

C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 26, Issue 1

California, California, Here We Come!

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Reunion 2015, our 26th reunion, will be in Sacramento, CA from 23-27 Sep. Our headquarters will be at the Lion's Gate Hotel at the McClellan Business Park (former site of McClellan AFB).

Lions Gate Hotel

3410 Westover St

Sacramento, CA 95652

916-643-6222 (front desk)

Reservations can be made **NOW**.

Our Group Code to make your reservation is "Caribou15."

Online at www.lionsgatehotel.com or by phone 916-640-0835.

\$93.00 per day (taxes excluded) or \$105.09 per day (taxes included).

Rate good for 2 days before and after reunion. You can also make your reservation on the Internet. See our web site for details.

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 Over the past 9 years that I have edited the newsletter, your submissions allowed me to build up a small backlog of unpublished items. THANKS for doing that. Keep it up!

Right now, that backlog is diminished and I need more of your stories.

The more items you write, the more we will have to keep the newsletter interesting and exciting for all of us.

Please, **respond** to this request or when I ask you for an article or two. Don't wait, **PLEASE, DO IT NOW!**



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

Elected Officers and Board Members...

Chairman of Board/Vice President - Peter Bird [535, 71]
President/Board Member - Pat Hanavan [535, 68]
Treasurer/Board Member - Mike Murphy [537, 68]
Secretary/Board Member - Al Cunliffe [458, 68]
Board Member at Large - Doug Boston [458, 68]
Board Member at Large - Wayne Brunz [535, 67]
Board Member at Large - John Tawes [537, 69]

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Chaplains - Sonny Spurger [537, 68], Jon Drury [537, 68]
Historian - Pat Hanavan [535,68]
Newsletter Editor - Pat Hanavan [535, 68]
Newsletter Editor Emeritus - Dave Hutchens [459, 69]
Reunion 2015 Planners - Doug and Ellen Boston [458, 68]
John and Fran Tawes [537, 69]
Pat and Alicia Hanavan [535, 68]
Bob and Ruth Whitehouse [459, 68]
Webmaster - Peter Bird [535, 71]
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Chaplain Emeritus - Bob Davis [457, 69]

Squadron Representatives...

457th Royal Moulton [457, 66], phone 540-720-7092
457th Mike Thibodo [457, 70], phone 651-483-9799
458th Lee Corfield [458, 69], phone 724-775-3027
458th Al Cunliffe [458, 68], phone 334-285-7706
459th Bob Cummings [459, 66], phone 865-859-0888
535th Cliff Smith [535, 69], phone 804-453-3188
535th Mike Messner [535, 70], phone 321-453-0816
536th Dana Kelly [536, 70], phone 407-656-4536
536th Chuck Harris [536, 68], phone 325-465-8096
537th George Harmon [537, 69], phone 417-368-2549
483rd Gary Miller [483, 68], phone 262-634-4117
4449th Bill Buesking [535, 70], phone 210-403-2635
18th AP Bill Buesking [535, 70], phone 210-403-2635

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

Pat Hanavan
12402 Winding Branch
San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
pathanavan@aol.com
210-479-0226 (home), 210-861-9353 (cell)

\$10.00 dues are payable each January. Write your check to **C-7A Caribou Association** (not Mike Murphy) and send it to:

Mike Murphy
555 Couch Ave, Apt 432
Kirkwood, MO 63122-5564
MikeM53@earthlink.net Phone: 314-570-4820

President's Corner

The Board approved D.C. as the site of Reunion 2016, so John Tawes and Doug Boston did a hotel site survey. Negotiations are underway to get an acceptable contract. By the time you receive this newsletter, we hope to have the contract signed and find a bus company to take us to the various sights, including: the Vietnam Wall, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum (Udvar-Hazy Annex), U.S. National Archives Museum, Iwo Jima Memorial, and a driving tour to see the major memorials, perhaps including some quick stops.



'Flight engineers are on the endangered species list'

Combat Talon I



Col. Rodney H. Newbold, Commander of the 483rd TAW from 4/10/71-2/25/72, was previously the Commander of the 779th Troop Carrier Squadron, the squadron that operated the new C-130E(I) aircraft (Combat Talon I) under the code name Project Skyhook.

Activities Planned for Reunion 2015 in Sacramento, CA

Old Sacramento

Experience a one of a kind visit to Old Sacramento. The unique 28-acre National Historic Landmark District and State Historic Park is located along the beautiful Sacramento River. Bustling with activity, the district is alive with shopping, dining, entertainment, historical attractions, and world-renowned museums set within the time of the California Gold Rush and the Transcontinental Railroad.

This national historic landmark overflows with things to see and do. From river boats to railroads, excursions to horse drawn carriages, and riverside bike treks. Old Sacramento is *History on the Move*.

Shops

Dozens of locally-owned small shops, with novel gifts, delightful treats and upscale accessories and apparel. There's always something surprising when you browse in Old Sacramento.

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

California Gifts & Shirts
California Tees
Expectation Imports
Fashion To Be Boutique
Jewels Unique
Karel's Giftland
Leathers by Mary Terry
LiBush International Connection
Mea Vita
Moxy Threads
Old Sac Leather Works
Old Sac Shirts & Gifts
Old Town Train Stop
Peruvian Crafts
Seventeen Purses and Sunglasses
Sock City
Sparkles
TS Gifts
U.BE.U. Fashion

ART/ANTIQUES/COLLECTIBLES

American Legacy
Artists' Collaborative Gallery
Brook's Novelty Antiques/Records
The Closet

Old Sacramento Trading Post
The Penny Farthing
Stage Nine Entertainment Store
Taylor's Art & Soul
This 'N' That
The Vault at Stage Nine

FOOD AND HOME

Chef's Mercantile
The Chefs' Olive Mix
Old Town Smokehouse
The Underground Tasting Room

GIFTS

Evangeline's
Garden of Enchantment
Visions of Eden

JEWELRY

Danny's Jewelry & Gifts
Krystal Garden
Skalet Family Jewelers
Super Silver Sacramento

SPECIALTY RETAIL

Christmas & Co.
Evangeline's Costume Mansion
El Maya
Heavenly Things
Huntington & Hopkins Hardware
McGee's Old Time Photos
Old Sacramento General Store
Ology
PlutoTech Repairs & Accessories
Practical Cycle
Railroad Museum Store
Sacramento Sports & Souvenirs

Eat

CAFES AND DELIS AND BARS

Chefs' Olive Mix
Happy Pita Café
Indo Café
Frozen in Time
Heavenly Brew Espresso
Old Sacramento Café
Old Town Smokehouse
Produce Junction
Railroad Fish & Chips
Sam's Café
Slice of Old Sac Pizza
Spud Shack
Spy Dogs
Steamers Bakery & Café
Subway

RESTAURANTS AND BARS

Annabelle's
Back Door Lounge
Coconut Grove Sports Bar & Grill
Delta Bar & Grill
Fanny Ann's Saloon
Fat City Bar & Café
Firehouse Restaurant
Joe's Crab Shack
La Terraza Mexican Restaurant
O'Mally's Pub
Pilothouse Restaurant
Rio City Café
River City Old West Saloon
Round Table Pizza
Sports Corner Café
Vega's Underground

SWEETS

Boxcar Eats Frozen Yogurt
Candy Barrel
Candy Heaven
Candy Land
Danny's Mini Donuts
Munchies
Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory
Sacramento Sweets Co.
Turtle
Yogurt Time

Service

by Carolyn Gould

Sister of Jim Bonner [537, 66]

They call it "Service" but it's so much more than that. It's leaving one's home to go to a place where you have to aim your gun at another human being and be shot in return.

It's clenching your teeth and feeling your feet burn from all the miles you've travelled. It's overcoming fears that cut to your soul. And doing it with honor and no complaints.

It's knowing how valuable it is to work and play in a country that is free of war – free of strife. It's protecting not just your family, but all families who rely on your courage.

It's called "service." It is noble, it is love, and it is the ultimate sacrifice ...

Activities Planned for Reunion 2015 in Sacramento, CA

California State Railroad Museum

First opened to the public in 1976, the California State Railroad Museum complex is one of Sacramento's largest and most popular visitor destinations. Over 500,000 visit the Museum annually, with guests traveling from throughout the world to experience this world-renowned facility.

The California State Railroad Museum complex consists of six original, reconstructed, and new buildings completed at a cost of \$30 million. The primary exhibit building, the Railroad History Museum, totals 100,000 square feet. Completed at a cost of \$16.1 million, it opened in May 1981.

With over 225,000 square feet of total exhibit space, the buildings within the California State Railroad Museum complex use stimulating exhibits, enthusiastic and knowledgeable docents, and beautifully restored railroad cars and locomotives to illustrate railroad history in California and the West.

Throughout the main Railroad His-



tory Museum building, 21 meticulously restored locomotives and cars and numerous exhibits illustrate how railroads have shaped people's lives, the economy, and the unique culture of

California and the West. Included are a Pullman-style sleeping car, a dining car filled with railroad china, and a Railway Post Office that visitors can actually step aboard.

Aerospace Museum of California

The Museum has a wide-range of aircraft, both military and civilian – everything from biplanes to Russian MiGs, Blue Angels' fighter, A-10 Thunderbolt, and the 'Top Gun' F-14 Tomcat.

The rapid advance in aircraft design and the diversity of technological innovation is visible and waiting for all to explore at the Museum. Our collection includes: low sub-sonic planes, propeller driven biplanes made of cloth-covered wooden structures, triple-sonic planes, and jet powered aerospace vehicles. The Air Park features fighters, trainers, transport and specialized aircraft flown by the USAF and Navy from 1940 to 2000.



**Have A
Great
Air Force
Day!**



Sutter Creek

A wonderful balance of old and new, today's Sutter Creek maintains its Gold Rush facade while catering to the wants and needs of visitors from around the world. Shop, dine, slumber, stroll, wine taste, and enjoy the quaint atmosphere of Amador County. Sutter Creek, the jewel of Amador County and the Gold Country, is steeped in history being born of the California Gold Rush and nurtured by the deep rock gold mines of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Picturesque Sutter Creek is Amador County's most walkable town with B&Bs, restaurants, and shops all along the main street. It is the perfect hub to explore the Sierra Foothill Wine Regions.

Sutter Creek, located in the heart of the Sierra Foothill Wine Region, is the perfect launching point for your wine tasting exploration. With wine tasting rooms on Main Street, Amador County's Shenandoah Valley just minutes away near the town of Plymouth, El Dorado County's Fairplay region near Placerville and Calaveras County Wineries near the town of Murphys, just 40 minutes away, Sutter Creek will serve as the perfect day of wine tasting in the California Sierra Foothills.

We will visit a unique tasting room (Sutter Creek Wine Tasting) featuring two family wineries: Le Mulet Rouge and Gold Hill Winery. Peruse the store while enjoying our wide variety of wines or just sit on the porch and enjoy the historic town.

www.suttercreekwinetasting.com

You may walk along both sides of Main Street as you visit Alicia's Antiques, the Columbian Lady, Cozy Collectibles, Creekside Antiques, or have your favorite ice cream delicacy at the Sutter Creek Ice Cream Emporium with its turn of the 20th century decor, player piano, fudge toys, friendly staff, and candy to delight you.

C-7A 63-9756 at the Museum of Aviation Warner-Robins AFB, GA



C-7A 63-9756 has been moved into her new home, out of the elements, at the Scott Exhibit Hangar of the Museum of Aviation at Warner-Robins AFB, GA. Volunteers have been cleaning her up and giving her a fresh look. The rear door is open and ramps installed so visitors can look inside. LED lighting is placed in strategic places so visitors can see inside better.

<http://www.museumofaviation.org/>

C-7A Memorial Bell



Thanks to the generosity of Tom McHugh [537, 69] we have a memorial bell to use at dedications of memorial benches and at memorial services during reunions. This bell was mounted by Tom and used at the National Museum of the Air Force, the Museum of Aviation, the Air Mobility Command museum, and the Air Force Enlisted Heritages Hall dedications.

Daedalian History

by Caitlin Cavanaugh
Editor of the *Daedalus Flyer*

Where did the name "Order of Daedalians" derive from?

According to legend, Daedalus was a skillful craftsman and artist. He created a Labyrinth as a service to King Minos to imprison the dreaded Minotaur (a monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man). Daedalus and his son, Icarus, were locked up in a tower surrounded by sea to prevent Daedalus' knowledge of the Labyrinth from getting out to the public. The only way Daedalus knew how to get out of the tower would be to fly, so he began to fabricate wings for both of them out of feathers, wax and string. When father and son were prepared to take off, Daedalus told Icarus not to fly too close to the sun, as the sun would melt the wax. But as Icarus became too confident in his flying ability, he lost himself, soaring upwards toward the sun, melting the wax on his wings, and falling quickly to his death into the ocean.

Daedalus was the first person to accomplish heavier-than-air flight, so the name "Order of Daedalians" seemed appropriate for our organization, composed of those who were the first to fly their country's newly evolved planes in WW I.

Where has Headquarters been located?

The first location of Wing Headquarters was at Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama in 1933. The initiation fee then was only \$5. Don't you wish you joined in 1933? The second location was Kelly AFB in San Antonio, Texas. Then, the third and final move was in 1994 to Randolph AFB, Texas, where we've been located for 20 years now.

We know the tenets, but what exactly are the objectives of this organization?

Every organization must have objectives, otherwise there would be no purpose to establishment. Our objectives are simple, but important; they are to promote air and space power in

support of national defense, to educate Americans to the advantages of air and space power, to promote the rewards of a career in military aviation to young Americans, to honor the legacy of our founder members and all who have flown in defense of our nation, to encourage and recognize improvements in flight safety, weapons development, combat support and the overall effectiveness of air and space power, and finally, to recognize exceptional performance by military pilots.

The organization demonstrates these objectives through comprehensive awards programs, scholarship programs, and cadet flight indoctrination programs. Our Daedalian Foundation even has a matching program that supplements scholarships awarded by the flights to deserving college students who are pursuing a career as a military aviator.

Membership Info

Daedalian Foundation
P.O. Box 249
Randolph AFB, TX 78148-0249
210-945-2111
daedalus@daedalians.org
<http://www.daedalians.org>

QUALIFICATIONS

U.S. Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine or Navy pilots of heavier-than-air, powered aircraft, active, retired, Reserve or Guard who hold or held a commission, warrant or flight officer status, or WASP are eligible for membership in the Order. Membership is not restricted with respect to age, sex, race, etc.

Pilots who held commissions, warrants or flight officer status but no longer affiliated with the military must have been honorably discharged.

All pilot ratings must have been received as a result of having successfully completed a U.S. military pilot training program.

Are You a Daedalian?



If you are already a Daedalian, please send your name and Daedalian number to Pat Hanavan at:

pathanavan@aol.com
12402 Winding Branch
San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
210-479-0226

MAC Aviator Terms

by Maj. Garnett C. Brown, Jr.

(Continued from Dec. 2014 newsletter)

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. Gathered over the years, these phrases have been heard with repetition in virtually all crew-served aircraft – not all of them in MAC.

- Attention to briefing!
- Is everyone up in back?
- Have you ever seen a whifferdill?
- Gear up/down.
- Now the last airplane I flew ...
- Was that for us?
- Flaps up/down.
- Call Mother on UHF.
- Tell him we want a higher/lower altitude.
- Tell 'em we'll take minimum ground time.
- REJECT!
- You've got it. I've got to send a message to MAC.
- Is the load tied down?
- I want an enroute descent and GCA.
- Hello. Mom?
- Are you sure about that ADIZ time?
- Don't you see that plane?
- Back in Mother's arms!

Split Second of Terror

by Paul Peoples [459, 67]

A month or two before the siege of Khe Sanh began, crews of the 459th were shuttling a variety of stuff from the Marine base at Hue Phu Bai to Khe Sanh for the Special Forces/Mike Force units at Lang Vei. We had loaded everything but a pallet of rice that had been around for some time. The wood runners were broken and we suggested they just put the bags on another pallet and we would be on our way in a few minutes. We all stood around the Caribou ramp watching as the worker guys picked up the 100 pound bags to re-stack. As one was being lifted, we heard a loud click and to our shock and horror saw an open cigar box.

NO CIGARS, JUST TWO O. D. COLORED GI BATTERIES, A COUPLE WIRES, AND A LUMP OF COMPOSITION-B PLASTIQUE EXPLOSIVE!!!

Some of us moved, some yelled, and a few other personal events transpired before we realized we were not dead. The EOD guys arrived on the scene and explained that the bomb should have detonated when the lid flipped up. Fortunately, the broken pallet had been hanging around for some time and the batteries were dead – instead of us. Thank God, the Energizer Bunny had not been invented yet!!

Surprise Tour of Dak Seang

by Jon Drury [537, 68]

Dak Seang, north of Ben Het, had been subject to NVA attacks during the 1968 Tet Offensive and would be again in 1970, when Caribou resupply was critical. It had the characteristic of having a runway that had a “dipsy doodle.” When landing to the west, you had to touch down in the first couple hundred feet of the runway, because then it dropped off and you would float

for a long ways until you reached the last few hundred feet of the runway when it leveled again.

On one mission, I was flying as co-pilot for one of our light colonels. He failed to touch down at the top, floated all the way to the bottom, touched down, clamped on the brakes to get stopped, and scraped off a couple of tires. One was partially damaged and one remained intact. We taxied as best we could back to the ramp and waited for another Bou to come with tires and the equipment necessary to change them.

As we waited, I took 8 mm movies of the fascinating array of villagers that came to the area of the runway, no doubt many of the families of the indigenous troops that manned the camp. The ladies were dressed in bright colors.

While we waited we got a tour of the base, a hilltop honeycombed with bunkers, barbed wire, and machine guns. The Special Forces troops took us into their bunker way below ground and fed us lunch. On occasion, when necessary, the Special Forces even called down air strikes on their own position when being overrun and driven into their underground bunker.

On another occasion landing from the west, it took me three attempts before I had the numbers right to make a touchdown. Landing from the west was always easier, because you had the long uphill to slow the aircraft.

On one occasion the strip was closed, so we had to make an airdrop and part of my load was crates of chickens. When the crates hit the runway they broke open, and Montagnard tribesmen chased chickens all around the runway.

VNAF C-7A Reunion

431st Squadron (Phoenix Dragon) Association will have a reunion in Santa Cruz, CA from 23-25 May 2015. Contact Major Sau Nguyễn by email at tuyetbn@yahoo.com or Lieutenant Hong Le at hong@fivelakesllc.com.

Fuel Bladders for Special Forces Camp

from Lee Waters [535, 67]



WE'VE MADE GRANDPA
LOOK SO TRIM
THE LOCAL DRAFT BOARD'S
AFTER HIM
BURMA-SHAVE

WHEN THE STORK
DELIVERS A BOY
OUR WHOLE DARN FACTORY
JUMPS FOR JOY
BURMA-SHAVE

THE POOREST GUY
IN THE HUMAN RACE
CAN HAVE A
MILLION DOLLAR FACE
BURMA-SHAVE

IF DAISIES ARE YOUR
FAVORITE FLOWER
KEEP PUSHIN' UP THOSE
MILES-PER-HOUR
BURMA-SHAVE

THE BIG BLUE TUBE'S
JUST LIKE LOUISE
YOU GET A THRILL
FROM EVERY SQUEEZE
BURMA-SHAVE

TRAIN APPROACHING
WHISTLE SQUEALING
PAUSE! AVOID THAT
RUNDOWN FEELING!
BURMA-SHAVE

Cam Ranh Bay Fuel Storage Sapper Attack on 29 Aug 1970



The Disaster Response Force of the 483rd Combat Support Group was tasked at 0230 on 29 August 1970 when enemy sappers attacked the Cam Ranh Bay AB POL area. The POL office, two MOGAS tanks, and three fuel bladders were destroyed. The response phase lasted about 2.5 hours before the blaze was subdued.

Good Book

Praetorian Starship: Combat Talon Special Operations by Col. Jerry L. Thigpen

This book is the history of Com-

bat Talon – the weapons system that performed virtually every imaginable tactical event in the spectrum of conflict and by any measure is the most versatile C-130 derivative ever produced.

First modified and sent to Southeast Asia (SEA) in 1966 to replace theater unconventional warfare (UW) assets that were limited in both lift capability and speed, the Talon I quickly adapted to theater UW tasking, including infiltration and resupply and psychological warfare operations into North Vietnam.

It was involved with the Son Tay raid, the Desert One rescue in Iran, and the Osama Bin Laden mission.

The basic Combat Talon crew consisted of 11 personnel – three pilots, two navigators, one electronic warfare officer (EWO), two flight engineers (originally designated as flight mechanics), one radio operator, and two loadmasters.

The third pilot on the Combat Talon performed safety duties during the Fulton recovery operations and assisted in map reading while flying low-level using the terrain following, terrain avoidance radar (TF/TAR).

The second navigator was responsible for map reading and terrain appointments during low-level maneuvers. The EWO was a navigator who had additional training in operating the sophisticated ECM equipment installed on the Combat Talon. It was his job to detect enemy threats and to defend the aircraft electronically until the crew could maneuver to safety.

The second flight engineer operated the Fulton winch during recovery operations and assisted the primary flight engineer during system operations.

The radio operator was responsible for external communications between the aircraft and the agency controlling the mission. In addition to their normal C-130 loadmaster duties, Combat Talon loadmasters were responsible for completing the Fulton recovery from the ramp of the aircraft once the lift line had been intercepted by the aircraft.

Because of the large crew and varied duties of each assigned crew member, the aircraft commander was often challenged to the maximum of his abilities to manage and coordinate the crew safely and efficiently.

Cam Ranh Bay Single Story Quarters – 1970 Partial Renovation on Right, None on Left



Irish Pub Signs



457th TAS Vietnamese School Project – 1970



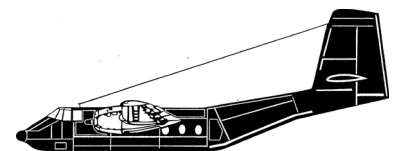
A stunning Senior Moment

A self-important college freshman walking along the beach took it upon himself to explain to a senior citizen resting on the steps why it was impossible for the older generation to understand his generation.

“You grew up in a different world, actually an almost primitive one.” The student said loud enough for others to hear. “The young people of today grew up with television, jet planes, space travel, and man walking on the moon. We have nuclear energy, nuclear powered ships, cell phones, computers with light speed ... and much more.”

After a brief silence, the senior citizen responded: “You’re right son. We didn’t have those things when we were young ... so we invented them. Now, you arrogant little twerp, what are you going to do for the next generation?”

The applause was amazing!



B-52 at CRB

by Joel Rosenbaum [30 Wea. Sq.]

One of the unusual occurrences during my one year tour of duty as Chief Forecaster of Detachment 18, 30th Weather Squadron, Cam Ranh Bay (CRB) from October 1968-69 was the emergency landing of a B-52 from an Arc Light mission in country at Cam Ranh Bay. Regular bases for the B-52's flying missions in SEA were U-Tapao in Thailand and Anderson AFB on Guam.

The huge visitor landed at an air base hosting F-4, C-7A, C-130, and transient C-141, and charter airliners. It was quite a sight and the topic of the morning briefings at the Caribou command post in the AM and the 12TFW for their PM briefing.

On my R&R from Cam Ranh Bay to Hawaii, as the Pan Am airliner refueled at Guam, I watched B-52's take off on long Arc Light missions to SEA. The takeoffs were both impressive and scary as there was a cliff at the end of the runway and the B-52's would briefly disappear below the cliff. On July 28, 1969 one of the B-52's crashed near the cliff when one of its wings came off. The entire crew was lost.

Prior to Linebacker II in December 1972, B-52's only flew high altitude missions over South Vietnam and were not exposed to SAMs, MiGs, or ground fire.

SAC commanders were very nervous about a disabled B-52 sitting at Cam Ranh Bay. It stood out like a battleship in a bathtub. It was an inviting target for the VC and the longer it stayed there, the longer the VC had to prepare an attack and score a propaganda victory.

One of the intelligence officers told me SAC was on the phone constantly requesting updates on when the B-52 repairs would be complete so the aircraft could take off. The aircraft was only on the ground a day or two. I remember giving them a weather briefing at the base weather station just after repairs were completed. SAC breathed

a sigh of relief when the B-52 took off from Cam Ranh Bay and out of range for a VC attack.

My second experience with SAC at Cam Ranh Bay was my accidental attendance at a top secret briefing on the SR-71. I arrived at the 12TFW auditorium for a scheduled Safety Officer's meeting. As I was sitting there, mostly bird Colonels began arriving. I began to shake my head as usually only Junior Officers are assigned as Safety Officer for their extra duties.

An Air Policeman arrived at the entrance while I was seated in the top row at the auditorium and asked, "Are only the people who are supposed to be here present?" I had no idea what he was talking about. This seemed very odd for a Safety Officer's meeting. Then Top Secret manuals were passed out about the SR-71.

It turned out the reason for the meeting on the SR-71 was that one had made an emergency landing in a foreign country and the USAF was concerned that if one had to make an emergency landing in Vietnam they didn't want the locals to get a glimpse of it. The preferred Vietnam emergency landing base was Cam Ranh Bay. The Colonels at the meeting were base commanders from USAF air bases in Vietnam. They all claimed they didn't have the facilities to hide the plane from view.

The officer running the meeting suggested that the SR-71 should be covered by a sheet. The response from the base commanders was that they didn't have sheets that big on base. The suggestion was to cover up the SR-71 with anything you might have.

When the audience was given a chance to ask questions. I decided to play the game. I asked if the SR-71 had any special weather requirements and the briefer told me it was in the manual which was passed out and was collected at the end of the briefing.

After the meeting ended, I went to the Weather Station and expected to be court-marshaled. I told the Detachment Commander what had happened.

He just laughed and told me that the weather station was called just after I left for the Safety Officer's meeting, reporting that the meeting was cancelled, but they had no way to get in touch with me after that. My commander only laughed at my story and it never came up again.

Recovery at Tra Bong

by Don Petrosky [483, 68]

I remember Lt. Col. Kozey flying an over-grossed C-7A out of Tra Bong after dark, with no runway lights. We had to go in there late one afternoon because one of our planes blew an engine and propeller and they wanted that plane out of there. It was not to be left over night. A group of mechanics volunteered to do the engine and prop change there with the help of an Army tank recovery vehicle with a boom and winch. Everybody survived, even the good ole Caribou.

It was over gross when we took off, because we had the broken engine, the prop, and a whole bunch of mechanics with their tool boxes. Officially, we were probably just under weight. I'm not a real religious man, but I said my prayers before that takeoff. I also remember that the Army guys there parked a jeep at the end of the runway with the lights on to let the pilot know where the end of the runway was.

Rescue at Kham Duc

Although very little has been written about it, the events of May 12, 1968 are among the most heroic of the Vietnam War, in fact of any war. On that day, a handful of American U.S. Air Force C-130 and U.S. Army and Marine helicopter crew members literally laid their lives on the line to evacuate the defenders of the Civilian Irregular Defense Corps camp at Kham Duc, an outpost

Continued on Page 11

Kham Duc (from Page 10)

just inside the South Vietnamese border with Laos.

For years, the camp at Kham Duc had served as a base for intelligence gathering operations along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, and in the spring of 1968 the Communists decided the time had come to take it out. By early May, Allied intelligence sources realized that a large number of North Vietnamese were gathering in the mountains around the camp. On May 10, the camp was reinforced with members of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade who were flown in from their base at Chu Lai. The following day, an outlying camp at Ngoc Tavok was attacked. Apparently, some of the Vietnamese troops in the camp turned their guns on their American allies. That evening General William C. Westmoreland determined that the camp was indefensible and, wishing to avoid the headlines of a camp being overrun, decided to evacuate the camp, beginning at dawn the next morning.

The original plan called for a helicopter evacuation, but when intense ground fire brought down the first helicopter into the camp, all evacuation plans were put on hold. Over the next few hours there was a lot of waffling – there was going to be an evacuation, then there wasn't, then there was. During the morning a C-130A flown by Lt. Col. Daryl D. Cole and his 21st Tactical Airlift Squadron crew landed at the camp with a load of cargo, apparently not knowing that it was to be evacuated. A flood of Vietnamese civilians rushed aboard the airplane, so many that the loadmaster was unable to off-load the cargo. The airplane was shot full of holes and a tire was flattened, but Cole attempted a takeoff. The overburdened airplane would not fly, so they returned to the ramp, where the Vietnamese leaped off and into ditches. Cole's crew worked feverishly to cut away the remains of the tire with a bayonet and a blow torch. While they were working, a C-123 flown by Major

Ray D. Shelton came in and picked up a load of Vietnamese and U.S. Army engineers. Cole loaded all remaining Air Force personnel at the camp onto his badly damaged C-130 and managed to take-off, and flew to Cam Ranh Bay. There the members of the 3 man airlift control team who were aboard were told that they should have stayed in the camp. They were put on another C-130 and sent back.

During the morning, a battle had raged around the airfield. Several airplanes and helicopters had been shot down, including an Air Force Forward Air Controller, who managed to crash-land his shot-up O-2 on the runway. In the early afternoon General Westmoreland notified Seventh Air Force to commence a C-130 evacuation. The first airplane to land was a C-130B flown by a crew from the 774th TAS, commanded by Major Bernard Bucher. Major Bucher landed and loaded his airplane with more than 200 Vietnamese, mostly civilians. As his airplane lifted off, it flew through the apex of fire from two .50 caliber machine guns, trembled, then crashed into a ravine and exploded. A C-130E flown by Lt. Colonel Bill Boyd landed behind Bucher. Boyd took off in the opposite direction and, in spite of more than 100 hits, managed to make it to safety. The third C-130 was an A-model from the 21st TAS, commanded by Lt. Colonel John Delmore. The airplane was hit repeatedly by automatic weapons fire that ripped out the top of the cockpit and shot away the engine controls. Delmore had no choice but to feather the engines – he crash-landed the shot-up C-130 and managed to steer it clear of the runway. Meanwhile, air strikes had been directed at the guns that brought down Bucher's airplane and other strikes laid down protective fire alongside the runway. The fourth C-130 crew got in and out safely and was followed by three others.

While the C-130's were landing, Army and Marine helicopter pilots took advantage of the distraction – the Communists were concentrating their

fire on the larger transports – and got in to make pickups of their own. Within a few minutes, some 500 of the camp's defenders were evacuated, although the bulk of the Vietnamese were left to attempt to exfiltrate through the enemy forces. But as the last C-130 came out of the camp with the staff of the U.S. Army Special Forces team, another C-130 was landing with the three members of the airlift control team who had been brought out earlier.

The camp had been evacuated, or had been declared so by the Special Forces team, at a cost of two C-130's and several other aircraft and helicopters, seven in all. What happened next is the event for which Kham Duc is most remembered, although in reality it was but a footnote to the day's events. The eighth C-130 flew into the camp and off-loaded the three men, Major John Gallagher, a C-130 pilot from the 463rd Tactical Airlift Wing and Sergeants Mort Freedman and James Lundie, both combat controllers with the 8th Aerial Port. The three men ran off the ramp of the C-130 and into the camp. The pilot, Lt. Col. Jay Van Cleef, waited several minutes then when no one came aboard his airplane, took off again. As he was climbing out, he heard someone report that the evacuation was complete. No it wasn't! Van Cleef protested into his radio that three airmen were still on the ground. Those present later reported that there was a dead silence in the airways afterwards.

The next airplane in the queue to go into the camp was a C-123 flown by Lt. Col. Alfred Jeanotte. He landed, but took off again when no one ran to the airplane. His crew spotted the three men hiding in a ditch, but they were too low on fuel to make another landing. It fell to the next C-123, flown by Lt. Col. Joe M. Jackson and Major Jesse Campbell, a Stan/Eval pilot from the 315th Air Commando Wing, to make the pickup. For the effort, Colonel Jackson was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Cam Ranh Bay Air Base – Fall 1970



Cam Ranh Bay Air Base – NCO Club in 1970

B-17 Navigator's Log



10-20-43 Mission #6.

Durben, Germany. Someone was praying hard for us today. Left England at 1230–28,000 feet, 14 degrees below zero. Spitfire escort. 20 minutes before target our #4 engine ran away and we couldn't feather it. Couldn't hold our altitude or stay in formation. We dropped down and turned back. Three minutes later four ME-109's picked us up.



We dove down to 12,000 feet trying to get away. Got into all the clouds we could. Vertical banks, dives, climbs, etc. The fighters came in at 5, 6, 7 o'clock on our tail, making several passes. Riggs said he saw one explode and another go down in smoke. Couldn't get much speed having only 3 engines and a headwind. We dropped all our bombs in a field near Arras, France in order to get more speed. We zigzagged for the coast. Flak picked us up and followed us for 2 or 3 minutes but did not hit us. We finally hit the coast and 20 minutes later hit the English coast. Our tail gunner, Faber, was wounded. A 20 mm hit the tail. Bullets in his leg, buttocks, and side. Not much bleeding, so no first aid was necessary. Turned north up the coast for home but our #4 engine was burning so we landed at the nearest field, Dettling, an RAF Spitfire field, 6 miles south of the Thames river near London. When we stopped rolling on landing, the engine was really spurt-ing out fire. Tried to put it out with fire extinguishers that we had, but couldn't. The field fire truck finally put it out. One tire was flat when we landed – bul-

let through it. Plane was riddled with holes. Must have been 200-300 holes in it, 20 mm cannon holes (maybe 7 or 8) in it. Can't see how the tail and waist gunners got back alive. Holes within inches of them – dozens of them. One 20 mm went through our bomb bay with our 12 incendiary bombs still there. Nose was not shot up much as they attacked from the tail. Skinny Frier turned back 10 minutes after we did and evidently went down as they haven't heard from him. He was in our squadron. Three gunners died in our group. Died from anoxia. Their tubes came loose and they didn't know it. Moral: Stay in formation, even if you have to get out and push.

Fulton Recovery System and Caribou

With the success of Operation Cold Feet, interest in Fulton's invention gained momentum throughout the U.S. military. U.S. Army Special Forces needed a reliable ex-filtration method for its expanding Green Beret program. The Green Beret's mission often took them deep behind enemy lines and often involved parachute operations into the objective area. Just as OSS troops of World War II had needed a means to return to friendly territory when the mission was complete, so did the Special Forces. In 1962, the Army operated a growing fleet of C-7 Caribou.

The Fulton Skyhook system was adapted for this aircraft. Installation on the Caribou was similar to that of the Navy P-2V and Intermountain Aviation's B-17. A large tubular steel V was mounted on the nose of the aircraft and



the sky anchor was installed at its apex. The winch system was modified and installed in the cargo compartment of the aircraft. An operational test and evaluation was flown in the Caribou during the fall, culminating in the Army's first live pickup of Capt James Skinner on 15 October 1962. Six additional live pickups were successfully completed in the C-7 during October and November training flights.

The Navy was also interested in expanding its Skyhook capability. On 3 April 1963, a Navy S-2F Tracker performed a live recovery of Sergeant Paul Mayer, USMC at its Patuxent River facility. Navy S-2F's and Army C-7's continued to perform live pickups during training throughout 1963 and 1964 to refine their respective programs.

The Air Force performed its first live Skyhook recovery on 27 November 1964, when Capt. Nelson Gough was picked up by a modified C-123H aircraft at Eglin AFB, FL. During 1965, another 22 live pickups were accomplished by Army C-7 and Navy S-2F aircraft. Of the first recorded 98 Skyhook pickups, 52 were performed by Army C-7 Caribous, 32 by Navy S-2F Trackers, 11 by Navy P-2V Neptunes, two by Intermountain Aviation's B-17 during Operation Cold Feet, and one by a USAF C-123H.

Ref: "The Praetorian Starship," pg. 30

Air Asia DHC-4

from Wayne Buser [18AOD, 63]

Air Asia Company Ltd. acquired DHC-4 S/N B-851 (shown at left with the Fulton Skyhook installed) in July 1962 and registered it in Taiwan. On 8/30/61 it struck horses on the runway at Vientiane, Laos. On 5/22/63 it made a hard landing in Laos and on 11/8/67 it had another hard landing at Ban Moug Ngan, Laos. The nose gear collapsed while taxiing at Da Nang, RVN on 10/23/68. On 7/13/71 it was sold to Air America and registered as N11014. It was damaged on 5/30/74 near Svay Rieng, Cambodia and then abandoned on 4/29/75 at Con Son Island, RVN.

Crew Duties: Webmaster

Adopted by the Board of Directors on February 18, 2015

Tasks to maintain website:

- Maintain design of website to ensure that Internet searches show Association web page at top of the returned list of sites
- Post new roster (extract data from master roster database to online database)
- Post reunion information
- Post changes to bylaws and crew duties
- Scan prints and slides
- Edit and post new photos from members (in Photo gallery)
- Update Association data (officers, contact points)
- Maintain officer e-mail forwarding aliases (e.g., president@C-7ACaribou.com)
- Post newsletters and approved Board motions
- Post obituaries
- Update memorabilia data (prices, order form)
- Post Lost and Found messages
- Update memorials pages (memorial benches and plaques)
- Update history of the C-7A and the Association
- Update information about the C-7A
- Update FAQ and information of joining the Association
- Maintain site search algorithm in website
- Update links
- Renew hosting biannually (domain, hosting changes, storage space, etc.)
- Maintain backups of all C-7A Caribou Association data, records, web page files

Skills/Tools required:

- Windows development machine (web site runs on Microsoft IIS)
- HTML4 and CSS3 working knowledge
- Server side scripting (VBScript) and Client side scripting (JScript)
- Microsoft Active Server Pages (ASP) object model and programming
- Working knowledge of Structured Query Language (SQL) and database access
- Web design tools (e.g., Microsoft FrontPage, Microsoft Expression, Adobe Dreamweaver)
- File Transfer Protocol (FTP) software and working knowledge
- Microsoft Access database software and working knowledge
- Adobe Photoshop (editing and tool) or equivalent

Proposed Amendment to By-laws

Adopted by the Board of Directors on February 18, 2015 for approval by the Active Members

Text of By-laws amendment:

... the following subparagraph to be added to Article 6.1 of the By-Laws, subject to the approval of the active members:

f. Additional Board Requirement. At least one Board member *shall have* the skills, software tools, and responsibility for maintaining the Association web site. His position on the Board will be specified each year by the Nominating Committee. If there is no active member qualified to be and willing to perform the duties of the Webmaster, this paragraph does not apply.

Article 7.2 of the By-laws states that:

“The By-laws may be amended by the vote of the active membership according to the procedures for membership voting. Only amendments proposed by the Board or submitted to the Association Secretary over the signatures of five percent (5%) of active members shall be submitted for vote. A ballot with an explanation of the effect of any amendment shall be submitted to **active members** for a vote.”

Context of the Proposed Amendment to the By-laws

The recent review by the Board of Directors and revision of the duties and skills required of the Webmaster showed that the Webmaster position is the most critical of all of the positions (elected or appointed) that serve our Association. Equally important is the connection between the activities and decisions of the Board and maintenance of the web site. The list of Webmaster tasks clearly shows that the activities of the Board have a very strong connection with the maintenance of the web site where information is made available to our members.

It is the opinion of the Board that it is essential for our webmaster to be a member of the Board so that he is actively involved in discussions and decisions of the Board. To achieve this, it is necessary to amend the By-laws.

Ballot for Proposed Amendment to the By-laws

On the proposal to amend the By-laws of the C-7A Caribou Association by adding sub paragraph "f" to Article 6.1, I vote

YES

Check the appropriate box on the left and sign your name below.

NO

After signing, send this page to the Secretary of the C-7A Caribou Association:

Al Cunliffe
2370 N Cobb Loop
Milbrook, AL 36054-3643

Send an e-mail message with your vote and name in the body of the e-mail to

4171kc@elmore.rr.com

Note: Your vote must be received by May 15, 2015 to be counted.

Only active members (BouTax date of 2014 or later) and Honorary Life Members may vote.

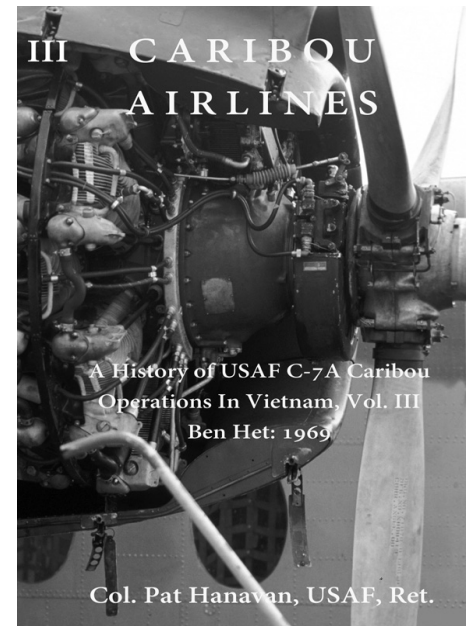
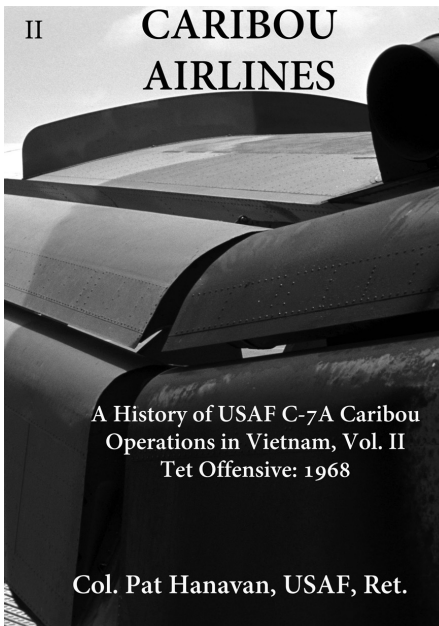
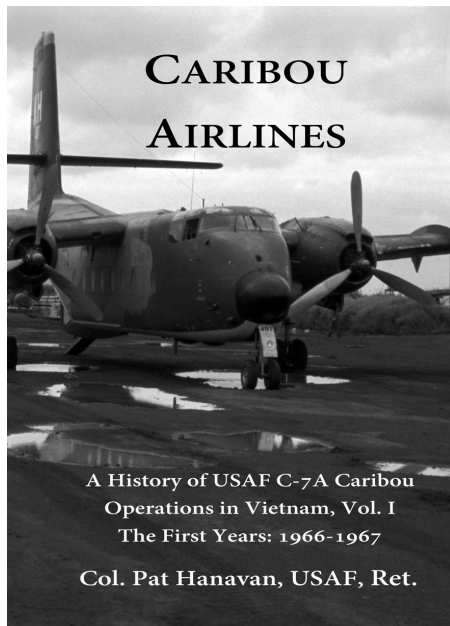
Associate Military Members, Honorary Associate Members, Honorary Friends of the Association and Friends of the Association are not eligible to vote.

Check the mailing label on this newsletter to see your current status, i.e. BouTax date.



Major accident at Thien Ngon on 2 Dec 1970.
C-7A 63-9752, assigned to the 536th TAS, taxied into an area that did not support the weight of the aircraft. Severely damaged aircraft was removed to Tan Son Nhut AB for restoration and repair throughout the remainder of the quarter.





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.

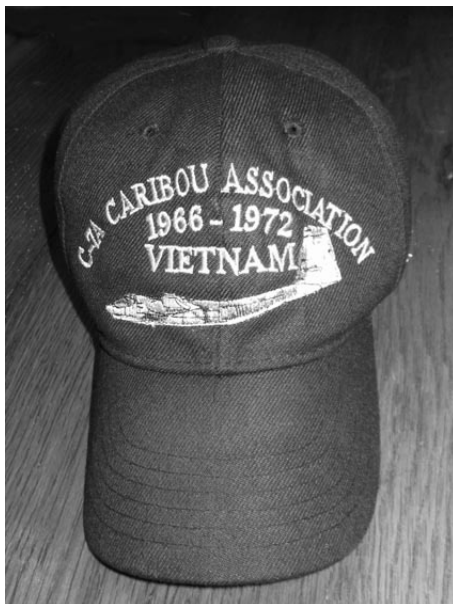
We weren't in fear for our lives because of drive-by shootings, drugs, gangs, etc.

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

Lost at 2014 Reunion



Hat #1 (black)



Hat #2 (black)

The hats above were found at the hotel after our 2014 reunion. Both were in plastic bags with other items. If one of these is yours, contact Pat Hanavan and **identify the other items in the bag.**



Help!!!

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

pathanavan@aol.com

A Special B-17

A mid-air collision on February 1, 1943, between a B-17 (S/N 124406) and a German fighter over the Tunis dock area, became the subject of one of the most famous photographs of World War II. An enemy fighter attacking a 97th Bomb Group formation went out of control, probably with a wounded pilot then continued its crashing descent into the rear of the fuselage of a Fortress named "All American," piloted by Lt. Kendrick R. Bragg, of the 414th Bomb Squadron. When it struck, the fighter broke apart, but left some pieces in the B-17. The left horizontal stabilizer of the Fortress and left elevator were completely torn away. The two right engines were out and one on the left had a serious oil pump leak. The vertical fin and the rudder had been damaged, the fuselage had been cut almost completely through connected only at two small parts of the frame and the radios. Electrical and oxygen systems were damaged. There was also a hole in the top that was over 16 feet long and 4 feet wide at its widest point and the split in the fuselage went all the way to the top gunner's turret.



The tail actually bounced and swayed in the wind and twisted when the plane turned and all the control cables were severed, except one single elevator cable that still worked, the aircraft still flew – miraculously! The tail gunner was trapped because there was no floor connecting the tail to the rest of the plane. The waist and tail gunners used parts of the German fighter and their own parachute harnesses in an attempt to keep the tail from ripping off and the two sides of the fuselage from splitting apart. While the crew was trying to

keep the bomber from coming apart, the pilot continued on his bomb run and released his bombs over the target.

When the bomb bay doors were opened, the wind turbulence was so great that it blew one of the waist gunners into the broken tail section. It took several minutes and four crew members to pass him ropes from parachutes and haul him back into the forward part of the plane. When they tried to do the same for the tail gunner, the tail began flapping so hard that it began to break off. The weight of the gunner was adding some stability to the tail section, so he went back to his position.

The turn back toward England had to be very slow to keep the tail from twisting off. They actually covered almost 70 miles to make the turn home. The bomber was so badly damaged that it was losing altitude and speed and was soon alone in the sky. For a brief time, two more German Me-109 fighters attacked the "All American." Despite the extensive damage, all of the machine gunners were able to respond to these attacks and soon drove off the fighters. The two waist gunners stood up with their heads sticking out through the hole in the top of the fuselage to aim and fire their machine guns. The tail gunner had to shoot in short bursts because the recoil was actually causing the plane to turn.

Allied P-51 fighters intercepted the "All American" as it crossed over the English Channel and took one of the pictures shown. They also radioed to the base describing that the empennage was waving like a fish tail, that the plane would not make it, and to send out boats to rescue the crew when they bailed out. The fighters stayed with the Fortress taking hand signals from Lt. Bragg and relaying them to the base.

Lt. Bragg signaled that five parachutes and the spare had been "used" so five of the crew could not bail out. He made the decision that if they could not bail out safely, then he would stay

Continued on Page 18

Special B-17 (from Page 17)

with the plane and land it.

Two and a half hours after being hit, the aircraft made its final turn to line up with the runway while it was still over 40 miles away. It descended into an emergency landing and a normal roll-out on its landing gear. When the ambulance pulled alongside, it was waved off because not a single member of the crew had been injured. No one could believe that the aircraft could still fly in such a condition. The Fortress sat placidly until the crew all exited through the door in the fuselage and the tail gunner had climbed down a ladder, at which time the entire rear section of the aircraft collapsed onto the ground. The rugged old bird had done its job.



Time To Renew!!

Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show "2015" 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

POL at Vung Tau

by Larry Jackson [535, 67]

Not nearly as classy as being a "Fly Boy," we were told, but just as important, only behind the scenes. The slogan most POL locations used was "without POL, Pilots are just pedestrians". There were many stories about our POL group at Vung Tau from being an undisciplined group to drinking anything that was found (some stories were even directed at us drinking the fuel we dispensed ... we did not do that as it would have thrown our inventory way off). But, we were a small group, ranging from 6 to 7 airmen with our NCO of POL being a SSgt. We had a MSgt. in charge for about 1 month, but he didn't want to continue as this wasn't his "type of POL." We were using the Army M-49 fuel trucks and not the Air Force type. The type of aircraft we were supporting (Caribous) were not jets. In his words, "There are no jets here, none land here, I have been around jets my whole career, and I want it to remain that way," he said shortly before his quick transfer to Guam. Love those B-52's! Mostly, he probably didn't care for the POL group of which he was placed in charge.

My buddy Caputo and I, arrived in country (Tan Son Nhut) on September 7, 1967 and we had to find our own way to Vung Tau. We realized very quickly it was not like finding your way from Topeka to Wichita. We ended up taking a Huey to Can Tho. We had to spend our first night in country in Can Tho as it was late when we arrived. We got settled in our hootch for the night when it sounded like the 4th of July ... someone came into our hootch and started yelling "Mortars, mortars," then said, "Pull your mattress off and get under it." This all lasted about 2 minutes and then the same person returned and said it was okay to get up. Caputo and I looked at our mattress and if we would have been playing darts on the mattress they would have gone through. That was the thinnest mattress we had

ever seen, even worse than Basic. We survived the night and caught a Caribou to Vung Tau about noon the next day. It was still pretty hot weather when we arrived in Vung Tau. Coming from Duluth AFB, MN where there are nine months of winter and three months of poor sledding, it was quite a change.



We arrived at Vung Tau in the early afternoon of September 8. During the next few days, the rest of the replacements started arriving. Two arrived from Selfridge AFB, MI, one from Tyndall AFB, FL, one from Whiteman AFB, MO, plus one from the original group that stayed after he extended for six months. Our replacement group was now complete. We did get our NCOIC of the POL group within a few days. SSgt. Jake (name changed to protect the innocent) was his name. Great guy, but he seemed a little slow at the gate. I believe that the group we were replacing came from Cam Rahn Bay when the USAF took over the Caribous earlier in the year. During the next year, each one of our POL group would spend some time back at Cam Ranh Bay, as well as Can Tho, and Tan Son Nhut, but our main base was Vung Tau. They were to remain until all their replacements arrived and were well trained on the equipment and overall procedures. But, when they found out we were there, they started leaving, and leave they did! Before we knew it, they were all gone and we had little if any training on the M-49 fuel truck and the F-6 support fuel tanker used for local storage of fuel

Continued on Page 19

POL at Vung Tau (from Page 18)

for the M-49's. We also had to introduce ourselves to the port guys north of the airfield about seven miles. It was there that we got our fuel and oil.



Each truck load had to be sampled and graded prior to refueling the Caribous or other aircraft. In addition, all fuel taken from the port storage area had to have samples sent weekly to the Air Force lab at Tan Son Nhut for analysis. This meant that every 6 weeks one of us ended up going to Tan Son Nhut carrying fuel samples and oil samples either in a Caribou or a Huey. Do you think we could get a direct flight to Tan Son Nhut? No way! Usually the flight we got made around 2-3 stops prior to our arrival at Tan Son Nhut. Some places had names, other places with Hueys had a "landing spot." We did lots of thinking while flying and landing especially when holding 6-8 bottles of fuel between your knees.

The one assignment none of us looked forward to was the week we were assigned to the oil truck. This assignment was only once every six weeks. The driving, etc. wasn't the bad part. The worst was going to the port container storage area and searching for the 55 gallon drums of oil and then hand pumping 18 to 20 drums of oil from the drums to the truck. "Dirty and oily" does not truly describe the way we looked. Many times our fatigues were almost black. I remember a Caribou pilot asking why my fatigues looked the way they did and that I should clean up. My response was, "Sir, I put on my good fatigues for your arrival." He just walked away.

Later that night I happened to see the pilot again due to the fact that, in addition to our POL duties, we also had to pull "guard duty" either on base around the perimeter or at the 535th officers' villa in downtown Vung Tau. One particular evening (I know it probably didn't happen often) they were grilling steaks. As I was patrolling the villa, the smell of steaks was driving me crazy. The pilot mentioned earlier came outside for some fresh air. He recognized me and came over and introduced himself and said he was sorry about the little "run-in" we had earlier. At first, I wasn't sure whether he was serious or just realized that I was the only one protecting his %\$#& while he slept. But, when he brought me out a beautiful steak, I was sure he meant it.

Sometimes people have great ideas and other times the ideas just stink. A terrible decision (at least to us fuel truck drivers) by SSgt. Jake was one night when we were being mortared, (I believe we lost a Caribou that night in April) he decided to have us move our fuel trucks from between the sand bunkers. SSgt. Jake wanted us to drive them away from all structures, vehicles, (we were already away from the planes) in the event they took a direct hit from the mortars. So, here we are the "Mighty Six" driving fuel trucks in many different directions wondering if the direct hit was going to happen while we were driving. It was quite a night, but we did relax later as is evident by the picture.

It wasn't a classy job, but it was "FULL-filling." We had pride in serving the Air Force and the mission of the C-7A Caribous.

We became a very close group over the course of 12 months and we stay in touch to this day. With regards to the POL group; Cass returned to Chicago after extending for another 12 months; Jim to Texas; Rick to Missouri; Marty to Massachusetts; and Paul to Kansas. For Caputo and myself, we still had 18 months to serve - no early outs for us. However, the Air Force did say they

would give us three choices for our next assignment (since Caputo and I had been together since Basic, he said you choose and I'll hopefully get the same location. Caputo was from NY and returned after discharge. I chose: 1) Forbes Field, Topeka, KS; 2) McConnell AFB, Wichita, KS; and 3) Tinker AFB, Oklahoma City, OK.

What did we get? More sledding - Loring AFB, ME! The only consolation was that Caputo came too!



Larry Jackson
POL Guru of the 535 TAS



Naval Aviation
has a place for You...
Pilots Machinists Mates
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Ordnancemen

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.

Action at Prek Klok

by "Dixie" Ray [535, 67]

I had recently upgraded to Aircraft Commander (A/C). My crew was John Germeraad, Copilot, and John Trease, Flight Engineer. We were diverted to Bien Hoa where we were to pick up a load of ammo along with two A-37's for escort on an emergency re-supply mission to Prek Klok.

Prek Klok had about 2900 feet of runway. Approaching the field we started taking fire. It was too loud to be small arms, it could have been .50 caliber. I know I could see tennis ball sized tracers going out of sight above me. I rolled up and could see the gun. We landed on runway 20 and turned around for take-off on runway 02.

John cut the load loose and moved it aft. Before the Special Forces guys could get there to unload the aircraft, the mortars started dropping in. I couldn't take off because the CG (Center of Gravity) was out of limits with the load positioned at the ramp and the bad guys were along the approach end of runway 20, so I taxied to the other end of the runway. The mortars were tracking us down the runway, so the Special Forces guys arrived in a six-pack, signaling us to dump the load.

We did and took off and returned to Bien Hoa. Upon arriving at Bien Hoa, we discovered a hole the size of a pie plate in the right wing. The A-37's never did engage the gun. I was told they couldn't get clearance.

Note: Dixie received the DFC for this mission. Ref: 7AF SO G-2478, 13 Aug 1968.

For Sale: B-1 Bomber

About 14 years ago a B-1 bomber from Ellsworth AFB was at Billings, MT doing practice approaches and touch and go landings. On one of the landings, the pilot set his brakes on fire. He taxied in and parked on a taxiway,



with cones around the bird, until parts and mechanics could be brought in from Ellsworth AFB the next day.

The next day is a Saturday. Since nothing much is going on, those of us in the tower got to laughing in the tower that maybe somebody should hang a "For Sale" sign on the plane. We convinced one of our guys, who was well-known for doing crazy stuff, that it would be a good idea.

He takes off for the hardware store to buy a "For Sale" sign. On the way back, he stops at a car dealer and gets one of those "As is/No Warranty" signs that hang in all used cars. On that sign was written something like "low miles, new engines, needs brakes and tires." Those signs were taped together, and our hero is off and running.

He climbs over the security fence, leaving some skin on the barbed wire, and makes his way the 1000 feet or so to the aircraft. As he is doing that, a couple of airport vehicles are starting to gather with the recently arrived mechanics, as well as the plane's crew. Things were not looking good for our intrepid airplane salesman. He makes it to the nose wheel and tapes the sign to the nose strut. Then, he starts to make his way back from the plane as the vehicles start to head out from the shop on the way to the bomber. Somehow, he makes it without being seen.

The vehicles arrive at the plane and, of course, they notice the sign right

away. The Air Force bomber guys are in stitches. It is the funniest thing they've seen in a long time. The airport guys are not sure what to think. Airport management is livid because they've been tasked with security. Pretty soon a camera appears and all the Air Force guys are taking pictures of each other by the sign.

By then, our hero is back in the tower and notices the bomber's commander is talking on a cell phone. Our guy gets on the radio to the airport truck and asks for the aircraft commander's phone number. As soon as the aircraft commander (A/C) finishes his call, our hero calls him. When he answers, our hero says "I'm calling about the plane you have for sale."

The A/C about falls over from the laughter. It just so happened that the chief photographer for the local newspaper was a pilot and he may have been called prior to the sign being placed. He was told to get there with a big lens. Above is one of the pictures he took.

An article appeared on the front page of the Sunday paper. When it came out, the Colonel running Ellsworth called the Billings Airport Director and read him the riot act, wondering what kind of dog and pony show he was running up there. We were later informed by the bomber crew that the sign was framed and permanently mounted inside the aircraft. It is hard to have that kind of fun anymore.

My Duties at CRB

by Bryan Bruton [483, 68]



When I showed up at Cam Rahn Bay AB, no one had a job for me so the Wing decided to make me a clerk. I had never had a typing lesson and I used the "A Method" for filing. That's where EVERYTHING is filed under "A" for "A Letter, A Form, etc." Worked for me and everything was in the same place. I believe I typed a letter a week, usually a "Letter to the Editor" for Dwight Robinson to one of the many publications he subscribed to. It would take me about a day to type a letter.

I was very good at processing messages and getting them out, because that justified a drive to the bakery for a fresh loaf of bread. First, a stop at the dining facility to get some butter and milk. Then I'd go park somewhere and enjoy a warm loaf of bread with a thick coat of butter on the bread and ice-cold milk.

Back to the typing. I believe I was the only person in the Wing that had a brand new Remington electric typewriter. I needed a never ending supply of ribbons for it because the security people kept showing up and confiscating my ribbons. Ol' Dwight had a habit of sending, or attempting to send, confidential and secret messages in the clear. I'd warn him that the information was classified. He'd tell me not to argue with him. Sure enough, less than an hour after I'd drop the message off at communications, here came the boys to take my ribbon. I'd just look at Dwight and say "Told ya."

I guess that was one of the many reasons I never made E-3 while Vietnam. Ol' Dwight was never written up, I was

Mission Accomplished

by Doug Clinton [458, 69]

Jon Drury's article, "Plei Mei Challenge," in the November 2012 issue brought back the memory of a run into that garden spot in December of 1970. It was my *finis* flight. I was headed home and back to C-141's.

My crew and I found ourselves at Pleiku with the very important war-time mission of shuttling Montagnard dependents from Plei Mei to Pleiku for a day of shopping! John's 1968 description of that 1300 foot gash on a hill was applicable to late 1970, to include the cloud of dust stirred up by aggressive reverse thrust on landing.

It was a well coordinated mission because as soon as we shut down here they came, little women with their Non La hats, shopping baskets, and children and, oh yes, the cloud of black flies. The Flight Engineer (FE) urged them up the ramp extensions and with some effort got the passengers into the troop seats and buckled in while the copilot and I waited in our seats to start engines.

It was a turbulent day. In most cases, when hauling passengers it was the unenviable job of the Flight Engineer to clean up the mess if the passengers got airsick. As you may recall, we had seat cards written on one side in Vietnamese and the other in English, but, of course, these people could read neither and they had no idea what the barf bags were that our FE handed out. Thus, the preflight safety briefing was a challenge. For the life of me I cannot remember the FE's name, but I can see him plain as day demonstrating the function of a barf bag by holding it to his mouth and acting out regurgitation.

Okay, engines started, before take-off check complete and off we go to Pleiku. "Gear - Up, Flaps - Up, Meto Power - Set, Climb Power - Set, Auto Feather - Off, Cargo Compartment and Engines"...done.

A moment of silence and the FE says on the interphone, "Hey Cap'n, turn around and look at this crap." I twisted

around for a look into the cabin and our passengers had their barf bags clamped to their mouths breathing in and out to the point of near asphyxiation. Some children were holding the bags to the faces of younger siblings, all believing this was necessary in order to breathe while flying in an airplane.

No one was passing out and the barf bags were in the proper location, so we just left it that way. I'd say our engineer did a good job of bridging the communications gap and avoiding a potential cleanup.

Cool Things to Know

Thirty-five percent of the people who use personal ads for dating are already married.

It's physically impossible for you to lick your elbow.

Our eyes are always the same size from birth, but our nose and ears never stop growing. SCARY!!!

The electric chair was invented by a dentist.

In ancient Egypt, priests plucked EVERY hair from their bodies, including their eyebrows and eyelashes.

TYPEWRITER is the longest word that can be made using the letters only on one row of the keyboard.

"Go," is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.

If Barbie were life-size, her measurements would be 39-23-33. She would stand seven feet, two inches tall.

A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out.

The cigarette lighter was invented before the match.

Americans on average eat 18 acres of pizza every day.

Apparently 1/3 of people with alarm clocks hit the 'snooze' button every morning, and in the 25-34 age group, it is over 1/2.

Right-handed people live, on average, nine years longer than left-handed people do.

The average person spends two weeks of their life kissing.

Santa Bou Meeting

by Frank Pickart [536, 71]

I was a 2nd Lieutenant in the 536th. A Lt. Col. whose name I can't recall, was the squadron's Santa Bou project officer. For the one or two of you who don't remember this event, we painted a Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer's face on the front of our Caribou with the radome painted red. Anyway, the Lt. Col. appointed me to be his assistant and then told me that he was supposed to attend a Wing Santa Bou meeting the next day at Wing HQ, but was scheduled for the Bien Hoa rotator. He told me to attend in his place. He said I would be the lowest ranking officer there, but that I had an equal voice in the proceedings.

Not wanting to be late, I arrived ten minutes early. Somehow, I knew you could get into the briefing room from an outside door and stepped in from the very bright sunlight outside. It took me a few seconds for my eyes to accommodate to the dark room and then I noticed that the table was full except for a seat on the other end, opposite the Wing Commander (CC). I quickly noted that all the officers there were full colonels. I thought, at first, that in spite of my effort to be early that I was in fact late and that my project officer wasn't kidding when he said I would be the lowest ranking officer there.

All of them seemed to watch me with interest as I slipped into the empty chair and spread my notebook and pencils out in front of me. Now fully prepared to do my part, I looked up at the Wing Commander, who said, and I'll never forget, "Lieutenant, I think you are in the wrong meeting." I replied, "Sir, I have the feeling this isn't the Santa Bou meeting." This got quite a laugh. The Wing Commander said I would have to wait a few years before attending this meeting since it was an O-6 only meeting.

I found out that when my face gets really red, I can hardly see. I grabbed my stuff and headed for the closest

door. The bad news was that it wasn't the door I had come in, but the good news was that it wasn't the door to the projection room either. If it had been, I suppose I would still be in there.

The Santa Bou event went off well that Christmas and we spread much good cheer at the forward firebases we visited with our load of cookies, candy, ice cream, and "doughnut dollies." It was a real kick to see the Montagnard children eating ice cream for the first time and chasing balloons. All in all, it was a wonderful experience in spite of my first "O-6 meeting."

At a later event, Col. King, the Wing Vice Commander, took me aside and told me that I had been the subject of discussion after I left that day and that they all agreed that I had handled myself with "aplomb." If they only knew!

Supporting Khe Sanh

by Marty Hillman [459, 67]

The day started just as any other day at the office starts. This day was scheduled to Khe Sanh out of Da Nang, recover to Phu Bai, back to Khe Sanh, do it one more time and then home to Da Nang. Just another day at the office. Weather wasn't memorably bad or good. Winds were normal.

The C-130 that splashed on the runway had been moved off to the side. Two thirds of the runway was still unusable because of the accident and the method by which the Marines had moved the C-130 kinda tore things up a bit. It was a vivid demonstration of what tank and cat tracks do to an AM2 runway.

With the existing winds, the result was landing down hill over a barrier, ending up on slimy, laterite covered AM2 matting. The Marines didn't believe in cleaning a runway either. It might have been because of the lack of a runway cleaning machine, or possibly the local neighbors didn't like the noise. Who knows?

The Bou would be loaded with a round blivet of fuel and some other

stuff. Rumor was the other stuff was beer. Believe it or not, there was a shortage of parachutes all over 'Nam because of Tet. There was also a shortage of beer in Khe Sanh. Our primary load back was to be parachutes because of the parachute shortage. An earlier flight into Khe Sanh took on two pallets of very wet parachutes. The full runway was still available for that flight and all of the runway was used. There was just barely enough to get airborne. Aborting the takeoff and taxing back was not an interesting option. Charlie wasn't a good shot, but we really didn't want to give him additional practice time. At the end of the runway, the pilot dove over the cliff, got some more airspeed, and staggered away. Lesson learned, take only one pallet. No matter how hard the ramp officer yelled, cajoled or whined, take only one pallet.

Our flight in was uneventful, thankfully, since the GCA shack had been obliterated a week earlier and the weather was good. There was now a hole where the shack had been. The radar guys at Khe Sanh had been really helpful in giving us radar let downs to VFR conditions. Luckily none of them got hurt. They really made the job easy.

With the shack guys gone, getting in could be interesting. One way was to fly the coast to the sunken French fishing boat, turn inland on heading 274° give or take, drop down to the deck to stay under the overcast, hop over the ridge to the A Shau valley, and turn right, down the river, until you got the river that came from Khe Sanh. This required a left turn and keep on trucking until you got to Khe Sanh.

It was a good idea to fly at a maximum altitude of tree top level. That confused the bad guys until it was too late for them to react. At least that was the plan. Have you ever made rooster tails in the sand? The Bou could make some dandies. The crew chief would open the tailgate and give us a heads up when it became advisable to pick it

Continued on Page 23

Khe Sanh (from Page 22)

up a bit. On one more memorable trip while wafting our way over the sand dunes and rice paddies, we came across a farmer with a bullock hitched to a plow doing farmer things. The bullock took one look at the Bou, threw his head back, his tail went up, and off and away he went. The really interesting part was that the farmer never let go of the traces and as a result he was body surfing across the paddy when last seen.

But wait, the flight only got better. The next paddy over was made even more interesting by a flock of sea gulls. Just a little turn in the Bou would clear them except one of the gulls had a death wish. He turned the same way. Another gentle turn the other way, no good. That sucker hit the Bou right at the gasper vent on the copilot's side. A splattered gull does create a bit of a mess, some of which was on the guy on the right. Yep, just some more to add to the excitement.

If you were lucky enough to be able to arrive at altitude, the normal approach scene was to fly down the runway at altitude, make a 360 degree turn while losing *beaucoup* altitude, skim over the telephone wires, and dive down the cut bank to the runway and round out. Then, it was stopping so as to make the right turn onto the ramp area and even more importantly not run off the existing AM2 into the mud. Plus, you didn't really want to overshoot the turn and provide a stationary target for the sometimes lucky mortar round. Someone must have awakened Charlie because, on this particular day as we were committed to land, the mortars started impacting and we could hear small arms fire. Just another day in the life of a Bou crew.

We used what I called the Dennehey off load. That was to keep the Bou moving while the crew chief got the blivet ready to go. The tail ramp would already be part way down and as we made the right turn, up the parking ramp, the blivet would bounce out the

back of the plane and end up in or near the hole where the GCA shack had been. A hole-in-one sometimes. Next came the forklift with the pallet of wet parachutes to be loaded into the back of the Bou. That was quickly tied down. The last order of business was that the crew chief would load as many guys as he could get on board. All this happened while we were still moving. As we turned to take the runway, the ramp came up, we all said a short prayer and threw the whip to the R-2000's. As the sleek subsonic STOL aerospace flying machine became airborne, the mortar crews would finally take a break. Adding to the excitement of the whole process was the option to dive over the drop off at the end of the runway to get

a few more knots and then swoop off into the ozone.

This day, we landed at Phu Bai, unloaded, reloaded with another blivet, probably some more beer, and off we went to do the whole thing over again. Charlie did his part in the Khe Sanh scene by providing more mortars or, if you were really lucky, a few rockets. What a neat display of inaccuracy! One more bouncing blivet, one more pallet of parachutes, some more Marines, and off we went to do it again. This time the trip back was cancelled because of weather so we went back to Da Nang to count fuselage holes. Got a few dents, but no holes. It was just another day at the office.

Weather Prank at CRB

by Joel Rosenbaum [30th Wea. Sq., 1968]



Sgt. W. E. Callins, SSgt. Ronald L. Galy, Sgt. George F. Hammett, Jr. prepare to probe speed and direction of winds over the runway by tracking a helium filled balloon at Phu Cat Air Base, RVN, Detachment 23, 30th Weather Squadron in March 1971.

Some enlisted weather technicians threw the Cam Ranh Bay into a panic with what they did to one of the weather balloons before I arrived. For a night run, instead of placing the small light outside the balloon they placed it inside, lighting up the whole balloon.

It made a very strange sight as it rose over the base. There was some panic and the Hawk anti-aircraft unit was alerted and was getting ready to shoot it down. The NCO in charge of the weather observers found out what was going on called the 12th TAC Fighter Wing Command Post and told them the Weather Detachment was experimenting with a new procedure. The NCO then called the two weather observers quietly on the carpet and told them if they ever did something like that again he would make sure they were hit with an Article 13!

Future of RPVs in the Air Force

Air Force leaders have outlined what the next 25 years for remotely piloted aircraft will look like in the RPA Vector, published April 4. [The preferred term in 2015 is "Unmanned Aerial Vehicle."]

"The RPA Vector is the Air Force's vision for the next 25 years for remotely-piloted aircraft," said Col. Kenneth Callahan, the RPA capabilities division director. "It shows the current state of the program, the great advances of where we have been and the vision of where we are going."

The goal for the vector on the operational side is to continue the legacy Airmen created in the RPA field. The vector is also designed to expand upon leaps in technology and changes the Airmen have made through the early years of the program.

"The Airmen have made it all about supporting the men and women on the ground," Callahan said. "I couldn't be more proud of them for their own advances in technology to expand the program, making it a top platform."

The document gives private corporations an outlook on the capabilities the Air Force wants to have in the future, ranging from creation of new RPAs to possibilities of automated refueling systems.

"There is so much more that can be done with RPAs," said Col. Sean Harrington, an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance command and control requirements chief. "Their roles (RPAs) within the Air Force are evolving. We have been able to modify RPAs as a plug-and-play capability while looking to expand those opportunities."

In recent years, RPAs not only supported the warfighter on the ground, they also played a vital role in humanitarian missions around the world. They provided real time imagery and video after the earthquake that led to a tsunami in Japan in 2011 and the earthquake in Haiti in 2010, according to Callahan.

Recently, during the California Rim Fire in August 2013, more than 160,000 acres of land were destroyed. Though this loss was significant, it was substantially decreased by the support of the California Air National Guard's 163rd Reconnaissance Wing, with support from an MQ-1 Predator, a remotely piloted aircraft.

With this vector, technologies may be created to improve those capabilities while supporting different humanitarian efforts, allowing the Air Force to support natural disaster events more effectively and timely.

The future of the Air Force's RPA programs will be continuously evolving, to allow the Air Force to be the leader in Air, Space, and Cyberspace.

"We already combine our air, space, and cyber forces to maximize these enduring contributions, but the way we execute must continually evolve as we strive to increase our asymmetric advantage," said Gen. Mark Welsh, the Air Force chief of staff. "Our Airmen's ability to rethink the battle while incorporating new technologies will improve the varied ways our Air Force accomplishes its missions."

Terrorist Military Technology Is Catching Up



Husband-Wife Stories

Avocados

A wife asks her husband, "Could you please go shopping for me and buy one carton of milk and if they have avocados, get 6."

A short time later, the husband comes back with 6 cartons of milk. The wife asks him, "Why did you buy 6 cartons of milk?" He replied, "They had avocados."

If you're a woman, I'm sure you're going back to read it again! Men will get it the first time. My work is done.

Water in the carburetor ...

WIFE: "There is trouble with the car. It has water in the carburetor."

HUSBAND: "Water in the carburetor? That's ridiculous!"

WIFE: "I tell you the car has water in the carburetor."

HUSBAND: "You don't even know what a carburetor is. I'll check it out. Where's the car?"

WIFE: "In the pool."

The Phone

A young man wanted to get his beautiful blonde wife something nice for their first wedding anniversary. So, he decided to buy her a cell phone. He showed her the phone and explained to her all of its features. Meg was excited too and simply adored her new phone.

The next day Meg went shopping. Her phone rang and, to her surprise, it was her husband on the other end.

"Hi Meg," he said, "How do you like your new phone?" Meg replied, "I just love it! It's so small and your voice is clear as a bell, but there's one thing I don't understand though..."

"What's that, sweetie?" asked her husband. "How did you know I was at Wal-Mart?"

HE MUST PAY...

Husband and wife had a tiff. Wife called her mom and said, "He fought with me again, I am coming to live with you."

Mom said, "No darling, he must pay for his mistake. I am coming to live with you."

You May Be A Vietnam Veteran If ...

You know that nine million men served in the military during the Vietnam war, three million of whom went to the Vietnam theater (and their desertion rate was less than Soldiers and Marines in WW II).

You know that Vietnam was 12,000 miles away from America and America's Veterans performed with a tenacity and quality that may never be truly understood. (Hanoi has admitted that 1.4 million of its soldiers died on the battlefield, compared to 58,000 total U.S. dead.)

You know that frequently the reward for a young man's having gone through the trauma of combat was to be greeted at home by his fellow citizens and peers with studied indifference or outright hostility.

You know that Vietnam Veterans faced war and possible death, and then weighed those concerns against obligations to their country and suffered loneliness, disease, and wounds with often contagious illnesses.

For you, combat is an unpredictable and inexact environment, and you remember moving through the boiling heat with 60 pounds of weapons and gear, causing troops to drop 20 percent of his body weight while in the bush.

You know that mud-filled, regimental, combat bases like An Hoa were not a "fun" places where Marines joked about "legendary" giant rats like "Big Al."

You remember "Rockets, Rockets, Rockets!" was not about a 4th of July fireworks celebration.

You are still amazed, that Veterans, barely out of high school, were called up from cities and farms to do their year in Hell and then returned without real complaint.

You are still astounded at the willingness of these Veterans to risk their lives to save other Marines and Soldiers in

peril.

You believe these Veterans were some of the finest people you have ever known.

You know that one finds in them very little bitterness about the war in which they fought. The most common regret, almost to a man, is that they were not able to do more – for each other and for the people they came to help.

Engineer vs. Manager

A man in a hot air balloon realized he was lost. He reduced altitude and spotted a woman below. He descended a bit more and shouted, "Excuse me, can you help? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."

The woman below replied, "You are in a hot air balloon hovering approximately 30 feet above the ground. You are between 40 and 41 degrees north latitude and between 59 and 60 degrees west longitude."

"You must be an engineer," said the balloonist. "I am, replied the woman. How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "Everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to make of your information, and the fact is I am still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help so far."

The woman below responded, "You must be in Management."

"I am," replied the balloonist. "But, how did you know?"

"Well," said the woman, "You don't know where you are or where you are going. You have risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep and you expect people beneath you to solve your problems. The fact is that you are in exactly the same position you were in before we met, but now, somehow, it's my fault."

Mind Pictures From Vietnam

from Bryan Bruton [483, 68]

The sound of main rotor blades beating the sky into submission

The thump of out-going mortar fire

The whistle, thump of incoming mortar fire

The smell of rice paddies in the heat

The feel of rain so heavy you think

you're going to drown

The taste of ice cold "33" . . .

Or luke warm "33"

Heating C-Rats with C-4

The ever-present smell of hot JP-4

The scream of 30 turbo-shaft engines under load

The beautiful dark green of the mountains

The smell of burning diesel fuel and s***

Flying lazy circles at 10,000 feet to cool off the beer

The sight of unfamiliar constellations viewed from the top of a sandbagged bunker on a pitch-black night

The chatter of an M-60

The smell of hot gun oil, burning gun powder, and overheated metal

The sight of green tracers reaching up

The feeling in the pit of your stomach when you look around and realize that all the civilian workers have disappeared into the bunkers for no apparent reason

R&R in Vung Tau

R&R any place

The whistle a main rotor blade makes when it has a bullet hole through it

The breath taking beauty of the country from 5000 feet

Waking up in a panic in the middle of the night because the artillery at the end of the field isn't firing and it's too quiet.

The scream of the scramble siren in the middle of the night

The feel of your M-16 on full automatic

Drinking Jim Beam straight up and chasing it with warm black cherry soda because that's all you've got

The 'rush' of short final into a hot LZ!

Dragon Lady Flight

Maj. Dean Neeley is in the forward cockpit of the Lockheed U-2ST, a two-place version of the U-2S, a high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft that the Air Force calls "Dragon Lady." His voice on the intercom breaks the silence, "Do you know that you're the highest person in the world?" He explains that I am in the higher of the two cockpits and that there are no other U-2's airborne right now. "Astronauts don't count," he says, "They're out of this world."

We are above 70,000 feet and still climbing slowly as the aircraft becomes lighter. The throttle has been at its mechanical limit since takeoff, and the single General Electric F118-GE-101 turbofan engine sips fuel so slowly at this altitude that consumption is less than when idling on the ground. Although true airspeed is that of a typical jetliner, indicated airspeed registers only in double digits.

I cannot detect the curvature of the Earth, although some U-2 pilots claim that they can. The sky at the horizon is hazy white, but transitions to midnight blue at our zenith. It seems that if we were much higher, the sky would become black enough to see stars at noon. The Sierra Nevada, the mountainous spine of California, has lost its glory, a mere corrugation on the Earth. Lake Tahoe looks like a fishing hole, and rivers have become rivulets. Far below, "high flying" jetliners etch contrails over Reno, NV, but we are so high above these aircraft that they cannot be seen.

I cannot detect air noise through the helmet of my pressure suit. I hear only my own breathing, the hum of avionics through my headset and, inexplicably, an occasional, shallow moan from the engine, as if it were gasping for air. Atmospheric pressure is only an inch of mercury, less than 4 percent of sea-level pressure. Air density and engine power are similarly low. The wind is predictably light, from the southwest at 5 knots and the outside air temperature

is minus 61 degrees Celsius.

Although not required, we remain in contact with Oakland Center while in the airspace that begins at Flight Level 600. The U-2's Mode C transponder, however, can indicate no higher than FL 600. When other U-2's are in the area, pilots report their altitudes, and ATC keeps them separated by 5,000 feet and 10 miles.

Our high-flying living quarters are pressurized to 29,500 feet, but 100 percent oxygen to our faces lowers our physiological altitude to about 8,000 feet. A pressurization system failure would cause our suits to instantly inflate to maintain a pressure altitude of 35,000 feet and the flow of pure oxygen would provide a physiological altitude of 10,000 feet.

The forward and aft cockpits are configured almost identically. A significant difference is the down-looking periscope/drift-meter in the center of the forward instrument panel. It is used to precisely track over specific ground points during reconnaissance, something that otherwise would be impossible from high altitude. The forward cockpit also is equipped with a small side-view mirror extending into the air stream. It is used to determine if the U-2 is generating a telltale contrail when over hostile territory.

Considering its 103 foot wingspan and resultant roll dampening, the U-2 maneuvers surprisingly well at altitude; the controls are light and nicely harmonized. Control wheels are used, however, perhaps because aileron forces are heavy at low altitude. A yaw string above each canopy silently admonishes those who allow the aircraft to slip or skid when maneuvering. The U-2 is very much a stick-and-rudder airplane, and I discover that slipping can be avoided by leading turn entry and recovery with slight rudder pressure.

When approaching its service ceiling, the U-2's maximum speed is little more than its minimum. This marginal difference between the onset of stall buffet and Mach buffet is known as the coffin

corner, an area warranting caution. A stall/spin sequence can cause control loss from which recovery might not be possible when so high, and an excessive Mach number can compromise structural integrity. Thankfully, an autopilot with Mach hold is provided.

The U-2 has a fuel capacity of 2,915 gallons of thermally stable jet fuel distributed among four wing tanks. It is unusual to discuss turbine fuel in gallons instead of pounds, but the 1950's style fuel gauges indicate in gallons. Most of the other flight instruments seem equally antiquated.

I train at 'The Ranch.' Preparation for my high flight began the day before at Beale AFB (aka. The Ranch), which is north of Sacramento, CA, and was where German prisoners of war were interned during World War II. It is home to the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, which is responsible for worldwide U-2 operations.

After passing a physical exam, I took a short, intensive course in high-altitude physiology and use of the pressure suit. The 27 pound Model S1034 "pilot's protective assembly" is the same as the one used by astronauts during shuttle launch and reentry. After being measured for my \$150,000 spacesuit, I spent an hour in the egress trainer. It provided no comfort to learn that pulling up mightily on the handle between my legs would activate the ejection seat at any altitude or airspeed. When the handle is pulled, the control wheels go fully forward, explosives dispose of the canopy, cables attached to spurs on your boots pull your feet aft, and you are rocketed into space. You could then free fall in your inflated pressure suit for 54,000 feet or more. I was told that "the parachute opens automatically at 16,500 feet, or you get a refund."

I later donned a harness and virtual-reality goggles to practice steering a parachute to landing. After lunch, a crew assisted me into a pressure suit in preparation for my visit to the altitude chamber. There I became reacquainted

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Dragon Lady (from Page 26)

with the effects of hypoxia and was subjected to a sudden decompression that elevated the chamber to 73,000 feet. The pressure suit inflated and I became the Michelin man. I was told that it is possible to fly the U-2 while puffed up, but that it is difficult. A beaker of water in the chamber boiled furiously to demonstrate what would happen to my blood if I were exposed without protection above 63,000 feet.

After a thorough preflight briefing the next morning, Neeley and I put on long johns and urinary collection devices, were assisted into our pressure suits, performed a leak check, and settled into a pair of reclining lounge chairs for an hour of breathing pure oxygen. This displaces nitrogen in the blood to prevent decompression sickness that could occur during ascent. During this "pre-breathing," I felt as though I were in a Ziploc bag and anticipated the possibility of claustrophobia. There was none, and I soon became comfortably acclimatized to my confinement.

We were in the aircraft an hour later. Preflight checks completed and engine started, we taxied to the 12,000 foot runway. The single main landing gear is not steerable, differential braking is unavailable, and the dual tail wheels move only 6 degrees in each direction, so it takes a lot of concrete to maneuver on the ground. Turn radius is 189 feet, and I had to lead with full rudder in anticipation of all turns.

We taxied into position and came to a halt so that personnel could remove the safety pins from the outrigger wheels (called pogos) that prevent one wing tip or the other from scraping the ground. Lt. Col. Greg "Spanky" Barber, another U-2 pilot, circled the aircraft in a mobile command vehicle to give the aircraft a final exterior check.

I knew that the U-2 is overpowered at sea level. It has to be for its engine, normally aspirated like every other turbine engine, to have enough power remaining to climb above 70,000 feet.

Also, we weighed only 24,000 pounds (maximum allowable is 41,000 pounds) and were departing into a brisk headwind. Such knowledge did not prepare me for what followed. The throttle was fully advanced and would remain that way until the beginning of descent. The 17,000 pounds of thrust made it feel as though I had been shot from a cannon. Within two to three seconds and 400 feet of takeoff roll, the wings flexed, the pogos fell away, and we entered a nose-up attitude of almost 45 degrees at an airspeed of 100 knots. Initial climb rate was 9,000 feet per minute.

We were still over the runway and through 10,000 feet less than 90 seconds from brake release. One need not worry about a flame out after takeoff in a U-2. There either is enough runway to land straight ahead or enough altitude (only 1,000 feet is needed) to circle the airport for a dead-stick approach and landing. The bicycle landing gear creates little drag and has no limiting airspeed, so there was no rush to tuck away the wheels.

We passed through 30,000 feet five minutes after liftoff and climb rate steadily decreased until above 70,000 feet, when further climb occurred only as the result of fuel burn. On final approach, Dragon Lady is still drifting toward the upper limits of the atmosphere at 100 to 200 feet per minute and will continue to do so until it is time to descend. It spends little of its life at a given altitude. Descent begins by retarding the throttle to idle and lowering the landing gear. We raise the spoilers, deploy the speed brakes, and engage the gust alleviation system. This raises both ailerons 7.5 degrees above their normal neutral point and deflects the wing flaps 6.5 degrees upward. This helps to unload the wings and protect the airframe during possible turbulence.

Gust protection is needed because the Dragon Lady is like a China doll, she cannot withstand heavy gust and maneuvering loads. Strength would have required a heavier structure, and the U-2's designer, Clarence "Kelly"

Johnson, shaved as much weight as possible. Every pound saved resulted in a 10 foot increase in ceiling.

With everything possible hanging and extended, the U-2 shows little desire to go down. It will take 40 minutes to descend to traffic pattern altitude, but we needed only half that time climbing to altitude. During this normal descent, the U-2 covers 37 NM for each 10,000 of altitude lost. When clean and at the best glide speed of 109 knots, it has a glide ratio of 28 to 1. It is difficult to imagine ever being beyond glide range of a suitable airport except when over large bodies of water or hostile territory. Because there is only one fuel quantity gauge, and it shows only the total remaining, it is difficult to know whether fuel is distributed evenly, which is important when landing a U-2. A low-altitude stall is performed to determine which is the heavier wing, and some fuel is then transferred from it to the other. We are on final approach with flaps at 35 degrees (maximum is 50 degrees) in a slightly nose-down attitude. The U-2 is flown at 75 knots, very close to stall. More speed would result in excessive floating. I peripherally see Barber accelerating the 140 mph chase car along the runway. I hear him on the radio calling out our height. The U-2 must be close to normal touchdown attitude at a height of one foot before the control wheel is brought firmly aft to stall the wings and plant the tail wheels on the concrete. The feet remain active on the pedals, during which time it is necessary to work diligently to keep the wings level. A roll spoiler on each wing lends a helping hand when its respective aileron is raised more than 13 degrees.

The aircraft comes to rest, a wing tip falls to the ground, and crewmen appear to reattach the pogos for taxiing. Landing is challenging, especially for those who have never flown tail draggers or sailplanes. It can be like dancing with a lady or wrestling a dragon, depending on wind and runway conditions. Maximum allowable crosswind is 15 knots.

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