C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 31, Issue 1

Dak Seang Emergency Resupply April 1970

In This Issue

The shift in U.S. policy and strategy to "Vietnamization" generated many organizational changes within the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing (TAW) in 1970.

On 31 March 1970 the Wing assumed Host responsibility for Cam Ranh Bay Air Base (CRB).

The Da Nang Mission Site supported by the 459th Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS) was closed on 31 January. On 15 May the 459th TAS was inactivated at Phu Cat Air Base with the aircraft and aircrews assigned to the other five squadrons.

The 535th TAS relocated from Vung Tau to CRB on 25 June, while the 536th TAS remained at Vung Tau until relocating to CRB on 14 July.

The Wing established a Mission Site at Can Tho Army Airfield on 1 July and an Operating Location at Bien Hoa Air Base on 14 July. The Bangkok Mission Site continued to be supported by Wing Headquarters throughout the year with all squadrons providing crews on a rotational basis.

Two major operations in the first half of 1970 emphasized the flexibility and utility of C-7A airlift support. One was the numerous Tactical Emergency, Combat Essential, and Emergency Resupply missions Caribou crews flew in support of the U.S. incursion into Cambodia, 1 May through 30 June. The other was Dak Seang.

The most significant USAF Caribou operation of 1970, and probably of the war, was conducted in April during the battle at Dak Seang. In the span of five days three C-7A's were shot down and nine crew members were killed during daytime airdrops. A change of tactics to single-ship night drops proved effective and successful. Operations at Dak Seang demonstrated the courage, skill, and ingenuity of the Caribou organization and its aircrews. The camp would have been overrun without their sacrifice, but the cost was high. (from *Caribou Airlines, Vol. IV)*

Reunion 2020 in Orlando Is Cancelled!!!

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

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Chairman of the Board's Corner

We certainly live in interesting times!

Between the chaotic politics and the COVID-2019, this is shaping up to be quite a year. On that latter subject, the Board had a serious and informed discussion about our Orlando Reunion. We ended up unanimously voting to cancel the 2020 reunion. This is a first time in our history that a reunion has been cancelled, but we believed it was the only possible course of action.

Our membership is mostly made up of people who are at serious risk with a grim outlook if they catch the disease. Although we cannot possibly predict what will happen as time goes on, the situation grows more concerning every day. We felt that it was not worth the risk to our members to continue with the reunion.

This, too, will pass and we look forward to getting back to normalcy for our reunion in 2021.

Our sincere thanks and apologies must go to John Tawes and his entire 2020 reunion team. They did a lot of great work in setting up things for the reunion and successfully getting a hotel contract in place. It has to be difficult to go to all that effort only to have it cancelled, but both John Tawes and Doug Boston agree that we are taking the right course.

Up here in the North Country, it seems like winter is almost over, although it was not much of a winter. Even though spring is nearly here, I will probably just hunker down and hope that COVID-2019 can't find me.

I hope you will all take similar measures and stay well.

CANCELLED!

31st Annual C-7A Caribou Association Reunion
October 14 – 18, 2020
Orlando/Kissimmee, FL

Tour the U.S. Air Force Museum!

Take an amazing tour of the U.S. Air Force museum from a perspective you have never seen before by using the link below.

The tour is provided by a drone flying over, around, and under the aircraft, missiles, rockets, and satellites on display throughout the museum.

The drone has incredible capabilities, but the drone pilot has skills!

Here is the link. Enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4wLr8_Kaw4&feature=youtu.be

Dak Seang Operations

by Michael A. Nassr [459, 69]
Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 11, July 2000

Lt. Col. Roger P. Larivee, 483rd Tactical Air Wing Deputy Commander for Operations, took over as on-scene commander at Pleiku Air Base during the April 2 to April 12, 1970 aerial resupply of Dak Seang, the most hazardous C-7A Caribou operations of the war.

An estimated 3,600 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army troops had staged a massive siege of this small South Vietnamese Special Forces camp in the Central Highlands. Under repeated attacks and heavy fire, the camp's survival was dependent upon airdropped supplies from C-7A aircraft.

An extraordinary and extended effort was launched to save the camp through C-7A airdrops due to its being one of the first tests of the United States' Vietnamization program.

Dak Seang was situated in a narrow valley with mountain peaks above the camp of 4,000 feet and 2,100 feet on each side and 1,400 feet to the north. Approach paths to the drop zone were severely limited and the C-7A, with its 110 knot airdrops at an altitude of 300 feet, was exceptionally vulnerable. Even more significantly, the enemy antiaircraft defense was one of the most elaborate encountered in the II Corps Tactical Zone. Consisting mainly of 12.7 mm machine guns, it contained in-depth and dug-in positions on ridges overlooking both sides of the camp.

In the first five days of the ten-day siege, three C-7A's were shot down and nine crew members were killed. Twenty-five other [Caribou] aircraft received hits from ground fire.

Displaying leadership through example, Lt. Col. Larivee led five-ship formations of Caribous over the tiny 200 by 220 foot drop zone on three successive days.

After making a total of five flights he was ordered by his superiors to refrain from exposing himself to further danger.

Deeply concerned over casualties incurred, Lt. Col. Larivee devised an imaginative use of the illumination capabilities of AC-119 aircraft to attempt single-ship airdrops at night. Recognizing the inherent dangers of night flights at low level in hostile, mountainous terrain, he insisted on flying the initial mission himself. He took along with him Captain Tim Black, who had first approached him on attempting night airdrops. This revolutionary tactic, developed and implemented under difficult combat conditions, saved the camp by permitting continued airdrops without further losses.

FAC Remembers Dak Seang

by Gary Dikkers, FAC
Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 19, May 2004

Dak Seang was a camp 55 nautical miles northwest of Pleiku and only six kilometers east of the Laotian border. It was located in the Dak Poko River valley, which ran parallel to the Laotian border. At the south end of the Dak Poko were the Special Forces camps of Dak To and Ben Het. Then, running north up the valley came Dak Seang and finally Dak Pek.

On 1 April 1970, two regiments of NVA crossed from Laos to attack Dak Seang and Dak Pek. By the time I got to Kontum to fly missions over Dak Seang, most of the fighting near the camp had stopped and was now in the hills and mountains to the north and west as patrols from the camp tried to winkle out the artillery, mortar, and "recce rifle positions" [spotters] that kept lobbing stuff into the camp.

Most of my missions over Dak Seang were in support of the patrols north of the SF camp. But, my mission one day was to carry an Army artillery officer and we spent most of four hours orbiting over Dak Seang to adjust artillery. The closest fire support base (FSB) was at Dak To, which was too far away to reach Dak Seang. So, the Army moved a temporary FSB halfway up the valley that could reach the Dak Seang area.

Although we were supposed to adjust and control artillery, we did work some air [support] when another FAC (Forward Air Controller) north of Dak Seang had to leave early. My Army Fire Support Officer (FSO) got sick as we maneuvered to control the air. Two helicopters had been hit by ground fire and made forced landings at Dak Seang. Their crews spent the entire siege in the SF camp. Much of the damage to the camp was from incoming NVA mortars and artillery.

There were bodies of NVA soldiers in the perimeter fencing and around the ground around the camp. During the first few days of the siege, A-1's and F-100's with napalm caught a high number of NVA troops in the wire. I wasn't at Kontum yet, but talked to one of the FACs who controlled those strikes and the instructions he gave the fighters was to put the napalm "in the wire."

The runway was still closed that day and the only way supplies could get into the camp was by USAF C-7A's making low-altitude parachute drops and Army Hueys and Chinooks dumping stuff into the camp. The story of the C-7A's dropping into the valley was really one of courage. Because of the mountains around the camp, the C-7A's could approach only by following a predictable route from the south. The NVA had that route lined with 14.5 mm and 12.7 mm antiaircraft artillery (AAA). [The AAA

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FAC Remembers (from Page 3)

was later estimated to be an AAA battalion, not just AAA attached to ground elements they supported.]

Here is a short account of the C-7A's at Dak Seang from an account I read:

"A year after Ben Het, the Communists attacked Dak Seang, which lay just north of Ben Het. In spite of indications that the enemy was building up strength in the area, no preparations were made. Only 12 hours before the attack was launched on April 1, Caribous were landing at Dak Seang to pick up ammunition for transport to another camp where the threat was thought to be greater.

When the enemy made their presence known, it became clear that they had taken a lesson from Ben Het as numerous antiaircraft guns revealed their presence in the areas that were the most likely air resupply corridors.

During the afternoon of April 1, C-7A crews made the first drops into the camp. Enemy fire was light during the drop, but increased as the crews left the area. One airplane took two hits. The next morning the first C-7A over the camp reported ground fire while making a right hand turn after his drop. The second airplane turned left and was hit by heavy fire. It crashed five miles from the camp. There were no survivors.

That afternoon, an all-out effort was made to supply the camp. Eleven C-7A's made drops into the camp using tactics learned at Ben Het as they made descending turns to approach the camp at 20 second intervals. Three airplanes were hit by ground fire.

Over the next two days the C-7A's made 31 drops using the same tactics. Fourteen airplanes were hit and one was forced to land at nearby Dak To. For more than a week [*sic*, six days], the C-7A crews continued the effort, with airplanes taking hits on each mission. On April 4, a second Caribou was shot down. A third fell two days later. Though supplies were getting into the camp, some were lost while the C-7A's were paying a heavy toll.

In an attempt to reduce the losses, the C-7A's turned to night drops under the illumination of AC-119 gunships that could also provide fire suppression. The new tactics worked as the C-7A's took less hits and most of the bundles landed within the camp."

I did get the chance to control one C-7A supply mission and their fighter support. As the C-7A approached from the south, I had the F-100's set up a racetrack pattern so that one of them was always flying parallel to the ground track of the C-7A's. The idea was that as soon as any NVA guns opened up, one of the Huns [F-100's] would be close to firing position and could immediately start hosing the AAA site.

One thought constantly in my mind as I worked north of Dak Seang was, 'If I get hit, am I going to be able to make it onto the runway and into the camp?' We spent a lot of time while on the ground at Kontum thinking about how we were going to make a forced landing on that little runway and whether we could get out and sprint into the camp before getting hit.

There was at least one FAC inside the camp during the siege, although I never got to meet him face-to-face. Apparently the living conditions in the camp got pretty gross by the time things became calm enough that C-7A's could once more use the runway and helicopters could get in to land.

Pleiku ALCE Operations

by Sgt. Richard P. Liefer
Vietnam Airlifter, May 1970
Newsletter, Vol. 1, No.18
September 2003

Report from "on the scene" in the Pleiku Airlift Control Element (ALCE):

A studied calm seems to settle over the U.S. Air Force Airlift Control Element (ALCE) office at Pleiku AB with the approach of a new series of sorties. Used as the command post in a resupply operation to airdrop supplies into Dak Seang, a Republic of Vietnam Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp 14 miles northwest of Dak To in Kontum Province, the office has been the site of increased activity during the past week, a week that saw three C-7A Caribous downed by enemy ground fire.

But, there is a feeling of almost enforced peacefulness as more sorties begin.

Strewn about is evidence of the last eight days – an abundance of used coffee cups, combat gear piled here and there waiting for owners to return, and newspapers left scattered about open, half-read, left for more pressing matters. People mill about quietly wearing signs of too little sleep, too much strain, and too much coffee.

The pilots for the next missions talk animatedly trying to "psych" themselves for the job they will soon have to do. Lt. Col. Loris L. Dorris, the ALCE commander, takes time to read a letter and answer it.

The man heading the operation, Col. Roger P. Larivee is away getting a shave, a shower, and a well-deserved steak. He'll be back. U.S. Special Forces Warrant Officer John Tatalajski – called Mr. T. to avoid tied tongues – is at his compound and will return later. He is in charge of rigging the supplies for the airdrop.

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Pleiku ALCE (from Page 4)

Those left in the ALCE make small talk, discussing the coordination involved in making an airdrop and repeating the old saying about waiting being the worst part, etc. One mission monitor gets up from his desk muttering, "Why does your pencil break in the middle of a war?"

Meanwhile, the first few aircraft are on their way to their target. Then the word comes, an excited unprintable synonym for, "Right on target." The pall of tension lifts and held breath is released.

Before long the plane is home, its performance to be repeated shortly in eight other sorties as C-7A crews place 27 pallets into Dak Seang without serious incident.

Improved Tactics

by Tim Black [457, 68 & 70]
Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 17
February 2003

On the morning of April 2nd, 1970, I was giving a checkout on airdrops to Lt. Col. Bob Davis somewhere in the central part of Vietnam. I was an Instructor Pilot with the 457th TAS and on my second tour to Viet Nam. My first tour was also in the 457th TAS from March 1968 thru March 1969. I volunteered for a second tour and came back in the A-26, flying night air strikes over Laos from Nakhon Phanom, Thailand. In January 1970, the A-26's were phased out and sent back to the States.

There were four of us who were on our second SEA tours. Personnel decided that we would finish our second tours in the squadrons where we had been assigned on our first tours. So, I came back to the 457th in February 1970 and because of my previous C-7A time and was made an IP in short order. Another [A-26] pilot, Tom Bame, who had flown out of the 458th TAS, returned to that squadron.

While doing our airdrops on that April 2nd, we received a radio call over HF that we were to proceed immediately to Pleiku for an emergency airdrop situation. Upon arrival at Pleiku, we met up with several other C-7A crews who had been diverted also. We were briefed on Dak Seang and loaded up for our first airdrops into the camp. Our orders were to drop inside the walls of the camp because the Viet Cong/North Vietnamese Army (VC/NVA) were into the barbed wire surrounding the camp. Col. Roger Larivee, the 483rd TAW Deputy Commander for Operations (DCO), was the Officer In Charge (OIC) of the Caribou operation from Pleiku.

Over the next couple of days, we tried several different tactics to get our loads into the camp without taking too much ground fire. We came in with a train of six Caribous from the same direction; we came in from different directions almost simultaneously; we came in from different directions at different times; we tried single-ship tactics and multi-ship tactics. On all of our missions, we took heavy antiaircraft fire. Most of the time when we were making our drops, F-4's were dropping hard bombs, A-1E's were dropping napalm, and F-100's were dropping smoke to try to hide our approach.

During that first 2 to 3 days of the resupply, the Caribous took heavy losses. We lost 3 aircraft and their crews. As I recall, our drop parameters were 100 knots and 300 feet above the ground. You can bet that put us smack in the middle of the hottest fire zone. I can still hear the noise of the ground fire while making our runs, even over the roar of the aircraft engines.

After having made several airdrops into Dak Seang and realizing the amount of ground fire we were receiving on every drop, I figured there must be a better way. I sat down with a map and did some study. After coming up with a plan, I took it to Col. Larivee.

My plan was this – single-ship night airdrops. His first reaction was, "You've got to be kidding me. We don't practice night airdrops."

My suggestion for night airdrops was based upon my night air strike experience in the A-26. After listening to my plan, he decided that he and I would make a night drop to see if it would work before sending in other Caribou crews. We coordinated with the Army personnel and other agencies to make the plan work.

The plan was to take off after dark from Pleiku without making any radio call and leaving all our outside lighting off. We would proceed to the Dak To TACAN and fly off the 270 degree radial for "x" number of miles at an altitude of 8-10,000 feet. That would put us at the south end of the valley where Dak Seang was located. We would then turn north and begin a descent with our engines at idle.

A code word was passed over the radio to the camp and at a certain time and they would light a fire within the walls of the camp to give us a target to aim for with our load. We would hit our drop parameters over the light from the camp and call "Green Light." That meant the load was on the way out and they could extinguish the light.

We would then go to full power, make 180 degree turn and fly back out of the valley on a south heading. While at max power, we would keep the props out of sync, so the enemy would not have one sound to aim at. By doing this in that valley, it kept the aircraft noise from being a steady target.

When Col. Larivee and I made that first night drop, our load went long, but he saw that the procedures would work. The next day, the Army decided that if we could get six loads into the camp each day, they could live on that.

Col. Larivee chose the most experienced pilots for those first night drops. He picked three crews. Myself, Tom Bame, and Neil Crist were the Aircraft Commanders who would make two drops each per night. We would take a

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Tactics (from Page 5)

Copilot with us to start with, but then we would take in another Aircraft Commander in the right seat to show him the night procedures we were using. That way we could increase the number of crews who were qualified to make the drops.

As our night drops went along, we refined our procedures to include using the AC-119 with its Illuminator for lighting instead of a light from within the camp. Once we went to the night drops, no other Caribou took hits from antiaircraft fire. After about two weeks of these drops, as I recall, the siege at Dak Seang was broken.

To all the crews who flew in support of the operation at Dak Seang, I would like to offer this footnote.

I was attending a memorial service and dedication in Atlanta for Pat Jaeger, a member of the third Caribou crew to be shot down. Al Ghizzoni, Mark Erickson, Bob Davis, and I were approached by an Army Sergeant who had been in the camp at Dak Seang while under siege during April 1970. He just wanted to say "Thanks," not just to us, but to all the crews who flew in support of Dak Seang.

He said if it wasn't for the Caribou and her crews (the Aircraft Commanders, the Copilots, and the Flight Engineers), he and his buddies would not be here today.

Aerial Delivery at 50 Feet

by Frank Godek, Jr.
[537, 69 & 535,70]
Caribou Airlines, Vol. IV

We were into our second week of drops into Dak Seang when Maj. "Bear Tracks" Brown [Commander of the Pleiku ALCE] approached me at the aircraft.

Our crew was assigned to the next drop. They were preparing the aircraft loads for the mission and he asked me if we could assure him that we could get two 4.2 inch mortar tubes and ammo into the camp. Maj. Brown then told me that the camp's mortar tubes were burned out and the tubes were desperately needed for the survival of the camp.

I told him to load the mortars in the middle two pallets and the ammo on the outside ones and we would get them into the camp.

When 1/Lt. Phillip L. Lewallen, my Aircraft Commander, and our Copilot arrived (I can't remember his name, as we were flying mixed crews then), we began our checklist and I explained the situation at hand to Lt. Lewallen.

He asked me what I thought about it and I told him, "We can't miss from 50 feet" [the usual drop altitude was 300 feet Above Ground Level (AGL)].

He agreed and the crew voted to go to that height above the ground to get the mortars into the camp.

When we approached the Drop Zone (DZ), we began our descent. We were the fourth ship in the five-ship formation.

As we started down our FAC (Forward Air Controller) started hollering for us to pull-up, as we were getting too low. We just kept on descending with the Copilot calling out 50 foot increments. We crossed over the DZ at 50 feet and Lt. Lewallen hollered, "Green Light," and away the mortars went.

We climbed back to altitude and returned to Pleiku. Upon arriving back at our operations at Pleiku, Maj. Brown approached me and stated that the mortars were in place and already in use. He said that the camp sends their thanks for a job well done.

I just replied, "You can't miss from 50 feet," and got a cup of coffee.

Dak Seang Airlift Support Summary

During the period of 1-12 April 1970, C-7A aircrews operating from Pleiku AB flew 100 aerial delivery sorties (58 day and 42 night) supporting the Special Forces camp at Dak Seang.

The camp was under continuous heavy attack throughout this period by a large enemy force, which made it impossible to utilize the runway at the camp for bringing in supplies.

Fighter aircraft and gunships suppressed enemy gunfire during the airdrops, but enemy ground fire directed at the aircraft was as intense as any the C-7A had been exposed to during the Vietnam conflict.

Caribous were downed by enemy fire at Dak Seang on 2 April (537th TAS), 4 April (458th TAS), and 6 April (457th TAS) with the loss of all three crews.

Innovative changes in tactics, including flying single-ship night airdrops and the use of illumination from AC-119 gunships just prior to scheduled Time Over Target significantly reduced hostile fire during the airdrops and no other Caribous were lost.

The last airdrops were conducted on the night of April 12-13 and the 483rd Mission Site at Pleiku was disbanded on April 13. Resupply missions to Dak Seang continued through 30 April as fighting continued in the vicinity.

The 100 Caribou airdrop sorties delivered 186.3 tons (106.8 tons by day and 79.5 tons by night) of ammunition, food, and supplies to the beleaguered camp. Given the size of the drop zone and the extremely dangerous conditions, a remarkable 86.4 per cent of the cargo dropped was recoverable (81 per cent by day and 95 per cent by night).

The C-7A operations at Dak Seang resulted in the award of at least 146 decorations to participants, including 15 Silver Stars, 96 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 25 one-day Air Medals, and 10 Purple Hearts.

Three Tours and a Wake-up

by Bernard Baker [537, 66 & 72]

From October 1966 to November 1972 I served three tours in Vietnam, including two tours in Caribous, and spent 35 months "in-country." That was probably a record of some sort, at least for C-7A guys.

I was busy maintaining C-124's at Hill AFB, UT in the summer of 1966 when I received orders to go to Fort Benning, GA for Caribou training. I drove down to Fort Benning with a class start date in September.

The training course I was scheduled for was on maintaining the Pratt Whitney R-2000 engine. Just about everyone else in the class was transitioning from jet engine maintenance, but there was nothing new that class was going to teach me. The Army course instructors finally agreed with me and they allowed me to sign-out early, partially because I had to drive back to Utah and there weren't that many days before I had to catch the flight to Vietnam.

I arrived in Saigon early in October 1966 with orders for the 17th Army Aviation Company and I was sent to the Caribou unit at An Khe. I spent three or four months at An Khe before moving to Phu Cat AB.

There were about 30 Caribou maintenance personnel at An Khe and we lived in seven-man tents, just like the Army. I remember the An Khe runway was PSP (pierced steel planking) at the time and it would sink and buckle every time a C-130 landed on it.

One day at An Khe I was pulling KP (kitchen patrol) and was told to burn the huge barrel of garbage behind the mess hall. It was raining heavy, so I poured a combination of kerosene and aviation gas (Avgas) on the garbage and then made a little trail with the Avgas and lit it. The problem was there was a pile of paper butter wrappers on top of all that garbage. The fire made it to the top of the barrel, hesitated for a moment, and then went off with a "Boom!"

The Army guys came running out of the chow hall yelling, "In-coming!" Then they looked up and saw butter wrappers floating in the air. I was laughing so hard I could barely stand-up. That was the last time I pulled KP.

When the barracks were finally ready at Phu Cat we made the short trip from An Khe to Phu Cat in a C-130. We were told not to use the first floor of the barracks because they were worried about flooding during the monsoon rains. After tent living, the beds were nice.

The engine shop and the other maintenance shops were in tents. There were wooden plank sidewalks and lots of mud everywhere.

I also spent time at the Caribou detachment at Pleiku. I shook hands with Bob Hope at Pleiku in 1967. I also saw Nancy Sinatra while I was at Pleiku. One day they took us in an Army "6 by 6" truck to an Army outpost. There was Nancy putting on a show and singing *These Boots Were Made for Walking*.

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Three Tours (from Page 7)

After that assignment, the USAF sent me to K.I. Sawyer AFB, MI. That winter brought lots of cold, ice, and over 265 inches of snow. The wife couldn't handle it and I couldn't either, so I volunteered to go back.

In 1970 I was back in Vietnam at Tan Son Nhut AB in Saigon with an AC-47 outfit. One day we were on the flight line working on an engine and saw an eight foot snake coming across the ramp toward us. We scrambled up onto the wing of the plane.

A couple of APs (Air Police) came up in a jeep. They drove over the snake a few times with the jeep, but the snake kept coming just like nothing had happened. The APs weren't interested in a face-to-face confrontation, so they let him keep on coming. The snake slithered under the wing of the plane, off the ramp, and disappeared into the tall grass.

After AC-47's I went to Maxwell AFB, AL for a short time but was back at Cam Rahn Bay AB on New Year's Day 1972. I caught a C-130 ride to Phu Cat the next day. The old barracks I had lived-in in 1967 was still there, but it was collapsed in the middle. Guess they were right about the first floor flooding.

TSgt. Bellows and I were assigned to train Vietnamese maintenance personnel as C-7A engine mechanics. We only had four or five aircraft.

I remember once Bellows and I with our two Vietnamese students flew down to the [Mekong] Delta to change an engine. We were heavy coming back with the old engine and all of our equipment on a Caribou flown by a USAF Instructor Pilot and a Vietnamese student pilot.

Another time I was sent to Qui Nhon on a UH-1 Huey to change a magneto. For some reason they wouldn't let my Vietnamese trainee go with me. I changed the magneto and it checked out okay, but they would not let me ride back on the Vietnamese C-7A. I had to wait for a Huey to get back to Phu Cat.

The worst thing that happened in my three tours was on Easter Sunday in 1972. TSgt. Bellows and I were riding on the flight line in a four-wheel drive Dodge Power Wagon truck with our two Vietnamese trainees.

We heard the whistling sound of "in-coming" and we could tell it was going to be really close. We all ducked. The explosion rocked the truck, but we didn't suffer any serious damage.

Not everyone was so lucky. The mortar or rocket, not sure which it was, made almost a direct hit on an Air Force aircraft electrician on the ramp who worked with us. He was killed instantly. I believe his name was Sgt. Fariss.

Sometime in May or June 1972, from the flight line at Phu Cat, I could see columns of smoke and dust rising up from the An Khe pass. I thought it was a North Vietnamese rocket attack, but found out later that three B-52's had dropped their bombs in the pass.

In early November, I was told to pack my stuff and go to Tan Son Nhut to catch a flight home. I was at Tan Son Nhut for a couple of weeks. During that time I watched C-7A's fly in with no markings and fly out with South Vietnamese markings and a yellow and red Vietnamese flag on the tail.

I arrived home four days before Thanksgiving in 1972, completing 35 months "in-country."

Hydroplaning in Thailand

by Mike Tubbs [458, 71]

I was told I would get a week of flying in Bangkok but it turned into three days.

On the third day, we had to go to Chang Mei and pick up an inspection team of Thai and American brass.

I think I scared the crap out of them on my landing back at Bangkok. It was raining to beat the band and visibility was limited.

About a quarter mile out from the runway, the Controller said he had heavy traffic coming and asked if I could land early and get off at the first taxiway. "No problem," was my answer.

We made a really "soft" landing and the aircraft was on top of all that water. When I went to full reverse to make the taxiway, I heard screams from the back of the airplane. I wondered what the hell was going on.

About that time, a Thai Colonel put his hand on my shoulder. He was laughing. Because of the layer of water on the runway, the passengers didn't feel the aircraft touchdown. They all thought that we were still in the air and were about to die when I went into reverse.

Funny thinks happen hydroplaning on a wet runway in a Caribou.

Bangkok Fun and Missing Duc Lap

by Don Borowski [458, 67]

One of the nicer aspects of flying the Caribou was our mission site at Bangkok. We kept two C-7A's at Don Muang Airport and almost all the aircrews had an opportunity to fly them during their tour.

During August 1968, one of those aircraft required an engine change. I was scheduled to fly the replacement engine to Bangkok. It just happened there was a USAF Thunderbird reunion and Dining-In taking place at the Chao Phraya Hotel (also known as the Chao Phya Hotel), which also served as a BOQ (Bachelor Officer's Quarters).

One of our 458th Tactical Airlift Squadron pilots, Lt. Col. Al Davis, had been a Thunderbird pilot flying the F-84. He was the other pilot going to Bangkok with me. We also took Capt. Chris Patterakis, a Cam Rahn Bay (CRB) F-4 pilot who had flown

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Bangkok Fun (from Page 8)

the F-100 with the Thunderbirds. Chris later became commander of the Thunderbirds flying the T-38.

The plan was that we would leave our aircraft at Bangkok, return to Cam Ranh any way we could (space available). When the engine change was complete, another crew would pick up the extra aircraft.

The flight to Bangkok was uneventful and we checked into the Chao Phraya Hotel. Chris was my roommate. He told some wild stories of his time as a member of the Thunderbirds.

After showers, we met Al and headed down to the bar. As the elevator door opened, Al instantly recognized an old friend waiting to get on the elevator.

He introduced Chris and me to "Doc" Blanchard, the Heisman Trophy winner from Army. The four of us went to the bar for a drink. Col. Blanchard, an F-4 pilot in Thailand, was the featured Dining-In speaker.

The following morning, our crew and Chris headed to the MAC Passenger Terminal to catch a ride back to CRB, or so we thought. We were wrong.

The only aircraft coming through heading to CRB was a MAC C-141. Guess what? They were carrying hazardous cargo and could not take passengers. We could not go as additional crew members. The hazardous cargo turned out to be one case of paint. They told us a medevac C-9 would be coming through the next day. There should be room for us. Back to the BOQ.

The next morning we went back to the MAC passenger terminal and there was a C-9 parked in front of it. Al, the Flight Engineer, and I processed through and were ready to board.

No Chris.

I returned to the terminal. There was Chris arguing with a MAC airman who refused to give him a boarding pass. The reason – he didn't have his shot record with him. Chris was shouting, "My shot record is in my room back at Cam Ranh Bay. I've got to get back to the damned war!" The verdict? "No shot record. No fly. MAC regulations."

The engine change was going smoothly, and the Caribou looked like it would be ready for an FCF (functional check flight) the next day. We called "home" and explained the situation. It really did make sense to stay another night and bring the spare aircraft, and Chris, back to Cam Ranh. Back we went to the Chao Phraya.

Another shower and down to the bar. I believe "happy hour" prices were 15 cents a drink. After dinner at a local restaurant, we wound up at the lounge of the American Hotel. It was a first class hotel and the lounge had a great band. I remember them introducing a new song, *Hey Jude*.

At the table next to ours, there were two women, also enjoying the band. I noticed Al kept looking at them. Now, Al was a suave, very good-looking gentleman. Al said to us, "I think that's Martha Raye." He picked up his drink, turned to the ladies and started talking to them. Next, he sat at their table and continued the conversation. A few minutes later, the three got up and moved back to our table.

It was indeed Martha Raye and a traveling companion. They spent over an hour with us. They were really excited about talking to two Air Force Thunderbird pilots. Martha Raye said she was in Bangkok on an official, DOD provided R&R, and she was proud of it. She had spent enough time "in-country" to earn it. She was quite a lady and I am proud to have met her as I did.

The next morning, we went back to the airport, flew the FCF, picked Chris up, and finally headed back to Cam Ranh Bay.

As we taxied in, there was an aircraft on the ramp with at least 20 people looking at it. After we parked, we walked over to see what was happening. Hunter Hackney had just returned from his Duc Lap air drops.

Lt. Col. Rawlings, our squadron commander, was there and told me that I had the next mission to Duc Lap. My roommate, Tom Bame, had been Hunter's Copilot. He briefed me about what had happened on the flight. Looked like a challenging mission coming up.

The next day we flew to Ban Me Thuot to pick up our load for Duc Lap. We found out that the enemy had withdrawn overnight. We flew four or five resupply sorties into the airfield without any incidents.

A closing note. Tom Bame, Hunter Hackney's Copilot on his Air Force Cross mission, flew as Aircraft Commander into Duc Lap several days later.

As he parked on their small ramp what he described as a "little old lady" came running toward the front of his aircraft and hurled an object at it. It turned out to be a grenade that did not detonate. After that, Tom had an M-3 submachine gun ready in the cockpit. If it ever happened again, he was ready.

Martha Raye in Vietnam

by David Mikkelson
August 22, 2012

Martha Raye, born Margaret Teresa Yvonne Reed, was a singer, actress, and comedienne. As the daughter of a vaudeville couple she embarked on a show business career in early childhood, joining her parents' act as soon as she could walk.

During World War II, Martha Raye joined other actresses to form a United Service Organizations (USO) troupe, performing shows, often under difficult and dangerous conditions, for U.S. soldiers across Europe, the South Pacific, and North Africa.

Raye performed a similar service for G.I.s in two more wars, entertaining thousands and thousands of troops at U.S. military bases in Korea in the early 1950's and in Vietnam from 1965 to 1973.

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Martha Raye (from Page 9)

She is fondly remembered by generations of service members not just for her tireless efforts in staging shows for U.S. soldiers all over the world, but for uncomplainingly enduring the same conditions they did. She also went far beyond the role of an entertainer by tending to troops in the field, including working with medivac units in Vietnam to pick up wounded Americans and assist in field hospitals.

An October 1966 Associated Press article reported the following account:

"Comedienne Martha Raye, a front-line trouper for 24 years, changed her routine last week. She donned fatigues and worked for two days in an Army field dispensary, cleansing wounds, changing bandages and comforting G.I.s wounded in a Mekong Delta battle.

The twangy-voiced brunette, who has gone from outpost to tiny outpost throughout Vietnam to entertain American servicemen, sang, danced and ribbed the men of two Army aviation helicopter companies stationed in the Mekong Delta town of Soc Trang.

The next morning, the chopper pilots and their crews delivered Vietnamese soldiers to the paddy fields and marshlands of the Delta to charge the entrenched Viet Cong.

As the first helicopters settled into the landing zones, they were met by intense fire. The landing zones were in the stronghold of a Viet Cong battalion.

Additional troops were brought in, and in the battle that followed four American helicopters were shot down and 20 were damaged. American casualties began arriving by 8 AM, at the small Soc Trang dispensary.

Miss Raye, a former nurse, arrived about the same time, dressed in Army fatigues and volunteering for duty.

'She worked all day, until 9 that night, doing everything she could,' one corpsman said.

One of the first things she did was donate a pint of blood to a badly wounded sergeant. Then it was hour after hour of scrubbing and preparing the wounded for surgery, helping the surgeons, changing bandages, and cheering up men awaiting evacuation to field hospitals in Vung Tau or Saigon.

Miss Raye's show did not go on that night. The next morning she was back at the hospital in her stained fatigues, helping one doctor and eight corpsmen care for the patients.

Shortly before noon, when the work eased, Miss Raye flew 80 miles north to Vinh Long and performed that night for another unit of Army chopper crews who fly Vietnamese troops into battle.

'She did a lot for the morale of the men who'd been shot up, and she did a lot for ours, too,' said a corpsman at the dispensary."

As recognition of her efforts on behalf of U.S. service members, Martha Raye was given several honorary military designations, including the honorary ranks of Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army and Colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps , which lead to her being dubbed "Colonel Maggie" by troops in Vietnam.

President Bill Clinton awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1993 for her service to her country.

The citation reads:

"Martha Raye's exemplary service to the Army, including trips to Vietnam to entertain the Green Berets, earned her a funeral with military honors. Raye, who died in Los Angeles at age 78, requested several years [earlier] to be buried at Fort Bragg, home of the Green Berets. She was to get her wish after a ceremony with a flag-draped casket and military pallbearers. Raye entertained troops in Vietnam for nine straight years, four months a year, spending much of the time with isolated Special Forces detachments in camps all over the country. Normally, only active duty and retired Army personnel are buried on post, but the Defense Department granted an exception for Raye, who was made an honorary Lieutenant Colonel in the Special Forces in 1966 by President Lyndon B. Johnson."

Low Visibility in Heavy Rain

by Larry Nilssen [536 & 535, 71]

It was monsoon season, October 1971. My copilot, Phil Messuri, and I, departed An Thoi Island in the Gulf of Siam, en route to Can Tho in the middle of the Mekong Delta, a one-hour flight.

If we had space available, we would allow the local Aerial Port to load civilians to our next destination. This time we had a full load of Vietnamese civilian passengers, probably about 19.

Everything in the Delta was flat with an elevation of 7 to 12 feet. However, at Can Tho there was a 1,000 foot radio tower, complete with guy wires to the ground.

It was sunny at takeoff and the weather was predicted to be good by Saigon weather service. Because it was monsoon season, the thunderstorms and rain were unpredictable. We were well along in the flight, with enough fuel to complete the mission as planned, when we encountered a low overcast and then

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Low Visibility (from Page 10)

steady rain. The visibility continued to decrease.

Can Tho was on the Mekong River, so we flew low at about 800 feet altitude along the south bank. Then the weather completely deteriorated, so we contacted Can Tho Approach Control. Can Tho was one of the main airports in the Delta and was big enough to have an approach control. They confirmed that their weather had deteriorated with fog and rain, but there was still enough visibility to execute a non-precision instrument approach. They cleared us for an approach.

During the first approach, I caught a glimpse of the runway, straight underneath us, but we could not position ourselves to land. We requested a second approach to the same runway, and circled around to try again, keeping in mind the radio tower. We made a missed approach the second time without seeing any runway at all. The weather was even worse and fuel was now a factor.

I asked for a precision radar approach, which allows you to go safely to lower decision height. I was told that the Vietnamese ran that facility, but since it was Sunday, they were not working! I remember thinking, "What the hell am I, an American, doing flying up here when the Vietnamese are taking the day off?"

We now had about 600 pounds of fuel left, less than an hour of flight time. There was an additional concern because the fuel gauge was not accurate below 400 pounds. We did not have enough fuel to reach any large base. We had to land soon.

A smaller base was nearby, run by the U.S. Navy, called Bihn Thuy. They had a non-precision approach that would allow us to descend lower, but most importantly there were no obstacles nearby. So I told Can Tho Approach to hand me off to Bihn Thuy Tower.

The trip to Bihn Thuy took about 15 minutes, using more fuel. I told the Copilot that if we missed this landing, we would proceed in the direction of Saigon, probably 40 minutes away, and prepare to crash land in the flat mud rice paddies of the Delta if we ran out of gas.

The instrument approach at Bihn Thuy provided azimuth guidance only with no elevation guidance. What that meant to me was that I would have to fly a very precise approach.

I decided I would continue to descend below the established minimum descent altitude, knowing that it was an emergency landing and there was nothing more than 25 foot high in the vicinity for us to hit.

Bihn Thuy Tower told us they could not clear us to land, as they could not see the runway! They called the visibility as 1/16th of a mile in heavy rain. I was soaking with sweat from concentration as I flew the most exact instrument approach I could fly while the Copilot looked for the runway environment. Lower and lower we flew, well below the specified decision height, and then Phil shouted, "I see the runway!"

If you have ever driven in an intense downpour, then you know how it feels when the windshield wipers cannot keep up with the rain. That was the case as I went "visual" to try to find the runway. I saw a black line ahead and started to line up with it.

"Not that! – That's a canal!"

Off to the left, I saw the real runway and touched down a few seconds later. There was deep, standing water on the runway and we immediately hydroplaned sideways, momentarily out-of-control. Hard left rudder straightened the aircraft out, and we were safely on the ground.

As soon as we taxied to a stop, our very airsick Vietnamese passengers scattered to the wind, happy to get out of the violently maneuvering airplane that now smelled awful. (Later, the interior was hosed down.)

I got out, knees shaking, and kissed the ground. I then radioed the command element in Saigon and told them we were in Bihn Tuy instead of Can Tho, and that I was not going to fly anymore that day. They objected, but I didn't care.

Two final points:

First, Phil and I had a dinner a few years back in Park City. He remembers the events exactly as I have related them.

Second, the canal is still visible today on Google Earth, exactly where I almost landed on it.

Maintenance and Rockets

by Stephen M. Wilson [483, 70]

Newsletter, Vol. 26-2
November 2016

One time, the rain was so bad that none of the weather radars worked on any of my 23 aircraft. They all came in with not a single radar unit working.

I had to remove all the transceivers, check them in the shop, and let the waveguides dry out.

The flight crews loved having a week off because they couldn't fly until everything dried out enough. One of the pilots even thanked me for the vacation and gave me a case of frozen steaks.

We also had three AC-119 *Shadows* assigned to our base as well as six F-4's and I was only one person, so I spent many nights working on aircraft.

Usually the repairs were perfect. I rejuvenated many of the TACAN units, whose maintenance was sorely neglected. All worked fine when I left on 3 January 1971.

I also remember the darkness and the rain. Constant small arms fire around me at night. Sometimes I had to work in the dark on the flight line with light carts on. That definitely made me a little nervous.

At the end of January 1970, I jumped into a ditch during my first rocket attack.

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Rockets (from Page 11)

Too bad that the ditch was about 10 feet deep. I spent three days in Qui Nhon hospital and three more weeks in rehab.

I came to realize that there is no real place to hide from rockets, so I relaxed a lot after that first experience.

We took 164 rockets that year. I lost count of the mortars. Mostly they did minimal damage, but they did kill one of my buddies. He was at the wrong place at the right time to meet his end.

The rest was just routine for the whole year I was there.

Always wished I could have piloted one of the Bous.

Vung Tau Speed Bumps

by Dana K. Kelly [536, 70]
Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 16
August 2002

Arriving "in-country" for the year 1970, I was prepared for 12 months of "trash hauling" without much anticipation of anything out of the unusual occurring. Was I in for a surprise!

The first six months were spent in the 536th Tactical Airlift Squadron (TAS) at Vung Tau. The base was under the command of an Army Colonel with a host of Air Force tenants: two Caribou squadrons, an Airlift Control Element (ALCE), a Forward Air Control unit, etc., plus an Australian Caribou squadron. The officers lived off base and were very fortunate to have their own "clubs."

An inevitable topic of discussion centered on the Base Commander. In his view of the war, we had greater dangers from speeding on the streets of the base than we did, say, from Viet Cong infiltrators and the like.

Thus, he installed broken tank treads across the heavily traveled streets of the base as "speed bumps." They were very effective, did what they were intended to do, but were a source of constant irritation to everyone.

In the early spring, after a rather unusually well attended late liquid evening at the 536th TAS bar, the "troops," with the enthusiastic support of the ALCE commander, returned to the base. There, using forklifts, each tread was loaded on a pallet, then loaded on an aircraft, and the ramp was closed.

The next morning, bright and early as was his habit, the Army Base Commander was at the flight line to see all the aircraft take off. This particular day, he was highly agitated as he was at a loss as to the whereabouts of his precious "speed bumps."

The aircrews flamboyantly called back to operations, "Bombs away!" as their tank treads were air dropped (*sans* chutes) into the mud of the Mekong Delta.

The Base Commander, convinced that the "renegade and unruly" Aussies had stolen his tank treads, immediately barged into the Aussie Commanding Officer's (CO) office demanding an explanation. Bewildered, but truly laughing on the inside, the Australian CO could offer nothing, further infuriating the Base Commander.

After dark that evening, the entire officer cadre of the Aussie squadron drove up to the 536th TAS club demanding to speak to our commander.

The Aussie CO yelled at our squadron CO saying, "It was the greatest thing in the world to get my a** chewed out by an Army Colonel for something I had nothing to do with, let alone had any knowledge of." That having been said and agreed upon, everyone (Aussies included) adjourned to the bar to what can best be described as a night never to be forgotten.

The victory was thoroughly enjoyed by all and *esprit de corps* among the crews of both organizations was never higher, thanks unwittingly in part to the U.S. Army!!!

Cambodia Evacuation Operations

by Ray Bower
from *Tactical Airlift, the United States Air Force in SouthEast Asia*

The 834th Air Division learned of the evacuation plan on June 22. Since neither Ba Kev nor Boung Long airfield had been used previously by 834th aircraft, survey teams flew in by C-7A before dusk that evening.

Both strips were of laterite and both were more than thirty-three hundred feet in length. Based on the surveys, the decision was made to attempt the evacuation using C-123's rather than Caribous to take advantage of the C-123's greater passenger capacity and the reliability promised by their auxiliary jets. The C-7A's were left on standby.

On the morning of the twenty-third, after several hours of delay caused by rainfall and low visibility, C-7A's lifted airlift mission commanders and combat control teams into the two evacuation points. Meanwhile three C-123's took off from home stations for the first pickups. The three landed and made safe departures, but it was clear that the rain-soaked laterite was too soft for further C-123 landings.

Accordingly, the effort became entirely a C-7A one, and by nightfall Caribou crews had withdrawn 542 refugees from the two points.

Enemy fire prevented resumption of the airlift from Ba Kev the next morning and the control team there was withdrawn by helicopter.

The Boung Long evacuation continued, however, and by evening of the twenty-fourth another twenty-five hundred refugees had been lifted out to Pleiku.

The communists nearly overran the camp during the night and at dawn Capt. Palmer G. Arnold earned the

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Evacuation (from Page 12)

Silver Star by flying out the last C-7A under small-arms fire.

In all, the C-7A's lifted out thirty-one hundred refugees in forty-five sorties, an average of sixty-nine passengers per load (twenty-four was the nominal maximum) without loss.

In addition, Vietnamese Air Force C-47's and C-119's made landings at both Cambodian fields prior to the heavy rainfall.

The garrison and the last two hundred civilians moved overland to Ba Kev by road on June 25 and by road and helicopter from Ba Kev to Duc Co. Most of the Cambodian troops, after reequipping and retraining, eventually returned to Cambodia.

7th AF Silver Star Citation S.O. G-4135, 16 Sep 1970

Captain Palmer G. Arnold distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force at a Cambodian airfield from 24 June 1970 to 25 June 1970.

On those dates, Captain Arnold, a C-7A Aircraft Commander, made three sorties into the besieged airfield, which was under heavy hostile attack and, with personal disregard for safety, evacuated 207 refugees. Later, with less than minimum crew rest, he returned during the hours of darkness to rescue a combat control team, which was in grave danger of being captured. Captain Arnold's courage, his disregard for personal safety and outstanding airmanship enabled him to successfully make a hazardous night approach and landing into an unlighted airstrip under sustained fire and to safely rescue the entire combat control team.

By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Captain Arnold has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Aviation Gas World War II Trivia

It was a puzzle. Why did the German Luftwaffe keep using 87 octane aviation gasoline (Avgas) while the Americans and British used 100 octane Avgas in their Spitfire fighters and the Americans used 130 octane in the P-51 and their other fighters?

Here is the reason.

The following information is from an article by the British Society of Chemists that was declassified in 2014.

German and British aircraft both used 87 octane Avgas in the first two years of World War II. While the 87 octane Avgas was fairly satisfactory in the German Daimler-Benz V-12 engine, it was marginal in the British Rolls-Royce Merlin XX engine in British aircraft. The 87 octane Avgas fouled the spark plugs, caused valves to stick, and caused frequent engine repair problems.

Then came the lend-lease program and American aircraft began to enter British service in great numbers. If British engines hated 87 octane Avgas, the American General Motors-built Allison 1710 engines loathed and despised it.

Along came an American named Tim Palucka, a chemist for Sun Oil in their Southeast Texas Refinery. He took a French formula for enhancing the octane of gasoline and invented the "cracking tower" that produced 100 octane Avgas. This discovery led to great joy among our English cousins and great distress among the Germans.

A Spitfire fueled with 100 octane Avgas was 34 miles per hour faster at 10,000 feet. The need to replace engines went from every 500 hours of operation to every 1,000 hours, which reduced the cost of British fighter aircraft by 300 pounds Sterling, and even more when used in four-engine bombers.

The Germans couldn't believe it when Spitfires that couldn't catch them a year earlier started shooting Me-109 E and G models out of the sky.

Of course, the matter had to be kept secret. If the Germans found out that it was a French invention, they would have simply copied the original French patents.

If anyone ever wondered what was happening in that three-story white brick building in front of the Sun Oil Refinery on Old Texas Highway 90 – they were re-inventing gasoline.

The American Allison engines improved remarkably with 100 octane Avgas, but did much better when 130 octane Avgas came along in 1944. The 130 octane Avgas also improved the radial engine bombers the U.S. produced.

The Germans and Japanese never snapped to the fact that we had re-invented gasoline. Neither did our "friends" the Russians.

100,000 Americans died in the skies over Europe. Lord only knows what that number would have been without "Super-Gasoline."

It all was invented just a few miles west of Beaumont, TX and people never knew a thing about it.

Time to Renew!

Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show "**2020**" 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 2020, you may have changed your address and the last newsletter went to an old address, or you just sent in your check, or forgot to send your check.

DO IT TODAY!

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

Tom Snodgrass
2515 S. White Cliff Lane
Wichita, KS 67210-1924

We Will Never Forget

On 2 April 1970, 537 TAS C-7A S/N 61-2406 was shot down at Dak Seang during the resupply operation killing: 1/**Lt. Steve W. Train, 1/Lt. Charles E. Suprenant, Jr.**, and **MSgt. Dale E. Christensen**.

On 4 April 1970, 537 TAS C-7A S/N 62-4180, flown by a 458 TAS crew, was shot down at Dak Seang during the resupply operation killing **Capt. James A. Gray, Maj. Frederick W. Dauten, Jr.**, and **MSgt. Russell L. Klein**.

On 6 April 1970, 459 TAS C-7A S/N 63-9746, flown by a 457 TAS crew, was shot down at Dak Seang during the resupply operation killing: **Capt. Julius P. Jaeger, 1/Lt. Theron C. Fehrenbach, II**, and **TSgt. Gordon M. Gaylord**.

Dak Seang Heroism

by Capt. T. S. Rankin
FAC in Command of
Tactical Operations
4 April 1970
Caribou Airlines, Vol. IV

This letter concerns the crash of a C-7A (S/N 62-4180) aircraft on 4 April 1970 near the Special Forces camp of Dak Seang in Kontum Province, South Vietnam.

The mission was to resupply the Dak Seang camp which had been under siege for three days and nights. The people inside the camp, including civilian women and children, were badly in need of supplies.

The mission was a highly dangerous one. There had already been one C-7A (S/N 61-2406) lost to ground fire two days earlier. The ground fire around the camp at that time was as intense as any we FACs [Forward Air Controllers] can remember. This includes the Ben Het conflict of last year for which some of our FACs flew support.

There was no easy way to approach the camp. There have also been many sightings of .50 caliber, .30 caliber, and even 12.7 mm guns. One 12.7 was captured the day this C-7A went in.

As acting command ship, I was able to observe the whole incident. The FAC who was putting the operation in laid his smokescreens and used fighter escort to parallel the C-7A's run-in heading. The first words hinting of danger came from the F-100 pilot who was giving fire support. He took a hit in his canopy.

The C-7A that was hit was over the camp at the same time. His run-in was from SE to NW and he pulled off right into an easterly heading. His right engine was on fire when he pulled off target. The airplane went into a steady descent until it impacted on the side of a sloping hill. No attempt was made to turn the aircraft from its easterly heading and no radio transmission was made. The pilot may well have been dead at time of impact.

I would like to recommend that the crew of this and all C-7A's flying missions over Dak Seang receive a Silver Star. These men did their jobs under extremely difficult conditions. Any witness statements needed can be obtained from the *Elliott* FACs [20th Tactical Air Support Squadron, Pleiku], fighter squadrons, and the people in the camp.

If You Are Able

by Maj. Michael Davis O'Donnell
Dak To, 1 Jan 70
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Panel 12W Line 040

If you are able,
save them a place
inside of you
and save one backward glance
when you are leaving
for the places they can
no longer go.

World War II Poster

Be not ashamed to say
you loved them,
though you may
or may not have always.

Take what they have left
and what they have taught you
with their dying
and keep it with your own.

And in that time
when men decide and feel safe
to call the war insane,
take one moment to embrace
those gentle heroes
you left behind.

Foulois Makes First U.S. Military Flight

by Steve Elliott, 502nd Air Base Wing Public Affairs
March 2, 2020

Joint Base San Antonio Fort Sam Houston, TX. Aviation pioneer Army Maj. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulois ushered in the dawn of military flight when he made his historic journey 110 years ago on March 2, 1910.

The original Signal Corps Aircraft No. 1 was a Canard biplane with a four-cylinder Wright 30.6 horsepower engine driving two wooden propellers via a sprocket-and-chain transmission system. "Old Number One," America's first military airplane, was an earlier machine than the Model B the Wright brothers began building in their Dayton factory in 1910.

A distinguishing feature was its front-mounted elevator. But Foulois made so many modifications in consultation with the Wrights, including a tail-mounted elevator, that by the end of 1910, it resembled a Model B.

Foulois graduated from the Army Signal School in 1908 and first learned to fly on the Army Dirigible No. 1, a lighter-than-air engine-propelled airship. He later participated in the trials of the Wright Flyer with the Wright brothers.

During the trials, Foulois was on board in the observer's seat of the Wright Flyer with Orville Wright, and clocked the time of the airplane's landmark 10 mile flight that qualified the airplane for acceptance into the Army.

In February 1910, Foulois was transferred to Fort Sam Houston with a team of enlisted men known as his "flying soldiers" and the Army's only airplane, Signal Corps Aircraft No. 1.

At Fort Sam Houston he learned to fly the airplane himself, aided by instructions in letters from the Wright brothers.

Foulois said he was a "mail-order pilot" who had learned to fly through his correspondence with the Wright brothers.

Foulois climbed aboard the Army Airplane No. 1 at Fort Sam Houston March 2, 1910 and at 9:30 AM circled the field, attaining the height of 200 feet and circling the field at the speed of 30 mph. The flight only lasted for seven and a half minutes.

Foulois made four flights that day, crashing on the last flight due to a broken fuel pipe. The premier flight became known as the "birth of military flight," and Foulois became known as the "father of U.S. military aviation."

"I made my first solo, my first landing, and my first crack-up – all the same day," Foulois said.

Foulois was relieved from flying duties in July 1911 and returned to aviation duty with the Signal Corps Aviation School at North Island, San Diego, in December 1913. He later commanded the 1st Aero Squadron in Mexico during the campaign to arrest Pancho Villa in 1916. He served as Chief of Air Service, Air Expeditionary Force, in France from 1917 to 1918.

Foulois was in charge of the Materiel Division at Wright Field, now Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, OH, from 1929 to 1930. On Dec. 20, 1931, he became Chief of the Army Air Corps. He retired from active military service as a Major General Dec. 31, 1935. Maj. Gen. Foulois died April 25, 1967.

While known for being the "father of U.S. military aviation" with his historic flight at Fort Sam Houston March 2, 1910, Foulois was also the owner of many other aviation-related "firsts," including the following:

First military man to teach himself to fly, 1910

After only 54 minutes of flight training with the Wright Brothers and no solo experience, Foulois left Fort Myers, Maryland, in 1909 and headed for Fort Sam Houston, Texas, as the United States' lone pilot with his team of "flying soldiers."

His orders were to teach himself how to keep flying; to use and take care of the United States governments' first airplane, to assess its military possibilities; and to take along plenty of spare parts.

He learned to fly it on his own, using instructions sent via letters from Orville and Wilbur Wright.

First to fly more than 100 miles non-stop, 1911

With Foulois plotting a course and Phillip Parmelee at the controls, the Wright Type B, on loan from Robert F. Collier, set an official U.S. cross-country record from Laredo to Eagle Pass, Texas. It flew the 106 miles in two hours, 10 minutes on March 3, 1911.

He and Parmalee flew along the Rio Grande River at an altitude of 1,200 feet from Laredo to Eagle Pass to search for enemy troops. They saw none during the flight.

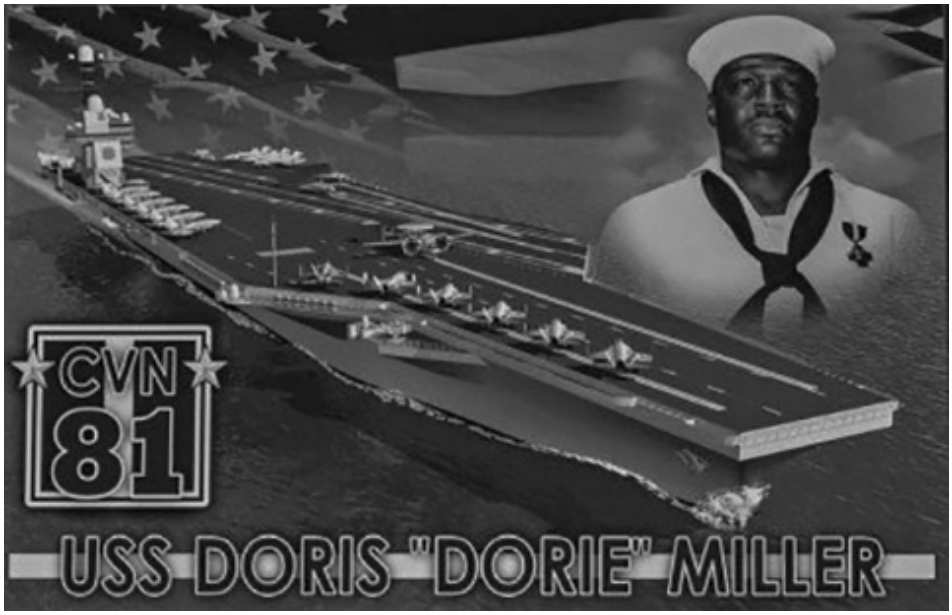
While conducting preliminary flights at Laredo, James Hare, a photographer from Collier's magazine arrived and was taken aloft several times. Hare took a number of pictures of the terrain and established another first: photo reconnaissance and aerial map making.

An extensive biography of Foulois is available online at:

http://www.af.mil/AboutUs/Biographies/Display/tabid/225/Article/107091/major-general-benjamin-delahauf-foulois.aspx.

Carrier Named for Doris "Dorie" Miller

National Public Radio
January 19, 2020



The U.S. Navy will name an aircraft carrier after Doris "Dorie" Miller, the African-American mess attendant who leapt into combat during the bombing of Pearl Harbor. It is the first time an aircraft carrier will be named for an African-American, and the first time a sailor has been so honored for actions taken as an enlisted man.

In 1941, Miller was a 22 year old Mess Attendant 2nd Class on the *USS West Virginia*. At the time, black sailors were assigned to the messman branch with tasks such as swabbing decks, cooking, and shining officers' shoes.

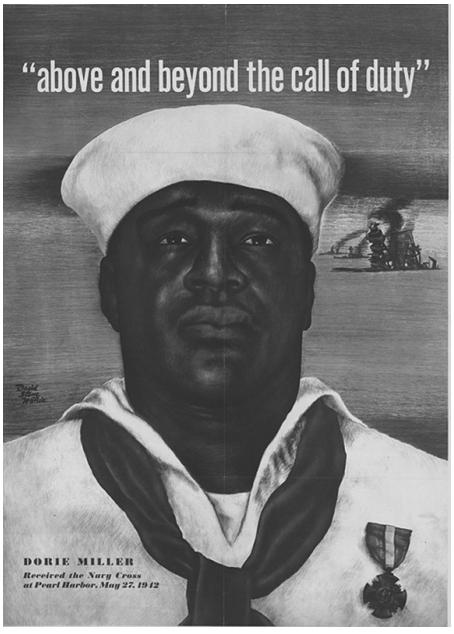
He had awoken at 6 AM and was collecting laundry when the Japanese attack began and an alarm sounded on the ship. Miller headed to the antiaircraft battery magazine, but it had already been destroyed by torpedo damage. He proceeded to the deck, where he was assigned to carry wounded comrades, including the ship's captain. Miller a former high school football player in Waco, Texas, was strong. He was also the ship's heavyweight boxing champion.

"Miller went topside, carried wounded on his shoulders, made several trips up and down, wading through waist-deep water, oil-slicked decks, struggling uphill on slick decks," Navy Rear Adm. John Fuller said in 2016. The young sailor then took over a .50 caliber anti-aircraft machine gun and fired it until the ammunition ran out even though he'd never been trained on the weapon.

"It wasn't hard," he remembered in a Navy history. "I just pulled the trigger and she worked fine. I had watched the others with these guns. I guess I fired her for about 15 minutes. I think I got one of those [Japanese] planes. They were diving pretty close to us.

The ship's communications officer, Lt. Cmdr. Doir C. Johnson, said that Miller was "blazing away as though he had fired one all his life," according to the *Navy Times*.

The *West Virginia* was heavily damaged in the attacks as Japanese planes had dropped armored bombs and launched multiple torpedoes on the vessel. The ship slowly sank and more than 100 of the men aboard the ship died that day.



U.S. Navy Recruiting Poster 1943

For his action and bravery, Miller was presented with the Navy Cross on May 27, 1942 by Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Miller was the first black sailor to be awarded the medal. "This marks the first time in this conflict that such high tribute has been made in the Pacific Fleet to a member of his race and I'm sure that the future will see others similarly honored for brave acts," said Adm. Nimitz.

Miller was brought home in November 1942 for a two-month tour to promote war bonds and his image appeared on a Navy recruiting poster.

Doris Miller did not survive the war. He was aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Liscome Bay* when it was struck by a Japanese torpedo in the Pacific in 1943. Nearly 650 of the more than 900 sailors on board died when the ship sank. Miller's body was never recovered.

By naming an aircraft carrier for Miller, Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly said, "We honor the contributions of all our enlisted ranks, past and present, men and women, of every race, religion and background. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. observed,

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"Dorie" Miller (from Page 16)

'Everybody can be great – because anybody can serve'. No one understands the importance and true meaning of service more than those who have volunteered to put the needs of others above themselves.

Doris Miller stood for everything that is good about our nation, and his story deserves to be remembered and repeated wherever our people continue the watch today."

Saved by a Beer

by Dave Kowalski [908, 75]

I guess the best place to start is at the beginning. I was fresh back from Vietnam where I had been a crew chief on AC-47's and C-47's at Bien Hoa. The last three months "in-country" I had worked on C-123 *Ranch Hands*.

My next station was at Otis AFB, MA where I was working as an engine mechanic in the Phase Inspection Dock on EC-121 aircraft. One morning in the spring of 1967, the Dock Chief called the crew together and asked if anyone wanted to go TDY (temporary duty).

He said he needed to know "right now." Winter and early spring are not the ideal times to be on Cape Cod. I thought about it a few seconds and said, "Send me," as did two other airmen, Hugh Martiz and Joe Kilgore.

Martiz and I had been stationed at Bien Hoa in Vietnam together and had been sent to Otis AFB at about the same time. The three of us were all single at the time.

The questions that should have been asked first came up next, "Where are we going?" and "When are we leaving?" The Dock Chief said he didn't know the answer to either question, but would get back to us. He told us to have our mobility bags packed and toolboxes ready to go. About this time we could tell there was an adventure in the making. (I had the same feeling years later when I volunteered to bring back a C-7A from Utapao, Thailand.)

After reporting for work a few days later, the word came down for us to get our gear and report to Base Ops (Base Operations) for an 1100 hours takeoff. "To Where and Why?" were still the unanswered questions. Upon arriving at Base Ops we found out we were going to Stewart AFB in Newburgh, NY on a C-47 to catch another plane for somewhere else.

When we arrived at Stewart AFB we were sent to the barracks and introduced to our Mission Commander. He told us to stay put, not to leave the base, and to be sure he could contact us quickly. He also said it would be a couple of days before we would leave. He didn't say to where. Maybe he didn't know.

There were other guys, all volunteers, coming in from all over the U.S. to go on this mission. That was the delay – waiting for everyone to arrive. A few days later we were told to be at the hanger for a briefing and that a C-118 would be there to pick us up.

The C-118 was there, but it needed an engine change plus the weather had turned bad, and it was forecast to be bad for the next couple of days. All flying was cancelled.

When we heard this Matiz, Kilgore, and I decided we had had enough of this "hanging around." We figured we would go see what the town was like, drink some beer, and maybe play with some girls.

We checked with the weatherman at Base Operations. He said the field would be socked in for at least one more day. We also confirmed the engine for the C-118 hadn't arrived yet. I got the telephone number of the barracks and planned to call a buddy periodically, just in case.

We grabbed a taxi and told the driver to take us to a bar with the best pool tables (Kilgore was a big pool player and carried his own stick wherever he went.), the coldest beer, and the prettiest girls. He took us to "Lucky's Bar."

We got there and were having a good old time. After a couple of hours I decided to call my buddy at the base and get an update. He said another C-118 had brought an engine in and the weather was expected to break enough that night for the second C-118 to carry us out. The Mission Commander wanted everyone down at the hanger ASAP. S**t!

Somehow we got back to the base, changed into our uniforms, and made it down to the hanger just in time for roll call. We smelled like a brewery, but no one seemed to notice or care.

Guards were posted at the doors and this Colonel comes in to tell us what we would be doing on this mission. Finally! He said that a B-52 had crashed and burned at Thule, Greenland and we would be putting contaminated snow in 55 gallon barrels for disposal.

It didn't sound too bad, something a little different. He then started to pass-out little black things, similar to a hockey puck that hung around your neck. He called it a dosimeter that was used to measure radiation. I remembered these from my years in SAC (Strategic Air Command). Not good – but the Air Force would take care of us. Right!

We managed to get our bags and toolboxes loaded on the aircraft. (Air Defense Command required all mechanics to carry their toolbox on TDY whether you needed it or not.) After one more roll call, we all boarded. It was raining hard by this time and everyone was wet.

Martiz, Kilgore, and I were seated in the back of the aircraft and Kilgore was hand-carrying his pool stick in a case. Martiz was almost sober by this time. Martiz had a voice that if there were a hundred people talking in a room you could pick him out and he was doing a lot of talking and laughing.

The doors were closed and the engines started. We were finally on our way. Before taxi, I was looking out the window and it was still raining hard. I

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Saved by a Beer (from Page 17)

saw a lot of blue and red lights flashing. It looked like the Air Police (AP) and fire trucks had the aircraft surrounded. I wondered, "What is going on?"

The engines were shutdown and the doors opened. Looking back over the seats (all the seats faced the rear of the aircraft), I saw the APs coming to the back of the aircraft. One grabbed Kilgore's pool stick case and two other APs grabbed Martiz and me. They told us they were taking us off the aircraft. Short flight!

After taking us to the brig they informed us that someone had reported us for having a gun (the pool stick case) and drinking on the aircraft. There was no gun and the drinking part wasn't true either, we just smelled bad from the afternoon of drinking.

We stayed in the brig for three days until the Commander at our home base sent a C-47 with armed escorts to bring us back home.

All of our bags and toolboxes went to Thule, Greenland. We didn't get them back for over three months. All the clothes in the bags had to be thrown in the garbage because they were still wet and smelled awful.

On our return, we were restricted to our rooms and dealt severe punishments. After it was all sorted out, the Aircraft Commander said he thought we should have been allowed to continue on the mission. That took a little of the edge off, but not much.

I really thought my Air Force career was over. Somehow I wound up making Chief Master Sergeant, got married, had two sons, and retired as a C-130 line chief. My trip to Stewart AFB was all but forgotten.

Thirty years after being escorted off of the C-118, I was sitting in the "Brew Pub" in Montgomery, AL having a cold one. A buddy of mine came in who works for the VA (Veterans Administration) as a claims processor and counselor.

He was telling me about some of the ways the VA verifies a claim and what proof is needed. He used as an example a message he had just received. He said it had just been declassified after 30 years and went something like this: A B-52 crashed at Thule, Greenland in early 1968. All recovery and clean up personnel were exposed to high levels of radiation. Most of the personnel succumbed to the radiation exposure. Any claims submitted by people who were on this mission should be considered valid.

I was dumbfounded and must have looked strange. After finishing his story, my buddy asked me what was wrong. I told him my side of the story. We both agreed that the trip to "Lucky's Bar" in Newburgh, NY probably saved the lives of three fun-loving airmen.

About a year later I finally located Hugh Martiz, who was living in Tampa, FL. I caught a hop on a C-130 to McDill AFB, met Hugh, and told him the rest of the story. We went to a little bar outside of Tampa called "Lucky's" and celebrated until the place closed that night.

Hugh Martiz died in 2018 from complications related to Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam.

When something bad happens, it might feel like the end of the world. It took 30 years for me to find out that a bad situation turned out to be a lifesaver.

Help with Changes!

Check your e-mail on the Association website by searching your name on the Roster.

If your Newsletter arrives with a **yellow postal address covering the printed address**, the Association does not have your correct address.

Please keep us updated. Send any changes to:

pathanavan@aol.com

B-52 Crash at Thule in 1968

by Timothy J. Jorgensen
Georgetown University
from *The Conversation*
reprinted *Air Force Times*
January 23, 2018

On January 21, 1968, the Cold War grew significantly colder. On that day an American B-52G Stratofortress bomber, carrying four nuclear bombs, crashed onto the sea ice of Wolstenholme Fjord in the northwest corner of Greenland, one of the coldest places on Earth. Greenland is part of the Kingdom of Denmark, and the Danes were not pleased.

The bomber, call sign *Hobo 28*, had crashed due to human error. One of the crew members had stuffed some seat cushions in front of a heating vent, and they subsequently caught fire. The smoke quickly became so thick that the crew needed to eject.

Six of the seven crew members parachuted out safely before the plane crashed onto the frozen fjord seven miles west of Thule Air Base (AB), America's most northern military base, 700 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

The crash severely strained the United States' relationship with Denmark, since Denmark's 1957 nuclear-free zone policy had prohibited the presence of any nuclear weapons in Denmark or its territories.

The radioactivity was released because the nuclear warheads had been compromised. The impact from the crash and the subsequent fire had broken open the weapons and released their radioactive contents, but luckily, there was no nuclear detonation.

Hobo 28's bombs were fusion bombs that get their energy from the union (fusion) of the very small nuclei of hydrogen atoms. Each of the four Mark 28 F1 hydrogen bombs that *Hobo 28* carried

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B-52 Crash (from Page 18)

was nearly 100 times more powerful than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima (1,400 kilotons versus 15 kilotons).

After the crash, the United States and Denmark had very different ideas about how to deal with *Hobo 28*'s wreckage and radioactivity. The U.S. wanted to just let the bomber wreckage sink into the fjord and remain there, but Denmark wouldn't allow that. Denmark wanted all the wreckage gathered up immediately and moved, along with all of the radioactively contaminated ice, to the United States. Since the fate of the Thule AB hung in the balance, the U.S. agreed to Denmark's demands.

The clock was ticking on the cleanup, code named operation "Crested Ice," because, as winter turned into spring, the fjord would begin to melt and any remaining debris would sink 800 feet to the seafloor. Initial weather conditions were horrible, with temperatures as low as minus 75 degrees Fahrenheit, and wind speeds as high as 80 miles per hour. In addition, there was little sunlight, because the sun was not due to rise again over the Arctic horizon until mid-February.

Groups of American airmen, walking 50 abreast, swept the frozen fjord looking for all the pieces of wreckage, some as large as plane wings and some as small as flashlight batteries.

Patches of ice with radioactive contamination were identified with Geiger counters and other types of radiation survey meters. All wreckage pieces were picked up and ice showing any contamination was loaded into sealed tanks.

Most every piece of the plane was accounted for except, most notably, a secondary stage cylinder of uranium and lithium deuteride, the nuclear fuel components of one of the bombs. It was not found on the ice and a sweep of the seafloor with a mini-sub also found nothing. Its current location remains a mystery.

Cleanup crew searches for radioactive debris near Thule AB. (U.S. Air Force photo)

Although the loss of the fuel cylinder was perplexing and disturbing, it is a relatively small item (about the size and shape of a beer keg) and emits very little radioactivity detectable by radiation survey meters, making it very hard to find at the bottom of a fjord.

Fortunately, it is not possible for this secondary "fusion" unit to detonate on its own without first being induced through detonation of the primary "fission" unit (plutonium). So there is no chance of a spontaneous nuclear explosion occurring in the fjord in the future, no matter how long it remains there.

The successful cleanup helped to heal United States-Denmark relations. But nearly 30 years later, the Thule incident spawned a new political controversy in Denmark. In 1995, a Danish review of internal government documents revealed that Danish Prime Minister H.C. Hansen had actually given the United States tacit approval to fly nuclear weapons into Thule. Thus, the Danish government had to share some complicity in the Thule incident.

In 2003 Danish environmental scientists revisited the fjord to see if they could detect any residual radioactivity from the crash. After nearly 40 years, the bottom sediment, seawater, and seaweed were radioactive, but the levels were extremely low.

Thule AB survived all of the controversies over the decades, but became increasingly neglected as nuclear weaponry moved away from bomber-based weapon delivery and more toward land-based and submarine-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. Nevertheless, as Thule's bomber role waned, its importance for radar detection of incoming ICBMs grew, since a trans-Arctic trajectory is a direct route for Russian nuclear missiles targeted at the United States.

In 2017, Thule received a $40 million dollar upgrade for its radar systems due to increased concern about Russia as a nuclear threat and because of worries about recent Russian military forays into the Arctic.

The U.S. remains very interested in Greenland for American defense purposes and is committed to maintaining good relations with Denmark.

Top Gun: An American Story

by Dan Pedersen
reviewed by Tony Daniel
2019

In his engaging and succinct memoir, *Top Gun: An American Story*, Top Gun's original commanding officer Dan Pedersen argues that "what matters is the man, not the machine," and because of this truism, pilot training will always be far more important than the technology of jet fighters for winning battles in the sky. At present, says Pedersen, "Something is rotten in Washington, and one day, sadly, we will lose a war because of it."

Pedersen claims that the Navy lacks relatively cheap fighter jets for training such as the old F-14 Tomcats (the "Top Gun" jets in the movie) and others. He cites a price tag for the new F-35 as $330 million per plane. The service can't buy and maintain a large number of trainers at those prices, he says. As a consequence, much of fighter pilot training must be done on simulators, which, in Pedersen's view, are an in-

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***Top Gun* (from Page 19)**

adequate substitute for real flight time.

Pedersen had spent a great deal of the Vietnam War as a fighter pilot at Yankee Station, the Navy's attack point off the coast of North Vietnam. There he witnessed many of his colleagues get shot down and die or become prisoners of war. He knew of more losses in the Air Force. Pedersen believed he had the solution. In fact, he'd had it since 1959.

In those days, any pilot who was in good with the senior chief in maintenance at an air station could check out a plane to get in extra practice. Pedersen and a small but dedicated group of other pilots used the privilege to fight each other in the air to sort out who was the best of the best. They did the sorting in a restricted airspace off San Diego near San Clemente Island called Whiskey 291.

"What happened in Whiskey 291 stayed in Whiskey 291, unless you met your opponent later and had the chance to talk over drinks," says Pedersen. "There were no debriefs. No reports. No paper trail at all."

Pilots from all branches of the service would converge. The first move was inevitably a game of chicken at insane speeds, followed by twisting and turning at near-maximum velocity. Fights were generally conducted without radio contact so no one could be identified and get in trouble.

You had to know the capabilities and limitations of your plane. You had to be good. The fights were over within a few minutes when one pilot or the other gained an advantage that would allow a kill shot. Then the opposing pilot would wag his wings and both would fly back to their respective homes, often never to learn who the other pilot was.

Pedersen adapted this experience for the Top Gun curriculum.

A second element was the in-depth analysis of the capabilities of the F-4 Phantom. Pedersen recruited instructors who used the "murder board" method for developing their curriculum, mercilessly grilling one another as they worked through their proposed lectures. The technical-minded spent days talking to F-4 engineers at McDonald Douglas to learn the Phantom's official specs and what its real tolerances and capabilities might be.

The result was the development of the signature Top Gun "yo-yo" or "egg" maneuver. It was simple and effective. While MiGs had a shorter turning radius, the F-4 Phantom could climb vertically at a rate no MiG could match.

Pedersen and his team determined that the best move when encountering a MiG was to go vertical like a rocket, thus avoiding the MiGs cannon, then to take the plane into a controlled stall, flip the nose, and head back down seeking to get a good shot for the air-to-air missiles.

How did Pedersen and his instructors know these tactics would work? They tried them against real MiGs. Pedersen finagled access to two ultra-secret captured MiGs the Air Force kept in Area 51 in New Mexico. He and his instructors flew them and flew against them, repeatedly. Later, as an amazing graduation present, the original Top Gun class was clandestinely taken to Area 51, where they got to fight against the MiGs themselves.

Navy pilots who completed Top Gun and rejoined their unit slowly but surely began to win in real-life combat. By the end of the Vietnam War, the overall shoot-down ratio was 24-1 in America's favor.

Top Gun trained pilots and those to whom they passed on their knowledge were perhaps the major factor in reestablishing U.S. air superiority.

With Top Gun an unqualified success, Pedersen moved on to command an air wing on a carrier, then to captaining an oil resupply tanker, and finally to skippering the aircraft carrier *USS Ranger*.

There is also a fascinating sidebar history of Pedersen's Israeli pilot friends and Top Gun trainees during the Yom Kippur War, and a moving recollection of airlifting thousands of Vietnamese boat people onto American ships after Vietnam was lost. There's even a bit on the movie.

Throughout, Pedersen sticks doggedly to his theme of explaining the purpose of the American jet fighter and the American jet fighter pilot by telling his own story.

What matters is the man, not the machine.

A good pilot should have a strong family background with a patriotic mind-set and a self-starting work ethic. He should believe in something greater than himself while remaining self-reliant and confident without being overbearing. (Some ego is necessary. I wouldn't want a soul filled with doubt flying my wing.)

An athletic background helps, because when properly coached at the right age, youngsters learn trust, teamwork, and goal setting. They'll need all those things in the air.

Manned Fighter Era Not Over

by Dave Deptula
Forbes, March 2, 2020

Elon Musk is a proven innovator and entrepreneur. He knows how to grab a headline, too. This Friday [February 28] he proclaimed the death of manned fighter aircraft in front of the world's largest user of those aircraft – the U.S. Air Force.

The defense media widely reported the comments, with one outlet calling them "frank and fascinating."

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Manned Fighters (from Page 20)

That it was, but Musk is not a warfighter and he is not responsible for the nation's security. His proclamations, while perhaps "fascinating," are actually fallacious for a time when modernized manned fighter aircraft are needed to deter and if necessary, fight and win.

For the next several decades, air superiority depends on fielding fifth- and next-generation aircraft, namely the F-35 and the next-generation air dominance (NGAD) system. There is no chance some auto-park technology can replace them.

Musk stated, "Drone warfare is where the future will be. It's not that I want the future to be – it's just, this is what the future will be… The fighter jet era has passed. Yeah, the fighter jet era has passed. It's drones."

Following up on Twitter after his talk, he put the F-35 stealth fighter in his target sight. "The competitor should be a drone fighter plane that's remote-controlled by a human, but with its maneuvers augmented by autonomy. The F-35 would have no chance against it," he tweeted.

Well Mr. Musk, actually, a manned fighter will hold the competitive edge for decades into the future. The sensor ability to provide the 360 degree spherical situational awareness necessary to win in aerial combat connected to the kind of processing power resident in the human brain cannot be replicated in any drone today, or in the near-term.

It might be possible sometime in the future for one-on-one, within visual range close-in air-to-air combat, but not today, and certainly not anytime soon, across the range of challenging scenarios that define air combat. That spectrum demands much more that simply pulling "G's."

Today, we cannot even provide robust, reliable, assured connectivity among weapon systems across all domains, and that is fundamental to coordinating effective combat, whether a person is in the cockpit or not.

To provide some point of reference relative to the current state of artificial intelligence in a far simpler scenario,let's look at Musk's self-driving cars being tested today in a two-dimensional environment, not three dimensions as in air or space, with known rules of the road, simple mechanics, and well understood human behavior patterns. In April 2019, Musk declared that Tesla's would achieve "full self-driving" capability by the end of the year. It did not happen.

In December 2019 alone, three cars using the Tesla "autopilot" feature crashed. One ran a red light and collided with another vehicle, killing two people. On the same day, another hit a parked fire truck killing the Tesla passenger. The third Tesla struck a police vehicle on a highway.

The point is that before we bet our nation's security on a vision for an automated future that is yet to mature, we need capability and capacity that is proven, reliable, and available now to meet the demands of the national defense strategy.

Dad and the *Jenny*

by Jon Drury [537, 68]

The model of the World War I era JN-4 *Jenny* trainer hung above my dad's desk in our home, painted yellow and resplendent in red, white, and blue Army Air Corps markings. The plane symbolized my dad's love for flying and the memory of his few days in the air.

An eight-year-old when World War I hit, my dad idolized aviation headliners such as Eddie Rickenbacker and the *Hat-in-the-Ring* squadron. Dad considered them to have been the Americans who had single-handedly won the Great War. In faded overalls at his farm in Early, Iowa, he reveled in every scrap of news he could glean. He was "over there" in spirit with the men, freed from his tiresome farm chores. He wanted to fly like them.

Every plane he saw stoked the fire, but money for flying lessons was scarce on an Iowa farm. His brother Cliff developed a method of sneaking a few farm chickens, never accurately counted, hiding them in a gully, then selling them in town. Whether my dad used the same ruse to raise cash, I don't know. Somehow, as a teenager, he finally had enough money for his first lesson in a tan biplane, instructed by a barnstormer.

The Curtis JN-4 *Jenny* was one of the "JN" biplanes built by the Curtis Aeroplane Company of Hammondsport, NY. Originally produced as a training aircraft for World War I, surplus aircraft were in abundance after the war and sold at bargain prices.

They say 6,813 Jennys were manufactured between November 1917 and January 1919 by six different companies. The Jennys anchored the barnstorming era, when my dad first flew.

The plane was powered by the OX-5 V8 engine and only had a top speed of 75 mph with a cruise speed of 60 mph. The landing speed was about 40 mph, so liftoff was probably about 35 knots. It reminds me of my Piper Cub days.

He loved it all – the cough and smell of the engine, the responsiveness of the controls, the freedom from the earth. But, life went on. He attended college and moved to the West Coast without completing requirements for his pilot's license.

While raising our young family, Dad battled unemployment and our Spartan lifestyle left no money for additional flying lessons. My parents still experienced joy as young-marrieds and growing a young family in ticky tacky, mass-produced housing built for veterans returning to civilian life.

My father taught in the local junior high school. During breaks from "reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic" he would preach the principles and joy of flying.

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Dad and *Jenny* (from Page 21)

As a preschooler, I gushed with pride over my dad the teacher. Pictures of airplanes and other aviation displays crowded his small Quonset hut classroom. The students loved it. Always a patriot, he championed the role of aviation in our nation's history. I proudly wore a flying jacket he bought me.

Jon Drury with "Jenny"

I am thankful we have several Jennys on display in our area.

The one on display at the Columbia Gorge Interpretive Center is a *Jenny* flown by Wally Olson of Evergreen Field, formerly operated at Vancouver, WA, where I live. Before the airport was a victim of highway expansion it was the center of the popular Evergreen Fly-In.

Another *Jenny* at the Western Antique Aeroplane and Automobile Museum in Hood River, OR is flyable. I visited that bird recently.

Dad was my staunchest cheerleader when the Air Force sent me to pilot training. By that time, he was a double-leg amputee due to a three-pack-a-day smoking habit from his teens. When he was born as a twin, his mother died giving birth, and he was farmed out to relatives for the first five years of his life.

Despite his difficult childhood and arduous life, he went on to fly, graduate from college, and earn his master's degree.

At the time of my pilot training he was institutionalized in a state hospital. He kept a coffee-table book on the history of the Air Force at his wheel chair. Buttons bursting, he told everyone about his amazing son who was fulfilling his own dreams.

Thanks, Dad, for passing on your own dream of flying. The Jennys remind me of how it all began.

X-37B Space Plane Breaks Record

by Rachel S. Cohen
AF Magazine
October 27, 2019

The Air Force's secretive X-37B space plane landed at NASA's Kennedy Space Center Shuttle Landing Facility in Florida on October 27, 2019 after spending a record-breaking 780 days in orbit.

The Orbital Test Vehicle, a reusable and unmanned spacecraft had completed its fifth mission. "Each successive mission advances our nation's space capabilities," Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett said.

The mission four lasted 718 days in space, though the spacecraft was designed to remain only 270 days aloft.

A sixth mission will be launched in 2020.

The X-37B performed experiments to lower the risk for potentially very expensive space technologies. The missions help the Air Force prepare for possibly costly next steps and how it should operate in space in the future.

Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office Director Randall Walden said the space plane completed all its mission objectives, successfully hosted Air Force Research Laboratory experiments, and provided a ride for small satellites. Air Force officials said the experiments relate to spacecraft materials, power generation techniques, and sensors.

The two existing vehicles are "workhorses" that are faring well. It has not yet been determined whether USAF needs to replace its two X-37B's as they age, or if it is planning a follow-on program.

Editor's note. The United States Air Force-Boeing X-37B Orbital Test Vehicle Team is one of the 2019 Robert J. Collier Trophy nominees. The recipient is scheduled to be announced April 3, 2020.

Silver Star at Loc Ninh

C-7A Caribou Association
Website, Individual Awards

Citation to
Accompany the Award of the
Silver Star to
Robert S. Hopkins II

Major Robert S. Hopkins II distinguished himself by gallantry in connection with military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-7A Aircraft Commander near Loc Ninh, Republic of Vietnam on 2 November 1967.

On that date, Major Hopkins was flying a Tactical Emergency Airlift mission carrying a Combat Control Team to Loc Ninh, scene of a fierce battle which had begun two days before.

The airstrip was under hostile fire and Major Hopkins' aircraft came under automatic weapons fire throughout the approach. Less than five hundred feet of the dirt airstrip was usable due to craters from hostile artillery, and even this short stretch of dirt was covered with unexploded mortar shells.

Continued on Page 23

Silver Star (from Page 22)

Major Hopkins made a successful landing, delivering the Combat Control Team, the first step in opening the field for the airlift vital to the forces at Loc Ninh. By his gallantry and devotion to duty, Major Hopkins has reflected great credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Note: Other 458th TAS crew members participating in the flight were: 1/Lt. George C. Patrick, Copilot, and SSgt. Allen E. Gustafson, Flight Engineer.

Maj. Hopkins Personal Account:

"We flew into Tan Son Nhut to pick up men and equipment to transport to Nha Trang when we were advised that we had a Tactical Emergency to fly a Combat Control Team (CCT) to Loc Ninh where a battle had been on-going for two days.

Enemy forces (North Vietnamese Army or Viet Cong) had laid siege to the camp and were deeply entrenched in the dense forest parallel to the runway. It was almost impossible to pinpoint their positions.

The Army brought a jeep with all kinds of equipment for us to load. I told the person in charge that the C-7A had a limit of 5,000 pounds of cargo. As always, he responded that the jeep and equipment was under that weight. We knew that wasn't true, but accepted the over-weight load.

Upon arrival at Loc Ninh, we established contact with the strike force that was trying to retake Loc Ninh and were advised that undetonated mortar and artillery shells littered the runway and only about 600 feet was usable. There were craters in some parts of the runway.

We relayed this to the senior Army guy on board and he told us it was critical to get the CCT on the ground to direct artillery fire and air strike missions in support of the camp.

Of the nearly 1,200 hours I logged in the Bou in Vietnam, this was the only true STOL[Short Takeoff and Landing] landing I made in my entire tour.

On final approach, I was more worried about the Army helicopters that were all over the place and the threat of a mid-air collision than I was about fire from the VC and friendly fire from the camp.

We landed successfully, zig-zagging to avoid holes in the runway and the duds on it. We made a quick off-load and a hasty departure to avoid further fire from the heavily wooded area next to the runway."

Robert S. "Hop" Hopkins entered the U.S. Army Air Force as an Aviation Cadet in 1943 and retired as a Lt. Col. with 36 years of service.

During his career he flew 25 different types of airplanes including the P-47, F-94, F-89, F-86, B-47, C-7A, and B-52 and accrued more than 8,000 flying hours with 1,400 hours of combat time.

He was also an Atlas Missile Combat Crew Commander in Wyoming and was subsequently assigned to the Air Force Western Test Range, where he launched the first Minuteman II intercontinental ballistic missile. He later served as a member of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff at Strategic Air Command Headquarters.

Lt. Col. Hopkins passed December 21, 2019, in Oklahoma City, OK at the age of 94.

Army Pathfinder Battle Damage

by Richard G. McCarthy and Kenneth E. McNamara [146th Aviation Bn., 66] http://www.dh4cand5.org and Dennis Buley's Special Electronic Mission site

Pathfinder was a one-of-a-kind HF Direction Finder system installed in DeHavilland RCV-2B Caribou S/N 62-4147. This aircraft was assigned to the 146th Aviation Company until it was turned over to the USAF in April 67.

Richard G. McCarthy recalls the Pathfinder system and the mission:

"The Caribou was a good system. My memory is a bit hazy about some aspects of the system. I remember two pilots, usually a crew chief, a TA [Target Analysis] guy who was relegated to working the Decca Navigator System and (I think) three operators – two intercept operators and one senior operator who was also the DF (Direction Finding) operator.

It was noisy like all Caribous and due to the weight it was carrying was even slower in the climb than most. I can't remember if it flew the standard four-hour mission or stayed up longer.

Everything that was painted dark OD (olive drab) and [flying] at low altitudes was hot. The Bou had the advantage of space so you could at least stand up occasionally.

Many times the tailgate was left up for cooling, but this was stopped when one of the *Phyliss Ann* crews (EC-47) lost some COMUS Pad pages out of an open door.

Other than the Master Operator and TA guy, the crews were flexible. I flew on it a few times but didn't like it, not because of the system but because of the similarity to field station work.

The most disconcerting thing about the Bou was due to the long fuselage

Continued on Page 24

Pathfinder (from Page 23)

you really got slammed around when it was working a target.

When we had to turn the Bou over to the Air Force, all of the mission gear was stripped out of it and put in a CONEX container. Someone probably a bought a complete set of mission gear at a government auction years later, and is probably still trying to figure out what it is.

Photo by Robert L. Taylor and provided by Richard McCarthy

The Bou was working north of the DMZ when it ran into a flak trap. Everything happened at once. At the same time that the 37 mm hit the tail of the airplane, the belly was peppered with .30 caliber fire at extreme range.

No one in the operators' compartment in the fuselage heard or felt the 37 mm impact. The Decca Navigator operator told me he looked out of the window and the sky was red with tracers going by.

There was a lot of noise from the .30 caliber rounds hitting the belly. Then it was over. Nothing penetrated the skin, but the bottom of the aircraft looked like it had been attacked by someone with a ball peen hammer.

One of the pilots called back and asked if everyone was okay. They were aware of the 37 mm hit because the rudder was jammed, with only 10 degree of travel. They flew back to Dong Ha using differential power and rudder trim.

At Dong Ha everyone piled out and was laying on the PSP (pierced steel planking) looking at the belly when they noticed a group of Air Force people staring at the tail with their mouths hanging open. That was the first indication that most of the crew had of the damage to the tail.

After a few nervous cigarettes the Pilot gave the crew the option of returning to Phu Bai in the Caribou, or riding in the SAR (Search and Rescue) helicopter that would be escorting the plane. To a man they climbed back in the Caribou for the return to Phu Bai.

McKay, the crew chief (and a true character) who had 75 or 80 sport jumps with the Saigon Sport Parachute Club, donned his parachute and spent the trip setting on the tailgate waving to the crew in the SAR helicopter."

Kenneth E. McNamara remembers:

"I was a Direction-Finding (DF) operator on the Pathfinder Caribou RCV-2B, S/N 62-4147 assigned to the 509th Army Security Agency (ASA), 146th Aviation Battalion, 3rd Radio Research Group in Vietnam from 1966 to 1967.

On September 20, 1966, our Pathfinder Caribou was performing an intelligence intercept operation over North Vietnam, slightly north of the DMZ, at about 5,000 feet altitude when we started to take ground fire from an NVA gun emplacement situated on a 2,000 feet mountain.

From my DF station I looked out the window and saw tracers coming up from the ground and passing between me and the wing tip. I knew that usually meant a tracer every fifth round, so there were a lot of machine gun rounds coming our way.

A 37 mm anti-aircraft artillery shell hit our tail. The pilot immediately banked towards the DMZ and was able to skillfully turn the plane without rudder function, compensating by alternating the prop pitch [*sic*], and landing all of us safely without any combat injury on the PSP (pierced steel planking) runway at the U.S. base at Dong Ha, a few kilometers below the DMZ."

Hidden Hole

by Lee Shelton [459, 67]

A long and diverse military flying career is liberally sprinkled with ups-and-downs. This war story illustrates one of my more memorable downs. Literally!

I went straight from pilot training to flying Caribous and, as a fairly new first lieutenant, had recently upgraded to Aircraft Commander when I encountered the hidden hole.

In 1968, the Special Forces (SF) camp at Tra Bong in I Corps came under siege. Normally, landing at the 1,000 foot dirt strip required your full attention, but a liberal application of mortar rounds had eliminated any possibility of resupply-by-landing. The airstrip was closed for a few weeks, so we conducted regular airdrops of essential stuff.

Since the sustained assault on Tra Bong continued in the "pretty damn serious" category, most of the airdrop sorties were flown using two qualified Aircraft Commanders and an experienced Flight Engineer. Eventually, the good guys wearing Green Berets outlasted the team in black PJs (pajamas) and the aerial resupply system began to work its way back to normal.

Prior to the resumption of routine operations, the SF "A Team" commander conducted a thorough site survey, identified and repaired all damage to the strip, and **certified** that he was ready to recover aircraft. The story was that the mortar rounds were focused on the team hut and surrounding defenses and only **one shell** had actually struck and cratered the runway. That **one crater** had been aggressively filled-in, meticulously inspected, and routinely driven over with a heavy truck to insure its integrity and load bearing capacity.

Y'all see where this is going, right?

Tra Bong goes back on the daily frag order and I am tapped to take the first

Continued on Page 25

Hidden Hole (from Page 24)

Bou into the newly reopened airstrip. I gave a thorough "what if" pre-flight briefing: One dry pass just to eyeball the runway. Land on the runway end opposite from the aforementioned hole. Creep down however much runway remained after getting stopped. Plan to turn around and off-load well short of the damaged bit of runway.

A Green Beret would be standing abeam where he was "pretty sure" the hole had been. It is important to note that the sun had baked the surface back to a hard crust. Truck and foot traffic had eliminated all evidence of the earlier crater and the repair activity.

Here is how it actually played-out.

Landed at the end. Got her "whoa'd up." Everybody was up in the cockpit peering over the nose like an old man trying to parallel park, looking for the hole. All of us were watching the "road guard" and creeping up to a turn around spot. Suddenly, everyone goes negative G's!! We are immediately, and literally, resting on the radome! The only guy probably more surprised than me was the poor "grunt" guarding the spot where he thinks the hole is hiding. Ceee-rap!!

Ding!! Ding!! Ding!! Was the painful sound of six prop tips plowing furrows in the runway of dirt and rock. Immediate engine shutdown was followed by a long moment of stunned silence. I could almost reach out the pilot's side window and touch the ground. Any guesses on the deck angle of a Caribou resting on its nose? Damn near vertical.

A sudden thought occurred! The Caribou's entire nose gear now occupied the same real estate as an earlier high explosive. That exact spot might still be identified and "zeroed in" by two bamboo sticks up in the hills. It was time to exit the beast and move away from the hole.

The Clan of the Hole Guards radioed the C-7A Detachment at Da Nang. A second Caribou eventually arrived with a gaggle of highly skilled maintenance troops and a max ACL (Allowable Cabin Load) of highly concerned senior officers.

The maintenance guys unfurled a giant rubber bag, shoved it under the Bou, and proceeded to pump it to horizontal. They then shoved a board under the nose wheel and rolled her back on solid ground. *Voila!!* They then went to work with saws and files to remove the damaged propeller tips.

Then I discovered why all the seniority had made the trip. Anticipating that I would fly my own mess back to Da Nang, I was musing about prop vibration and takeoff distance, etc., when I was informed, "Oh, no more flying for you, young aviator. Col. Mason has **grounded** you." Their quote from Col. Mason, 483rd Wing Commander, was "Hells Bells, he knew there was a damn hole in the runway – and he taxis right into it anyway?!"

My U.S. Air Force wings were well short of a year old. Now the "Big Boss" sitting 300 miles south of the hole in the Tra Bong runway was holding them hostage. Ceee-rap!

Sawing and filing were concluded and engine start and run-up failed to shake the R-2000's off the motor mounts. An experienced "recovery aircrew" chugged off toward Da Nang without incident. The rest of us followed in the support Bou.

Sitting in the back of the aircraft, I was devastated and more than a bit nervous about my future. "What does the 'system' do with a grounded, barely-First Lieutenant, barely-pilot and aircraft commander, most recently flying Caribous in South Vietnam? Where is the bottom when the fall starts from my present position?"

Happy ending! By the time we landed at Da Nang, I had been restored unblemished to the ranks of the Yankee Air Pirates. The "Green Beanies" at Tra Bong and the recovery Bou crew had contacted the Bou Headquarters and explained the on-scene situation. They had also provided some mitigating information and had described my actions pre- and post-contact with the hole. The final verdict was, "Okay. Sounds good. Put him back to work."

Author's Note: I sincerely thank the Caribou maintenance troops, Col. Mason, and the Green Berets of Tra Bong for making a long, successful U.S. Air Force flying career possible.

More Call Signs

by Larry LaVerne [457, 67]

The "Call Signs" story in *C-7A Caribou Association Newsletter 30-2* motivated me to provide my call sign list.

The following airfields, Special Forces camps, and artillery call signs are from my notebook that I always carried in my flight suit:

An Lac	*Raining Hacks*
Cheo Reo	*Sherman Siren*
Chudron	*Public Prison*
Dak To	*Red Hot Cures*
Nhon Co	*Supurb Board*
Thong Duc	*Stanley Looker*
Song Mao	*Vagabond*
Pleiku Arty	T*ollhouse Zero/ Ragged Scoop/ Tollhouse Hotel*
Plei Djering	*Playboy*
Khanh Duong	*Camden Stanza/ Ragged Scooper*
An Hoa	*Santo*
Duc Co	*Wilted Brace*
Hiep Hoa	*Ugly Ambush*
Dong Ba Thin	*Tuned Piker*
Ban Be Thuot	*Stagecoach Metro*
Mang Ho	*Tiger*
Tan Linh	*Placid Weeper*
Bu Dop	*Swim Patron/ Slate Loading*
Phu Tuc	*Odgan Scamps*
Vinh Than	*Rancid Sweeper*
Moc Hoa	*Stale Bobcat*
Hay Tay	*Sparse Detour*
Chu Lai Arty	*Land Shark Alpha*
Tan Linh	*Simplex Hanker*

Master Pilot

by Jim Furlong [536, 67]

I had something happen to me this week that may be of interest to our members.

From 2014 to 2018, I was the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Wing Commander for the Washington (state) Wing. I traveled a lot and met a lot of nice people. One of them asked me to write a letter of nomination to the FAA to accompany his application for the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. I did so and he was duly awarded the honor.

I had never heard of the award or its companion award, the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award, for aviation maintenance professionals. After receiving considerable urging from some of my CAP members, I also applied and received my award this weekend.

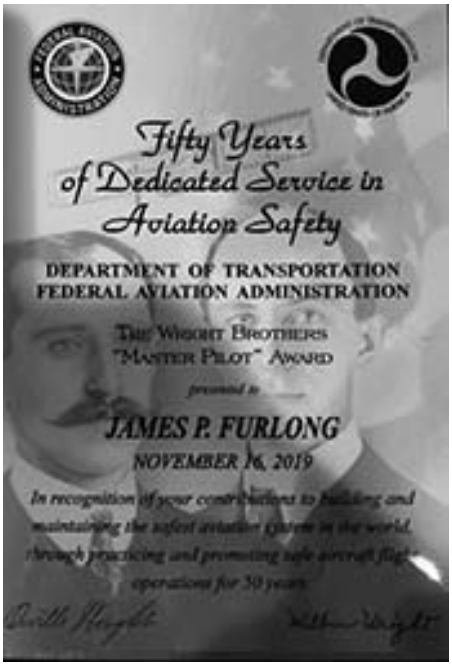
Many of our members are fairly senior and also great airmen, but I suspect many of them are also unaware of these awards. We could do them a favor by publicizing the procedure.

Editor's Note. Jim is right. Many C-7A Caribou Association members are probably qualified for these FAA awards, but are not even aware that they exist.

The two following articles provide information about the awards, the eligibility criteria, and where to obtain the current award Information Guides.

Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award

FAA Safety



The Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award (MPA) is the most prestigious award the FAA issues to pilots certified under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61.

This award is named after the Wright Brothers, the first U.S. pilots, to recognize individuals who have exhibited professionalism, skill, and aviation expertise for at least 50 years while piloting aircraft as "Master Pilots."

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Wright Brothers MPA, nominees must meet the following criteria:

1. Hold a U.S. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) pilot certificate.

2. Have 50 or more years of civil and military flying experience.

Note: Up to 20 years of the required 50 years may be U.S. military experience.

The effective start date for the 50 years is the date of the nominee's first solo flight or military equivalent.

The 50 years may be computed consecutively or non-consecutively.

3. Be a U.S. citizen.

4. Have NOT had any airman certificate revoked. Revocation of any airman certificate will disqualify a nominee for this award

To Apply

Follow application procedures located in the current Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award Information Guide that can be downloaded from the "Pilot" tab on the FAA safety website at:

Faasafety.gov

Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award

FAA Safety

The Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award is named in honor of Mr. Charles Taylor, the first aviation mechanic in powered flight.

The Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award recognizes the lifetime accomplishments of senior mechanics.

Mr. Taylor served as the Wright brothers' mechanic and is credited with designing and building the engine for their first successful aircraft.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award, nominees must meet the following criteria:

1. Hold a U.S. Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) or Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) mechanic or repairman certificate.

2. Have 50 or more years of civil and military maintenance experience.

Note: Up to 20 years of the required 50 years may be U.S. military experience; or worked as an un-certified person in a U.S. aviation maintenance facility that maintained U.S. registered aircraft, either domestic or overseas; or worked as an un-certified person in the aircraft manufacturing industry in the United States, producing U.S. type-certificated or U.S. military aircraft.

Continued on Page 27

Master Mechanic (from Page 26)

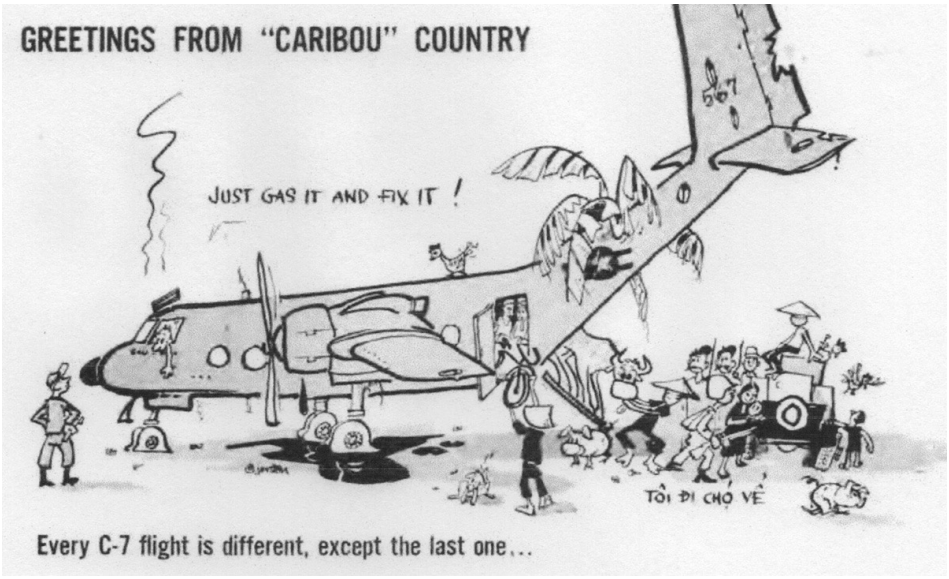
3. The 50 years may be computed consecutively or non-consecutively.

4. Be a U.S. citizen.

5. Have NOT had any airman certificate revoked. Revocation of any airman certificate will disqualify a nominee for this award.

To Apply

Follow application procedures located in the current Charles Taylor Master Mechanic Award Information Guide that can be downloaded from the "Maintenance Hangar" tab on the FAA safety website at: **Faasafety.gov**



Mini-Rifle Fits in Ejection Seats

by Kyle Mizokami
Popular Mechanics
February 18, 2020

The U.S. Air Force has developed a new assault rifle that breaks down into two pieces, allowing it to be stored in the ejection seat of modern jets. The GAU-5A carbine is designed to provide the firepower necessary for aircrew to defend themselves until rescue.

The Air Force Gunsmith Shop was formed in 1958 to repair and refurbish arms for the Air Force, from pistols to .50 caliber machine guns.

When the Gunsmith Shop received a requirement for a weapon with the ability to hit a "man-sized target at 200 meters," it designed the GAU-5A.

The GAU-5A is a modified M-4 carbine, the same weapon used by the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, and by Air Force security personnel. The M-4 has an average length of approximately 33 inches and a weight of seven pounds.

The new rifle is modified into a "take-down" weapon, breaking down into two major pieces for storage purposes. The gun and four 30 round magazines loaded with 5.56 millimeter ammunition are designed to fit in a 16 x 14 x 3.5 inch compartment in an ACES II ejection seat.

The Gunsmith Shop made several modifications to the M-4 to create the GAU-5A.

First, it replaced the standard 14.5 inch barrel with a 12.5 inch barrel to create an overall shorter length.

Next, it installed a Cry Havoc Tactical Quick Release Barrel kit, which allows the barrel and hand guard to be removed. The pistol grip also folds backward. Finally the bulky front sight post was removed and replaced with front and rear fold-down sights.

If a pilot bails out over hostile territory, he or she simply removes the weapon case from the back of the ejection seat, folds the pistol grip forward, fits the barrel on the rifle, pops up the sights, and inserts a loaded magazine. The entire process takes 30 seconds.

The U.S. Air Force has issued "bail-out" weapons for decades for use by aircrew in the event of a crash behind enemy lines or in a remote region. The GAU-5A is one of the more capable of the Air Force's bailout weapons.

In the past pilots have carried Smith & Wesson .38 caliber revolvers, the AR-7 (a compact .22 caliber rifle), and in recent years pilots have carried the Beretta M9 pistol – all of which had their limitations.

The Gunsmith Shop has built and shipped 2,700 GAU-5As to Air Force units worldwide, at a total cost of $2.7 million.

Katherine Wright Trophy 2019

National Aeronautic Association
December 5, 2019

Barbara Walter-Phillips is the wife of Pat Phillips [535, 68].

The National Aeronautic Association (NAA) is proud to announce that **Barbara Walters-Phillips** has been selected as the recipient of the 2019 Katharine Wright Trophy. The trophy was established in 1981 and is awarded annually to an individual who "has contributed to the success of others or made a personal contribution to the advancement of the art, sport, and science of aviation and space flight over an extended period of time."

Walters-Phillips is being recognized for "her career and contributions as a pilot, mentor, community advocate, and educator" and "inspiring countless youth and fellow teachers with her aviation education programs."

While attending the National Congress on Aviation and Space Education (NCASE) in 1986, Walters-Phillips was inspired to integrate aerospace education into her fifth-grade classroom curriculum.

After receiving the Eleanor Roosevelt Grant from the American Association of University Women, she created "Aviation Invasion," an aerospace program designed to motivate middle school girls towards math and science careers. The program quickly expanded, and Walters-Phillips brought her workshops, classes, and "first flight" experiences to thousands of students and teachers across the country.

Since 1992, Walters-Phillips has worked with Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) Chapter 74 in Orlando and the Orlando Youth Aviation Center to reach out to all youth and help them learn about aviation careers and the school subjects needed to attain them. After completing the aviation curriculum developed by Walters-Phillips, the "Introduction to Aviation" students prepare a flight plan and fly a mini cross-country flight to three local airports. This program has provided hundreds of young people with the opportunity to see their world from the sky.

Identifying a need to involve young people in the Lakeland "SUN 'n FUN" air show program, Walters-Phillips started the first aviation summer camp, "Destination Aviation," for students at the Florida Aviation Museum in 2000. She is also the chairman of the "SUN 'n FUN" Aerospace Educators' Workshop and has conducted this program for thousands of teachers in the last 27 years.

Walters-Phillips is credited with integrating the Civil Air Patrol's Aerospace Connections in Education (CAP ACE) program into the Orange County, FL, school system. She served as the director of the 2011 National CAP ACE lift-off event, bringing together the school system, aviation industry, and community to inspire more than 750 at-risk youths towards a better future using aviation and STEM.

Over the course of her career, Walters-Phillips has received more than 20 awards and recognitions for her work, including the 1994 national A. Scott Crossfield Aerospace Teacher of the Year Award and the 2011 Air Force Association National Medal of Merit for Aerospace Education.

In 2018, she was named Teacher of the Year at Cheney Elementary School. She then transferred to Rosemont Elementary, where she continues to inspire and motivate at-risk students with her lifelong passion for aerospace.

WASP Pilot Dorothy Olsen

Air Force Times
August 12, 2019

Tacoma, WA, Associated Press. Dorothy Eleanor Olsen, a member of a group of civilian volunteers who flew planes across the country during World War II, died July 23, 2019 at the age of 103.

She flew about 60 missions as a member of the 6th Ferry Group of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). WASPs were not recognized as veterans until 1977.

Olsen flew about 29 different aircraft. Her favorite was the P-51.

"Mom said the P-38 was an old woman's plane. She said anybody could fly that," said her daughter, Julie Stranburg. "She said with the P-51, you had to stay on top of [it]."

Olsen was stationed at Long Beach Army Air Base in California from

Continued on Page 29

WASP (from Page 28)

1942-1944 and was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 2009.

Stranburg said her mother didn't fly after she and her brother were born and didn't even think of flying commercial or private planes.

She said, "Why would I want to fly a Cessna when I've flown a P-51?"

B-17 Navigator's Log

1-19-44 Mission, No. 19. Braunsweig, Germany. City of 500,000 population, 100 miles west of Berlin. Carried twelve 500 pound demolition bombs. [It was a] Pathfinder mission with Colonel Van leading. Got up at 0200 hours. Took off at 0800. Left England at 1000 hours from Clacton-on-the-Sea. Got to Dutch coast and encountered a large bank of clouds, which we had to detour around to the north. [We] picked-up P-47's and P-38's half way in.

Ran into cloud banks, which we had to fly through. Went over target at 1215 hours while still in clouds. Flak was light, mixed in with the clouds. During the bomb run, the high squadron was directly over us and we had to move around to prevent their dropping on us. Scared us plenty.

We broke out of clouds about 10 minutes later. One Fort dropped down on the deck and five German fighters jumped him, but P-38's came to the rescue before they got him.

30 miles out from the Dutch coast we saw an Air-Sea Rescue boat heading east to pick-up some crew. Landed at 1430 hours.

We lost one plane. He dropped out over Braunsweig and didn't come back.

On alert tonight.

Avoid Being a Victim to Internet and Email Scams

Prevent Identity Theft

Keep these tips in mind to protect yourself from identity theft:

Secure your SSN (Social Security Number). Don't carry your Social Security card in your wallet. Only give out your SSN when necessary.

Don't share personal information (birthdate, Social Security number, or bank account number).

Collect mail every day. Place a hold on your mail when you are away from home for several days.

Pay attention to your billing cycles. Billing Cycle is the number of days between statements on a regularly recurring bill. If your bill is late, contact the sender.

Use the security features on your wireless devices. Security Features are app's or settings that can help protect the device and the information on it from threats and vulnerabilities.

Update sharing and firewall settings. A Firewall is security monitoring software that analyzes and blocks or allows information traveling between the internet and your computer based on a defined set of security rules. When you're on a public wi-fi network (WiFi hotspot) that anyone can use to connect to the internet or other networks, use a virtual private network (VPN). A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a private network that connects your computer or mobile device to the internet and encrypts (codes) your information to protect your internet activity from monitoring or spying.

Review your credit card and bank account statements. Compare receipts with account statements. Watch for unauthorized transactions.

Shred receipts, credit offers, account statements, and expired credit cards. This can prevent "dumpster divers" from getting your personal information.

Store personal information in a safe place.

Install firewalls and virus-detection software on your home computer. Virus Detection Software: (antivirus software) a computer program used to prevent, detect, and remove malicious programs that have been placed on your computer to spy on you or to do damage to your computer.

Create complex passwords that identity thieves cannot guess. Change your passwords if a company that you do business with has a breach of its databases.

Review your Credit Reports' financial information once a year. Be certain that they don't include accounts that you have not opened. You can order it for free from Annualcreditreport.com.

Freeze your credit files with Equifax, Experian, lnnovis, TransUnion, and the National Consumer Telecommunications and Utilities Exchange for free. Credit freezes prevent someone from applying for and using your credit card.

Share a Story

by Ron Lester [459, 67]

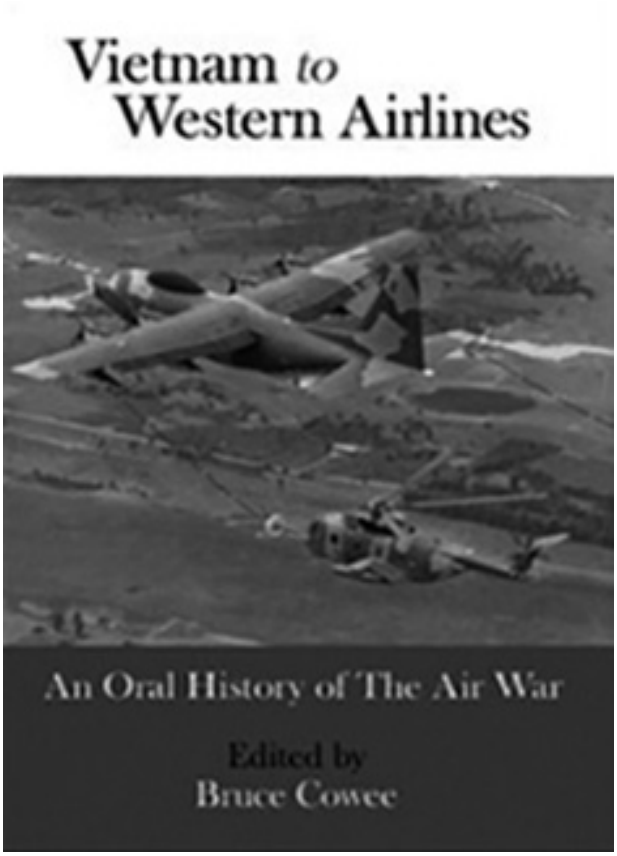
The *C-7A Caribou Association Newsletter* is a forum to share your stories and enjoy the stories of others. Each of you has stories. I know you do. Please share your stories; others are interested in them.

The stories do not have to be about Caribous or Vietnam. We want to hear stories about your career, the airplanes you flew or supported; the experiences you had that hold a place in your memory; the people you served with who made a lasting impression.

I am asking each of you to submit a story. If you need assistance or have questions, call me at 703-851-6892.

Send your stories to:

ron.lester43@verizon.net



Vietnam to Western Airlines

Edited by Bruce Cowee [458, 68]

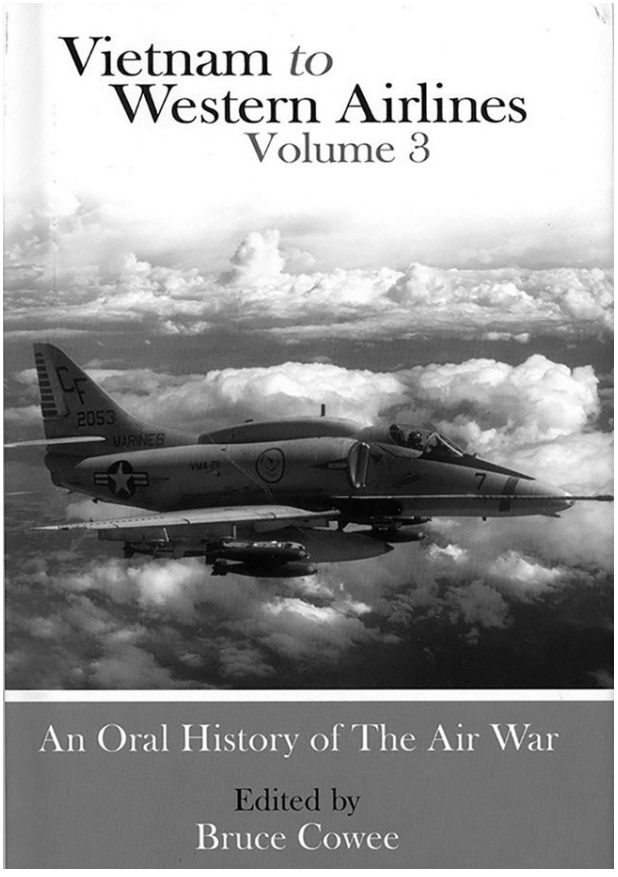
The three books already published in this series are an oral history of the air war in Vietnam, including stories and photographs, of pilots who all had one thing in common. After returning from Southeast Asia, and separating from military service, they were hired by Western Airlines.

The stories are written by the men who were there and flew the missions. All the uniformed services who provided combat pilots, and all the types of aircraft and missions these pilots flew, are included in these volumes.

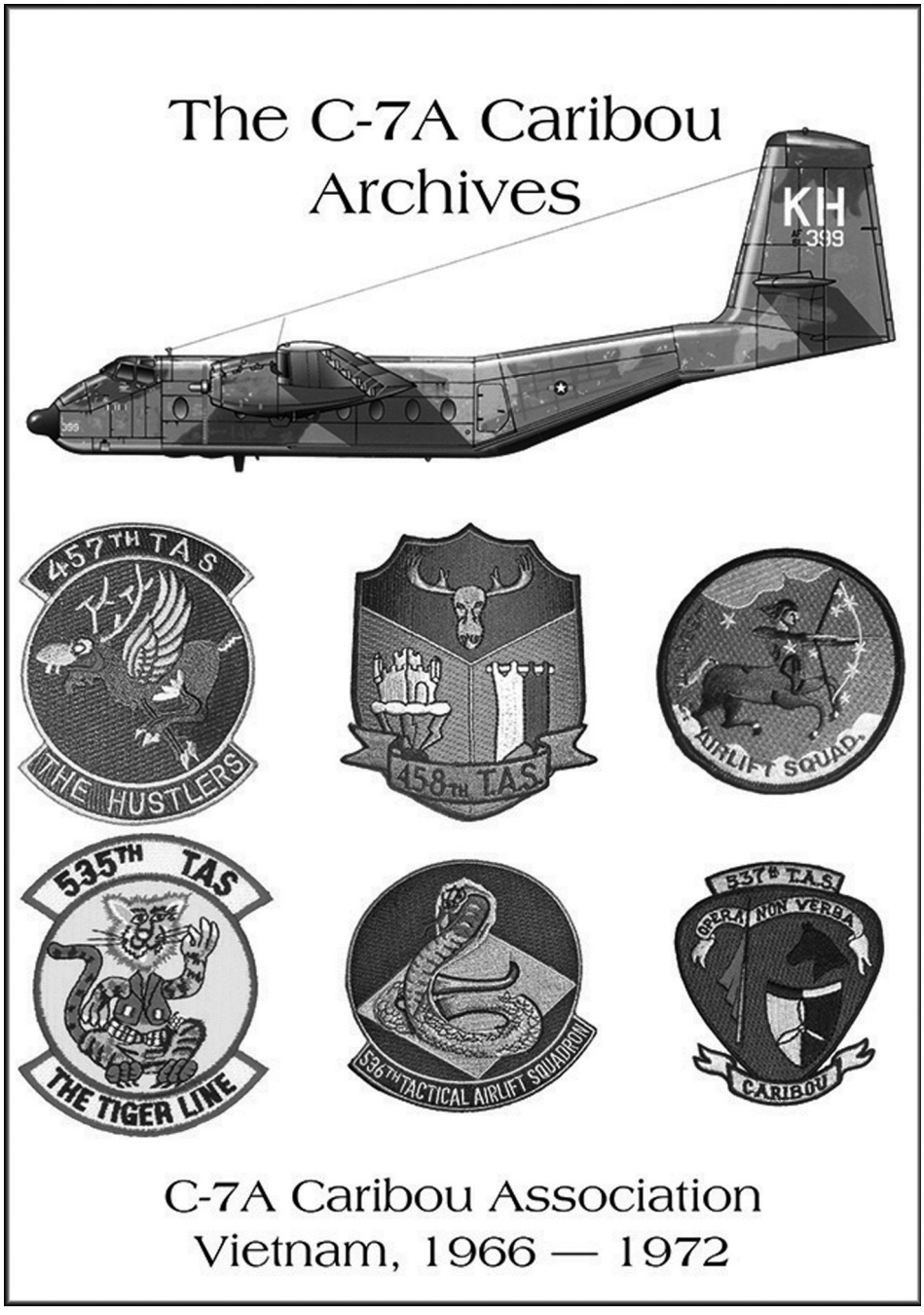
These are personal stories. They will capture and hold your attention. They will make you remember and they will teach you things you didn't know before. Above all – they will make you proud.

Vietnam to Western Airlines volumes can be ordered from:
www.vietnamtowesternairlines.com

If a personalized inscription is desired, you can also place an order through Bruce at:
b2acowee@aol.com



C-7A DVD #2



C-7A DVD

DISK 1:
- 7AF
- 834AD
- AFM 51-40
- AFR-64-4-Survival
- Air Base Defense
- Airman Magazine\Oct 1968
- Airman Magazine\Nov 1968
- Air_War_over_South_Vietnam_1968-1975
- Army Air Facilities 1973
- **Art**
  - Art\Logo Images
  - Art\Patches
  - Art\Poster
  - Art\R2000
- ATC Manuals
- Aviation Week
- C-7A-1
- Cam Ranh Ammo Dump
- Cam Ranh Ghost Town
- Caribou Agreement (USAF and USA)
- Caribou Sales Brochure
- Caribou SEA newsletters\Caribou Courier and Clarion
- Caribou SEA newsletters\Surfside Sentinel
- CRB_Approach_Plates
- DHC-4 Maintenance Manual
- DHC-4_Type_Certificate
- Indochina_Atlas_1970
- M16_Comic_Book
- Misc._Manuals
- Squadron_Signal_C-7A
- Tactical_Aerodrome_Directory
- Tactical_Airlift-Bowers
- TO_1-1-4_Aircraft_Marking
- USAF Combat Wings
- **Videos**
  - Video\Aussie Bou
  - Video\C-7A Training
  - Video\Cam Ranh
  - Video\Gimli Crash
  - Video\Gunter News
  - Video\Radial Engine Animation
  - Video\UPT
- Vietnam Campaigns
- Vietnam Gazeteer

DISK 2
- City Maps
- Fire Bases
- Google Earth database (add-in)
- ONC_K-10
- Series 1301 Charts
- Series_1501_Charts
- Series_L509_Charts
- Series_L701_L7014_Maps
- Series_L701_L7014_Maps\L7014_Below_17N
- Tactical_VFR_Chart
- Vietnam Country Maps

Available on our web site:
http://www.c-7acaribou.com/memorabilia/memorabilia.htm
for $8, shipped.

C-7A at SF Camp

Order framed, Alex Durr giclée color print on canvas using the **Canvas Print Order Form** from the C-7A Caribou Association Memorabilia website.

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

C-7A CARIBOU ASSOCIATION VIETNAM

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
San Antonio, TX
Permit # 244

Memorabilia Sales Temporarily Suspended due to COVID-19

MEMORABILIA TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED
Contact pathanavan@aol.com to check availability of items.

Fill out and mail with a check to: **C-7A Caribou Association, c/o Pat Hanavan, 12402 Winding Branch, San Antonio, TX 78230.**

1. Polo Shirt*	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ $20.00	Total: _____
2. Colored T-Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ $16.00	Total: _____
3. R-2000 T-Shirt	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ $13.00	Total: _____
4. Denim Shirt (short sleeve)	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ $25.00	Total: _____
5. Denim Shirt (long sleeve)	Size - Please Mark: M L XL XXL	Qty. _____ @ $30.00	Total: _____
6. Cap, Denim	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ $13.00	Total: _____
7. Cap, White	One size fits all	Qty. _____ @ $13.00	Total: _____
8. 457th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
9. 458th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
10. 459th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
11. 535th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
12. 536th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
13. 537th Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
14. 483rd Patch		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
15. C-7A DVD (1:10 long movie)		Qty: _____ @ $5.00	Total: _____
16. C-7A DVD Archives (documents, art, videos, charts, maps)		Qty: _____ @ $8.00	Total: _____
17. C-7A Poster (12" x 18")		Qty. _____ @ $7.00	Total: _____
18. 50th Anniversary C-7A Coin		Qty. _____ @ $11.00	Total: _____
19. C-7A Pin		Qty. _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
20. C-7A Sticker (outside)		Qty: _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
21. C-7A Magnet		Qty: _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
22. C-7A Data Plate		Qty: _____ @ $3.00	Total: _____
23. C-7A Painting Paper Print		Qty: _____ @ $25.00	Total: _____

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

Total: _____

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

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