribou Reunion, our rate is \$99.68 (includes 12% tax) and is good from 23-31 Aug.

Make your reservation **NOW**
See page 11 for some of the special events being planned for the reunion.

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

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President's Corner

After a disappointing winter and enough rain to last for the rest of the year, spring has finally sprung in New England! (For those of you who aren't hard core New Englanders, "disappointing winter" means not nearly cold enough and not nearly enough snow.) My snow shovel only used a third as much diesel fuel as in a normal winter, so it must have been terrible. Here's hoping for a nice, normal summer and a very hot November!

Your Board finally got ahead of the power curve on reunions and the event for this year at the end of August in Macon, GA is shaping up to be a great time in an almost brand new hotel. It looks like we may get a little information on the C-27J and JSTARS projects during the base tour. There is more information both in this issue and on the web site. On top of that, the hotel contract for 2011 in Addison, TX and the Cavanaugh Flight Museum (near Dallas) is almost complete. Stay tuned for more details on that one. (Hint: The Cavanaugh Museum has the last flying C-7A in the country!) We are still working on other attractions.



Pat Hanavan has been tirelessly working at Maxwell AFB to dig out historical information on our squadrons and wing. Some of that data has already showed up on the web site in the form of a significant awards and decorations database, but that is only the tip of the iceberg. As we

sort through all the information, we hope to publish a complete history of our operations based on the quarterly reports submitted by the units.

Along with the good news, there is inevitably bad news. In early March, the Association lost one of its most tireless supporters and workers and we all lost a good friend with the passing of Bob Markham. The Board has voted to make a donation to the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund in Bob's memory, which is something we think he would have appreciated.

About a year ago, there was a newsletter article called "Prop for my Pop," which related the story of my son finding and acquiring a C-7A prop blade to give me for Christmas. I am happy to say that the blade is now all cleaned up, has new yellow tip paint, and has a new (but historically correct) Hamilton Standard decal. It is now standing in my family room on a custom-made base I constructed just for the purpose. The only thing that could be better would be a coffee table made from an R-2000, but my wife would probably draw the line on that one!

The project to build a set of DVDs with essential Caribou information continues to move ahead, but you wouldn't believe how much data we have. I can easily fill three DVDs as things stand now and there is more in process.

I'm about out of space here, but I hope to see you all in Macon in August. Make your hotel reservations now!

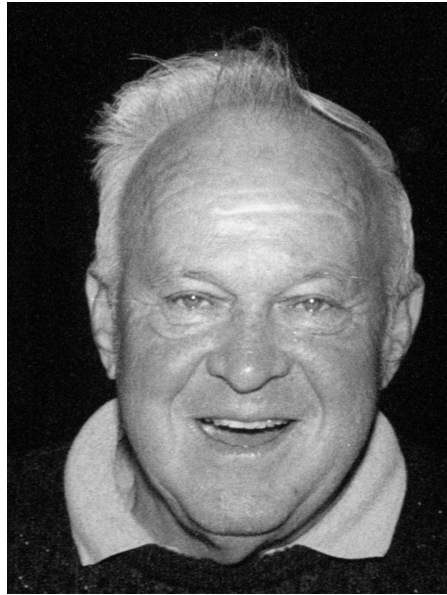
Bob Markham

Senior Master Sgt., USAF
459th TAS, 69

Bob Markham has “Gone west” as Chris Nevins says. He will be with us only in memory. The following tale gives a good insight of Bob.

“The best story I ever heard from Bob was the attempted recovery of, I believe, KE-724 from Tra Bong. The aircraft overran the runway and damaged the nose gear to the extent it could not be repaired on site and flown out. Bob was on the maintenance team that went out to prepare the aircraft to be lifted out by a CH-64 Skycrane. All went well as the props and outer wing sections were removed. A special sling was rigged to allow the CH-64 to pick up the wounded bird and carry it to a suitable repair facility. With all the preparatory work complete, the maintenance crew stood and watched as 724 was lifted off the ground. Murphy’s Law was in full effect that day. As the CH-64 got to about 100 feet, the lift sling broke and the aircraft dropped to the ground and was destroyed. The First Lieutenant Maintenance Officer came over to Bob and asked what they were going to do. Bob looked at him with those steely blue eyes and said, ‘I don’t know about you, sir, but I’m going to sit down and smoke a cigar.’” [Recollection from Peter Bird]

Bob was a doer, he got the job done. And done well, I might add. My first exposure to him was while living in Anchorage. I had just discovered the internet and the C-7A Caribou Association. I contacted Bob and got an almost instant reply. Yes, yes, yes, and why are you not a member. He didn’t mince many words. I liked him immediately. Over the years, we would correspond about life in general, philosophy, politics, and just about anything else that came to mind. He would send emails of his service to the veterans in Southern California, or of a political nature, complete with comment usually or just to check how things were doing. Then



there would be the emails with beautiful photography and music. Bob wasn’t afraid to share his opinions. He could be outspoken to say the least. Bob also had a soft side that some didn’t see. More and more, his later emails concerned his failing health. Now there will be no more emails.

He was very dedicated to veteran causes as witnessed by his never failing visits to the Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, CA. Bob made certain that each and every grave was honored on Veteran’s Day. He cherished the C-7A Caribou Association as he would a family member. His sense of honoring the histories of the fallen was manifested by his unrelenting quest to find our Caribou brethren, dead or alive. And he was good at it. He spent hours researching and finding Caribou veterans to ask them to join the Association.

He also operated the memorabilia store and managed the bereavement function for the Association. He was elected to the Board five times and also served as President of the Association. In recognition of his service, he was honored with a life time membership. Although we were in the same squadron in ‘Nam, we did not serve at the same time. That would have been a pleasure, if not unique experience.

Bob was a man that could be trusted

to do whatever needed doing. That is why I would not have had a problem flying a ‘Bou that he “turned around.” A little shy on people skills, he was nevertheless competent and thorough in all he did. I miss him, but am damn glad to have known him. I know he is in good hands now, back with his wife, Winona, and probably giving pilots hell for writing up the Bous.

From Marty Hillman [459, 67]

Note: The Board of Directors sent a \$500 donation to the *Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund* in memory of Bob.

OFFICIAL OBITUARY

Robert “Bob” William Markham (78), a 38 year resident of Redlands, passed away on March 3rd at Redlands Community Hospital. Bob was retired Senior Master Sgt. from the USAF and travelled the world during his service including one tour of duty in Vietnam.

He was a member of the 1st Congregational Church in Redlands, and the B.P.O. Elks. He was a lifetime member of the Riverside National Cemetery Support Committee where he was instrumental in ensuring flags were appropriately placed upon the graves of deserving Veterans and loved ones, and also a lifetime member of the C-7A Caribou Association.

Bob was a good provider for his family, and a stickler for details. He was inseparable from his wife of 48 years, Winona, and their personalities balanced each other well.

Robert is survived by: daughter, Nancy (Marc) Villeneuve; his sons David (Julie) Markham and Timothy Markham; sister, Louise Weldon; aunt, Grace McIlvane, and his 7 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Robert was preceded in death by his wife, Winona, in 2002.

Bob was buried on March 10, 2010 at the Riverside National Cemetery, 22495 Van Buren Blvd., Riverside CA.

Mission Commander's Report of Dak Seang Aerial Resupply Ops.

by Col. Roger Larivee [483, 69]

The siege of the 5th Special Forces Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp at Dak Seang (V-283) began the night of 11 March 1970. The camp is situated on the southeast side of the runway which is located in the Dak Seang Valley between parallel ridges reaching heights of 5700 feet mean sea level (MSL). The best air approaches to the camp are from the south and the north-northeast although the valley affords adequate maneuver space to permit VFR approaches from any direction by C-7 aircraft.

The camp is normally supplied by airland operations utilizing C-7 Caribous and U.S. Army helicopters. The camp had sustained attacks during the night of 31 March and in the early morning hours of 1 April. Later on the morning of 1 April, Colonel Donald M. Wood, Commander of Company B 5th Special Forces hovered over the camp in order to evaluate the seriousness of the enemy attack. As a result of his findings a request for aerial resupply of Dak Seang was initiated by his headquarters. The items most urgently needed were flak vests, helmets and gasoline. Because the tactical situation was not judged to be serious at the time, the initial reaction of Company B staff members was to utilize a routine practice airdrop by C-7 Caribou, which had been scheduled previously to take place on 2 April, for providing the required resupply. By mid afternoon of 1 April however, continued enemy activity in the area of the camp caused a reevaluation of the situation, and the urgency of the resupply requirement was upgraded to one of emergency. It was at this point that Lt Col John S. Bonner, Tactical Air Liaison Officer (TALO) to the Airlift Control Center (ALCC) requested airlift assistance of the 834th Air Division. The ALCC at

Tan Son Nhut immediately directed two missions, the 454 and the 413 which were working in the area, to proceed to Pleiku in support of the camp at Dak Seang. Although 834th Air Division had no requirement for Forward Air Controller (FAC) and/or fighter protection for C-7s operating into Dak Seang at this time, the Tactical Unit Operations Center (TUOC) at II Corps Direct Air Support Center (II DASC) was aware of the extent of enemy activity in that area. Hence, when the two Caribou missions proceeded to Dak Seang for airdrops, II DASC TUOC directed an on scene FAC to cover them as necessary. The 454 mission flew 2 sorties, dropping 4240 lbs of flak vests on the first, and 3490 lbs of water and medical supplies on the second. Mission 413 flew one sortie dropping 2120 lbs of helmets. At this time, only the open area on the south side of the camp enclosure measuring approximately 200 x 80 feet was used as a drop zone (DZ). Approaches were made from east to west by each aircraft, dropping from an indicated altitude of 2500 feet MSL (300 feet above camp elevation) at an airspeed of 110 knots. Although the DZ was substantially smaller than normally deemed minimal, the first drop was on target, the second and third were short and long respectively, but both were 100% recoverable according to camp personnel. Each aircrew observed ground fire directed toward it and one aircraft took 2 hits sustaining minor damage. At the conclusion of their drop, both aircrews elected to make sharp climbing 240° turns to the right in order to exit the valley to the southeast as heavy fire was observed to the southwest.

The 483rd TAW TUOC at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base received the hit report submitted by the aircraft commander of mission 413 and promptly requested ALCC to arrange FAC coverage for missions supporting Dak Seang. (Neither ALSS or the 483rd were aware, at the time, of II DASC TUOC's actions to provide FAC coverage on 1 April.)

On April 2nd, the situation at the camp was viewed with considerable concern because of increasing enemy activity, and 5th Special Forces requested that MACV raise the priority of the Dak Seang resupply operation to one of Tactical Emergency (TE). Although MACV had not officially defined the priority as Emergency Resupply (ER), Major E. E. Trosky, TALO to Company B, and the personnel of Pleiku Airlift Control Element (ALCE) were under the impression that resupply of Dak Seang was of the greatest urgency and had been declared a TE. That understanding of the priority was passed by Pleiku ALCE to the aircrews of the 413 and 454 missions which were fragged again on 2 April to airdrop at Dak Seang.

The 454 mission made the first airdrop on the morning of 2 April. The approach was east to west and the aircraft commander observed ground fire directed at his aircraft during the right climbing turn following the drop. He advised the aircraft commander of mission 413, which was about 10 minutes behind him, of the position of the ground fire. The Aircraft commander of mission 413 elected to make a climbing turn to the left following his drop and his aircraft was hit while in the turn. He attempted to divert to Dak To for an emergency landing but crashed enroute about 5 miles north northwest of Dak To (1/LT Charles E. Suprenant, Jr., 1/Lt Steve W. Train, and MSgt Dale E. Christensen were fatally injured). Air strikes in support of the ground forces at Dak Seang had been increasing in number and intensity with FACs and fighters in the area almost constantly. II DASC TUOC had tasked the FAC on scene to utilize the fighters to suppress ground fire prior to the arrival of each of the C-7 airdrop sorties. In addition, A-1Es (Spads) were directed by the FAC to escort the C-7s as they approached the drop zone. Captain Gary Clark, aircraft commander of the 454 mission confirmed the fact that FAC and fighter

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Dak Seang (from Page 4)

assistance was provided even though this was unknown to both the 483rd TUOC and ALCC at the time.

When aircraft 61-2406 (the 413 mission) crashed as a result of battle damage, ALCC suspended further operation to Dak Seang pending the declaration of a higher priority by MACV. The requirement was then stated to be an ER (109) with 60,000 lbs to be airdropped, however, research reveals that the priority was actually Combat Essential (CE). At approximately 1400 hours, 2 April, ALCC directed the 483 TAW to divert all aircraft available, manned by drop qualified crews, to proceed to Pleiku AB in response to CE-109. Within 55 minutes of that notification, 18 C-7 aircraft were enroute to or in place at Pleiku.

The distribution of VC gun positions in the Dak Seang area and the growing intensity of their fire dictated a change of tactics on the afternoon of 2 April. In view of the success of tactics developed and used at Ben Het under similar circumstances, it was decided to make airdrops in a trail formation with 20 second intervals over the DZ. Prior to the drop run, the area would be "prepped" by fighters. This would entail use of fighters by the FAC on scene, to "prepare" the approach and departure area over which the C-7s would pass. These areas would be "sanitized" by using bombs, guns, napalm, and smoke in hopes of neutralizing enemy capability during the drop run. Spads would accompany the C-7s on their drop run to suppress any ground fire observed after the "prepping" was complete.

One three ship formation and two four ship formations were flown during the afternoon and early evening of 2 April. The area around the drop zone was "prepped" prior to each formation drop, utilizing whatever tactical air there was on scene at the time. Of these eleven sorties, all drew fire and three aircraft were hit. The last four aircraft of the day were delayed in making their

passes over the DZ when the camp suffered a major assault by the enemy. After 50 minutes of intensive air activity in support of the camp forces, the FAC directed the last C-7s to proceed and they completed their drop with about 90% effectiveness. By this time practically all structures above ground within the camp perimeter had been leveled and thus the entire area within the wire (approximately 200' by 220') was utilized as a DZ. Supplies which landed outside the wire were destroyed by air strikes put in by the FAC in order to deny their acquisition by the enemy.

By mid-afternoon on 2 April, it became obvious to the Commander, 483TAW, that the situation at Dak Seang had many of the aspects of Ben Het and Bu Krak-Duc Lap. Consequently, he directed Colonel Roger Larivee, Deputy Commander for Operations of the 483TAW to proceed immediately to Pleiku as Mission Commander there. Colonel Larivee arrived at Pleiku at approximately 1700 hours and at 1830 hours, he was charged by the DCO 834th Air Division with responsibility for all Dak Seang air resupply activities as the on scene Mission Commander of the 834th Air Division.

Sixteen sorties were flown on 3 April. Trail formations employing five or six aircraft at 20 second intervals made their drop runs from either south to north or from northwest to southeast. Those aircraft making their drop runs to the north proceeded up the valley on the east side of the river letting down enroute to the DZ and making a 180° climbing turn to the right immediately after their drop. The others proceeded north from Dak To, remaining well to the east side of the ridge, beyond sight of the enemy in the valley, and then approached over the ridge heading approximately west southwest into a rapid descending left turn so as to cross the DZ on about a southerly heading with climb out to the southeast. The area was "prepped" by fighters prior to the arrival of the Caribous, then smoke

was laid in a location that would screen the approaching C-7s from enemy fire. As the C-7s began their descent to the DZ, they were joined by Spads which escorted them across the DZ and up into their climbout. The pair of Spads would then break off to return in time to escort the following Caribou. Even with all this fire suppression, nine aircraft were hit – all of them while at low altitude and airspeed, within two or three kilometers of the DZ. Although ground fire near the camp was very disconcerting, drop accuracy was remarkably good with an 88% recovery rate for the 64 pallets dropped that day.

Brigadier General John H. Herring, Commander, 834 Air Division, arrived at Pleiku the morning of April 4th and was met by the Mission Commander. After a short briefing which included a recapitulation of tons delivered vs tons requested, Intelligence and order of battle, and a review of the premission briefing, General Herring boarded his aircraft, a C-130, and proceeded to the area of the DZ. From his position in orbit over the DZ area, General Herring observed the first formation of the day make its drop run at Dak Seang. This was a five ship formation which dropped on a pass made from northwest to southeast, the approach which had proved to be the most successful on 3 April. Although predrop fire suppression by fighter aircraft was extensive, three of the five Caribous were hit – one of them sustaining serious structural damage. The next drop was to be made by five aircraft, in trail, approaching from south to north which entailed making a climbing 180° turn following the drop. Suppressing fire was again provided by fighters, and Spads escorted the C-7s. The lead and the #4 aircraft were both hit. The #4 aircraft was observed to enter a steep diving turn and then to level off as if under control. The right engine was burning when the aircraft crashed about 3000 meters east southeast of the camp (Maj

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Dak Seang (from Page 5)

Frederick W. Dauten, Jr., Capt James A. Gray, and MSgt Russell L. Klein were fatally injured).

The remaining five sorties flown on 4 April were rescheduled so as to be flown by one two ship formation and one three ship formation each making their passes from different directions in the hope this would reduce vulnerability to ground fire. Only one of these aircraft was hit. Drop accuracy continued to be quite good in spite of heavy ground fire, however, the recovery rate dropped very substantially because of two different malfunctions which caused loads to hang momentarily before they departed the aircraft. One of these loads was totally lost and part of the other fell long and was unrecoverable.

Tactics were changed again on 5 April as a result of careful analysis of all previous operations at Dak Seang. Because the resupply requirement was substantially reduced by 5th Special Forces, their total requirement could be met with six sorties carrying 4000 lbs each. The schedule agreed upon by members of II DASC, 5th Special Forces and the Mission Commander called for three two ship elements, each accompanied by Spads with each element making its drop at different times and on different headings. The approach and departure paths were to be "prepped" by fighters before each element dropped, and smoke was to be laid for each element. All sorties operated as planned and all loads except one were 100% recoverable. This exception was lost because of another malfunction. One aircraft in each element was hit – the most seriously requiring a cylinder change.

On the afternoon of 5 April, Capt Ralph R. Black, a member of the 457 TAS suggested to the Mission Commander, a navigational pattern utilizing dead reckoning and TACAN which would make night operations in the Dak Seang valley feasible. This suggestion was viewed initially with some skepti-

cism, but after careful consideration, the mission commander decided to attempt a night drop using the plan outlined by Capt Black. A time over target (TOT) was coordinated with 5th Special Forces so that camp personnel would ignite a fire or flare at each corner of the camp in order for the DZ to be visible from the air. The technique to be used was to depart Pleiku headed for Dak To. Enroute there, all aircraft lights would be turned off and complete radio silence would prevail. The aircraft would depart from the Dak To TACAN (Channel 94) on the 270° radial at 10,000 feet and proceed to the 7 mile fix where it would then turn to the north. On completing the turn to 360°, the clock would be hacked, power reduced to 15" Manifold Pressure and 1500 RPM and a 1500 foot per minute descent to 2500 feet MSL initiated. In theory, this would allow the aircraft to cross the DZ at 2500 MSL, after making a very quiet approach under blackout conditions, exactly 5 minutes after turning to a northerly course. (There was no moon.) Camp personnel were to light flares two minutes prior to the prescheduled TOT thereby enabling the aircrew to find the DZ. There is a 3200 foot hill 3000 meters due north of the DZ which necessitated a climbing 180° turn at the end of the 5 minute turn to the north. This first night drop was a failure if measured in terms of aerial resupply, but it proved the feasibility of the concept. The aircrew proceeded north for five and a half minutes without seeing any lights to identify the DZ, and fearful of contacting the hill ahead, they made a sharp climbing left turn. Half-way through the turn, the camp lights came on exactly in the area that the aircraft had just passed over. The crew reduced power, dove the aircraft toward the DZ and released the load almost all in unison. The load fell long because of excessive airspeed which could not be bled off under the circumstances.

The very heavy damages inflicted on the C-7s during the first four days of this operation had provoked the com-

mander of 7AF to order all C-7 aircrew members to wear parachutes for all further operations into Dak Seang. He also expressed his concern over the adequacy of the tactical air suppression of ground fire prior to C-7 airdrops and the effectiveness of the Spad escort for the airdrop aircraft.

Consequently the entire fire suppression package as well as airdrop tactics were reviewed in depth at a meeting on the afternoon of 5 April attended by the 834th Air Division Mission Commander and representatives of II DASC. The Mission Commander had discussed Spad escort tactics used in conjunction with C-123 defoliant aircraft, with the Commander of the Spad unit at Da Nang, prior to this meeting. The final tactics worked out at this session differed from any employed so far. In essence, they called for individual C-7 aircraft to rendezvous with four Spads, each at preselected TACAN fixes. The C-7 aircraft commander would control the Spads, directing them to escort or suppress as necessary throughout the drop run and recovery. The FAC would direct preparation of the approach corridor, also preselected, utilizing CBU-49 and Napalm and he would also lay down smoke as necessary. Each C-7 and its four Spads were to approach the DZ from a specific preselected coordinate. TOTs were twenty minutes apart allowing three C-7s to drop during the loiter time of the three sets of fighters assigned to the FAC. Each C-7 was joined by two Spads rather than the four promised. All TOTs were slipped approximately 30 minutes to allow the fighters to finish their fire suppression. Finally, when the FAC was ready for the C-7s, he directed that they all approach from the same direction, northwest to southeast. These instructions were given "in the clear" over Fox Mike (FM) Common (40.1) although considerable precaution had been observed to keep the entire tactic from the enemy. Of the three aircraft

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Dak Seang (from Page 6)

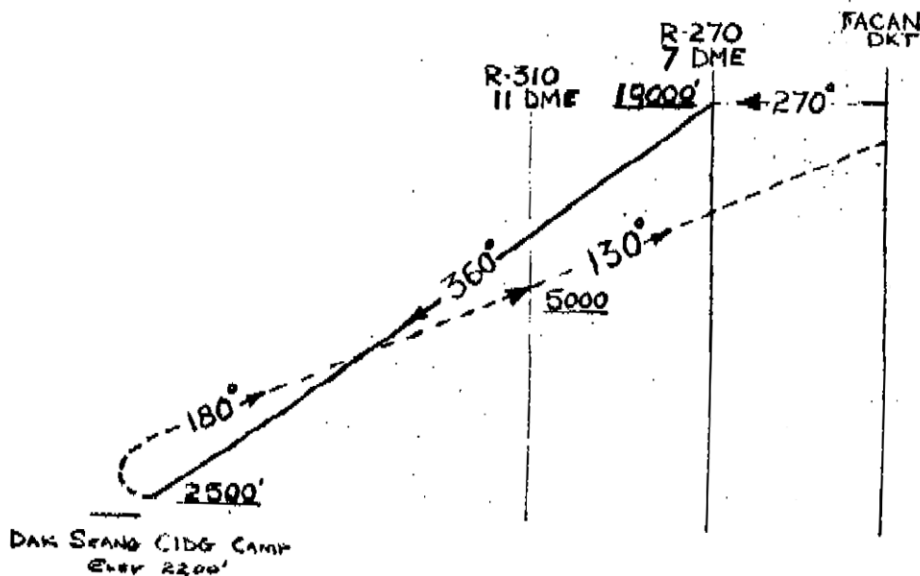
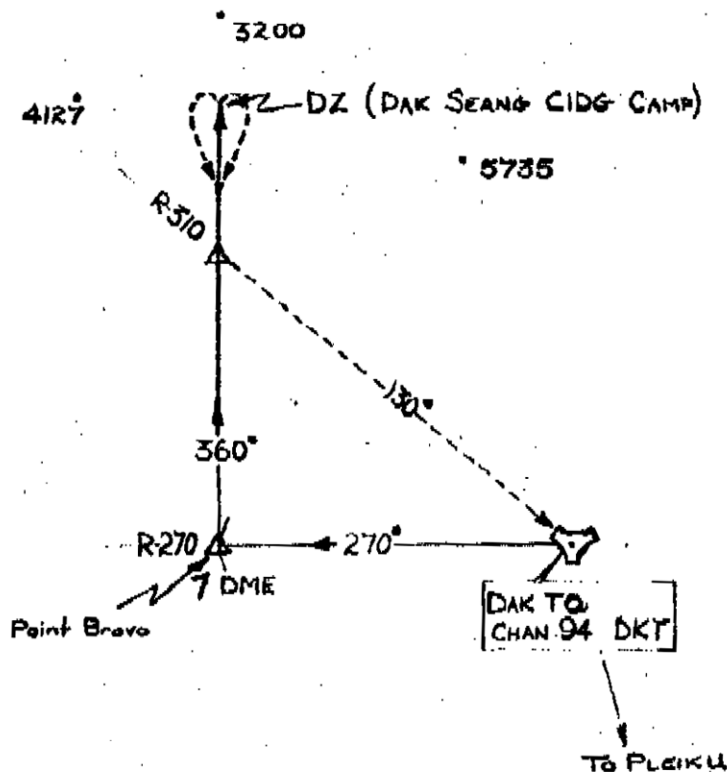
involved, early the morning of April 6th, the last one to drop was hit about the time he was approaching the DZ. His drop was short and on climbout to the southeast, the pilot announced his aircraft had been hit but that they were in no serious difficulty. Shortly thereafter, he released his Spad escort declaring his intention of proceeding to Pleiku. At about 10 miles south of Dak To enroute to Pleiku, the aircraft was observed to turn back toward Dak To airfield and the pilot was heard declaring Mayday. Shortly thereafter, an Army helicopter pilot observed "something came off the airplane" and then saw the airplane crash about 5 miles south of Dak To. (Capt Julius P. Jaeger, 1/Lt Theron C. Fehrenbach, II, and TSgt Gordon M. Gaylord were fatally injured).

Another three sorties were scheduled that day, employing essentially the same tactics developed at the planning meeting the day before, but with different approach coordinates each time. Shortly after the termination of the first three sorties, however, Major Trosky, TALO to the 5th Special Forces Co. B informed the Mission Commander of a ranger battalion consisting of 407 men which needed to be airlifted from Kontum to Dak To, a distance of 25 miles serviced by a secure road. This requirement, he stated, carried much more urgent priority than the resupply of Dak Seang scheduled for later that day. He indicated that the tactical situation at the Camp also dictated cancellation of the last three sorties in favor of providing immediate airlift for the ranger battalion which was to be positioned in the hills southeast and southwest of Dak Seang. The Mission Commander immediately advised ALCC of the requirement for a C-130 as the most practical vehicle for this airlift. In addition the three Dak Seang resupply aircraft along with four other C-7s working in the area were immediately reconfigured and sent to Kontum. At about 1000 hours, the Mission Com-

mander received a telephone call from one of the C-7 aircraft commanders at Kontum informing him that there were seven Caribous and one C-123 on the ramp ready to provide airlift but that the ranger unit could not be ready before 1100 hours. This information was promptly relayed to 5th Special Forces as well as to ALCC. At about 1530 hours some six or seven hours after the three Dak Seang resupply sorties had

been cancelled in favor of the ranger airlift, the TALO advised the Mission Commander that the latest communication with the camp at Dak Seang indicated the defenders were out of water and down to their last 88 rounds of 105mm ammunition, therefore there was again an urgent requirement to fly the three sorties that had been

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Dak Seang (from Page 7)

cancelled. II DASC was informed of the requirement immediately and was requested to coordinate with all concerned, the escort and fire suppression package in support of the same tactics utilized earlier that day.

The earliest TOTs possible were 1755, 1810 and 1825 hours. Of the three aircraft involved, the first took a hit in the main hydraulic reservoir located immediately behind the pilot's seat just as the pilot was about to drop. As a result, all his pallets fell long and were unrecoverable. The second aircraft had a hung load which released several hundred meters long and the third was directed by the FAC to abort because the fighters were running short of fuel. April 6th was the most discouraging day of the operation.

Because of the increasing incidence of hung loads, the Mission Commander requested 5th Special Forces to provide plywood skid boards for all future loads. This request was immediately honored and all loads from 7 April forward were on plywood skids. Another action taken on 7 April to increase drop accuracy was to reduce the number of pallets carried from four to three and increase the load on each of the remaining three to compensate for the reduction of one pallet.

Having proved the feasibility of night operations on 5 April, a meeting was held at II DASC the following day for the purpose of coordinating the actions of all agencies in preparation for night operations beginning early the morning of 7 April. During the course of this meeting, the entire concept of night airdrops at Dak Seang was discussed. Several suggested changes and/or modifications to the basic plan were considered. During these discussions, the capabilities of the AC-119 gunship were explored both from the standpoint of its potential as protective cover for the C-7 and for its lighting capability. The techniques and procedures which finally evolved from this meeting were

first put into practice on the morning of 7 April and were followed with only minor changes until the termination of the resupply effort on 13 April. Essentially the scheme called for the same flight pattern and approach as that flown on the trial run the night of 5 April; however, radio procedures were developed whereby an AC-119 gunship (Shadow or Stinger) [was] over the area, and the camp at Dak Seang would be notified of the exact position of the approaching C-7 when it was precisely 5 minutes from the DZ. Two minutes later, the orbiting Shadow would illuminate the DZ giving the approaching C-7 pilot a perfect target on which to "home." In the event of illuminator failure, camp personnel were to light flares at each corner of the DZ.

Four sorties were scheduled to be flown before dawn on 7 April. Col Abbott C. Greenleaf, Commander of the 483 TAW, who had arrived at Pleiku the previous afternoon, was to be Aircraft Commander of the last one. The first three sorties went off as planned with all supplies on target. Just prior to takeoff, Col Greenleaf was informed by Kontum Advisory of a B-52 strike which precluded his meeting his scheduled TOT of 0545. Because of impending daylight the sortie had to be cancelled. No aircraft were hit and no automatic weapons fire was observed. Pilot debriefings disclosed one important factor which had not been foreseen. As the C-7 approaches the DZ and the illuminator is turned on, the C-7 pilot transitions to what can best be described as "spot VFR," i.e., he is flying his aircraft which is in an IFR environment in relation to his visual perception of the DZ, which in turn is in a VFR environment because of the intense and concentrated illumination provided by the Shadow. When the C-7 pilot transmits "Green light" over the common frequency, indicating load is clearing the aircraft, the Shadow pilot turns off his illuminator immediately, in order to restore to the C-7 the protection afforded by complete darkness.

Thus the C-7 pilot finds himself in the space of an instant transitioning from almost total VFR conditions to complete IFR conditions. As though this were not problem enough, this transition takes place at precisely the instant the C-7 pilot must apply "Max Power" and make a sharp pullup followed by a steep climbing turn. Some pilots readily admitted to momentary disorientation when "the light went out." A description of this transition along with reemphasis of the requirement for the co-pilot to cross check and monitor the actions of the aircraft commander was incorporated into the premission crew briefing. It is interesting to note that pilots who were forewarned of this phenomena had no particular difficulty adjusting to it.

Even though the night resupply operation was 100% effective the considerable time necessary to withhold artillery fire in the Dak Seang valley while the C-7s made their runs was of serious concern to the 24 Special Tactical Zone (STZ). (Each aircraft required a check fire of at least 20 minutes duration.) Consequently, when 24th STZ noted the time frame within which the nine sorties for the night of 7-8 April were scheduled to operate (2025 to 0305), and each with a 20 minute artillery check fire, they requested all sorties after the second be cancelled in favor of uninterrupted artillery support of the Mike Force south of Dak Seang. In view of the prearranged procedures, where each aircrew requested its own artillery check fire 15 minutes prior to TOT, the decision to continue launching the sorties as scheduled was made by the Mission Commander with approval of II DASC and a 7AF representative, Col Scott Smith. Although each time a drop was completed, 24 STZ requested cancellation of the remaining missions, no aircraft was denied a check fire when it was requested. All nine sorties dropped on schedule and all supplies were recoverable.

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Dak Seang (from Page 8)

Scheduling of TOTs and the climb out and departure pattern from the DZ were modified on 8 April in order to reduce the time frame within which artillery check fire was necessary. By spacing TOTs 8 minutes apart and having three aircraft in a “stack,” each ready to start its drop run as soon as its predecessor turned out of the corridor, nine sorties could operate within a 1 hour 45 minute check fire period versus nine individual check fires totaling 3 hours. A further 14 minute compression is possible but achieving it would require an airframe for each sortie or six additional airframes – hardly an economical trade-off. Of the nine sorties scheduled for 8 April one aborted with mechanical difficulties and one could not drop because the Shadow illuminator failed and the camp did not respond to the pilot’s request for “self help.” The “stacking” with 8 minute intervals between TOTs was very effective and caused no problems. It does however, stereotype the operation by imposing a regularity to it that might eventually

compromise its security.

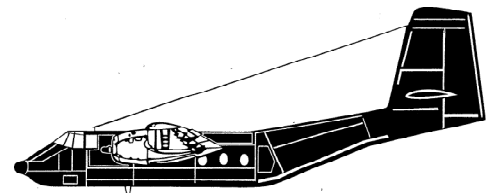
Nine more sorties were scheduled the night of 9-10 April. The first two aborted; one because neither the Shadow nor the camp responded when the pilot requested lights, and the second because the Shadow was unable to pin-point the DZ with his illuminator. All other sorties operated routinely and with nearly perfect accuracy.

Fifth Special Forces reduced their requirement for resupply again on 10 April. As the tactical situation improved, many pallets that had landed in the wire surrounding the camp were recovered increasing their inventory of supplies quite substantially. In addition, patrols were venturing outside the camp and water was again available from the regular source. Therefore, only six sorties were set up to fly the night of 10-11 April. There were nine TOTs coordinated however, to insure flexibility and provide “makeup” sorties if any of the six aborted or dropped ineffectively. Six sorties were completed uneventfully with all drops 100% recoverable.

The requirement for 11 April re-

mained constant and six more sorties were completed the night of 11-12 April with 100% success. Only three sorties were required the following night and once these were completed, 5th Special Forces notified the Mission Commander there would probably be no further requirement for C-7 aerial resupply at Dak Seang as the Army planned to resume helicopter operations there. Consequently, all 483TAW personnel and assets at Pleiku except the Mission Commander and Intelligence Officer, were returned to Cam Ranh Bay and Phu Cat on 13 April. Thus, for all intents and purposes, the C-7 Aerial Resupply of Dak Seang came to a costly but successful conclusion.

Editor’s note: This report is from the official records at the Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL with additional data from the files of the C-7A Caribou Association.



Dak Seang Sorties and Deliveries

Date	Sorties	Air Aborts	# Required	Priority	# Delivered	Recovered
1	3		not specified	Normal	9,850	100%
2	13		60,000	CE 4-109	45,132	88%
3	16	1	48,000	CE 4-111	57,639	96%
4	15		48,000	ER 4-117	55,950	70%
5 day	6		21,000	ER 4-123	25,228	84%
5 night	1		4,000	ER 4-134	4,193	0%
6 day	5	1	21,000	ER 4-131	19,836	26%
7/0100-0600	3	1			11,160	100%
7-8/1800-0600	9		33,000	ER 4-135	34,780	100%
8-9/1800-0600	7	2	23,400	ER 4-139	26,508	96%
9-10/1800-0600	7	2	24,000	ER 4-143	27,028	96%
10-11/1800-0600	6		24,000	ER 4-145	22,998	100%
11-12/1800-0600	6		24,000	1	20,160	100%
12-13/1800-0600	3		12,000	ER 4-149	12,000	100%
Subtotal - day	58		198,000		213,635	81%
Subtotal - night	42		144,400		158,927	95%
Total	100	7	342,400		372,562	86.4%

Note: Two air aborts were for mechanical failures, 5 air aborts were for operational reasons.

Caribou Personnel Involved In Support of the Special Forces Camp at Dak Seang from 1-12 April 1970

(List includes aircrew, maintenance, and operational support personnel)

Anderson, Eugene	Eggert, Martin F	Kelso, James V III	Reynolds, Floyd L
Anderson, James S	Engle, Orville C	Klein, Russell L	Rodriguez, Raul
Anderson, John A	Erickson, Mark S	Lanoue, Richard R	Rojas, Ramon
Askew, Felton L	Evans, Allen F Jr	Larivee, Roger P	Rosbury, Gordon M
Baker, Richard W	Farley, Donald W	Leblanc, Lewis O	Ruddell, David A
Bame, Karl T	Feathers, Chester T	Lewallen, Phillip L	Rynearson, Richard A
Batten, William E	Fehrenbach, Theron C II	Lewis, Herbert L	Savarda, James S
Becker, Ronald E	Finelli, Fiore T	Lowe, Ralph W	Schwengels, Forrest V II
Bernard, Doran C	Fink, Paul R	Luntzel, James R Jr	Seavey, Derrill V
Bishop, Charles J	Fleck, Richard H	Manning, James M	Smith, Wendell H
Black, Ralph R (Tim)	Funderburk, Clyatte A	Matkins, Edward P	Smith, William T
Blankenship, Wesley L	Gallogly, William F	Matthews, Otis M	Strang, Robert S
Bounds, Shirley R	Gaylord, Gordon M	McGregor, Mark A	Stubbs, Thomas C
Bower, Frederick B Jr	Germann, Arthur A	McHugh, Thomas B	Suprenant, Charles C Jr
Buono, Bruce J	Giannarelli, Errico G	McLeod, Clyde W	Swaim, Walter R
Busher, Charles J	Gilman, Alfred F	Messing, Ward A	Synco, Kenneth L
Causey, James H	Godek, Franklin F Jr	Meyer, William C	Tarpley, Billy E
Chickles, James G	Goodspeed, Terry L	Miles, David A	Tawes, John P Jr
Christensen, Dale E	Gordon, Mitchell K	Mullen, Thomas M	Train, Steve W
Clark, Gary L	Gray, James A	Nassr, Michael A	Truszkowski, George E
Clinton, William D	Grigg, Dale	Nemec, Ronald R	Trump, William E Jr
Coupe, Richard J	Grimes, Robert D	Neutzling, Thomas G	Vannier, Vern F
Cramer, Charles E Jr	Hafner, Andrew W	Newman, John C	Vaughan, Grandison
Crist, Neil B	Hardy, Edward G	Nickerson, Gilbert	Vuncannon, Thomas R
Croach, Robert E	Harrigan, David	Noss, George M	Waller, Phillip L
Cunningham, James H	Henkle, Donald E	Paramore, Travis M	Ward, Harold D
Curtin, James A	Henry, Richard A	Peters, Franklin D	Ward, Thomas E
Dauten, Frederick W Jr	Hoffman, George R	Petersen, Robert	White, Dawson N
Davis, Robert A	Humes, George W	Plumleigh, Quentin D	Wiedman, Charles H Jr
Depp, Herbert D	Isaacson, Wayne G	Preslan, David L	Wood, Robert J
Dickson, Marshall W Jr	Jaeger, Julius P	Pulver, Robert O	Yale, John W
Drnec, Harry F Jr	Johnson, Jimie K	Rackly, John I	
Ecker, Leroy G	Jordan, Douglas I	Reifenberg, Jan P	
Edwards, Fred A	Kelsey, Loyal L	Rexroad, Harry M Jr	

Names in bold were KIA

Spads at Dak Seang

by Tom Stump

[A-1 driver, Da Nang, 1970]

I flew cover for the C-7's on a number of occasions in the first week of this siege. Those C-7 guys really put it on the line to get the supplies in. They had a long run straight in to a valley completely surrounded by the bad guys. They dropped at about 400 feet AGL, wings level and going as fast as they could which was way too

slow. I am happy to say we never lost a C-7 while the A-1's were providing cover. I believe we lost 3 and they went down on different days in the first week. After the first week it became apparent it was too hostile an environment for the C-7's and they went to night drops with AC-119's providing cover. Many others took hits during that first week, I know, but were not shot down. These were some very courageous guys. 3 men to a crew I believe. Nine very brave souls lost.

Awards and Decs. for Dak Seang

Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

So far, I found the following awards and decorations for the Dak Seang operation from 1-12 April 1970:

Silver Star – 7

DFC – 85

Air Medal – 23

There will be more when I finish the records search at Maxwell AFB.

Yoder's Deitsch Haus

Montezuma, GA
Lunch Stop on 26 Aug



Some customer reviews:

1. "Yoder's is an experience, serving fantastic, simple, wonderful down-home cooking in a very comfortable restaurant that feels like a picnic. They are family-owned and family-staffed, by pleasant people who provide excellence service."

2. "I have been eating for several years at Yoder's, traveling to attend the annual living history program at Andersonville NHP. The food and drink are excellent. The waitstaff and management are very friendly. This is a tradition in waiting for anyone traveling through southwest-central Georgia."

3. "Yoder's is a great place to eat. It is cafeteria style and run by Mennonites, which adds to its appeal. The women wear head coverings and their clothing is simple and traditional. They feature country cooking: meat loaf, beef, fried chicken, ham, fish....The country fried steak on Thursday is delicious, very tender and can be cut with a fork.

Side dishes include mashed potatoes or rice, and of course southern vegetables including tasty buttered corn kernels, turnip greens, fried okra, vegetable casserole, spiced apples which taste more like a dessert, and green beans. Any vegetarians in the family should be happy.

Only pies are served for dessert including shoofly, pecan, chocolate, and coconut."

Andersonville NHS

Guided Tour on 26 Aug

Andersonville NHS has three main features: the National Prisoner of War Museum, the historic prison site, and the National Cemetery.

Andersonville National Historic Site is the only park in the National Park System to serve as a memorial to all American prisoners of war.

Congress stated in the authorizing legislation that this park's purpose is "to provide an understanding of the overall prisoner of war story of the Civil War, to interpret the role of prisoner of war camps in history, to commemorate the sacrifice of Americans who lost their lives in such camps, and to preserve the monuments located within the site."

Sacrifice and Courage

From the Revolutionary War to Operation Iraqi Freedom, American prisoners of war have endured untold hardships, and shown tremendous courage. Andersonville NHS commemorates the sacrifices of these brave Americans through exhibits in the National Prisoner of War Museum; preserves the site of Camp Sumter (Andersonville prison); and manages Andersonville National Cemetery.

Andersonville Prison

Camp Sumter, commonly called Andersonville, was one of the largest military prisons established by the Confederacy during the Civil War. In existence for 14 months, over 45,000 Union soldiers were confined at the prison. Of these, almost 13,000 died from disease, poor sanitation, malnutrition, overcrowding, and exposure to the elements. The largest number held in the 26½-acre stockade at any one time was more than 32,000, during August of 1864. Today the beauty of the prison site belies the suffering that once took place inside the stockade.

National Prisoner of War Museum

The 1970 legislation responsible for establishing Andersonville National Historic Site instructed the site "to interpret the role of prisoners-of-war

camps in history" and "to commemorate the sacrifice of Americans who lost their lives in such camps." To that end, the exhibits in the National Prisoner of War Museum serve as a memorial to all American prisoners of war. The museum opened in 1998 and is dedicated to the American men and women who have suffered as POWs.

Andersonville National Cemetery

The cemetery is the final resting place for those who perished while being held as POWs at Camp Sumter. It is now a National Cemetery, serving as an honored burial place for present-day veterans.

Trolley Tour of Historic Houses

Macon, GA

Optional Tour on 26 or 28 Aug

Cannonball House

This 1853 Greek Revival House, was the only site in Macon to be struck by a cannonball during an 1864 Federal attack. See the two-story brick structure containing the original kitchen.

Hay House

Treat yourself royally with a trip to this magnificent 1860 Italian Renaissance Revival mansion that has been featured on A&E's America's Castles as "The Palace of the South," and is listed as a National Historic Landmark.

Sidney Lanier Cottage

Tour the nationally registered cottage that is the 1842 birthplace of Sidney Lanier, famous poet and musician of the Old South, and see his writings, flute, even his bride's tiny wedding gown.

Help!!!

If you have changed your email, address, or phone recently, PLEASE send the information to Pat Hanavan:

pathanavan@aol.com

210-479-0226 or 210-861-9353

It is impossible to keep you up to date on Caribou news when your contact information is outdated.

Sandys at Son Tay

Lt.Col. John Waresh, USAF, Ret.

On Saturday night, 20 Nov 1970, a C-130 picked us up from Takhli where we had been housed in the CIA compound since deploying from Eglin. The NKP flight line was blacked out, even the tower people had been relieved and was empty. The C-130 landed, without any lights on it or the runway and ramp, and taxied to the ramp. It had already lowered the rear ramp and when it came to almost a stop, ten of us ran out, 2 pilots for each of the five Fat Faces we were taking. It then continued on, pulling up the ramp, taxied out, and took off. It had other people to deliver to other locations.

The only people out and about were the crew chiefs and us. The Wing Commander met us and followed me around like a puppy dog asking question after question, none of which I could answer. He got rather pissed, as I recall.

Picking up our flight gear, we went straight to the birds, cranked up and taxied out. No taxi, runway or aircraft lights were used and no radio either – total silence. The radio was not to be used till over the camp.

Taking off at the exact second, we did a 360 to join up. A C-130, Talon, was to rendezvous with us there and lead us on. Timing was everything. It wasn't there. We did two more 360's and couldn't wait any longer. We were about ten minutes behind schedule.

The backup plan was to navigate ourselves to Son Tay, following the planned route, and arrive at the appointed time, 0200 local Sunday, 21 November. No way, Jose. We had agreed among ourselves earlier that that was not a viable plan. We would fly the course until we got lost, which we knew we would, and then head straight for Hanoi. Hold just south of the IP, which was the Black River, west of the camp, and do our thing at the TOT (Time Over Target). The route was NKP, straight to Ventiane, straight north out of there, and then drop to low level

and weave through the karst and valleys all the rest of the way. Impossible at night for A-1's. A back up rendezvous with the Talon was over Ventiane at the appointed minute, but because we made an extra 360 over NKP waiting, we were running late. We were able to make up some of the lost time, but not all. We hit Ventiane a few minutes late, maybe five, no Talon. We turned north and pressed on.

After Ventiane passed behind there were no lights, anywhere, ink black. And then our worst nightmare loomed up. A cloud bank. Being lead, I wasn't worried about being hit, but the rest of the flight exploded like a covey of quail, everyone in God only knows what direction. Pushing it up, I climbed straight ahead and soon popped out on top. Not an A-1 in sight and no hope of joining up again without lights or radio. We were all on our own.

After a short time, we noticed a speck of light far ahead. A star? After watching it a while, we were sure it was below the horizon and no Lao in his right mind would have a light on. Had to be something else. Heading straight for it, it took some time to catch. A fully loaded A-1 is no speed demon.

Sure enough, there was our Talon with a teeny-weeny white light on the top of the fuselage and a dim bluish glow coming from the open ramp in the rear. Couldn't see the bluish glow until you were only few meters from it. There were already two A-1's there, one on each wing. We moved up and the left one moved out and we took our place on the left wing tip. A few minutes later the other two A-1's slowly pulled up and once we were all in place the little white light went out, the bluish glow went out and the Talon descended into the black. From there on it was hold on tight as it bobbed and weaved through the hills and valleys.

The Talon driver was top notch. His power applications during climbs and descents and gentle banking allowed our heavy A-1's to hang right in there. The three day "moon window" we had

for this operation provided good night visibility, with one exception. Several valleys we drove through were so deep that mountains, karst, trees or whatever eclipsed the moon. When that happened it was like diving into an inkwell. You could make out only a few feet of wing tip and that was only because of our own exhaust flame. When turns or ups and downs occurred, it was tough.

As we emerged from the back country over the Red River Valley it was almost like being over Iowa farm country with Omaha/Council Bluffs up ahead. Hanoi lights everywhere. Soon thereafter, the Talon started climbing and we knew the IP was coming up. We had a controlled altitude over the IP. The choppers, with their Talon, were going to be under us coming in from a different direction. They should have been slightly ahead of us, but one couldn't be sure everyone was on time. The control time was over the camp, so IP times were adjusted for the different speeds.

Then the Talon transmitted the code word. First thing we heard on the radio all night. I can't remember the word, but it was to be picked up by a high orbiting EC-135 over northern Laos and relayed back to wherever. It meant we had crossed the IP. (We were two seconds off. The best anyone had done during practice was ten minutes. Of course we didn't have Talons for the practice.) The Talon then accelerated out and up like a shot and disappeared in the night. The heading to the camp was 091 and trying to reset our DG by a jiggly whiskey compass was an effort in futility. It was part of the high tech, latest hardware we had on board. Not! Good thing all the towns, cities and roads were lit up. With the target study we had done, it was like being in your own back yard.

Next, number 5 peeled off to the right. He was backup in case anyone was shot down and was to orbit a large hill just south of course until called in. As it turned out the hill was an Army

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Sandys (from Page 12)

artillery practice range and it wasn't long before they started taking a few rounds. They moved off to somewhere else, probably closer to the camp, don't know where. Just another example of the brilliant Intel we had.

Then 3 and 4 peeled off to the left to hold just short of the camp until called in. The plan was to call them in when we had expended 50% of our ordinance. Then they would do the same with us, each time expending 50% of what you had left. That way, if someone went down, there would always be aircraft in the air that had some ordinance left for support.

Then 2 dropped back so we could set up a two aircraft Daisy Chain around the camp. It was like a precision ballet, a computer simulation would not have been better timed. Just as I rolled into a bank along side the camp, two flares popped right over it, having been released from one of the Talons. At the same time Banana (HH-3 with Blue Boy assault team aboard) crash landed inside the camp compound and the first Apple (CH-53) opened up with miniguns on the watch towers and the guard quarters. The towers either blew apart or caught fire as did the guard quarters. We didn't want the big fire consuming the two story quarters. Attracts attention, but it was too late.

At that time, we had nothing to do except to make sure no one approached the camp. No one did. We could see the sparkles from a Fire Fight Simulator dropped by one of the Talons on the other side of town as a distraction and soon a large explosion and fire where another Talon dumped napalm on an infantry base armory a few clicks to the south.

Then it hit the fan. Gear Box (the Command and Control team.) started yelling about losing Axle. Axle was Col. (Bull) Simons' personal call sign. "We've lost Axle" he kept yelling. "Damn, Simons has been killed, we're all in deep s**t."

At this point I'd like to say that I think the universe will collapse in upon itself in the Big Crunch before the Army and Air Force will ever be able to talk to each other on a radio and have each other understand what's going on. He wasn't lost like being dead in AF jargon, they just didn't know where he was – couldn't find him. Then the radio erupted with chatter from everywhere. The second Apple carrying half the assault force and Bull Simons, landed the troops in the wrong place. Their heading had been one degree off coming in from the IP (whether pilot or equipment error I don't know), placing them several hundred meters south of the camp. When time ran out, they saw a building that didn't quite look like the guard quarters, but it was the only building around, so they landed. That's where the infamous "Fire Fight at The School" took place. We called it a school because it looked like a school, regardless of what it really was. You couldn't just keep referring to it as the white building south of the camp. There were lots of buildings south of the camp. Everything had to have a name.

That way everyone knows what you're talking about. The liberal media, though, had a small field day with that name. I remember some time later a female TV reporter asking Col. Simons if he had killed anyone at the School. He said something like "I was approached by a big fella, I had a tracer as every third round in my M-16 and I saw three go through his middle." The reporter didn't have a follow up question.

The troops in the wrong place were screaming, Gear Box was screaming and all the Apples were screaming. The FM and VHF radios were almost impossible to read let alone get anything in of your own. The UHF was kept for AF use to call the MIG Cap or Weasels if needed or to talk among ourselves. The Apple that had dumped the guys in the wrong place was the closest so he did a 180 and went in to pick them up. All the others took off and headed for

the School as well, just in case. No one has figured out yet why there wasn't a midair.

The troops at the School were in a fierce fire fight the whole time they were on the ground. Right after they landed, people came pouring out of the building. Most were too large in stature for Vietnamese. The guess was Chinese or Russian, but no one had time to check. The estimated kill was between one and two hundred and, again, no one had time to count.

Bull Simons and the rest of the assault force made it back to the camp without a casualty. The whole incident only lasted a few minutes, but it put the entire ground operation off schedule. The two perimeter teams, Red Wine and Green Leaf, headed out to do their thing, but Blue Boy, the assault team inside the prison compound, had already searched most of the prison. As soon as Simons got on the radio he asked Blue Boy for a status report. The answer was "No Packages so far, still searching." (A Package was the code word for a prisoner.) Simons then told us to take out the foot bridge to the Citadel.

We called a group of buildings surrounded by a small moat the Citadel. It was a few hundred meters southeast of the Camp and had a small foot bridge over the moat on the camp side. Intel told us it was a military cadet training facility and probably had an armory for small arms. We didn't want anyone coming across that bridge armed and getting within rifle range of the camp.

Jerry and I put two WP bombs on it and when 2 came in, he saw the bridge was wiped out and dropped short to get anyone that might have already come across. In the process, taking out a few blocks of a housing area between the camp and the citadel. WP does a real number on wooden structures, the fire storm was not small.

About this time the sequence of events gets all jumbled up. I have no idea what happened first, second, and

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Sandys (from Page 13)

so forth. About the time Simons and the troops got back to the camp, the first SAM took off. You cannot miss a SAM launch at night. It's like a mini Shuttle launch, lights up an area for miles in all directions. The first few were called "SAM, SAM, DIVE, DIVE," but that soon became silly. There were so many launches that you couldn't call them. There seemed to be about four launch sites within a few miles of the camp on the west side of Hanoi. The rest were further east and we didn't think they were a threat to us. Most of the SAMs went high, after the MIG CAP, Weasels, and the Navy's two hundred plane feint coming in from the east. The idea was to make them think there was a major raid on Hanoi and not bother with a few planes on the west side. It worked, NSA told us later that the Air Defense Commander screamed "Fire at will," shut down the net and went off the air.

We were at our briefed 3000 feet until the SAMs started coming our way. Intel told us we wouldn't have any trouble with SAMs at that altitude. A lot some pencil pushing puke knows. We all hit the deck and kept an eye on the launch sites close to us and sure enough, someone decided to try for the guys to the west – us. The site closest to us, just a few miles to the northeast, launched one that never got to the horizon. I watched it rise and almost immediately it leveled off. Then the thing stopped moving on the windscreen.

You know what that means, collision course. We dove into the Red River and turned west. Jerry was flying and I was turned around keeping an eye on the damn thing as it charged at us over my right shoulder. I kept bumping the stick forward saying "Lower, lower." Jerry kept bumping the stick back saying "We're going to hit the water." When the rocket plume on the thing seemed as big as the A-1, I yelled break left. We went up and over the river bank, about fifty feet, and leveled off at phone pole height, going straight south.

We never saw the thing again. It either hadn't had time to arm or buried itself in the water/mud so deep that the flash of detonation was masked. That's another thing you can't miss at night. The detonation of a SAM. It's a lightning bright flash, quite large. They were going off over us constantly and when you got used to them you didn't even bother to look up. For about a thirty minute period there were no less than three SAMs airborne at any one time and other times so many you couldn't count them. I've never heard an estimate of the number fired that night, but it has to be in the hundreds. All the SAM misses would self detonate, either at a pre set altitude or motor burn out, I don't know which.

Like I said, you wouldn't look up at a SAM detonation because they were so numerous, unless something was different. Then there was something different. The flash was yellowish instead of bright white. Looking up there was a large fire ball with flaming debris falling from it. "Damn, someone got nailed." Then suddenly there was a flaming dash across the sky heading southwest, then another and another. Three dashes were all I saw, couldn't spend any more time looking up.

Later we learned that a SAM detonated close to a Weasel and filled his bird with holes. Fuel was streaming out and his afterburner was igniting it in dashes across the sky. Since he was losing all his fuel anyway he left it in AB till he ran out. He got to the southern Pleine De Jars (PDJ) before bailing out.

About this time, Blue Boy calls Axle and says "Search complete, negative packages." Silence, then Simons asks for a repeat. "Search complete, negative packages, repeat negative packages." More silence. I don't know what anyone else was thinking then, but for me it was a setup, ambush. But hell, we'd already been there twenty minutes and they'd have sprung it by then. So then it turned to "What the hell are we doing here?" And "How the hell are we going to get our asses out of here intact?" Si-

mons must have been thinking the same thing. He called for the perimeter teams to pull back and the Apples to come in for pickup. Then he told us to take out the Big Bridge.

All sounds very simple, but it sure wasn't. First of all we had no hard ordnance and couldn't take out the Big Bridge. We had no more WP bombs and that was the only thing that would have damaged a wooden bridge. The bridge was Red Wine's objective and were supposed to blow it, but because of their late start hadn't reached it before the pull back order.

A little poop about the Big Bridge. The bridge was a few hundred meters northeast of the camp on the road that ran in front of it. It was about a hundred feet long, heavily constructed and could carry any vehicle up to a tank, we were told. Red Wine was supposed to blow it and hold the road while Green Leaf went southeast and held the road.

During training the engineers said twelve pounds of C-4 would take out the bridge. However, to be sure they were going to double it and use twenty-four pounds. Col. Simons said that he wanted to be doubly sure and doubled that to forty-eight pounds then added that two people would carry forty-eight pounds each making it ninety-six pounds of C-4. I would have liked to see what ninety-six pounds of C-4 did to that bridge, but it wasn't to be.

What made things worse was that the out bound and pull back routes for the perimeter teams were different. Since each team out bound had to take out any possible threats, they didn't want to retrace their steps and possibly run into someone they missed. He would have been one pissed off gomer. There was a lot of housing just outside the camp. Intel said it was for the camp commander, married officers, and maybe some camp workers. The teams outbound went house to house making sure no one was going to be a threat. It was a slow process, so between starting

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out late and an early pull back they had no chance of reaching their goal.

Since they hadn't got to the end of the outbound route there was no way they could follow the pull back route. The radios went bananas again. "There's part of Red Wine's team in Green Leaf's area of responsibility and part of Green Leaf's team in Red Wines area. Do not fire without identification." This was repeated over and over again. So much so that the teams couldn't get in to acknowledge. They were so out of breath that they couldn't say but one word between two or three panting breaths. It wasn't fun to listen to.

Some time during all this we had expended 50% of our ordnance and called in 3 and 4. They had done the same and called us back. We dumped the Rockeyes on the bridge. The Rockeye is a Navy fast mover ordnance we had to certify the A-1 to carry while in training at Eglin. It's a multi-munitions thing with gobs of little shaped charges to take out vehicles, even tanks I guess. Not very good for bridges. We put a lot of holes in it though. After that we strafed continuously until everyone was in the Apples and on their way.

I might add we never saw any vehicles or people moving anywhere near the camp. There was a lot of traffic on the east-west road along the Red River, about a click north, going in and out of Hanoi, but no one turned toward the camp. Also about this time, the SAM launches were slowing down but the MIG calls were increasing. Roughly twenty minutes into the forty minutes this took, we started picking up MIG calls. Intel told us they had no night qualified pilots so we would have no trouble with MIG's. Right.

There was one call of an air to air missile firing, saying it zoomed right past his plane. I don't know who it was and never saw any myself. That was the only call of a firing I remember hearing. But the MIG warning calls from College Eye or whoever makes those calls

were coming regularly.

Once the Jollies were off and running, we putted along above and behind them, guessing where they were since it was dark and no one could see each other. Everyone was to call the IP outbound. One by one we heard the call.

Then we hear this voice "Is everybody out?" "Who are you?" "This is Apple (something or other)." "Where are you?" "I'm back at the holding point waiting to be sure everyone got out okay." "%*#+@! jerk." We told him to get his a** airborne and head for the IP as fast as his funny machine would take him. He acknowledged. By this time we had nearly reached the IP ourselves. Jerry and I looked at each other and said "We don't have a choice." With possible MIGs around a lonely Jolly all by himself makes for a pretty good target. We turned around, climbed to a nice MIG target altitude, three or four thousand, and went Christmas tree.

Every light we had was turned on and we slowly drove back to Hanoi. With MIG calls coming every few minutes I was sweating profusely. Don't know if it was hot, I was scared or just pooped out, but I was soaked. It seemed an eternity but as the camp and the west side of Hanoi were slipping under the nose, we heard the IP call. Lights out and Split-S. We beat feet west for the IP, on the deck.

Getting away from the river valley and into the dark country side, we climbed to a safe altitude to clear the mountains en-route to Udorn. We had used up the left stub tank getting there and most of the right. We were on internal over the target and used the center line while holding. Time to clean up the fuel mess. The right stub ran out almost right away. Time to jettison. That's when the longest two seconds of my life occurred.

I hit the button, but instead of falling away it pitched up, slammed back against the leading edge making it into a vee shape and came bouncing along the leading edge of the wing toward the

fuselage. I can see it to this day, making four bounces and then falling away under the wing. It all happened in one or two seconds, didn't even have time to say "Oh s***." I sometimes wonder what would have happened to the right horizontal stabilizer if it had decided to pass up and over the wing instead of under. I don't dwell on it though, too scary.

The five Jollies, three carrying the assault force and two empty because of no prisoners, were all together after hitting a tanker in order to make it back. The A-1's were spread out who knew where, but still in radio contact. As we crossed the PDJ, we picked up the beeper of the downed Weasels and soon made voice contact. They were both all right - #1 was cool, but #2 was a little panicky. Not because he was being threatened, but because he was all alone, in the dark, in the woods, in Laos. I didn't blame him one bit.

Then we made contact with four Sandys launched out of NKP in answer to the Weasels' Mayday. They didn't know who we were because of the call signs. Took a hell of a while to convince them that Peach and Apple really meant Sandy and Jolly.

The call sign battle had been long and arduous, but in the end we lost. I'll never forgive the Air Force for either picking them or allowing them to be forced on us. At least the Army had call signs that if not macho were at least neutral. Blue Boy, Red Wine, Green Leaf, Gear Box, and Axel. What did the wimpy Air Force come up with? A-1's Peach, Jollies Apple, the HH-3 that crash landed in the compound Banana, Talons Cherry, and the C-130 tanker Lime. A damn fruit salad. It was embarrassing, down right humiliating. I'll never forgive those pencil pushing Air Force pukers for that.

Anyway, it was decided that the two empty Jollies would hang around with the four Sandys and make a first light pick up. From what I understand

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USAF Sniper Eliminates IED At 725 Yards

SECURITY FORCES SNIPERS



Nothing blends in better with the environment like 1/4 carat diamond earrings and lip gloss

Sandys (from Page 15)

it was uncontested and pretty much a piece of cake.

Landing at Udorn, we were all rushed to debriefing, a building right on the flight line. As I walked in, I was met by a group of Intel people with wide grins across their faces and seeming higher than kites. I thought they were lunatics. They asked "How many prisoners?" I said "None, the camp was empty." The grins disappeared and their faces turned pale. "What?" I repeated it and thought they were going to pass out.

What had happened was, after leaving the target area, the Army did a head count and got it all screwed up. For a while they thought someone might have been left behind. For several minutes over the radio we could hear the chatter between the Jollies. "I've got thirty-three, I've got thirty-five, I've got thirty-two, I've got thirty-one." Seemed to go on forever. Finally they got it right and no one was left behind. The high orbiting EC-135 must have been relaying all that back to Udorn and it was interpreted by the Intel people as a prisoner count. They all thought we had rescued thirty some prisoners.

Once that got squared away, debriefing fell apart. People running every

which way. I don't remember ever being debriefed and don't think anyone ever was. What preparations had been made to receive prisoners I don't know, but they had to be considerable and now were all down the tubes. It was almost a state of panic.

Col. Simons, Jerry Rhine, Dick Meadows, and maybe others were whisked off to meet with Gen. Leroy Manor at Monkey Mountain, Da Nang. The rest of us were left in the lurch and forgotten about. The sun was coming up by then and we all wandered out onto the ramp. We sat down on the cement, cross legged, Indian style, in circles of about ten. We in our reeking, sweat soaked flight suits and the grunts with their blackened faces, guns, grenades and what-have-you hanging off them. They were bleeding from every square inch of exposed skin from dozens of cuts, scrapes, and bruises. We all just sat mumbling to each other. No stories were being told. We had all just done it, seen it or heard it, and knew what had happened.

Then someone came out and handed a bottle to each of the circles. Everyone took a sip and passed it around and around and around, till it was empty. All of us still just mumbling to ourselves

and each other. I can't attest to what was going on at the other circles, but there wasn't a dry eye at ours. A tear running down every cheek. A gallant effort with nothing to show. To hell and back for naught.

The Economy Is So Bad that ...

I got a pre-declined credit card in the mail.

I ordered a burger at McDonald's and the kid behind the counter asked, "Can you afford fries with that?"

CEO's are now playing miniature golf.

If the bank returns your check marked "Insufficient Funds," you call them and ask if they meant you or them.

Hot Wheels and Matchbox stocks are trading higher than GM.

McDonald's is selling the 1/4 ounce.

Parents in Beverly Hills fired their nannies and learned their children's names.

A truckload of Americans was caught sneaking into Mexico.

Dick Cheney took his stockbroker hunting.

Motel Six won't leave the light on anymore.

The Mafia is laying off judges.

Exxon-Mobil laid off 25 Congressmen.

Congress says they are looking into this Bernard Madoff scandal. Oh Great!! The guy who made \$50 Billion disappear is being investigated by the people who made \$1.5 Trillion disappear!

And, finally ...

I was so depressed last night thinking about the economy, wars, jobs, my savings, Social Security, retirement funds, etc., that I called the Suicide Lifeline. I got a call center in Pakistan and when I told them I was suicidal, they got all excited and asked if I could drive a truck.

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 12TH TACTICAL FIGHTER WING (PACAF)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96326

Reply To
Attn Of: C
Subject: C-7 Pilot Training Volunteers
To: Commander, 483rd TAW

27 Mar 1969

1. Reference your letter dated 18 March 1969, Subject: "Pilot Training". I do have a surfeit of pilots and I most sincerely appreciate your kind offer to upgrade them in the C-7 Caribou.
2. I had my staff make a comprehensive survey, keeping your guidelines in mind, and they reached a near-total impasse because of the requirement for candidates to be volunteers. The consensus of opinion seemed to be that my pilots would rather smell JP4 and watch F-4's taxi than fly a Caribou. I said near total because there was one volunteer; an experienced aviator who would have, I feel, made an excellent candidate for your program. Unfortunately he was declared mentally incompetent only this morning. He was found to be suffering from recurring schizophrenia dementia, his personal hang up being that he thought he was a female North American reindeer. Arrangements are being made to medevac him to the ZI where it is my understanding that he will be given full authority to graze on federal pasture lands as he feels the urge – dropping fawns occasionally I presume.
3. The only other candidate I would consider a likely candidate for upgrading from the F-4 to the C-7 is cadet C.L. Masters, the 559th TFS Billygoat. Again I thank you for your kind offer.

Signed.
FLOYD WHITE, Colonel, USAF
Commander

You Know You Are Living in 2010, If...

Leaving the house without your cell phone, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.

You start tilting your head sideways to smile. :)

You're reading this and nodding and laughing.

You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.

Even worse, you know exactly to whom you are going to forward this message.

You accidentally enter your password on the microwave.

You pull up in your own driveway

and use your cell phone to see if anyone is home to help you carry in the groceries.

You e-mail the person who works at the desk next to you.

You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.

You get up in the morning and go on line before getting your coffee.

Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that you don't have their e-mail addresses.

Every commercial on television has a web site at the bottom of the screen.

You realize that solitaire is actually called patience.

You see how many types of cell phones there are and you don't want any of them, because you hate everyone!

Flight Line Memories

by Kenny Bryant [458, 71]

I was Comm/Nav maintenance, spent all my time at Forward Operating Locations (FOLs) – Phang Rang, Bien Hoa. At one of them I had a Red Ball, engines running. The equipment was on the bottom rack on the right. I took all my stuff out of my pockets and put them in my cap on the floor, so that I could work. I laid down on my right side working under the equipment rack. When I got the problem fixed, I jumped up, gave the pilot a thumbs up and ran to the rear door and out. That's when I remembered my hat! Of course, I waited all day for the airplane to return, but never saw my stuff again. The worst part was my ID was among the items, so I lost my ID, money, change, watch, ring, glasses, everything.

Another day, we were at Phu Cat. As the Bous descended over the mountain, they would get pot shots from the ground. I was in front of Base Ops when one of our Bous came in. As they taxied on, the flight mech was standing at the back door, a hand on each side of the door, leaning way out, enjoying the prop wash. It was really hot. All of a sudden, there were three mortar hits directly at his feet. He bailed back inside. We rushed out when they stopped, expecting the worst. There were over 80 holes around that door, but **nothing** hit him. Talk about miracles! Wow!!!

Most of my work was recovery, at FOLs. We usually worked 16 hour nights. Launch (my favorite activity) and maybe three or four turn arounds in the day, then I'd get the broken stuff.

One night at Bien Hoa, I was walking across the dark ramp when, suddenly, behind me, a fuel truck started doing all kinds of funky things – slamming on brakes, backing up, turning around and around. There was something in the lights, but I couldn't tell what it was. It turned out to be about a 10 foot Cobra. I didn't walk alone or without a light from that time on.

Grandparents

Grandmas are moms with lots of frosting. ~ Author Unknown

What a bargain grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million dollars' worth of pleasure. ~ Gene Perret

Grandmothers are just "antique" little girls. ~ Author Unknown

Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. ~ Welsh Proverb

A grandmother is a babysitter who watches the kids instead of the television. ~ Author Unknown

Never have children, only grandchildren. ~ Gore Vidal

Becoming a grandmother is wonderful. One moment you're just a mother. The next you are all wise and prehistoric. ~ Pam Brown

Grandchildren don't stay young forever, which is good because Grandfathers have only so many horsy rides in them. ~ Gene Perret

When grandparents enter the door, discipline flies out the window. ~ Ogden Nash

Grandma always made you feel she had been waiting to see just you all day and now the day was complete. ~ Marcy DeMaree

Grandmas never run out of hugs or cookies. ~ Author unknown

Grandmas hold our tiny hands for just a little while, but our hearts forever. ~ Author Unknown

If I had known how wonderful it would be to have grandchildren, I'd have had them first. ~ Lois Wyse

My grandkids believe I'm the oldest thing in the world. And after two or three hours with them, I believe it, too. ~ Gene Perret

If becoming a grandmother were only a matter of choice, I should advise every one of you straight away to become one. There is no fun for old people like it! ~ Hannah Whithall Smith

It's such a grand thing to be a mother of a mother – that's why the world calls

her grandmother. ~ Author Unknown
Grandchildren are God's way of compensating us for growing old. ~ Mary H. Waldrip

You do not really understand something unless you can explain it to your grandmother. ~ Proverb

An hour with your grandchildren can make you feel young again. Anything longer than that, and you start to age quickly. ~ Gene Perret

The best baby-sitters, of course, are the baby's grandparents. You feel completely comfortable entrusting your baby to them for long periods, which is why most grandparents flee to Florida. ~ Dave Barry

I wish I had the energy that my grandchildren have – if only for self-defense. ~ Gene Perret

Grandmother-grandchild relationships are simple. Grandmas are short on criticism and long on love. ~ Author Unknown

Nobody can do for little children what grandparents do. Grandparents sort of sprinkle stardust over the lives of little children. ~ Alex Haley

Grandmother – a wonderful mother with lots of practice. Author Unknown

A grandparent is old on the outside, but young on the inside. Author Unknown

One of the most powerful handclaps is that of a new grandbaby around the finger of a grandfather. ~ Joy Hargrove

It's amazing how grandparents seem so young once you become one. ~ Author Unknown

If your baby is "beautiful and perfect, never cries or fusses, sleeps on schedule and burps on demand, an angel all the time," you're the grandma. ~ Teresa Bloomingdale

Grandparents are similar to a piece of string – handy to have around and easily wrapped around the fingers of their grandchildren. ~ Author Unknown

What is it about grandparents that is so lovely? I'd like to say that grandparents are God's gifts to children. If they

can but see, hear, and feel what these people have to give, they can mature at a fast rate. ~ Bill Cosby

Caribou Night Flight

by Bruce Buono [458, 70]

Flying the Caribou at night wasn't a regular occurrence. That was good since we were all waived from instrument check rides and who knew if the aircraft met any IFR certification requirements. But, that didn't mean occasional night flights were unheard of.

One such flight arose for me quite unexpectedly. I was not on call or scheduled to fly the next day, so I was having a relaxing night at the hooch. So were a number of our neighbors, including an aircraft commander who was on call/alert. He stopped through our hooch and then moved off elsewhere.

About an hour or two later, his alert co-pilot, Lew Willis, came in saying they had been called in to fly. There was a piece of cargo that was needed up the coast. We were at Cam Ranh Bay. He felt his A/C was unfit to fly and asked me to cover for the A/C. We had several others distract the A/C while Lew and I headed to ops (no other transport was left for the not-fit-to-fly A/C).

We made a quick preflight, ensured our cargo was loaded, and slipped the surly bonds before the aircraft commander who was scheduled for the mission found his way to the flight line. It was a beautiful night to fly.

Lobster at CRB

by Larry Stuppy [536, 71]

During training of pilots at Cam Ranh AB, we often flew south to Phan Thiet and dropped off clean trash cans, telling the operations people that we would be back the next day. After touch and go landings the next day, we made a full stop and picked up the trash cans full of lobster (100-200 craw fish) – boiled and ready to eat at 11 cents each.

Sometimes, the flight surgeon supplied us with steaks and we would have feasts of steak and lobster.

Ups and Downs of Iris 442

by Spec. 4 Bill Toliver

Stars and Stripes Pacific Edition, 27 February 1971

Cao Lanh, Vietnam – “Motion sickness bag (for use in moments of stomach upset)”

The words swam giddily on the plastic bag before me as the C-7A “Caribou” climbed higher in an ever increasing circle, land and water flowing by the window in a blurring pattern of gold, brown, blue, and green. This was the second time the pilot had missed the runway and upset isn’t the word to describe what my stomach was experiencing.

“If an upset stomach is anticipated, remove bag from the container and keep ready for use. Do not be embarrassed by this precaution as even veteran travelers are subject to occasional motion sickness.”

The laughter of the Air Force sergeant rang hallowly in the veteran travelers’ ears as he handed out the bags. “You too? You guys are in bad shape.”

Iris 442, a milk run to Long Xuyen, Chau Doc [*sic*], Chi Lang, and Cao Lanh – that was what that merry-go-round ride over the delta was called. Thank goodness, the Chi Lang airstrip was closed that day. Three landings was the limit that my stomach could take.

At 9:00 in the morning, the time I was supposed to land in Cao Lanh, we were standing on the Can Tho airstrip waiting to board the plane. Seems this young lieutenant was having trouble refueling his plane, trouble especially with getting his gas caps unscrewed.

Blithely, we filed on the plane. It is surprising how people so easily put their lives in the hands of another man.

The first hint that all was not right came as we were coming in for the first landing and one of the wheels did not go down with the satisfying clunk it should. The landing was aborted with a stomach-wrenching turn and back we went for a second try.

It was at Chau Doc [*sic*] however, that the merry-go-round began in earnest. The airfield sits on a dike about 10 feet above ground level and the pilot just didn’t seem to be able to figure it out. The plane would sit down briefly and off we would go again into the blue and nauseating turns.

Finally, at Cao Lanh at 1 o’clock, I stumbled out of the plane onto soil, blessed Vietnamese soil. As the fresh air mingled with gasoline fumes – best air known to man.

Seeing the greenish cast of my sorry gills, the airfield sergeant grinned sympathetically and drove me gently into town.

Later, safely in a bar, I was telling of my harrowing experience.

“Oh, flight 442, the training flight,” said one of the advisers. “We never take 442 in. Out, maybe, but only if we have to. That’s the flight they break in all the young Air Force lieutenants when they first come in country.”

A brief pause. “Whiskey, pardner?” (see next column)

Note: the Tactical Airdrome Directory of 15 Jan 1970 notes about Chao Duc say: “HAZARDS - App either end of rwy over water-filled borrow pit. 12’ windsock pole 60’ fr N edge, 4’ dirt and rock pile 20’ fr N edge, SW end of fld. Drop-off surrounds afd 45’ to 100’ fr landing surface.”

A Vietnam Prayer

by Marvin Johnson [483, 70]

Stars and Stripes Pacific Edition,

8 January 1971

Oh Lord, what are we doing here,
Fighting and dying, and showing no fear?
How many will come, how many will go,
How many have died, in the years before?
Wives lose husbands, mothers lose sons,
Children lose fathers, blood shed by the tons.

There must be a way, that time will find
To bring peace to this land, and all mankind.
In you, oh Lord, lies all our trust;
We need Your leadership, to deliver us.

Win, lose, or draw, this war can’t go on;
There must be an end, and the troops sent home.
God bless our troops, who rest in their grave
Far from the land of the free and home of the brave.
There must be a reason, and someone knows why,
Ten-thousand miles from home, an American must die.
We serve here with pride, and our mind is sane
For the lives that are lost, we hope not in vain.

The world knows we are here and how we have tried
But this is no comfort to those who have died.
Time passes slow, but the end draws near;
We will long remember, time we spent here.

We know we must die, as sure as we live,
But to take one’s life, is something we can’t give.
I dream of the day, that so often is heard,
I am homeward bound, on that freedom bird.

Waiting for your plane, a smile on your face
There’s a long way home, before you are safe.
I will do my job, and serve my time
For protection of my family, I left behind.
Four lovely kids, and a beautiful wife
Is a lot to live for, and enjoy your life.

An Ugly Angel, But It Gets You There

by MSgt R. Grove Fisher
Pacific Stars and Stripes
1 August 1969

Tan Son Nhut AB, Vietnam (Special)

It is probably the most ungainly looking object to take to the air since the advent of the pterodactyl.

Its bulbous gray nose only needs red blood veins to become worthy of a W.C. Fields proboscis. Its stork-line main landing gear seems dreadfully fragile in proportion to its size; the tail assembly resembles nothing so much as a dragonfly that caught its tail in a screen door.

But appearances are deceiving, especially the appearance of the C-7A Caribou – one of the hardest-working, most rugged, and most agile Air Force cargo transports in Vietnam.

The U.S. Air Force took over 144 U.S. Army CV-2 Caribous in Vietnam on January 1, 1967, and redesignated the aircraft the C-7A.

Less than three months later, a four-man Air Force crew established a new record for the light cargo transport, hauling more than 80,000 pounds of cargo and passengers in a single day. The feat took six flying hours and 27 takeoffs and landings – a sortie almost every 10 flying minutes.

In the past two and a half years, C-7A Caribous have handled the bulk of cargo-passenger flights to and from small, undeveloped airstrips throughout Vietnam. Cargo has ranged from bombs to bullets (ammunition supplies), bon bons to baking soda (exchange and food supplies), and Bach to Basic (musicians traveling as passengers).

Cargo has also included a variety of animals that would complement a well-stocked farm and a zoo: ducks, chickens, and other domestic fowl; pigs, cows, horses, carabao (no relation); snakes, monkeys, tigers and other wildlife; and, once, a 500-pound baby

elephant.

At least one Vietnamese mother gave birth to her infant on board a C-7A aircraft, during an air evacuation from her Communist-threatened mountain village home.

In the first year of Air Force operation of the Caribou in Vietnam, crews flew more than 100,000 combat hours, increasing flying hours, sorties flown, and payload tonnage by almost 25 per cent over all previous records set by Caribous in Vietnam. Last year, C-7A crews carried more than 1.3 million passengers and 250,000 tons of cargo. Additionally, better than 2,500 tons of critical combat cargo were airdropped to ground units in areas where it was impossible to land.

Caribou airlift has frequently been credited with providing the margin of victory for Free World forces facing enemy attacks.

The twin-engined, high-wing transport can airlift up to three tons of cargo, delivering it in any one of three ways: conventional landing and off-loading, airdrops, and parachute extraction.

It can also carry 32 passengers, or 26 full-equipped paratroops. Sometimes, it is an aeromedical evacuation aircraft, and can transport up to 20 litter patients, together with nurses and corpsmen, to medical facilities far from the battlefield.

The Caribou, manufactured by the DeHavilland Aircraft of Canada, Ltd., was originally designed to transport cargo and passengers into the remote wilds of Canada and Alaska. It has a cruising speed of 180 m.p.h. without cargo, and can fly 1,250 miles without refueling.

It is normally flown with a crew of three – an aircraft commander, a pilot and a flight engineer. On some airdrop missions in Vietnam, a fourth crewman, usually a Special Forces parachute rigger, rides as “kicker,” assisting in the proper loading, tying down and dropping of the cargo, and retrieving the parachute static lines after the load slides out of the rear door.

Some Caribou pilots, older men who had discontinued flying for one reason or another for several years, but who have since returned to flight status in C-7A cockpits, good humoredly refer to themselves as members of “Grandpa’s Air Force.”

Most of them enjoy flying the C-7A, and are proud of their ability to ease the Caribou onto a dirt strip shorter than an average city block.

“It’s a great airplane,” says one 49-year old lieutenant colonel, “one of the few left in the Air Force where you really can get the feel of good, old-fashioned, seat-of-the-pants flying.”

He made the comment just after taking several dozen rounds of communist ground fire during a successful (“We dropped the second pallet right on top of the smoke marker,” he beamed proudly) airdrop mission in resupply of a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp at Ben Het, near the Laos-Cambodia-Vietnam borders.

On the other hand, a few of the younger pilots disagree. “But it’s the only aircraft we have” remarked a former B-47 jet bomber pilot “that can do what has to be done – get in and out of tiny strips, sometimes exposing ourselves to the enemy, and delivering what is needed to the troops on the ground. The mission is essential to these soldiers.”

Even as the Caribou is the precedent for transport of people and supplies to otherwise-inaccessible places and the crews demonstrate flying skills and courage, there are people who are planning its eventual, albeit honorable, retirement.

Radio Controlled Bou

Kenny Bryant [458, 71] is building a radio controlled C-7A: 1/12 scale, 75” fuselage, 95” wingspan. Also making a 30-40” wingspan Caribou made of foam with electric power. Anyone interested can contact him at kdbryant@windstream.net or 478-320-2908 or look him up at the reunion.

Vietnam Citations

by Pat Hanavan [535,68]

If you have accessed our website recently, you know that the awards and decorations I found at Maxwell AFB during the last six months are now on the website under *History/Awards and Decorations Search*. If you have a Silver Star, DFC, or Air Medal for a specific action and have internet access, please check for your award.

If your **citation** is not shown, please locate it and send it to me for inclusion in our history records. If you cannot find it, at least let me know the location of the action. My email and snail mail addresses are on page 2, lower left hand corner of this newsletter.

History of a Bou

by Dave Kowalski [908, 75]

I did some research on one of our Caribous, 63-9755. Most of the information comes from the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB, the FAA and a few phone calls.

- Manufactured by De Havilland Canada, Toronto, Canada and accepted on 12/22/1964 as a CV-2B, and assigned to the Army's 17th Aviation Co.

- Transferred to USAF on 31 December 1966. Assigned to the 483rd TCW.

- Deployments to Clark AB, Philippines, Cam Ranh Bay AB, RVN, and Kadena AB, Japan.

- September 1971 assigned to 537th TAS, tail code "KN."

- Deployments to Bien Hoa AB, RVN, Don Muan RTAFB, Thailand, and Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN.

- March 1972. Dropped from inventory by transfer to Military Assistance Program (MAP).

- July 1975. Recovered at Utapao AB, Thailand by the 908th TAG, Maxwell AFB, AL and ferried back to USA via the northern route, then to Hayes Aircraft, Napier Field, AL. It took 34 days and 93 flying hours. See Caribou Newsletter, July 2005 for details.

- August 1975 regained into USAF

inventory at Hayes aircraft, Napier Field, AL.

- February 1976. Deemed un-repairable and was picked up and flown by the 908th TAG (The same guys who had picked it up at Utapao AB, Thailand) to Military Aircraft Storage and Disposition Center, Davis Monthan AFB, AZ.

- July 8, 1976. Loaned to the Department of Agriculture for use in the Screw Worm Eradication Program along the Mexican border.

- September 30 1981. Deregistered and returned to Davis Monthan AFB, AZ.

- January 8, 1990. Sold to Aero Nostalgia, 7030 South C.E. Dixon, Stockton, CA 95206. Its registration was changed to N91NC and designated a DHC-4A.

- January 17, 1990. Sold to New California Aviation, Inc., Little Ferry, NJ 07643. (civilian registration serial number 217).

- November 1994. Sold to PenTurbo Aviation Inc., Cape May County Airport, Rio Grande, NJ 08242. PenTurbo was planning on installing turbo props on the old 'Bou but 9-11 put so many restrictions on export of aircraft that the plan was scrapped.

- January 2008. The aircraft is now stored at Western International Aviation, Tucson, AZ as serial number 217.

I talked to the guy at Tucson and he said 755 was for sale for \$100,000, but I felt that he would sell it for somewhat less to a good home. If anyone has any information on activities of 755 from 1972-1975, please let me know.

Missing Five Knots

by Ed Breslin [537, 67]

We were on the ground at LZ English and there were always Army grunts standing around looking for a ride to An Khe for rotation back to the states, and plenty of others needing a ride. To keep us from waiting around too long, the Army rep told us to take a load of grunts to An Khe. Ok, reconfigure the plane. Take up the rollers, secure the

hardware, tie down the rollers, secure the stretchers, put down all the passenger seats. Wasted time! War is hell!

We got the pax aboard and I briefed them. Army guys stood fire guard outside as the pilots started the engines. I jumped out the back and slid the ramp into the aircraft between the feet of the pax who were seated along both sides of the plane, facing the aisle. Then I jumped up on the ramp and applied a tiedown strap down the length of the ramp to secure it to the deck. With the interior of the aircraft secured, I made my way forward as the aircraft taxied.

Once airborne, we leveled off and headed for An Khe. After a few minutes, the pilot noted that we were making 115 knots indicated airspeed. There is one thing sure about a Caribou. It cruises at 120 knots indicated, no matter what. The pilot asked me to have a look around the aircraft, inside and out. The FE could look out windows on both sides of the cargo compartment and see most of the plane, except for the high tail and underneath the aircraft. There was nothing unusual to be spotted, no funny noises, no vibration, nothing. Nor were there any indication from the instruments. The power settings were right according to the book. I reviewed the CG and it was within limits. Just that airspeed, reading 115 on both pilots' panels.

As we taxied into the parking area at An Khe, with me in the roof hatch once again, the parking area was teeming with aircraft and people. Numerous Caribous, mostly from the 537th at Phu Cat, were loading and unloading. So, there were quite a few witnesses to the Caribou that taxied in with the tailstand still suspended from the tail. Amazingly, my number 2 pencil replacement for the locking pin stayed in place all the way from LZ English to An Khe! Much to my public embarrassment, there was no denying that the 5 knot loss of airspeed was caused by my leaving the tailstand in. Later that night according to tradition, I had to buy the 537th FEs a case of beer.

F-100's at Dak Seang

by Jim Icenhour [31TFW, 70]

On Wednesday, April 1, 1970, more than 1,200 Civilian Irregular Defense Group troops and their dependents at Dak Seang Special Forces Camp were besieged by North Vietnamese troops. I flew eight missions in support of Dak Seang beginning on April 3 and ending with my "champagne flight" on April 26. By far, the most memorable of mission occurred on April 4, 1970.

The day was overcast and rainy at Tuy Hoa Air Base, RVN as Doug Hawkins and I reported to the 31st Tactical Fighter Wing's alert pad for 15 minute alert duty. I was scheduled as the flight lead that day, and Doug was my wingman. When we arrived at the alert pad, we knew immediately that something unusual was up. We were told to expect a scramble as soon as the weather in the target area permitted, and that we would be carrying some ordnance neither of us had used before.

When we walked out to the revetments to accept and cock our aircraft, we were met by senior munitions crew members who were loading CBU-12 dispensers on the outboard stations and un-finned napalm on the inboard stations. Neither Doug nor I had ever delivered CBU-12 before. The dispensers were filled with white phosphorus bomblets that were released from tubes at the back of the dispenser by ram air pressure once each tube's retaining squib was fired. The plan was to dispense these bomblets in level flight so they would create a smoke screen between the ground and our delivery altitude of 200 feet. At the time, we weren't sure exactly why smoke would be needed, but as mere lieutenants, we figured that somewhere along the line, someone would tell us why.

The scramble phone rang and we were on our way. While taxiing out, we copied the scramble information: Call sign, Litter 03 and 04; troops in contact; target area, 319 degrees at 145 NM from Tuy Hoa; rendezvous point,

340 degrees at 10 NM from Dak To. We made a left turn out of traffic, joined up and climbed out, in the weather until we got roughly over Kontum.

The FAC, Eliot 16, briefed us on the situation, which was pretty tense. Enemy troops were within 10 meters of the western and northern walls of the Special Forces camp. Five C-7A Caribous were going to drop supplies into the camp. They were running in from east to west at about 500 feet and 120 knots. Our job was to lay down smoke on the western and northern sides of the camp to screen the C-7As from view as they made their run-ins. Spad 01 and 02, a flight of two A-1Es, were flying cover for the C-7As along the run-in, and Cobra 09 and 10, a flight of two F-4s, were holding high in reserve.

When Eliot 16 cleared us in hot, I rolled in from about 16,000 feet, and by the time I reached the 200 foot level delivery altitude, I was humming along at 500 knots. I made my first pass from north to south along the west wall of the camp, and Doug crossed right behind me on a near simultaneous pass from west to east along the north wall of the camp. It worked like a charm.

While we were zipping back up to 16,000 feet to await further instructions, the first three C-7As dropped their loads and made hard right turns to exit the area.

About the time the third C-7A was approaching the drop, Eliot 16 directed us to set up for a second smoke pass because the original smoke was beginning to dissipate. So, here we came for a second straight and level pass, but this time the bad guys knew we were coming, and that did not bode well.

As I approached the camp, I saw that Eliot 16 was orbiting high over the camp, and that the fourth C-7A was just to the east of the camp at about 500 feet. As I flew down the wall, I passed directly under the fourth C-7A, and we both got nailed by ground fire. The shock was instantaneous. A bullet ricocheted off the right quarter-panel of my windscreen, but the impact punched

a small hole through it. The glass was shattered, but the lamination held.

From the instant I was hit, my every action seemed to be based on instinct and training, rather than a conscious thought process. "Job One" was to put as much mileage as possible between me and the bad guys I had just dropped white phosphorous on. I lit the afterburner, cleaned the wings and made an aggressive pull up to exit the area. Doug did not see me get hit, but he did abort his second pass when he saw the fourth C-7A come off the drop trailing white smoke from one of its engines.

Once I had an upward vector heading away from the target, I called out that I had been hit. Doug didn't hear my call, but Eliot 16 acknowledged that he had seen me clean my wings. Eliot 16's reply was the first indication Doug had that I was in trouble. We heard a radio call that one of the C-7As had crash landed, and it looked like there might be survivors — encouraging!

From the target area, my two nearest recovery options were Pleiku, at about 55 miles and slightly right of the nose, and Phu Cat, at about 95 miles and slightly left of the nose. I opted for the 10,000 foot runway at Phu Cat because I had heard stories of a Hun that had gone off the end of the 6,000 foot runway at Pleiku into a mine field.

I went over to Guard channel and made a Mayday call to "Peacock." Peacock's response was garbled and unreadable, but I did get a response from Phu Cat Tower asking if they could assist me. It was a simple decision to accept the help that was offered.

As I passed over Kontum, I had unconsciously leveled off at 17,000 feet under an overcast deck. I suddenly became aware of three things: I was still in afterburner, I was motoring along at about 0.95 Mach, and my damaged windscreen was beginning to buckle inward! I quickly pulled the throttle out of afterburner ... all the way back to about 80% rpm ... extended the

Continued on Page 23



F-100's (from Page 22)

speed brakes and slowed to 250 knots. I remember checking that my oil and hydraulic pressures were good, but I completely forgot to check my fuel.

By this time, Doug had me in sight and was racing to join up and look me over. We changed to Phu Cat Approach Control, and I began a gradual descent at 230 knots as Doug continued to close on me. He was joining just as we went into the weather at about 10,000 feet, but after several valiant attempts to control the overshoot, he went lost wingman. Once I was all alone in the weather, I noticed that my total fuel gauge was continuously cycling counterclockwise, and my forward fuel gauge was down to 1,000 pounds. I had to assume that I was losing fuel due to additional battle damage.

As Phu Cat Approach Control gave me radar vectors to an emergency fuel, straight-in approach, my forward fuel quantity kept decreasing. At 25 miles out, I was down to 800 pounds. I kept thinking about having to bail out. It was mid-afternoon, but with the bad weather and no wingman around to spot my landing site, it was likely that I would have to spend the night on the

ground. I decided that I would stay with the bird until it quit and would then bail out as close to Phu Cat as possible.

The right quarter-panel hit got my attention pretty fast. Fortunately, the lamination held! I leveled at 3,200 feet, lowered gear and half flaps, and slowed to 220 knots. About six miles from the runway, I broke out of the weather in a left turn with the runway about 45 degrees left of the nose. My forward fuel gauge read 400 pounds.

When I checked in on Tower frequency, I was advised that it looked like it was raining fluid out the bottom of my airplane. At one mile, I lowered full flaps, extended the speed brakes and slowed to 170 knots. I touched down at about 150 knots, got a good chute and stopped straight ahead on the runway, where I shut down and exited the aircraft.

As I stepped off the bottom rung of the ladder, I came face-to-face with an irate Colonel who was livid that I had closed his only runway! Fortunately, I was immediately hustled off into a waiting ambulance by a flight surgeon and two medics. As we left the scene, I could still hear the Colonel snarling at his troops to get "this hunk of junk off my runway!"

New Air Drop Method

by TSgt Joseph Kapinos
Air Force News

A C-130 aircrew conducted a new method of airdrop that makes deliveries more accurate and flexible for resupply of small, mobile forces, in Afghanistan. The C-130 aircrew from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, performed the first-ever low-cost, low-altitude combat airdrop to re-supply soldiers at a forward operating base in Afghanistan.

A low-cost, low-altitude (LCLA) combat airdrop is accomplished by dropping bundles weighing 80 to 500 pounds, with pre-packed expendable parachutes, in groups of up to four bundles per pass. The drops are termed "low-cost" to reflect the relative expense of the expendable parachutes compared to their more durable, but pricier, nylon counterparts.

"Our goal for this mission is to fly to a small forward-operating base and drop some of the smaller bundles to them," said Lt. Col. Darryl Sassaman, the 774th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron assistant director of operations who flew on the first LCLA combat mission. They're different from the usual, larger bundles, which we normally drop. Depending on the group we're dropping for, they may not need the mass amount of supplies and equipment, but still need re-supply. Utilizing these smaller bundles accomplishes that mission, giving (ground forces) the ability to quickly pick up the supplies and keep moving forward."

The new airdrop method is another tool airlifters in Afghanistan use to keep ground troops supplied with what they need. In many parts of Afghanistan, rugged terrain and the lack of roads for vehicle convoys make airdrop the only way ground forces get what they need to continue combat operations.

The low-altitude delivery is also more accurate than traditional, higher-altitude airdrop methods and cuts down on "stray bundles" that can land away from the drop zone.

Resupply of Duc Lap

by Eldon R. Sapp [537, 66]

On 19 December 1966, the Abolish 08 mission took numerous hits from enemy fire while making a combat resupply sortie to Duc Lap. During this enemy fire, one round came through the right front window of the cabin, cut the front tie down chain, and the chain fell to the floor. Since we were just seconds from touchdown, I didn't have time to do anything but hope and pray that we would make it out alive. We had 5,000 pounds of rice, but the load did not shift a bit on landing.

Captain John M. Shonts was the aircraft commander and he wrote of the incident on 3 Jan 67.

"On 19 Dec 66, Abolish 08 (61-2395) took off on the last cargo mission of the day at 1400 local time. Capt. John M. Shonts was the pilot in command, Lt Phillip E. Jach was co-pilot, and A1C Eldon R. Sapp was crew chief [*sic*]. We established radio and visual contact with the destination air strip, Duc Lap, about 5 minutes out to the East. They said the strip was secure and dropped smoke for us. I crossed over the strip and turned directly to a left downwind leg at 1000 feet above the strip altitude. Gear and flaps were extended in a normal manner and final was set up at 70 knots with 30° of flaps at a point approximately 300 yards from touch down and 100 feet altitude.

We received intense ground fire from automatic weapons. I saw several tracers go by the wind screen and felt numerous hits to the aircraft. The crew chief told me over the interphone that he had been hit. Not knowing the extent of injury to him or the severity of damage to the aircraft, I elected to land. After landing, at 1450 local, I found the crew chief's injuries were not serious. Lt Jack helped off load, engines running because the generators were off the line and a restart was not probable.

A1C Sapp and Lt Jach made a quick visual inspection outside the aircraft while I remained in the seat and

checked over the cockpit.

Damage to the outside of the aircraft was numerous bullet holes and fuel leaking from the left wing. All temperatures and pressures were normal in the cockpit. The generators would not come on the line. Only the FM radio was working. I elected to take off and head for Nha Trang via Ban Me Thuot, in case the fuel leak would have presented a problem.

Over Ban Me Thuot, there was enough fuel to make Nha Trang with reserve. After level off, we turned off the battery since the entire area was clear with unlimited visibility. Upon reaching the Nha Trang area, we attempted radio contact, but the only working radio was the FM. We contacted one of our aircraft on FM and they relayed to the Nha Trang tower that we declared an emergency. The aircraft relayed back to us that we were cleared for a precautionary landing pattern and crash equipment was standing by. Landing was made at 1540 local and the aircraft parked without further incident.

Final count was 19 primary bullet holes with damage to the electrical system, hydraulic system, fuel system, and one prop blade. I think the crew acted in a very professional manner throughout the entire experience."

Editor's note: All 3 crew members received the DFC for this mission.

Puzzling Form 781 Write-up

Date Discovered: 20091203

WUC: 2300

Discovered by: Pilot

Discrepancy: APU pwr switch moved to OFF position shuts down the APU.

Corrected by: Crew chief

Corrective action: APU switch in "OFF" position shuts "OFF" APU in all known aircraft, as well as a Boeing C-17. IAW 1C-17A-249JG-OG-1 step 15, page 2-40.

Date Corrected: 20091203

Auto Repair

post-card to Chester Bjorngaard
Maxbass, North Dakota
June 29, 1928

Dear Sir,

We're writing this letter to you today because we want to help you get your money out of your Model T.

It's still as good a car as it was the day the new Model A Ford was announced and there's no need to sacrifice it.

The Model T Ford is still used by more people than any other automobile. Eight million are in active service right now and many of them can be driven one, two, three and five years and even longer.

Bring your car to us and let us look it over. You'll be surprised to see how little it costs to put it in tip-top shape.

New fenders, for instance, cost from \$3.50 to \$5.00 each, with a labor charge of \$1.00 to \$2.50. Tuning up the motor and replacing commutator case, brush and vibrator points costs only \$1.00, with a small charge for material. Brake shoes can be installed and emergency brakes equalized for a labor charge of only \$1.15. A labor charge of \$4.00 to \$5.00 will cover the overhauling of the front axle, rebushing springs and spring perches, and straightening, aligning and adjusting wheels.

The labor charge for overhauling the average rear axle runs from \$5.75 to \$7.00. Grinding valves and cleaning carbon can be done for \$3.00 to \$4.00

A set of four new pistons and rings cost only \$7.00. For a labor charge of \$20 to \$25.00 you can have your motor and transmission completely overhauled. Parts are extra.

Very truly yours,
C.E. GLEASON CO.
Borrineau, N. Dak.

Editor's note: In 1925, the price of a new Model T Ford was \$290, about three months of salary for the average American worker.

The Fugitives

Bruce Sasser [458, 69]

Besides the midnight shift on the flight line, I had another job while I was at Cam Ranh Bay.



I was in a band of all things called The Fugitives. There were seven of us and if you were in any of the clubs at night, you probably heard us play. Five of the guys were in the Air Force, one was in the Army, and one was a civilian.

We didn't go to other bases. We played the Airmen, NCO, the Officer's club at Cam Rahn, and several officer squadron parties. We also played at the Navy clubs (Chief's Club and Officer's Mess) across from the flight line.

We were asked to go on the USO Tour in country, but we didn't do that because they would only pay us our rank pay, whereas each independent club paid us a specified fee which was a whole lot more than rank pay. We had our own band manager, Marcus Salas, our own practice room, and vehicle to move the equipment around the base.

When we needed different things for our instruments, our manager was able to get them from the Philippines

through different flights there. When a person's tour in country was up, we would have an audition to replace them, and it was done mainly through word of mouth.

(below, from the left: Ron Bass, Bruce Sasser, Rufus Byrd)

Hauling Logs

Dana Kelly [536, 70]

On the first flight out of Vung Tau one day, I was told to go to Can Tho and pick up a load for delivery to a Special Forces camp in the delta.

A bright eyed, brand new Army 2nd Lt met our aircraft with three 2 and 1/2 ton trucks loaded with 16 foot long creosoted logs. He promptly announced that he had measured them and that they would all fit in the Caribou for a single trip to their destination.

He looked bewildered when I told him that may be true, but that there was not a runway long enough to get the airplane up to speed so it could fly with that load.

After a lengthy discussion, we spent the rest of the day taking these logs, six at a time, to the desired destination. I believe the 2nd Looney learned a bit about the difference between weight and volume vs. aircraft performance.

IFR Encounter

Ron Seymour [459, 68]

We left Phu Cat going to Da Nang. I was the A/C, but the right seater was flying. We were feet wet, flying east of Chu Lai in thick clouds. I went to the center console to change the Tacan station. As my head started to look down at the console, something caught my attention from the left corner of my eye. When I turned to see what got my attention, it was a Vietnamese DC-3 flying south. Our wing tips must have been within 10 feet plus or minus. Realizing how close I had just come to a mid air collision, I got on the radio and said, "Chu Li Approach, were you painting any traffic in our area?" They said, "Negative." I told them what had just happened to me and they told me that the Vietnamese think it is their airspace and they can fly anywhere they want. I told Approach to report this incident and advise them that type of flying is going to kill somebody. Later in life, I came to realize that may have been an indicator as to how lucky my life would be at times.

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

Heroism at LZ Litts

by Jerry York [537, 67]

April 15, 1967 was quite an exciting day at LZ Litts, several miles north of Phu Cat. The 1st Cav mounted an operation in the area and we were tasked with hauling troops and equipment in there from the Cav main base at An Khe. The runway was 1500 ft of laterite, with a steep embankment on each end because the runway was built by cutting crosswise into the top of a small hill.

One of our aircraft (62-4178), loaded with 25 fully equipped infantry troops (yes, probably overloaded), crashed on landing, having encountered rotor wash from a departing Chinook. The right landing gear hit below the lip of the runway, ripping off the right wing. The aircraft skidded on its side and came to rest about 25 yards from another Bou waiting to take off.

Yours truly was sitting in the overhead hatch of that Caribou catching some breeze and had a ringside seat. Seeing that wreckage come sliding down the airfield towards me was a breathtaking experience. Anyway, it came to rest and we shut down our engines and bailed out to help.

Theroux, Malloy, Jackson and Harrington were 537th flight mechanics on the field as coordinators and helpers getting the planes offloaded and acting as air traffic controllers. We all pitched in. At first we couldn't get the cargo door to drop off, but the crew inside the aircraft finally managed to get to the rear and pull the release handle, dropping the cargo door on the ground.

What a mess inside. None of the troops were belted in. They were all in a jumble along with their M-60's, mortars and base plates, radios, ammo cans, etc. Fuel was running down into the cargo compartment from the left wing. We managed to get in there and get the troops out without touching off the fuel, which was our main concern. Interestingly, none of the troops was injured. They collected their stuff and wandered off into the morning. The

crew was OK, except for the flight mechanic, John Godfrey, who somehow got a sprained foot in the crash.

We didn't think we did anything really heroic and were quite surprised to receive the Airman's Medal.

Note: Joe Kurtyka [459, 66] was on the recovery team.

Not Your Faithful Bou

The Alenia C-27J Spartan is a medium-sized military transport aircraft. It is an advanced derivative of Alenia Aeronautica's G.222, with the engines and systems of the Lockheed Martin C-130J Super Hercules. The aircraft was selected as the Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) for the United States military.



In 1995, Alenia and Lockheed Martin began discussions to improve Alenia's G.222 using C-130J's glass cockpit with a more powerful version of the G.222's T64G engine and four-blade propellers. Later, the design included the C-130J Super Hercules's Rolls-Royce AE 2100 engine and six-blade propeller. Lockheed Martin chose to offer the C-130J as a contender in the same U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA) competition in which the C-27J was competing. Alenia Aeronautica then paired with L-3 Communications to form the Global Military Aircraft Systems (GMAS) joint venture to market the C-27J. Boeing Integrated Defense Systems later joined Alenia and L-3 Communications as a GMAS team member.

The Pentagon selected the C-27J as

its Joint Cargo Aircraft (JCA). A contract worth \$2.04B was awarded to the L-3 Communications team for 78 C-27Js, along with training and support.

Raytheon formally protested the award of the JCA contract to the Alenia C-27J. The GAO denied Raytheon's protest, thereby allowing the Pentagon to go ahead with the C-27J procurement. Prior to Raytheon's protest, the first C-27J aircraft were to begin delivery to the joint US Army-Air Force test and training program in June 2008. The United States received its first C-27J on 25 September 2008. In September 2008 the C-27J Schoolhouse, operated by L-3 Link, officially began classes at Robins Air Force Base, GA. In May 2009, it

was proposed that the US Army/Army National Guard lose all of their aircraft to the US Air Force, primarily the Air National Guard, and the total buy reduced in half to 38 aircraft.

Specifications: length 74.5 ft, wingspan 94.2 ft, height 31.8 ft; max takeoff weight 70,107#; max landing weight (10 ft/sec sink rate) 60,627#; max payload 25,353#, fuel capacity 3,255 gal; loads: 68 troops or 46 paratroops, 36 stretchers, plus 2 attendants; LAPES up to 11,200#; Low VELOCITY Air Drop (LVAD) 25,353#; two Rolls-Royce AE 2100-D2 turboprop engines of 4637 SHP; Dowty R-391 six-bladed props; tactical takeoff run 1,903 ft; landing ground roll 1,115 ft; range 1000 nm with 22,046# of payload or 2300 nm with 13,227#.

Heroes Flew Bous

by John Shilling [483, 67-68]

I'm very disappointed about history's love of the fighter jocks and what they did in Vietnam. To me the real heroes were the guys who flew low and slow and into the worst possible places and they often did it several times a day.

You don't see the History Channel doing stories of the conditions they flew under to bring supplies to the guys on the ground who were going to die if this stuff didn't get to them.

I would bet that very few Caribou guys ever sat down and counted the number of lives that they saved by the flying they did into conditions where many others wouldn't go. I sat in the 483rd TAW command post at Cam Ranh and listened to the radio traffic, but you never got the full impact of what they were seeing outside their windscreens.

The reports of the rounds many of these planes took still didn't give the whole story. I can't imagine the pucker factor going on with many of these flights. Most never got the rewards they deserved. They were all heroes in my mind.



This is a really tight fit! The importance of landing on centerline cannot be underestimated.

Who needs a 150' or 200' wide strip? One of South Africa Airway's first B-747s landing at Rand Airport, South Africa (elevation 5568 feet with a 4898 long by **50 feet wide** runway!) The 747-100 outer-to-outer main gear tire width is 41.33 ft. Right on the center line. An inch is as good as a mile.

Round and Round

by Dave Kowalski [908, 75]

It was the summer of 1973 and I had just changed jobs from a C-7A engine mechanic to the flight line as Assistant Crew Chief. In the engine shop we had fans and some air conditioning in the office. That made the 100° Alabama summer a little more bearable. On the flight line our work area was in the aircraft and our break area was the edge of the ramp, summer or winter.

We had eighteen C-7As on the ramp; six rows of three Caribous, with enough ramp space for at least six more Bous.

My new boss/flight line chief was an old school Master Sergeant called J.B., who was a couple of years from retirement. He was a hard guy to talk to and you didn't ask him many questions because he gave you answers you didn't want to hear. He also mumbled a lot.

MSgt J.B. was really dedicated to the mission. When we got to work, he was already out on the flight line signing exceptional releases for the day's flyers and setting up our work schedules for the day. His office was the expeditor truck, or "Bread Truck" as we sometimes called it. The two front doors slid back on tracks and the back doors opened out and were bungeed open in the summer.

He stayed in the truck all day long, monitoring the maintenance, ordering parts, calling for a specialist, calling in take-off and landing times, keeping track of us – his crew chiefs and mechanics, and the numerous other things the flight chief does.

Old Master Sergeant J.B. did a lot of strange things some times. We just thought that was what old master sergeants did and we didn't question his actions, although we talked a lot about them when we had a break or some lag time between babysitting specialists. One of the odd things he did, especially in the summer time,

was drive his bread truck around in circles between the rows of C-7As.

Sometimes he would do the same thing on the unused portion of the ramp. Then he would do figure eights on different portions of the ramp. All these maneuvers were done at really slow speeds.

Sometimes half way through his circle or figure eights he would stop suddenly and stay in that spot until something made him move again. If we needed him he always appeared at our aircraft. He was always alone in his truck. He didn't believe in people riding around in his truck when they should be in their aircraft working.

When Master Sergeant J.B. retired I was assigned to his position. On his last day, I had a chance to talk to him about the job. I asked him why he drove around in circles on the flight line. He said: "As you know, summer days on the flight line are hot, especially in a dark blue truck sitting next to the engine box. On a 100° day it could easily be 120° in the truck. I did figure 8's and circles to find the breeze. Even when there wasn't any wind the slightest breeze felt good.

Later, as I drove around in circles and figure 8's I heard one of the crew chiefs say, "Look, now Kowalski is doing it. It must just be something old Master Sergeants do."

Moral: If a Master Sergeant does it there must be a good reason.

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