

C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 29, Issue 2

Combat Airdrops at Duc Lap August 1968

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The most significant battle of the Tet Third Offensive occurred at the Special Forces/ Civilian Irregular Defense Group camp at Duc Lap near the Cambodian border, August 23-29, 1968. Beginning early on August 23, three North Vietnamese Army regiments (approximately 4,000 men) attempted to destroy the camp and a nearby South Vietnamese district headquarters.

The camp was partially overrun, but the defenders eventually regained all fallen positions with the help of counterattacking elements from the 2nd and 5th Mobile Strike Force (aka MIKE Force) units, which were airlifted by U.S. Army helicopters and inserted into the area on August 24.

The Duc Lap defenders, under constant attack, had been forced to tighten their perimeter. Helicopters were unable to penetrate the intense fire. Ammunition, water, rations, and medical supplies were critically needed.

On 24, 25, and 26 August, Caribous flew 13 sorties in support of the camp, dropping 26.5 tons of supplies. C-7A aircrews flying those missions received two Air Force Crosses, four Silver Stars, and 19 Distinguished Flying Crosses for their heroism under intense enemy fire.

On 24 August, Maj. George C. Finck and his crew accomplished the first night Caribou combat drop. Over two tons of critically needed medical supplies and munitions were dropped into a drop zone 75 feet by 75 feet, which was lighted by flares and marked by a small, steady light on top of the command post bunker.

On 25 August, Caribous made seven drops without escort while the camp was under attack. Four aircraft took a total of 31 hits from automatic weapons fire during those day drops.

Maj. Finck received the Air Force Cross for his actions on August 24 and Maj. Hunter F. Hackney received the Air Force Cross for multiple sorties flown on August 25. The other members of their crews received the Silver Star.

(From *Caribou Airlines, Vol. II*)



Minutes of 2018 Business Meeting

Al Cunliffe, Secretary, announced at 10:05 AM that a quorum, 68 members, was present.

President, Pat Hanavan called the meeting to order at 10:05.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Bob Davis.

Invocation was given by Jon Drury.

A motion to adopt the agenda as published was made by Don Asbury, seconded by Don Terrill, and carried unanimously.

A motion to accept the minutes of the 2017 business meeting as published on the Association Website and included in the registration packet was made by Chris Nevins. The motion was seconded by Bob Davis and passed unanimously.

Officer and Committee Reports:

Secretary Report: Al Cunliffe

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

20171208: Title: To establish a committee to select an artist to paint a painting of a Caribou in its operational setting.

20180514: Title: 2018 Nominating Committee.

20180531: Title: Memorial Bench for Edwards AFB.

Motion to adopt the Secretary's Report was made by Chris Nevins, seconded by Don Asbury, passed by acclamation.

Bereavement Committee Report:

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

Audit Committee Report: Pat Hanavan provided a review of the audit committee's finding. The end-of-year Liability for Dues Paid in Advance was incorrect at the end of 2017 and has been corrected.

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

Report on the Roster: Pat Hanavan provided an update of current membership; we have 788 active members, 269 inactive members, 10 Honorary Lifetime Members, 47 Honorary Associate Members, and 7 Friends of the Association. There are approximately 7410 names listed on the roster, of these 965 are deceased.

Reunion Committee Report: Pat Hanavan provided an update.

Doug Boston is working on plans for reunion 2019 in Denver. Hotel contract is not in place yet. Future locations being considered are Orlando, FL; San Diego, CA; Las Vegas, NV; and Dearborn, MI.

Nominating Committee:

Chris Nevins, Chairman of the Nominating Committee reported on the work of the Nominating Committee to the Board of Directors, their report represented the following names for positions on the Board of Directors:

President: John Tawes

Vice President: Doug Boston

Treasurer: Pat Hanavan

Secretary: Al Cunliffe

At-Large/Webmaster: Peter Bird

At-Large Members: Tom Snodgrass

Ed Breslin

Old Business:

Caribou painting has been produced and prints are available for sale through our memorabilia sales. The original oil painting will be donated to the Museum of Flight at Warner Robins AFB early next year for inclusion in the Air Force Art Collection.

Planning for the 2019 reunion in Denver, CO, will include a day trip to the Air Force Academy (AFA) in Colorado Springs. A plaque with the names of the AFA graduates who were lost flying the Caribou will be dedicated at that time.

John and Judy Behr have the memorabilia supply point in Austin, TX operating efficiently.

Pat and Peter Bird scanned four of the C-7A Tech Orders at the AF Museum. A PDF of the T.O.s will be created, a DVD burned of these T.O.s, and they will be given to the museums that have a Caribou on display.

An ongoing project of scanning the Aircraft History data cards continues.

Peter has added PDFs of the T-37 and T-38 Dash 1's to the website.

Four sets of cargo roller conveyors have been obtained and they have been delivered to the Museum of Flight at Warner Robins AFB for distribution to other museums.

The Caribou at Edwards AFB has been moved to the paint hangar and is being painted now.

A 40th Caribou casualty has been verified. It will not be possible to add the name to our existing memorial benches.

Warner Robins has expressed a desire to display an R-2000-7M2 engine alongside their Caribou when it has been restored and placed on display. The Association is researching sources for an engine at a reasonable cost. The chair asked for a motion to purchase an R-2000-7M2, at a cost not to exceed \$6000, Ed Breslin made the motion and Chuck Harris seconded. The motion passed by acclamation. Frank Godeck and Paul Phillips each pledged \$500 towards the purchase.

New Business:

Election of Officers: A call for open floor nominations was made to the members. No floor nominations were received. Don Asbury made and John Record seconded a motion to elect the slate of officers as presented by the Nominating Committee. Motion passed

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Business Minutes (from Page 3)

by acclamation.

Free Room Nights: Drawings for nine free room nights were made.

General Discussion: A request was made to remove the city from the list of reunion attendees posted on the website. This has been done for this and future reunions.

Essential information needed for updating the roster and reunion planning which has been missing from submitted registration forms was discussed.

Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Don Asbury moved for adjournment and John Record seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:14.
Respectfully submitted

Hillis "Al" Cunliffe
Secretary
C-7A Caribou Association

2018 Reunion Attendance by Name

Aubray and Judy Abrams
Don Asbury
David and Sandy Ashbaugh
Peter Bird and guest Jeffrey Bird
Louie Bishop and guest *Kay Kirk
Doug and Ellen Boston
Bob and Evelyn Bowers and guests
*Robert Bowers, Jr. & *Bill Bowers
Ed Breslin and guest *Phil Mitchell
*Jack and Cheryl Brooks
Wayne and Joyce Brunz
*Larry and Cyndi Burke
Allen Cathell
Gary Clark
*Tony Clay and Olga Kritskaya and guests Igor and Michael Kritskii
Tom and Chantell Collins
Mike and Sandy Cooney
Frank "Lee" and Donna Corfield
David Cormack
*Bob Cormican
Bruce Cowee
Bob and Carolyn Cummings
Al and Shirley Cunliffe

Chuck Davis
Bob and Peggy Davis
*Tom Dawes
Wayne and Patty De Lawter
*Ben and Patty Diepenbrock
Marlin Dietz
George and Donna Donaldson
Jon and Bev Drury
Roy and Burma Dunn
Steve Elsasser
George and Kim Embrey
John and Peggy Eppolito
Stoney and Melva Faubus and guests
Gary Faubus, Jr. & Angie Waggoner
Huey Frye, Sr.
Hal Gayer and guest *Bob Gardner
Frank Godek & guest Ellie Matthews
Bill Grosse and guest Mike Grosse
Bob and Kathy Hamrin
Pat and Alicia Hanavan and guests
Pat Hanavan III, Mike Hanavan and
*Rebecca Hanavan
Chuck Hanks
Tom Harmon
Chuck Harris
Glenn and June Helterbran
Marty Hillman and guest Margie Wright
Kent and Shirley Hoisington
Pat Howe and guest *Markham Howe
Jim and Sandra Johnston
Chuck Jordan
Bill Jordan
Bob Kopp
Bob Korose
Dick Lanoue
Dave and Debbie Larson
Ron and *Martha Lester
Ray and Norma Longo
*Ralph and Carol Lumm and guests
Dave and Lori Tilstra
George and Sandy Malamatos
Ken Mascaro
*Lorne Maul
Ron and Sue Anne McCorkle
Tom McHugh and guests Jeff and Cathy Gross and Craig and Maureen Moore
Mike Messner
Phil and Lynn Molohosky
Joe Moody
Chris and Eileen Nevins

Harry Norton
Don and Kay Overton
Jerry and Carol Pfeifer
Pat and Barbara Phillips
Paul and Christine Phillips
Al and Sharon Pichon
*Harry Procina and Susan Rhoads-Procina
Andy Quillope
John and Pam Record
Russell Riggelman
Gary and Mary Sanger
*Dennis and Rose Marie Scheumann
Chuck and Anne Schmitz
Doug Schoenhals and guest *Theresa Littlejohn
Ron and Nancy Seymour
Allen and Karen Shanahan
Randy Smith and guest Chris Smith
Tom and Kathy Snodgrass
Ron and Judy Sober
Link and Jean Spann
John and Fran Tawes and guests Fred and Cheryl Tawes
Don and Daphne Terrill
John and Elaine Teske
Staton and Debbie Tompkins
Charlie Tost
Bruce Toy
John Tupper and guest Al Tupper
John Westman
Ray and Gail White
Hank Wilborn
Jim and Donna Williams
Clyde Wilson
Hugh Wilson
*Indicates first time attendee.

Guests:

**AFROTC color guard of Det. 643,
Wright State University:**
Cadet Preston Casey
Cadet Jacob Contz
Cadet Rachel Croyle
Cadet Christine Christiansen
Cadet Jushua Hefner

We have a New Champion!
The **535th TAS** was the winner of Caribou Bowl VII at the Dayton Reunion.

Attendance by State

AL	1	KY	3	OK	1
AR	1	LA	1	OR	2
AZ	3	MD	2	PA	7
CA	8	MS	1	SC	2
FL	7	NC	4	TN	6
GA	3	NE	2	TX	8
IA	2	NH	2	VA	5
IL	2	NV	3	WA	6
IN	3	NY	3	WI	1
KS	1	OH	10		

Attendance by Unit

457	14
458	16
459	18
483	8
535	15
536	12
537	17
Total	100

Bouncing Bou

by "Spectre" Steve Na

I was in the 20th Special Operations Squadron. We used to sit alert at Duc Lap for the Special Forces teams. Resupply of the camp usually came in on a C-7A.

One day we watched a Bou land and it bounced sky high! The struts looked like they were completely compressed. After another bounce or two, the airplane finally got on the ground to stay. The Caribou then turned around and back-taxed to the camp for unloading.

As the Caribou passed by, we applauded the show. The Copilot had his hands out the window, fingers spread and arms over his head. Apparently the Pilot had made the landing and the Copilot was publicly proclaiming his innocence.

It was hilarious.

Da Nang Jeep The Beginning

by Lew Shedd [459, 66]

I think it was sometime in September 1966. This jeep just shows up on the Caribou ramp at the Da Nang mission site. I assume it came from Qui Nhon, but I'm not sure. There were no markings on the jeep; there was no paperwork; and no one claimed it.

The jeep soon became the primary means of transportation for the USAF C-7A personnel. The 92nd Aviation Company (AvCo) Detachment 1 mission site and the Caribou ramp were abeam the south end of the Da Nang runway on the west side. The base facilities, main ramp, and all USAF units were located mid-field on the other side of the runway. It was a hike from Det. 1 to the main base if we needed anything. That jeep was a lifesaver. (When the C-7A transfer from the Army was completed on 1 January 67, the only "official" vehicles the USAF mission site owned were a fuel truck and a forklift.)

The Detachment Commander, USAF Maj. Gerald Weeks, said we could keep the jeep, but we needed a serial number. Without a serial number on the jeep, we ran the risk of being stopped by every Security Policeman who saw it. Questions would be asked and we didn't have any answers.

So, Fred Morris went down to the 92nd AvCo at Qui Nhon and explained that we needed a jeep serial number. They took him to an Army salvage yard and found a jeep that was obviously not recoverable and copied the serial number. The 92nd AvCo guys then made a stencil that said "92nd AvCo Det 1 S/N ..." and whatever the serial number was.

Fred hitched a ride back to Da Nang with the stencil. We used the stencil and white paint to paint the serial number on the jeep. The Det. 1 jeep was ours to keep.

Da Nang Jeep The End

by Larry Pennington [459, 68]

I was the Da Nang Mission Site Commander in late 1968 and early 1969. In December 1968, USAF Col. John Roberts, a Brigadier General selectee, became commander of the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing. Col. Roberts ran things at Da Nang and he was determined to bring order to the various USAF entities scattered around the area.

One of Col. Roberts' pet peeves was our olive drab 92nd Aviation Company, Detachment 1 jeep. It clearly did not belong in an Air Force unit.

The General-to-be chewed on me every time he had a chance. The jeep had to go.

To make matters worse, because of his interest in the Army jeep, Col. Roberts learned the Bou pilots were living downtown and commuting to the base every day. That ended that. We moved to the base.

There was an Army sergeant down south I had traded with in the past. I gave him a call and played "Let's Make a Deal." The deed was done. In early 1969 we put the Det. 1 jeep on a Caribou and dropped it off at Ban Me Thuot.

Someone in the Army got a jeep. The Da Nang C-7A Mission Site got a case of steaks. Col. Roberts was happy and I could sleep better at night, but it was still tough to see that jeep disappear.

Special Recognition!

At the Dayton Reunion, Frank Godeck and Paul Phillips each pledged \$500 towards the purchase of a R-2000-7M2 engine to be displayed with the Caribou at Warner Robins AFB.

Checks to honor these two pledges have been received.

We thank Frank Godeck and Paul Phillips for their contribution to the preservation of Caribou history.

My First Reunion

by Tom Dawes [537, 70]

I just got in from Dayton and, while my thoughts are still fresh, I thought I'd shoot off an e-mail.

Although I log on to the Caribou Association website frequently, I had never been to a reunion. I'd always thought, "Well it's been so long, and who would I know, and it would probably be boring, and who would remember me anyway."

This year, I knew a couple of old buddies who were going. I don't live that far away and I had not been to the AF Museum in about 40 years, so I completed my application (to include my emergency contact info) and signed up.

I arrived Wednesday afternoon and registered at the hotel. I went directly to the War Room where I imagined I'd see a bunch of young guys in flight suits drinking beer. I got the beer part right but reality set in when I saw the mobility scooters, canes, walkers, grey hair, and bald heads. Which should have not surprised this 72 year-old pilot who weighs about 85 pounds more than I had on my DEROS from Phu Cat. So I grabbed a cool one and sat down next to John and Al Tupper from Shelton, WA.

From that moment on I was never bored. Listening to the stories of these men and others who maintained and flew the Caribou, as well as other USAF aircraft, was an incredible experience.

To stand in the cargo hold of the C-124 with the flight engineers, pilots, and mechanics as they shared their memories was just remarkable. They brought "Old Shaky" back to life. The same for the C-118, C-119, C-130, C-121, C-123, C-141, C-133, F-111, F-105, OV-10, B-52, RB-47, WB-50, C-97.... It was my privilege to be an interloper as I heard the guys tell stories of their experiences with these planes.

It doesn't matter if we flew them, maintained them, or supported them. Whatever our job, these airplanes were a significant part of our lives.

And of course the Bou!

Christmas Cocktails

by Jon Didlo

I was a maintenance control officer with the 315th Special Operation Squadron at Phan Rang. It was Christmas Eve 1969 and I was leaving on an R&R (Rest and Recuperation) flight to Hawaii early on Christmas day. The "show time" for the flight was around 4 AM and I didn't want to spend all night in the Cam Ranh Bay terminal. Some of our C-123 pilots knew C-7A pilots at Cam Ranh and they arranged for the Caribou pilots to put me up for the evening.

It was late afternoon on December 24 when I arrived at Cam Ranh Bay and found the Caribou pilots. A rousing Caribou Christmas party was already in progress. For some reason, the main drink served that evening was the Bloody Mary, or as some would say, Bloody Maria. I suppose the red color was in keeping with the holiday season. Anyway, it was a rocking good party. Sometime around 1 AM, someone shouted out "We have a problem here. We are out of tomato juice!" A resourceful voice from the back of the room replied, "Don't worry. I have plenty of BBQ sauce." The party did not slow down.

I didn't try the BBQ sauce Bloody Mary, but I did make my R&R flight on time. It was a fun, unforgettable Christmas Eve party.

Thanks to my C-7A hosts for their hospitality long ago.

What Happened?

by Jerry Callahan [535,67]

A lot of the detail is lost in my memory, but this is what I remember of the C-7A crash December 13, 1967.

I was on my "once a month copilot in the left seat refresher ride." Capt. Ken Chrisman was the Instructor Pilot (IP) in the right seat. We had a Chief Master Sergeant giving a loadmaster recheck to an Airman in the back. We flew to

Saigon to pick up C-rations for a base on an island just off the west coast. I do not remember the name, but I think it was Phu Quoc. We made several approaches at Phu Quoc, but the winds were out of cross wind limits. So we proceeded to our next destination, Can Tho. We were cruising at an altitude of 1,500 feet or so. About half way to Can Tho, the IP, the Chief, and I were taking bets on whether or not we would make it to base with the required command minimum of 500 pounds fuel.

About 15 to 20 miles out, the right fuel indicator dropped rapidly. We all recited the Dash-One note that the fuel gages were not accurate at low quantities. Then the right engine quit. The IP took the airplane and declared an emergency to Can Tho tower. We feathered number two engine. The loadmaster and assistant dumped the C-rations. The boxes broke open in the slipstream and rained down all over central IV Corps. Capt. Chrisman and I went through the single engine failure checklist.

At this point we had no idea why the fuel gauge indication dropped or why the engine quit other than it ran out of gas. When the checklist called to turn the cross feed on, I did as prescribed. Then the left fuel gauge indication started down. Shortly after, the number one engine quit and we feathered that engine. The IP radioed tower of the pending crash landing. Tower replied that we were number two in the emergency rescue queue. They were already supporting an F-100 that went down about 20 miles southeast of the base.

We were about five miles out with the runway in sight, but we had no thrust. The landscape was almost all rice paddies with an occasional row of palm trees separating farms. Capt. Chrisman setup a max range glide which looked good for landing in the middle of a nice flat rice paddy. We had a short discussion about gear up or down and ditching, as the paddies are sometimes way under water. He went for gear up.

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What Happened? (from Page 6)

As the copilot, I watched that he held the airspeed and watched the glide path. As we got close, the glide path was just inches too low to miss the top of a palm tree. That put a small dent in the leading edge and started a small yaw. As I was not flying, I braced myself, and shut my eyes as we flared.

When we touched down, I felt a yaw followed by something cold on my right arm. When the motion stopped, seconds later, I opened my eyes. The



Down near Can Tho. Note long landing skid before airplane did a 180.

cockpit was nearly black. I thought maybe we are under water. The side window had slid forward, shut. I made a short mental review of the wisdom of opening the window if we were under water. I opened it anyway. The light came in. We were not under water. The light showed the front windows and instrument panels covered in mud – very eerie. I looked around to the back and saw the back door open and the floor buckled up. On touchdown, one wing and prop dragged the plane into a 180 degree turn. The last portion of the skid was backward with the cargo door open. The plane had made like a large shovel, scooping up water and mud.

It was time to get out of the plane. I unbuckled and climbed down to the

crew equipment storage in the cabin. I put on my survival vest and pistol belt. I looked back to see what Capt. Chrisman was doing. He was getting the Dash 781 out of the box. I went out the back of the plane looking for the loadmasters. The Airman was on the ground to my left with his rifle pointed to the front of the plane. I looked to my right. I saw the Chief, also on the ground, rifle pointing front, waving at me to get down. I hustled over to him and saw a dozen or so guys in black pajamas running across the field toward



Cockpit mud bath.

us a shot of whiskey. The enlisted guys drank up. Since the IP and I were not clear on the real cause of the crash, neither of us took a drink.

The safety inspectors showed up from Vung Tau in a Caribou in no time at all. We got a ride back to Vung Tau on that airplane.

Later we were in the bar, the Safety Officer tapped Ken Chrisman on the shoulder and showed him the small caliber bullet that went through our cross feed fuel line.

That was the one, and only, round I took in my whole tour.

the plane. The Chief shouted something in Vietnamese and waved his gun. That made them stop about 50 yards out.

About this time Capt. Chrisman made it out of the plane and joined us. An O-2 arrived overhead and circled twice. We checked to see if everyone was okay – and they were. After about ten minutes, an ARVN helicopter landed about 20 yards away. We all ran over and piled in. I was surprised to see that it was an all-Vietnamese crew. Since they did not point any weapons at us, I relaxed and took it for granted that they were not Viet Cong. They got us to the airfield in just a minute or two as we were only about a mile out when we landed.

When we got to Can Tho, they greeted us warmly and offered all of

Time To Renew!!

Check the mailing label on this newsletter. If it does not show “2019” 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 2018, 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:

Jess Cogley
244 Mecca Drive
San Antonio, TX 78232-2209

Shuttle to Duc Lap

by Philip E. Jach [459, 66]

On December 19, 1966, I was a 1/Lt. and flew as copilot on a mission out of Nha Trang to Ban Me Thuot and Duc Lap in the Central Highlands. Capt. John M. Shonts was the Aircraft Commander and A1C Eldon R. Sapp was the Flight Mechanic/Loadmaster.

Our mission was to re-supply the Special Forces camp at Duc Lap. The mission consisted of loading up at Ban Me Thuot and flying approximately 20 minutes to the camp, which was near the Cambodian border. We had made several uneventful flights in and out of Duc Lap earlier that day, going in with supplies and returning empty.

The problem with Duc Lap was that the camp was at least a mile from the runway. So, security was an issue at Duc Lap. This was unusual because most of the camps had the runway right next to the camp or at least within sight of the camp.

That day there was an Army truck with ONE U.S. Special Forces (SF) soldier and five or six Vietnamese soldiers at the runway. The runway was bordered by trees and jungle, which added to the problem with security on approach and departure. The procedure was to overfly the runway at 3,000 feet and look for a smoke flare. If the smoke was green we could assume that the good guys were still there, plus the smoke gave us an idea of the wind speed and direction.

Late in the afternoon we got our smoke signal and started a 360-degree turn and descent for landing. I was the non-flying pilot on this segment. As we rolled out on final, all looked well.

At approximately 200 feet in the air on short final, we were hit with 30-caliber weapons fire from the right side of the approach path. I could hear the bullets hitting the aircraft and I could see several tracers go by the nose. For those few seconds, it seemed like time stood still and everything was moving

in slow motion. Then we were on the ground and needing to get the aircraft stopped on the 1,000-foot dirt runway.



The unload point was mid-runway, so we had to turn around and taxi back down the runway. The SF soldier was, to say the least, concerned since he had limited support and he was a long way from his camp. Our loadmaster had been wounded and fuel was running out of both wings. The SF trooper and I pushed the load out of the aircraft on to the ground. Then I did a quick “walk around” of the aircraft. There was no apparent damage other than the leaking fuel. The radio rack behind my seat was completely destroyed. The Loadmaster’s wound was not severe and it was easy to stop the bleeding.

If we abandoned the aircraft on the runway, it would surely be destroyed that night. If we tried to fly out, we may not be able to stop the fuel leaks. Our decision was to attempt to return to Nha Trang, which was about a 45-minute flight over mountains and jungle. Our alternate would be Ban Me Thuot, only 20 minutes away, if necessary. We had to taxi down to the same end of the runway where the shots had been fired to take off into the wind on the short runway. The SF sent the Vietnamese soldiers down to that end of the runway to provide us some measure of protection and we waited until they were in place.

If you can picture trying to make

yourself as small as possible, that was how it felt taxing back to the departure end. Our only protection from enemy gunfire was in the bottom and back of our seats, but we were exposed everywhere else. There is a big difference between being shot at in flight and sitting in a slow moving aircraft on a dirt strip in the jungle.

The take off was normal and shortly after we were airborne the fuel stopped leaking from the wings. We decided to fly to Nha Trang. The only radio that was operating was our FM set. We carried that radio for communications with the Special Forces camps. Approaching the Nha Trang runway, we called our operations center and asked them to contact the tower and clear us for landing. On final, tower gave us a green light and the landing was normal.

Upon leaving the aircraft, we counted 21 holes in the fuselage and wings. One of the propeller blades on the left side was struck in the tip by a .30 caliber round. The Aircraft Commander had the prop tip cut off, and he took it home as a souvenir. I found one of the rounds intact and laying on the cargo floor. I still have that bullet. The aircraft was out of service for some time, but it eventually returned to flying.

On a side note: That day, December 19, 1966, three of our four aircraft in the detachment did not make it back to Nha Trang. One had crashed on a Special Forces camp after taking ground fire. The other two either had engine trouble or diverted for other mechanical reasons. Our aircraft was the only one out of four that returned home that day.

Each of us received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Loadmaster also received the Purple Heart for our work that day. We also eventually received recognition from the Pacific Air Force (PACAF) in a ceremony at Tan Son Nhut, some time after the event.

The bad part about the PACAF recognition was that we had to fly to Tan Son Nhut and spend the night in Saigon

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Duc Lap (from Page 8)

for the ceremony. A night in Saigon was considered by most in our squadron as far more dangerous than living in the barracks near the runway at Pleiku.

Duc Lap Camp and Airfields

Duc Lap Special Forces (SF) camp, Detachment A-293, was established in October 1966. Located just 14 kilometers from Cambodia, the camp was used to train and support Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) troops and to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

Duc Lap was one of seven camps designed to monitor and interdict North Vietnamese infiltration from Cambodia and Laos. The seven SF/CIDG surveillance camps from north to south were Ben Het, Plei Djereng, Duc Co, Tieu Atar, Ban Don, Duc Lap, and Bu Prang.

When Duc Lap opened in late 1966, the only airstrip available was Bon Sar Pa (VA2-95), which was a cleared stretch of earth approximately 2,000 feet long and 60 feet wide, located more than a mile from the camp.

Beginning in February 1967, the Army 20th Engineering Battalion built a new runway close to the camp. "Clearing of the area began on 3 Feb 67. The following morning all equipment and troops were hard at work. Twelve days later, six Caribous landed on the partly completed runway..." (*Engineers at Work* by Adrian G. Trass).

Named Duc Lap #2 (VA-293), the new runway, 3,500 feet long and 60 feet wide, was made of coated nylon membrane (T-17) with asphalt-treated laterite overruns. The airstrip, taxiways, and large parking area were completed on 7 April 1967. Although originally intended to be C-130 capable, the airfield was classified as a Type 2 airfield for C-7 and C-123.



Night Drops at Duc Lap

by George Finck, Sr. [458, 68]

I was contacted at approximately 1730 hours on August 24, 1968, by Lt. Col. Fasolas, 458th Tactical Airlift Squadron Operations Officer, of the possibility of the Alert Crew being called out for an emergency resupply at Duc Lap (V-293). Although not on the Alert Crew, I was more current in drop procedures than the Aircraft Commander (AC) on alert, so I was the logical choice to go. Capt. Lewis Drew was selected as the other pilot and Sgt. Joseph Szczepanek as the flight engineer, as they both had made recent airdrops and were familiar with the procedures.

We departed Cam Ranh Bay at 1820 hours and blocked in at Nha Trang at 1840 hours to pick up our load and a "kicker" to assist in the airdrop (two kickers actually went on the mission). Our cargo consisted of five pallets weighing 4,400 pounds. Three pallets, weighing approximately 3,600 pounds, consisted of 80 mm mortar rounds and .30 caliber ammunition. The other two pallets, weighing 600 pounds, were medical supplies that were desperately needed by the camp. At Nha Trang, I had 600 pounds of additional fuel put on the aircraft to bring my total fuel load up to 2,400 pounds, which I felt was sufficient for the mission. While on

the ground at Nha Trang, I also received a detailed briefing on the drop zone and enemy activity at Duc Lap from Capt. David Rogers who had made airdrops at Duc Lap earlier that day.

The load was rigged so that two pallets would be dropped in the first pass (1 pallet ammo and 1 pallet medical supplies) and 3 pallets would be dropped on the second pass (1 pallet medical supplies and 2 pallets ammo). Two passes were planned so that if the medical supplies didn't land in the camp on the first pass, we still had a chance to get them in on the second pass.

We departed Nha Trang at 1910 hours enroute to Duc Lap via overhead Ban Me Thuot. We received radio frequencies and call signs from *Colby* (483rd Tactical Airlift Wing Command Post) on the climb out. Capt. Drew computed a time over target of 2005 hours and this was passed to *Hilda* and *Colby* (C-7A Duty Officer at 834th Air Division). After contacting *Port Call* for artillery advisors on departing Nha Trang, we were instructed to track out the 030 degree radial [of] channel 105 for 30 NM (nautical miles) prior to turning on course. This would have taken us far to the north of course, so we requested a clear radial direct. *Port Call* advised us that the 290 degree radial was available with one mile artillery clearance on either side. We proceeded out this radial enroute to Ban Me Thuot, climbing to 8,500 feet.

Approaching Ban Me Thuot, we contacted *Pyramid* for artillery advisors and flight following to Duc Lap. The Ban Me Thuot TACAN and radio beacon were both inoperative. About 10 miles east of Ban Me Thuot, I found a hole in the undercast and descended to 4,500 feet, which was below the cloud layer. *Pyramid* gave us a heading and distance to Duc Lap and after establishing visual contact with Ban Me Thuot, we proceeded direct to Duc Lap. It was necessary to completely ignore

Continued on Page 10

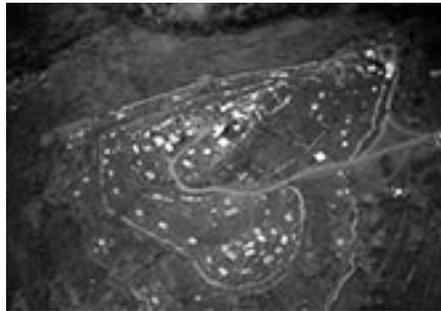
Night Drops (from Page 9)

the artillery in the area as it appeared to be everywhere and Pyramid could not keep up with all the incoming artillery postings. Duc Lap was not difficult to find as illumination flares were going off periodically over the camp. Radio contact was established with the camp and also with an AC-47 “Spooky” aircraft that was orbiting the area.

After contacting the camp, we asked how we were to identify the drop zone and were informed a small, white strobe beacon would illuminate the area. As I approached the camp, I called for the appropriate gravity airdrop checklists from the 20 minute warning on. At the 6 minute warning, all exterior lights and the cabin lights were turned off; lights in the cockpit were turned down as low as possible. I approached the camp at 4,500 feet planning on an overhead, tactical approach pattern similar to that used in a short field landing. I had asked Capt. Rogers for the altimeter setting he had used during the airdrops that day, which was 29.84 inches and I set this in my altimeter. If I had used the 29.59 inches altimeter setting from Nha Trang, I would have been much too low on my approach.

The pallets were rigged with T-7 chutes requiring a drop altitude of 300 feet above the ground. The height of the camp was approximately 2,400 feet so I used 2,700 feet as our drop altitude because of the T-7 chutes. We were over the drop zone at 2005 hours as planned. As I approached the camp at 4,500 feet on a 270 degree heading, I could see mortars or rockets impacting on the camp and considerable ground fire coming in and going out of the camp. Most of the incoming fire was from a position north of the camp close to the eastern edge of the runway. I also detected the small strobe light that marked our drop point. As I passed over the strobe light, I called for the 1 minute check, reduced power and commenced a high rate descent turn to

the left (south). At 180 degrees of turn, I re-identified the strobe light, flew a short downwind and turned to my final approach heading of 270 degrees. I leveled off at 2,700 feet and slowed to 110 knots approximately 1/4 mile from the strobe light. As we flew our final approach, we were experiencing heavy ground fire from automatic weapons with most of the tracers originating on our right, or from north of the camp.



As the strobe passed under the aircraft nose, I called “Green Light” and commenced a pull up while adding METO power (Maximum Except for Takeoff). Sgt. Szczepanek observed both chutes open and then hit the ground almost immediately. Both pallets appeared to hit well within the camp perimeter. During this pass, illumination flares were above the camp and, although they increased my vulnerability to ground fire, they were beneficial as they illuminated the area giving us visual contact with the drop area. I made a left climbing turn to 4,500 feet, reduced power to 650 BHP (Brake Horsepower) and orbited east of the camp while the remaining pallets were being rigged for the second drop. While orbiting, Capt. Drew contacted the camp requesting information on the accuracy of our drop. Due to the intense incoming fire, it was difficult for anyone to move around in the camp, but we were informed one pallet landed within two feet of the strobe light outside their bunker.

I continued orbiting about four miles east of the field at 4,500 feet just beneath a dark cloud in order to keep the strobe light and camp in sight. Also, there was a minimum of ground fire in

that area. It was difficult for Sgt. Szczepanek to work very fast while rigging as a flashlight held by one of the kickers was his only source of light. Although it was slow going, Sgt. Szczepanek was very methodical, making sure everything was perfect for the next pass. At 2025 hours the load was rigged and ready for the second pass. As I was still orbiting four miles east of the camp at 4,500, I elected to line up on the strobe and make a straight in approach while descending to drop altitude. Again all pertinent checklists were accomplished and I reduced power to make a diving approach at the drop zone. I leveled off at 2,700 feet and slowed to 110 knots approximately 3/4 of a mile east of the camp. We requested illumination flares for our run so we could more clearly see the camp and drop zone. As I leveled off at 2,700 feet, I lost sight of the strobe light due to a layer of smoke and haze that surrounded the camp as a result of the gunfire and explosions around the camp. I continued on a heading of 270 degrees as this had me lined up with the strobe light. As I approached the camp perimeter, flares illuminated the area so I had visual contact again with the camp, although I couldn’t see the strobe. As I passed over the camp perimeter and saw the peak of the hill pass under the aircraft nose, I called “Green Light,” added METO power, and commenced a climbing left turn. Again on this run we were subject to heavy ground fire with most of the tracers originating in the vicinity of the airfield north of the camp. The camp was also under intensive mortar and rocket attack during both of the drops.

I climbed up to 4,500 feet just beneath the clouds and checked with the camp on the accuracy of our drops. At the time, the camp was under heavy attack so no one would venture out of the bunker to check on where the pallets landed. Sgt. Szczepanek observed all chutes to open and the pallets landed

Continued on Page 11

Night Drops (from Page 10)

within the camp perimeter.

Since we were of no further use in the area, I set a course for Nha Trang and climbed to 9,500 feet to get on top of the weather and circumnavigate some thunderstorms along our route. The Ban Me Thuot area was ringed with artillery so we proceeded on a direct route to Nha Trang. The remainder of the flight was uneventful. We landed at Nha Trang at 2115 hours to drop off our kickers and then we proceeded to Cam Ranh Bay, arriving at 2140 hours.

I have since learned that this was the first night drop by a C-7A aircraft in Southeast Asia. Also learned that all of the pallets we dropped on our two passes hit well within the camp perimeter and were recovered.

Lessons Learned from my post-mission notes:

1. A current altimeter for the Duc Lap area is essential.
 2. A working radio altimeter is desirable.
 3. Illumination flares were a tremendous help in establishing visual contact with the camp and drop zone.
 4. A brighter strobe light is desirable in the drop zone, one that flashes and has a distinguishable color.
- The small white light last night was difficult to see and hard to distinguish from small fires.
5. Two kickers are desirable as they can help the Flight Engineer rig, cutting down on TOT [Time on Target].
 6. An overhead tactical approach similar to a short field landing was effective and kept exposure to ground fire to a minimum.

7. Most ground fire appeared concentrated to the north of the camp.

8. Three pallets max per pass, two desirable due to small drop zone.

9. T-7 chutes at 300-foot drop altitude are very effective.



Air Force Cross Citation S.O. GB-147, 24 Mar 1969 Maj. George C. Finck

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Title 10, Section 8742, United States Code, awards the Air Force Cross to Major George C. Finck for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-7A Aircraft Commander near Duc Lap, Republic of Vietnam, on 24 August 1968. On that date, Major Finck flew the first night combat airdrop ever flown in a C-7A through a hostile environment of heavy antiaircraft and automatic weapons fire in which five other aircraft had been shot down while attempting to re-supply the camp. Despite intense ground fire and battle damage to his aircraft, Major Finck made a second pass over the embattled camp to deliver sufficient ammunition, medical supplies, and water to the beleaguered defenders who would have been overrun without this vital re-supply. Through extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of an opposing armed force, Major Finck has reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Note: Other members of the 458th Tactical Airlift Squadron crew were Capt. Louis D. Drew, Copilot, and Sgt. Joseph Szczepanek, Flight Engineer.

Editor's Note. Hostile action at Duc Lap continued non-stop during the night of August 24 and throughout the day on August 25. Survival of the camp and its defenders was seriously in doubt and air resupply was critical.

The second, and last, Air Force Cross awarded to a Caribou pilot during the Vietnam War was presented to Maj. Hunter F. Hackney for his actions on August 25, 1968.

It was not until 1900 hours on August 25 that the last enemy soldiers were forced out of the Duc Lap camp perimeter.

Air Force Cross Citation Maj. Hunter F. Hackney

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Air Force Cross to Hunter F. Hackney, Colonel [then Major], U.S. Air Force, for extraordinary heroism in military operations against an opposing armed force as a C-7A Aircraft Commander of



the 458th TAS, Cam Ranh Bay Air Base, Vietnam, Seventh Air Force, in action near Duc Lap, Republic of Vietnam, on 25 August 1968. On that date, Major Hackney flew two drop passes delivering vitally needed ammunition through vicious concentrations of antiaircraft and automatic weapons fire in which his aircraft sustained severe battle damage, disabling it and causing him to recover at a forward base.

Realizing that the defenders of Duc Lap could not survive through the night without resupply of small arms ammunition, Major Hackney obtained a new aircraft and volunteered to reenter this hostile environment in which five other aircraft had perished. With tenacious courage, he delivered his cargo, again sustaining heavy battle damage. Through his extraordinary heroism, superb airmanship, and aggressiveness in the face of an opposing armed force, Major Hackney has reflected the highest credit upon himself and the United States Air Force.

Other members of the 458th TAS crew were Capt. Karl T. Bame, Copilot, and Sgt. Fred G. Carr, Flight Engineer.

Billy and Me

by William G. Barnes
[483 CAMS, 68]

It all began with Billy and me in 1963. We were both in the eighth grade at York High School in Yorktown, VA. Billy Campbell and I were enrolled in Mr. Bruce Cobb's Earth Science class, a precursor to the more difficult science classes ahead of us. But it was nothing like the very difficult life events that lay ahead in the ever-escalating conflict and war that was raging in the clash between Communism and democracy in Southeast Asia. A subject Billy and I would soon study and experience first hand.

Bruce Cobb was an elderly male teacher who had been teaching for many, many years. He assigned student seating in his class in last name alphabetical order. I was assigned the second seat immediately against the classroom internal wall. Billy was assigned the seat immediately behind me. We did not know one another, but that would soon change.

Billy and I quickly became acquainted as we settled into our assigned seats and studies. Billy was really smart and took to the study of Earth Science like a duck takes to water. For me, it wasn't really challenging and I found it rather boring. Billy excelled, but I tended to have my mind and interests on more challenging subjects.

At Christmas, I received a square faced Timex watch with a black leather strap band from my parents. It was just what I wanted for Christmas that year. I had my eye on that watch for many months. My parents knew of my wanting that particular watch, so they scraped together the money and purchased it for me as a Christmas gift. I was anxious to return to school after the holidays and show off my really good looking timepiece, the one that inspired John Camron Swayze to declare on television, "a Timex takes a licking and keeps on ticking."

The holidays ended and Billy and I found ourselves back in Mr. Cobb's class in our assigned seats. I made the mistake of showing my new Timex timepiece to my classmate and new friend, Billy. To my surprise, Billy commented that my gold tone watch was the ugliest watch he had ever seen! Billy told me he wouldn't take me to a dogfight wearing that watch, even if he thought I could WIN! Needless to say, I was devastated. But, I would not let the derogatory comments, by my good and trusted friend, cloud my own feelings about my Timex timepiece that could "take a licking and keep on ticking."

Spring arrived and school was almost over. It was also the time of Billy's birthday. The day after Billy's birthday, Billy comes to class and shows me the birthday gift his parents presented to him, "a gold tone square faced Timex watch with a black leather strap band." The truth had arrived on the scene. Billy and I both laughed. I could not resist telling Billy how ugly I thought the watch was. His only response was a smile.

School ended and Billy and his family moved away to a nearby city. But, Billy and I kept in contact over the next three years. We would always greet one another with how ugly each other's watch was and laugh.

After graduating from high school in 1967, the draft was in "full speed ahead" mode as the war in Southeast Asia escalated to new heights. Uncertain about college funding, I received an offer to enlist in the Air Force. I accepted the offer, put college on the back burner, and departed Yorktown for Richmond to the induction center for my physical. I did not make it back home until the following year, after basic and tech school. I came home to Yorktown on a short leave and then on to Forbes AFB, Topeka, KS. I knew little about the Tet Offensive that was currently underway and raging in South Vietnam. Four months later, I received my orders to Cam Ranh Bay, Republic of Vietnam. I departed Forbes for Sew-

art AFB, TN and C-7A familiarization training, and then on to Yorktown for a brief leave with the family before arrival in country. While at home, I made a stop by Billy's house for a quick visit.

Billy's mother answered my call at the door. She was always glad to see me and happy when I stopped by to see Billy. (I later learned from Billy's wife that I was the only friend of Billy's that Billy's mom liked.) His mother informed me that Billy had joined the Marine Corps and was already in Vietnam. He signed up for the infantry and was an infantry machine gunner. I was shocked to say the least.

I got Billy's address and decided to write him a letter before I departed. I informed him where I would be stationed and, if he was able to look me up to please do so. Little did I know what the cards held in store for Billy and me.

I arrived in country on or about September 1, 1968. I was initially assigned to the C-7A docks, then the flight line, followed by a short time on flying status, and finally teaching familiarization and skill training to new arrivals.

In my early days at Cam Ranh Bay I had to walk past the base hospital and convalescence center on my way to the C-7A docks every day. I did not know that Billy was in that same hospital, at that same time, recovering from the first of three wounds he would receive while serving as a machine gunner during the height of the Vietnam War. We were so close, but worlds apart. We did not know we were simultaneously in country together, and merely steps away from one another.

I would not learn that Billy had only been a few short steps away until long after he recovered, had departed the convalescence center, and my letter finally found him when he was once again in the field.

Billy and I did not hook up with one another again until years after my separation from active duty. I returned to Virginia to attend college, while Billy

Continued on Page 13

Billy and Me (from Page 12)

returned to the Newport News Shipbuilding Apprentice School. We remain friends to this very day, and often talk about our Timex watches “taking a licking, while keeping on ticking.” It has become the norm of how we greet one another.

Billy received three Purple Hearts and Agent Orange poisoning during his service and is now 100% disabled. Thank you Billy for your service to our grateful nation and for being my friend and comrade in arms.

I will never forget two youngsters who became of age in war –

Billy and Me.

C-7A Accomplishments

Airlift Accomplishments 1966

Sorties	129,324
Flight Hours	87,125
Cargo Tons	89,010
Passengers	822,432

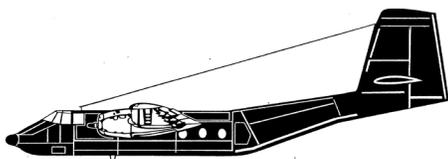
The 1966 data is for the Army Aviation Companies, including attached USAF personnel starting in July 1966.

Airlift Accomplishments 1967

Sorties	155,938
Flight Hours	100,230.8
Cargo Tons	95,320
Passengers	1,081,629

Airlift Accomplishments 1968

Sorties	174,702
Flight Hours	119,184.1
Cargo Tons	104,225.8
Passengers	1,308,259



Bandy Welcome

from *7th Air Force News*

April 24, 1968

Phu Cat. C-7A Caribou crew members of the 537th Tactical Airlift Squadron, Phu Cat AB, received quite a surprise when they made the first fixed-wing aircraft landing at Camp Evans, the new headquarters of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

The crew members, Lt. Col. Robert P. Jones, Fairfield, ID, aircraft commander; 1/Lt. Thomas G. Collins, Wareham, MA, copilot; and Sgt. Donald E. Wilson, Amarillo, TX, flight engineer; were greeted by their first passengers the 1st Cavalry Division band.

Prior to the landing of the 537th on Camp Evans' newly constructed 1,600-foot landing strip, all personnel and supplies arrived by helicopter or truck.

First to Camp Evans

by Tom Collins [537, 67]



Camp Evans was open for business. Caribou business, that is. The first crew in was to be treated by the 1st Cav band.

We were carrying the standard 1st Cav load of troops and baggage, along with several muzzled working dogs. There were other C-7A missions scheduled to Camp Evans that morning and we wanted to be the first. The race to history was on and fuel conservation was not a consideration.

We were the first crew in “and the



Camp Evans 1968

band played on,” although the band didn't look very military and they didn't act very enthusiastic either.

Our second trip to Camp Evans that same day was somewhat different. The tower would not answer my inbound calls. Again and again I tried. A whispered voice finally responded to my repeated attempts, “Stay away. We are being attacked.” We stayed away.

And, that, as Paul Harvey would say, “is the rest of the story.”

“Dolly” Remembers

by Mary L. “Larry” Young Hines
[Red Cross, 68]

I thoroughly enjoyed the article in the most recent *C-7A Newsletter* (April 2018) by Doug Clinton on page 22. We could have overlapped at Cam Ranh Bay, but I don't remember meeting him.

I am always amazed when I see Caribous referred to as “slow, ugly, and easily shot down.” The same could be said about my Navy aviator husband's plane, the A-1 Skyraider “Spad” which he flew off the *USS Intrepid* in 1966.

To me, the Caribou was a lovely, graceful aircraft, much like a dragonfly.

I truly looked forward to every flight I had in those Cam Ranh Caribous 50 years ago. Besides the seasonal “Santa Bous” I flew on, I took many flights to see troops in remote locations and helped deliver food and, yes, live chickens.

Editor's Note. “Larry” Young Hines served as a “Donut Dolly” with the Red Cross at Cam Ranh Bay in 1968-69. She has been a member of the C-7A Caribou Association for many years.

We Will Never Forget

On October 3, 1968, 537th TAS C-7A S/N 63-9753, flown by **Capt. Wayne P. Bundy**, Aircraft Commander, **Capt. 1/Lt. Ralph Schiavone**, Copilot, and **SSgt. James K. Conner** and **SSgt. Donald G. Cleaver**, Flight Engineers, took off from Camp Evans and made a climbing right hand turn before reaching the end of the runway. A CH-47 was approaching Camp Evans from Landing Zone Nancy on a regular shuttle flight with troops and mail. The two aircraft collided at 1,100 feet. One of the Chinook's rotor blades sliced through the Caribou cockpit and another blade hit the left engine. The Caribou spiraled into the ground and exploded. The C-7A crew was killed, along with their ten passengers and the thirteen people aboard the CH-47.

The Letter

by The Box Tops

Gimme a ticket for an aeroplane
Ain't got time to take a fast train
Lonely days are gone, I'm a-goin'
home

My baby, just-a wrote me a letter
I don't care how much money I gotta
spend

Got to get back to my baby again
Lonely days are gone, I'm a-goin'
home

My baby, just-a wrote me a letter

Well, she wrote me a letter
Said she couldn't live without me
no more

Listen mister, can't you see I got to
get back

To my baby once-a more
Anyway, yeah!

Gimme a ticket for an aeroplane
Ain't got time to take a fast train
Lonely days are gone, I'm a-goin'
home

My baby, just-a wrote me a letter
Well, she wrote me a letter

Said she couldn't live without me
no more

Listen mister, can't you see I got to
get back

To my baby once-a more
Anyway, yeah!

Gimme a ticket for an aeroplane

Ain't got time to take a fast train
Lonely days are gone, I'm a-goin'
home

My baby, just-a wrote me a letter, my
baby just-a wrote me a letter

Songwriter: Polly Jean Harvey
The Letter lyrics © Universal Music
Publishing Group

"The Letter" was a very popular song in 1968, especially with the younger officers, NCOs, and enlisted men, and probably with the older ones too. Everyone had a wife, or a girl friend, or someone they hoped would be their girl friend. Everyone waited for a letter. The letters received from that "special someone" were important beyond measure.

The upbeat song's lyrics expressed exactly what everyone wanted:

*Gimme a ticket for an aeroplane
Ain't got time to take a fast train
Lonely days are gone, I'm a-goin'
home*

My baby, just-a wrote me a letter

My Country

by John McCain

From John McCain's speech accepting the Republican presidential nomination, September 4, 2008:

"I was in solitary confinement when my captors offered to release me. I knew why. If I went home, they would use it as propaganda to demoralize my fellow prisoners...I wasn't in great shape, and I missed everything about America. But I turned it down.

A lot of prisoners had it worse than I did... I always liked to strut a little after I'd been roughed up to show the other guys I was tough enough to take it. But after I turned down their offer, they worked me over harder than they ever had before. For a long time. And they broke me.

When they brought me back to my cell, I was hurt and ashamed, and I didn't know how I could face my fellow prisoners. The good man in the cell next to me, Bob Craner, saved me. Through taps on a wall he told me I had fought as hard as I could...And then he told me to get back up and fight again for our country...

I fell in love with my country when I was a prisoner in someone else's. I loved it not just for the many comforts of life here. I loved it for its decency; for its faith in the wisdom, justice, and goodness of its people. I loved it because it was not just a place, but an idea, a cause worth fighting for. I was never the same again. I wasn't my own man anymore. I was my country's."

The Importance of Remembering

"Dying for freedom isn't the worst that could happen. Being forgotten is."

Susie Stephens-Harvey, reflecting on her brother, Stephen J. Geist, Missing in Action on 26 September 1967.

Note and Beer Can

National Park Service



Dimensions: 4.8 inches high x 2.75 inches wide x 2.75 inches deep

Physical Description: Paper with writing & aluminum "Colt 45" beer can
Note states:

"Hey Bro! / Here's the beer I owe you – 24 yrs late. You were right – I did make it back to the world. Great seeing you again. Sorry not to be with you but I'll be along soon. / Thanx / Sarge"

These objects were left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall during the time period from May to June 1989 at Panel 3E.

From 1992 until 2003, the National Museum of American History, in conjunction with the National Park Service, mounted a major exhibit entitled "Personal Legacy: The Healing of a Nation" of more than 1,500 objects that had been left at the Memorial over its first 10 years. This was the first time any of the objects from this collection had been placed on view for the public. Many of the objects were service related such as military patches, dog tags, and service bars. Other objects were things of a more personal nature such as photographs, letters and teddy bears. The curator's tried to include objects that were representative of the different types of objects that are now part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Collection, at the National Park Service.

Visitors began leaving tokens of remembrance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 1982, while it was still under construction. Flags and flowers

historically have decorated veterans' monuments, but the presence of many other mementos is unique to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The first was a Purple Heart thrown by a Vietnam veteran into the wet cement of the Memorial's foundation. Since then, visitors from at home and abroad have left more than 25,000 keepsakes at the Memorial, collected daily by National Park Service rangers. Each has its own story, often known only to the donor. These messages and gifts from the heart were created by relatives, former comrades-in-arms, friends, neighbors, and members of civic and fraternal organizations. They express the love, grief, and pain associated with the more than 58,000 names on the Memorial's 140 black granite panels.

This unsolicited outpouring occurs year round, particularly at Christmas, Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veterans Day. The gifts also commemorate birthdays of dead and missing veterans and other days of personal importance. These remembrances demonstrate the continuing impact of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on the generation that lived through that conflict.



Aussies and Kiwis in Vietnam



The Australian government first sent troops to Vietnam in 1964 with a small aviation detachment at Vung Tau and an engineer civic action team. Some individual members of the Australian Army were also assigned to serve as advisors with U.S. Special Forces.

In 1965, Australia increased their commitment to the war with the deployment of the 1st Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment. In 1966, the Australians again increased their troop strength in Vietnam with the formation of the First Australian Task Force, which established a base of operations near Ba Ria in Phuoc Tuy province near Vung Tau. The task force included two infantry battalions, a medium tank squadron, and a helicopter squadron, as well as signal, engineer, and other support forces. By 1968, Australian forces in Vietnam totaled almost 8,000 personnel.

New Zealand initially sent a small engineer detachment to South Vietnam, but later sent an artillery battery in July 1965. The New Zealand contingent was placed under the operational control of the First Australian Task Force, and eventually grew to over 500 men.

The Australian and New Zealand contingents were part of the Free World Military Forces, also known as the "many flags" program, which was an effort by President Lyndon B. Johnson to enlist allies for the United States and South Vietnam.

“Wallaby Airlines”

Australian War Memorial article

“Wallaby Airlines” flew DHC-4 Caribous and was active in Vietnam from July 1964 to February 1972. Wallaby Airlines was the popular name for the Royal Australian Air Force Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV) established on 20 July 1964. The unit was renamed No. 35 Squadron on 1 June 1966.

The name referred to its radio call sign “Wallaby,” rather than to the RAAF roundels on the aircraft, which featured a kangaroo painted in red.

Three Caribous, aircrews, and support personnel returned to Australia on 1 Jun 71. The remaining four aircraft took off from Vung Tau for the last time on 19 Feb 72.

In their seven and a half years in Vietnam, Wallaby Airlines flew nearly 80,000 sorties and 47,000 flight hours. Its Caribous carried more than 677,000 passengers, 79 million pounds of freight, and 11 million pounds of mail.

While there were incidents in which crew members were injured, there were no Wallaby Airlines fatalities.

How Wallaby Airlines Got Its Name

by Doug Pollock [RTFV, 64]

To the best of my recollections, this is how the name “Wallaby” came to be used as the call sign for the Royal Australian Air Force Transport Flight Vietnam (RTFV) that began flying Caribous in Vietnam in 1964. Wallaby became famous in Vietnam amongst many armed services and peoples: including U.S., New Zealand, Thai, Korean, and Vietnamese Armed Forces, French plantation operators, the occasional Brit on some civil aid project, and of course, the Australians who served both in the armed forces and the civil assistance programs.

About a year before the formation of RTFV, a group of young pilots from 38 Squadron had formed an associa-

tion with several Qantas air hostesses who shared a flat in the Sydney eastern suburbs. The association was neither constant nor regular. The girls had irregular schedules in those days and the pilots were pulled at a moment’s notice for a medevac (medical evacuation) flight, a SAR (Search and Rescue) flight for some lost mariner or bush walker, or one of the many temporary detachments to other bases. Accordingly, although the relationships were friendly, they were infrequent. Occasionally some pilots turned up at the girls’ flat and a Chinese meal was shared, or we just sat and talked, or together we organized a party on the spot. The relevance of this causal relationship and its importance to the “Wallaby” call sign will soon become apparent.

In late 1963 crews were picked for the ferry of the Caribous from the de Havilland factory at Downsview, Canada, to Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Base Richmond, Australia. Most of the copilots on Caribou ferry missions 1 and 2 were the same “boggies” who formed the nucleus of the contact with the air hostesses. (“boggie” is a contraction of “bogat.” A term used exclusively, and often derisively, for any RAAF officer having the rank of Officer Cadet, Pilot Officer, or Flying Officer.) Both Caribou ferry missions were completed by June 1964. The ferry missions further disrupted any contact with the girls.

During the second ferry through RAAF Base Butterworth, Malaysia the pilots on that ferry learned that a flight of Caribou aircraft would be committed to operations in Vietnam. After lunch each day, officers would go into the officer’s mess lounge room to listen to the world news on the radio. Believe it or not, back then, people would sit and look at the radio as intently as people today look at a television.

On this occasion, I remember sitting beside John Staal when we heard the announcement that a flight of RAAF Caribous were to be dispatched to Vietnam. We looked at one another and

bolted for the aircraft lines. Simultaneously, we had guessed that Squadron Leader Chris Sugden, aka “Suggy,” the leader of our ferry of three aircraft, would be the first Commanding Officer as he was the most widely experienced officer in our squadron. He was down at the lines inspecting a Caribou and we wanted to be his first volunteers.

After about a kilometer run, not a jog, we both ran up to “Suggy” absolutely puffed. We saluted, gasped out the news, and begged to be allowed to join him if he led the Caribous into Vietnam. Our Caribou ferry had been delayed by suspected sabotage, so he had got to know us fairly well. He agreed to



recommend us, if he was selected to lead the first group.

Back in Australia a week later, those picked for Vietnam were given embarkation leave, then briefings and some intensive training. We started to think about what we might take to Vietnam to identify ourselves: slouch hats, flags, koalas? All the suggestions were dismissed as “kitchy,” too large, or too expensive.

During this busy period the friendship with the Qantas air hostesses was renewed. At one of the “get togethers,” a boggie saw one of the girls with a Qantas pin – the golden kangaroo. We asked the girls if they could get us some pins. They told us they would try. They also said they would organize a send-off party for us. The party was a happy affair.

I remember three people from that evening. Mick Gwinn among the loadmasters, because he was a big gentle

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giant and towered over everyone else; John Staal with Geertje, who arrived late as they had gone to a night club where the leading talent had sung a funny song about Vietnam; and Delas England, a hostess, who had a small cardboard box jammed packed with a few hundred kangaroo pins – a great gift from Qantas.

Later, the pins were given to Suggy who distributed them amongst all members of the RTFV group. I think each member had about five pins. The aim was to award the pins to people in Vietnam who gave us special service.

A day or so after arriving in Vietnam, Suggy gave a pin to the Base Commander at Vung Tau, Col. Dillard, U.S. Army. He was a most professional officer who did what he could to get us kitted, billeted, and supplied to become an effective unit without delays. Likewise, Maj. Dillard, U.S. Army, the Executive Officer to the colonel (but no relation) received a pin.

Maj. Schaumberg, USAF, was our liaison officer. He was most diligent in getting RTFV operational “in country.” RTFV had been integrated as part of the USAF air support services and was tasked by the USAF. Most of the tasks were supporting the U.S. Army and the South Vietnamese Army. Our induction had been completed in record time, thanks in a large part to Maj. Schaumberg. The last item requiring agreement was a unit call sign that would identify us on all future operations.

When Suggy gave Maj. Schaumberg a Qantas pin as appreciation for his services to us, the conversation went something like: “What is this animal called, Chris?” Schaumberg sometimes had a peculiar manner of pronouncing and emphasizing each syllable. On this occasion, in an almost Southern drawl, Schaumberg said “An-I-Mal,” although I do not recall Schaumberg being a Southerner.

Chris replied, “A Kangaroo. Could

that be a suitable name for our squadron call sign?” Schaumberg was almost aghast. “A Kan-Ga-Roo? Hell Chris, that’s not an easy name to pronounce. The Vietnamese would find it impossible. Are they called something else?” Chris replied, “A Wallaby.” The name had an instant appeal for Schaumberg. He said it several times. “Wal-La-By” sounded much better to him than “Kan-Ga-Roo.” Schaumberg then said he would arrange for “Wallaby” to become the call sign for the RTFV, which later



became 35 Squadron.

Thus, “Wallaby Airlines” was named because of a causal relationship with the Qantas kangaroo.

Squadron Leader Chris Sugden

Squadron Leader Chris Sugden “Suggy” was the quintessential quiet achiever.

Possibly influenced by the example of his father, who lost an arm at Gallipoli in WW I, Suggy began his military career early as a member of the 10th Light Horse. Later, he avoided RAAF parades, occasionally stating that he was the only officer in the RAAF who had carried a sword as a weapon of war and; therefore, he was not going to carry one on parade.

Help!!!



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

athanavan@aol.com

He was possibly the only RAAF officer who flew in three wars in three different roles: Boston bombers in WW II, Meteor fighter-bombers in Korea, and transport Caribous in Vietnam.

Suggy decided to test the ability of the Caribou to take off on one engine. He did this test flight in Malaysia before the Caribous deployed to Vietnam, just in case the situation arose when a single engine take off would be required.

Some months later such a take off (the only operational one that I know of) was required from an airstrip in the Mekong Delta. Daylight was rapidly disappearing and the area was known as unfriendly – where a mortar or two could be expected after nightfall when friendly forces reaction time would be delayed. The take off was successful. Fortunately for all concerned, Suggy was captain of the aircraft when it had the engine problem. He did not have to make the decision of authorizing one of the “boggies” to do it had it happened to them. On the other hand, he had been such an inspiration to all, any boggie crew probably would have flown it out and told him later.

When the day finally arrived for the first group of RTFV to fly from Butterworth RAAF, Malaysia to Vung Tau, the meteorological forecast report had a major storm enroute. The weather did not deter Suggy, so off he went, and I followed with Kev Henderson as the copilot.

Apparently most of the U.S. Army at Vung Tau thought, “The Aussies will not make it today.” Col. Dillard disagreed. He said that he had served near Australians in Korea and they always got through. Our arrival as planned vindicated Col. Dillard’s opinion and set the scene for the “Can Do” attitude, which was basically the unofficial motto for RTFV, or “Wallaby Airlines.” It also was amusing to Suggy, “that some Yanks thought we would not get through.”

At his 80th birthday party, Mike

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Lancaster, Suggy's right hand man in Vietnam, sent this message. "What I would really like to place on record is my enormous respect for Chris as a remarkable original thinker and an outstanding leader. The official histories will never be able to reflect how lucky we were in having Chris appointed as the first commander in Vietnam. He had the ability to nut things out from first principles and if the answer didn't agree with the book so much bad luck for the book. Without doubt, he was the strongest and best commander I had during my RAAF career."

Suggy was very proud of his part in RTFV. He was especially pleased that the popular reunions included all ranks and all musterings.

Sadly, Suggy died just a week before the U.S. Air Medal was finally presented to all "Wallaby Airlines" aircrew who had served in Vietnam – 42 years after the original recommendation. His elder son, Peter, said his dad was very happy that the efforts of the loadies (loadmasters) were also recognized in the awards.

Caribous at HARS



There are two former "Wallaby Airlines" Caribous in flyable condition at the HARS (Historical Aircraft Restoration Society) Museum located at the Illawarra Regional Airport, Albion Park, New South Wales, Australia.

The HARS museum is about 60 miles south of Sydney. The train ride from Sydney takes approximately an hour and twenty minutes.

London to Chicago on 9-11

by Philip E. Jach [459, 66]

*United Airlines Flight 939
London, England to Chicago, IL
September 11, 2001*

A scheduled flight to London and return in a Boeing 777B was a three day trip. Having been to London many times, this was viewed as just another routine trip. We departed Chicago O'Hare on September 9, 2001 at 1740 hours. We arrived in London at 0636 hours on September 10, 2001. The flight time was 7 hours and 52 minutes. The layover in London on September 10th was at a hotel on Bayswater Street near Kensington Palace. We departed London at 0704 hours westbound for Chicago on the morning of September 11, 2001.

Our flight plan took us up over northern England and then Scotland before entering the over-water segment. We passed well south of Iceland and Greenland. Our ground track was well to the south of the normal tracks because of the favorable winds that day. We crossed into Canada just north of the Canadian-Maine border. We transitioned into U.S. airspace and were only under U.S. control for about five minutes. One of the last things the U.S. air controller said to us was that we had better start looking for a place to land. That was an unusual statement, but we let it pass. Shortly after, we were back under Canadian control. The Canadian controller said, "United 939, U.S. airspace is CLOSED. Where are you going to land?" I have to say that statement got our attention. I told him that we would be right back to him and we called our dispatcher in Chicago. His recommendation was to come as far west as they would let us and to ask for Toronto as our divert point. He told us that there had been a terrorist attack in New York and nothing more. We asked for Toronto and they gave us a clearance. Our other options were

either Montreal or Quebec. On the way into Toronto, I briefed the First Flight Attendant and made an announcement to our passengers. We landed in Toronto at 1054 hours on the morning of September 11, 2001. We were the third aircraft on the ground that morning. A Northwest DC-10 and a Saudi Boeing 777, also diverted, had preceded us for landing.

After landing we were given taxi instructions to the cargo ramp. The deplaning process was delayed because Toronto had to get busses and air stairs to our aircraft. My crew consisted of three pilots and thirteen flight attendants. The crew members were taken separately to our operations office and we remained there until hotel accommodations could be arranged.

This was the first time we found out about the attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. While we were waiting, the Chief Pilot of United Flight Operations walked into the operations center. He would be the one key person to handle the flight operation of United that day and he was on vacation in Canada. He was fishing with the Chief Pilot from American Airlines which, as everybody knows, was the other U.S. airline involved in the attacks on 9-11. He was around for only a short time before he departed. He was going to attempt to cross into the U.S. even though the borders were closed.

Because we arrived so early in the day, my entire crew was given rooms in the same hotel in downtown Toronto. This was extremely lucky, as we later found out. As the day progressed and more and more flights diverted into Toronto, hotel space became non-existent and crews were scattered everywhere. The fact that my flight was so far west and that my crew was all-together in one hotel helped us become the first aircraft to eventually return to Chicago. This also allowed us to have crew meetings each day to hear what news each crew member had heard through

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Flight on 9-11 (from Page 18)

whatever source and to talk about our eventual return to Chicago O'Hare.

Air Traffic Control over the Atlantic on 9-11

The aircraft handling that day over the Atlantic was broken down into three segments. Longitude 30 West (30W) is approximately the midpoint between Europe and Canada.

Segment #1. Flights east of 30W were sent back to Great Britain or Europe.

Segment #2. Flights west of 30W were sent into the Canadian Province airports: Gander, Goose Bay, Halifax, St. Johns. These crews and passengers were scattered all over the cities for lack of hotel space. There was usually no choice of divert airport for these flights.

Segment #3 Flights that were already in Canada were given Canadian airports like Toronto, Quebec, and Montreal.

Return to the U.S.

On the morning of September 13, 2001, the United Airlines crew desk contacted me and asked if I could get my crew together for a return flight. Since we were all together and we were that far west, we were chosen to come home first. The people in the hotel and all Canadians that we encountered could not have been more accommodating.

We departed the hotel mid afternoon and returned to the airport. The taxiways and ramps looked like a parking lot. There were aircraft from all over Europe, the U.S., and Canada parked everywhere as far as we could see. Our aircraft had been towed from the cargo ramp and placed at a gate for boarding and departure.

After a thorough screening by security, we eventually reached our operations center and began flight planning. Many of our passengers chose to try to drive across the border to get home. Our full passenger load from London was now considerably less. During the boarding process, Toronto secu-

rity came to me to discuss one of my passengers. They told me that he was Arabic, he started his flight in North Africa, and he was on a one-way ticket. After discussing this individual with security I refused to let him return as a passenger. I never saw this individual, but there is a follow up to this incident.

With the lengthy security procedures, we finally pushed back from the gate at 1921 hours. We were the only aircraft moving on the Toronto airport, so taxi and takeoff were accomplished with no delay. Our flight to Chicago was uneventful, but the arrival in Chicago was surreal. Again we were the only aircraft in the air and if you have ever been through O'Hare, you will know how strange this looked to us.

We landed at 2108 hours and began our taxi to our gate. There were no lights on the whole airport other than the one runway (9 Right) that we used and the taxiway lights. There were no aircraft anywhere, no fuel trucks, no baggage carts, no tugs, no people, no lights in the terminals. O'Hare was a complete ghost town. The only thing moving was my aircraft.

Gate Arrival at O'Hare

One of the most moving and memorable events of this whole story was about to happen and I cannot, to this day (so many years later), tell this part of the story without becoming emotional. Since early in the day on September 11th we had been in Canada. We were not allowed to reenter our own country and we were watching the horrible video footage of the Twin Towers and the Pentagon burning on TV every day. The news was overwhelming for most, if not all, of my crew and now we had returned home to an empty airport that looked like a ghost town.

As we approached our assigned gate, we where met with the sight of United Airlines trucks fanned out in a "V" on each side of the approach to the gate. Each truck had its headlights on bright and the United Airlines employees that met us were standing on the trucks or beside them waving small American

flags. From the flight deck it was an incredible sight and I know the passengers could also see this wonderful welcome from their windows. I will never forget it!

After the passengers were all off the aircraft our crew gathered and walked off together. We were again met in the terminal by more United employees with American flags, all cheering for us and our arrival. We had done nothing exceptional and we were lucky to be the first flight back to O'Hare, but the welcome was enjoyed by everyone on the crew. A flight manager met my crew of three pilots and had rooms waiting for us at the hotel right across the street. Check in was easy even though the hotel was full.

Since I lived in Cleveland, there was no way to get home because nothing was flying. I let the crew desk know where I was and I spent the next three days at O'Hare. The crew desk called me the night of September 15th and asked if I wanted to return to London on the next night. I returned to London on the same flight schedule for a three-day trip starting the evening of September 16, 2001.

Afterthought #1

While I was on my flight on September 9, 2001 to London, my wife Linda had gone to California to visit our son Mike and our granddaughter, Lilly. She was planning to meet me after my arrival in Chicago on September 11th. Linda was on her aircraft at the Orange County airport waiting for departure from the gate when the agent came on the aircraft and announced the attacks in New York and Washington. Her flight was canceled and she returned to my son's home in Irvine. After many phone calls, we planned to meet in O'Hare after my flight to London returned on September 18th. That worked just fine and we returned home together that night.

Afterthought #2

The man who was my passenger

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from London to Toronto on 9-11 that was denied boarding did turn up later.

Approximately one month later, sometime in October, I was reading the *USA Today* newspaper. On one full page there was a collection of photos of individuals and brief descriptions of each person. These were people that the U.S. government believed were involved with the 9-11 terrorist attacks. Under one of the photos the description read: originated in Algeria, transitions in London, detained in Canada, returned to London. This is the exact description of my passenger that Toronto pointed out and I denied boarding on the afternoon of September 13. I cannot be sure if this was my passenger, but with that information it is sure reasonable to assume it was.

Afterthought #3

I retired from United three months later on January 1, 2002. I have to say that during those three months the 9-11 experience was always in my mind.

My other related experience was on a domestic flight from Seattle to Denver in October 2001. After push-back from our gate in Seattle the first flight attendant came to the cockpit. She said that one of our passengers had told another flight attendant, "If I go to Denver on this flight I will die and everybody on the flight will die with me." We had Air Marshals on board, so I had her contact them and they had him detained quickly. We returned to the gate and the police and FBI met us and took him into custody.

After a long delay we were told that this man was on the FBI list as a missing person and suicidal. We eventually left for Denver after losing many of our passengers. Retirement was looking better and better.

There are many other memories from my many years flying for United Airlines, but this one on 9-11 is by far the most memorable.

Skunk Works at 75

by John A. Tirpak
Air Force Magazine
June 14, 2018



Lockheed Martin's "Skunk Works" advanced development division celebrated its 75th anniversary today with a company party for employees. There are almost 4,000 of them in Palmdale, CA, up from 2,700 not long ago.

Business is booming. The Skunk Works is doing about \$1 billion a year in business, comparable to what it earned at the height of the F-117 project. "The parking lot is getting pretty full," said Jeff Babione, who took over as head of Skunk Works today from Rob Weiss, who has held the job since 2013.

Weiss said that Skunk Works is diversifying into directed energy and other technologies not necessarily associated with aeronautics, and Babione said there's no plan to hold aeronautics at a certain percentage of the overall business.

"We're looking at, where does our customer need us to be," he said. "What are their toughest problems? Maybe problems they don't even know they have." The Skunk Works will aim to provide those answers before the questions are asked. Hewing to a certain percentage of platform work "narrows your field" unnecessarily, he added.

He singled out Hypersonics as "a national need and we look at it as the core of our defense policies." Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning he said will be applicable across all domains, and lasers may be "just another weapon" that goes on future platforms. The organization's "moonshot" is a miniature fusion reactor, which could

lead to aircraft with unlimited range and persistence.

Major announced efforts at the Skunk Works include the Navy's MQ-25 autonomous unmanned tanker; the Air Force and Navy Next-Generation Air Dominance programs; next-generation surveillance drones, including a stealthy successor to the MQ-9 Reaper (although the Air Force has not yet stated requirements for such a system); the Marine Corps battlefield Unmanned Aircraft System called "Ares;" futuristic cargo-carrying aircraft ranging from flying wing aircraft to airships; Multi-Domain Command and Control systems; and hypersonics. All that only adds up to about 15 percent of the unit's business. The other 85 percent is "black," or secret.

Babione said there will be greater collaboration with commercially oriented entities like Google, because they have great "horsepower" to apply to AI and machine learning. However, they don't understand the security situation or the threat, and so there's mutual benefit to partnerships with such companies, Weiss said. "You can't overstate the domain expertise" the Skunk Works possesses, he said. How that collaboration will work is "something that will be matured in the next few years."

Weiss also said he doesn't think the time of big production runs of airborne systems is over, even though some have argued that technology demands short runs of systems quickly supplanted by new ones. Weiss said the F-35, for example, can be upgraded and improved for decades to come and will be able to evolve along with the threat because of its open mission systems architecture.

The company showed off what it calls its "Einstein box," because of its acronym, Multi-domain Command and Control, or MC2. The unit can instantly perform tasks such as automatic target recognition and post that information to a friendly defense network, aiming the information at platforms that can attack

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the targets and battle commanders who need to know about them. The system can work with aircraft without requiring any integration with their existing flight programs or other processors. It's a "plug and play" unit, company technicians said, which fits the new paradigm of networking to enhance capability.

The Skunk Works reckons its anniversary to the June day in 1943 that Clarence "Kelly" Johnson, then chief of engineering for Lockheed, signed a contract with the Army Air Forces to develop, within 180 days, a jet fighter. Johnson handpicked a small team to attack the problem and delivered the XP-80 in only 143 days.

Asked to tackle other projects, Johnson held his team together and continued to rapidly deliver cutting-edge aircraft in record time. The organization prides itself on the culture Johnson created to build expert teams who took on tough challenges with the proviso that government oversight was minimal and that there was trust between the company and its customers. On a project code-named "Suntan," Johnson returned 65 percent of the money paid by the government because it became clear the requested technology was still out of reach. That kind of action cemented the unit's "reputation for integrity," Weiss told reporters.

The projects undertaken by the Skunk Works were done "quickly, affordably, and met urgent national needs," Weiss asserted. Johnson's mantra was that the company would only promise "one miracle per program" and rely wherever possible on existing technology and proven systems to save time, complexity, and money.

Frank Cappuccio, head of the organization from 2001 to 2011, said Johnson was successful because he could "cherry pick" the best engineers from Lockheed, and never really went back to his job as chief of engineering. "He was having too much fun."



Editor's Note. Aircraft designed and developed by the Skunk Works include: F-80 Shooting Star, U-2 Dragon Lady, F-104 Starfighter, SR-71 Blackbird, F-117A Nighthawk, F-22 Raptor, and the F-35 Lightning II.

Boxer 22

by Tom Waldron

in *The Vietnam War from the Cockpit*
Edited by Col. Dennis M. Ridnour

Key aircraft in Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) missions during the Vietnam War were HH-3E "Jolly Green Giant" and HH-53 "Super Jolly Green Giant" helicopters, and A-1E "Skyraiders," which provided rescue escort for the helicopters and used the "Sandy" call sign on CSAR missions. Forward Air Control (FAC) aircraft, command and control aircraft, strike aircraft, and tankers – as necessary, completed the aircraft needed to meet CSAR mission requirements.

New H-3 crews came to Nakon Phanom Royal Thai AFB (NKP), Thailand on temporary duty from the 37th Aerospace and Rescue Squadron in Da Nang, South Vietnam. Normally, one of our NKP pilots would fly with one of their aircraft commanders, and *vice versa*, and each chopper had one PJ (para-rescuer) from each location – so we had a very mixed crew. Most of the PJs knew each other from previous training schools. They were all super guys, so it did not matter who was on with you for the day. The Flight Engineers were all top-notch guys. Most of them had maintenance backgrounds and understood the mechanical, hydraulic, electrical, and fuel systems.

On December 5, 1969, Maj. Bob was

up early on alert duty, flying copilot with Capt. Chuck Smith. I was to fly a training mission later that afternoon, so I made my way down to the operations building on the flight line. I liked to stop and watch the A-1's taxi out, four at a time, run up their engines, and then make their takeoff rolls. It was great to hear the sound of those big engines roaring as they lumbered down the runway, waiting for that magic liftoff speed. I could see Bob's H-3 sitting on the ramp, ready to launch if needed. After a phone call from Saigon, the operations clerk would turn on his mic and announce, "Launch the Jollys!" If someone was shot down, the air war in Southeast Asia would virtually stop while USAF and USN aircrews supported the rescue effort to bring them back safely. No new POWs on our watch!

A little after 10 o'clock in the morning, I entered the operations area. A large map was used to track any current rescue missions. The map was not marked. Before each training flight, you still needed to get your flight gear: parachute, combat survival vest with radios and a first aid kit and weapons in case you were diverted from a training flight to an actual combat mission. We were always prepared for the worst-case situation.

The operations phone rang shortly after 10:30 AM, and "Launch the Jollys" was the clerk's message. I could see Maj. Bob and Capt. Smith heading toward their chopper. It was Bob's first mission. Slowly, the mission details came into operations. An F-4 had been shot down near a small village in Laos near the border of North Vietnam. His call sign was *Boxer 22*. On board were a pilot and his back-seater (guy-in-back or GIB). They would now be known as *Boxer 22A* (pilot) and *Boxer 22B* (GIB). That way the On-Scene Commander would know which crew member he was talking to during the mission. They would normally use Guard channel,

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243.0 UHF or 121.5 VHF, to talk to the survivors. All other aircraft in the area could monitor any conversations between the downed crewman and the On-Scene Commander.

As I studied the map location of the rescue site, I nearly froze. The site, Ban Phanop, Laos, was just on the west side of the famous Mu Gia Pass. It was one of four passes that came from North Vietnam and into the infamous Ho Chi Minh Trail on which many trucks and beasts of burden traveled to take ammo, fuel, and other supplies to the Viet Cong and regular North Vietnamese troops in the South. I quickly pulled out my maps of the area to look for known antiaircraft sites and SAM sites. Many such sites surrounded the area, and it would take a while to silence the anti-aircraft guns. Immediately, the USAF began to launch strike aircraft, F-4's and F-105's, to take out the AAA guns. We had several rescue crews airborne and standing by in the area. The crews were from Udorn, NKP, and Da Nang. Also in the area were fighters armed for air-to-air fighting against any potential MiG threat in the area. The Russian/Chinese-built MiGs could be launched from two nearby areas. One, of course, was the Hanoi area and the other was an airfield located near Vinh. A C-130 with the King call sign controlled the mission, keeping track of available incoming aircraft, and they would designate the safe areas where strike aircraft could hold until needed. More KC-135 refueling aircraft were diverted to provide needed fuel in the coming minutes or hours. The USAF was very involved.

Not to be left out, the USN was sending strike aircraft from carriers. It was now a total U.S. effort. We could hear some of the pilots' conversations on our radio receiver in operations. Whoever was not on the schedule was gathered around the radio. We could hear Sandy Lead, "*Jolly 17*, understand you're tak-

ing severe gunfire and you are pulling out to the west. Jink, *Jolly*, jink!" That was Maj. Bob's chopper. "Jink" is a fighter pilot's term meaning don't fly in a straight line! About forty minutes later, the first two H-3 "*Jolly Greens*" landed at NKP. I went out on the ramp to see if I could help. Bob was walking toward me. "Tommy," he said, "I didn't think we'd get out of that place alive. Those big guns rolled out of the caves and all hell broke loose! We were in a hover at about 50 feet, and then we had to turn the chopper around and head west. I still don't know how they missed us." He was now a combat veteran.



Two FACs ran another series of airstrikes and the Sandy lead called in *Jolly 72*, an HH-53. Capt. Ron was flying copilot on that one. They, too, got shot at and were heading westward when it happened. A mobile 37 mm aircraft gun opened fire as they flew directly over the gun. Direct hit! The 37 mm round exploded on the HH-53 cargo hook located just under the center of the aircraft. They landed at NKP as well due to the severe battle damage. Bob and I walked over to Ron. He was shaking his head back and forth.

"What happened?" I asked.

Ron said, "We went out the same route that we went in, but the 37 mm site waited until we were leaving to open fire. Thank God they hit the cargo hook and it absorbed the explosion. Every cockpit gauge was in motion. Things were flying all over the chopper. Can you believe it? No one in the cabin area or cockpit was hit by flying pieces of metal. The exploded round made a hole in the bottom of the fuselage the size of a card table!"

By the end of the day, more than a half a dozen HH-53's and a couple of H-3's were hit by ground fire in the rescue area. The bad guys liked to shoot at the six rotor blades, perhaps thinking that by shooting them the chopper would crash. Most of the HH-53's could still fly, though a bit rough. Once the chopper landed, it was grounded until the main rotor blades were replaced. The supply officer at Udorn had just complained about storing over forty main rotor blades. But, at six blades per chopper, he soon ran out.

Most of the first day attempts were made to rescue *Boxer 22A*. On the last rescue attempt, the pilot just missed getting on board the HH-53, but he revealed his location to the bad guys. Sandy Lead told both the downed crew members to settle in for the night and we'd be back at first light. That meant that rescue crews would be airborne before sunrise so that they would be on station just at sunrise to make a quick pick-up. This procedure had worked before.

The next day, December 6, 1969, it appeared that the bad guys had been busy. First, there was no reply from *Boxer 22A*. Sandy lead called *Boxer 22B*. He came up on his radio. "I heard gunshots last night and some screaming," he said. "I moved a bit further west of the small river." The GIB, Lt. Bergeron, was alive and well and, so far, hidden from the enemy.

No word from *Boxer 22A*. Was the pilot dead? Was he captured? Capt. Holly Bell and crew made one of the first attempts that day. His copilot that day was Capt. Wade Weeks, fixed-wing convert. They, too, were hit by ground fire. Someone on the crew was hit, and they were coming back to NKP. The base hospital crew was standing by with doctors and med-techs. When they landed and taxied in, Holly Bell called in, "One of my PJs was hit. He didn't make it." Dead? One of our PJs was shot and was now dead?

Continued on Page 23

Boxer 22 (from Page 22)

Slowly, Holly's crew came into the operations room. I recognized Capt. Weeks and went over to talk with him. He was a bachelor and didn't have any brothers or sisters. He and I always got along since he went to North Carolina State, big rivals of my Clemson Tigers.

"Wade," I asked, "did you bring in your classified package and M-16?"

"No," he said.

"Sit down. I'll run out and get your package and weapons."

As I trotted over to the HH-53, I noticed many of the base guys hanging around the chopper. A young PJ inside had been shot and killed in action. Why were these guys looking at the helicopter? I became a bit miffed and went over and began to chew out the lookers. Many outranked me, but I didn't care. One of the Colonels said to me as he left, "You're right, I'm sorry." He turned to the others and said, "Let's go!" They did. I climbed in the HH-53 and gathered up Wade's personal gear. I looked back. There, next to his bulletproof floor pan were the young PJ and the medical crew.

Somehow a bullet came through the floor, missed the pan, and came under his helmet. I don't think he felt anything. He was a young airman, David Davison, about the same age as my youngest brother, Terry. This young hero was someone's son, somebody's brother, somebody's nephew, or friend. He would never be someone's husband or father. This was my first time during combat to see someone who had paid the ultimate price. He gave his life in defense of his country. He did so, trying to rescue a comrade in harm's way. He was a hero. I am sorry I did not know him better in his short life.

From then on, I made it a point to know my PJs and flight engineers. I knew that they were the most dependable warriors I would meet during my lifetime. We couldn't forget what we saw and had to keep memories alive, but, most importantly, we had to move

on to tomorrow. Our friends would expect us to do so.

On the third day, December 7, Maj. Bob had gone back in with Maj. Ed Robbins. They had a 37 mm shell go off very close. I later said that Robby's ability to handle that H-3 saved the chopper and their lives. Two new HH-53's moved into the area for another attempt to rescue *Boxer 22B*. Next, it was my turn in the barrel flying with our Detachment Commander, Lt. Col. Joe Lyle. I gave our assigned H-3 a thorough check to ensure it was ready for flight. We would be next. We were strapped in awaiting launch. But, before we lifted off, it happened! Lt. Col. Shipman and Capt. Rich Basket and crew picked up *Boxer 22B*. They were headed back to NKP. The base commander and others involved in the rescue gathered with the base medical crew who were waiting to take the rescued Lieutenant to the hospital for examination and treatment if needed. The HH-53 pulled off the runway and taxied up to the parking area.

Lt. Woody Bergeron stepped out of the HH-53 and walked toward the waiting crowd. He stopped, saluted the base commander, and then reached into the flight suit pocket on his lower right leg. He pulled out a bag of muddy water. He turned and handed it to the doctor and said, "I lost my water purification tablets two days ago. I've been drinking this stuff, so you might want to see what's in there."

Woody was still thinking, even after all he's been through. Tonight, he would once again sleep in a bed. His thoughts will always be with his pilot, *Boxer 22A*. More than a dozen choppers received various degrees of battle damage during the rescue attempts, but most would become airborne again. We couldn't afford too many.

By days end, the three-day rescue mission was one of the longest of the war up to that time. We Yanks just don't give up. It was then I realized that I was flying among heroes every day. I remembered reading about "giving

your life for a brother." I believe it was in the *New Testament* in the *Book of John*. I need to read that again.

Editor Ridnour's Note. A total of 154 sorties were flown on the second day including 74 by Sandys, 50 by fighters, 14 by FACs, 5 by HC-130P's, and 11 by HH-53's. The entire operation lasted 51 hours during which a total of 366 sorties were flown, resulting in severe damage to 12 helicopters and five A-1's.

Col. Bud Day Promoted

Air Force Magazine

June 12, 2018

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David L. Goldfein posthumously promoted former POW and Medal of Honor recipient Col. George E. "Bud" Day to brigadier general on June 8, 2018.

Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain, Day's cellmate during their captivity in Hanoi, introduced the advancement, which was directed by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act and became official on March 27, 2018.

Day, who died in July 2013, was flying his F-100 Super Sabre on a "Fast FAC" mission over North Vietnam when he was shot down, seriously injured, and immediately captured on August 26, 1967.

He escaped from his captors in North Vietnam, but was wounded and recaptured in South Vietnam prior to reaching safety, and returned to the North.

Day was repatriated on March 14, 1973. He eventually returned to active flying status and retired in 1977.

Bud Day is one of the most decorated officers in USAF history with almost 70 military decorations, of which more than 50 are for combat, including the Medal of Honor, the Air Force Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, and the Silver Star. He wore 12 campaign battle stars.

DARPA Gremlins

DARPA News and Events
May 9, 2018

Airborne launch and recovery of low-cost unmanned aerial systems could enhance combat operations in contested areas and present significant per-mission cost savings.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is progressing toward its plan to demonstrate airborne launch and recovery of multiple unmanned aerial systems (UAS), targeted for late 2019. Now in its final phase, the goal of the *Gremlins* program is to develop a full-scale technology demonstration featuring the air recovery of multiple low-cost, reusable UAS, or “gremlins.”

Safety, reliability, and affordability are key objectives for the system, which would launch groups of UAS from multiple types of military aircraft while out of range of adversary defenses.

Once gremlins complete their mission, a C-130 would retrieve them in the air and carry them home. Ground crews would then prepare them for their next use within 24 hours.

“Early flight tests have given us confidence we can meet our objective to recover four gremlins in 30 minutes,” said Scott Wierzbanski, program manager in DARPA’s Tactical Technology Office.

The gremlins’ expected lifetime of about 20 uses could provide significant cost advantages by reducing payload and airframe costs, and by having lower mission and maintenance costs than conventional platforms.

The C-130 is the demonstration platform for the *Gremlins* program, but Wierzbanski says the [military] Services could easily modify the system for another transport aircraft or other major weapons system.

Gremlins also can incorporate several types of sensors weighing up to a total of 150 pounds and easily integrate technologies to address different types of missions.



Button Busters 1971

from *Caribou Airlines, Vol. V*

SSgt. Charles T. Beirlair, SSgt. Henry B. Hutton, Sgt. Darryl Evridge, and Sgt. Leonard W. Leis, Aero Repair Shop, were named Field Maintenance Mechanics for March 1971 and received the 483rd Field Maintenance Squadron Button Buster Award.

The Button Buster Award recognized “the outstanding NCOs/Airmen or Section who displayed professionalism, job knowledge/performance and devotion to duty through the previous month [and] is to publicize the fact that they

distinguished themselves by giving that extra-added effort.”

The mechanics were commended for their outstanding efforts in preparing C-7A S/N 63-9738 for salvage and recovery from Tan Linh to Tan Son Nhut to repair extensive damage caused in a landing accident on 27 February.

The accident occurred when the pilot failed to correct for the crab in the plane’s attitude prior to touching down in a strong crosswind landing. The aircraft veered to the left of the runway after touchdown. The left main gear collapsed and the left wing and propeller contacted the ground. The left wing separated from the aircraft just outboard of the left engine. All crew members escaped without injury.

The mechanics worked long hours under extremely difficult conditions. No equipment was available to assist them in the disassembly of the aircraft. Utilizing their initiative, they succeeded in this task in a minimum amount of time. Considering all the factors involved, it was a truly outstanding achievement.



Letter to the C-7A Association

by Judy Gray Bowling Morrison
August 6, 2018

To: Col. Pat Hanavan, USAF, Ret.
and C-7A Caribou Association

From: Judy Gray Bowling Morrison
Widow of Lt. David B. Bowling,
USAF, 459th TAS, January - December
1969.

Killed in Action on 26 December
1969

Dear Col. Hanavan:

For some time I have considered writing to you or someone in the Caribou Association. I need to tell the Association how grateful I am to you for the "band of Caribou brothers" you sent to La Plata, MD on Veterans Day 2017. On that day the United Methodist Church of La Plata was having a rededication of the David B. Bowling Memorial Chapel.

The original of this chapel was a nice sized room within the church containing twelve pews, a lectern, an altar, and a baptismal font. It was the result of some planning and designing that David's family and I did with some of the funds that were given to the church as memorials at David's death in Vietnam on December 26, 1969. This chapel was used for small services, weddings, prayer services, etc. Unfortunately the building the chapel was in was literally leveled when a tornado came through the town around sixteen years ago.

The chapel was not included in the rebuilding of this destroyed part of the church. Last year a member of the church, Rick Boggs, found the dedication plaque and wondered who David Bowling was. He made it his mission to find out about him and the chapel. Consequently, he succeeded in securing an area of the church for a temporary chapel to memorialize my husband. Rick determined that this temporary chapel space should be rededicated on Veteran's Day 2017. (There are plans for a new permanent chapel to be in-

cluded in a future building.)

I am not sure how he contacted you or the Caribou Association, but on that Veteran's Day Sunday morning six members of the Caribou Association showed up for the service! They were recognized at the church's worship service, along with many other veterans from all military branches. Following this regular Sunday service, they joined interested members of the church in the space that had been set up as a temporary chapel.

The six Caribou Association members present were all Caribou pilots (as was my husband) in Vietnam.

Several were in the 459th TAS at the same time and on the same base as David. Others were either in another unit or were in the 459th at a different time. It is hard to say how much my heart (as well as my eyes) swelled as I heard several of them speak about knowing and being with David in Vietnam in 1969.

One of these pilots had been a co-pilot on some of David's missions. He was scheduled to fly with David to Tien Phuoc on the day that an enemy sniper shot David as he was on landing approach to deliver ammunition to a Special Forces camp. Plans changed as David told him to go and have his Christmas meal. Another fellow pilot had eaten a meal with him the day before. What joy, as well as sorrow, it was for me to hear them talk about something they remembered from the time they were with David in Vietnam 48 years ago! Others from the church and family spoke also. Every talk was so meaningful to David's family and to me.

There is no way I can adequately thank the following members of the Caribou Association for taking the time to travel to Maryland for this service in memory of a fallen "brother": Gary Clark, Bill Jordan, Link Spann, Art Candenuist, Bob Striegel, and Marty Reza. So many thanks to each of these Caribou veterans!

The expression "it is never too late" is now so true to me. All I had been

told about David's death was that he had been shot in the neck and his plane crashed. I now know so much more about what really happened and it has given me so much clarity about that event so long ago. I have revisited that time over and over in my mind. I have reread the many letters I received from David telling me of each day's events as well the many missions he flew before his death. I have asked many questions.

I have read Pat Hanavan's *Vol. III of Caribou Airlines*, given to me in Maryland by Gary Clark. The meeting of some of David's "Caribou brothers" and hearing them tell me about that time in the Vietnam War has been so cathartic for me even though my husband's death was so many years ago.

I am not sure how war deaths are handled now and I really cannot criticize how David's death was reported to me. At the young age that I was at the time, it just seemed like the only duty the Air Force had to me was to give me my benefits and be done with it. Perhaps I should have questioned my Summary Courts Officer more.

Yes, I had contact with my husband's family and I received letters of condolence from Air Force friends and others, but I never felt like I had the whole picture. Well, now I feel like I do! And that is thanks to David's "band of Caribou brothers." Many thanks and much appreciation goes to them for remembering and expressing their memories. That was probably not an easy thing for them to do, but hopefully sharing made it better for them. It was certainly beneficial for me!

I am just so impressed at how the C-7A Caribou Association has brought this group of airmen together. May the camaraderie you share sustain you as you remember your time in Vietnam. You are certainly to be commended and honored for your willingness to serve, your patriotism, and your love of the "Bou!"

Continued on Page 26

Letter to Assoc. (from Page 25)

I was always thankful that David's job was to help, as helping was the job of the Caribou. Thanks to all!

Most Gratefully,

Judy Gray Bowling Morrison

Editor's Note. Members who would like to share memories of David Bowling with Judy may send their stories to her at judygray.m@gmail.com or to the newsletter editor at ron.lester43@verizon.net

Orphans Evacuated

from *Caribou Clarion*
April 1968

Cam Ranh Bay (7AF), Personnel of the 458th Tactical Airlift Squadron, 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing, using C-7A Caribou aircraft evacuated more than 200 orphans and 10 nuns from Ban Me Thuot and brought them to Cam Ranh Bay AB (CRB) after a recent battle between the Viet Cong (VC) and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops.

The nuns and their charges, orphans and young Vietnamese girls training for sisterhood, were trapped and hid in a bunker early one morning and stayed hidden for 72 hours and prayed as Viet Cong and friendly forces battled for control of the city. As enemy forces crept into the southern portion of Ban Me Thuot and began their attempt to overrun the entire town, ARVN troops and other friendly forces took their stand in the northern section of the city. The Vinh Son School and orphanage were caught in the middle of the vicious fire-fight.

The nuns and the children ran for the safety of the bunker and stayed hidden. At times, the bunker was in the impact area of both VC and friendly mortar and artillery shells. The VC moved toward the school and the bunker and advanced as far as the church adjacent to the school when USAF pilots flying

fighter-bombers were summoned to the area. Following the air strikes the enemy began to retreat.

On the fourth day of fighting, friendly forces found the bunker where the sisters and children were hiding and the USAF Caribous evacuated them from Ban Me Thuot. Temporary facilities were set up for half the children at Nha Trang AB, while the others were brought to CRB. When the youngsters arrived at CRB several organizations pitched in to feed and house them.

Capt. James V. Gordon, 38, of Cape Coral, FL, Commander of the Medical Squadron, 12th USAF Hospital was called. He delivered more than 2,000 pounds of food for the orphans and 30 pounds of fish which he and a handful of Navy personnel caught in the waters near the base.

The 555th Civil Engineering Squadron helped out by laying floorboards and erecting tents for a temporary shelter. The tents were put up in the rear of the historic My Ca Monastery on CRB.

The children were taken to the monastery where there were tears and screams of laughter as the children and nuns were reunited. Tears of joy ran down the cheeks of Sister Bernadine, Mother Superior of the orphanage and school at Ban Me Thuot, as the tiny nun gathered the children together and thanked those who saved them. "It brings me much joy and happiness to see them safe," she said, "Thank you for everything."

Words of Wisdom

Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world.

A veteran doesn't have that problem.

Ronald Reagan

B-17 Navigator's Log



12-21-43 Our group raided Munster, Germany today. "Red Squadron" did not fly. However, they got our crew up to fly the weather plane. We took off two hours before the group did and sent back weather reports until after they had gone. Climbed through the clouds and broke out at 5,000 feet and went down to Splasher #7 and reported weather from there. Let down at Ipswich and came home.

12-23-43, Mission No. 16. Germany's new secret weapon. The long range rocket guns. Our gun installation was in a patch of woods a few miles south of St. Omer, France, 20 miles from the Channel. Carried sixteen 200-pound demolition bombs. Briefed at 0830. Took off at 1130. Left England at 1330.

At IP (Initial Point) our group peeled off by squadrons and went over the target in squadrons. Had plenty of fighter support and therefore no German fighters.

Didn't find the woods the first time so had to circle around and make another bomb run. The second time over, the flak was getting awful accurate. We got a nice hole in our tail.

Dropped bombs on target the second run and were sure we destroyed the rocket run, if there was one there.

Got back to base at 1600 and visibility was about a mile. Had to circle the field while Robby landed. He had his rudder controls shot away and landed on A.F.C.E. (Automatic Flight Control Equipment).

Could hardly see runways so had to circle until 1730 and then landed by flares, fires, etc.

Thought this one would be a milk run, but it didn't turn out to be so.

Tiger Tries to Join Platoon

by John Harrison

A lot of Vietnam is simply gorgeous, breathtaking and gorgeous. It was early in the morning and not very hot yet. Alpha Company was walking in platoon column formations through an emerald green, vast grassy area overlooking the South China Sea that could have easily been converted into a luxury, top flight, golf course simply by putting in the holes and placing the little flags on the greens. The sand traps were already in place, as were these sort of nascent greens, fairways, and rough. It was perfect, all just waiting for golf balls and golfers.

There is an actual golf course near there now, the Ocean Dunes Golf Club, Phan Thiet, designed by Nick Faldo. It is reputed to be one of the finest golf courses in Southeast Asia and is located just northeast of Phan Thiet, only a few miles from where this action took place.

I was actually enjoying our early morning stroll when, suddenly, as we walked along, I heard someone screaming from the radio handset behind me. I looked back to see Hal Dobie, my RTO (Radio-Telephone Operator), running up to give me the black plastic handset he was holding out in his right hand.

Then it sunk in. The voice on the radio had yelled, "It's a lion! It's a lion! It's a f...ing tiger!"

Right before Hal got to me with the handset, a perfect maelstrom of bullets arrived first. There were bullets flying everywhere. Luckily no M-79 rounds were fired, so no explosions, but there was lots of lead flying all over, all around us, and close too. It was as though you could hear each bullet cracking harshly as it broke the sound barrier on its way past us. Intense, agonizing, and fierce at the same time.

Then, I saw the enormous, orange and black, candy-striped, white-fanged, cat, running flat out in the space between my platoon and the following platoon's

column formations. That cat was huge. Including the tail it looked to be at least 14 feet long. It was running all-out trying to get away from the crazy humans with the black bang sticks trying their best to hurt it. It was a tiger, a very big tiger – a just a few feet away tiger. No cage. No whip. No chair. No animal tamer. Thrilling yes, but in a really bad way.



Like everyone else in my platoon, I was dropping to the ground as fast as I could, because the bullets kept pouring in from behind us as the following platoon tried its best to shoot the fleet-footed tiger. I don't know how long it lasted, but the act of getting down on the ground was almost like being in some sort of scary cartoon horror movie where your feet come up, but you stay right there, suspended in mid-air waiting for gravity to take effect, while tracers flamed bright red as they flashed closely by. That part seemed to last forever as ever more bullets cracked and whistled all around us.

Everybody missed the tiger. When last seen, it was still heading northeast toward the South China Sea in the distance, still running flat out in spectacular leaps and graceful bounds across what still looked strangely like a well-manicured, gently rolling, golf fairway.

Although there is little worse for an infantryman than being fired on from the rear, I held my temper and complemented the following platoon leader, who will remain forever nameless, on the almost supernatural accuracy of his men in avoiding hitting any of my men

when his platoon had opened fire on the tiger; and, in the interest of future cooperation, I also did not mention the complete lack of any observable hits on the tiger.

Frankly though, the lack of hits worried me even more than the tiger had, but not as much as those bullets flashing by. But, that tiger, that was something special. I can't forget that tiger.

While no animals were hurt creating this story, it was not for lack of trying. Afterward, well afterward, I, for one, was glad that beautiful tiger got away.

It Is Your Turn to Share a Story

by Ron Lester [459, 67]

In "My First Reunion" on page 6, Tom Dawes captures the purpose of the Caribou Association reunions and why people go to them.

Part of it is seeing old friends and comrades. Part of it is remembering the past and our younger days. Maybe the most enjoyable part is the stories – the ones you tell and the ones you hear.

Like the reunions, the newsletter is a forum to share your stories and enjoy the stories of others. The newsletter serves C-7A Association members by providing a means to record those stories and share them with others

Just like the many of the stories Tom Dawes heard at the Dayton reunion, the stories do not have to be about Caribous or about Vietnam. We want to hear stories about your career, the airplanes you flew or maintained; the experiences you had that hold a place in your memory; and the people you served with who made a lasting impression.

Your turn. Please share your stories. Other C-7A Caribou Association members want to read them.

Send to:

ron.lester43@verizon.net

War Reporting 1968

by Uwe Siemon-Netto
Letter to the Editor
Wall Street Journal
February 15, 2018

On the 50th anniversary of the launching of the Tet Offensive by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces, the *Wall Street Journal* published an Op-ed article about the impact of less-than objective reporting of the Tet Offensive on U.S. public opinion. The following was written in response to that article.

Regarding William J. Luti's "Did Fake News Lose the Vietnam War?" (Op-ed, January 30, 2018): I am a journalist who covered the 1968 Tet Offensive in Hue for West German newspapers. There were three different sets of reporters accredited in Saigon at that time. The first category accounted for some 70% who hardly ever left the Saigon region. Category II consisted of fewer than 30% who did spend a lot of time in the field. I knew many of those well, including Peter Braestrup. We were far too busy reporting what we had seen to squander our time producing fake news. These combat reporters knew and wrote that the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong had lost the Tet Offensive militarily. But they were overshadowed by category III. These were the media stars flown in from New York or Washington for brief stints who often made ideologically motivated pronouncements on camera that were really a form of malpractice.

I remember how furious Peter Braestrup, I, and others were when Walter Cronkite stated in front of millions of U.S. viewers that the war couldn't be won, when in fact we had just witnessed American and South Vietnamese soldiers shed their blood vanquishing the Communists and destroying their infrastructure.

I stood next to Braestrup at a mass grave [near Hue] filled with the bodies of old men, women, and children.

A U.S. television team walked idly about this site. Braestrup asked them:

"Why don't you film this scene?"

"We are not here to spread anticommunist propaganda," one answered.

Editor's Note. Peter Braestrup, the former Washington Post Saigon correspondent, wrote the book "Big Story: How the American Press and television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington" (1977) which concluded that the reporting on Tet was a major failure of American journalism.

Letter Home

by Gene Haran, Jr. [458, 68]

This is a letter I wrote home, September 68, during my first tour in Vietnam:

"Glad to hear from you. It's been a while since I've heard from anyone. I guess it's in retaliation for my not writing. Have no particular reason for not writing, other than lengthy assignments I have been on. I guess you should know that now.

I'm now assigned to working on broke and downed birds during the day. No more nights. Our mission is to fly support, and supply food, ammo, etc. to the small Green Beret, Special Forces Camps over here.

We have an alert bird we keep ready in case of possible attacks on the camps. We mainly have all types of ammo ready to go, such as 105 mm artillery. Mostly the camps are along the Cambodian border. One camp, Duc Lap, had a siege recently that we helped suppress.

Oh, our aircraft is called a C-7A Caribou. It's the only plane that can get into these small airstrips. They land on mud, dirt, or PSP (steel planking) that connects together.

Any questions you may have, just ask me. Hope everything back in the world is ok. I have 99 days and a bag drag, before I return.

See you all, Gene"

Gene Haran was the crew chief of C-7A S/N 62-4192.

Hit in the Delta

by Jess Cogley [535, 68]
from *Newsletter 25-2*, Dec. 2014

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

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

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

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

We were extremely lucky that none of the bullets caused a fire or an explosion with the AVGAS.

I was especially thankful that the nose tire stopped that bullet from coming into the cockpit. We were fortunate again that we didn't have to spend the night at Bac Lieu as another Caribou brought us back to Vung Tau.

The worst part was filling out all the paperwork due to the "damaged" aircraft.



Mind Controls Drones

by Patrick Tucker
Defense One,
 September 6, 2018

DARPA's new research in brain computer interfaces (BCI) allows a pilot to control multiple simulated aircraft at the same time. A person with a chip embedded in their brain can now pilot a swarm of drones or even advanced fighter jets.

The work builds on research from 2015, which allowed a paralyzed woman to steer a virtual F-35 with only a small, surgically implantable microchip.

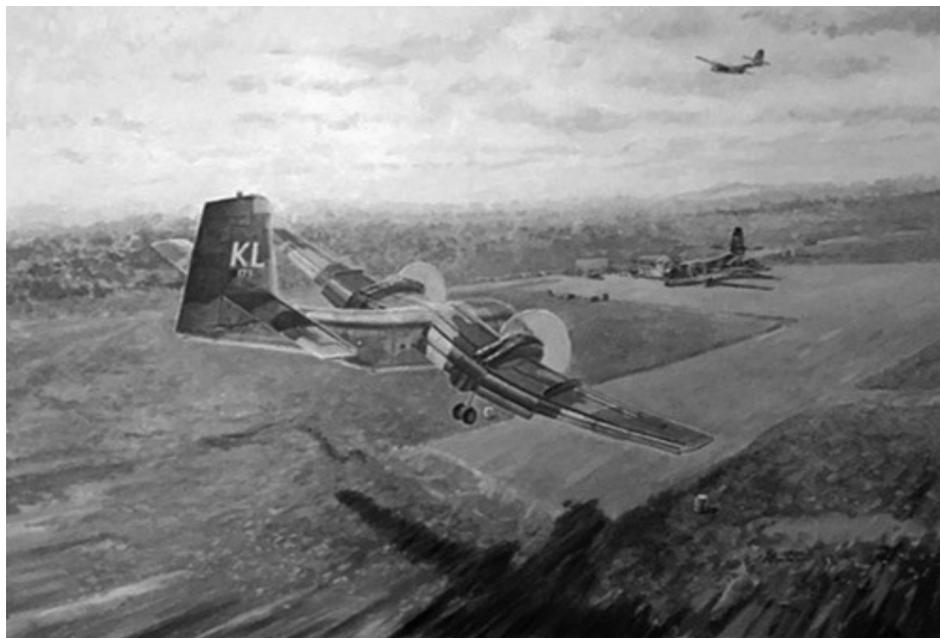
On September 6, 2018, agency officials announced they had scaled up the technology to allow a user to steer multiple jets at once. "As of today, signals from the brain can be used to command and control not just one aircraft but three simultaneous types of aircraft," said Justin Sanchez, who directs DARPA's biological technology office.

More importantly, DARPA was able to improve the interaction between pilot and the simulated jet to allow the operator, a paralyzed man named Nathan, to not just send, but also receive signals from the craft.

"The signals from those aircraft can be delivered directly back to the brain so that the brain of that user can also perceive the environment," said Sanchez. "It's taken a number of years to try and figure this out."

In essence, it's the difference between having a brain joystick and having a real telepathic conversation with multiple jets or drones about what's going on, what threats might be flying over the horizon, and what to do about them. "We've scaled it to three [aircraft], and have full sensory [signals] coming back.

The science has advanced rapidly in recent years, allowing for breakthroughs in brain-based communication, control of prosthetics, and even memory repair.



Caribou Painting Available

Giclée color prints on canvas of our painting by Alex Durr, a member of the American Society of Aviation Artists, are now available.

"C-7A CARIBOU AT SPECIAL FORCES CAMP"

16" by 20" print \$150

18" by 24" print \$180

24" by 36" print \$305

Giclée prints are mounted on gator board, framed with real mahogany and acrylic glass, boxed, and shipped via UPS Ground.

Mail your order and check made out to the C-7A Caribou Association to:
 Pat Hanavan, 12402 Winding Branch, San Antonio, TX 78230-2770
 Call Pat at 210-479-0226 if you have a question.

Review of *Caribou Airlines*, *Vol. IV and V*

by Col. Francis L. Kapp, USAF, Ret.
Daedalus Flyer, Summer 2018

Author Pat Hanavan completes his five-volume set with these last two books. *Vol. IV* covers 1970, with special interest on resupply efforts at Dak Pek and Dak Seang. *Vol. V* covers final USAF operations and the Vietnamization efforts that occurred in 1971 and 1972. Like the first three volumes, which I reviewed in an earlier *Daedalus Flyer*, these last two are also very

detailed and are based upon the official USAF histories of the wing, the tactical airlift squadrons, the maintenance squadrons, and the combat crew training squadron, augmented with stories from those who were there.

If you liked the first three volumes, you will also enjoy these. If you have not read any of them, I recommend you start with *Vol. I* and I think you will quickly realize your aviation library will need all five. Pat, thanks for preserving the USAF's history of the many accomplishments of this unique airlifter, the C-7 Caribou.

Vietnam to Western Airlines



Vietnam to Western Airlines Volume 2



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.

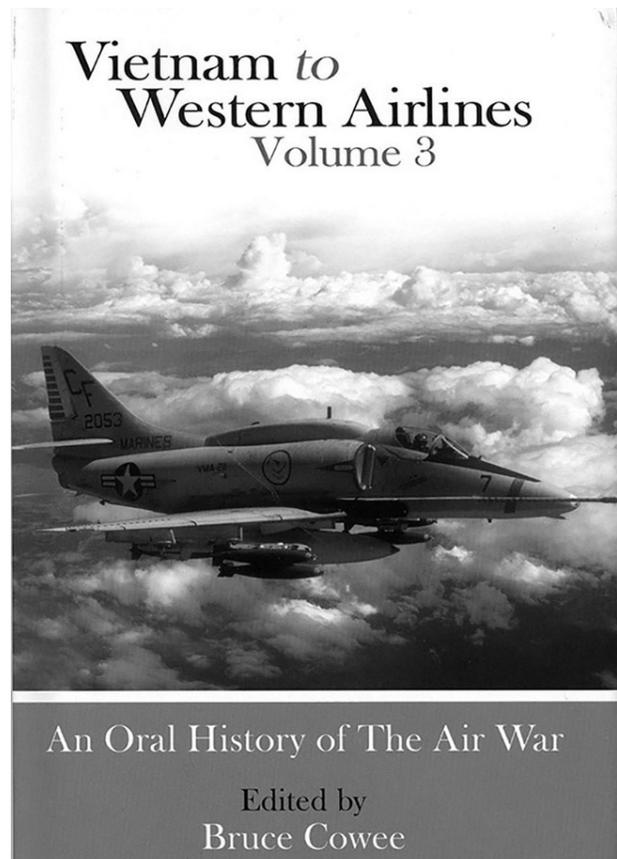
The stories are written by the men who were there and flew the missions. All the uniformed services who provided combat pilots, and all the types of aircraft and missions these pilots flew, are included in these volumes.

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.

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C-7A DVD #2

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Vietnam, 1966 — 1972

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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
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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
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Vietnam Country Maps

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