

C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 25, Issue 2

Coast to Coast

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Reunion 2014 in Fort Walton Beach provided the attendees with a wide variety of activities and an opportunity to enjoy the beautiful beaches and food of the Florida Gulf Coast.

Over 160 of the 229 attendees visited the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. More than 130 visited the Armament Museum and walked among the awesome aircraft at the Air Commando Association air park at Hurlburt Field.

Fifty of the ladies viewed the beauty and decor of Weseley House at Eden Gardens State Park before having lunch and going shopping at the Silver Sands Outlet Mall.

Each member at the reunion received a white Caribou hat with commemorating our 25th Reunion. A few extra hats are still available. Anyone who wants one of these special hats can order one from the Memorabilia Shop by marking "25th Reunion" next to your hat order (white only, same price as the regular hat).

Next year in Sacramento, we will be staying at the Lion's Gate Hotel at the McClellan Business Park (former site of McClellan AFB). Reservations can be made early in 2015. Watch the web site for the notice that the registration line is open for your calls.

Dates for the reunion are 23-27 September. Plans are being made to visit Old Sacramento with its numerous shops, restaurants, ice cream parlors, the California Railroad Museum, and many other attractions.

A day trip will be made to Travis AFB to dedicate our new memorial bench



which was installed earlier this year at the Travis Heritage Museum. C-7A S/N 60-3767 is at the museum and is being restored, slowly but surely.

The museum itself, although small compared to Dayton and Warner Robbins has quality displays and a good collection of aircraft on the ramp. We may also visit the Aerospace Museum of California (on McClellan City Base) or take a half-day bus trip to the wine tasting rooms and quaint shops in Sutter Creek.

Mark your calendars **now** and plan to be at Reunion 2015 in Sacramento.

Write A Story

This newsletter was made possible by your responses to my requests that you write one or more pieces for the newsletter. Over the past 8 years that I have edited the newsletter, your submissions have allowed me to build up a small backlog of unpublished items. THANKS for doing that. Keep it up! The more items you write, the more we will have to keep the newsletter interesting and exciting for all of us. Please, **respond** when I ask you for an article. Don't wait, **DO IT NOW!**

Minutes of 2014 Business Meeting

Al Cunliffe, Secretary, announced at 10:05 AM that a quorum, 74 members, was present.

President Pat Hanavan called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Pat Hanavan.

Invocation by Bob Davis.

A motion to adopt the agenda as published was made by Gary Steiner, seconded by John Record, and carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes of the 2013 business meeting as published on the Association Website and included in the registration packet was made by Bob Davis. The motion was seconded by Stoney Faubus and passed unanimously.

Officer and Committee Reports:

Secretary Report: Al Cunliffe presented a report on the motions considered and passed by the Board of Directors for the previous year:

20131015 - *Appointment of COB*

20131215 - *Change of By-Law on Nominating Committee Recommended to the Membership*

20131217 - *Newsletter Mailing*

20140205 - *Newsletter Printing*

20140326 - *Newsletter Mailing*

20140502 - *Nominating Committee*

20140514 - *2013 Audit Committee*

20140516 - *Newsletter Printing*

20140519 - *Memorabilia Chairman*

20140618 - *2014 Reunion Funding*

20140710 - *Reunion Flyer Mailing*

Bereavement Committee Report

Jay 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.

Audit Committee Report: Pat Hanavan provided a review of the audit commit-

tee's findings. No significant findings were made.

Treasurer's Report: Our Treasurer, Mike Murphy, was unable to attend, Pat Hanavan provided a summary of the Association's financial status which was also included in the registration packet given to each attendee.

Report on the Roster: Pat Hanavan provided an update of current membership. We have 766 active members and approximately 6733 names listed on the roster, 853 of these are deceased.

Reunion Committee Report: The board has a list of possible reunion sites for future reunions. The 2015 reunion will be in Sacramento, CA from 23-27 September. Tucson, AZ and Washington, D.C. are possible future sites to be considered. Pat outlined the criteria considered when a reunion site is proposed.

Nominating Committee: Jerry York, Chairman of the Nominating Committee reported on the work of the Nominating Committee and presented the following names for positions on the Board of Directors:

President: Pat Hanavan

Vice President: Peter Bird

Treasurer: Mike Murphy

Secretary: Al Cunliffe

At-Large Members: Doug Boston
Wayne Brunz
John Tawes

Old Business:

Status of our contributions to the Center for the Intrepid was reviewed by Pat Hanavan.

New Business:

A general discussion of the status of the Caribou on display at Hill AFB, and the possible disposition of the airplane was conducted.

Election of Officers: A call for open floor nominations was made. Rick Patterson nominated Steve Kelley for Vice President, Pat Mannion seconded the nomination.

Pat Hanavan ceded the floor to Chris Nevins. A spirited discussion of the nominees for Vice President followed. Pat Hanavan stated his unequivocal

support for the candidacy of Peter Bird, given his many years of faithful and varied service to the Association.

Doug Boston moved the nominations be closed. The motion was seconded and it carried unanimously.

Doug Boston moved that a plain paper ballot be used for election for Vice President, amended by Earl Reynolds, carried unanimously.

Stoney Faubus moved, Earl Reynolds seconded, that all candidates running unopposed be elected by acclimation, passed unanimously. All unopposed candidates were elected by acclimation.

Earl Reynolds moved and Gary Sanger seconded that Chris Nevins be elected *ad hoc* president for counting the ballots for Vice President. Election of Vice President was called, ballots were collected and counted by Don Asbury and Tony Coehlo.

Earl Reynolds moved and Chuck Harris seconded that the Board create a position of Webmaster and ask Peter Bird to continue in that position. A spirited discussion of the qualifications desired followed. Motion passed.

Meeting recessed for 10 minutes at 11:35 while ballots for Vice President were counted. Meeting resumed at 11:55, Peter Bird was elected Vice President with 45 votes vs. 38 for Steve Kelley.

Chris Nevins relinquished the floor back to Pat Hanavan.

Free Room Nights: Drawings for 10 free room nights were made. They were won by: Tony Coehlo, Chuck Harris, Huey Frye, Wayne DeLawter, John Shanahan, Andy Anderson, Jack Thomas, Don Asbury, Lee Shelton, and John Tawes.

General Discussion:

The meeting was adjourned at 1220.

Respectfully submitted

Hillis "Al" Cunliffe

Secretary

2014 Reunion Attendance by Name

Aubray and Judy Abams
 Andy Anderson
 Don Asbury
 Jim Bailey and Guest: Susan Morgan
 *Dick Baird
 Tim and Grizelda Black
 Doug and Ellen Boston
 Bob and Evelyn Bowers
 Ed Breslin
 Pat and Lesley Brooks
 Wayne and Joyce Brunz
 *George Bryant
 Larry Campbell
 Dave and Joyce Capobianco
 Allen Cathell
 Ken and Venita Chrisman
 *Chris and Pam Christensen
 Duane and Judith Cocking
 *Tony and Evelyn Coelho
 Guest: Sandra Johnson
 Tom and Chantell Collins
 *Mike and Sandy Cooney
 Stu and Cathy Crafton
 John Craig
 Bob and Carolyn Cummings
 Guest: Gabriel Cummings
 Al and Shirley Cunliffe
 Guests: Sara James, Mike Cunliffe
 Red and Brigitte Danielson
 Bob and Peggy Davis
 *Chuck Davis
 Wayne and Patty DeLawter
 Steve Donovan
 Jon and Beverly Drury
 Bob and Pat Dugan
 George Embrey
 *Eduardo and Yvonne Emmanuelli
 Stoney and Melva Faubus
 Guests: Dana Golden, Gary Faubus, Jr
 Gary and Sharon Fox
 Huey Frye
 Larry and Tricia Garrison
 Guests: Ron and Elizabeth Sassano,
 Dimitri Karsos, Lori Hiller,
 Brookelyn Ziegler
 Hal and Angie Gayer
 Bruce Gerrity
 Guest: Jean Hutcherson
 Frank Godek
 Guest: Ellie Matthews

Bill Grant
 *Bill Grosse and Guest: Mike Grosse
 Tina Gustafson
 Bob and Kathy Hamrin
 Pat Hanavan
 Guest: Patrick Hanavan, III
 *Tom Harmon
 George Harmon
 Chuck Harris
 Wyatt and Annell Heard
 Glenn and June Helterbran
 *Jerry and Ellen Hester
 Jerry Huffmaster
 Chuck and Dorothy Jordan
 *George and Cindy Kahl
 John Karamanian
 Steve Kelley
 Guest: Steve Dawber
 *John Kopp
 Bob Korose
 Joe and Nita Kottak
 Dave and Chris Kowalski
 Jim and Sandy Laney
 Dick and Phyllis Lanoue
 Bob Lawson
 Ron Lester
 Bob and Dodie Lipscomb
 *Ray and Norma Longo
 *George and Sandy Malamatos
 Patrick Mannion
 Ken Mascaro
 Bill McCarron
 Mac and Sue McCorkle
 Mike and Kari Messner
 Phil and Lynn Molohosky
 Harold and Regena Myers
 Rocky and Joyce Nelson
 Bob and Iola Neumayer
 Chris, Eileen and Ben Nevins
 *Harry Norton
 *Dave and Aggie O'Meara
 Ken Pacholka
 Rick and Antoinette Patterson
 Pat and Barbara Phillips
 Wayne ("Dixie") and Elaine Ray
 John and Pam Record
 Rex and Margie Rexroad
 Earl and Pamela Reynolds
 Bill and Marinee Ricks
 Mary Beth Riedner
 Mike Riess
 Keith Ryland
 *Dick and Janey Rynearson

Gary Sanger
 Ron and Nancy Seymour
 Allen and Karen Shanahan
 Troy Shankles
 Guest: Byron Shankles
 Lee Shelton
 Cliff Smith
 Tom and Kathy Snodgrass
 Link and Jean Spann
 Kenneth and Laveda Synco
 Guest: Rose Lachala
 Ray Tanner
 John and Fran Tawes
 Guests: Fred and Cheryl Tawes
 Curry Taylor
 *Al Thomas
 John L. Thomas, III
 Jack Thomas
 Bill and Carol Tidmore
 Staton and Debbie Tompkins
 David and Dianne Toon
 Guests: Kathy Kepner and Don Poat
 John and Jan Tupper
 George and Kathy Turnes
 Charles and Luan Vanness
 Bob and Ginny Waldron
 Roger and Tara Wayland
 *Chris Webster
 Guest: Andrea Webster
 Gary and Restie Wever
 Jim Williams
 Clyde Wilson
 Roger Woodbury
 Guest: Charity James
 Frank Woznicki
 Richard and Vicki Yamashiro
 * Indicates first time attendee

Attendance by State

AK	1	KS	1	NV	3
AL	7	KY	6	NY	3
AR	1	LA	1	OH	1
AZ	3	MA	1	OK	3
CA	3	MD	1	OR	1
CO	2	ME	1	PA	2
CT	1	MI	2	TN	7
DE	1	MN	1	TX	17
FL	16	MO	3	VA	5
GA	7	NC	6	WA	4
IA	1	NE	3	WV	1
IL	2	NH	1	UK	1
IN	1	NM	2		

President's Corner

(Continued from p. 2)

Many of these jobs require specific computer skills and software. Some do not. All, however, require a devotion to getting the job done.

What is required to serve on the Board? According to the By-Laws, the only requirement is "active membership." That is somewhat like the U.S. Constitution that says the President is to be a citizen at least 35 years old. Woody Allen, of all people, said "90% of life is just showing up." That is a prime requirement for Board membership.

Since we are a very geographically dispersed organization, access to email is essential. All of our business must be conducted by email and you must be willing to show up on your email at least once a day. In another quote, this one from John F. Kennedy, he said to "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." We have all shown that we were more than willing to serve our country, but we also need people to serve the Association. Going back to that definition of service, "work" must be re-emphasized. We need people willing to work in whatever way they can to help. We are currently in the unfortunate position of having about 99% of the work being done by a small handful of people and we welcome any and all help we can get. Look at that list of things that have to be done. Is there anything you can do to help? If so, volunteer to give us a hand and make yourself known. The surest route to the Board is demonstrated willingness to take on some job and get it done. If you think you can help, just contact any Board member and let us know.

Make yourself attractive to the Nominating Committee as a potential Board member by VOLUNTEERING to "work" for the Association and DO THAT JOB!

Be someone who has a positive answer to the question: "What have you done for the Association **lately**?"

2014 Reunion Attendance by Unit

457 Member/Spouse	13/7
458 Member/Spouse	15/10
459 Member/Spouse	15/10
483 Member/Spouse	8/4
535 Member/Spouse	22/14
536 Member/Spouse	16/5
537 Member/Spouse	30/16
5 SF	1/1
AFAT2 Member/Spouse	1/0
908 TAG Member/Spouse	1/1
4449 CCTS	1/0
Guests of Members	29
Total	231

Thanks for Your Help at the Reunion

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

The number of members, wives, and guests who pitched in to make our reunion in Fort Walton Beach a success was remarkable. No less than 21 members volunteered **in advance**, on their registration forms, to help. Others pitched in when needed.

At the risk of overlooking someone, the list of those who made a difference includes: John and Fran Tawes, Fred Tawes, Doug and Ellen Boston, Wayne and Joyce Brunz, Ed Breslin, George Harmon, George and Cindy Kahl, Jon Drury, Bob Davis, Bob Neumayer, Wayne and Patty DeLawter, Al Cunliffe, Pat Brooks, Andy Anderson, Tara Wayland, "Dixie" Ray, Tony and Evelyn Coelho, and Lee Shelton.

Good Book

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

"Duty, Honor, Country" by Col. George "Bud" Day, USAF, Ret. is a page-turning account of his 7 years as a POW. It is a roller coaster ride, alternating your emotions between anger and tears, as his story of shoot-down, capture, escape, re-capture, imprisonment, and brutal torture by the North Vietnamese unfolds. Print and Kindle copies are available at Amazon.com.

Flowers for Alicia



"We are missing you. We wish you good health. We hope to see your smiling face next year at Sacramento."

From the Ladies of the
C-7A Caribou Association



"We missed seeing you at the reunion. Get well soon."

From the The Young Lieutenants

It was so very thoughtful of the Ladies and the First Lieutenants to remember me with these gorgeous flowers and the beautiful gardenia plant.

I was overwhelmed by your caring and concern. Your gifts really uplifted my spirits, especially since I was unable to be with you at the reunion.

Thank you all so much for your kindness. I will always keep you in my heart and prayers.

Fondly,
Alicia Hanavan

Memorabilia Shop



Effective immediately, our memorabilia shop is managed and operated by Bryan Bruton [483 CAMS, 68]. You probably have seen stories by Bryan in the newsletter. During reunions, he is ably assisted by Wayne and Joyce Brunz, Andy Anderson, Dick and Besley, Jim Bailey and Susan Morgan, and others, depending on who is able to attend the reunion.

Bryan's contact information is on the web site page for Memorabilia.

Send your order and check made out to the *C-7A Caribou Association* to:

Bryan Bruton
107 Hillcrest Dr
Burnet, TX 78611-5669
You can also contact him at:
bryanb@hughes.net

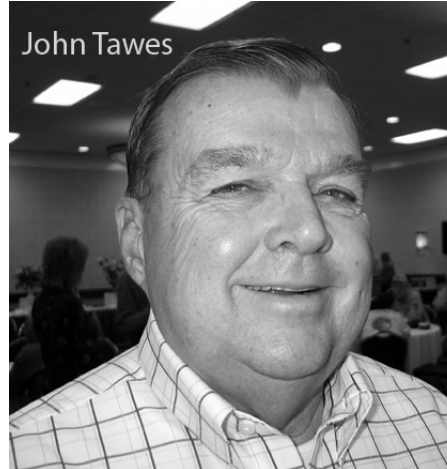
Reunion Team

Effective in January, the reunion planning and execution team will be led by John and Fran Tawes [537, 69] and Doug and Ellen Boston [458, 68]. All of them have experience in planning elements of our reunions (hotel survey, transportation, buying for the War Room, on-site registration at the reunion, bus transportation, etc.) from 2010-2014.

Pat and Alicia Hanavan will continue to be involved and will mentor them and other key personnel involved with

planning and execution of our reunions.

The survey of activities of interest at a possible reunion in Washington, DC was very informative and will guide the planning for a reunion there, possibly in 2016.



The significant responses on the survey taken at the Fort Walton Beach reunion, in order of popularity were: Vietnam War Memorial, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian



Air and Space Museum Annex (Udvar-Hazy), and the WW II Memorial.

John, Fran, Doug, and Ellen will visit Northern Virginia in January to survey the most promising hotel for a reunion.

Bob and Ruth Whitehouse [459, 68] will be involved in reunion 2015 reunion (Sacramento, CA, 23-27 Sep.). The hotel contract has been signed and the planning of activities is moving forward.

Success!

After nearly ten years of correspondence with different levels of unresponsive government agencies and management, CMS Bob Bowers [536, 66] reports that he succeeded in his quest to get proper recognition for his maintenance guys. The individuals are TSgt. (now MSgt.) Buford N. Center, TSgt. (now MSgt.) William R. Duvall, and TSgt. (now SMSgt.) Marshall R. Goodfellow.



All three maintenance technicians flew from Vung Tau on approximately 45 missions to "remote and isolated locations" (e.g., Lai Khe, Xuan Loc, Bearcat, Dong Tam, Di An, Phuoc Vinh, Tay Ninh, Song Mau, Don Phuoc, Soc Trang, My Tho) to repair Caribous so they could be flown to their home base. Many repairs were performed under enemy fire, requiring that the personnel fly back to Vung Tau at the end of each working day.

On 3 June 1967, Lt. Col. Gerald A. Ottem, Chief of Maintenance, recommended (by letter, over his signature) that the airmen be awarded the Air Medal for "their performance in going beyond what was normally expected of them ... reflecting the highest spirit and truest devotion [to duty]."

Correspondence from 2004 through 2013 to the Air Force Board of Correction for Military Records, the Chief of Staff USAF, the Chief MSgt. of the USAF, the Secretary of the Air Force, and numerous Congress-critters failed to obtain results until recently.

Congratulations, Bob, on a job well done! Your efforts are a good example of great leadership and persistence.

Valuable Flying Lesson

by Tom Dawes [537, 70]

My first assignment after UPT was the C-7A Caribou. For me, it was the perfect time, place, and airplane to gain some valuable flying experience – flying experience that would serve me well in the next 36 years of professional flying. One particular episode comes to mind that could have been disastrous had it not been for a very alert copilot.

I was a newly upgraded A/C with very little actual instrument time. I had a plane full of GIs, landing at Qui Nhon in heavy rain. Qui Nhon had a GCA with a final approach course offset from the runway heading. Decision height (DH) was 750 feet and about 2 miles from the end of the runway. DH was over the water and about 15 degrees off runway heading. It was really a non-precision approach in disguise.

I remember arriving at DH still in heavy rain with hills straight ahead and small boats in sight, at anchor. The controller gave me a heading to align me with the runway and said, “Further descent at pilot discretion.” I was on speed and on altitude as I went “heads up.” I saw a boat anchored just off the end of the runway. I felt comfortable that I would see the runway very soon when the copilot yelled, “We are going to hit the water!!!” I was below 100 feet, in a shallow descent when I pulled up and leveled off. A few moments later, I saw the runway and landed. I “thought” I was visual, but I was so focused on looking for the runway that I lost track of my altitude. The heavy rain blended in with the ocean below. Understandable, “Yes,” excusable, “Never!”

In the many, many instrument approaches that I flew later in my career, I never went completely “visual” after leaving the DH or MDA. Perhaps the most valuable lesson I learned from that experience was how important it is to have an alert, fully active copilot – something the airlines recognized a decade or so later with the advent of Crew Resource Management.

Cargo for Gia Nghia

by Larry Stuppy [536, 71]

It was late in 1971 and I was stationed at Phan Rang. The job was to train the Vietnamese pilots to fly the Bou. We did cargo missions.

Our mission was to Gia Nghia (V-202). Upon arrival overhead at the field, we saw that the Army was doing an “exercise” and the field was full of choppers. We called the Army on their “FM” and asked them how long their operation would take. Their answer was, “at LEAST 30 minutes.”

After a pause, the Army troop added, “By the way, what are you carrying?” We answered, “We have a pallet (80 cases) of Coke and a pallet of BEER.” The moment we said BEER, every chopper peeled off, leaving the field open. The Army troop stated, “THE FIELD IS OPEN, WE’VE BEEN OUT OF BEER FOR THREE (3) WEEKS.” Now that was a priority cargo mission!

On landing, the Army troops invited us to lunch and said they would off-load the plane. Their base was across the river, so we really saw the country and the Vietnamese in their environment. Back at the airplane, number one engine failed to start – a sheared starter. We contacted operations and they flew a “rescue” mission to repair our Bou.

Air Commando Request

At the Fort Walton Beach reunion, a note was left under the door to the Memorabilia Room.

“I am a retired Green Beret Colonel writing a book on the Secret War in Laos. If you are a pilot or aircrew who flew the Caribou with Air America in Laos, please contact me.”

Thanks.

Joe

Colonel Joe Celeski, USA, Ret.
GB 5253@aol.com
678-591-3230

Why We Serve

Roll Call! We’ve all done it, some more than once. We’ve raised our right hand and repeated the oath to solemnly swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. It is a humbling oath, a thoughtful and serious promise to take on the sobering duty to protect our freedoms.

The motivation behind our first oath is often different. Many initially raise their right hand for the opportunities that come with service in our military - great young men and women looking to further their education goals, for direction and purpose in life, or financial stability. For others it could be family tradition or the thrill of a new challenge. The reasons vary greatly, and none are wrong.

There is no bad reason to join our Air Force.

For each of us, at some point in our service, that reason must evolve. We must grow to understand that service is about more than direction, pay or education.

It is about protecting American ideals, embracing the responsibility that comes with freedom, and strengthening our country through an unbreakable bond with the comrades who serve by our side. We share a commitment to do and be more, a commitment that only those who have served can fully understand and appreciate.

When proud veterans recall their service – however short, or long ago it may have been – they never recall the tangible benefits. They cherish the intangible benefits – pride, service, duty and honor – and stand taller knowing they did their part to serve their country.

It is a privilege to be an Airman, and an honor to defend our nation. We can never forget that.

**Have A Great
Air Force Day!**

The First Day

by Dave Larson [457, 69]

Cam Ranh Bay flight crews usually flew out in the morning and returned to CRB by evening. We had a few missions that would remain overnight at Bien Hoa AB and then do another day's flying before returning to CRB.

At CRB, we would get an intel briefing prior to departure. At Bien Hoa, we had no intel source so we usually got it from the first morning crew arriving from CRB. This morning, they were delayed for some reason so we had no report on B-52 strikes and the like.

Our mission on 26 Nov 1969 was to fly a load of ammunition or fuel in rubber bladders (I forget which) to Bu Dop (V-121), north of Saigon near the Cambodian border. There was hostile action close by and there was a Forward Air Controller (FAC) and fighter requirement for the airstrip. We had to have contact with the local FAC and the FAC had to be in contact with available fighter aircraft before we could land.

We also had a TOT (time over target of 9:30 a.m.). After a nice 45 minute flight north, we called the FAC at about 9:20, south of the field. The FAC said the fighters had not checked in yet and to hold off to the south for a while. We throttled back to a low power setting for holding. There was a lot of radio noise and conversation between the FAC and ground units in combat, with lots of loud, chaotic chatter. At 9:35, the Bu Dop ramp area blew up, right where we would have been parked while unloading. The radios went really crazy with excited yelling and chatter. We held for a while and after 15 or 20 minutes, the FAC called us and stated the obvious – we couldn't land.

Before starting back to Bien Hoa, we called on the FM radio for an artillery firing advisory. They read us the grid coordinates for an Arc Light (B-52 bomb strike) from the present time and the next 15 minutes for our position. In all the loud radio noise, we had somehow not heard the announcement on

the Guard radio channel. I went to max power on the engines and pushed the nose down in a dive to gain airspace.

Almost immediately, the plane started shaking with what we thought was engine backfiring from jamming the power from a low setting to max power. After we travelled several miles east clear of the bombing area we turned south and looked back to see a huge cloud of smoke and debris were the bombs had impacted, about where we had been. The engines were running fine. We were feeling the shock waves from the exploding bombs.

When we got back to the Bien Hoa traffic pattern, a cloud layer pushed us about 200 feet lower on the downwind leg. About mid-field, a momentary cloud break in front revealed a Vietnamese DC-3 head-on just barely above us about one second away. I thought it would take the tail off our Caribou. Seconds later, we were still flying and made an uneventful and relieved landing at Bien Hoa. For this flight, an NCO at the aerial port had decided to ride with us as he had been in-country several months and wanted to go along on a flight. He said he was never going out again. We flew the rest of the day, happy to be alive and content with somewhat less thrilling combat bush flying.

The Next Day

by Dave Larson [457, 69]

I was sitting on alert at Cam Ranh Bay on November 27th. During the afternoon, my crew was one of two crews alerted to help recover a Caribou and some Air Force maintenance personnel. A C-7A had been on the ground for a couple of days at Song Mao (V-18) and maintenance men were finishing an engine change on it. Intel now thought that the airfield might be overrun by Viet Cong that evening and wanted the maintenance men and, hopefully, the aircraft evacuated ASAP.

We landed at dusk. The maintenance men accomplished a miracle and had the grounded C-7A ready to go with the

damaged engine tied down inside. We kept the engines running as the other crew ran over to the grounded Caribou while most of the maintenance men climbed into our aircraft. By now, it was dark. They got the engines started and taxied to the runway. We followed in case they needed to abandon their aircraft. We both made lights-out take-offs from the dark airstrip.

Once we were in the air, we saw a lot of reddish orange streaks arching towards us, some getting pretty close. The rest of the night flight back was routine with the usual terrain and weather to work around. I never heard if we had any bullet holes and we never heard anything about the planes we brought back. The aircraft I flew that evening was C-7A S/N 62-9760, now on display at the AMC Museum, Dover, DE.

It was one of the most challenging and exciting years of my life. As a separate bit of trivia, we had a standing request to find a rainstorm to fly through on the homeward leg to help wash the day's dirt off the airplane.

7th AF DFC Citation **S.O. G-2557, 6 Jun 1970**

“First Lieutenant David E. R. Larson distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as Aircraft Commander of a C-7A aircraft at Song Mao airfield, Republic of Vietnam on 27 November 1969. Lieutenant Larson flew a critically needed flight test crew from Cam Ranh Bay AB to the Song Mao airfield to effect the recovery of a damaged aircraft engine and the maintenance personnel who performed an engine change. During the night recovery operation at the small insecure airfield, Lieutenant Larson exposed himself to hostile small arms fire and successfully completed the hazardous mission without the loss of personnel or equipment. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Lieutenant Larson reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.”

Wing Weenie

by Bryan Bruton [483, 68]

Although I was assigned to the 483rd Wing, I worked in Material Control. You would normally find me sitting in front of the building on the flight line, watching the aircraft come and go.

The Material Control office was always extremely cold because I provided it with two coolers from a portable mortuary that I found on the south side of the base. With that scrounging skill, people basically left me alone and let me do my own thing.

One day, my assignment was to get Colonel Mason a couch for his trailer. It's amazing what a person can do when they have a clipboard, a pick-up, two Vietnamese helpers, and a gift of gab. The three of us walked into the Base Headquarters building. My Vietnamese workers picked up the nice leather couch in the front office waiting area, loaded it, and away we went. I told the clerk on duty that we, or someone, would be delivering a new couch soon. The statement was not false. I am sure that with the loss of their couch a replacement was immediately ordered.

I also kept everyone stocked with steaks, fresh milk, and occasionally lobster. I'd deliver tubs of ice cream to the C-7A working area at least once a week. My method of obtaining the meat, milk, and ice cream varied quite a bit. I would normally trade my "ice art" for a couple cases of steaks. That translates to the leader watching me while an associate was unloading the freezer into the truck.

My "ice art" was made from crushed ice colored with a Kool Aid type product. The process was like sand painting. It was hard to see my work covered up by bowls of salad laid on top of my "ice art."



We're Hit — Well, Maybe Not

by Mike Gould [535, 69]

I arrived at Vung Tau in April 1969 as a "brown bar" (2nd Lt.). The day prior to my arrival, a squadron mission had experienced an in-flight emergency bad enough that the crew had to jettison pallets loaded with .50 caliber ammunition. Knowing that the ammunition could be used against us, one objective for my first mission was to see if we could spot the jettisoned load. If we could find it, then it might be possible to provide a specific location for destruction by an air or ground asset.

Our Caribou in-flight tactics were mostly designed to avoid small arms fire and/or limit our ground time to reduce the exposure to enemy mortars. We needed to reduce our altitude on this particular mission lower than our usual 1,500 feet or more Above Ground Level (AGL) safety margin to sight the missing ammunition.

My anxiety was a little higher than normal. The bad guys could have discovered the ammunition and set up an AAA site waiting for someone to come looking for the cargo. As we were in a left hand turn over the approximate area, with the Aircraft Commander (A/C) and the Flight Engineer looking out the left side of the aircraft, my copilot seat took the opportunity to dislodge from its current height setting and bottom out.

The resounding "thud" the seat made when it hit bottom certainly surprised us all. The A/C immediately declared that we had been hit and took action to get us to safety. Since he had been looking out the left window, he had no idea that my seat had dropped several inches. My reaction was two-fold, one of relief, knowing we hadn't been hit, and a release of nervous tension through hysterical laughter that kept me from coming on the intercom immediately to explain the "hit." It was probably only a few seconds before I

could advise the crew of what actually happened, but it seemed longer at the time.

We never did find the missing cargo, but I've never forgotten the incident because of the unfortunate timing of my maladjusted seat. I never experienced a real "hit" during my year "in-country," which, of course, I attribute to superior airmanship (tongue firmly in cheek). At least that's the way I remember it.

MAC Aviator Terms

by Maj. Garnett C. Brown, Jr.

According to some of MAC's veteran aviators, the use of proven aeronautical terms is essential in order for the neophyte to establish himself as a *bone fide*, dyed-in-the-wool MAC aviator. Whether or not this is true, MAC aeronautical jargon has evolved into something approaching a separate vernacular.

The following list of terms, phrases, and sayings are ideally suited to the novice upon embarkation as a career transport crew member. The adroit use of these phrases, liberally sprinkled among otherwise dull conversation, will dispel the "new guy" image and provide the user with an aura associated with the Old Heads. Gathered over the years, these phrases have been heard with repetition in virtually all crew-served aircraft – not all of them in MAC.

- I've got it!
- Is anyone up back there?
- How are we doing on fuel?
- One with cream and sugar.
- Say again.
- You've got it!
- How are we doing on flight plan?
- Say ceiling and visibility again, please.
- Did it look okay on takeoff?
- You forgot what?
- What's for lunch?
- I thought YOU checked that.
- Jeez, is he still in the rack?
- What was that noise?
- Ask which way he wants us to turn.

Light Load

by Mike Harvin [535, 69]

I got up one AM for a standard flight from Vung Tau to Bien Hoa: normal unspecified support; check in with the ALCE; gas up and go. Normal morning. Came back at lunch and checked-in with ALCE. They reported that they had a high cube, light-weight load that would end the day for us.

We quickly computed how much gas we could load on for the mission; decided to “fill ‘er up” (you know how we like to have gas in the tank rather than back at the airfield whenever possible) and ordered the fuel truck. While the copilot and I were off eating lunch, the fuel truck arrived and the flight engineer “filled ‘er up.” He then went to lunch.

The load arrived while everyone on the crew was gone and ALCE members put it on the bird and left. We came back from lunch and, as we walked up to the Bou, you could tell that SOMETHING WAS WRONG!

She was squatting like a hen on a nest with her struts fully compressed. We checked the “light load” we had been given and found it to be over 10,000 pounds of steel slabs!!! I called ALCE and said I could not take off with that load and the gas we had on board.

They said, “start ‘er up and idle until the gas is low enough to take off.” I explained that we would still be there the next day idling away our full tanks. After a fairly heated exchange, ALCE reluctantly agreed to unload the steel (which I heard on the ramp was supposed to have gone on a C-123 that hadn’t shown up on time) and give us the original load promised. We delivered the correct load as scheduled.

By the time we got back to Vung Tau, SOMEONE had called the Squadron Commander and told him we weren’t “Mission Gung Ho” since we wouldn’t even TRY to takeoff with that load. Needless to say, the Boss was on our side.

Autorotation

by Jon Drury [537, 68]

Our Caribou sat on the irregular gravel and tar that Camp Evans called a “ramp,” next to the runway. Suddenly everything came unglued as a pilot hollered into the mike on the tower frequency.



“Tower, this is Dustoff 503 (rescue helicopter), three clicks (kilometers) south. I have a big time Fire Light and smoke in the cockpit. I need an autorotation to Runway One Eight right now. Please clear all traffic.”

In helicopters, an autorotation is where the main engine is disconnected from the rotor system and the rotor is driven solely by the upward flow of air through the blades. Usually the engine has failed. The rotor acts as a huge parachute. To keep the proper airspeed, the approach is made at a fairly steep angle, requiring good pilot skills.

“Dustoff 503, Roger. Continue autorotation to Runway One Eight. What is your condition?”

“Dustoff has one WIA (wounded in action) and six souls on board. Fuel is half.”

“Soul One Two (Caribou in the pattern), break out of the pattern for an aircraft emergency, runway unavailable.”

“Soul One Four (us) do not taxi to the runway. Maintain your position until the emergency is over.” Actually, we didn’t have our load yet and weren’t going anywhere.

“Dustoff 503, emergency vehicles

will be midfield, including fire. The whole runway is yours.”



The autorotation landing of the Huey could best be described as a pancake with a couple little bounces, followed by a short scrape down the flexible aluminum runway. The pilots in olive drab flight suits and grunts in fatigues leapt and crawled out of the chopper, the pilots grabbing at cords, and flinging off seat belts.

All dove into the ditch beside the runway, anywhere away from the coming fire and explosion. The wounded soldier couldn’t climb out, and a crew member grabbed him and dragged him to the ditch, with what little help the wounded man could give.

We expected to see fire or explosion any moment. If there had been one, we could have been torched also. Events happened too quickly to move our aircraft. The chopper did not catch fire; the engine began to cool; and emergency vehicles allowed the pilot to return and move the chopper.

The helicopter pilot had done a sterling job on the autorotation, keeping his cool, and landing safely. The first principle in a flight emergency is “maintain aircraft control.” Army chopper pilots always impressed me with their professionalism. Among them, Dustoffs were our heroes.

3x-6x Denim Shirts

Denim shirts in sizes 3x to 6x are now available for special order (not stocked). They are \$30 for short sleeve and \$35 for long sleeve.

7th AF Silver Star Citation S.O. G-1954, 9 Nov 1967

“Technical Sergeant Robert A. Kummerer distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force near North Vietnam on 26 April 1967. On that date, Sergeant Kummerer was performing the duties of Flight Engineer on a C-7A aircraft engaged in a low level air delivery of supplies to friendly forces. When the extraction parachute was deployed, the heavy pallet jammed, placing the aircraft in imminent danger of a crash landing into hostile territory. With complete disregard for his own safety, Sergeant Kummerer immediately went to the rear of the aircraft, cut the parachute loose, and secured the load. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Sergeant Kummerer has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

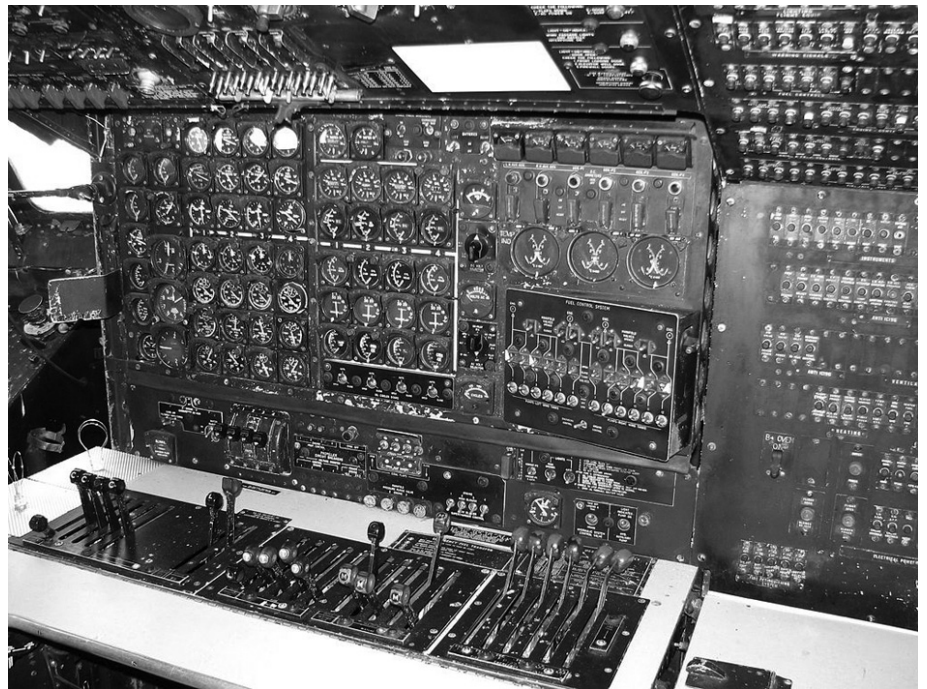
TSgt. Kummerer’s Story by Andy Kummerer

The details, as told to me by my father were:

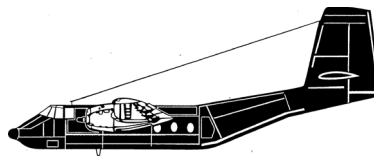
The crew was in the process of making a LAPES (Low Altitude Parachute Extraction System) drop in Vietnam. They did not have any 23 foot cargo chutes, so they were using 27 foot personal chutes to extract the cargo. They went in to drop a pallet of concertina wire. As the pallet was being pulled out of the plane, it jammed and would not extract from the plane.

Once the situation was realized, the pilot called over the intercom and announced he had good news and bad news. The good news was that they were flying at 50 feet off the deck and could maintain that altitude indefinitely. The bad news was that between where they were and safety, the land rose to higher than 50 feet.

TSgt. Robert “Bob” Kummerer, the Flight Engineer, climbed over the top of the pallet of concertina wire and pulled out a bone-handled hunting knife he always wore strapped to his ankle when



Familiar to Anyone? (Before Your C-7A Tour)



flying in-theater. He made his way to the main chute strap and slashed down on it with his knife. The strap, being under great tension, separated and the plane flew free of the chute.

Then, the crew winched the pallet back until they were able to un-jam it. The plane, now able to climb, headed for home. Although the pallet was no longer jammed, the crew was not able to get it into the plane far enough to raise the ramp for landing.

As the plane neared the boundary of the base, they pushed the pallet out and the concertina wire deployed itself on impact. The crew joked that with that much wire at the end of the flight line the guys on the ground could probable stop patrolling that part of the base perimeter.

When Dad returned to the States and told the story, his wife emotionally asked if he was scared. He said that if someone didn’t do something they were not going to make it back, so it really wasn’t a hard decision to make.”



Crystal Ball

In 1985, Kelly Johnson, head of the Skunk Works wrote: “I can foresee the day when the fighter pilot will be on the ground, flying an unmanned fighter with a missile in it. With the latest electronic advances, I think this can be done remotely at a great saving in aircraft costs – and, of course, great saving in manpower, to say nothing of the greater safety for the pilot. It’s worth considering.

Yankee Ice Fishermen

A guy buys a new Lincoln Navigator for \$42,500.00 with monthly payments of \$560.00. He and a friend go duck hunting in upper Wisconsin. It's mid-winter and, of course, all of the lakes are frozen. These two guys go out on the ice with their GUNS, a DOG, and of course the new NAVIGATOR. They decide they want to make a natural looking open water area for the ducks to focus on, something for the decoys to float on.

Making a hole in the ice large enough to invite a passing duck, is going to take a little more power than the average drill auger can produce. So, out of the back of the new Navigator comes a stick of dynamite with a short 40 second fuse. Our two Rocket Scientists, afraid they might slip on the ice while trying to run away after lighting the fuse (and becoming toast, along with the Navigator), decide on the following course of action: (1) They light the 40 second fuse; then, with a mighty thrust. (2) They throw the stick of dynamite as far away as possible.

Remember a couple of paragraphs back when I mentioned the NAVIGATOR, the GUNS, and the DOG...? Let's talk about the dog.

A highly trained Black Lab is used for RETRIEVING; especially things thrown by the owner. You guessed it! The dog takes off across the ice at a high rate of speed and grabs the stick of dynamite, with the burning 40 second fuse — just as it hits the ice.

The two men swallow, blink, start waving their arms and, with veins in their necks swelling to resemble stalks of rhubarb, scream and holler at the dog to stop. The dog, now apparently cheered on by his master, keeps coming. One hunter panics, grabs the shotgun, and shoots the dog. The shotgun is loaded with #8 bird shot, hardly big enough to stop a Black Lab.

The dog stops for a moment, slightly confused, then continues on. Another shot and this time the dog, still stand-

ing, becomes really confused and of course terrified, thinks these two geniuses have gone insane!!!!!!

The dog takes off to find cover, UNDER the brand new Navigator. The men continue to scream as they run. The red hot exhaust pipe on the truck touches the dog's rear end. He yelps, drops the dynamite under the truck, and takes off after his master.

Then—KABOOOOOOOOOOOOOM! The truck is blown to bits and sinks to the bottom of the lake, leaving the two idiots standing there with "I can't believe this just happened" looks on their faces.

The insurance company says that sinking a vehicle in a lake by illegal use of explosives is NOT COVERED by the policy. And, he still had yet to make the first of those \$560.00 a month payments.

The dog is okay and is doing fine.

And to think — you thought that all Rednecks lived in the South.

Docks to the Bar

by Bill Barnes [483,68]

I arrived at Cam Ranh in early September 1968 and departed in early September 1969. My first assignment was at the outside docks. I was there for two or three months, then switched to the flight line working the 6 p.m. to 8 am shift for several months. Then, I was put on flying status for a short while until it was observed that I could type, so I was given clerical duties and the familiarity training of new assignees upon their arrival in country to the squadron. I worked very closely with MSgt John R. Sandy from White Plains, NY and SMSgt Oscar G. Garringer from Tampa, FL.

I served my entire time in Vietnam as an E-3 and did not make E-4 until December 1969, after my return to the States. I was discharged in May, 1971 at Richards-Gebaur AFB, Grandview, Missouri, having worked with a C-118 photo mapping squadron there.

Several years after my discharge and

completing my undergraduate degree, I went to work for the Navy as a civilian in manufacturing weapons and munitions. Upon completing my graduate degree, I transferred to the Army, as a psychologist, with HQ Training and Doctrine Command, and subsequently transferred to the U.S. Treasury where I taught law and conducted organizational and law enforcement training research.

I ended a twenty-eight year career with Uncle Sam and took an early retirement during Clinton's presidential second term reduction of the federal work force and began practicing civil and criminal law, after having obtained two law degrees while working as a psychologist with the Army.

The C-7A Caribou Association is doing one heck of a good job and I am very proud to have been a small part of the Bou family and experience. Although, I must say that cleaning those exhaust tubes in phase maintenance was not a wonderful experience; however, it did help keep those birds in the air and flying for the benefit of many. The stories in the newsletter often bring swells in my eyes as I personally know many of the activities being spoken about.



Fear of Flying

by Lt. Col. Bull Meecham, USMC

"Are you ever afraid when you fly?"

"That's a good question. Yeah. I'm always a little afraid when I fly. That's what makes me so darn good.

I've seen pilots who weren't afraid of anything, who would forget about checking their instruments, who flew by instinct as though they were immortal.

I've looked on the graves of those poor bastards too. The pilot who isn't a little bit afraid always screws up and when you screw up bad, you get a corporal playing taps at the expense of the government."

Welcome Home

Sleeping Dog Productions is working to have a series ready to premier by April of 2015. We have certainly been gratified at the response the trailer has generated. We are creating a “Welcome Home” page for our website (www.sleepingdogtv.com) and will soon become proactive in updating our progress on Facebook as well.

Shortly, those who have an interest in the series, would like to comment, or would like to support the series, will be able to stay in touch with it, through those means. Meanwhile, we continue to work on the production, the funding and negotiations with distribution outlets, including cable networks.

The objective of this series is to have hundreds of thousands of viewers gain an informed understanding of the service rendered by our Vietnam Veterans. Until such an understanding is achieved, it is unlikely that those veterans will ever experience the “welcome home” and unconditional gratitude they have earned and rightly deserve.

The objective will be achieved by having as many as 15 veterans of the war tell, in the first person, the stories of their experiences before, during and after their respective tours in Vietnam.

Great care is being taken to choose veterans who represent all branches of the armed services. We would like those who view the trailer to know that the series is still in production. The veterans who appear in the trailer are not the only Vietnam Veterans who will appear in the series.

A range of ranks, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and jobs performed in-country will be included. From carrier-based Navy fighter pilots to infantrymen; from helicopter ambulance pilots to forward air controllers; from communications officers to artillery soldiers; from transport pilots to Air Force tactical wing commanders; from sailors aboard mine sweepers to medical corpsmen, each veteran will describe his mission and his job in

detail. In that way, viewers will learn just how the war was fought and why. Viewers will understand how decisions made in the White House, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Pentagon affected the missions and daily lives of those living in harm’s way in Southeast Asia.

As a result of viewing the “Welcome Home” series, we hope viewers will understand, perhaps for the first time, just how heroically and successfully the United States military and its allies performed in Southeast Asia. “Welcome Home” is intended to be a personal – as opposed to a political – series. However, for some, the hurtful and erroneous perception endures that these American heroes were somehow “defeated” in Southeast Asia. It is a simple matter of historical fact that the decision of the United States to withdraw from South Vietnam and allow North Vietnam to complete its objective was a political – not a military one. The Paris Peace Accords were signed January 27, 1973; the last U.S. troops were withdrawn March 29, 1973; Saigon fell two years later, April 30, 1975.

The straightforward presentation of the missions accomplished by these veterans will make it abundantly clear that they should be sincerely thanked for a job well done – as all other veterans of America’s wars have been.

Sleeping Dog Productions
920-294-6401/920-379-8998
www.sleepingdogtv.com

Trailer can be seen at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K-CTKFzWjjw&sns=em>



B-17 Navigator’s Log



10-18-43 Mission #6.

Durben, Germany. A town of 50,000 people. Not much military importance. Just wanted to wipe out the town. Morale raid, I guess.

Got up at 0600, took off at 1000, climbed to 27,000 feet. Left England at 1330 – 44 degrees below zero. The nose was completely frozen over. Couldn’t see a thing. My electric suit worked really well.

Visibility poor and clouds all the way. Weather got worse and worse. When we were 20 minutes from the target, they scrubbed the mission and turned around to come home. Might as well have gone on to target.

Pretty risky flying formation in clouds. Counted as a mission even though we didn’t drop our bombs. Just as hard as a mission.

Really getting anxious to raid – weather or no weather.

Bobby and crew went to the “rest home” – 13 missions.



**Caribou Street
Banff, Alberta, CN**

7th AF DFC Citation S.O. G-5139, 19 Dec 1969

“First Lieutenant Gary L. Clark distinguished himself by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight over Southeast Asia on 11 October 1969. On that date, he superbly accomplished a highly intricate mission to support Free World forces that were combating aggression. His energetic application of his knowledge and skill were significant factors that contributed greatly to furthering United States goals in Southeast Asia. His professional skill and airmanship reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.”

Gear Problem

by Gary Clark [459, 69]

We were inbound for landing at Pleiku when we lowered the gear handle and found that the right main gear failed to extend fully to the ‘down and locked’ position. There was no ‘green’ light. I broke from the pattern and orbited several miles southeast of the runway to try and sort things out. We exercised the gear several times and noticed that the strut inched down a bit more, but stopped short of being fully extended.

At one point, I turned controls over to the copilot (1/Lt James B. Rollins) and went back to take a look. The landing gear was about 12” away from being fully extended. The Flight Engineer, TSgt Roy L. Callier, and I decided to remove the cabin window next to the right main gear to see if we could get to the strut. The only thing we had in the cabin was a broom which we poked through the window hole. We tried to pry the strut down, but we couldn’t get any leverage on it, so we gave that up.

We had enough fuel, so we had time to work through the emergency. Given that we had hydraulic pressure on the gear and since the right main wheel was extended to a point below the aircraft fuselage, I decided to try and make a cross-wind touch and go landing on just the left main tire by using a lot of

left aileron cross-controlled with right rudder to hold the nose straight down the runway. On landing, I planned to reduce the amount of left bank enough to allow the airplane to ease over onto the right main tire to “bump” it on the runway just before applying full power to complete the touch and go. I configured for a no-flap approach, leaving the landing gear extended. I hoped that, as the right main gear started to collapse, when I lifted back off the runway the strut might snap back toward the down and locked position given the hydraulic pressure behind it. We didn’t have any cargo or pax onboard, so we were light and that really helped.

I contact Pleiku ALCE and let them know my intentions. A few minutes later, they called me back with clearance from Wing to try it. I then declared an emergency with Pleiku tower and they rolled the fire trucks as we entered the pattern for a no-flap approach to a touch and go. On the first attempt, I landed left wing low on the left main tire, eased the wings level so the right main tire would touch the runway, then as the right main gear started to collapse I went to full power to get airborne again. I remember that the Flight Engineer yelled out “It’s collapsing” as I was lifting off the runway. On climb-out, the Flight Engineer reported that the right main gear had snapped back a few inches closer toward the extended position, but not enough to give us the “green” light. That was encouraging, so we left the gear handle down, climbed up into a right, closed downwind leg and set up for another no-flap approach for another touch and go.

On the second approach, I noticed ahead and to my left that a lot of guys had gathered along the taxiway to watch, so we were rapidly becoming the main attraction that day. As I made that second approach, I again landed left wing low on the left main tire and again eased the wings level so the right main tire would touch the runway, then went to full power for the go-around as the right main gear started to collapse.

Again, the Flight Engineer yelled “It’s collapsing.” Fortunately, when I lifted off the runway this time, the right main gear did snap to the full “down and locked” position with all the “green” gear lights on.

Then, I encountered another problem. After I went to full power on the second touch and go, when I started to bring my power back to climb power, the right engine remained at max power. I had lost all throttle control of the right engine! The throttle linkage had failed, probably because I was too heavy handed in pushing the power up on that second touch and go.

Having just solved one issue and now working on a second issue, I was hesitant to shut the right engine down until I had the landing assured even with potential control issues with the engine operating at max power. We proceeded to pull up into a right closed downwind with the right engine at max power and the left engine at half power. While that made for some uncoordinated flying, it wasn’t a major control problem.

Again, I planned for a no-flap landing approach. We turned onto final at about one mile out, the gear was still showing down and locked with the gear lights all showing “green.” On short final, I had the copilot shut the engine down and we eased the bird in for a safe landing.

It turned out that the airplane had just gone through Inspect and Repair As Necessary (IRAN) maintenance. During that process, the strut was machined and, apparently, some metal filings had fallen down between the strut and outer cylinder of the strut. Those filings caused the strut to bind, preventing it from fully extending. Fortunately, we were able to bring it back in one piece so it could be repaired and returned to service. Just another day in the life of a Caribou pilot!

In my 37 years as a military pilot, I can safely say that I have thoroughly enjoyed every aircraft I’ve flown, but the C-7A Caribou, with its unique mission supporting the Special Forces camps, ranks at the very top of my list!

Able Aeronaut

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

Capt. Clark received the PACAF Order of the Able Aeronaut for his outstanding feat of airmanship during an in-flight emergency (see page 14).



Gary also received two DFCs during his tour with the 459th TAS for missions on 2 April 1970 and 12 May 1970 during the siege at Dak Seang.

Shoring at Can Tho

by Pat Hanavan [535, 68]

In the Spring of 1968, we faced a difficult situation with the ALCE at Can Tho. It was quite common to haul barrels of POL from Can Tho to airfields in IV Corps. This required pallets or shoring to load the POL on the Caribou. Unfortunately, the ALCE wasn't doing their job properly in providing the needed pallets or shoring, instead, insisting on "deck loading" the POL by rolling the barrels into the cabin on their sides.

The small surface area of the rims around a barrel, coupled with the weight of the full barrel, resulted in a footprint (pounds of pressure per square inch) which exceeded the limits specified in the Technical Order for the Caribou. Adding to the problem was the willingness of our sister squadron at Vung Tau to accept such loads at Can Tho.

Lt. Col. Guy Perham (Chief of Stan-Eval), Maj. Albert M. Stephens (Instructor Pilot), and myself (Chief of Safety) discussed the problem one day at the office. We made a pact that whichever one of us faced the situation next at Can Tho, we would tackle the problem and try to get it fixed. Irish luck prevailed and I was the next one who was fragged to Can Tho to haul POL.

When I parked at the Can Tho ramp, a Sergeant from the ALCE asked how much POL I could haul to Cao Lanh. I answered, "I can take three pallets plus two barrels." He replied, "We don't have any pallets, we'll just deck load it." My response to that suggestion was, "If you don't have pallets, provide shoring to distribute the load." He countered with, "We don't have shoring, we can roll the barrels aboard." I told him that he needed to provide either pallets or shoring, because deck loading exceeded the structural limits of the flooring of the C-7A. He angrily walked away and went to the ALCE shack.

A couple of minutes later, a Major came out and asked me, "What's your problem?" I answered, "I don't have a problem, you have the problem!" He went through the same routine that his Sergeant and I had just finished, then said, "What can be done?" I told him that he could provide pallets or shoring, or call the Airlift Control Center (ALCC) in Saigon and get a waiver of the Caribou Technical Order.

Ah, hah! He took the bait and went inside to call Saigon. A short time later, he came back to the airplane fuming and said that he would locate some shoring. With that, we went about our frag and delivered loads of POL to Cao Lanh for the rest of the day.

The next day, the Wing sent a message to all squadrons stating, "Do not deck load POL on Caribous." I doubt that the Major realized that the C-7A Duty Officer at the ALCC did not have the authority to waive the Technical Order, so he called the Wing with his waiver request and that set in motion a chain reaction which fixed the problem.

Aircraft Mechanic's Creed

Upon my honor, I swear I shall hold in sacred trust the rights and privileges conferred upon me as a certified aircraft mechanic. Knowing full well that the safety and lives of others are dependent upon my skill and judgment, I shall never knowingly subject others to risks I would not be willing to assume for myself or those dear to me.

In discharging this trust, I pledge myself never to undertake work or approve work I feel to be beyond the limits of my knowledge, nor shall I allow any non-certified superior to persuade me to approve aircraft or equipment as airworthy against my better judgment, nor shall I permit my judgment to be influenced by money or other personal gain, nor shall I pass as airworthy aircraft or equipment about which I am in doubt, whether as a result of direct inspection or uncertainty regarding the ability of others who have worked on it to accomplish their work satisfactorily.

I realize the grave responsibility which is mine, as a certified airman, to exercise my judgment on the airworthiness of aircraft and equipment, I, therefore, pledge unyielding adherence to the precepts for the advancement of aviation and for the dignity of my vocation.

Sign on Highway Outside Laughlin, NV



Too Scared

by Pat Markham [535, 68]

On 11 March 1969, I was scheduled to fly on what I called the “pig, duck, and chicken” mission, delivering live food to the Special Forces camps along the Laotian border. While I was pre-flighting the airplane, a young airman came up to me, and asked if he could ride along with us. He said this was his airplane, he worked on it daily, and wondered where it went each day. I said “Sure,” and we went into Operations to put him on the manifest.

On our arrival at Bien Hoa, we were informed we had a TOT (time on target), with air support, at Katum for 1300. We flew a few short runs in the morning and were ready to go at 1200. I briefed the crew on what we were going to do on arrival at Katum. On landing, I was going to a corner of the parking ramp and get ready for an emergency ground extraction. My flight engineer was to cut the straps and signal to the airman to say “Go.” I gave him a headset and showed him how to push the microphone button before he spoke. Everyone was ready to go.

When we arrived at our orbit point, we were told we were number two behind a C-123. After it landed and left, we were sent in. We had a normal landing, I pulled over to a corner, set the brakes, ran up the power, and waited for the call. I waited, and waited, and waited, but nothing happened. When my anxiety level started climbing rapidly, I heard “GO-O-O.” I released the brakes, the load slid out the back and on the ground.

As we were approaching the runway, “Charlie” started dropping in a few mortars, just as a reminder that they knew we were there. We took off OK and on the way back to Bien Hoa, I asked the flight engineer what happened. He said he had to come from the back of the airplane, hook up to the intercom, and give me the “Go.”

After we landed, I asked the airman what happened, and why he didn't

say anything. He just said, “I was too scared.” I just chuckled and said it was OK.

When our day was done, and we shut the engines down at Vung Tau, I climbed out of my seat to talk with the airman, but he was gone. I never saw him again. Guess he had learned enough of what his airplane did all day.

Hit in the Delta

by Jess Cogley [535, 68]

We were flying from Soc Trang (V-16) to Bac Lieu (V-58) in the Mekong Delta (IV Corps) through heavy thunderstorms with 3 or 4 pallets of AVGAS. We finally had to go lower to get through the weather.

About 9 miles out of Soc Trang at about 200 feet above ground level (AGL), we heard what turned out to be 30 caliber rounds hitting the airplane, and the loadmaster saw sparks in the cargo area.

My first, inexperienced thought was to climb away from the fire, but the Aircraft Commander, Capt. Fred G. Pappas, Jr., immediately put the airplane in a descent to pick up speed to get away from it all. That tactic worked as we stopped getting hit and made our way to Bac Lieu.

As we were coming down final, the tower told us that our nose gear was not down, although the cockpit lights did not indicate that. We proceeded to land without the nose gear. It turned out that, besides the bullet holes in the fuselage, one had destroyed the nose tire also.

We were extremely lucky that none of the bullets caused a fire or an explosion with the AVGAS and I was especially thankful that the nose tire stopped that bullet from coming into the cockpit. We were fortunate again that we didn't have to spend the night at Bac Lieu as another Caribou brought us back to Vung Tau. The worst part was filling out all the paperwork due to the “damaged” aircraft.

Fast Movers

by Pete Rikeman [536, 68]

It would have been early February of 1969, just before my return to the States. I landed in Saigon, at the end of a long day, to be met by a Major who was standing in front of a forklift with a pallet loaded with ammunition. He informed me that I had a Combat Essential (CE) mission to deliver the pallet to an airfield (almost certainly Katum) whose troops were expecting to be hit that night. I told him I needed fuel. No time, I was told, as two F-100's were in the area to cover my approach. If I delayed, they would have to leave and I would be making the landing without air support.

I took off as instructed and flew to the airfield without refueling. When I got into the area, I contacted the FAC for landing clearance. When I was told to start holding to await the F-100's, I knew I'd been had.

I orbited for several minutes and asked where the fighters were. It turned out they hadn't even launched yet. Now, I had to decide: do I abort to get fuel, knowing that night was approaching and I would never be able to return before dark, or stick around and watch my fuel gauges plummet toward empty? When I told the FAC of my predicament, he showed a distinct lack of verbal skills, since all he would say was “Stand by a little longer.” I had the added distraction of having the GI controller on the ground pleading with me for the ammo.

After about a half hour, I told the FAC I had to land or leave, as fuel was now critical. Just then, the fighters reported in. They started their bombing and strafing under me and I headed for the runway. At about 1000 feet over the approach end, I dropped the gear and flaps and spiraled down. I told the flight engineer to loosen the load so we could drop it quickly. I landed halfway down the runway, turned into the ramp area, and got rid of the load with a

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Fast Movers (from Page 16)

ground LAPES. I don't remember even slowing down, much less stopping. We turned back onto the runway and took off in the opposite direction.

Fuel was now so low that I realized Saigon was probably not feasible. Our only option was Tay Ninh. We probably landed with enough fuel to power a Prius for a couple of minutes. Tay Ninh was not happy to see us, complaining that they had AVGAS for some Bird Dogs, but not enough for a C-7A. When I told them they could scrounge it up or have a large target to interest Charlie all night, they grudgingly found enough to get us home to Vung Tau.

This was my first encounter with the famous Air Force "snafu" system. Had those F-100's been a little later, the newsletter might have been able to print another picture of a downed Bou.

483 TAW Intel in 1967

by Manson Polley [483, 66]

Andy Padgett's article in the March 2014 newsletter about his arrival in Vietnam reminded me of my arrival just a couple of months earlier.

I was a Captain at the time, assigned to the 12th Air Force (TAC) IG Team as the Intel evaluator. Col. Paul Mascot was the IG, but left a couple months after my arrival. I was on a 3 year stabilized tour, but 13 months later I was a "special levy" to Vietnam under "Project Red Leaf." *Reclama* was denied, so I had 28 days to report to Travis.

My arrival at Tan Son Nhut in late October 1966 was similar to Andy's. They had no idea what my assignment was other than CRB. "They will tell you." Again, verbal orders to "find your own way to get there." I finally checked in at 12th Tactical Fighter Wing and they had no clue as to why I am there, no idea what "Red Leaf" is, and to "stand by" while they checked.

That evening I am at the Officer's Club having a beer and mumbling to myself about the "hurry up and wait,"

"special levy," "priority short notice urgency," and all the other bureaucratic nonsense I had been told, only to find out "We don't know."

Then I hear "Polley, what the h*** are you doing here?" Col Mascot was passing by and pressed me for an answer. After my sorrowful tale, he said not to worry. He was commander of a new wing getting ready to start business on the 1st of January and I would be his Wing Intel Officer. Whoa! That was completely off my radar, but he contacted personnel the next day and I wound up as Intel Officer of the 483 TCW, later changed to 483 TAW.

What a learning curve! A new aircraft system for the USAF, with no precedence to go on, and I am only a Captain filling a Lt. Col. position with two months to write all the directives and regulations that go with an Intel function at 6 squadrons and the wing. No chair, no filing cabinet, only a desk from salvage, a large empty office with a frowning Army Major in the corner who says he is the Army Liaison Officer to the wing commander. Okaaaaay ...

Somehow, it all came about and I escaped a year later to go to another job I knew absolutely nothing about at HQ 15th AF (SAC) as an Intel planner on the East Airborne Command Post. Another steep learning curve.

Time To Renew!!

Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show "2014" or later, then it is **TIME TO PAY** your Bou Tax or this will be the **last** newsletter you will receive.

If the year is before 2014, you may have: changed your address and the last newsletter went to an old address, or just sent in your check, or forgotten to send your check

DO IT TODAY.

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

Mike Murphy
555 Couch Ave, Apt 432
Kirkwood, MO 63122-5564

Hidden Maps

by Ki Mae Huessner

It's a story that will forever change the way you think of the phrase, "Get Out of Jail Free."

During World War II, as the number of British airmen held hostage behind enemy lines escalated, the country's secret service enlisted an unlikely partner in the ongoing war effort: the board game Monopoly. It was the perfect accomplice.

Included in the items the German army allowed humanitarian groups to distribute in "care packages" to imprisoned soldiers, the game was too innocent to raise suspicion. But, it was the ideal size for a top secret escape kit that could help spring British POWs from German war camps.

The British secret service conspired with the U.K. manufacturer to stuff a compass, small metal tools, such as files, and, most importantly, a map, into cut out compartments in the Monopoly board itself. "It was ingenious," said Philip Orbanes, author of several books on Monopoly, including "The World's Most Famous Game and How it Got That Way." "The Monopoly box was big enough to not only hold the game, but hide everything else they needed to get to POWs." British historians say it could have helped thousands of captured soldiers escape.

So how did a simple board game end up in a position to help out one of the most powerful military forces on the planet? Silk and serendipity!

Of all the tools in a military-grade escape kit, the most critical item was the map. But, paper maps proved too fragile and cumbersome, said Debbie Hall, a cataloguer in the map room at the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford in Oxford, England.

For hundreds of years, even before World War II, silk was the material of choice for military maps, Hall said, because it wouldn't tear or dissolve in water as easily as paper and was light

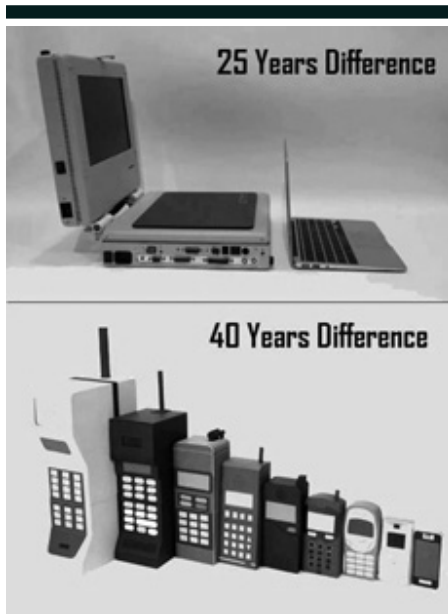
Continued on Page 18

Hidden Maps (from Page 17)

enough to stuff into a boot or cigarette packet. Unlike maps printed on paper, silk maps wouldn't rustle and attract the attention of enemy guards.

"Initially, they had some problems printing on silk," Hall said. "It's quite technically challenging." Then MI9, the British secret service unit responsible for escape and evasion, found the one British company that had mastered printing on silk: John Waddington Ltd., a printer and board game manufacturer that also happened to be the U.K. licensee for the Parker Bros. game, Monopoly. "Waddington, in the pre-war era, was printing on silk for theater programs for celebration events for royalty and that kind of thing," said Victor Watson, 80, who retired as chairman of the company in 1993. "It made a name for itself for being able to print on silk."

He was just a child during the war, but said his father, Norman Watson, president of the company at the time, worked with the British secret service to embed the maps in Monopoly games. A secret service officer named E.D. Alston (known around Waddington as "Mr. A.") used to come by to place the orders in person. Because he was in the secret service, Watson never knew who he was.



Little Bitty Ball

by Lee Shelton [459, 67]

The generally accepted maxim in aviation is that ambient air temperature decreases at a "standard lapse rate" from the Earth's surface up to a certain altitude and then it stabilizes at a constant temperature. For all practical purposes and for flight in normal air vehicles, this is true. For the SR-71, neither practical nor normal, this is not true. The temperature of the atmosphere is not constant, but constantly varies.

In 1977, when I began qualifying in the aircraft, my Habu instructor, Major Bob Helt, explained it as if we were very rapidly flying through Swiss cheese, wherein the cheese and all the holes were at slightly different temperatures. Air masses at different temperatures have different densities and when you are streaking through these pockets of air with varying density at 33 miles per minute, it manifests itself as turbulence. So, at altitudes above 70,000 feet, where there should have been nothing but smooth air, it was often a very rough ride. Sometimes violently so.

One scenario where you could always anticipate this turbulence *a la* a temperature differential was passing from land to water, of vice versa. One place where you always passed from land to water and back again was entering and exiting the airspace over the Korean Demilitarized Zone, something we did quite routinely. Anticipating areas of possible turbulence was just good mission planning, because the critical dynamic balance maintained by the Habu's temperamental inlets could be startled by the change in airflow and a startled inlet could ruin your whole day.

On a beautifully clear, "you-can-see-forever-from-up-here" Friday, January 21, 1983, we entered Korean airspace just below the DMZ in SR-71 S/N 61-7960 (now on display at the museum at Castle AFB, CA). We were flying a "Bow Tie" sortie. The profile was to cross the peninsula west-to-east, do a

big 180 degree turn out over the water and re-cross the land mass east-to-west, do another 180 for a second pass through Korean airspace and then turn south and return to Okinawa. If you flew just a single loop, with one 180 turn, it was dubbed a "Lollipop."



The initial trip across was routine and very stable, essential for a good "take" from the sensors. As we coasted out over the land and went "feet wet," the airplane was violently shaken by a single, terrific blow that lasted only a fraction of a second. Coincidentally, the Master Caution Light illuminated and I immediately focused my attention on the condition of the inlets and engines. They were "Normal."

As I began to sweep the cockpit for the source of the warning light, I saw both a red light in the landing gear handle and the "Canopy Unsafe" light illuminated. Had the turbulence been of sufficient severity to unlatch a gear or crack-open a gear door and lift the canopy from its down-and-locked position? Or, more likely, had the rapid application of positive and negative Gs caused both the gear and the canopy micro-switches to "float" momentarily,

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Little Bitty Ball (from Page 18)

declaring an “open” status to the warning enunciator? As Dirty Harry asked, “How lucky do you feel, punk?”

We rolled out on a southerly heading toward Okinawa, very gently eased the engines out of afterburner and began an equally gentle descent to a more manageable altitude and airspeed.

It was a long drive back to Kadena at a speed that would not damage the gear should it choose to extend or damage us if the canopy chose to separate. Maintenance later confirmed that the micro-switches had indeed been given just enough room to turn the lights on and both gear and canopy had been locked for the duration.

Looking back on these events a few hours later, with my feet firmly on Okinawan soil, I realized that all my concern, beyond the first few seconds, was pure wasted energy. If, at Mach 3, the canopy had separated or if a gear or gear door had presented itself to the slipstream, the result would have been both instantaneous and most likely catastrophic.

At the time, however, if only in my mind, I had willed myself to scrunch-down in the nose of that airplane into a little bitty ball ... to present the smallest possible surface area to the “big wind” I knew was coming at any second.

Note: I did not know it at the time, but this single pass across Korea and subsequent air abort was to be my last “operational” sortie in the SR-71. On January 24, I was named as the Operations Officer for the 1st Squadron.

I would continue to fly instructional sorties in the B-model and functional check flights in the A-model, but I would never again enjoy that very special sensation of taking an SR-71 “into harm’s way.” I had flown 78 operational missions during 10 Kadena deployments, 4 trips to Mildenhall and 5 “Clippers” (Cuban missions). I hated to quit.

Survival School

by Doug Craze [458, 71]

I vividly remember survival training at Fairchild. Who but the Air Force would send flight crews destined for the hot jungle environs of Southeast Asia to the mountains outside of Spokane in December with two feet of snow on the ground? Added to that was the prison guards dressed as Russian soldiers. Aside from those very few hilarities, the training and knowledge imparted by the staff there taught me some very valuable lessons.

I didn’t take it seriously at first but by the time I made it through the third rotation in “the little black box,” I was a believer. Towards the end of the “practical exercises” in the prison compound, I had had enough. Chits were being passed around to anyone willing to make an escape attempt. Time after time, guys would not step up to take a chance, officers and enlisted alike. Who knew what punishment the goons would unleash on someone who didn’t make it? Myself and a Lt. Fields took the chance, although neither he nor I knew about each other’s attempt.

It was night time and very cold. I took the chit and started surveying the guards’ routines with the help of other enlisted men. Once it was determined that the tower at the far corner of the prison yard was unmanned, I made my move. I hit the ground, covered my head as best I could, and rolled with all my might (whatever was left at that point) through and under the barbed wire. Once I was out, I had to make a quick decision where to proceed. We were previously briefed that if anyone gets out, they must E&E (Escape and Evade) toward a light far off in the distance. A telephone would be placed there to call and identify yourself (“animal number”). All well and good, except that I had three choices. There were three lights out in the distance.

Of course my first choice was the wrong one. I E&E’d on my belly for what seemed like an hour, up and

down the rolling landscape. Cold, very fatigued, and now very teed off after having chosen the wrong direction, I surveyed the area for my next move. Luckily, it was the right one. It seemed like it was an interminable amount of time before I located the phone, cranked it up, and called in. I collapsed backward in the snow on a berm, listening to the muffled, shouted commands of the guards and watching the silhouetted prisoners darting to and fro. It was surreal. I was awash in excitement of having escaped. I enjoyed the moment, but only briefly.

After being picked up, I thought the “exercise” was over for me. I took the pending interrogation in stride, naming the names of the rank and file of the chain of command of the prisoners and other pertinent information. Then to my disbelief, I was dumped right back into the prison again. My head was spinning by that time. I thought, “What the heck did I just bust my ass for out there, only to be put right back where I started from?” Luckily, the entire exercise ended a few hours afterward. After being summoned by the guards to yet another pain in the rear formation, we prisoners erupted into a massive single voice of cheerful elation when we were told that “this practical exercise is over!” Myself and Lt. Fields were recognized during the formal class debriefing. It was a proud moment for both of us. But, we both realized that this was just a test. It would be a different story once we got in country.



Help!!!

Check your email address on our web site, <http://www.c-7acaribou.com/>. Send any change to:

pathanavan@aol.com

Return to Vietnam

by Ed Thacher [MACV team, 67]

This is the follow-up story to my November 2012 newsletter story regarding the friendly fire shoot down of Caribou S/N 62-4161, resulting in the deaths of Capt. Alan E. Hendrickson, Capt. John D. Wiley and TSgt. Zane A. Carter. I said that I planned to return to the site and place a memorial to their memory. I was able to do so on April 20, 2013.



One thing that has troubled me about the Vietnam War over the years is that so many men perished in those far off and unknown battlefields and that no one would remember them. Making this trip allowed me to make sure that at least these men are not forgotten. My sons and grandchildren will remember this long after I am gone as I have made a point to them to remember. My hope is that any relatives or friends of these men will get some solace from this and know that they are not forgotten.

In August of 1967, I was told that I was being helicoptered out near the Son Ha Special Forces camp for a week-long operation. More than forty years later, I would learn the names and actual locations. The location was in the hills near a little village by the name of Ha Thanh, Son Ha District, Quang Ngai Province, about 35 kilometers southwest of Quang Ngai City by road. I would be serving as the radio operator for two U.S. Marine advisors to a Vietnamese artillery battery. The artillery unit would provide indirect fire sup-

port for the 101st Airborne conducting Operation Cedar Falls. What happened two days later was the reason I returned to Vietnam after almost 45 years.

On August 3, 1967, sometime in the afternoon, I heard a plane approaching. I saw that it was preparing to land somewhere in the valley below. I walked to the edge of the hill we were on and saw a plane with two engines coming in. I saw a little dirt strip near the Special Forces camp and it became apparent that the plane, a C-7A Caribou, was setting up to land on the strip. I was a little surprised that a plane that size could land on that little strip, not knowing at the time, that this was what the Caribou was designed to do.

As the plane was making a pass across my front from right to left, I heard the artillery battery down in the valley fire a salvo. This was a U.S. battery also assigned to assist in the operation. Within a second, one of the shells hit the Caribou in the rear fuselage and blew the tail off. The plane crashed into the ground within seconds and all three USAF crewmen were killed. This was a "friendly fire" incident.

More than 40 years later, after finding the picture of the shoot down, I was able for the first time to know where the incident occurred. I began to research the incident more and got in contact with a group called Vietnam Battlefield Tours (VBT), which is run by Vietnam veterans. After talking with several members of VBT, I was able to secure old military tactical maps of the area, including the Son Ha grid map. I was also able to get a copy of the after-action report filed by the 101st Airborne on Operation Cedar Falls. The report had a hand drawn map of the area. By comparing the tactical map and the hand drawn map, I was able to narrow down the coordinates for the incident.

I also confirmed with former airman, Greg Plumb, who went on the recovery mission, that the village there was Ha Thanh. Some of his photos assisted in locating the area. I found some 1970 aerial photos of the old Special Forces

camp and adjacent dirt strip used for resupply. We had an excellent idea of where and how to get to the site.

Our group of 12 veterans, four women (including my wife), one non-veteran and two guides, met at Los Angeles International Airport and flew to Taipei, then on to Hanoi International Airport and spent two nights in Hanoi. Next, we flew down to Phu Cat Airport, one of few remaining U.S. built airfields left intact and took our bus for a ride north on Highway 1.

We stopped for lunch in Duc Pho, near the site of the old base. There are no visible signs of the base, but one long, straight street is apparently the site of the old strip. We headed to Quang Ngai and made a stop at an old fire-base I was assigned to called Nui Dep or Hill 61. Nothing looked the same, but I knew this was the place.

After a night in Quang Ngai, we headed out to the village of Ha Thanh, taking road 58 out to the site. This day was the most emotional. That day was why I made the decision to return.

When we reached Ha Thanh, Dave Macedonia of VBT used his hand held GPS and the old tactical maps to nail down the location. We left the bus and headed down a trail to an open rice paddy and found our site.

I placed my simple memorial, consisting of the poem "The Caribou" written by Captain Hendrickson, the information from the Virtual Wall



about the men, a picture of a Caribou in Vietnam, and an explanation of my

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involvement with this incident.

I believe the hill in the background of the photo was my vantage point of the incident. The Vietnamese men in the photo remembered the shoot down. The older man, who was 21 at the time of the incident, described it to our interpreter by using both of his hands to show two parts of the plane coming down. The two younger men were 6 and 8 at the time and remember the crashed plane. I asked one of them to place the memorial in their home to honor the three men killed in the incident. One of them, Nguyen Van Le (on the right in the picture below), agreed to do it.

The road to Ha Thanh goes through



some remarkably beautiful land. The area is completely different now, as is most of modern Vietnam. The hills are covered with trees and vegetation and the village is larger, still a very rural hill area, but we were sure this was it.

I tried to explain this to our group what happened that day in 1967, I became very choked up. As I placed the simple memorial that I made on a small knob near a rice paddy, curious villagers began showing up as they very, very rarely see Americans out there.

After talking with the three villagers and taking photos, we thanked them and continued our journey north to the DMZ. We passed by the Danang Airport, Phu Bai Airport, and the old site of the huge Chu Lai Base.

I am glad I made the trip. It is a personal decision to go back and it is not for everyone. For me, it was. All of the veterans on the trip had similar reasons for returning and I think we all gained some kind of solace by returning.



Da Nang Beach Resort (Monkey Mountain in Background)



Old Hangar at Da Nang Airport



Old Main Gate at Chu Lai Air Base

Last Mission

7th Air Force News

The 470th mission [*sic*] flown by a C-7A Caribou out of Phu Cat AB seemed to be nothing special. Yet it was.

When the pilot, 1st Lt. Darrel D. Whitcomb eased the Caribou onto Phu Cat's runway on August 30, 1971, it marked the end of the last operational mission to be flown by the 537th Tactical Airlift Squadron.

The last flying day began at 7 a.m. when aircraft 62-4172 lifted off en route to Quang Ngai in Military Region 1. The crew consisted of aircraft commander 1/Lt. Whitcomb, copilot 1/Lt. Edward C. Yewdall, flight mechanic Sgt. Barry D. Burke, and aeromedical specialist Sgt. William R. Henderson.

At Quang Ngai, the 470th mission was assigned to support Vietnamese Ranger airlift requirements and during the morning several flights were made to Ninh Long as a succession of passengers, rice, fuel, ammunition, and other essentials occupied the cargo compartment of the Bou.

Then it was to Chu Lai for refueling and lunch before the return to Quang Ngai. The afternoon's trips were to the mountain village of Ha Thanh, where Lieutenant Whitcomb had to maneuver the aircraft through a succession of mountain valleys and he hit the end of a landing strip a bare thousand feet long each time [1300 feet of laterite].

One load to Ha Thanh consisted partly of the highly pungent *nuc mam* fish sauce which naturally leaked and added a certain "flavor" to the balance of the day's flying.

After a final trip to Ninh Long with a load of passengers and ammunition, the C-7A headed back to Phu Cat – its 21st sortie of the day – and the crew received the traditional hosing down which marks all final flights. This time, though it was the *fini* flight for a whole squadron which has amassed an unequalled record of combat airlift sorties during its 56 months in the Republic of

Vietnam.

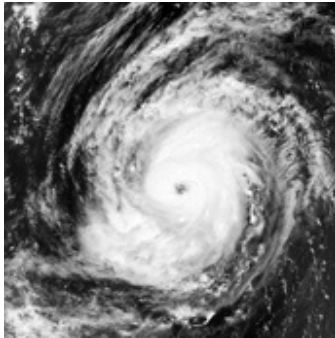
Next day, with the 834th Air Division commander, Brig. Gen. John H. Germeraad [father of 1/Lt. John O. Germeraad of the 535th TAS in 1968], the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing's vice commander, Col. William G. Christensen, cased the unit's colors, marking the inactivation of the squadron.

The aircraft and men of the 537th are going in various directions. Some are returning to the United States while others are continuing to work and fly with the four remaining Caribou squadrons in Vietnam. The 537th TAS, whose motto was "Deeds, not Words," had done its last deed.

Typhoon Evacuation

by Bob Cummings [459, 66]

On November 13, 1967, the 459th was evacuated to Bangkok, Thailand because of Typhoon Gilda bearing down on Vietnam. We landed at Ubon, Thailand.



A/IC Michael J. Hall and myself were the only engine mechanics assigned to 5 of our aircraft. I remember our flight because we were flying at around 10,000 feet and none of us had a field jacket and we were very cold. You could see your breath when you breathed.

Maj. Paul L. Peoples was piloting the aircraft. I also remember we had a long flight because we had to go around Cambodia over the ocean. Cambodia was a zone we could not fly over.

We stayed there until the all clear was given which was the next day. We came back to Vietnam because the typhoon had veered away from Vietnam.

The Caribou Song

by Gary Clark [459, 69]

Sung to the song "MTA"

by the Kingston Trio

Chorus

The Caribous are Flyin' Day after Day
There's not a place they won't fly
Tam Ky, Tra Bong, Mai Loc,

Minh Long
Hauling "S**t" throughout the sky

For those who fly the twin engine skies
Noise and hard landings are the rule
With no radios on IMC Days
Guess who's being reamed with a tool

The 432 is one of the few
With pleasures very unique
Chu Lai's cuisine for the 1st line team
Taste like bread and donkey meat

Chorus

The 433 between you and me
Is something beyond compare
ARVNs to Ba To join the mile high club
To subsidize part of their fare

There's some who tease they've
more time on leave
That a J.O. in the service yet
When they criticize eating habits
besides
It's grounds for another TET

Chorus

Rules of flight are all very fine
According to one FE
But Eli's offer to fly New Year's Day
Brought questions from you and me

The 459th has seen better days
With Da Nang, China Beach and Erf
But you'll never meet a more
rum soaked crowd
Than the Bou Jocks on this earth!

Chorus

Red Tail Inn Opened

by Denis DelMonte [458, 67]

Col. William H. Mason, 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing Commander, recently cut the ribbon officially opening the 458th Tactical Airlift Squadron Red Tail Inn. The new party hootch of the 458 TAS was constructed in just three months under the guidance of MSgt. Earl W. Churchill, Squadron First Sgt..

Bringing a touch of luxury to the sandbox of Vietnam, the Inn has an air-conditioned lounge, large outdoor patio, and rooftop sun deck.



Located in the maintenance and administrative personnel hootch area, the Inn is easily found – just look for the red and white “Home of the 458 TAS” sign beneath the Oriental archway.



Step inside where it is cool. Settle back with a cool drink, watch TV or stereo music, or maybe a magazine from the rack. The rooftop sun deck is the perfect place to relax or bask in the sun, which will keep up that good tan.

Sound like an ideal place to relax and unwind after a hard day? It is that and much more. It is already an integral part of life of many men of the 458 TAS.



**Interior of 458 TAS Red Tail Inn
With F-Troop Banner on Wall**



**Thanks to
Dave O'Meara
[535, 67]
Crew Chief
of
61-2399**

I've Got Your Back

by CMSgt. Yelverton
[60th Medical Support Squadron]

Seeing the newly selected staff sergeants recently brought back memories of when I was selected for staff sergeant.

Actually, my thoughts went to the night that I graduated from Airman Leadership School. As I crossed the stage after receiving my completion certificate, my coworkers gathered to congratulate me and shake my hand. My supervisor, SSgt. Todd Mitchell, stayed back at the table and as I approached he shook my hand and said, "I've got your back."

I said, "Thank you," as I sat down.

While cheering on my fellow graduates, I started thinking of what my supervisor said to me. What did he mean? I expected "Congratulations" or "You did awesome," but not "I've got your back."

The next morning at work, I immediately asked my supervisor if we could talk.

I asked him, "What did you mean last night when you said, 'I've got your back?'" His response was surprising and informative.

"Everyone has a specific role in our section," he said. "Before yesterday, your role was to master skills required as an Airman and a Health Service Management Apprentice. Today, your role changed to a frontline supervisor, which includes responsibility for others. My duties also changed today, I am now your first line of defense, meaning I've got your back."

He explained, as tasks flow down from above, "I will always keep you informed and prepared to complete the mission. Also, leadership will always be aware of what you and your Airmen are working on and what requirements are being met and exceeded. Most importantly, you will make many decisions affecting personnel on a personal level as well as a professional level. Your Airmen will not always agree with

you and they will come to me."

"When this happens, I want you to know, I've got your back," he continued. "I will never question your decisions in front of subordinates and will never ask you to change your mind on a decision as long as it upholds the values of the Air Force. I have to make sure your subordinates understand you are the leader and will make the decisions."

That single conversation made me a better supervisor and leader. Throughout my entire career, those words have been engraved in my mind. Mitchell was right that night. I didn't need the usual congratulations, good job, or well done on my graduation night. I needed to be reminded what my next step in my career was and what responsibilities lie ahead as an NCO. His words gave me the confidence in my abilities to be not only the NCO I was back then, but also the Chief Master Sergeant and leader I am today.

I have stayed in touch with now retired MSgt. Mitchell for advice and mentoring. We still talk about that conversation and how he knew exactly what I needed to hear that day. He reminded me as I, in turn, remind you, "Those we lead need to know they have leaders who will stand behind them through the good and the bad."

Today, I challenge all of you to let your subordinates know you have their back.

Shape Changing Wing

from USAF News Service

A feature of aircraft design unchanged for nearly a century may have been twisted into a new shape as a result of a revolutionary new structure being tested in the Mojave Desert. A specially modified Gulfstream III jet successfully took to the skies over NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center on November 6, 2014 using shape changing wings rather than the standard wing flaps.

The seamless, bendable, and twistable surfaces promise to improve aero-

dynamic efficiency and reduce noise generated during takeoffs and landings. The Adaptive Compliant Trailing Edge, or ACTE, program is an Air Force Research Laboratory project using flaps designed and built by FlexSys, Inc., of Ann Arbor, MI. The effort is partnered with NASA's Environmentally Responsible Aviation project for exploring the feasibility, benefits, and technical risks of enabling technologies and vehicle concepts that will reduce aviation's impact on the environment.

"We're thrilled this first flight has been a major success and we're hopeful that further testing will bear out our theories for the potential benefits for this technology," said Pete Flick, AFRL program manager. He noted that successful completion of ACTE flight research will cap nearly 20 years of collaboration between AFRL and FlexSys.

With AFRL funding through the Air Force's Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) program, FlexSys developed a variable geometry airfoil system called FlexFoil™ that can be retrofitted to existing airplane wings or integrated into brand new airframes. FlexFoil's inventor, FlexSys founder and CEO Sridhar Kota, hopes testing with the modified G-III will confirm the design's flight-worthiness and open doors to future applications and commercialization.

"Twenty years ago when I approached AFRL with this method, they had the vision to recognize the merit of our design and they have funded us through SBIR Phase 2 and 3 all the way to this flight test. FlexSys replaced the primary trailing edge wing flaps on a Gulfstream III business jet with 18-foot span-wise FlexFoil™ aircraft control surfaces on each wing, including 2-foot wide compliant fairings at each end to eliminate noise-generating gaps in the airframe. With these, it is intended that they will be able to alter the wing's camber, or cross-section, seamlessly on demand to maximize performance throughout the whole flight. The aeronautics com-

Continued on Page 25



Wing (from Page 24)

munity has been trying to accomplish this for almost 40 years,” Kota said.

“This technology can be applied to all kinds of surfaces moving through a fluid medium such as airplane wings, engine inlets, helicopter rotors, and wind turbines, as well as specialized components for automobiles, boats, and submarines,” said Kota, who is also a professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Michigan.

The technology looks to solve a problem that has long faced aircraft designers. Wing flaps that tilt and separate from the wing introduce gaps that produce unwanted drag and a lot of aerodynamic noise. Conventional flaps are also unable to make the fine adjustments necessary at certain phases of flight or when flight conditions are less than optimal.

The FlexFoil structure eliminates these gaps offering potential noise

reduction and fuel savings as well as enhanced stability in flight.

“We have progressed from an innovative idea, and matured the concept through multiple designs and wind tunnel tests, to a final demonstration that

should prove to the aerospace industry that this technology is ready to dramatically improve aircraft efficiency,” Flick said. “This is a very exciting time for this program.”

Shape Changing Wing on G-III



GEAR PROBLEM

AS THE BOMBER SKIDDED DOWN THE RUNWAY, THE CONTROL TOWER ASKED IF THEY NEEDED ANY ASSISTANCE FROM THE PLANE CAME A LACONIC SOUTHERN VOICE:
DUNNO - WE AIN'T DONE CRASHIN' YET

Off-load At Bu Dop

by Jon Mickley [35, 69]

As we approached Bu Dop, I used the standard overhead pattern to stay close to the camp perimeter as it reduced the amount of ground fire the bad guys may put up. We came in at 3000 feet AGL, pitched out, configured with gear and flaps, and tried to roll out close in on final and low enough to touchdown on the first "brick," aka "cloud of dirt!"

As we turned final, the technique to get down in a hurry was to slip the airplane with a lot of rudder and cross-controlled aileron. I saw some tracers going by, but they were well off to the left, on the outside of the turn as we were turning to final. I wondered who taught those guys to shoot, as they weren't even close. Later, I learned they were taught to just shoot in front of the airplane and let it fly into the bullets. Since we were in a big slip, the airplane was not actually flying in the direction of the nose, but to the right. Hence, I was not moving in the direction the guys on the ground thought we were. Have no idea if they ever figured out how an airplane can "point one way and fly another!"

We landed and began a standard, engine running off-load in the small ramp area. I preferred the "drop the load in the middle of the runway" technique, but there was a lot of traffic into and out of Bu Dop that day, so that wasn't possible. The folks on the ground backed the duce and a half up to the ramp and we began off-loading the cargo, mostly Vietnamese food – live chickens and 55 gallon drums of live eels. It had to be live since there wasn't much refrigeration available for the local folks. As usual, there were a lot of local people around to help with the off-load, despite the threat of getting shot at.

Shortly after the off-load started, the first mortar round hit the corner of the ramp, but nobody really noticed, at least not in the cockpit since it was behind us. The flight engineer saw it and started yelling "incoming" on the interphone,

...we spend billions because we can't let Chrysler go bankrupt, and then let Chrysler go bankrupt.

...can Congress force Fannie and Freddie to buy sub-prime loans.

and then blame Fannie and Freddie for buying sub-prime loans.?

...can the Congress make laws that they don't have to follow.

...does a major crisis require swift action to pass a bill without reading it and then vacation for three days before the President has time to sign it!!

...does the military get investigated by homeland security as possible terrorists, while our borders are wide open.

...can you get a tax refund on taxes you didn't pay.

...can you can blame others when you don't perform.

...are you punished for good performance and revered for nonperformance.

...can you call large corporations evil,

while most Americans work in companies with less than 500 employees.

...can Chrysler get 10 billion in aid for their company of 30,000 employees, because is difficult to run a company for \$333,333 per employee.

at which time the cockpit crew became involved. The Flight Engineer yelled, "clear" and off we went. A mortar is not effective against a moving target, even one as big as a Bou, so we got moving. We turned onto the runway, flaps 25° for a quick departure and off we went. We did a low speed, corkscrew climb-out over the camp, got high enough to avoid ground fire, cleaned up, and departed.

No harm, no foul, except for one minor footnote. The locals had come out to help unload and apparently one was on the airplane when the mortars came in and he didn't get off. Nice young man, but I doubt when he left home that morning, he had planned on taking an airplane ride! Naturally, we weren't going back to Bu Dop to drop him off, so we took him to Tan Son Nhut and dropped him off there. A few days later, I was talking to the crew that had flown the *Tong 452* mission the next day and they told me they took him back home. I assume he spent the night on the ramp at Bien Hoa. I always wondered what he told his wife when he finally got home. Perhaps it was, "I was helping unload an airplane yesterday and ended up in Saigon, dear!" To which she replied, "Sure honey, what was her name?" I doubt if he ever got involved in unloading another Caribou!

Only In America

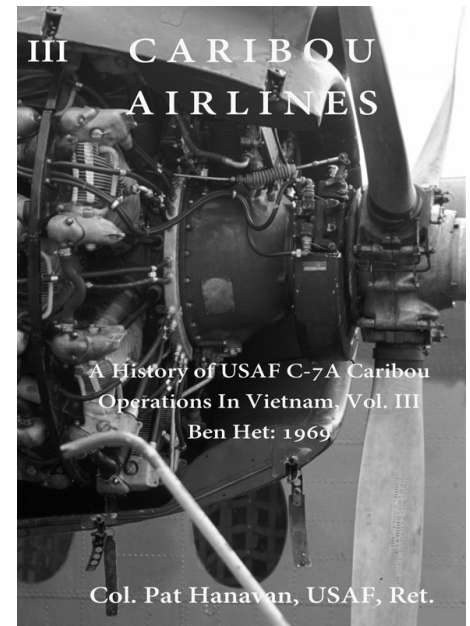
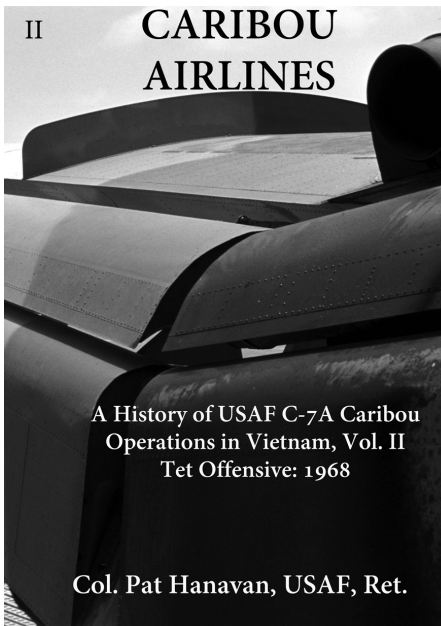
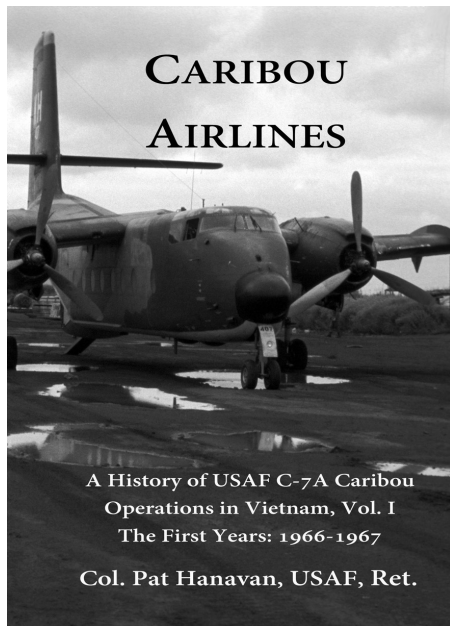
7th AF DFC Citation S.O. G-4806, 26 Oct 70

"Captain Jon E. Mickley distinguished himself by extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight as pilot of a C-7A aircraft at Bu Dop Special Forces camp, Republic of Vietnam, on 15 December 1969. Captain Mickley, flying a combat re-supply mission, was advised of hostile activity at the camp but was able to make a successful tactical approach and landing. While off loading, the camp came under a heavy ground attack, at which time he made an immediate tactical take off and departure thereby evading the hostile fire. The professional competence, aerial skill, and devotion to duty displayed by Captain Mickley reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force."

Bon Mots

Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what the h* happened!**

One of the best feelings in the world is knowing that your presence and absence both mean something to someone.



Caribou Airlines is a comprehensive history of USAF C-7A operations in Vietnam. It is about aircrews, crew chiefs, maintenance officers, line chiefs, maintainers, phase inspection personnel, specialty shop personnel, supply personnel, personal equipment specialists, administration and operations personnel, commanders, staff personnel, etc. They made it possible to deliver the troops, guns, ammunition, rations, beer, soda, equipment, animals, etc. to hundreds of bases on the battlefields of Vietnam.

The 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing and its squadrons were not an airline, per se. They were tasked with supporting Army and Marine units and other customers with air landed and air dropped supplies using pre-defined, emergency, and opportune sorties to front line locations where the supplies were needed.

The history of the Military Advisory Command, Vietnam (MACV); C-7A Caribou Association newsletters; and personal stories of those involved in C-7A operations provide the context for the books.

Volumes I, II, and III (print or Kindle) are available on Amazon.com. The planned publication date of Volume IV: 1970 is the fall of 2015. Signed copies of the books can be ordered from the author for \$20: Pat Hanavan, 12402 Winding Branch, San Antonio, TX 78230-2770

Glad I Grew Up When

It took 3 minutes for a TV to warm up.

Nobody owned a purebred dog.

A quarter was a decent allowance.

You'd reach into a gutter for a penny.

Your Mom wore nylons that came in two pieces.

You got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped for free.

Laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes, or towels inside the box.

It was a privilege to be taken out to dinner at a real restaurant by your parents.

They threatened to keep kids back a grade if they failed ... and they did.

A '57 Chevy was everyone's dream car ... to cruise in, peel out, or watch

drive-in movies.

Boys and girls went steady.

No one ever asked where the car keys were, because they were always in the ignition and cars were never locked.

Lying on your back with your friends and saying, "That cloud looks like..."

You played baseball with no adults to help kids with the rules of the game.

Stuff from stores came without safety caps and hermetic seals.

Being sent to the principal's office was nothing compared to the fate that awaited students at home.

We weren't in fear for our lives because of drive-by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc.

Summers were filled with bike rides, Hula Hoops, visits to a pool, and eating Kool-Aid powder.

Can You Remember?

- Howdy Doody
- The Shadow Knows
- The Peanut Gallery
- Nellie Belle
- Peashooters
- Candy cigarettes
- Telephone party lines.
- 78 and 45 rpm records
- Fort Apache play set
- War was a card game
- The Lone Ranger, Tonto, Silver, and Scout
- S&H green stamps to paste in books
- Sniffing mimeograph duplicating fluid
- Newsreels and cartoons before the movie.
- "Oly-oli-oxen-free" meant perfect sense

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 San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
 Address Service Requested



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Memorabilia

MEMORABILIA ORDER FORM

Contact Bryan Bruton at bryanb@hughes.net to check availability of items.

Fill out this form and mail with a check to: **C-7A Caribou Association, c/o Bryan Bruton, 107 Hillcrest Dr, Burnet, TX 78611.**

1. Polo Shirt*	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$20.00	Total: _____
2. Colored T Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$16.00	Total: _____
3. Round Engine (R-2000) T Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$12.00	Total: _____
4. Denim Shirt (short sleeve)	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$25.00	Total: _____
5. Denim Shirt (long sleeve)	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ \$30.00	Total: _____
6. Denim Hat	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ \$13.00	Total: _____
7. Baseball (white) Hat	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ \$13.00	Total: _____
8. 457 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
9. 458 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
10. 459 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
11. 535 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
12. 536 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
13. 537 th Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
14. 483 rd Replica Patch		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
15. Caribou Lapel Pin		Qty. _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
16. Caribou Poster (12" x 18")		Qty. _____ @ \$5.00	Total: _____
17. Caribou Challenge Coin		Qty. _____ @ \$8.00	Total: _____
18. Caribou DVD – 1:10 long		Qty: _____ @ \$5.00	Total: _____
19. Caribou decal (outside)		Qty: _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
20. Caribou data plate (new)		Qty: _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____
21. Caribou refrigerator magnet (new)		Qty: _____ @ \$3.00	Total: _____

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

Total: _____

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

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