

C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 21, Issue 2

Dak Seang Remembered at 2010 Reunion

On Wednesday, 25 August 2010, members and guests of the C-7A Caribou Association began gathering at the Marriott City Center Hotel in Macon, GA for the annual reunion. Registration went smoothly as name tags and registration packets were picked up in the War Room at the Macon Convention Center.

The reception began at 1800 with snacks, soft drinks, beer, and wine, provided by the Association, supplemented

by beef sliders, chicken skewers, and bacon wrapped scallops provided by the Marriott's catering services.

The Memorabilia Room was open from 1500-1700 so attendees could pick up memorabilia items.

Thursday, 26 August 2010, offered attendees a trip to Andersonville National Historic Site. One hundred and twenty-four of the attendees went on the bus tour. After a short panic when the first bus arrived before the doors were open, a cafeteria style lunch was served en route at Yoder's Deitsch Haus. Lunch featured country cooking which was enjoyed by all. Dessert was pie, including shoo fly, pecan, chocolate, and coconut. We enjoyed the friendly Amish atmosphere and courteous service.

Despite two of the buses making wrong turns near the site entrance, the touring Caribou guests entered the historic site to enjoy a brief tour of the museum, complete with movie illustrating the history of POWs. Tours of the prison grounds were led by very knowledgeable and interesting docents from the local area. Returning to the hotel about 1700, dinner was on our own.

Planned activities on Friday, 27 August, began with tours of the base (C-27J Spartan, JSTARS, and maintenance areas) and the Museum of Aviation. Lunch at the Horizons Club was well organized by the catering. In the afternoon, the groups switched their focus and continued visits on the base and at the museum until 1700.

On Friday evening at 1900 we enjoyed a Southern plated dinner at the hotel. The menu was: southern style

BBQ pulled pork, corn on the cob, potato salad, baked beans, and bourbon pecan tart for dessert, with coffee and tea. Lt Gen John Nowak [458, 68] spoke briefly to the group.

On Saturday, we gathered in the auditorium of the Museum of Aviation for the presentation of our memorial bench to the museum. As the names of each of our 39 brothers-in-arms who made the supreme sacrifice in Vietnam were read, Capt Dave Cappobianco, USA, Ret. rang the bell. Dave was the camp commander at Dak Seang in 1970 when four Caribous were shot down and 9 crew members lost their lives. Also present were Jim Icenhour who flew his F-100 in support of the drops and Bruce Brown who flew AC-119K illuminator and gunship support during the night drops.

The banquet on Saturday evening was held in the Century of Flight hangar, amid an array of aircraft, missiles, and displays. Dave Cappobianco presented commemorative hats to those involved in the Dak Seang missions. Despite the rain, a good time was had by all.

Agent Orange

Much information about Agent Orange, its connection to service in Vietnam, and its relationship to various medical conditions has come to light in the last year. Lee Corfield [458, 69] is the expert in the Association and has volunteered to be a source of information for the members. His contact information is: 724-775-3027 and n3ial@comcast.net. Check our web site for links to important sources of information.

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

Elected Officers and Board Members....

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

Appointed Positions

Bereavement Chairman - Jay Baker [535, 66]
Chaplains - Sonny Spurger [537, 68], Jon Drury [537, 68]
Historian - Robert Blaylock [457,70]
Newsletter Editor - Pat Hanavan [535, 68]
Newsletter Editor Emeritus - Dave Hutchens [459, 69]
Reunion 2010 Planners - John Tawes [537, 69],
 Doug Lewis [535, 69],
 Kenny Bryant [458, 71]
Reunion Advisor - Wayne DeLawter [458, 66]
Webmaster - Peter Bird [535, 71]
President Emeritus - Nick Evanish [457, 66]
Chaplain Emeritus - Bob Davis [457, 69]

Squadron Representatives...

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

Members are encouraged to communicate with the Editor of the Newsletter. Send change of address, phone number, or e-mail address to:

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 210-479-0226 (home), 210-861-9353 (cell)

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

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

President's Corner

After an exciting and successful reunion in Macon, it is time to acknowledge the efforts of those most responsible for that success. Doug Lewis [535, 69] did yeoman's work for over a year in arranging bus transportation, base tours, lunch at Yoder's, and our visit to Andersonville NHS. John and Fran Tawes [537, 69] took on the challenging task of finding a suitable hotel when that seemed to be an impossible task. Wayne and Joyce Brunz [535, 67] ran the Memorabilia room with the able assistance of Andy Anderson [535, 67], and Yogi and Judy Behr [459, 66]. Jim Bailey [AFAT-2, 1970] and Susan Morgan did an excellent job of setting up the Memorabilia Room and then watching over the supplies in the War Room, assisted by George Harmon [537, 69]. Daryle and Cindy McGinnis pitched in at the registration table. Alicia Hanavan planned the menus for dinner at the hotel on Friday evening and the banquet on Saturday evening. She wasn't able to see the fruits of her effort from her hospital room in Orlando, FL where she was sidelined on her way to the reunion.



Jon Drury and Bob Davis ably handled invocations and benedictions at the various activities and the candle ceremony at the banquet.

To all who helped make the reunion a success, we pass on a rousing "Sierra Hotel!"

Next year's reunion will be 21-25 September in Dallas, TX with headquarters at the Radisson Hotel on West Mockingbird Lane. Highlights include a chance for attendees, including spouses, children, and grand-children to take a ride in the Caribou belonging to the Cavanaugh Museum in Addison, TX. Transportation to and from the museum will be provided by the Association. The reunion will be a good chance to enjoy REAL Texas BBQ and a cooking demonstration for the ladies. Cuisine for the demo will be Thai or Tex-Mex.

Reunion 2012 will be 17-21 October in Dover, DE. We will dedicate our memorial bench at the Air Mobility Command Museum. Activities may include visiting the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge and a visit or briefing by Dover AFB.

Other locations under consideration for future reunions include, Seattle, WA; Travis AFB, CA; Ft. Walton Beach, FL; Las Vegas, NV, and Windsor Locks, CN.

The Reunion 2011 planning committee met in Dallas on 20 November to identify activities for the reunion and develop contact points.

We still need help with the Stars and Stripes project, which is an element of the Caribou History project. If you are interested in helping, contact me by e-mail or phone (information in the column to the left).

See you in Dallas for our next gathering of Caribous for a GREAT reunion!!!

Reunion 2010 Business Meeting

Al Cunliffe, Secretary, announced at 10:04 AM that a quorum, 95 members, was present.

Vice President, Pat Hanavan, called the meeting to order at 10:02 AM.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Pat Hanavan.

A motion to adopt the agenda as published was made by Bob Davis, seconded by Ken Mascaro, and carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes of the 2009 business meeting as published on the Association web site was made by Art Candenquist. The motion was seconded by Lee Mott and was passed unanimously.

Officer and Committee Reports:

Secretary Report — Al Cunliffe:

The secretary presented a report on the motions considered and passed by the Board of Directors for the previous year.

20090901: Elect Board Chairman

20090902: Check Authority

20090916: Reimbursement of Reunion Expenses to Pat Hanavan.

20090923: 2009/2010 NOMCOM

20090924: Add R2000 T-shirt to Standard Inventory

20091026: 2010 Reunion Hotel

20091123: Friend of the Association Status for Robert Baitis

20100120: Newsletter V20, Issue 2 Invoice

20100128: Check Writing Policy

20100219: Authorization to acquire historical documents from the Air Force Historical Research Agency.

20100321: Approval of IRS Form 990EZ

20100323: 2010 Audit Committee

20100325: Memorial Contribution for Bob Markham

20100506 Payment for April 2010 Newsletter Printing

20100517 Hotel Deposit for 2011 Reunion

20100525: Reunion Flyer Invoice

20100531: Memorial Bench at Dover AFB

20100602: Select Dover, DE for 2012 reunion

20100804: Authorization for 2010 Reunion Checks

Bereavement Committee Report

Jay Baker was unable to attend, so Pat Hanavan provided a report of the previous year's activities, which consisted primarily of providing a letter of condolence or suitable condolence card to the deceased's family, and an offer for the widow to become an Honorary Associate Member of the C-7A Caribou Association if they so desire. We have lost 22 members since the 2009 Branson reunion.

Report on the Roster: Pat Hanavan

Current membership is 805 active members and approximately 5300 names listed on the roster.

Audit Committee Report — Pat Hanavan

Treasurer's Report — Mike Murphy (see next page)

Nominating Committee

The C-7A Caribou Association Nominating Committee (NOMCOM) consisting of Chris Nevins, Marty Hillman and Bill Buesking started on 22 April 2009. We queried the current officers and board members. All current Board members and officers were agreeable to serving for another year. The committee requested a group e-mail be sent to the membership requesting volunteers for open officer or board member positions. No positive responses were received. The following names were presented as nominees for the Board of Directors for 2010 — 2011: Pat Hanavan, President; Peter Bird, Vice President; Mike Murphy, Treasurer; Al Cunliffe, Secretary; Members at Large: Fred Dimon, Bob Neumayer, Pat Phillips.

Old Business:

Pat Hanavan updated the membership on progress of his research into the history of Caribou operations at the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) at Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

He has been able to extract approximately 80% of some 3000 pages of data available at the AFHRA. Peter Bird has also gained access to the Pacific Stars and Stripes electronic archives.

New Business:

A board motion for the Audit Committee be comprised of 3 active Association Members was presented by Pat Hanavan and seconded. The motion passed.

After receiving the Nominating Committee's report, Pat Hanavan asked for nominations from the floor. As there were no nominations from the floor, Doug Boston moved that the proposed slate of officers as presented by the Nominating Committee be elected by acclamation. Art Candenquist seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Reunion planning:

2011 Reunion: Dallas, TX, 21 – 25 Sep. Caribou rides will be available, proposed cost would be about \$50.

2012 Reunion: Dover, DE, 17 – 21 Oct, Air Mobility Command Museum.

2013 Reunion: tentative location is Seattle, WA.

Possible future locations: Spokane, Ft. Walton Beach, Lakeland, FL

General discussion by members.

Lee Corfield informed the membership of the resources available from the VA for people affected by Agent Orange. Basically, anyone who spent any time in Vietnam would be eligible for benefits from the VA. Lee also outlined the eligibility for burial in a National Cemetery.

TJ Hainkel suggested forming a speaker's bureau. Discussion deferred to a later time.

Drawing for 8 Free room nights:

Allen Shanahan, Wayne DeLawter, Bob Dugan, Bob Watson, Pat Mannion, George Harmon, Mike Murphy and Glenn Helterbran won the drawing for the free room nights.

Pat Hanavan asked for a motion to adjourn, Bob Waldron so moved. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Balance Sheet As of July 31, 2010**ASSETS**

1101 Checking Account	\$23,292.92
1310 CD 1036	10,752.70
1320 CD 0930	22,781.78
1500 Reunion Deposit	1,000.00
1600 Memorabilia Inventory	5,386.53
1700 Postage/Pkg pre-paid	66.34
TOTAL ASSETS	\$63,280.27

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

3800 Advance Dues	\$2,140.69
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$2,140.69

EQUITY

Equity reserve (Adv Dues)	-2,140.69
Opening Balance Equity	39,744.67
Retained Earnings	-133.13
Net Income	23,668.73
TOTAL LIAB. & EQUITY	\$63,280.27

PROFIT AND LOSS (2010 YTD)**INCOME**

3100 Dues	\$6,320.00
3220 Donation – Mem. Order	192.67
3230 Donation to Assn.	154.00
3200 Donation – Other	260.58
3250 Extra Newsletters	15.00
3500 Interest	125.03
3610 Reunion Registration	21,581.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$28,648.28

EXPENSES

4310 Newsletter Printing	\$1,293.76
4320 Newsletter Mailing	1,233.92
4720 Inventory Shrinkage	9.87
4800 Memorials	2,425.00
4999 Bank Fees	17.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$4,979.55

NET INCOME \$23,668.73

Help!!!

If you have changed your e-mail, 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.

Still Captain America

by Drew Werner [Addison, TX]

Recently, my brother was sitting in first class on a flight from Dallas-Fort Worth to Colorado Springs when a couple boarded and sat in front of him. He immediately recognized the man as Roger Staubach. They exchanged greetings and Staubach said he was headed to Colorado Springs for the inaugural Warrior Games.

After 60 or 70 percent of the plane was boarded, a female Army soldier who had lost her leg boarded. Staubach insisted she sit in his seat; she said, "No, thanks," but he insisted. He took her place in a middle seat way in the back. After a few minutes, the young girl got tears in her eyes and said she wanted to go to her seat and have Staubach return to his.

The flight attendant overheard, and, as the female soldier headed to retrieve Staubach, the attendant had a no-show and both could sit in first class.

The flight attendant returned with the female soldier, but Staubach sent a double amputee Army soldier to sit in his seat. Staubach remained in coach the entire flight and disembarked last. My brother waited and asked for an autograph for my birthday. Staubach said, "Certainly."

It's a great gift, but the greater gift is knowing Roger Staubach is still Captain America.

2010 Reunion Attendance by Unit

457 Member/Spouse	12/6
458 Member/Spouse	22/16
459 Member/Spouse	13/6
483 Member/Spouse	5/2
535 Member/Spouse	22/12
536 Member/Spouse	24/10
537 Member/Spouse	29/15
4449 Member/Spouse	3/1
AFAT2 Member/Spouse	1/0
908 TAG Member/Spouse	1/1
Guests of Members	30
Total	231

2010 Reunion Attendance by State

AL	5	LA	5	NV	3
AR	1	MD	2	NY	1
AZ	2	ME	1	OH	2
CA	6	MI	2	OK	1
CO	1	MN	1	OR	2
CT	2	MO	5	PA	2
DE	1	MS	1	SC	3
FL	12	NC	3	TN	7
GA	17	ND	1	TX	16
IA	1	NE	2	VA	6
IL	6	NH	1	WA	2
KY	3	NJ	3	WI	1

Police Humor

An 87 year old woman was pulled over by police for speeding. The officer asked if she knew she was speeding, and she said "Yes, I was in a hurry to get where I was going before I forgot where it was." Sounds good to me.

These are actual comments made by 16 Police Officers. The comments were taken from actual police car videos around the country:

- "You know, stop lights don't come any redder than the one you just went through."
- "Relax, the handcuffs are tight because they're new. They'll stretch after you wear them a while."
- "If you take your hands off the car, I'll make your birth certificate a worthless document."
- "If you run, you'll go to jail tired."
- "Can you run faster than 1200 feet per second? Because that's the speed of the bullet that'll be chasing you."
- "You don't know how fast you were going? I guess that means I can write anything I want to on the ticket, huh?"
- "Yes, sir, you can talk to the shift supervisor, but I don't think it will help. Oh, did I mention that I'm the shift supervisor?"
- "Warning! You want a warning? O.K, I'm warning you not to do that again or I'll give you another ticket."

2010 Reunion Attendance by Name

Abrams, Aubray and Judy
 Allison, Max and Shirley and
 guests Dick and Shirley DeVries
 Anderson, Andy
 Archibeque, Francisco and Marcella
 Bailey, Jim and guest Susan Morgan
 * Baitis, Robert
 * Bartlett, Jerry and Sherry
 Beaulieu, Ron
 Beck, Frank
 Behr, Yogi and Judy
 Black, Tim
 Bondo, Mark and Erika
 Borts, Lee
 Boston, Doug
 Bowen, Brian
 Bowers, Bob and Evelyn
 * Boyd, Bill
 Boyd, Lloyd and Yolanda
 Breslin, Ed and
 guest Murphy Phillips
 Brooks, Pat and Lesley
 Brown, Larry and Karilyn
 Brunz, Wayne and Joyce
 * Bryant, Kenny and Gale
 Candenquist, Art
 * Casperson, Dave and Fran
 Cathell, Allen
 Chrisman, Ken and Venita and
 guests Keith and Kim Stokes
 Clinton, Doug and
 guest Janie Jernigan
 Collier, Betty and guests Pam
 Swartwood and Bobbie Marchman
 Collins, Tom and Chantell
 Corfield, Lee and Donna
 Craig, William
 Cummings, Bob and Carolyn
 Cunliffe, Al and Shirley and guests
 Mike Cunliffe and Jennifer West
 Davis, Bob and Georgia
 DeLawter, Wayne and Patty
 Drury, John
 Dugan, Bob and Pat and guests
 Sean and Leslie Huffman,
 Bruce and Claudyne Brown
 * Dyer, Les
 Erickson, Mark
 * Evridge, Darryl and Cheryl

Faubus, Stoney and Melva and guests
 Gary Faubus Jr and Dana Golden
 Furlong, Jim
 Gannon, John
 Garner, Hugh and Peggy
 Garrison, Larry Tricia and guests
 Elizabeth Sassano and Lori Hiller
 Ghizzoni, Al
 Godek, Frank
 Golart, Milt and Marge and guests
 Alia Golart and Carole Golart
 Gravel Alan and Sheri
 Griffin, Don and Sue
 Grissom, Kelly
 Hainkel, TJ
 * Hallmark, Terry
 Hanavan, Pat and Association guest
 Dave Capobianco (5th SF)
 Harmon, George
 Harris, Chuck
 Helterbran, Glenn and June
 Henwood, Charlie and Dolores
 Hopkins, Bob and Eula Mae
 * Icenhour, Jim
 Ippolito, Gerald
 * Jordan, Bill
 Jordan, Chuck and Dorothy
 Kelley, Steve
 Kelly, Dana and Carolann
 Kimseu, Ken and guests
 Bruce and Janet Vanbibber
 Kottak, Joe and Nita
 Kowalski, Dave and Chris
 * Langley, Steve and Cam
 Lehmann, Eugene and
 guest Ramona Flowers
 Leonard, Benny and
 guest Benny Leonard Jr
 Lewis, Doug and Kathy
 Lipscomb, Bob and Dodie
 Mannion, Pat
 Mascaro, Ken
 McGinnis, Daryle and Cindy
 Mednansky, Ed
 Messner, Mike
 Miller, Bob and Jan
 * Mitchell, David and Eddie
 Mott, Lee and Joy
 Murphy, Mike
 Neumayer, Bob and Iola
 Nevins, Chris
 * Nowak, John and Maureen
 Osgood, John

Pacholka, Ken
 * Partington, Fred and Betty
 Pasero, Frank
 Patrick, George and Suzanne and
 guest Caryn Davis
 Perry, Bill
 Phillips, Pat and Barbara
 * Proctor, Lowell and Charlotte
 Ray, Wayne and Elaine
 * Record, John and Pam
 * Revelle, Bardon and Lorri
 Reynolds, Earl and Pam
 Riedner, Steve and Mary Beth
 Riess, Mike
 Ryland, Keith and Opal
 Sanger, Gary
 Schwartz, Rudy and Gina
 * Seymour, Ron and Nancy
 Shanahan, Allen and Karen
 Shankles, Troy and
 guest Byron Shankles
 * Shelton, Lee
 Smith, Josh and Dee
 Smolinski, Jerry
 Sprague, George and Debbie
 Strange, Tom and guest
 Joanne Alloway
 Strickland, Jim
 Tanner, Ray
 Tawes, John and Fran
 Taylor, Curry
 Teske, John and Elaine
 Thomas, Jack and Mary
 Tompkins, Staton
 * Tripp, Roger and Babs
 Vanness, Charles
 Vondersmith, Bill and guest
 Dave Vondersmith
 Waldron, Bob and Ginny
 Wayland, Roger and Tara
 Westman, John
 Wever, Gary and Restie
 * Wilborn, Hank
 Woodbury, Woody
 Woznicki, Frank

* Designates first time attendee



Siege at Ben Het

from 537th TAS History

DEPT. OF THE AIR FORCE

537TH TAS (PACAF)

APO SAN FRANCISCO

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: 537TAS (C) 7 July 1969

SUBJECT: Operations at Ben Het

TO: 483 TAW (C)

The 537th TAS played an active and vivid part in the 36 day siege of the Ben Het Special Forces Camp.

The squadron conducted frequent C-7A Caribou missions into the Ben Het Airfield from early May through late May. The threat of enemy ground fire and enemy artillery being fired into the base camp was ever present. Many times our aircraft were turned away by the Special Forces Advisors because of intense in-coming rounds. Several times our aircraft were subjected to enemy mortar rounds while unloading supplies and personnel at Ben Het. On one occasion an aircraft was hit by mortar fragments.

The airfield was declared closed in early June at which time the 537th TAS started making drops into the camp. A total of 10 drops were made from the 3rd through the 8th of June without an incident. However, on 30 June, six drops were made and all the aircraft commanders reported intense ground fire in spite of FAC support and armed helicopters operating in the area. No hits were received.

On 18 June another single C-7A aircraft free fall drop was scheduled in the morning. The tight ring and large number of enemy on all sides of the Ben Het Camp became quite apparent when the aircraft commander had to make two successive passes over the camp. No drop was made on the first pass because the camp did not pop smoke and there appeared to be people on the drop zone. The aircraft received very intense automatic weapons and 30 cal. fire on the run-ins to the drop zone and during the climb outs. The crew reported that they received in excess

of 300 rounds of fire during these two passes over the camp. The FAC also reported heavy ground fire. The aircraft was not hit; however, Special Forces personnel later stated that considering the amount of fire received the crew was extremely fortunate.

The aircraft commander reported and discussed the incident with the C-7A Duty Officer at the 834th Air Div ALCC (Airlift Control Center). He stated to him that the condition at Ben Het was extremely dangerous for the C-7A on an air drop without adequate fire suppression support. It was further stated that if we did not get support we were going to lose an aircraft. As the result of this, the afternoon drops were provided with a FAC and two armed helicopter gunships as direct support. Three ships in trail dropped in 2-5 minute intervals that afternoon — all three aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire. On 13 June two drops made: a single aircraft and a four aircraft mission. FAC, A-1E's and armed helicopters supported these missions. Two of the aircraft in the four aircraft drop mission were hit by automatic weapons and 30 cal. ground fire. An aircraft commander and flight engineer were wounded on one aircraft and the co-pilot on the other. On 14 June one drop mission was flown with two aircraft, one of the two aircraft was hit by ground fire. One aircraft made a drop on 15 June with A-1E's providing suppression fire and a smoke screen, and the aircraft commander reported intense ground fire. From 17 June to 30 June all drop missions were receiving fighter (F-4, F-100 or A-37) fire suppression passes prior to the air drops and were escorted during the drops by A-1E's and once by F-100's. Also, the A-1's were providing smoke screens. Only one aircraft was hit by ground fire after 17 June (hit on 20 June) in spite of the intense ground fire received throughout the period.

A meeting was held on 21 June 1969 between the agencies concerned at TACC-Alpha to establish connection between fighter strikes, artillery, fighter

escort, and air drop mission aircraft at Ben Het. As the result of this meeting a time over target (TOT) was officially established for each drop. These TOTs were included in subsequent mission frags and were used to provide better coordination of activities.

Although additional fighter suppression support did much toward helping to alleviate the number of aircraft hit by ground fire after 17 June 1969, the incorporation of established procedures with the adoption of the drop procedures peculiar to the Ben Het situation by the 537th TAS also played an important part. Early drops were made in a more conventional tactical pattern with a single aircraft at a time. The intervals between aircraft varied from 2-5 minutes. In order to minimize the effectiveness of enemy ground fire and to better utilize the FAC, fighter, and armed helicopter support available, some general and flexible procedures for air drops were developed. These included the use of in-trail formations of two to six aircraft, Time Over Target (TOT) for planning purposes, best approach corridor to initial point (IP) and drop zone (DZ), rapid in-trail formation descent to IP at 20-30 second intervals, sharp turn at IP to lower airspeed and a minimum run at drop altitude to DZ and finally a hard breaking turn after drop with maximum power climb-out.

Weather was a factor in all missions for take off to landing at Pleiku AB. Some of the air drops during this period were made under adverse weather conditions which necessitated extreme pilot skill and caused additional exposure to enemy ground fire while maneuvering individually, or in a formation, for proper initial point position and for drop alignment and target area departure.

During the siege period of 10 June through 30 June 1969 the 537th TAS participated in 67 air drops. A grand total of 87 air drops were made by the 537th into Ben Het Special Forces Camp

Continued on Page 7

Ben Het (from Page 6)

from 3 June through 3 July 1969. Seven of the squadron aircraft were hit by enemy ground fire with a total of 10 hits — three of which were 50 caliber rounds. Three squadron personnel on the different aircraft were wounded [Maj Delbert D. Lockwood, Lt William F. Quinn, and TSgt John E. White]. Of the seventy flying crew members in the squadron during the action from 3 June through 3 July all but eight participated in one or more missions over Ben Het.

All aircraft were staged out of Pleiku AB for the drop missions. Pleiku ALCE provided mission coordination and ground loading support with the aid of the 5th Special Forces personnel and the Pleiku Aerial Port Detachment. 537th TAS maintenance personnel on temporary duty at Pleiku provided maintenance and cargo handling assistance. During the aforementioned aerial resupply activities, air crews of the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing and the 457th and 458th Tactical Airlift Squadrons at Cam Ranh Bay also participated in the air drop missions. Their missions are not included in the 537th TAS summaries or total figures.

GEORGE C. MARVIN
Lt Col, USAF

Ed. Note: Some sources believe that the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) used the lessons learned at Ben Het about Caribou drop tactics to plan the ambush at Dak Seang in April 1970.

Many awards (there may be others) were received by Caribou personnel for Ben Het missions during the siege:

Silver Star: Delbert D. Lockwood, William A. Evalenko

DFC: William L. Witzig, John D. Mood Jr, Charles W. Hardie, John L. Thomas Jr, Curt Fischer, William F. Quinn Jr, John D. Mellert

Purple Heart: William F. Quinn Jr
Air Medal (single mission): Michael Murphy, Max L. Allison

Purple Heart at Ben Het

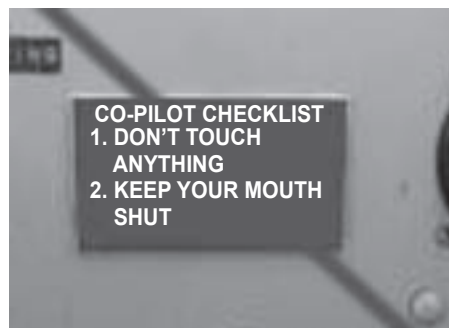
by Billy Quinn [537, 68]

On 13 June of '69 Bill Evalenko was in the left seat and we were making drops at Ben Het. We took a couple of fifty cal. hits on the way down. One of them came up between my legs and could have made life a lot less dramatic during my earlier years.

The shell casing lodged in my boot, stopped by the steel plate or I'd be toeless. It was quite a deal. Ev took over ... cool, calm, and collected, assessing the situation and making all the necessary cockpit decisions with his mike on hot mike. When I got out of the airplane back at Papa Kilo, some of the guys were there to see us in. They looked at my flight suit that was shredded a bit below the knee and, in fact, was actually kind of bloody from some shrapnel damage of a minor nature. We all laughed and kidded that I might get a purple heart out of the deal.

Darned if I didn't! It was the third drop of the day. The first two with Spads flying cover were uneventful as far as effective ground fire was concerned, not that they weren't shooting the s**t out of us, they just weren't leading enough or something. On the last flight, there was a mix up with the Spads and we had Army Hueys flying cover. They were great, but just not quite as potent and effective as the Spads and that's when it happened.

Note: 7th Air Force Special Order G-4698, 15 Nov 1969, awarded Lt Quinn a DFC for this mission and he also received the Purple Heart.



Where Are We?

by Serge Molohosky [459, 66]

My most memorable flight was a day when Ron Lester and I were trying to get to Khe Sanh. It was another exercise in dodging numerous thunder bumpers. After a long time trying to find a way through with no success, we headed back to the coast with no idea where we really were. When we finally broke out over land, nothing looked familiar and we figured we were north of the DMZ. Ron put it down as low as he could over the beaches as we headed South. We were skimming the beaches so low that the flight engineer said the props were making rooster tails in the sand.

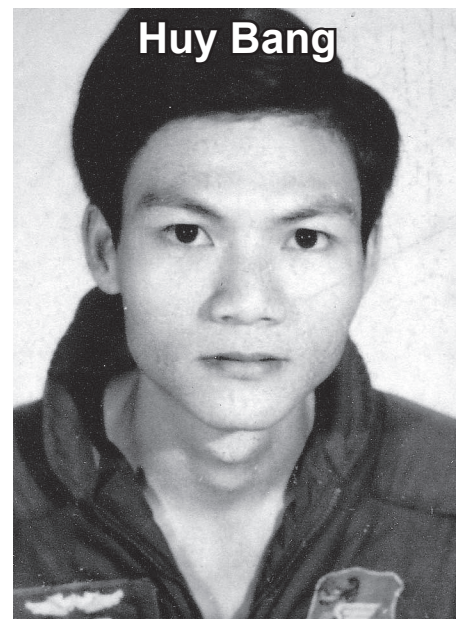
Military Wit and Wisdom

“Bravery is being the only one who knows you’re afraid.” – David Hackworth

“Any ship can be a minesweeper. Once.” – unknown

“Don’t draw fire; it irritates the people around you.” – unknown

“Never tell the Platoon Sergeant you have nothing to do.” – Unknown Marine Recruit



See story on next page.

A Terrified Evacuation Flight

by Huy Bang [427 Sq. VNAF, 71]

Dedication: This article is written in memory of a fallen crew member. 1st Lieutenant Doan The Hao. He was a young, good aircraft commander with whom I enjoyed to fly and work. He was a model airman who encouraged me to study hard and become a good flight mechanic. His outstanding actions as an aircraft commander helped us survive a horrible takeoff. Thanks to Lt. Hao's struggle against the deadly situation, we brought our aircraft back to the base safely.

On another mission, he had bad luck, his wings broken. He lives alone today in the Mac Dinh Chi graveyard in Saigon. Sadly, the enemy flattened his last tomb-home after their victory.

Dear brother Hao, please, accept my prayers for your peaceful rest in heaven. I will carry your dear images everywhere in the USA, until I leave this world for my final resting.

Thanks for our very first memorable flights in the Caribou. Our young C-7A Caribou crew was made up of an aircraft commander and flight mechanic with about 500 flying hours each and other crew members with less than 250 flight hours. We called ourselves "young birds" in the war storm's sky. I learned a costly lesson of war to become a man in the great offensive "Red Fire Summer 1972."

Huy Bang walked into his new squadron operations room of 427th C-7A Caribou squadron. His unit was based at Phu Cat AB, Binh Dinh Province. They received the Caribous from the USAF several months ago. Bang looked up at a large mission planning board in the center of the squadron operations room. His eyes stopped at the line for a routine flight to Bong Son. He mused about the Bong Son district, a small, remote town where a hot battle to be called "Red Fire of Summer 72" was taking place. Bong

Son was one of three "hot" districts in Binh Dinh Province. The Vietcong took over or fought many bloody battles in the Tam Quan, De Duc, and Bong Son districts. The Vietnamese newspapers, radio, and TV were daily reported these battles.

Armed forces of the Republic of Vietnam were trying to reoccupy the land in enemy hands with strong spirited titles such as Tri Thien Dart-up, Binh Dinh Valiant, Kontum Proud, An Loc Decisive Victory Battle.

Bang slowly sat down on a chair in the operations room, reviewing his next day's flight schedule: aircraft commander 2nd Lt. Hao, copilot 2nd Lt. Binh, Sgt Bang, and Cpl Phung. Flight route: Phu Cat to Qui Nhon to Bong Son, flying two times. He silently reviewed his young crew's capacity for the hottest mission tomorrow. For some, it is the their first C-7A Caribou flight landing at the dangerous outpost airstrips.

Lt. Hao and Bang served in the Thanh Long ("blue dragon") 415th Squadron. For the last eight months they flew the C-47 of WW II. However, this old aircraft must land in the large, convenient, and safer airfields. Now, they fly the C-7A, a newer aircraft that can land and take off at short fields of the dangerous outposts along the borders of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

Huy Bang was concerned as he perceived his young crew's capabilities for tomorrow's mission. They were still young, with little war experience at small airfields in dangerous battle conditions. His young aircraft commander was not over 24 years of age. Four months ago, Lieut. Hao became an aircraft commander, so Bang was not sure how his commander would handle the aircraft in a battle situation.

Nobody in the new 427th squadron denied that Lt. Hao was a young, smart, high-energy pilot with great skill. He stature was not large, but he was quick, active, and a great memory. He remembered all his aircraft flying and maintenance systems manuals. In short, he was a young, bright, and valued

aircraft commander.

Huy Bang was fond of Lieut. Hao like a big brother, a young pilot who loved to study hard. Bang was comfortable around Hao and happy to work with him during "ask and answer questions" while studying together as the crew members. As would teach others everything that he learned himself. After one year of studying hard, Bang became a hard working flight mechanic with more knowledge and confidence about the aircraft.

All afternoon and evening, Bang could not sleep. The hot Phu Cat summer included the noise of the South Korean Tiger Division's cannon fire all night long, mixed with helicopter sounds of the 243rd Lion squadron of the VNAF. No one slept well in this war situation.

After four months working with the Caribou aircraft, Bang was only 22, so young without much thought and worry about life. He was thinking more about tomorrow and how to survive in this long war with its deadly crisis, as most Vietnamese thought "Leave life in God's hands." The cannon fire and helicopter and music sounds brought Bang only a little sound sleep.

In the flight line van carrying the crews to their aircraft, Lt. Hao looked back to check his crew members. Smiling, he saw them all. They made a quick check of their aircraft and took off for Qui Nhon, where they loaded 4,000 lbs of 105 mm cannon shells for Bong Son. They would make two 45 minute round trips to Bong Son.

With the tiny Bong Son airfield in front of them, Lt. Hao started to descend. After a long night thinking without too much sleep, Huy Bang carefully made a request of his aircraft commander: "Lt. Hao, before we land, please fly around a little so we can check them out and see the situation before we land."

Hao happily agreed to make a low level pass at 500 feet. The crew mem-

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Evacuation (from Page 8)

bers carefully observed the small unsafe town. It was only a few thatched houses and a single road through the town. Looking down, the motorcycles and three wheel Lambrettas seemed like normal activities of life in the town.

Everything seemed OK. Lt. Hao decided to land. Their Caribou turned into the outpost terminal, but it was strange that nobody was there to receive their cargo. Lt. Hao decided to drop the pallets of cannon shells on the ground. Huy Bang left the aircraft to help the pilot clear the way to move up to drop the second cargo pallet.

The pilot turned off the engines and waited for the terminal personnel to come and sign the cargo manifest. Huy Bang walked around the aircraft to check both engines. The pilots left the cockpit and were walking to the ramp, when, suddenly, they heard the screaming of two hundred Vietnamese passengers who were hidden behind the sand bag walls, elderly people, children, and soldiers. They were running quickly to the aircraft. They jumped into the airplane and they jammed and completely covered the cargo ramp.

Both pilots quickly returned to the cockpit. Huy Bang hurried to find a way to get into the aircraft. A soldier trying to throw his large military bag over the heads of the evacuees was struggling at the ramp. Huy Bang pulled his bag down and it fell on the ground. The soldier got mad with a bad words, as he looked at Bang, pistol hanging at his side. Bang shouted, "Airplane has no room for your property, sir! Please, run for lives."

Bang quickly opened the left passenger door and hooked up the ladder. Only one side was hooked and the evacuees moved over to try and get into the airplane. Bang could get aboard the plane. He took off the ladder and dashed it down on the ground.

He was confused as he thought about how to get into his airplane. The crew may leave him behind if he cannot get

into the airplane. The first engine is now running noisily. Bang's face is happier as he remembers the bottom hatch — a last chance to get into airplane. He quick looked around, ducked down under the fuselage and raced to the bottom hatch as fast as possible to get in the aircraft before the pilots moved the aircraft. He got in the cockpit just as the pilot was moving for takeoff.

As Lt. Hao moved the aircraft, several evacuees gave up, leaving the aircraft, but many were still hanging onto the ramp. Turning into runway, Hao made a running takeoff without rechecking the engines. People were in the aircraft and on the ramp. Bang and the loadmaster could not close the ramp and cargo door.

The takeoff run was slow, without normal airspeed to lift off the ground. Bang felt it was slow as he waited for the airplane to lift up into the air. After a long time, the landing gear still did not lift up from the runway surface.

Hao screamed into the interphone: "Flight engineer and loadmaster! Hurry up and move passengers forward. Airplane is tail heavy and we cannot lift off." One man was hanging on the end of ramp, his foot slipped out, both his hands trying to hold the cargo door actuator. He could no longer endure the wind and the airplane shaking. His hands lost grip and he fell onto the runway, unmoving as our airplane reached takeoff speed. A 12 year old boy screamed for help as he saw his father fall off the plane without people helping. The plane's engine noise covered his voice.

Almost at the end of runway, the landing gear just lifted up into the air. In horrible, slow motion Bang saw that the landing gear is lower than the barbed wire fence around the field, as the aircraft moves closer to it.

Landing gear is up, but Lt. Hao cannot throttle back to meto power. He keeps maximum power to climb over the tree tops. His deadly voice screams again: "Help! Quick, move the passengers forward, we cannot fly, move

them up!"

In a trembling voice, the loadmaster answered, "We try hard, Lt.! But, the crowd of people is on the ramp. We can't close the door, sir!"

Bang's face turns green, his mind frozen as the wing tips are lower than the tree tops. His soul is full of a fear of death. His mouth trembles as he pray for both engines to be good. If one fails, certainly they will die with this overload. Lt. Hao has a hard time to bringing his aircraft over the trees.

Bang mumbles to himself, "What can I do to help? What can I do now? Looking at the empty space behind the two pilot seats, Bang feels an Army soldier standing behind the cargo compartment wall, pushing him into the cockpit as he screams noisily. "Move up! Quick! Move it, you, and you, please, quick move up." Everyone starts moving up. Moments later, the loadmaster closed the ramp as the plane reached a few hundred feet into the air.

Still shaking, Lt. Hao reduced engine power slightly and turned his aircraft toward the sea, where it is safer than over land. As he was turning, the crew heard a noise. It seemed like enemy bullets struck the plane. Lt. Hao shouted, "Anyone hear that noise?" The loadmaster replied, "It seemed like enemy bullets hit our aircraft, Lt." Hao quickly climbed to 2,000 feet and leveled off, flying along the sea shore, heading to Qui Nhon.

First Lieutenant Nghiep flew the same route, starting one hour later. Hao stopped Lt. Nghiep from landing at Bong Son to avoid the bad evacuation situation. Lt. Nghiep returned his plane to Qui Nhon and reported the bad situation at Bong Son airfield.

Hao asked his crew, "FE and loadmaster, how many passengers did we load?" Both crew men counted and answered, "69 passengers, Lt.!"

Lt. Hao turned the crying boy who lost his father over to the Qui Nhon terminal personnel for them to take care of him and find his relatives.

How's This For A Bad Day?

Aircraft Commander 1st Lt Oliver Hildebrandt, Pilot 1st Lt Walter Ross, Co-pilot Captain Wilbur Evans, and a crew of thirteen took off from Carswell AFB in B-36B, S/N 44-92035 of the 26th Bomb Squadron of the 7th Bomb Wing at 5:05 A.M. on November 22, 1950. The planned 30-hour training mission consisted of air-to-air gunnery, bombing, simulated radar bombing, and navigational training.

Immediately after take-off, the #4 alternator would not stay in parallel with the other three alternators, so it was taken off-line and de-excited three minutes into the flight. About one minute after the #4 alternator was shut down, flames 8 to 12 feet long erupted from around the air plug of the number-one engine. The left scanner reported the flames to the pilot. Six minutes after take-off, the flight engineer shut down the number-one engine, feathered its propeller, and expended one of its methyl bromide fire extinguishing bottles.

The mission continued on the power of the remaining five engines. The plane cruised to the gunnery range on Matagorda Island at an altitude of 5,000 feet. It arrived at 7:00 A.M. and the gunners began practicing. Radar Observer SSgt Ray Earl manned the tail turret. The charger for the right gun burned out, so he expended just half of his ammunition. Then the APG-3 radar for the tail turret started acting up, so SSgt Earl secured the set.

Aircraft Commander, 1st Lt Oliver Hildebrandt noted that the vibration from firing the 20 mm cannons increased significantly during the fourth gunnery pass. Immediately afterward, radar operator Capt James Yeingst notified Hildebrandt that the APQ-24 radar set blew up and was smoking. Vibration from the firing of the guns was causing shorting between the internal components of the radar. Then the liaison transmitter failed as well.

The cannons in the left forward upper turret and the left rear upper turret stopped firing. The gunners attempted to retract the gun turrets, but the failed turrets would not retract. Gunner SSgt Fred Boyd entered the turret bay, but other problems began to take precedence over the stuck turrets. Boyd was called out of the bay before he could manually crank the turret down.

At 7:31 A.M., the number-three engine suffered an internal failure. The torque pressure fell to zero. The manifold pressure dropped to atmospheric pressure. The fuel flow dropped off and the flight engineer could not stabilize the engine speed. The pilot shut down the number three engine and feathered its propeller. The B-36B had only one operating engine on the left wing, so the pilot aborted the remainder of the training mission and set course for Kelly Air Force Base.

Flight engineer Captain Samuel Baker retarded the spark, set the mixture controls to "normal," and set the engine RPMs to 2,500 to increase the power from the remaining engines. Unknown to Captain Baker, the vibration from the guns had disabled the electrical systems controlling the spark settings and fuel mixture. He immediately discovered that the turbo control knobs no longer affected the manifold pressure.

The B-36B could not maintain its airspeed on the power of the four remaining engines. It descended about 1,000 feet and its airspeed bled off to 135 miles per hour. The pilot called for more power. The flight engineer attempted to increase engine speed to 2,650 RPM and enrich the fuel mixture, but got no response from the engines except for severe backfiring. The fuel mixture indicators for all of the engines indicated lean. The second flight engineer, MSgt Edward Farcas, checked the electrical fuse panel. Although the fuses appeared to be intact, he replaced the master turbo fuse and all of the individual turbo fuses. He noticed that the turbo-amplifiers and mixture amplifiers were all cooler than normal.

He climbed into the bomb bay to check the aircraft power panels and fuses, but could not find any problem there.

Kelly Air Force Base had a cloud overcast at 300 feet and the visibility was restricted to two miles. The weather at Bergstrom Air Force Base was not as bad, with scattered clouds at 1,000 feet, broken clouds at 2,000 feet, and 10 miles visibility. Carswell Air Force Base was clear with 10 miles visibility, but it was 155 miles farther away than Bergstrom. Air traffic control cleared all airspace below 4,000 feet ahead of the crippled B-36B. Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt was flying on instruments in thick clouds.

The poor weather at Kelly Air Force Base convinced Hildebrandt to change course from Kelly to Carswell Air Force Base, passing by Bergstrom Air Force Base on the way in case the airplane could not make it to Carswell. Bombardier Capt Robert Nelson made two attempts to salvo the 1,500 pounds of practice bombs in the rear bomb bay, but the bomb bay doors would not open by automatic or manual control, or emergency procedure.

There was no way to dump fuel to reduce the weight of the B-36B. The flight engineers resorted to holding down the switches used to prime the fuel system in an attempt to increase fuel flow to the engines. MSgt Edward Farcas held down the prime switches for the number-two and number-four engines while Capt Baker held down the prime switch for the number-five engine and operated the flight engineer's panel. The configuration of the switches did not allow them to prime the number-five engine and the number-six engine at the same time.

The high power demand coupled with the lean fuel mixture made the cylinder head temperatures of the engines climb to 295 degrees C. Flight engineer Baker jockeyed the throttles, decreasing the throttle setting of the engine with the highest cylinder head temperature until

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Bad Day (from Page 10)

another engine grew even hotter. The high temperature caused the fuel-air mixture in the cylinders to detonate before the pistons reached top dead center, diminishing power and damaging the engines.

Despite the critical situation with the engines, Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt decided to continue past Bergstrom Air Force Base to Carswell. Bergstrom was overcast and its runway was only 6,000 feet long. Carswell offered a much longer runway. By the time the B-36B reached Cleburne, the backfiring on all engines increased in violence. The number 2, number 5, and number 6 engines were running at 70% power and the number 4 engine was producing only 20% power. The airspeed had dropped off to 130 miles per hour.

Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt attempted to restart the number one engine, the one that had spouted flames on take-off, but fuel was not getting to its induction system. He tried to restart the number three engine, but could not unfeather the propeller on that engine. As the bomber passed to the west of Cleburne, the right scanner reported dense white smoke, oil, and metal particles coming from the number five engine.

After a short while, the number five engine lost power, and Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt feathered the propeller on that engine while still twenty-one miles from Carswell Air Force Base. The B-36B could not stay airborne on the power of the three remaining failing engines. It was flying at just 125 miles per hour, seven miles per hour above the stall speed, losing both altitude and airspeed. Howard McCullough and W. Boeten were flying Civil Aeronautics Authority DC-3 N342 near Cleburne. They were notified by Meacham Tower to be on the lookout for 44-92035. They spotted it about five miles south of Cleburne. They observed that the number one and

number three propellers were feathered and the number-five engine was on fire. They turned to follow the descending bomber. Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt ordered the crew to bail out of the stricken bomber.

Bombardier Capt Robert Nelson had bailed out of airplanes on two previous occasions. He had crash landed twice and ditched once. He was the first man to bail out from the forward crew compartment. He suffered contusions of his lower spine when he landed.

Radar Operator Capt James Yeingst responded to stress with laughter and jokes. He was a bit giddy before the bailout. He was the second man to exit from the forward crew compartment. His parachute streamed after he pulled the rip cord. He passed Capt Nelson going down. Captain Yeingst's parachute mushroomed open just before he hit the ground, but he suffered fatal injuries.

Co-pilot Capt Wilbur Evans was the third man to exit from the forward crew compartment. He had bailed out of airplanes twice before and crash landed several times during WW II. This time he broke both bones in his lower right leg when he landed.

Navigator Capt Horace Stewart had previously tried to get off flying status because he felt that the B-36 was too dangerous. It is reported that during the hour before bailout, he was tense, nervous, and chain-smoking. He was the fourth man to bail out from the forward crew compartment. He pulled his rip cord just as he exited the forward escape hatch on the left side of the fuselage. His parachute opened and pulled him toward the number three propeller. His head hit the downward pointing blade of the propeller, killing him instantly.

Radio Operator Cpl Paul Myers followed Capt Stewart out the escape hatch. Myers landed with minor injuries. Flight Engineer MSgt Edward Farcas jumped head first through the exit hatch of the forward crew compartment right after Cpl Myers. His parachute did not open when he pulled the rip cord.

He pulled the parachute out of its pack with his hands and landed with only minor injuries.

Radar Mechanic Robert Gianerakis and Flight Engineer Capt Samuel Baker were the next to escape from the forward compartment. Both landed with only minor injuries. Radio Operator Sgt Armando Villareal bailed out after Capt Baker. Villareal did not trust his parachute to open, so he pulled the rip cord while he was still in the forward crew compartment. He held his parachute in his arms as he jumped feet first through the escape hatch. Despite his unorthodox method of escape, he landed with only minor injuries.

Pilot 1st Lt. Walter Ross was the next to last to leave the forward compartment. He landed with only minor injuries. Gunner SSgt Andrew Byrne and Radar Observer SSgt Ray Earl were the first two crew members to bail out of the rear crew compartment. Both landed with only minor injuries. Gunner Cpl Calvin Martin was the third man to exit the rear crew compartment. He was swinging under his parachute as he hit the ground. He broke his right ankle as he landed. He fell backward onto a rock, fracturing his third lumbar vertebra and compressing his tailbone. Gunner SSgt Ronald Williams followed Cpl Martin out the rear escape hatch. He landed with only minor injuries. Gunner SSgt Fred Boyd was the last man to exit the rear crew compartment. He called to Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt over the intercom to let him know that everyone had escaped from the aft compartment. When he turned back to the exit hatch, it had fallen shut. He had to open the hatch again to make his escape. He broke the fibula of his left leg when he landed farther to the north than the other crew members.

After SSgt Boyd reported that all other crew members had bailed out of the rear compartment, Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt set the autopilot and jumped clear when the bomber was

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Bad Day (from Page 11)

less than 1,000 feet above the ground. He and nine other crew members escaped from the B-36B with only minor injuries. When McCullough and Boeten in DC-3, N342, saw the parachutes of the escaping crew members, they announced the bail-out on the emergency frequency of 121.5 megacycles.

Each report of Emergency Parachute Jump indicates that the incident occurred 20 miles south southeast of Carswell Air Force Base. The descent of the B-36B was witnessed by Mr Buck Bell and his wife, who lived about 5 to 7 miles southwest of Crowley, TX. Mr Bell saw the crew members parachuting from the bomber, but did not see it hit the ground about one mile north of his house. Mr James Bandy and his wife were on the road to Cleburne about 4 miles from their house on Route 1 near Joshua when they spotted the B-36B trailing smoke, flying in a nose-high attitude. They saw it hit the ground in a level attitude, raising a cloud of dust.

The B-36B descended straight ahead in a nose-high attitude for a mile after Aircraft Commander Hildebrandt bailed out. It stalled, pitched nose down, and impacted in a terraced field on Les Armstrong's Dairy, 14 miles south of Carswell Air Force Base, and six miles west of Crowley at 9:50 in the morning. The forward crew compartment separated and folded underneath the rest of the fuselage. The tail section broke off, and the rear crew compartment came away from the mid-fuselage as the wreckage slid 850 feet along the ground and twisted to the right.

The rear sections of the airplane remained largely intact. The elevation at the crash site was approximately 700 feet. Mr. W. Doggett witnessed the bail-out and crash from his home on Route 1 near Joshua. The B-36B impacted about 2.5 miles north of his house. He drove to the crash site in his pickup truck and helped the surviving crew members to regroup.

Four minutes after the crash, Mc-

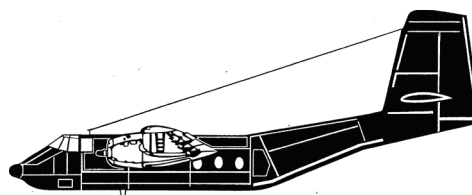
Cullough and Boeten in DC-3, N342, reported that two Navy aircraft were circling the wreckage. The wreckage smoldered for about eight minutes before a fire broke out in the number six engine. The 15,000 gallons of remaining fuel consumed the forward fuselage and wings. The civilians and crew members were driven away from the crash site by exploding ammunition and the knowledge of the presence of 1,500 pounds of bombs aboard the airplane.

Read this the next time you think you're having a bad day

Cool Hand Bob

by Peter Bird [535, 71]

A 459th TAS Caribou, S/N 63-9724 (?), overran the runway at Tra Bong and damaged the nose gear to the extent it could not be repaired on site and flown out. Bob Markham 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 (Jerry Brown?) 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."



Nui Coto Mountain

by Wayne Hollrah [536, 67]

We were just finishing a rather long day, and had to make one last delivery to Can Tho. The 536th had a small detachment at Can Tho, but they were all busy. I was not part of that detachment. We landed at Can Tho and off loaded when Lt Col Hendricks, the detachment commander, came running out of operations and said to me that he just got an emergency re-supply air drop mission of the highest priority. I told him that we could do it, but how long would it take to get rigged? He confirmed that it could be done quickly. He also knew that we didn't have much daylight left.

True to his word, the Army delivered a half pallet of small arms ammo, just after we got the aircraft set up for the air drop. We loaded, took off, and headed for the mountains. A small Special Forces squad was trapped and surrounded in a rice paddy just south of the southern end of the mountains. It was a short flight to get there, and we soon made radio contact.

It made a tremendous impact on them just to hear that we were not only on the way, but close. I had them throw smoke, and was surprised that we had enough time to descend, and get ready to drop. This was done in good time and we flew straight in on the drop run. It was a good thing, because we didn't have enough light to look for them. We could hear the small arms fire at us, but didn't take any hits. Having done these drops many times, the challenge of dropping the load right on top of them was fairly typical. This one was the same, and they didn't have to leave their position to reload and respond to their attackers.

Mission complete, with success. We didn't even return to Can Tho, but flew straight back to Vung Tau. It was dark when we got back there.

Note: At this time, Caribou crews were required to be on the ground by sundown – no flying at night.

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 Traylorcrest Ln Apt #2
Kirkwood, MO .63122-2263

Rescue From Katum

by Charlie Corder [536, 70]

I was at Bien Hoa as a site commander. On December 23, 1970, there was a frantic call for someone to try and evacuate the crew of a Caribou which had crashed on landing at Katum and who wanted to get out of there. I volunteered to try and get them out and took off for Katum. The weather was really bad, but we found our way down through the clouds without a problem. The runway was very slick, but we managed to land safely. Almost immediately, we started to get ground fire from the enemy firing over the fence from Cambodia.

As I recall, we radioed to the ground troops to get our guys out to the end of the runway ASAP and they did. As we landed we saw the Caribou crew at the other end and rolled out to pick them up. At the end of the runway we turned around, pushed off some crates of ammo, waived the stranded crew aboard and poured on the coal to go back the way from which we had landed. The takeoff was uneventful, but the ground fire started immediately.

Although there were some hits, none caused any significant damage and we hauled a** towards Saigon. Once away from Katum, the trip was uneventful. The good Lord was with us that day.

Note: 7th Air Force Special Order G-0542, 29 February 1972, awarded Major Corder a DFC for this amazing rescue. At this time, we have not found awards for the other crew members, but we are still searching.

Creative Thinking

by Earl Allen [483, 70]

I spent my days either on the flight line handling issues with getting birds launched or in my office in job control where my guys were in contact with FMS specialists or OMS guys on the flight line launching and recovering the birds. I spent a fair amount of time at night in my trailer addressing problems the birds had in the field, trying to get home safely. Often, the flight engineer or other crew member would call for permission/approval/suggestions on what to do to the bird to get back to home base. One night, I recall a call asking if it would be ok to tie down an engine cowling with tie down straps since some fasteners were missing or ineffective. I told them to go ahead and do so and get out of there ASAP. Thankfully, they made it home safely or else my career might have been shortened somewhat.

Vietnam Citations

by Pat Hanavan [535,68]

The awards and decorations I found at Maxwell AFB during the last 12 months are on the web site 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 our history records. If you cannot find it, at least let me know the location of the action. My addresses are on page 2.

Attack on CRB

by David Mitchell [536, 70]

My friend Alan and I remodeled an abandoned squadron club into a two man apartment at Cam Ranh in 1970 to get out of the Quonset hootch. It was like MASH, trading for supplies. I was there under the bed with a traded-for AK-47, complete with banana clip, when our ammo dump got blown by sappers which caved in our roof.

Sirens went off about 5 min. after the first explosions. I really got scared then. Almost got in trouble as well as feeling bad for firing it on 1 Jan. The distinctive chatter of an AK-47 was known by many and feared, justifiably, by all.

Caribous Recognized

The February 2011 issue of Air Force Magazine is scheduled to have an article on the C-7A Caribou in the Classic Aircraft section. The article was written by Walter Boyne, author of *Beyond the Wild Blue*, *Clash of Wings*, *Rolling Thunder*, *Hypersonic Thunder*, *Dawn over Kittyhawk*, *Beyond the Horizons*, *Air Force Eagles*, and many other books. Publication date might change, so be looking for this article.

Cool Things to Know

Butterflies taste with their feet.

In 10 minutes, a hurricane releases more energy than all of the world's nuclear weapons combined.

On average, 100 people choke to death on ball-point pens every year.

On average, people fear spiders more than they do death.

Ninety percent of New York City cabbies are recently arrived immigrants.

Elephants are the only animals that can't jump.

Only one person in two billion will live to be 116 or older.

It's possible to lead a cow upstairs ... but not downstairs.

Women blink nearly twice as much as men.

Tales From Nam

by Kenny Bryant [458, 71]

Once, I was the only passenger leaving Bien Hoa for a day trip to Saigon, the flight mech came back, opened up the cargo ramp, sat next to me and said, "Cinch it up tight ... we're going to buzz the Saigon Bridge." We were below tree top level, following the river. When we rounded the last turn, we pulled up tight and watched the people jumping in the river. I didn't know the crew or the flight mech.

On a flight back to home base, I was again the only passenger. We had to fly back to home base every now and then to sign papers for some other one day trip. The flight mech came back and said "cinch you seat belts tight." The pilot was on his last flight in-country and he bet the co-pilot his pay that he could stop the Bou on the asphalt overrun. We made a very steep descent, dropped full flaps, and at the last minute he flared really hard, then full reverse. Doggone if he didn't do it! The overrun at Cam Rahn Bay wasn't very long and it was uphill! The landing wasn't that bad.

On another flight, I had my AWOL bag and headphones back in the cargo compartment, listening to the radio and intercom traffic. We were going into a short field out somewhere in the boonies when the TACAN broke lock. The co-pilot pointed it out to the pilot, who said, "That's the only nav-aid into our destination." I keyed my mic and said, "Channel all the way down to zero and then back to the channel you need." They looked at each other, then the co-pilot followed my suggestion. Bang! The TACAN locked on. The co-pilot leaned forward and looked up to the sky and said, "Thank You."

When we landed, the pilot saw me on the headphones and asked if that was me on the interphone. I told him "Yes." The TACAN "A" models had a crystal turret and it would sometimes oscillate for no reason. If it stopped off channel, it would break lock. A little over a year

later, on the streets of Agana, Guam this same Captain stopped me on the street and said, "TACAN, right?" We greeted each other and he told me that he was flying B-52's there in Guam on Bullet Shot! He also said he'd not had another TACAN failure since I shared the tip with him. The B-52 had "C" Model TACANs and that trick didn't work on them because they had solid state tuning. I don't remember his name, but I often remember the event.

When we closed down the Forward Operating Locations, we returned to Cam Ranh Bay. They were boxing up and shipping things out. I said, "Do we get to go home early???" Instead, the next day they tossed a stack of patches to us and said, "Have them on all your uniforms and report Monday for deployment." We wore 2nd Division of the VNAF on one shoulder and pocket and AFAT 2, Det 3 on the other shoulder. When I got home, Walter Cronkite was on the CBS evening news saying, "The number of U.S. servicemen in Vietnam, dropped to xxx today." The 98 Americans in AFAT 2 were not counted. Our base commander was a VNAF Colonel. Our "Team Leader" was Col. Enright (???). He was a really neat guy.

One evening, we were going to mid-night chow. The steep hill crossing the perimeter road into our parking area was a very difficult stop. I told my passenger, "You check right, I'll check right. If there's nothing coming, I'm not stopping." When I looked right, all I saw was an upside down Christmas tree sparkling white, yellow, red, poof, it was gone. A 122 mm rocket went off right outside the truck door. Neither of us ever heard it. All sound disappeared. We bailed out of the truck. It continued on to the parking lot, but I'd turned it off before leaving. We hit the ground and rolled into the ditch. Phu Cat took its normal 14 rockets. After the "all clear," we went retrieved the truck and went to chow. I've seen that Christmas tree a couple of times since, but we never heard the explosion.

Operation Bullet Shot

Operation "Bullet Shot" was conducted during 1972 and resulted in the North Vietnamese finally getting serious about negotiating. In February 1972, in response to the increased infiltration by the North Vietnamese into South Vietnam, SAC initiated Operation Bullet Shot. Bullet Shot resulted in the build up of B-52 forces at Andersen AFB to carry out increased bombing missions that would eventually involve every B-52D unit. By July 1972, a force of almost 50 B-52Ds, 100 B-52Gs and over 12,000 personnel were bedded down at Anderson AFB. These bombers participated in bombing raids against enemy targets all over Vietnam, including north of the demilitarized zone.

When Operation Arc Light began during the mid-1960s, B-52's from Guam, Thailand, and Okinawa would each take off at approximately the same time and rendezvous at roughly the same points using essentially the same tactics night after night. Flying at an altitude of 39,000-41,000 feet, the bombers would head directly to the target areas. During the early days of Bullet Shot, many B-52's were lost on the flights over North Vietnam due to the repeated use of the same tactics. When the bombers changed the day-to-day tactics, the number of lost aircraft went down significantly.

The Arc Light sortie rate had been reduced to 1,000 per month in July 1971, and was increased to 1,200 per month in February 1972. When Bullet Shot was complete, the B-52's were capable of 3,150 sorties a month, until President Richard M. Nixon ordered a cessation to the aggressive bombing efforts. President Nixon gave that order when it appeared that the Paris Peace Talks were resulting in a possible agreement. However, when the Communist forces took advantage of the bombing halt by increasing their operations tempo, President Nixon gave the order to execute Linebacker II.

True American Humor

You might be a *True American* if

- You stand and place your hand over your heart when they play the National Anthem.
- It never occurred to you to be offended by the phrase, "One nation, under God."
- You respect your elders and expect your kids to do the same.
- You bow your head when someone prays.
- You've never burned an American flag.
- You've never protested about seeing the Ten Commandments posted in public places.
- You know what you believe and you aren't afraid to say so, no matter who is listening.
- You still say "Christmas" instead of "Winter Festival."
- You treat Vietnam vets with great respect, and always have.

Santa's Check Ride

In early December Santa received a notice from the FAA informing him that, given the tighter security being imposed in U.S. airspace, he will be required to take an FAA check ride in order to continue his traditional flight operations. An examiner will be at his disposal on December 20th and that he should make all the necessary preparations with his logbook and flight equipment.

Santa figures that he has little choice and that he must get all the toys to the deserving children, so he instructed the elves to re-do the annual inspection on the sleigh and to be sure the reindeer are well fed and groomed. "Let's take no chances," he tells them.

The examiner arrives the morning of the 20th and is escorted out to the sleigh for the obligatory walk around inspection. He finds the sleigh sound, very clean, and all the required bullets incorporated. The reindeer are found to be well behaved and full of vim and

vigor. So far, everything is fine.

The examiner exclaims, "So, Santa, let's mount up and get this check ride out of the way, since I'm sure you are busy with other Christmas preparations."

As they climb onto the bench seat, Santa sees that the examiner has a 12 gauge shotgun. Out of curiosity, Santa inquires "Uh, why the shotgun?"

The examiner looks at Santa furtively, glancing to his left and his right as he exclaims, "Well, I'm not supposed to tell you this, but you are going to lose an engine on takeoff!!!"

Life on the Flight Line

by Robert Hamilton [535, 70]

Kudos to the guys of the 535th on the flight line at Vung Tau. These young airmen – the crew chiefs, expeditors, line chiefs, specialists in the shops – returned their aircraft to "in commission" status overnight, day after day. From tire changes, to plug changes, and anything else, they carried themselves as professionals.

They were on the line from the early hours of the morning or recovering the birds late in the day and working on them into the night.

I was proud of each and every one of them and to have responsibility for them. They did their best and have every right to be proud of their work.

Creative Leave

by Daryle McGinnis [458, 70]

In 1971, DoD started letting us go **home** on 2 weeks leave in addition to R&R. Roommate Don and I did something I don't think was done before or after. We each stretched 2 weeks into nearly a month using a variety of schemes, including flying each other's missions. (I'm sure we both flew 160 hours in a 30 day period as ourselves and as the other.) We had flown C-141's and knew ACP, so we bought our Pan Am tickets to get our leave orders cut, but then cashed them in. C-141 crews wrote us on their crew orders, so we flew home and back in cockpits.

Girlie Humor

- One of life's mysteries is how a 2 pound box of chocolates can make a woman gain 5 pounds.
- My mind not only wanders, it sometimes leaves completely.
- The best way to forget your troubles is to wear tight shoes.
- The nice part about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you are doing, someone else does.
- The older you get, the tougher it is to lose weight, because by then your body and your fat are really good friends.
- Just when I was getting used to yesterday, along came today.
- Sometimes I think I understand everything, and then I regain consciousness.
- Amazing! You hang something in your closet, for a while, and it shrinks 2 sizes!
- Skinny people irritate me! Especially when they say things like, "You know sometimes I forget to eat!" Now, I've forgotten my address, my mother's maiden name, and my keys, but I have never forgotten to eat. You have to be a special kind of stupid to forget to eat!
- The trouble with some women is that they get all excited about nothing – and then they marry him.
- I read this article that said the typical symptoms of stress are eating too much, impulse buying, and driving too fast. Are they kidding? That's my idea of a perfect day!

Shuttling Troops

by Charlie Henwood [457, 68]

We were moving an Army battalion around some time in 1968 and we had shuttles going from Ben Het to Dak Pek to Dak To. There was a pilot at each base coordinating the loading. I was at Ben Het. I read somewhere once that a record of some sort was set. I did hear that an Army colonel who hadn't smiled in years was very happy.

Feather #2

by Jim Luntzel [536, 69]

I was on my last mission in country on 2 April 1970 with a brand new co-pilot on his first mission in country. We were directed from Bien Hoa up to Pleiku to participate in air drops to the Special Forces Camp at Dak Seang the next day. We had already lost one C-7A and its crew of three to heavy ground fire, so we were prepared for the worst on our run over the camp. We had to go in at just 300 ft and 110 kts, so we made pretty easy targets.

Intel reported that the “bad guys” had quad-mounted 51 cal. machine guns, 23 mm AAA, and, of course, a multitude of AK-47’s. On 3 April 1970, our flight of six C-7As had to orbit around for quite some time while a B-52 “Arc Light” bomb run was in progress. Then, several F-100’s made fire suppression strafing runs. The FAC (call sign “Elliott”) cleared us in and we picked up an A-1E “Spad” on each wing to beat up the NVA below. We were Bou #3. On the way in the FAC radioed “Caribou One, you were LONG!” Next I heard “Caribou Two, you were SHORT!” As I started hearing funny pop-pop sounds, I had the camp in sight and made a mental determination to keep my altitude right on 300 ft, not 298 or 302, and the airspeed exactly 110 kts, not 107 or 112, and head right for the center of the camp. Over the target, with the popping sounds much louder (we flew with the side windows open), I called out “Green Light” on the intercom, shoved the throttles to max power, and pulled back on the yoke. The loadmaster called out “Pallets away — good chutes.” Our load was 105 mm ammo.

We heard the FAC call out, “Bingo, baby! Caribou Three — right on target!”

The popping was really loud now and we were not going anywhere. The flight mech came on intercom and said, “We have a heavy vapor stream coming out of #2. Looks like a fuel leak.” I glanced at the instruments and saw that the



manifold pressure on #2 was very low, which accounted for the fact that, even with the throttles jammed all the way forward, we were not climbing out. We were headed for some hills, so I called out, “Feather #2!!” to the co-pilot on the intercom.

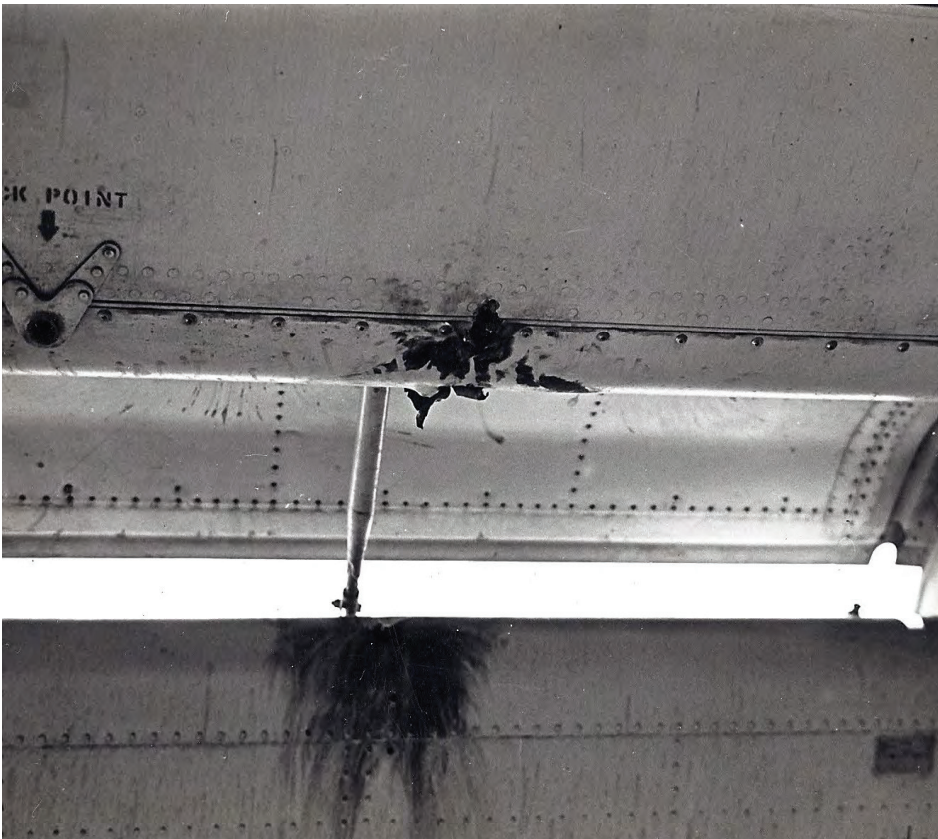
The drag of the wind milling prop was pulling us to the right and adding more power to the “good” (left) engine just made it worse. The wind milling prop was dragging us towards the oncoming hills. It was NOT feathered! I pushed my helmet back and shouted out as loud as I could to the co-pilot, “FEATHER #2!” Nothing happened. I looked at him and he was sitting there glassy-eyed, frozen, staring straight ahead. So, I reached over to the two big, red feathering buttons, pushed the right one (#2) and tried to maneuver between the peaks of the rising terrain. Now, without the tremendous drag of the now-feathered engine, we could begin a slow, but positive, climb out over the hills that surrounded Dak Seang.

I knew we couldn’t make it back

to Pleiku, or at least it would be very dicey, because we did not know if there was any damage to the good engine. If we had suffered any hits, it could stop running at any moment, just like #2 did. Then we’d be s**t out of luck, in deep kimchi for sure. I wracked my brain for a solution, then I remembered a Special Forces strip I’d been into quite some time before and that was Dak To — if I could remember where it was. Somehow, I did recall about where it was located and made a pretty good single-engine landing on that short PSP (pierced steel planking) strip.

We sat on that strip for several hours before a Caribou came to take us back to Pleiku. I was called back to Saigon and continued to check out my replacement before my return to the U.S.

Note: 7th Air Force Special Order G-3182, 14 July 1970, awarded Major Luntzel a DFC for this mission. MSgt Eugene Anderson (see next column for his recollections) and the co-pilot also received DFCs for this mission.



Limping to Dak To

by Gene Anderson [536, 69]

I was stationed at Vung Tau and Major Luntzel and the co-pilot were stationed at Cam Ranh Bay. They came to Vung Tau for orientation flights. We had completed many flights for the day and were at Bien Hoa with cargo on board to take home on the last sortie of the day. The operations sergeant came out and asked if we were drop qualified. I said I was and I went up to the flight deck and confirmed that both pilots were qualified. I took the engineer position as I was the only one available at the time.

The operations sergeant said "Throw that load off. You're going to Pleiku." When we arrived at Pleiku, we loaded 155 mm ammo and water cans for airdrops at Dak Seang. Then, our flight was cancelled. They had so many fires going that we wouldn't find the drop zone. We went to bed and got up the next morning for airdrops at Dak Seang.

Nearing Dak Seang, I was in the rear

of the aircraft preparing for the drops when the pilot said, "Man, they blew that Bou out of the air." At this time, we were taking AAA and small arms fire. We continued to the drop zone, dropped our load, and were climbing out when the aircraft gave a sudden lurch. We also took a 23 mm anti aircraft round which hit approximately one 32nd of an inch behind the rear spar and left a huge hole where it came out. An itchy trigger finger would have put it in the fuel tank and I would not be telling this. Another round of some kind also left the left wing tank looking like a furious wife took one big a** can opener, opening up a slit about four feet long. Another round came up through the bottom of the fuselage and took out some radio and electronic equipment.

To say the least, we were not in the best of shape. No, I was not strapped in for the landing. I stood on the step and watched ol' Diamond Jim grease that Boo in for a perfect single engine landing at the old Dak To airfield which was closed at the time. An old Army sergeant greeted us in a jeep and po-

lately asked, "What the @#%^ are you guys doing here?" We said, "Just visiting." Major Luntzel used the radio and got permission for another Boo to come in and pick us up. To make things just a little bit more exciting, Dak To was under attack at the time and was taking fire from the high ground.

First to Land at A Luoi – A Shau Valley *Caribou Clarion, July 1968*

Not since Air Force Medal of Honor winner Maj Bernard Fisher's daring landing and rescue of his downed fellow A-1 Skyraider in the A Shau Valley have American planes been able to land or takeoff in the valley.

But, due to the courage and determination of the men of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), and Air Force C-7A Caribou from the 537th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Phu Cat Air Base., recently touched down safely on the 2,300 foot dirt runway near A Luoi and delivered vitally needed supplies.

The crew members, Lt Col Maynard E. Stogdill, 44, Colorado Springs, CO, aircraft commander; 1st Lt James E Laney, Jr, 25, Birmingham, AL, co-pilot; and SSgt James E. Drumm, 33, Marysville, OH, flight engineer, were greeted by Maj Gen John J. Tolsen, Commander 1st Air Cav.

"I could tell by his broad grin and anxious look that he was really happy to see us come in," noted Stogdill.

Prior to this landing, all personnel and supplies had been brought in by helicopter or truck. "The landing strip is really in good shape," noted Laney. "We only had to use about a quarter of it."

Known to the men of the 1st Air Cav as Landing Zone Stallion, the strip is located some 209 miles north of Phu Cat Air Base. The crew members of the 537th are now providing continuing airlift support to the A Shau Valley in continuation of their primary mission to provide airlift for the 1st Air Cav.

Panel Engineer-to-be Diverted to Caribous

by Glenn Thrasher [483, 66]

I was a Tech Sergeant with eleven years engine maintenance experience in the Air Force, when I received orders for Vietnam. It all started while I was stationed at Vandenberg, AFB, CA.

While clearing the base to attend C-141 Flight Engineers' School at Sheppard AFB, TX and later to be stationed at Charleston AFB, SC, my First Sgt located me at transportation. I was about to get my airline ticket for Texas. He told me that the personnel office needed to see me.

There, I found out that my orders for F.E. school had been cancelled and I was going to Vietnam on Operation Red Leaf (transfer of the Army CV-2 to the Air Force as the C-7A Caribou).

I called a Sgt at Lackland AFB who was in charge of F.E. school dates and base assignments for the C-141's, to discuss the situation. He told me that when I got to a regular Air Base in Vietnam to re-submit for F.E. school with a copy of my cancelled orders and he would assign me to Charleston.

My orders for Vietnam were to attend R-2000 engine training at Ft. Benning, GA, where I met SMSgt Tom Thompson. I learned that the Army had small camps in Vietnam and I was to process in at Saigon.

While processing in, I was asked if I knew Sgt. Thompson. I said, Yes, sir." The Capt said that Sgt Thompson requested that I be assigned with him, but he needed to know if that was OK with me and I said, "Yes."

After completing my processing in, my duty station was the 135th Aviation Company. The next morning I was to report to operations for a flight to Cam Ranh Bay and then to Dong Ba Thin. It was too late to get a pickup, so I spent the night and was picked up the next morning at 10 a.m.. The trip by jeep was about 15 miles from Cam Ranh Bay to Dong Ba Thin Army Camp. I

checked in at the orderly room where I received my bedding, foot locker, helmet and M-16 rifle. I was assigned to a tent with six Army personnel. The next day, I was assigned additional duty as NCO in charge of 3 bunkers, manned by two troops each, in case of enemy attack. We had a couple of night drills, but, luckily, no enemy attacks while I was there.

The R-2000 Engines on the CV-2's were the same as on the C-54 aircraft I had worked on while stationed at Anderson AFB, Guam for 2 years, 1962-1964.

Early one morning, I was the only person in the engine shop when Maj Childers, Army Operations Officer pulled up to the shop in a jeep and said, "Get that tool box, some rubber hose, clamps, hacksaw, and some spark plugs. We have a plane down at Tuy Hoa." I asked him if I needed one of the Army personnel to go along and he said "No, we don't have time."

We drove up to the plane and the Army pilot and flight mechanic were

ready to go. Maj Childers got in the pilot's seat and off we went. That was my first take off ride on a Pierced Steel Planking (PSP) runway, which was very noisy!

After landing at Tuy Hoa, Maj Childers said the oil leak was on a metal line. It was the oil scavenge line from the nose case to the rear of the engine. I cut the line at the hole where it was leaking and connected it back together with a piece of rubber hose and two clamps. Also had some spark plugs to change.

This was just one of my experiences while I was with the Army and Operation Red Leaf.

When I returned from Vietnam, I did go to F.E. school and was assigned to Charleston AFB, SC where I served until I retired in September, 1974.

Note: Histories show that the Air Force built the initial Caribou cadre with very experienced flying and maintenance personnel – heavy on Lt Colonels, Majors, SMSgts, and MSgts.



RARE VIEW

A rarely seen picture of the inside
of an actual Can-o-Whoopass

Airdrops in Afghanistan

by Bob Fehringer, *Air Force News*

When your unit is surrounded by an enemy hitting you with small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades, and mortar rounds are screaming in and you're running low on food, ammunition and everything else, you can't exactly send someone to Walmart for supplies.

That's when you pray for an airdrop. **Now.** "Sometimes these missions are like driving an 18 wheeler through a 5 o'clock traffic jam while trying to ask for directions with a cell phone that isn't getting any reception," said Capt. Scott Huffstetler, an airdrop mission planner with the 8th Airlift Squadron in Afghanistan. "Eventually, you just muscle your way through and get the job done.

"The airspace in Afghanistan can be incredibly busy, and often times the terrain makes radio reception poor. Last night, my crew and I flew a mission into an area of the country where the air traffic congestion could rival Frankfurt, Atlanta or Chicago."

Communication and coordination had to be accomplished during that mission by talking with many different air traffic control areas, none of which could hear the other.

"One of the biggest challenges that we face during the airdrop missions is coordinating clearance into the different airspaces within the country. With about 10 minutes until the drop, we had four different radios which were actively being used to accomplish this. With dozens of aircraft flying a wide variety of missions, and all of them needing access to the same airspace at the same time, things can get complicated quickly."

"In short," he continued, "with three pilots talking on four radios, some of which were less than 'loud and clear,' and driving 20 minutes out of our way in order to avoid traffic and blocked

airspace, we successfully got the drop off and delivered the goods to the user. All of this being at night and using night-vision goggles."

In spite of communication glitches and other problems encountered on these missions, during a recent 12 week period, about 500 bundles were dropped per week, which amounts to 450 tons dropped each week.

For comparison, during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, 482 tons of supplies were dropped in a two-day period in December 1944. In Vietnam, during the battle of Khe Sanh, 294 tons were dropped in a 77 day period.

April was a record month for bundles dropped, with more than 2,700 delivered, with April 7 setting a single-day record of 200 bundles, equaling 160 tons.

"We have been steadily increasing since sustainment airdrop operations began in 2005," said Col. Keith Boone, the commander of the 621st Contingency Response Wing at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., who has managed airdrops since his arrival in Afghanistan last year. "Undoubtedly, this is the longest aerial delivery sustainment in the history of military operations. With the exception of about five days, we have had at least one drop every day since I have been here, and I suspect that is true for the past two years."

Methods of delivering supplies to troops in the field have improved dramatically since the early airdrops of World War II were conducted by pushing small crates with parachutes out of the aircraft's side cargo doors.

Lots of great innovations are happening in theater. The end result is the Air Force is providing what the warfighter needs, when he needs it, and where he needs it.

Among those innovations are the Joint Precision Airdrop System (JPADS), the Improved Container Delivery System (ICDS) and the most recent development, the C-130 Hercules "low-cost low-altitude" (LCLA) combat airdrop to resupply soldiers at a forward oper-

ating base.

JPADS uses GPS, steerable parachutes, and an onboard computer to steer loads to a designated point on a drop zone. It integrates the Army's Precision and Extended Glide Airdrop System and the Air Force's Precision Airdrop System program. ICDS allows for improved precision by factoring in the altitude, wind speed, wind direction, terrain and other circumstances that might affect the drop. A low-cost, low-altitude 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 LCLA drops meet the needs of a smaller subset of the units – a significant step forward in our ability to sustain those engaged in counter-insurgency operations throughout Afghanistan.

"Our main method of supply will continue to be through air-land missions – landing at airfields and off loading supplies," Colonel Boone continued. "Where that isn't possible, we will deliver sustainment requirements through larger-scale (container delivery system airdrops) – everything from ammunition to meals."

The work Airmen do every day is saving lives, No matter the size of the challenges, they find solutions and get the job done. These airdrop missions are a terrific example of how phenomenal Air Force people in the field will always deliver to the warfighter. Ninety-five percent of the airdrops have been on target.

Tactical airlift has never been so responsive, so agile in tactics, techniques and procedures, and critical in a fight. Airdrops enable the small, dispersed counterinsurgency unit to engage and operate. This April, the Air Force dropped 4,860,000 pounds to ground forces who needed the food, fuel or ammunition. It is taking air-ground teamwork to succeed, and together, they are making history.

Bit Sporty Landing

by Dana Kelly [536, 70]

One very rainy day with a brand new 2nd Lt co-pilot in the right seat we approached Ha Tien South (V-273) only to find an Aussie C-7 already in the only parking spot available at this Type I airfield (1000 feet long).

Conversations with their pilot revealed they were about to depart. When asked how the laterite landing conditions were, he replied, “a bit sporty.” I briefed the “newbie” that, if either engine failed to go into reverse we would immediately make a touch and go out of the landing.

We touched down within the first 100 feet, went into full reverse and in less than a second were totally blinded by mud on the windshields. Hoping we were still somewhere near the middle of the runway, we finally came to a full stop barely 6 feet from the end of the very slippery runway beyond which lay the ocean! The copilot was “bug-eyed.” Later that evening back at Vung Tau, I sought out the pilot of the Aussie Caribou and told him I now fully appreciated his terms of “a bit sporty.” We then commenced to get thoroughly “salted down” (as the Navy would say). To quote an often used phrase, “All is well that ends well.”

Aviation Definitions

AIRSPPEED - Speed of an airplane. (Deduct 25% when listening to a retired fighter pilot).

BANK - The folks who hold the lien on most pilots' cars.

CARBURETOR ICING - A phenomenon reported to the FAA by pilots immediately after they run out of gas.

CONE OF CONFUSION - An area about the size of New Jersey located near the final approach beacon at an airport.

CRAB - A VFR Instructor's attitude on an IFR day.

DEAD RECKONING - You reckon correctly, or you are.

Base Access

The Defense Biometric Identification System (DBIDS) will soon become the standard for access to DoD facilities. Lackland AFB and Maxwell AFB have been working on early enrollment of affected persons.

To register in DBIDS, a Common Access Card (CAC) or other DoD issued identification card is scanned into the system. The cardholder's information is verified and an electronic fingerprint is taken. Officials expect the process to take about five minutes a person, the time dependent on how much information has to be entered.

All active duty, family members, DoD contractors, and retirees — anyone with permanent base access — will have to register. The system will also require a criminal history check on personnel entering military installations.

DBIDS enhances installation security and improves force protection. It allows a gate guard to use a hand-held wireless scanner on the bar codes of CACs and DBIDS issued credentials. The scanners will instantly identify who the person is and whether or not they're allowed on base.

In addition to providing personal information at the point of entry, DBIDS will notify guards about lost or stolen ID cards, persons barred from the base, or persons being sought by their commander for an emergency or key response notification.

Earth, Water, Fire, Air

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world [**earth**].” John Muir

“All the **water** that will ever be is, right now.” National Geographic, October 1993

“The orbed continent, the **fire** that severs day from night.” William Shakespeare (Twelfth Night)

“Live in the sunshine ... drink the wild **air** ...” Ralph Waldo Emerson

Stealth Plus Non-Stealth

by David Fulghum, *Aviation Week*

Air National Guard F-15C Golden Eagles – upgraded with advanced, long-range radars that also will serve as electronic warfare jamming and attack weapons – are becoming part of the Air Force's composite air dominance force that also includes stealthy F-22's stationed at Langley AFB, VA.

Each fighter type will shoulder 50% of the air dominance mission now that the F-22 force has been capped at 187 aircraft. The upgraded F-15Cs will carry the larger APG-63(V)3 active, electronically scanned array (AESA) radar. The radar's long range and ability to detect small targets will allow F-22's to operate in electronic silence with their low observability (LO) uncompromised by electronic emissions.

The first operational F-15C modified with the Raytheon radar has been declared operational with the Florida Air National Guard's (ANG) 125th Fighter Wing. The objective is to fly in front of any strike force (F-22's) and have the persistence [because of larger fuel loads] to stay there while stealthy fighters are conducting their LO attack.

The FL, LA and OR ANG will field the first 48 V3 radar-equipped F-15Cs. Massachusetts and Montana ANG units will follow so that the East, West and Gulf coasts have a cruise missile defense capability.

A missile in consideration for the theater ballistic missile defense mission is Raytheon's Network Centric Airborne Defense Element (NCADE) variant of the AIM-120 advanced medium-range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM).

It takes the AMRAAM body and extends the range to support a ballistic missile mission. The AIM-120C-6 and AIM-120D AMRAAM models were optimized in part to attack small-signature cruise missiles.

The fleet eventually will grow to 176 Golden Eagles – serving until 2030.

I Flew

by Brad Baker

When the last checklist is run and the bag drag is over
 I will reminisce of the days I once knew,
 I will not remember the 3 AM alerts
 But only that I flew!
 I will not remember the crew rest in tents
 Nor recall how cold Arctic winds blew,
 And I'll try not to remember the times I got sick,
 But only that I flew!
 I will never forget when nature got angry
 And challenged my intrepid crew
 And I'll always remember the fear I felt
 And the pride in knowing I flew!
 I will remember the sights my mortal eyes have seen
 Colored by multitudes of hues,
 Those beautiful lights on cold winter nights
 Seen only by those who flew.
 God was extremely good to me
 And let me touch His face,
 He saw my crew through war and peace
 And blessed us with His grace.
 So when I stand at St. Peter's gate
 And tell him that I'm new
 I know he'll smile and welcome me,
 Because he knows
 I FLEW!

Only In America ...

... do drugstores make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions, while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front.

... do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke.

... do banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counters.

... do we leave cars worth thousands of dollars in the driveway and put our useless junk in the garage.

... do we buy hot dogs in packages of ten and buns in packages of eight.

... do we have drive-up ATMs with Braille lettering.

... can a pizza get to your house faster than an ambulance.

... are there handicap parking places in front of a skating rink.

... do we use answering machines to screen calls and then have call waiting so we won't miss a call from someone we didn't want to talk to in the first place.

... do we use the word "politics" to describe the process so well: "poli" in Latin meaning "many" and "tics" meaning "bloodsucking creatures."

Four Bous Move 1200 In One Day

Adapted from *Caribou Country Clarion*, v. 1-7, May 69

Back they came again and again, those four twin engined Caribous, and when the sun set that first day, the job which was to have taken the better part of two days of continuous flying had been completed. The mission was to move a tribe of Montagnard families — some 1,200 people — from an outlying Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp to a location in the interior. The job fell to the 458th TAS based at Cam Ranh Bay. But, why Caribous — whose capacity is limited compared to larger transports — to move all those people and belongings?

A glance at the red clay landing strip at the Bu Krak site provides the answer. It is 1,840 feet long, 40 feet wide. Near one end, the runway takes a gradual 35 foot dip. The strip is not level; it banks to the right and then to the left — like a "whip-the-whip" ramp; on a carnival midway back home. The whole thing is perched on a hilltop with sheer drops on either end.

"The Caribou is the largest fixed-wing aircraft that can land here," marveled Army Capt Lawrence M. Kerr, American commander of the hilltop camp. Four C-7As left Cam Ranh Bay before first light. The plan was to fly into the camp, one after another, and with engines running, take on a load of passengers. Then, a quick takeoff and flight to the inland base, off-loading there, engines still running. Take off again, return to the CIDG strip, more passengers, return, and so on through the day.

With each of the Caribous moving about 35 people at a time, it looked as though the C-7As would need two days to move the 1,200. But, Lt Col Frederick R. Beal, movement coordinator for the 458th TAS, looked at his watch at 1:40 p.m. He said they had moved 756 people already — and a few dogs.

"We didn't expect to move over 800 all day," he smiled. "Things couldn't be going smoother ... They sent me here to watch that we don't overload the aircraft. When a plane lands, we load 32-36 people, depending on fuel, and also the things they are carrying. I just count and cut it off when I have to."

The Bou can carry from 4,600 to 5,000 pounds, depending on fuel remaining. Today, they were spending about seven minutes on the ground before taking off with a new load of passengers. A typical turn-around was observed when C-7A # 62-4162, kicking up red dust, touched down at 12:57:30. It taxied over to the waiting passengers. The ramp was lowered and 34 people trooped aboard. Col Beal brought soft drinks for the crew who stayed aboard. Meanwhile, the 34 passengers were strapped in seats. The walk-up ramp was removed. The hatch closed, engines speeded up, and in a cloud of red dust and a hail of flying pebbles, the Caribou rolled back onto the runway. Dust swirling, it hurried down the strip, down the 35 foot dip, up the other side, and lifted off at 1:05 p.m. It took 7½ minutes — a slow turn-around!

They flew 65 sorties and transported 1,207 Montagnards; flew a total of 42.6 hours (10.7 each) and carried a total of 16.8 tons, including five tons of rice returned to Bu Krak on return trips.

Project Eldest Son

by John Plaster, Maj, USAR, Ret.

During the Vietnam War, the Studies and Observations Group (SOG) created an ingenious top-secret program called *Project Eldest Son* to wreak general mayhem and cause the Viet Cong and NVA to doubt the safety of their guns and ammunition.

Amid a fire fight near the Cambodian border on June 6, 1968, a North Vietnamese Army soldier spotted an American G.I. raising his rifle and the NVA infantryman pulled his trigger, anticipating a muzzle blast. He got a blast, alright, but not quite what he'd expected.

United States 1st Infantry Division troops later found the enemy soldier, sprawled beside his Chinese Type 56 AK, quite dead – but not from small-arms fire. Peculiarly, they could see, his rifle had exploded, its shattered receiver killing him instantly. It seemed a great mystery that his AK had blown up since nothing was blocking the bore. Bad metallurgy, the G.I.s concluded, or possibly defective ammo. It was neither. In reality, this actual incident was the calculated handiwork of one the Vietnam War's most secret and least understood covert operations: *Project Eldest Son*.

So secret was this sabotage effort that few G.I.s in Southeast Asia ever heard of it or the organization behind it, the innocuously named Studies and Observations Group. As the Vietnam War's top-secret special ops task force, SOG's operators – Army Special Forces, Air Force Air Commandos and Navy SEALs – worked directly for the Joint Chiefs, executing highly classified, deniable missions in the enemy's backyard of Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam.

The genesis of *Eldest Son* was the fertile mind of SOG's commander from 1966-68, Colonel John K. Singlaub, a World War II veteran of covert actions with the Office of Strategic Services. "I was frustrated by the fact that I couldn't

airlift the ammunition we were discovering on the [Ho Chi Minh] Trail in Laos," Singlaub explained. It was not unusual for SOG's small recon teams – composed of two or three American Green Berets and four to six native soldiers – to find tons of ammunition in enemy base camps and caches along the Laotian highway system. But SOG teams lacked the manpower to secure the sites or carry the ordnance away. Further, it could not be burned up, and demolition would only scatter small-arms ammunition, not destroy it.

"Initially I thought of just booby trapping it so that when they'd pick up a case it would blow up," Singlaub recalled. Then it hit him – booby trap the ammunition itself!

Though obscure, this trick was not new. In the 1930's, to combat rebellious tribesmen in northwest India's Waziristan - the same lawless region where Taliban and al Qaeda terrorists hide today – the British army planted sabotaged .303 rifle ammunition. Even before that, during the Second Matabele War (1896-97) in today's Zimbabwe, British scouts (led by the American adventurer Frederick Russell Burnham) had slipped explosive-packed rifle cartridges into hostile stockpiles, to deadly effect. SOG would do likewise, the Joint Chiefs decided on August 30, 1967, but first Col. Singlaub arranged for CIA ordnance experts to conduct a quick feasibility study. A few weeks later, at Camp Chinen, Okinawa, Singlaub watched a CIA technician load a sabotaged 7.62x39 mm cartridge into a bench-mounted AK rifle. "It completely blew up the receiver and the bolt was projected backwards," Singlaub observed, "I would imagine into the head of the firer."

After that success began a month of tedious bullet pulling to manually disassemble thousands of 7.62 mm cartridges, made more difficult because Chinese ammo had a tough lacquer seal where the bullet seated into the case. In this process, some bullets suffered tiny scrapes, but when reloaded these

marks seated out of sight below the case mouth. Rounds were inspected to ensure they showed no signs of tampering. When the job was done, 11,565 AK rounds had been sabotaged, along with 556 rounds for the Communist Bloc's heavy 12.7 mm machine gun, a major anti-helicopter weapon.

Eldest Son cartridges originally were reloaded with a powder similar to PETN high explosive, but sufficiently shock-sensitive that an ordinary rifle primer would detonate it. This white powder, however, did not even faintly resemble gunpowder. SOG's technical wizard, Ben Baker – our answer to James Bond's "Q" – decided this powder might compromise the program if ever an enemy soldier pulled apart an *Eldest Son* round. He obtained a substitute explosive that so closely resembled gunpowder that it would pass inspection by anyone but an ordnance expert. While the AKM and Type 56 AKs and the RPD light machine gun could accommodate a chamber pressure of 45,000 p.s.i. Baker's deadly powder generated a whopping 250,000 p.s.i.

Sabotaging the ammunition proved the easiest challenge. The CIA's Okinawa lab also did a very professional job of prying open ammo crates, unsealing the interior metal cans and then repacking them so there was no sign of tampering. In addition to SOG sabotaging 7.62 mm and 12.7 mm rounds, these CIA ordnance experts perfected a special fuse for the Communist 82 mm mortar round that would detonate the hand-dropped projectile while inside the mortar tube, for especially devastating effect. Exactly 1,968 of these mortar rounds were sabotaged, too.

Project Eldest Son's greatest challenge was "placement" – getting the infernal devices into the enemy logistical system without detection. That's where SOG's Green Beret-led recon teams came in. Since the fall of 1965, our small teams had been running deniable missions into Laos to gather

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Eldest Son (from Page 22)

intelligence, wiretap enemy communications, kidnap key enemy personnel, ambush convoys, raid supply dumps, plant mines and generally make life as difficult as possible in enemy rear areas. As an additional mission, each team carried along a few Eldest Son rounds – usually as a single round in an otherwise full AK magazine or one round in an RPD machine gun belt or a sealed ammo can – to plant whenever an opportunity arose.

When an SOG team discovered an ammo dump, they planted *Eldest Son*; when an SOG team ambushed an enemy patrol, they switched magazines in a dead soldier's AK. It was critically important never to plant more than one round per magazine, belt or ammo can, so no amount of searching after a gun exploded would uncover a second round, to preclude the enemy from determining this was sabotage.

Planting sabotaged 82 mm mortar ammo proved more cumbersome because these were not transported as loose rounds, but in three-round, wooden cases. Thus, you had to tote a whole case, which must have weighed more than 25 lbs. Twice I recall carrying such crates for insertion in enemy rear areas, and to our surprise, my team once witnessed a platoon of NVA soldiers carry one away. SOG's most clever insertion was accomplished by SOG SEALs operating in the Mekong Delta, where they filled a captured sampan with tainted cases of ammunition, shot it tastefully full of bullet holes, then spilled chicken blood over it and set it adrift upstream from a known Viet Cong village. Of course, the VC assumed the boat's Communist crew had fallen overboard during an ambush. The Viet Cong took the ammunition, hook, line and sinker.

In Laos, American B-52's constantly targeted enemy logistical areas, which churned up sizeable pieces of terrain. SOG exploited this opportunity by organizing a special team that landed

just after B-52 strikes to construct false bunkers in such devastated tracts, then "salt" these stockpiles with *Eldest Son* ammunition. However, on November 30, 1968, the helicopter carrying SOG's secret *Eldest Son* team, flying some 20 miles west of the Khe Sanh Marine base, was hit by an enemy 37 mm anti-aircraft round, setting off a tremendous mid-air explosion. Seven cases of tainted 82 mm mortar ammunition detonated, killing everyone on board, including Maj Samuel Toomey and seven Green Berets. Their remains were not recovered for 20 years.

But, as a result of these cross-border efforts, *Eldest Son* rounds began to turn up inside South Vietnam. In a northern province, 101st Airborne Division paratroopers found a dead Communist soldier grasping his exploded rifle, while an officer at SOG's Saigon headquarters received the photo of a dead enemy soldier with his bolt blown out the back of his AK. "It had gone right through his eye socket."

An intelligence specialist with the 1st Infantry Division heard of such a case but, "didn't believe it until they walked me over and opened up the body bag, and there he was, with the weapon in the bag." Unaware of SOG's covert program, he attributed the incident to inferior weapons and ammo.

Booby trapped mortar rounds took their toll, too. Twenty-fifth Infantry Division soldiers came upon an entire enemy mortar battery destroyed – four peeled back tubes with dead gunners. In another incident, a 101st Airborne fire-base was taking mortar fire when there was an odd-sounding, "boom-pff!" A patrol later found two enemy bodies beside a split mortar tube and blood trails going off into the jungle.

On July 3, 1968, after an enemy mortar attack on Ban Me Thuot airstrip, nine Communist soldiers were found dead in one firing position, their tube so badly shattered that it had vanished but for two small fragments.

Booby trapped ammunition clearly was getting into enemy hands, so it was

time to initiate SOG's insidious "black psyop" exploitation. "Our interest was not in killing the soldier that was using the weapon," explained Colonel Steve Cavanaugh, who replaced Singlaub in 1968. "We were trying to leave in the minds of the North Vietnamese that the ammunition they were getting from China was bad ammunition." Hopefully, this would aggravate Hanoi's leadership – which traditionally distrusted the Chinese – and cause individual soldiers to question the reliability (and safety) of their Chinese-supplied arms and ordnance.

One Viet Cong document – forged by SOG and inserted into enemy channels through a double-agent – made light of exploding weapons, claiming, "We know that it is rumored some of the ammunition has exploded in the AK-47. This report is greatly exaggerated. It is a very, very small percentage of the ammunition that has exploded."

Another forged document announced, "Only a few thousand such cases have been found thus far," and concluded, "The People's Republic of China may have been having some quality control problems [but] these are being worked out and we think that in the future there will be very little chance of this happening."

That, "in the future," hook was especially devious, because an enemy soldier looking at lot numbers could see that virtually all his ammo had been loaded years earlier. No fresh ammo could possibly reach soldiers fighting in the South for many years.

Next came an overt "safety" campaign, with Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) publishing Technical Intelligence Brief No. 2-68, "Analysis of Damaged Weapons." Openly circulated to U.S. and South Vietnamese units, this SOG-inspired study examined several exploded AKs, concluding they were destroyed by "defective metallurgy resulting in fatigue cracks" or "faulty ammunition, which

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Eldest Son (from Page 23)

produced excessive chamber pressure.” An SOG operative left a copy at a Saigon bar whose owners were suspected enemy agents.

Under the guise of cautioning G.I.s against using enemy weapons, warnings were sent to Armed Forces Radio and TV. The civilian Stateside tabloid *Army Times* warned, “Numerous incidents have caused injury and sometimes death to the operators of enemy weapons,” the cause of which was, “defective metallurgy” or “faulty ammo.” The 25th Infantry Division newspaper similarly warned soldiers on July 14, 1969, that, “because of poor quality control procedures in Communist Bloc factories, many AKs with even a slight malfunction will blow up when fired.” Despite such warnings, some G.I.s fired captured arms, and inevitably one American’s souvenir AK exploded, inflicting serious (but not fatal) injuries.

That incident spurned SOG itself to stop using captured ammunition in our own AKs and RPD machine guns. SOG purchased commercial 7.62 mm ammunition through a Finnish middleman – and, ironically, this ammo, which SOG’s covert operators fired at their Communist foes – had been manufactured in a Soviet arsenal in Petrograd.

By mid-1969, word about *Eldest Son* began leaking out, with articles in the *New York Times* and *Time*, compelling SOG to change the code name to *Italian Green*, and later, to *Pole Bean*. As of July 1, 1969, a declassified report discloses, SOG operatives had inserted 3,638 rounds of sabotaged 7.62 mm, plus 167 rounds of 12.7 mm, and 821 rounds of 82 mm mortar ammunition. That fall, the Joint Chiefs directed SOG to dispose of its remaining stockpile and end the program. In November, my team was specially tasked to insert as much *Eldest Son* as possible, making multiple landings on the Laotian border to get rid of the stuff before authority expired.

Lacking the earlier finesse, such insertions had to have confirmed to the enemy that we were sabotaging his ammunition – but even this, SOG believed, was psychologically useful, creating a big shell game in which the enemy had to question endlessly which ammunition was polluted and which was not. The enemy came to fear any cache where there was evidence that SOG recon teams got near it and, thanks to radio intercepts, SOG headquarters learned that the enemy’s highest levels of command had expressed concerns about exploding arms, Chinese quality control and sabotage. In that sense, *Project Eldest Son* was a total success – but as with any such covert deception program, you can never quite be sure.

Caribous Haul Just About Anything

“Feed, ammunition, weapons, live-stock, spare parts and whatever else you need – we will haul it.”

The statement was made by Lt Col Clarence W. Griffith of Huntington, IN, commander of the 459th Troop Carrier Squadron’s Detachment 1, Da Nang.

The 459th, the newest tenant unit on base, was formed when the Air Force took over the C-7A Caribou from the U.S. Army on January 1, 1967.

The squadron resupplies Army Special Forces camps in the jungles and flies general cargo into airfields where larger aircraft cannot land.

When the weather is bad, the Caribou crews paradrop the supplies to the camps.

Maj Philip E. Anderson, Shreveport, LA, assistant operations officer, flew a record combination load of 482 people, and 35,000 pounds of cargo in 26 sorties one day recently.

First Lieutenant Serge P. Molochosky, Akron, OH, stated, “Sometimes the landings get pretty hairy. We have to be constantly on the lookout for live-stock on the runways and sometimes local natives cross without looking for incoming aircraft.”

Early Days at CRB

by Sam McGowan [536, 66]

In 1966, when the Air Force took over the Caribous, I was at Naha in the 35th TCS. We rotated to Cam Ranh. The enlisted men were quartered in a Quonset hut. When the 483rd activated, somebody, I guess 834th Air Division, decided to partition the hut and give one side to the Caribou flight engineers. Looking back, it’s hard to believe, since the hut wasn’t that big!

Sometime in early 1967, the C-7’s got into a rather intense operation at one of the Special Forces camps. I think one or two may have been shot down, but don’t remember for sure without looking it up. One day, I was in the barracks and heard someone on the Caribou side playing the hymn “Whispering Hope” on a 12-string guitar. That song was one of my mother’s favorites. I wondered if he had chosen that particular song for a reason.

One day, four or five C-130s were sent to Vung Tau for a special mission to move the first Aussies inland and Col. Rodney Newbold [Commander of the 483rd TAW in 1971] went as mission commander and went with our crew. We were the first Air Force people to operate out of Vung Tau. When we got there, they quartered us in an Army Special Forces R&R center for NCOs. It was set up with large open bay cubicles with about three or four double-bunk beds in each. They gave our crew one cubicle. Col. Newbold and I shared one of the bunk beds. As we climbed into bed that night, he commented “I bet this is the first time in Air Force history that a Colonel and an Airman Second have been bunkmates!”

Police Humor

- “The answer to this question will determine whether you are drunk or not. Was Mickey Mouse a cat or a dog?”

- “Yeah, we have a quota. Two more tickets and my wife gets a toaster oven.”

The Airman

A nurse took the tired, anxious serviceman to the bedside. "Your son is here," she said to the old man. She had to repeat the words several times before the patient's eyes opened.

Heavily sedated because of the pain of his heart attack, he dimly saw the young uniformed Airman standing outside the oxygen tent. He reached out his hand. The Airman wrapped his toughened fingers around the old man's limp ones, squeezing a message of love and encouragement. The nurse brought a chair so that he could sit beside the bed. All through the night the young Airman sat there, holding the old man's hand and offering him words of love and strength. Occasionally, the nurse suggested that the Airman move away and rest awhile.

He refused. Whenever the nurse came into the ward, the Airman was oblivious of her and of the noises of the hospital - the clanking of the oxygen tank, the laughter of the staff members, the moans of other patients.

Now and then she heard him say a few gentle words. The dying man said nothing, only held tightly to his son all through the night.

Along towards dawn, the old man died. The Airman released the now lifeless hand he had been holding and went to tell the nurse. While she did what she had to do, he waited.

Finally, she returned. She started to offer words of sympathy, but the Airman interrupted her.

"Who was that man?" he asked. The nurse was startled, "He was your father," she answered. "No, he wasn't," the Airman replied. "I never saw him before in my life."

"Then why didn't you say something when I took you to him?"

"I knew right away there had been a mistake, but I also knew he needed his son, and his son just wasn't here. When I realized that he was too sick to tell whether or not I was his son, knowing how much he needed me, I stayed."

Drops on Target

by Steve Kobelas [457, 1967]

On 26 December 1967, we were assigned four crew members for the air drop mission to a Special Forces camp near Phan Rang. I wish I could remember their names, but try as I could, I can't.

We had two pallets to drop: food, medical stuff, and ammunition. The drop zone was on the side of a mountain and our only approach was from the valley up toward the camp. So, we were dropping up-hill. There was an overcast. It was sort of hairy. We could only drop one pallet at a time so we had to make two passes.

The ground forces said that we were being shot at pretty heavily. Providence must have stepped in twice, because we didn't pick up one hit. I know that we were being looked after.

The drop zone area was so forested that we had trouble finding the place and making the drops. The first pallet was right on target and the Special Forces guys had no trouble getting that one. The second pallet landed at the edge of the drop zone, but it was recoverable according to the guys in the camp.

After the last drop, we all felt pretty good about helping the guys on the ground. I really had a feeling that I was contributing more on that mission than on any other. After that, most other missions seemed fairly routine.

Note: 7th Air Force Special Order G-2553, dated 19 Aug 1968, awarded Major Kobelas a DFC for this difficult drop mission. At this time, we have not found awards for the other crew members, but we are still searching.

Male or Female

You might not have known this, but a lot of non-living objects are actually either male or female. Here are some examples:

FREEZER BAGS: They are male, because they hold everything in, but

you can see right through them.

PHOTOCOPIERS: These are female, because once turned off, it takes a while to warm them up again.

They are an effective reproductive device if the right buttons are pushed, but can also wreak havoc if you push the wrong buttons.

TIRES: Tires are male, because they go bald easily and are often over inflated.

HOT AIR BALLOONS: Also a male object, because to get them to go anywhere, you have to light a fire under them.

SPONGES: These are female, because they are soft, squeezable, and retain water.

WEB PAGES: Female, because they're constantly being looked at and frequently getting hit on.

TRAINS: Definitely male, because they always use the same old lines for picking up people.

EGG TIMERS: Egg timers are female because, over time, all the weight shifts to the bottom.

HAMMERS: Male, because in the last 5000 years, they've hardly changed at all, and are occasionally handy to have around.

REMOTE CONTROL: Female. Ha! You probably thought it would be male, but it easily gives a man pleasure, he'd be lost without it, and while he doesn't always know which buttons to push, he just keeps trying.

REMOTE CONTROL: Male. Device for scanning through all 175 channels every 2 1/2 minutes.

SHOE: Male, because it is usually unpolished, with it's tongue hanging out.

SWISS ARMY KNIFE: Male, because even though it appears useful for a wide variety of work, it spends most of it's time just opening bottles.

KIDNEYS: Female, because the always go to the bathroom in pairs.

ENTERTAINMENT: Female. A good movie, concert, play or book.

ENTERTAINMENT: Male. Anything that can be done while drinking.

Letter From The Boss

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
HEADQUARTERS 483rd TACTICAL AIRLIFT WING (PACAF)
APO San Francisco 96326

REPLY TO ATTN OF: C

23 Jan 1969

SUBJECT: Flight Safety

457 TAS	458 TAS	459 TAS	483 CAMS	DCM
535 TAS	536 TAS	537 I'AS	DCO	SA

1. One of the earliest recorded flight accidents was when Icarus had an in-flight malfunction and made an uncontrolled descent (spin) into the Ionian Sea. Unfortunately for Icarus, this was long before beepers, "Pedro," and life support equipment, so there was little hope that he could violate Newton's Law and live to fly again. When your wings have melted you're probably going to be DNIF for a long time even if you do survive, so you might as well join the mermaids in the Ionian Sea.

2. After reviewing the circumstances surrounding Icarus' fatal flight, I've often wondered how our modern day experts would establish proximate cause of the accident. There are several possibilities, for example:

COMMAND AND CONTROL. Had regulations, policies and procedures been published and enforced which would preclude the alleged flight profile in the vicinity of the sun? Was there proper flight following and communications?

SUPERVISORY. Icarus was flying wing on an experienced and trusted flight leader, his Father, Daedalus. Did his dad fail him in time of crisis?

OPERATOR. Did Icarus intentionally ignore the use of checklists, SOP's, and the DASH-1? How about preflight planning, had he properly computed his WMP (wax melting point) before take-off? How was his personal conduct the previous 24 hours? I understand Venus visited his hootch the night before the accident; she was reputed to be pretty hot stuff. Maybe his wings were melting before he left the ground.

MAINTENANCE ENGINEERING. An obvious design deficiency existed here. Wings should be capable of withstanding the aerodynamic stresses and strains imposed by the flight regime. Pilots must be assured of the reliability of their equipment.

3. Since the days of the Mythological Icarus we've made great progress in aviation. These are facts, not myths. You are all familiar with this progress and the great achievements planned for the future.

Yes, we've made rapid gains in all areas of aviation except one. We still haven't overcome the human weaknesses of faulty judgment, complacency, disregard for safety, and sometimes, even willful violation of regulations. I'm convinced we still have some pilots who would try to fly around the sun with waxed, feather wings if given half a chance.

4. Our friendly medics and flight surgeons tell us that self preservation is the greatest of human instincts. According to their gospel everyone fights to stay alive to a ripe, old age. I generally agree with the learned members of the medical profession, but not on this one. As a matter of fact, I hold an entirely opposite view. My observation of recent aircraft accidents leads me to conclude that some of our pilots are not interested in self preservation; the preservation of fellow airmen or the preservation of valuable equipment. They seem more intent on self destruction - not calculated destruction, but destruction caused by that one disastrous mental lapse in self discipline, professional judgment and pilot skill. These mental lapses have caused us the loss and injury of several of our fellow airmen and aircraft.

5. During the past few months we have worked hard on flight safety programs and we have made some progress. But we must do better. One avoidable accident is too many. We are all aware of the fact that our operational environment is hazardous. We fly unsophisticated, low performance equipment, thousands of sorties and thousands of hours monthly. Our crew duty day is long and hard. But these factors must be recognized for what they are - reasons for that extra safety effort rather than excuses for accidents.

6. I want to reiterate that I insist upon a safe operation at all times. More directives, policies and guidance will not achieve this objective. All we have to do is follow explicitly those that already exist and demand that every officer and airman assigned to this Wing do the same. I will accept nothing less than whole hearted support for and compliance with these directives.

7. One closing thought. It's the Icarus type that causes us trouble. Get rid of him even if you personally have to melt his wings.

[SIGNED]

WILBERT' TURK, Colonel, USAF

Commander

Leaders No Longer With Us

It is sad to report that two of our commanders passed away recently.

Col Wilbert Turk, Commander of the 483rd TAW (1968-69) passed away on 4 June 2010.

Lt Col Joe Faulkner, Commander of the 535th TAS (1967-68) passed away on 22 October 2010.

The Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,
in a one bedroom house made of plaster and stone.

I had come down the chimney with presents to give,
and to see just who in this home did live.

I looked all about, a strange sight I did see,
no tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stocking by the mantel, just boots filled with sand,
on the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.

He had medals and badges, awards of all kinds,
and a sober thought came through my mind.

For this house was different, it was dark and dreary,
I found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.

The soldier lay sleeping, silent, alone,
curled up on the floor of this one bedroom home.

The face was so gentle, the room in such disorder,
Not how I pictured a United States soldier.

Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?
Curled up on a poncho, the floor for a bed?

I realized the families that I saw this night,
owed their lives to these soldiers who were willing to fight.

Soon round the world, the children would play,
and grown ups would celebrate a bright Christmas day.

They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,
because of the soldiers, like the one lying here.

I couldn't help but wonder how many lay alone,
on a cold Christmas eve in a land far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees as I started to cry.

The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice."

"I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,
my life is my God, my country, my corps."

The soldier rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.

I kept watch for hours, so silent so still,
and we both shivered from the night's cold chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night,
this guardian of honor so willing to fight.

Then the soldier rolled over, with a voice soft and pure,
whispered, "Carry on Santa, it's Christmas day, all is secure."

Pilot Humor

In his book, *Sled Driver*, SR-71 Blackbird pilot Brian Shul writes: "I'll always remember a certain radio exchange that occurred one day as Walt (my back seater) and I were screaming across Southern California 13 miles high. We were monitoring various radio transmissions from other aircraft as we entered Los Angeles airspace. Though they didn't really control us, they did monitor our movement across their scope. I heard a Cessna ask for a readout of its groundspeed." "90 knots," Center replied. "Moments later, a Twin Beech requested the same." "120 knots," Center answered. We weren't the only ones proud of our groundspeed that day as almost instantly an F-18 smugly transmitted, 'Ah, Center, Dusty 52 requests groundspeed readout.' There was a slight pause, then the response, "525 knots over the ground, Dusty." "Another silent pause. As I was thinking to myself how ripe a situation this was, I heard a familiar click of a radio transmission coming from my back seater. It was at that precise moment I realized Walt and I had become a real crew, for we were both thinking in unison." 'Center, Aspen 20, you got a groundspeed readout for us?' There was a longer than normal pause 'Aspen, I show 1,742 knots.' No further inquiries were heard on that frequency."

The pilot was sitting in his seat and pulled out a .38 revolver. He placed it on top of the instrument panel, and then asked the navigator, "Do you know what I use this for?" The navigator replied timidly, "No, what's it for?" The pilot responded, "I use this on navigators who get me lost!" The navigator proceeded to pull out a .45 and place it on his chart table. The pilot asked, "What's that for?" "To be honest sir," the navigator replied, "I'll know we're lost before you will."

There's a story about the military pilot calling for a priority landing because his single-engine jet fighter was running "a bit peaked." Air Traffic Control told the fighter jock that he was number two behind a B-52 that had one engine shut down. "Ah," the pilot remarked, "the dreaded seven-engine approach."

Late For Work

He just couldn't get to work on time. Five to ten minutes late every day. But, he was a good worker, real sharp, so the Boss was in a quandary about what to do about it. Finally, one day he called him into the office for a talk. "Bill, I have to tell you, I like your work ethics, but your being late often is bothersome." "Yes, I know Boss, and I'm working on it." "Well good. That's what I like to hear. It's odd though, your coming in late. I know you're retired from the Air Force. What did they say if you came in late there?" "They said, 'Good morning, General'."

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