ARMY OTTER-CARIBOU ASSOCIATION
AOCA "ABOVE THE BEST"
JULY 2020

LOGBOOK

ARMY OTTER 91685

Submitted by Terry Love

Logbook Available Online - Go to www.otter-caribou.org

9155 35th Way N. Pinellas Park, FL 33782-5427 1-727-366-6969

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Please tell us if you've moved, changed your e-mail, gotten lost or recently found so we can update your membership roster information. Call EVP Bruce Silvey at 1-727-366-6969, e-mail him at BSilvey@aol.com or write him at 9155 35th Way N., Pinellas Park, FL 33782-5427. ***Roster copies available on request.***

Visit AOCA's web site at: http://www.otter-caribou.org/

Want to see your name in print? If so, please send your anecdotal, amusing, audacious, historical, and/or hysterical Otter, Caribou, or Neptune tale(s) (photos encouraged) to: Bill Upton, 2360 Vaccaro Dr., Sarasota, FL 34231 - 941-923-1695
Email: wsupton@verizon.net

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The year 2020 has been and continues to be an unusual year not only for our great Army Otter Caribou Association, but for our beloved United States of America. We have just recognized and honored those great patriots on Memorial Day who gave all to fight and protect our nation and citizens from enemies, foreign, domestic, seen and unseen. And we won! Currently, we are in another fight with the same type of enemies, both within and without.

Together we know how to beat challenges, be they pandemic virus or other unseen forces based on our proven history of how to fight both at home and abroad. Our forefathers over generations have provided us a detailed map of success and lessons learned fighting similar enemies we face today.

Our AOCA generation continued the winning spirit and dedication as we with the support of our families and friends, fought the protracted war in Vietnam. As a point of reference, I proudly recall our participation in the extreme and challenging testing with the 11th Air Assault Division with our great Caribou units and personnel operating 24-7 from unimproved short fields day and night throughout the Carolinas. After the extensive and successful tests demonstrating the proven and responsive capability of the Caribou, all units and members returned to Fort Benning prior to self-deployment, to Vietnam. The great success and recognition has been proudly recorded by many members and past presidents over the 35 year history in the AOCA Logbook! Please review the many great articles.

Please make special notes to attend our 2021 Reunion at Fort Benning, with family and friends where so much of our history and documented training was realized. FYI, we have a completed hotel contract for same time frame in October as the 2020 that had to be canceled due to COVID-19; Details will be published by Bruce Silvey later, as planning continues.

Continuing on my theme regarding challenges over time and our Nation's ability to respond and win, we all recall the unprovoked terrorist attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 and how our Country and people responded to the attack, including many of our own AOCA members and those of our next generation, who deployed and are still protecting our country in Iraq, Afghanistan and other unnamed locations. The point, regardless of the source or type of attack, Americans will fight and win against all adversaries, be it a country, a group of terrorists or even an unseen virus that must be planned for in advance and then executed in a national response that protects our freedoms always.

Thanks to all, who have contributed and led to the success of the AOCA and America over the years and continue each and every day. **Mel McLemore, Proud 35th President AOCA**

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Bruce D. Silvey

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

Currently we stand at 490 members. It is not easy to know anymore since we have stopped collecting dues.

OUR WEB SITE

www.otter-caribou.org

This is being kept up for now and still has some old pictures that will bring back memories.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM REPORT

Applications closed for this year on the 1st of May and a committee is due to meet later in the summer. Our funds status is good and we are supporting three $2000 scholarships dedicated for an AOCA applicant. Results of this years activity will be reported by email and in our Dec/Jan issue of the Logbook.

REUNION

We felt it necessary to stop the planning and preparation for this years reunion due to the virus situation. We have retained the hotel in Columbus, GA for the same dates for next year (First week October) 2021.

OUR FUTURE

We are continuing as best we can as a viable association. At this point our finances are solid - Bill Upton is in good health and plans to continue to produce the Logbook for as long as he feels up to it. The two major expenses we have are the Logbook and the Scholarship Program.

If you should care to send a donation we are completely open to accepting them.

NEW ADDRESS

9155 35th Way N
Pinellas Park, FL 33782-5427
727-366-6969

Your EVP, Bruce Silvey, with Leon Wiggins at the El Paso Reunion in 2004. Leon was a Past President (1998) and the Association Chaplain for some years. Ed Shuster was President 2004.

THE WELCOME MAT IS OUT

Dear Mr. Silvey & Mr. Upton,

It was truly an honor and pleasure meeting you both at the October 2019 reunion, accompanying my dad John Swift. As usual, sharing war stories and having a few beers among military flight crew seems to transcend generations with ease. That week last October was no exception. Dad told me I'd get a lot of flack at a Caribou reunion being an Air Force pilot (deservedly so because of history) and it was all worth it - believe me. I took a lot of flack from him as a kid so I was already highly trained and up for the task, ha-ha!

For me to listen to my dad's and the group's many Caribou stories made me understand even more about just how fortunate my dad and you guys were to come home from Vietnam alive. Now I know where much of his humility comes from - you. There was a job to be done, in a dangerous environment - and you guys did it - because of your training, discipline, teamwork, and leadership. Dad doesn't talk about Vietnam in depth that much around his family. It was great to see him at ease and "open up" like he did that week. I'll never forget it and and can't thank you enough for your US Army service and sacrifice for our country.

Thank you very much. If you are ever in the Sacramento area, our welcome mat is always out, please let me know.

Best Regards,
John Swift, Jr.

MEMBER spotlight

Bruce Silvey

PIO Bill Upton asked me to put together a 'brief' history about myself - not sure just what he is looking for but he seemed to think that since I had been a member for 33 years and the Executive Vice President since 1996, perhaps those members we have remaining would want to know something about me.

I grew up in Oklahoma and graduated from Oklahoma State University. At the same time I received a commission as a 2nd Lt, US Army, and almost immediately reported for duty at Ft Carson, CO. While there I became involved with the Post Rifle and Pistol team and following various competitions and being a member of some winning teams I found myself being assigned to the US Army Marksmanship Unit at Ft Benning GA. I was assigned to the unit's Olympic Rifle Team and after more competition and training discovered that I probably was not going to make it to the Olympics. I will say it was demanding, fun, fierce competition and two individuals of those I was originally assigned with went on to win double Gold medals in forthcoming Olympic competition.

So off to Flight School at Ft Rucker to fixed wing training. Upon graduation we were immediately told to stand our ground and not proceed on our orders while the Cuban Situation played itself out. We were not called to war in our trusty L-19's and drove off to our next station - in my case the 11th Air Assault Division, Ft Benning, GA. Then being further assigned to the 10th Air Transport Brigade, 37th Air Transport Battalion, and subsequently the 187th Transport Airplane Company (an aviation unit with no airplanes - in this case No Caribous). It was a time to remember for all of us as the Caribou companies began to fill and the aviators and crews formed into five companies. At one time we had 80 Caribous on the ramp at Lawson Army Airfield - a sight to behold when you drove from Range Road onto the road overseeing the airfield.

All of us became fully enmeshed in the Air Mobile Testing concept with helicopters and airplanes flying around and through each other. It was an exciting time and we seemed to never stop participating in one exercise followed by another. The concept was proven and almost immediately was put to the test with one Otter and/or Caribou Company after another departing CONUS for the Republic of Vietnam. I flew with the 17th Aviation Company which was finally attached to the 1st Air Cavalry Division in II Corps - the company being positioned in Pleiku. The dedication, the enjoyment of flying the mission and the accomplishment of one mission after another was suddenly dashed by the unfathomable decision to transfer the Caribous to the USAF. That was 1967. A dark moment for many of us who felt we had proven the airplane a winner and suitable for the job it was doing.

It was in the 1984 timeframe that Bill Hooks, Ralph Seale. Sam Pinkston, Jim Lybrand, John Houser, Ken Blake, Luke Roach and others came together at Columbus, GA and began discussion about initially getting members of the 1st Aviation Company together, then expanding it to those who had served with Otter and Caribou units. I heard about the Association in 1987 and attended my first reunion in Enterprise in 1988. It was in 1994 that Bob Richey called me to ask me if I would take over as Executive Vice President. Bill Hooks, the Executive Vice President had held this position since the very beginning and felt it was time to retire and let someone else take over. I was told (failed to get this in writing) that I would only have to do the job for three years.

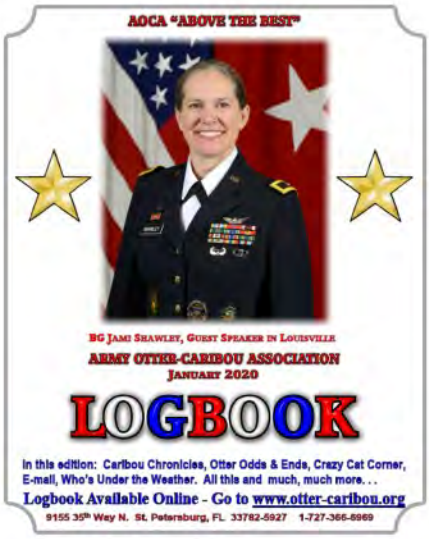
We worked hard, Floyd Burks was a determined Membership Chairman and was constantly finding new prospective members. At one time our membership topped out at nearly 850. As with organizations such as ours who do not make new younger members our membership is now in decline.

Most of my Otter and Caribou friends are a result of this Association - we still have a few from the 17th - but overall the majority of us did not know each other until we joined this group. We have been privileged to have smart, educated souls in charge of things - most important has been the Logbook. Initially it was Jimmy Moore - who then turned it over to P.T. Smith who maintained Jimmy's standards and then added some of his own - and then Bill Upton. Bill and I worked to the point where we could finally do the complete book in digital format. The Logbook is the one constant that our members look forward to at each publishing date.

The job is a labor of love - every one of you has been an absolute joy to have come to know and I have looked forward to the reunions each year to meet old and new friends. It is sad that we have come to a point where we are scaling back our annual reunion - made more difficult by our present national crisis situation. We have a core on the Executive Board who are committed to keeping the Association together for as long as we can - we appreciate those that are able to continue to support the group in whatever manner you can. **Bruce D Silvey, Executive Vice President**

Dear Editor We Get Letters. . .

HOW ABOUT THAT .PDF COLOR VERSION OF THE LOGBOOK?



My GOODNESS!! I never thought I would be in this stage of life. The PDF version is WONDERFUL! I feel as though I have ARRIVED, no more yesterday for me, I AM WITH IT! I will no longer receive printed versions of many publications! I have iPhone, iPad and iMac- ALL APPLE. And, the great part - I have been an APPLE stockholder for over 10 years. Keep movin baby, it pays. LIFE IS GOOD $$$. . . AND, I sincerely appreciate what you and Bill do! **Pete Kopecky**

Great work from you and Bill. The on-line color edition is great - and a marvelous tribute to your continued dedication. Many thanks, **Gene Dewey**

Thank you Bruce and I would especially like to commend Bill Upton for the exceptional work on the latest Logbook. Beautiful work and great contributions from members.

I would like to continue to get the mailed version as I have tried to collect these for several years now. If it can be worked out, perhaps you could have one of your staff figure out how to add the cost-plus to our annual dues for those who collect these? I would be more than happy to send a check in the interim and suspect others would too. Absorbing the extra cost takes away from the general fund and I understand that completely. **Skip Henley**

ABOUT BG SHAWLEY

I just got the Logbook yesterday.

The Guest speaker, BG Jami Shawley, was actually affiliated with the 1st Radio Research Company. I was at the 224th MI Battalion change of command ceremony at Fort Stewart Georgia in May. Well, the 224 MI Battalion is the same battalion historically as the 224th Aviation battalion was in Vietnam. So she actually is associated historically with the 1st Radio Research Company because it was under their command and control when I was with them in Vietnam, June 69 to June 70. **Bernard Voit**

Thanks for sharing the background note on BG Shawley. Another great Logbook featuring her and many others. Thanks to Bill and other contributors.

Looking forward to a good and happy 2020! **Mel & Wanda McLemore**

The latest Logbook was excellent, as always and even Col. Carr's article was very readable. I'll bet that throughout his career, he could be counted on to be where the interesting stuff was happening. **Dennis Toaspern**

THIS FROM LARRY JOHNSON

I just wanted to let you know that after I sent the email requesting the latest Logbook that I went to my POB and there it was so I now have it and have read it cover to cover. I can certainly relate to the Article by Glen Carr regarding my body being like a Car.

Phyllis and I are in a definite declining state of health as we move on in our years but are thankful for every day that we wake up and don't read our obits in the paper. We certainly don't travel much any longer for many reasons, none the less for the amount of health support equipment that both of us must use on a daily basis. Thus the reason for not attending the AOCA reunions any longer.

After reading the Logbooks I still see the same individuals taking charge of the AOCA and running the show which is a good deal. Sorry that we had to drop out but health takes priority. We knew that the day would come when you would have to stop the reunions but it will surely be a sad day and I am sorry that we cannot plan on being in Columbus for the last one.

I still try to be active in the Disabled American Veterans and have been the Chief Financial Officer for the state of New Mexico since 2015 so that has helped keep me out of Phyllis' hair a lot. This year I will be the Commander of one of our local Chapters here in the ABQ area and will be running to be on the line of officers for the state department so am staying busy trying to help and support veterans and their Families as best as I can.

I really appreciated the quick response on the challenge coins that I ordered and have divided them up as I needed plus put one with my extensive collection of coins to include the original one that we had from many years ago. I also have several of MOH Challenge Coins that are precious to me. **Larry Johnson**

A LETTER FROM KEITH MOWRY

Hello Bruce,

Happy New Year to you and all the AOCA members and thanks for your years of service in our "Wings of Friendship."

I haven't been able to participate much, but have always enjoyed reading the Logbook. My wife and I did attend the reunion in Nashville many years ago. Jack Serig introduced me to AOCA. We served together in the 18th Avn. Co in Vietnam in 1962. I flew with him on a couple of missions, and many years later, after his

retirement, he contacted me and we met again in Platte City, MO. It was a wonderful experience, we became friends and kept in contact the rest of his life.

I became a crew chief (671.20) there and with the help of a few officers started a flying career. After the service I finished up a commercial pilot's license and continued through an ATP.

I was an aerial for many years and retired as a corporate pilot flying the B-200 King Air. I was also honored to fly seven years in Mexico and Central America as a missionary pilot.

Next month I will have 52 years as a certified flight instructor. I quit logging time at 14,000 hours knowing there would be no more resumes to fill out.

I've just said all this just to say thank you for the US Army and the few Army pilots that had a great influence in my career. God bless and I'm inclosing $10 for a couple of the 35 year coins. Keep the change. In the Master's service, **G. Keith Lowry**

WE MISSED A SPECIAL LADY

Hi Bruce,

When Betty and I were married 24-plus years ago she didn't take my name LaGrandeur as she and Don had many properties and the legal papers were, and are, in the name, of Bongers. Every now and then Betty brings up the subject that she is not listed as a Special Lady of the AOCA, and this kind of bothers her.

Is there a way to rectify this situation and recognize Betty as a Special Lady?

Ken LaGrandeur

BRUCE RESPONDS

Ken,

Thanks for the note - you are absolutely correct that we should recognize Betty as a "Special Lady." I don't think the oversight is or was intentional. Over the years as you and Betty would attend reunions I don't recall that it was ever brought up. I remember that when I joined the association Betty and Don were two of the first to welcome me into the group. I also think that it is a natural result that as you two remarried each other that someone like myself would be reluctant to bring the subject up.

Betty is truly a "Special Lady" and she and Don are a part of the history of our association, I will add her name to the list of Special Ladies for the group.

Hope you two are doing well - stay off the slippery slopes. **Bruce Silvey**

BETTY RESPONDS

Hi Bruce,

Just a note to sincerely thank you for honoring Ken's request regarding a Special Lady designation for me. Don't know exactly how it came up, think we were just discussing the past 30+ years. Maybe more a matter of honoring Don's life and untimely death, rather than myself. Or, maybe just my old age catching up with me!! I am sure it was not intentional or an oversight.

Also want to pass on our kudos to the organization. Reunions have all been completely educational and enjoyable. The Logbook is a class production. It is with deep regret that the reunions must end. Our heartfelt thanks to all of AOCA and you in particular for many fond memories. **Betty, A Proud Special Lady**

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Special Lady Betty,

Thanks for sharing your note, we appreciate you and all the Special Ladies always! Best Wishes. **Mel and Wanda McLemore**

UPDATE: JOHN NEAMTZ

Dad, John Neamtz, is now at an assisted living facility in Avon, CT just a couple of miles away from me. It has been a long time since he has had the opportunity to reach out and communicate with you so I've taken it upon myself to send each of you this message from my email address.

Dad turned 92 in December and is doing as well as can be expected for someone who has attained this age! He doesn't get around very well anymore and in general I would say his health is declining at an accelerated rate.

He is on what is called an "extended Hospice program" which means nothing is imminent, but improvement from his current situation is not expected. He is

comfortable and alert and eating three squares a day.

Because he has short term memory issues, he's in the right place to get the best care. His long term memory is outstanding, so if anyone would like to send a message to Dad, just email me back and I will make sure I pass it along to him and I will write you back with anything he has to say!

Some of you I know and some I don't. I just want to make sure I do right by my father in keeping his friends abreast of his situation as I know he would want that. **Steve Neamtz**

Ed. Note: John has since passed away. His obituary is in this issue.

ABOUT THOSE DUES

Dear Bruce,

I think I have overlooked getting David's (David Schweinburg) dues paid. I have been sick since before Christmas and ended up with pneumonia so I am behind on things. Would you please refresh my memory on how much it is and where to send it.

His dementia continues to worsen but we are hanging in there best we can. He goes to Adult Care two afternoons a week and seems to really enjoy that. He comes home with a spring in his step and a smile on his face and so happy to see me. I get a five hour break each time which refreshes me enough to carry on. Vietnam and the Caribou are always close to his thinking. It is truly a strange and frustrating illness. **Sue Schweinsburg**

BRUCE RESPONDS

Hi Sue,

We, as an association, are getting older also and are making the transition into a less active group. As such we have decided to make the dues a voluntary contribution. We are still supporting the Logbook, the Scholarship Program, and we are planning one more major reunion in September.

If you want to send something you can do so at our new address:

Army Otter Caribou Association
9155 35th Way N.
Pinellas Park, FL 33782-5427

I have friends with David's situation and find it sad and I know it is difficult for you. I wish you all the best. **Bruce Silvey**

SUE WRITES BACK

I will be sending a donation. This group was always very close to his heart. We never really had a vacation until we came to our first reunion. He was bound and determined we were going to be there.

Two of our daughters are very determined to bring us to the reunion in September so please keep me posted. I don't know how he will be by then. They did take us to MI this summer and he did well. Our one daughter, Laurie, who has contacted you before is quite interested in all this. I hope he is able to make the trip for her sake. Time will tell. **Sue**

WANTS TO BE A PART

I am very proud to have worked on all of deHavilland AC, Beaver, Otter, Mohawk, L-23, L-19, OH-34, H-19, Huey while in Germany. Went to Vietnam Nov 1965, assigned to 51st Maintenance Detachment to 92nd Aviation Company under 14th Avn Bn down at Vung Tau (??) Left VN Nov 1966.

I've enclosed some pictures I took of our aircraft, got this one out of creek, repaired nose and belly. Also went to Khe Sanh in 1966 replaced a left main gear; went to special forces camp repaired a leading edge. I was a sheet metal mechanic.

I hope this can get me into your group. We had the best crew, great pilots.

Billy K. Bacon
3220 Highway Z
Edgerton, MO 64444-9123
(816-790-3316)

Editors note: Bill has been added to our mailing list.

ROBERT FLANAGAN UPDATE

Bill,

Sorry it's been so long without contact; been a hell of a period. My wife (85) has Alzheimer's and in 2018 had to put her in a care home when she developed heart problems also. Physically better, I moved her from there in Oct 19 to a home I bought in Winchester, Va., where I had an apt. close to her facility. In Dec., she had a fall in our home and suffered a compression fracture of a vertebra; had a surgical procedure done and was healing nicely. On Feb 3, she had another fall, this time breaking her left hip. It was such that it could not be repaired so they did a replacement. She was then transferred to another care home in Front Royal, Va., 22 mi. away, to undergo Physical Therapy and learn to walk again.

In meantime, AGENT ORANGE has demonstrated its lasting facility: it got me with diabetes II back in the 80s, and in 2004, prostate cancer. Had radiation, thought it was a goner. (Got 15 good years, though ...) Recently found it had migrated to my left lung and is a nuisance again. Being treated; doing well. Wife improving and to be discharged on 3/20. I'm also scheduled for back surgery in the next few months. So, all in all, it's been a hectic time. Not to whine, but to validate my lack of correspondence and submissions of writings.

As to that... I don't know when the next Logbook is due out, and realize I've no doubt missed that issue, but I have a piece I thought you might be able to use in an upcoming issue. Currently entitled "Ancillary Duties: A&D" and is about an incident at the 1st RRC at Cam Ranh Bay in 1969. Trying to get back on some regular writing; thought first of you and your Ace Logbook. Be well. **Bob Flanagan**

B*ob, always good to hear from you and I will always wait patiently for your submissions. I'm sorry to hear about your and your wife's physical problems. Hopefully, you're faring well during this novel corona virus pandemic. Get well, stay healthy and keep writing.* **Bill Upton**

ROSS McKIMMEY STATUS

At present, Ross is in memory care here at Patriots Colony and is not able to participate in any AOCA activities. He has dementia associated with advanced Parkinson's disease. Please change his email address to:

judimckimmey@gmail.com

He has many lucid times when he is able to read correspondence and comprehend, therefore I print many of the items for him to enjoy. **Judy McKimmey**

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE AOCA

Currently, this country is very politically divided and the division is growing more intense every day. The virus problem has further isolated both the political left and the right. Thankfully, the AOCA organization has moved in a different direction focusing on unity and the "Wings of Friendship."

Leaving the military after 30 years was a difficult change for me. Luckily, the formation of the AOCA in the mid-80's filled a void. Bill Hooks invitational call from Columbus to join was accepted without hesitancy. Subsequently, our yearly reunions became sheer joy. I believe our organization was successful because competent leadership was always available these past 30 plus years. Kudos to Bill Hooks, Bruce Silvey, Bill Upton, and a whole lot more members. Although another a/c was added, the common bond remained – de Havilland.

It is amazing that a couple of Canadian manufactured aircraft could so readily bind an organization together. There was always some friendly competition between the "Otter" and "Caribou" supporters, but "Wings of Friendship" always remained the central theme.

I've been a member since the beginning and have always enjoyed seeing fellow members from my 1956 Fort Riley Otter group. Moving the reunions around the country certainly enhanced attendance. I have hopes to make it to Fort Benning in 2021 and even attending some impromptu gatherings- (92 and ever the optimist). **Jim Greenquist**

SOME REPLIES

Jim, I totally agree with your statement. I've made many, many good friends through AOCA and you are one of them. Rather than list all my friends here, just look at any old AOCA roster and you'll know who they are. It has given me much pleasure to be a part of this fine group of American patriots and heroes. And, though many of us do have differing social and political views, all have honored the other's right to be an independent thinker. Isn't that what we were raised to believe? Isn't that what we fought for in Vietnam? Isn't that what makes us a "Band of Brothers?" I look forward to seeing you at our next reunion. **Bill Upton**

That "other a/c" that was added was the LOCKHEED P2-V – the largest a/c in the ARMY's inventory at that time. **Charles Auker**

OUR OWN TV PERSONALITY

For those who know, remember, and love Lila Jean Potts - our infamous 'Hat Lady' from reunions past, I received a call today to report that she and Bill are still kicking and fussing out in San Antonio - Bill will be 90 this year - Lila says she will be year older.

At the time, she called to let us know that she was going to be one of the episodes of Antique Roadshow beginning April 20. Of course, that day has come and gone. Anyway, if you missed it, she put on quite a show herself. **Bruce D. Silvey**

CORRECTION NECESSARY!

Bill - request you print 'correction' in next Logbook to take care of this egregious error regarding the supposed age of Lila Jean Potts. I was just trying to not mention the fact that she was 87 which I find to be a great age to have attained. This has always been a problem with those folks who attended the University of Oklahoma (better known as 'tip sips' by us Oklahoma State Aggies/Cowboys).

Now, now, Bruce, you make it seem as if I will be one year older than Bill, when I'm actually three years younger. You should have made it very clear that I will be only one year older than my "claimed age" of 33. At least that's the age to which I admit. You know, we southern gals just don't tell or discuss politics, religion or our ages; and it's not courteous for a southern gentleman to even ask. I guess we southerners will have to teach you some of our courtly manners. (I am now laughing out loud.) Ha,ha,ha,ha,ha. Please amend your distribution of this information. . . if you have the time during our quarantine. Tee Hee!!! **Lila Jean Potts**

We watched the Antiques Roadshow from San Antonio one evening. Lila Jean looked great and was the Lila Jean we all know and love. I was just glad she didn't wear the raffle ticket hat to the road show. That Bill Potts sure robbed the cradle when he married Lila Jean. I thought there were laws against child marriages. Tracy remembered an incident from the DC reunion in which Lila Jean and Bill couldn't get their room safe open to get jewelry, that he had bought for her in South America, to wear to the Banquet that evening.

Bill's old $150.00 Rolex watch turned out to be worth a good chunk of change even though it had survived two tours in Vietnam. It would have been worth much more if it hadn't been repaired. Most of us couldn't afford anything but a Seiko watch and an elephant hide billfold when we were in Vietnam.

My brother Phil and His wife Joan were stationed together with Bill and Lila Jean years ago and were able to reminisce about old times at the Saint Louis Reunion in 2008. **Sam** (Grey Tiger 50) **& Tracy Kaiser** (Pilot in Command)

Phil Kaiser, Bill and Lila Jean Potts and Joan Kaiser

ARMY OTTER-CARIBOU 35 YEAR COIN

From the Scrapbook of Ken and Leslie Womack

Back in the 'good ol' days, patriots all . . .'

CARIBOU AND OTTER DRAWINGS AVAILABLE

My dad, Paul Bolam was a member and I have a couple of nicely framed small drawings, one of an Otter and one of a Caribou. I'd be happy if they ended up in the hands of another AOCA member. Please forward my email address to anyone who you think might want them.

Thank you,
John White Jjffwww@gmail.com

These are not the actual drawings.
I just wanted to remind you of what the Caribou and Otter looked like.

URGENT CARE BENEFIT

THIS FROM A MARINE FRIEND

I have no idea how many of y'all are in the VA health care system, so I'm including everyone on my list.

Recently I had a very positive first experience with the new VA Mission Act, the "VA URGENT CARE BENEFIT."

I had what was diagnosed as an acute ear infection and followed the instructions on the following website:

https://www.va.gov/find-locations/

So, instead of traveling 14 miles through some 20 red lights to the VA Hospital ER and/or getting an urgent care appointment, I drove about 1 1/2 miles to a MED EXPRESS urgent care location. They wrote two prescriptions. I went to a Walgreens a half mile from my house had them filled, no problems, no cost. Took less than 1 1/2 hrs.

Follow the instructions at the site above to find locations near you for care and pharmacies. Be sure to click on "Important Notice." Print the three sheets and take them with you to the provider.

PLEASE READ!

CRAZY CAT CORNER

BOXER -22 CALLED TODAY
(A Crazy Cat Story)
Bill Baker

Recently I was called by Woody Bergeron an Air Force Lt. I had met along with Cpt. Benjamin Danielson at the 558th Tactical Fighter Squadron O-Club on 4 Dec. 1969. That was fifty plus years ago, while visiting from the west side of the Cam Ranh Bay Airfield which was used by all U.S. and allied forces in Vietnam. Paul D. Weaver (a Convair contractor) and I would liaison with the Air Force by frequenting their O-Clubs when time permitted. It was invigorating to show up at these gatherings where aviators would discuss the days activities. You were never a stranger and all were welcomed with enthusiastic hospitality. Ben and Woody dismissed themselves around 9 pm for they had a mission to fly early the next day. We departed with a promise to debrief two days hence.

The next day, 5 Dec 1969, Keith Glascow, myself and one other pilot were tasked to fly one of our normal 17 hour missions and we met in the briefing room at 10:30 for our standard briefing. This day we were told to delay for we had been tasked to fly a special mission in another area of the S.E. Asia Theatre. At 14:00 hours (2 PM) we gathered in the briefing room and were told that we had a mission into Laos to a point 100 miles SW of Hanoi where the Air Force, Navy and Marines were tasked to take out anti-aircraft weapons located in a valley and were hampering the rescue of two downed aviators. They needed our linguists and Morse code operators to listen and report damages done to the gun positions in the valley.

Needless to say we were apprehensive for it was a high improbability that we could even reach the area without being shot down for we were low and slow. At 250 knots at 5000 ft. AGL our bus sized aircraft would provide a turkey shoot for enemy aircraft and Anti-Aircraft guns on the ground. Plus there were no intelligence reports available to pinpoint missile or gun positions along our route.

Being true to our code we launched at 16:00 and arrived just south of Mu-Gia pass at dark as the Air Force F-4s were making their first run (West to East) into the valley. 4-6 Anti-Aircraft guns greeted them head on. We took up a position over the south mountain on an east-west track that gave us a desired reception location. The aircraft were attacking at a steady rate and the valley was bright with tracers and exploding bombs . There were at least 10 guns that took the aircraft on broadside and another five bidding farewell as the aircraft departed. Once one squadron ran out of ordnance the next one would take up the fight.

The process was effective but when there was a lull between attacking squadrons the P2 attracted the attention of guns across the valley and before they could adjust their trajectories, another squadron was attacking. Our track put us above and behind the guns on the southern mountain which gave us a distinct advantage.

When the exercise was terminated about 1 AM in the morning, we extinguished all external lights and returned to Da Nang with-out incident. After delivering our goods, we returned to Cam Ranh Bay arriving around 6 AM the next day.

The next evening we returned to the 558th only to discover a somber mood and that the downed aviators were Cpt. Ben Danielson and his RIO, Lt Woody Bergeron. The rescue mission was still in progress.

Woody was rescued 51 hours later after many attempts by Jolly Green Helios and Sandys who took many hits from residual anti-aircraft guns that would not die. Cpt. Danielson is believed to have been killed in a firefight with the North Vietnamese Army on the second day.

The 50 year anniversary of the incident held at Lackland AFB in Texas and a story by Don Hallway that detailed specifics of the rescue gave me a point wherein I was able to make contact with BOXER-22A. He was unaware of any Army participation in his rescue. For further Information- Google "Boxer 22."

Photo Submitted by Bill Baker

ANCILLARY TASKING: A&D

by Robert Flanagan

Grange was right. A VIP was indeed coming to visit the First RR, and he would be here tonight. Not *just* a VIP, but *the* VIP: Major General Charles J. Denholm, Commanding General, US Army Security Agency. "Charley Two-Star" himself.

I'd never laid eyes on the man, though he'd been CG since about the time of my first 'Nam tour, four years earlier. Most ASA troops never saw him, unless they occupied a slot in "Confusion East" — ASA headquarters at Arlington Hall Station, Virginia. I'd seen pictures, of course, command photos on the walls of unit offices, day rooms, training halls across the world, along with photos of the chain of command from the president on down.

But this senior officer held his place in that chain with distinction — a Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts from World War II — valor keeping derisory remarks within bounds. A 1938 West Point grad, he'd fought across Tunisia as CO of an infantry battalion, 16th Infantry Div; was captured, then led an escape of all 150 prisoners from a sinking enemy ship carrying them to imprisonment, and later fought across Sicily, up the Italian peninsula and across the Rhine into Germany, commanding a regiment of the 36th Inf. Div. No one knowing his history, was going to dismiss this officer as a "lifer-loser."

He'd be here tonight. Major Grange, as of this morning the new CO of 1st Radio Research Co. (Aviation) at Cam Ranh Bay, was about to wet his pants. He'd never met the general either. Harvey Grange was an aviator in the Transportation Corps, not an ASA officer, however irrelevant that might seem. I mean, after all, *there were no ASA in Viet Nam!* But by any other euphemism, Grange worked for the general... way down the ladder.

The change of command that morning had been a bigger shock to the company than Charley Two-Star's scheduled arrival. Major Starkey, outgoing 1st RRC CO, pried from the Sandbag wall with no evidence of lingering invasive metal anywhere about him after being stapled to the bar's wall in last night's impromptu fête, following an impromptu formation (all hands) the previous day, at which he, Starkey, had made the somehow unexpected announcement that he'd reached the end of his tour; was going down to 224th Aviation Battalion headquarters at Saigon/Tan Son Nhut for a week or so, leaving today, and the new CO was ... *drum roll* ... Major Harvey H. Grange! The drop of jaws could be heard in downtown Da Lat.

The shock was due, perhaps, to Harvey's colorless presence in the First. When he'd joined the unit from the 224th and was named XO, no one thought he'd ever abandon that role; with the command presence of Minnie Mouse, no one considered him CO material. But then, I don't think any officer in the First ever knew him. And the colonel down in Saigon had mandated his emergent icon-like transformation. Grange *was* several cuts above the next consideration, Major Koenigseder, the "Militia Airplane Driver." Jeez, Mary and Joe!

* * *

That evening the First RR had complete and sole occupancy of the NAF Officers' Club. The only Navy officer to show up was Captain Raymond X. Carver, commander of the Naval Air Facility, who liked to be called "Bucky" by his senior officers. But out of sheer perversity and dislike, no one ever called him that; everyone, officers and men, cast him as Captain Blye. He had alienated Army officers when he took command of the Navy facility, on which First RR enjoyed rent-free domiciliary rights, and made a point of insisting that the entire NAF, grounded on sand and other insubstantial southeast Asian waste, was to be thought of and treated as an aircraft carrier. Keel-hauling and flogging were still *de rigeur* in Carver's navy.

* * *

I happened to be on the flight line when the general's U-21 taxied in and eased to a stop, the props coming to rest in precision alignment. Mandatory for a general's bird. Lieutenant Colonel King , his face shiny with sweat even in the early morning calm of Cam Ranh, was first out the door. The three-step ramp was hurriedly pushed into place barely in time to prevent King's first, blind step from dropping him to the tarmac. He quickly took up a position of attention at the foot of the ramp and, along with the moderate assemblage of officers and NCOs, saluted The Man when he bounced down the steps. Grange, new CO that he was, placed himself in jeopardy of never being promoted again when he jumped forward to shake the general's hand ahead of his boss, LTC King, immediately after the toadying and arm-flapping was done.

I walked away before inadvertently being drawn into the circus. CW2 Tajiri and I were there only because we'd been walking past the taxiway when Grange spotted us and called us over to help fill in a meager retinue. Officers scurried about like ants on a burning log, demeaning themselves and their rank, groveling. The general didn't take to that hysterical behavior, I'd been told by a captain in Bad Aibling who had previously been an aide to the general at The Hall.

Now, late evening, having arrived at the great moment, we warrant officers gravitated toward a muddle at one side of the cleared area mid-floor of the O Club. It might have been a dance floor in a civilian venue; it could have been used for courts-martial proceedings, for promotion boards, various ceremonies, an ill-advised wedding, a theater club, a cattle auction or a short-field bocci court. With the addition of a few slight yards of flooring, you could have landed a Caribou. But the plentiful space was likely the result of having insufficient chairs and tables

to fully equip the club. It was all a revelation to me; I was seeing the Navy O Club for the first time.

The command officers, led by LTC King and MAJ Grange, followed the general, scurrying like a covey of quail chicks as he moved about the club floor, speaking to everyone. General Denholm was a personable gentleman, an exceptional officer, and he made a point of asking each man's title and job in the unit. If the officer was career ASA, the general asked where he'd served. He was fully conversant about every ASA station, and knowledgeable about aircraft, certainly about the aviation programs that ASA was engaged in. He must be on top of LAFFING EAGLE, I thought. They'd flown him up here from Tan Son Nhut in one of their new birds.

Nofsinger, Tajiri, "Bimbo" Billingsgate, myself and Murtaugh, an unpopular supply warrant officer, were in one knot; others including WOs Holloway, Birchfield and Petre congregated in other isolated islands of indecision. Three warrants were still out on mission. As the general made his way nearer, I could discern the clear pattern of his laid-back social niceties.

Everyone was in jungle fatigues: nice, clean, starched jungle fatigues. And all felt like fools. We'd dressed in that particular style following Grange's quick order; he insisted on "freshly starched," clean fatigues. And we all heard General Denholm quiet comment, as he walked in the door to the O Club that evening and looked about, "Colonel," nodding toward King. "Major," he added Grange to his address. "Is it really wise to have your officers and men in starched fatigues? After a multi-million-dollar design effort to create a comfortable, practical suit of uniform clothing for troops in this terrible climate? I question if that's optimizing our assets."

The general appraised Murtaugh, who had overlooked the starch-and-iron aspect of Grange's order, and smiled. "Now there's an officer who knows where he is." He nodded at the grungy warrant, who looked startled. He had no idea what the general referred to. He'd just heard someone say he had to be at the O Club at 1800 hours. While this left-handed dressing-down was playing out, I saw Brenner wander into the fringe of the cluster.

Grange stepped away from the touring general's flock and I saw him cross to Navy Lieutenant Ivory, the liaison Instructor Pilot assigned to the 1st RRC ostensibly to help keep the outdated P-2V Neptunes in the air. I had a flash of karmic instinct about what was coming. As IP, Ivory had requirements also to fly regular combat missions; he had to know what the pilots faced on mission. But Ivory flew as seldom as possible, missions and otherwise, and consequently did not occupy a position of fond comradeship among Army pilots and operators. But Ivory was black; the battalion CO, King, was black; and all officers in the command were fully cognizant of political implications.

LTC King escorted the general to the small gathering of warrants — well, *mostly* warrant officers; Lieutenant Billingsgate was in our midst, but Bimbo, it had been decided in local WOPA circles, was so much like a warrant officer, so devoid of commissioned officer social disguise, he was deemed an honorary warrant — and properly introduced the general, first to the one commissioned officer, and then, "Warrant Officers Nofsinger, Brenner, Winter, and . . . uhh . . . Tajiri. And Murtaugh, whom you've met, sir."

The general shook each officer's hand. He talked briefly but thoroughly with each of us, about our jobs, and with three of us about other ASA assignments. "Sounds like you, Mister Brenner, and Chief Winter here, have been following each other around the world."

Well, I thought, you don't make two stars and miss many tricks.

Before the conversation could begin to drag, Major Grange swept up to the group, Lieutenant Ivory in tow, and launched into briefing mode. "General Denholm, I'd like you to meet Navy Lieutenant Ivory. Lieutenant Ivory's with us as Instructor Pilot on the P-2V Neptune aircraft."

"Lieutenant. Good to have you with us Army folk," the general said easily, reaching to shake hands. "Our men treating you all right? Not giving you too much grief over your service affiliation, are they?" He chuckled easily, knowing they just would not dare ... but probably did.

"Just fine, sir. Everything's great here: the billets, the job, the people . . ." He looked questioningly at Grange but said nothing further.

Colonel King spoke up. "Lieutenant Ivory's about to complete his tour with us. He's the second accomplished naval aviator we've had in that slot. But he's down to just under two weeks left in-country."

"Do you have a replacement lined up?" General Denholm asked straight-faced, no doubt knowing the name, flight record, and personnel file of Ivory's replacement whom the Navy had already selected, alerted, and briefed.

"Navy's notified us of a Lieutenant Commander . . . hmm, name's Kristophsen. He's in the pipeline and will be here in a week or so. They'll have overlap." The colonel — misfit or otherwise — did have his stuff together in this case, I acknowledged.

The general surprised us all when he said, "Colonel, I trust you'll ensure the lieutenant's fine service will be adequately recognized. Specifically an Army award, something not all Navy personnel will have." He didn't turn to the colonel when he spoke; but I knew the statement was rhetorical. Was in fact an order. The general didn't want a debate or specifics. Just a reminder for Grange to butter up the Navy to keep the replacement IPs and parts coming. Ivory's performance, or in this case lack of same, wasn't a factor.

"Uhh, yessir." King, startled, turned, fixed his eyes on Grange, who in turn locked his eyes on me but spoke to the general. "We're in process of completing his award recommendation now."

I cringed. In addition to my primary function as Mission Director of the First's in-flight intelligence role, one ancillary duty which occupied a lot of my time — along with roles as Intercept Control and Management Officer, Traffic Analysis Officer, Assistant Operations Officer, member of the Message Review Board, In-flight Procedures Training Officer and Assistant Unit Historian — was that of Awards and Decorations Officer for the 1st RR. I just knew the general's political dictum was going to mean some crawling and bullshit to write an Army Commendation Medal for Ivory. And sadly, there was nothing to hang an ARCOM on; the Squid pilot did nothing of commendable significance. Even that with reluctance. And I

knew this would require major chunks of creativity to the composition of this fantasy.

Much of my function as A&D was to keep track of the hundreds of flying hours by everyone on manifested missions for the award of Air Medals to the crews — officers and men qualifying at the same rate. Occasionally — because I was known as *the writer* in the same tone one would refer to *the Albanian shoeshine artist* — an officer or NCO putting together an award or decoration for a subordinate would ask for help in wording, punctuation, spelling and lacking the details of the qualification, often what I thought of as "speculative history." I'd done numerous ARCOMs, several Bronze Stars, hundreds of Air Medals ... even one Soldier's Medal.

Then I heard Grange speak, but surely I'd heard wrong.

King reiterated it.

"Yes, general. We're recommending Lieutenant Ivory for the Army Legion of Merit."

I swear I saw the general hesitate — a flaring of nostrils, a tight jaw.

"Fine," he said, seemingly unaffected. "Have the paperwork completed, signed, and get it to me before we leave for Da Nang in the morning. I'll take it back to The Hall, sign it and put it through channels. That will speed things up by a margin of three." The general's signature was the only requirement for approval.

He turned away and moved to the next group.

Colonel King nodded fiercely at Grange, who dropped out of the queue and pulled me to one side. "Winter, I need an L.O,M, recommendation, worthy of a field grade's wording, written right now!"

"Well, sir—"

"Don't give me that 'well, sir' shit, mister. I want that recommendation, with details, witness statements, whatever . . . *and* the citation. Write the citation, also. Get that done, in clean copy, four carbons, on my desk before oh-six-hundred." He huffed unnecessarily for a moment, and said, "Got that?"

There was a long moment of awkward silence.

"I'm not sure I do, Major. I can't write a Legion of Merit recommendation for this . . . pilot. Hell, I'd have trouble justifying an ARCOM."

"Mister Winter, if I'd wanted . . . if the colonel had wanted An Army Commendation Medal for Lieutenant Ivory, he would have prescribed it. And you, young sir, don't have to justify a goddamned thing. And don't tell me you 'can't' follow this order.' I'd hate to see your career in the dustbin over something so trivial."

Prescribed? In a desperate move toward reason, I tried to recall a scenario in which I'd heard the word used, outside a doctor's office.

"Major, for the record, as your Awards and Decorations Officer, I don't consider this trivial. Is this going to be S.O.P. for awards in this company in the future? Are we going to get on the Air Force bandwagon, giving Bronze Stars for a successful bowel movement? Do we really want—"

"What I want is for you to remember who's commanding this company."

God help me, I almost said what came to mind, that I *hadn't for the moment* remembered who was CO.

"What I want, junior grade Warrant Officer Winter, is for you to follow orders." He worked for a glare, failed to produce it, resulting in an unspoken and confused appeal.

I was on the point of bringing up the subject of "illegal orders," those commands which were not proper and could not be enforced. This case seemed to fall square athwart the limits of that consideration. But I knew, too, that trying to get the inevitable courts-martial board to recognize and agree with this judgement — and it was strictly a judgement call on my part; hell; who knew if I was even correct? Maybe Ivory wore a cape under his flight suit and called Krypton home. What the hell! I realized, with a flash of insight, that I might have sought this manner of clarification anytime over an indefinite period . . . maybe ten, the full 16 years.

"You got it, Major. An L,O.M. it'll be. Coming right up, sir. Hokey dokey! On the double." I turned from the startled major's presence, recognizing something approaching panic on his face. I stopped, turned back and, from ten feet away, in-doors, entirely beyond protocol, snapped a brisk salute at my commander and held it until Grange's hand crept reluctantly into the air, approaching his wrinkled brow, never quite getting there. Without waiting for fulfillment, I cut my salute away, then went to perform creative manipulations, acknowledging the rampant bastardization of the entire A&D program.

The major had not asked if I required input from anyone, including himself. If I needed help with typing. Or accessing records, some of which were personal and thus secure. Grange dashed away, dragging a stunned Ivory along behind him, catching up to the procession.

I returned to the warrant officer gaggle, scowled a moment without explanation, finished my Tuborg and looked over at Brenner and Tajiri. who still waited nearby. I hadn't said that my clerk for A-and-D purposes, SP5 Marvin O. Marsh, was probably lying in a stupor in his billet, having tried to drink The Sandbag dry earlier in the day. Marsh, a strap hanger, had ridden the mission bird yesterday, slept late today, and started drinking early. Likely not much help there, I thought. I tossed my beer bottle to Tajiri. "Take care of that, my good man, will you? Take a couple of sheckels from the kitty . . ."

I wandered off to search out Marsh, seething, determined not to show it. I found him in the condition I expected; but blissfully, he didn't suffer through the sheer madness of his task. He just blindly typed what I scribbled and pushed in front of him. He never remembered being wakened.

* * *

I made a point of being at the strip when the general departed Cam Ranh Bay the following morning. The award recommendation had been finished, submitted. Signed by MAJ Grange. Endorsed by LTC King. I suffered a small ripple of convulsion when I saw the colonel pass a brown envelope to the general's aide.

My own name, as creator and spiritual adviser of this work, appeared nowhere on the fabricated document. The only way it could happen. I had no wish — I *refused* — to be in any way associated with the bogus L.O.M. The event, however, did serve as the genesis of my interest in fiction writing.

I would never again look upon one of those lovely magenta ribbons on the chest of a soldier with the same feeling of respect, even envy. I wondered if it would be appropriate, under my crushed sensibilities, to refuse to accept my own award of an L.O.M. when my tour was up. END

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

With a Surface to Air Missile in a P2v Aircraft

Bill Baker

While assigned to the 1st Aviation Company Radio Research at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam under the control of 509th RR Group, we were tasked to do intelligence gathering in the area of the Ashau Valley and points north and west. That placed our area of operations in close proximity to North Vietnam, Laos and the north west tip of South Vietnam.

Our platform provided for five stations of linguists, two stations of Morse code collectors, a supervisor and an avionics repairman who also served as the after station watch. The flight crew was made up of three pilots and a plane captain/crew chief. We flew our missions at 5,000 feet above ground level which placed the aircraft well in range of of the 23, 37 and 57 MM anti-aircraft guns that were employed against allied aircraft.

This night was especially difficult in that the area was laced with moderate to severe thunderstorms. That made it impossible to retain your exact location since the storms made the radial indicator (VOR) and the Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) cycle and it gave very few or no verifiable readings at all. We were diligent and remained on station even though our track had taken us over a known 37mm site that had taken the aircraft under fire at least twice during the night.

At the magic hour of 1:00 AM when we were authorized to leave the mission area it was noted and reported that our normal egress track over Hue was laced with severe thunderstorms so I decided to take a direct track to Da Nang . About 10 minutes on a heading of 110 degrees there was an indication on the Radar Warning System (RAWS) that there was a lock onto our aircraft by a radar site: first there were small flashing red lights on the instrument panel, then there were repeated red X's that flashed then a BONG- BONG-BONG with the words LAUNCH-LAUNCH-LAUNCH.

My instinct told me that the site must be on our right side so I must offer a slim profile to the missile and immediately put the aircraft in a porpoise motion with inconsistent dives and rises. I warned the after station watch to watch out the port window and look for the burn of a passing missile. Meanwhile the crew was being tossed around and wanted to know what was going on. The plane captain ordered the crew to access the parachutes for we had been fired on by a missile. Their attempt to get to the chutes ware hampered by the erratic motion of the aircraft but the question was answered. Why?

After about three long minutes the after station watchman screamed over the radio that the missile just missed the tail of the aircraft. The crew screamed with joy and the aircraft was silent for the remainder of the flight into Da Nang. We landed and made our deposit of goods that had been accumulated during the flight, refueled and made our way back to Cam Ranh Bay landing at 0400 in the morning, That night everyone was silent, asleep or praying, thankful that we were able to tell the story rather than becoming a statistic in the record of Vietnam casualties.

From Sam Kaiser

THE TRUCULENT TURTLE'S AMAZING MISSION

Submitted by Chek Adamcik (Reprinted from the March 2013 Logbook)

The oxidized Lockheed 'Truculent Turtle' had been squatting next to a Navy Air Station's main gate, completely exposed to the elements and getting ragged around the edges. Finally recognizing the Turtle's singular historic value to aviation, it was moved to Pensacola to receive a badly required and pristine restoration. It is now – gleamingly hanging – from the National Naval Aviation Museum's ceiling where it earned its distinction.

Taxiing tests demonstrated that its Lockheed P2V-1's landing gear might fold while bearing the Turtle's extreme weight before carrying it airborne. And during taxi turns its landing gear struts could fail carrying such a load. For that reason, the Turtle was only partially filled with fuel before it was positioned at the head of Australia's Pearce Aerodrome runway 27 at 7 A.M. On September 29, 1946.

Lined Lined up for take-off, all fueling was completed by 4:00 p.m. At the same time JATO packs were carefully attached to its fuselage for the jet-assistance required to shove the Truculent Turtle fast enough to take-off before going off the end of the runway. The Turtle would attempt its take-off with CDR Thomas D. Davies, as pilot in command, in the left seat and CDR Eugene P. (Gene) Rankin, the copilot, in the right seat. In CDR Rankin's own words:

"Late afternoon on the 29th, the weather in southwestern Australia was beautiful. And at 1800, the two 2,300 hp Wright R-3350 engines were warming up. We were about to takeoff from 6,000 feet of runway with a gross weight of 85,561 pounds [the standard P2-V was gross weight limited at 65,000 pounds."

Sitting in the copilot's seat, I remember thinking about my wife, Virginia, and my three daughters and asking myself, "What am I doing here in this situation?' I took a deep breath and wished or the best."

At 6:11 p.m., CDR Tom Davies stood hard on the brakes as both throttles were pushed forward to max power. At the far end of the mile-long runway, he could make out the throng of news reporters and photographers. Scattered across the air base were hundreds of picnickers who came to witness the spectacle of a JATO takeoff. They all stood up when they heard the sound of the engines being advanced to full military power. Davies and Rankin scanned the engine instruments. Normal. Davies raised his feet from the brakes.

On this day, September 29, 1946, the reciprocating engine Turtle was a veritable winged gas tank. THIRTEEN TONS BEYOND the two-engine Lockheed's Max Gross Weight Limitations. The Truculent Turtle rumbled and bounced on tires that had been over-inflated to handle the heavy load. Slowly it began to pick up speed. As each 1,000-foot sign went by, Rankin called out the speed and compared it to predicted figures on a clipboard in his lap.

With the second 1,000-foot sign astern, the Turtle was committed. Davies could no longer stop on the remaining runway. It was now. . fly or burn. (Secretly . . . some of the excited end of runway watchers may have wanted to see the airplane crash and burn.) When the quivering airspeed needle touched 87 knots, Davies punched a button wired to his yoke, and the four JATO bottles fired from attachment points on the aft fuselage. The crew's ears filled with JATO bottles' ROAR. . . bodies FEELING the JATO's thrust. For a critical twelve seconds, the JATO provided the thrust of a third engine.

At about 4,500 feet down the runway, 115 knots was reached on the airspeed indicator, and Davies pulled the nose wheel off. There were some long seconds while the main landing gear continued to rumble over the last of the runway. Then the rumbling stopped as the main landing gear staggered off the runway and the full load of the aircraft shifted to the wings.

As soon as they were certain that they were airborne, but still only an estimated five feet above the ground, Davies called 'gear up.' Rankin moved the wheel-shaped actuator on the pedestal between the pilots to the up position, and the wheels came up.

Davies lightly tapped the brakes to stop the wheels from spinning, and the wheel-well doors closed just as the JATO bottles burned out. Behind the pilots in the aft fuselage, CDR Walt Reid kept his hand on the dump valve that could quickly lighten their load in an emergency. Roy Tabeling, at the radio position, kept all his switches off for now to prevent the slightest spark.

The Turtle had an estimated 20 feet of altitude and 130 knots of airspeed when the JATO bottles burned out. The JATO bottles were not just to give the Turtle additional speed on take-off, but were intended to improve the rate of climb immediately after lift-off. The Turtle barely cleared the trees a quarter of a mile from the end of the runway.

The field elevation of Pearce Aerodrome was about 500 feet, and the terrain to the west sloped gradually down to the Indian Ocean about six miles from the field. So, even without climbing, the Turtle was able to gain height above the trees in the critical minutes after take-off.

Fortunately, the emergency procedures for a failed engine had been well thought out, but were never needed. At their take-off weight, they estimated that they would be able to climb at a maximum of 400 feet per minute. If an engine failed and they put maximum power on the remaining engine, they estimated that they would be forced to descend at 200 feet per minute.

Their planning indicated that if they could achieve 1,000 feet before an engine failure they would have about four minutes in which to dump fuel to lighten the load and still be 200 feet in the air to attempt a landing. With their built-in fuel dump system, they were confident that they were in good shape at any altitude above 1,000 feet because they could dump fuel fast enough to get down to a comfortable single-engine operating weight before losing too much altitude.

Departing the Aerodrome boundary, the Turtle was over the waters of the Indian Ocean. With agonizing slowness, the altimeter and airspeed readings crept upward. Walt Reid jettisoned the empty JATO bottles.

The Turtle was thought to have a 125 KT stall speed with the flaps up at that weight. When they established a sluggish climb rate, Gene Rankin started bringing the flaps up in careful small increments. At 165 KT, with the flaps fully retracted, Tom Davies made his first power reduction to the maximum continuous setting.

The sun was setting and the lights of the city were blinking on as the Turtle circled back over Perth at 3,500 feet and headed out across the 1,800 miles of the central desert of Australia. On this record breaking night, one record had already been broken. Never before had two engines carried so much weight into the air. . . After the JATOS quit.

Their plan was to keep a fairly low 3,500 feet for the first few hundred miles, burning off some fuel, giving them a faster climb to cruise altitude. . . And (hopefully) costing them less fuel for the total trip. But the southwest wind, burbling and eddying across the hills northeast of Perth, brought turbulence that shook and rattled the overloaded Turtle, threatening the integrity of the wings themselves.

Tom Davies applied full power and took her up to 6,500 feet where the air was smoother, reluctantly accepting the sacrifice of enough fuel to fly an extra couple of hundred miles if lost, bad WX or other unexpected problems at flight's end. Alice Springs at Australia's center, slid under the Turtle's long wings at midnight.

And Cooktown on the northeast coast at dawn. Then it was out over the Coral Sea where, only a few years before, the LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN had sunk the Japanese ship SHOHO to win the first carrier battle in history, and prevented Australia and New Zealand from being cutoff and then isolated.

At noon on the second day, the Turtle skirted the 10,000 foot peaks of southern New Guinea, and in mid-afternoon detoured around a mass of boiling thunderheads over Bougainville in the Solomons. As the sun set for the second time since takeoff, the Turtle's crew headed out across the vast and empty Pacific Ocean and began to establish a flight routine. They stood two-man four-hour watches, washing, shaving, and changing to clean clothes each morning. And eating regular meals cooked on a hot plate. Every two hours, a fresh pilot would enter the cockpit to relieve whoever had been sitting watch the longest.

The two Wright 3350 engines ran smoothly; all the gauges and needles showed normal. And every hour another 200 or so miles of the Pacific passed astern. The crew's only worry was Joey the kangaroo, who hunched unhappily in her crate, refusing to eat or drink.

Dawn of the second morning found the Turtle over Maro Reef, halfway between Midway Island and Oahu in the long chain of Hawaiian Islands. The Turtle only had one low-frequency radio, because most of the modern radio equipment had been removed to reduce weight. Radio calls to Midway and Hawaii for weather updates were unsuccessful due to the long distance.

Celestial navigation was showing that the Turtle was drifting southward from their intended great circle route due to increased northerly winds that were adding a headwind factor to their track. Instead of correcting their course by turning more northward, thereby increasing the aircraft's relative wind, CDR Davies stayed on their current heading accepting the fact that they would reach the west coast of the U.S. (Somewhere) in northern California rather than near Seattle as they had originally planned.

The "Turtle" at her final resting place at the Fort Rucker Museum

When Turtle's wing tip gas tanks emptied, they were jettisoned over the ocean. Then the Turtle eased up to 10,000 feet; later to 12,000 feet. At noon, CDR Reid came up to the cockpit smiling. "Well," he reported, "the damned kangaroo has started to eat and drink again. I guess she thinks we're going to make it."

The purpose of our mission (except in Joey's brain) was not some foolish stunt, despite her unusual presence aboard. In the fall of 1946, the increasingly hostile Soviet Union was pushing construction of a submarine force nearly ten times larger than Hitler's. Anti-alternative-submarine warfare was the Navy's responsibility, regardless of the U.S. Army Air Force's alternative views.

The Turtle was among the first of the P2V Neptune patrol planes designed to counter the sub threat. Tom Davies' orders derived straight from the offices of Secretary of the Navy, James V. Forrestal, and the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. A dramatic demonstration was needed to prove beyond question that the new P2V patrol plane, its production at Lockheed representing a sizeable chunk of the Navy's skimpy peacetime budget, could do the job.

With its efficient design that gave it 4-engine capability on just two engines, the mission would show the Neptune's ability to cover the transoceanic distances necessary to perform its ASW mission and sea-surveillance functions.

At a time when new roles and missions were being developed to deliver nuclear weapons, it would not hurt a bit to show that the Navy, too, had those significant capabilities. So far, the flight had gone pretty much according to plan. But now as the second full day in the air began to darken, the Pacific sky, gently clear and blue for so long, turned rough and hostile.

An hour before landfall, great rolling knuckles of cloud punched out from the coastal mountains. The Turtle bounced and vibrated. Ice crusted on the wings. Static blanked out its radio transmissions and radio reception. The crew strapped down hard, turned up the red instrument lights and took turns trying to tune the radio direction finder to a recognizable station.

It was midnight before Roy Tabeling succeeded in making contact with the ground and requested an instrument clearance eastward from California. They were 150 miles off the coast when a delightful female voice reached up through the murk from Williams Radio, 70 miles south of Red Bluff, California.

"I'm sorry" the voice said. "I don't seem to have a flight plan on you. What was your departure point?"

"Perth, Western Australia."

"No . . . I mean where did you take-off from?"

"Perth, Western Australia."

"Navy Zero Eight Two, you do not understand me. I mean what was your departure airport for this leg of the flight?"

"Perth, Western Australia."

"BUT. . That's halfway around the world! "

"No . . . Only about a third. May we have that clearance, please? "

The Turtle had departed Perth some thirty-nine hours earlier and had been out of radio contact with anyone for the past twenty hours. That contact with Williams Radio called off a world-wide alert for ships and stations between Mid-way and the west coast to attempt contact with the Turtle on all frequencies. With some difficulty due to reception, the Turtle received an instrument clearance to proceed on airways from Oakland to Sacramento and on to Salt Lake City at 13,000 feet.

The weather report was discouraging. It indicated heavy turbulence, thunderstorms, rain and icing conditions. As Gene Rankin wrote in a magazine article after the flight: "Had the Turtle been on the ground at an airport at that threatening point, the question might have arisen: is this trip important enough to continue right through this ' stuff'?

The Turtle reached the west coast at 9:16 p.m. about thirty miles north of San Francisco. Their estimated time of arrival, further north up the coast, had been 9:00 p.m. They had taken off about forty hours earlier and had covered 9,000 statute miles thus far. They had broken the distance record by more than a thousand miles, and all of their remaining fuel was in their wing tanks which showed about eight-tenths full. Speculation among the pilots began as to how much further the Turtle could fly before fuel exhaustion.

The static and atmospherics began demonstrating the weird and wonderful phenomenon of St. Elmo's fire, adding more distractions to the crew's problems. The two propellers whirled in rings of blue-white light. And violet tongues licked up between the windshields' laminations. While eerie purple spokes protruded from the Neptune's nose cone.

All those distracting effects now increased in brilliance with an accompanying rise in static on all radio frequencies before suddenly discharging with a blinding flash and audible thump. Then once again. . . slowly re-create itself.

The Turtle's oxygen system had been removed for the flight, so the pilots were using portable walk-around oxygen bottles to avoid hypoxia at higher altitudes. The St. Elmo's fire had been annoying but not dangerous. But it can be a heart-thumping experience for those witnessing it for the first time. The tachometer for the starboard engine had been acting up, but there were no other engine problems. The pilots kept the fuel cross-feed levers, which connected both main tanks to both engines, in the 'off' position so each was feeding from the tank in its own wing.

Somewhere over Nevada, the starboard engine began running rough and losing power. After scanning the gauges, the pilots surmised that the carburetor intake was icing up and choking itself. To correct that, the carburetor air preheating systems on both engines were increased to full heat to clear out any carburetor ice. Very quickly, the warm air solved the problem and the starboard engine ran smoothly again.

With an engine running rough, CDR Davies had to be thinking about their mission. The Turtle had broken the existing record, but was that good enough? It was just a matter of time before the AAF would launch another B-29 to take the record up another notch. The Neptune was now light enough for single engine flight, but how much farther could it go on one engine?
And was it worth risking this expensive aircraft for the sake of improving a long distance record?

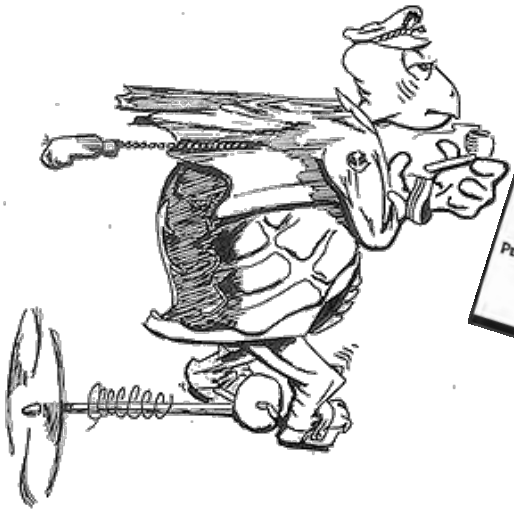
Over Nevada and Utah, the weather was a serious factor. Freezing rain, snow and ice froze on the wings and fuselage, forcing the crew to increase power to stay airborne. The aircraft picked up a headwind and an estimated 1,000 pounds of ice. It was problematic because the plane's deicing and anti-icing equipment had been removed as a weight-saving measure.

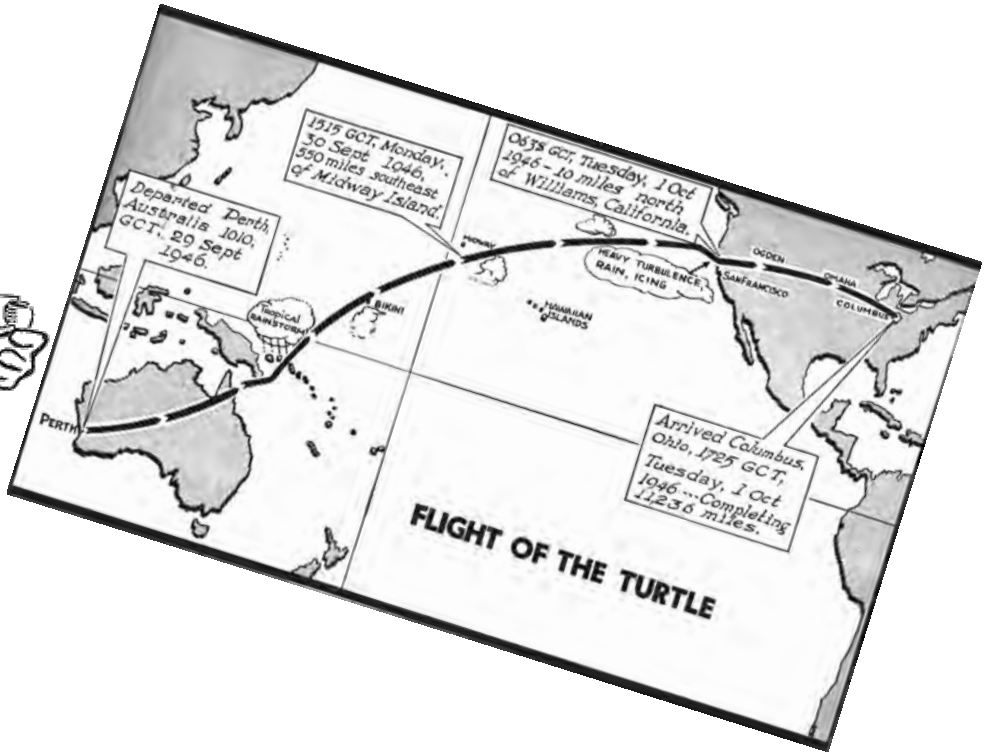
The next three hours of high power settings and increased fuel usage at a lower altitude of 13,000 feet. And it probably slashed 500 miles from our flight's record breaking distance.

After passing Salt Lake City, the weather finally broke with the dawn of the Turtle's third day in the air. The Turtle was cleared to descend to 9,000 feet. All morning, CDR Davies tracked their progress eastward over Nebraska, Iowa, and the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. To the north, Chicago's haze was in sight. But not surprisingly, our remaining fuel levels were gaining more attention from each and every member of the crew.

The wingtip tanks had long ago been emptied and jettisoned over the Pacific. The bomb bay tank, the nose tank and the huge aft-fuselage tank were empty. Entirely empty. The fuel gauges for both wing tanks were moving inexorably toward zero. CDR Davies and his crew consulted, tapped each fuel gauge, calculated and recalculated their remaining fuel, and cursed the gauges on which one-eighth of an inch represented 200 gallons.

At noon, they concluded they could not safely stretch the flight all the way to





Washington, D.C., and certainly not to the island of Bermuda. CDR Davies chose the Naval Air Station at Columbus, Ohio to be their final destination.

At quarter past one that afternoon the runways and hangars of the Columbus airport were in sight. The Turtle's crew were cleaned-up and shaven and in uniform. And the fuel gauges all read empty. With the landing checklist completed and wheels and flaps down, CDR Davies cranked the Turtle around in a 45 degree left turn towards final. As the airplane leveled out of its final turn, the starboard engine popped, sputtered and quit.

The port engine continued smoothly. Down to 400 feet, as they completed their final turn, both pilots simultaneously recognized the problem. Their hands collided, as both reached for the fuel cross feed fuel lever between their seats.

During the landing pattern's descending final turn in the landing pattern, the near-empty starboard tank had quit feeding fuel into the starboard engine.

Within seconds, the starboard engine began running smoothly again from fuel rushing in from the open cross feed. The Turtle had been in no danger, since they were light enough to operate on one engine. On the other hand, it would have been embarrassing to have an engine quit, in view of the growing crowd watching below.

At 1:28 p.m. on October 1st, the Neptune's wheels once more touched the earth (HARD) with tires intentionally over inflated for our take-off at Perth. 11,236 miles and 55 hours and 17 minutes. . after take-off.

After a hastily called press conference in Columbus, the crew was flown to NAS air station in Washington, D.C. by a Marine Corps Reserve aircraft, where they were met by their wives and the Secretary of the Navy. The crew was grounded by a flight surgeon upon landing in Columbus.

But before the day was over, the Turtle's crew had been awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses by Navy Secretary Forrestal. Next day, they were scheduled to meet with an exuberant President Harry S. Truman.

And Joey was observably relieved to be back on solid earth. And she was installed in luxurious quarters at the zoo.

The record established by CDR Tom Davies and the crew of the Truculent Turtle's crew did not stand for a fluke year or two. But for decades. The long-distance record for all aircraft was only broken by a jet-powered B-52 in 1962.

The Truculent Turtle's record for piston/propeller driven aircraft was broken by Burt Rutan's Voyager, a carbon-fiber aircraft, which made its historic around the world non-stop flight in 1986, more than four decades after the Turtle landed in Ohio.

After a well-earned publicity tour, the Truculent Turtle was used by the Naval Air Test Center, at Patuxent River, as a flying test bed for advanced avionics systems. The Truculent Turtle was retired with honors in 1953 and put on display in Norfolk, Virginia, and later repositioned at the main gate of Naval Air Station Norfolk, Virginia, in 1968.

In 1977, the Truculent Turtle was transported to the National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Florida where it now holds forth in a place of honor in Hangar Bay One.

Many thanks to the Naval Institute Proceedings magazine, Naval Aviation News magazine, the Naval Aviation Museum Foundation magazine, CDR Eugene P. Rankin, CDR Walter S. Reid and CDR Edward P. Stafford, whose articles about the "Truculent Turtle " were the basis for this article.

Caribou Chronicles

"Wrong Way" Willie

My story begins on 4 December 1964. I had just finished Caribou School at Ft. Rucker, graduating 15th of 102 students. I was now qualified in aviation maintenance and awarded an MOS of 670.00. I just knew that when I got out of the Army I would find a respectable job in civilian aircraft maintenance. And that would be the pinnacle of achievement for a high-school dropout. Wouldn't Mother and Dad be proud.

On 11 December I received orders to travel to Fort Benning and join up with the 50th Transport Airplane Company, 11th Air Assault Division. I couldn't wait to sink my paws into the engine oil of a Pratt and Whitney (Spartan rebuild) R-2000 engine. To this day, I don't remember spending a single minute as a mechanic back then. I'm guessing the 50th looked at my Army Standard Scores and decided that the Army would be better served if I was made an assistant crew chief. So on 29 January 1965 I received orders changing my MOS to 672.30, Assistant Flight Engineer, and was introduced to Jack (Motor-Mouth) Powell. Jack got that nickname because he just wouldn't stop talking. He was a great crew chief and was a fountain of knowledge about anything and everything Caribou and lots of other things as well. On long flights, especially, I would have to partially disconnect my headset cable to get some relief. While he talked, I would just look at him every once in a while and nod my head which seemed to satisfy him. He must have taught me well for soon Jack was assigned to another plane and I was left alone with our plane. I was probably the only PFC, and at 20 years old, likely the youngest acting crew chief in the company.

In June of 1965 my plane was assigned a mission to fly to Fallon Naval Station in Nevada and deliver helicopter blades. I remember that cargo because there was only space to leave one set of troop seats down near the forward bulkhead. When I had to check for the main gear position ("Gear up, Sir!" Or "Gear down and locked, Sir!"), I had to do the 40-yard low-crawl to get back there. That was a pain in the you know where.

We dropped the blades off, got quarters for the night and headed back to Fort Benning the next day. At one point, west of Denver, the pilot, Captain Smith, called me up and asked if I would like to fly the plane for a while. I looked over to the co-pilot, WO Kelly, who nodded his assent. So I climbed up into the pilots seat but before going back, Captain Smith instructed my on what to do. "See this gauge? It's an altimeter. Says how high we are. Keep it there." He pointed at the attitude indicator. "This one tells you if the wings are level. Keep them level." Next, he tapped on the course indicator glass. "And this one keeps you going in the right direction. You got that?"

"Yes Sir!," I said. And I settled in for my very first flying experience. Mr. Kelly watched me for a few minutes before reaching into his Jepp case and pulling out a fountain pen, some stationary and a clipboard. "You seem to be doing all right, Upton. I'm going to write a letter home. Tap me on my knee if you have a problem. Other than that, don't bother me."

"You got it, Sir," I said and I worked very hard at keeping the Caribou at altitude, level and on course.

I had no idea where we were when the VOR needle edged left, so I followed it with the yoke. I looked up at the world outside the cockpit and wondered at my luck in being able to pilot this wonderful aircraft. And that these two officers would trust me enough to put me in the pilot's seat. After a moment or two, I looked back to the gauges. That darn needle was still moving. I followed it some more. Now, I mostly kept my eyes on that one gauge. It began moving left even faster. I turned harder. It wouldn't stop moving. I was forced to push the rudder pedal in an effort to keep up to it. Finally, the needle stopped moving and I sighed in relief, proud of myself for following the Captain's instructions to the "T." But then, I figured something was wrong when I could see the Rocky Mountains ahead. They should have been behind us.

I tapped Mr. Kelly on the knee. When he looked up, I pointed to the mountains. He said something that rhymed with spit and grabbed the controls back. "I followed instructions all the way, Sir." I protested.

He didn't say anything until we were once again headed to Fort Benning. "Listen, PFC Wrong Way, that needle you were following was the Denver beacon." He said that as if I knew what he was talking about. Still I nodded as if I understood. "Okay, now listen. When the Captain wakes up we won't say anything about this." I guess he felt a bit responsible for my not-so-splendid flying effort. "Thanks," I said.

We kept the secret between us but every time I flew with Mr. Kelly after that, he always called me "Wrong Way." *(Pilots names were changed to protect the innocent from ridicule.)*


Certificate of Proficiency

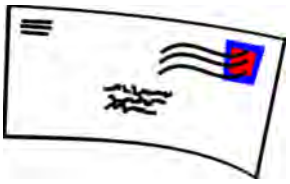
This Certifies that
William Upton
has satisfactorily completed an
Aircraft Maintenance Training Course conducted by
THE DE HAVILLAND AIRCRAFT
OF CANADA LIMITED
and is qualified to perform general servicing on
CV-2B CARIBOU AIRCRAFT
Signed and sealed this 27th day of
January 1965
W. R. R. Walden
SERVICE MANAGER
Mackenzie Brown
CHIEF INSTRUCTOR

Proof Positive That I did, In Fact, Graduate Caribou School

Very little PhotoShopping Necessary

A Nice Letter. . .

Army Otter Caribou Assn
C/0 Bruce Silvey
9155 35 Way N.
Pinellas Park, Fl. 33782



Bruce,

Let me first join the many others in thanking you for all you have done and continue to do for the Association. I don't know how I missed the previous messages on the changes being made to the Association, but am glad that the "Logbook" is still available via email. I'm enclosing a check for dues as a volunteer and for two 35 year Challenge Coins.

Very sorry to hear of Newell Mock's passing, he was my instructor at Flight Safety for the C-12 way back in the eighties. He was a true gentleman and a great instructor.

Upon retiring from my 32+ year military career, l was employed by the FAA and gave many check rides in Bell-47's and a few Sikorsky S-58's, also many odd ball aircraft Champion Lancer 402 (Twin Champ) Cessna T-50 (Bamboo Bomber) Twin-Bee (twin sea bee) Grumman Widgeon, etc. Also thanks to the Association flew a civilian Caribou a little in sky-diving operation. l recently allowed my flight instructor's certificate to expire after holding it continuously from 1969.

One of my proudest moments was teaching both my son and daughter to earn their pilot's certificates in a 1946 Aeronca Champ. l have flown Champs on wheels, floats and skis.

l was recently awarded the FAA's Wright Brothers "Master Pilot" award for over 50 years of accident and incident free flight, accumulating a little over 10,000 flying hours. As Bob Hope would say, "Thanks for the memories."

Chuck Martin
1331 Mill Pond Way
Palmyra, Pa. 17078

FOLLOW ME

LTG Jack Cushman, my boss during the Caribou evaluation by the Army Concept Team in Vietnam, and instigator of the Caribou case studies featured in the Logbook some years ago, got word that there were elephants on the runway at Ban Don near the Cambodian border. And he heard that one of them might be employed as a "Follow Me" vehicle for aircraft landing at Ban Don. When I landed at Ban don at first light the next morning to check it out, there was no "Follow Me" elephant in sight. I thought it was not a good idea to ask the Special Forces sergeant who greeted me on landing where the "Follow Me" elephant was. Instead, I handed him the Stars and Stripes and asked him to take me to the nearby elephant training center where mahouts trained elephants to work in the nearby forests. So as not to disappoint Jack Cushman - whereas there was no "Follow Me" elephant when I arrived at Ban Don, there was one indeed before I left. *The photo was included with our monthly Caribou evaluation report to the Pentagon, and got fairly wide circulation back home.*
Gene Dewey

From Gene Dewey's Scrapbook

The final 1st Avn Co (Caribou) contingent closed into Korat, Thailand in July 1962. We lived in tents, but had to build a more sturdy mess hall. The company's two Corps of Engineer officers - Gene Dewey and Ted Dayharsh - supervised the Thai carpenters and company volunteers (shown above) in getting it done.

OTTER ODDS & ENDS

BIG DADDY WILLIAMS

(Or, How to Make Room for One More)

Dick Lochner

Dear Bill,

Saw your email about the upcoming Logbook and thought I'd make a contribution of something on the light side which happened during the disastrous TET Offensive.

I was a Platoon Leader of the Otter contingent of the famous 54th Otter Company (The Rat Finks) assigned to Can Tho, Vietnam. The platoon consisted of three Otters at Can Tho and two at Saigon. Our call sign was appropriately BIG DADDY.

As I recall it was the morning of 30 January 1968 and our crews had arrived at the Can Tho airfield early for our departures of Otters in support of the 5th Special Forces and the 22nd ARVN Division. Somewhere around 0800 a three quarter ton ambulance with ARVN markings came thru the security gate and proceeded directly to the PSP runway. The doors opened and several Viet Cong emerged firing automatic weapons and tossing thermite grenades. They successfully killed the civilian tower operators and destroyed an Air America Caribou and a DC-3 on the ramp before they were duly dispatched.

The airfield was surrounded and our helicopter gunships were hovering out of the revetments and spraying their entire load of ammo in a 90 to 180 degree arc and then returning to the revetment to reload while a companion gunship would repeat the maneuver. This went on for most of the morning. Meanwhile the VC were launching rockets into the entire area surrounding the airfield. Several of the rockets hit and destroyed the Mess tent and surrounding area but, fortunately, God was on our side and it was empty at the time. The primary reason it was empty was by the time the first round was fired our troops immediately headed for the designated shelters. Our designated shelter was a Conex container covered on all sides and top with a double layer of sandbags. The shelter immediately filled up with a variety of individuals of all sizes and shapes to the point of standing room only.

That was the general situation that day and those and other memories will always be with me. But amidst all of the chaos that day an incident occurred that I, and I am sure, most of the individuals present, will always remember. One of our Mechanics had the nickname "Big Willy." I regret that I don't recall his first name but SGT Williams was a very large individual, over six feet in height and close to that size in girth. No doubt an exaggeration, but Willy appeared to weigh at least 300 pounds and not much fat to speak of. One of the strongest men I've ever met.

Well, during the above mentioned rocket attack, and the rush to occupy the fortified shelter, Willy was one of the last, if not the last, individuals to reach the entrance. Upon announcing his arrival, someone in the crowd of standing room only occupants called out "There's no more room in here." Whereupon Willy announced "There's gonna be room for Big Willy," and with that he nearly ripped the door off the Conex and took command of the last remaining square feet of space in that steel box. After a short period of time the gunships had done their job of suppressing the major element of the attack and the occupants of the shelter emerged to allow chest expansion and normal breathing again. It has been said that those who serve in the military in combat become much closer. On that day in January 1968 Sergeant "Big Willy" Williams made several of us become much, much, closer.

God Bless you Big Daddy Sergeant Williams if you are still out there somewhere. Thanks for your service and thanks for the memories.

HOMELINESS, A THING CALLED OTTER

Lieutenant Colonel Raymond E. Dickens

Reprinted from the March 2006 Logbook

OF THE MANY aviation units operating in Vietnam, probably least publicized are the Otter units. The U-I A Otter, the Army's single engine light transport aircraft, was rapidly approaching obsolescence in favor of the newer and bigger CV-2 Caribou. However, the conflict in Vietnam gave the old girl a chance to prove that she was by no means finished.

January 1962 saw the 18th Aviation Company, formerly of Fort Riley, boarding the USNS Core which soon set out on a westerly course. On 30 January, just after departing Guam, its destination was announced -- Vietnam. The 18th Aviation Company, the first fixed wing unit to arrive in Vietnam, established its headquarters in the coastal town of Nha Trang and immediately spread its platoons from one end of South Vietnam to the other. The Otters provided support sorely needed in all corps areas.

U-lAs, the Army's largest single engine transport, are capable of operating on short unimproved strips carrying up to eight passengers or a ton of cargo. It is old and slow -- maybe a 100 knots if you push it -- but is reliable and gets the job done. Later the 18th was reinforced with another platoon, bringing its strength to 24 aircraft. These ships operated in all sorts of terrain, ranging from the mountainous areas of the north to the delta in the south. Weather often required either climbing on top and letting down through a hole at the destination or flying at treetop level. Although the Otters did not receive as hot a reception from the Viet Cong as did the choppers, they did take their share of hits.

Many have wondered why the Otters are not mentioned more often. As far as any single spectacular event or any unusual employment of the U-IA is concerned, you'll probably not come up with any. What is outstanding is the overall support rendered throughout Vietnam since the arrival of the 18th. Thousands of individuals at the many Special Forces camps and advisory groups can and have given personal witness to the support rendered by the Otter crews and their ships. In a situation where supplies and equipment must come in by air, the Otter has become a welcome sight to those manning isolated outposts and camps throughout Vietnam. You name it and if it will fit in the door, it has been carried. All sorts of Supplies and equipment, from C-rations to livestock and poultry, generators, gasoline, and ammunition have been delivered to more than 150 strips.

The delivery of items which greatly affect a fighting man's morale – mail, PX items, and even Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys -- must also be included among the myriad articles transported by Otter. Even though most camps boasted of a landing strip, there were some less fortunate camps who had no place for a ship to land. In this situation, supplies were dropped by parachute. Not only have supplies and equipment been continuously transported, but thousands of passengers have used the "Otter Lines." American, Vietnamese members of many Allied Nations - military, from privates to generals, civilians including VIPs, entertainers, newspaper correspondents and photographers - have depended upon this low and slow but reliable ubiquitous transport. Replacements are delivered to their new units, repair teams are often transported to the camps to effect repairs on equipment which is vital to the successful accomplishment of the mission. CV-2s and Air Force 123s have taken over the heavy hauling, but plenty of business is still left for the U-lAs. Normal passenger and cargo runs make up The majority of the flying done by the Otter crews; however, this by no means is the extent of their operations, Aircraft have been made available at times for Special Forces personnel to make training jumps to maintain their proficiency. U-1As are frequently used to drop flares for battlefield illumination and or surveillance of an area. When a VC boat loaded with arms and ammunition was spotted south of Tuy Hoa last spring, the Otters illuminated the area throughout the night. Each night you'll find U-1As loaded with flares, their crews standing by to take off on a moment's notice.

Another vital role shared by the Otter, is that of medical evacuation. Scores of sick and wounded have been flown in U-lAs to hospitals at Saigon and Nah Trang. Many of these evacuations have been accomplished under extremely marginal conditions and many lives have been saved by the skill of the crews and their thorough knowledge of the terrain. These evacuations have not been limited to friendly military forces.

Frequently the call is received that a wounded VC at one of the remote Special Forces camps has information that would be of value to our forces. As an example, the Otter section at Da Nang received a call late one afternoon requesting that a valuable VC prisoner be picked up at the isolated camp at Gia Vuc and then taken to the hospital at Nha Trang. Gia Vuc is tucked away in a valley southwest of Quang Ngai and is surrounded on all sides by VC infested mountains, making it hazardous to approach even during daylight. An Otter was dispatched immediately, arriving at the camp as darkness closed in. The wounded prisoner was loaded on board and the flight through the deep valley was made in total darkness - that is, except for the tracers which were coming from the mountains on both sides as well as from the valley floor.

Approximately 0200 hours on 7 February 1965, both camps at Pleiku were hit hard by the VC. At this time the Otter crews were living at the MACV compound on the north side of town. When the attack came, they immediately took up their fighting positions. As soon as the fighting stopped and wounded had been given first aid, the platoon commander voluntarily organized a convoy and took his Otter crews across town to Camp Holloway. On arriving at Holloway they found the air filled with smoke from burning helicopters. Their Otters had miraculously escaped damage, Quickly rigged for litters and with crew chiefs guiding them, they taxied across a ramp strewn with rifle grenade duds and burning helicopters to where they could pick tip the wounded. Loaded with some of the more seriously wounded, the ships took off through the dust and smoke and the sporadic enemy fire.

Upon delivering the wounded to the 8th Field Hospital in Nha Trang, the crews were offered the opportunity to rest since the CV-2s and the Air Force had taken over. However, the Otter crews chose to return to Pleiku where they continued to fly command and liaison flights throughout the day.

Surveillance, reconnaissance, and radio relay also make up a part of the daily routine, but in addition to this great variety of missions, many personal services are rendered. The Otter crews have great respect and admiration for those who man the remote camps, and will go out of their way to try to make life a little more pleasant for them. On a trip into a Special Forces camp which had just been opened, the pilot asked the camp commander it there was anything he needed that might be brought in on the next trip through. The young captain said, "Nowell, yes, we'd sure like to have some ice cream."

Ice cream was rather hard to come by, and transporting it was even more difficult. However, on return to his home base, the pilot found that a mission was going to the same camp on the following day. A quick check of the area produced a couple gallons of ice cream.

With the help of mess personnel, the frozen goodies were packed in ice, loaded aboard the U-IA at the last minute and delivered to a surprised but grateful team.

This is just one of the multitude of "extras" accomplished by the Otter crews. The friendly greetings and the genuine appreciation shown by those manning the camps provided more than adequate return for the extra effort put forth in rendering these services.

Otters were placed in direct support of each of the four Vietnamese corps. Missions were routed through the Tactical Operation Centers, through the Combat Operation Centers to the Otter platoon or section. About 75 percent of the Otter pilots arriving in Vietnam had just completed flight school and 25 hours of transition in the U-IA. Upon their arrival at Nha Trang, they are given a local area checkout to familiarize them with the strips, weather and terrain in Vietnam. On completion of this checkout, they are released to one of the platoons. There they fly with the more experienced pilots until they are completely familiar with the area as well as with the enemy situation. Flying from 75 to 100 hours per month, it doesn't take long for these young men to become seasoned aviators.

Not to be forgotten are the crew chiefs and maintenance crews who maintain these old ships. They are a dedicated lot who do a marvelous job in keeping the Otters flying day after day. The company administrative personnel, the supply section, commo and mess have also contributed immensely to the successful completion of the mission. The l8th Aviation Company's Otter patch with its motto, "Low, Slow and Reliable" is worn proudly by the men of the company.

Until recently, the l8th was the only Otter company in Vietnam The 54th arrived from Fort Ord and in October 1965, took over the support of the III and IV Corps areas. With the addition of these aircraft and with the continued spirit and dedication demonstrated by the crews, the Otter will certainly continue to build the fine reputation it has enjoyed in the past.

MILITARY MUSINGS
And More. . .

The Christening

Marilyn Weitzel

The saga begins at an early 1960s church service in a small Ohio town on Lake Erie. I was approached by a gentleman who asked me to model for an upcoming boat show at the nearby Catawba Island Yacht Club. The event was the christening of the first fiberglass yacht manufactured by the Hatteras Yacht Company of High Point, N.C. Among those in attendance would be the company's founder, Willis Slane, and his partners as well as a representative of Owens-Corning Fiberglass from New York.

It was a beautiful summer day in the marina on Lake Erie as I grasped the mesh-wrapped wine bottle and slammed it against the side of the newly manufactured sport fishing boat. To my chagrin, the sturdy glass remained intact, so I gripped it again and gave it my best tennis backhand. Much to everyone's delight (and mine), the container erupted in a cascade of delicious foaming champagne.

The afternoon continued with my first ride on the 38-foot yacht as it glided on the sparkling Lake Erie waters. The owners even let me pilot it for a few minutes which was a bit terrifying when I asked them what would happen if I ran it aground, and they replied, "then we'll stop !!"

At the conclusion of the show, founder Willis Slane and his fellow hosts invited me to join them for dinner at the Catawba Yacht Club later that evening. Since I already had a date with a young Army aviator, he was invited as well. Turns out several of the owners were also pilots, which only served to enhance the enjoyment with my boisterous dinner companions.

A couple of months later in church at the original scene of the crime, the same man who had originally approached me showed me a copy of Ohio Boating Magazine. Much to my surprise, I saw myself on the cover !! Then I remembered that one of the guests had asked me to pose on the deck of a sailboat at the conclusion of the afternoon show. Little did I know that he was the managing editor of the boating publication.

Fast forward a couple of years, I am now living at Fort Benning, having married the young pilot who had been my date at the yacht club (and later KIA in VN). While waiting for a doctor's appointment one day at Martin Army Hospital, a doctor kept walking by and staring at me. After his 5th or 6th pass, I noticed he was carrying some literature so I asked him,

"Excuse me, isn't that a Hatteras Yacht?"

"How did you know that?" he replied, "I'll bet there aren't 10 girls in the whole country who know what a Hatteras Yacht is!"

When I told him my story of the christening, he said, "…and they took some films that day, didn't they?" to which I replied, "Yes, but I never got to see them since I moved away later that year."

Turns out the doctor was a neurosurgeon from Miami, a USAR colonel on his two weeks' active duty at the hospital. "I'll get a copy of the film while I'm here and bring

it to your quarters to show to you and your husband," he said. "Together with my partners in Miami, we own a 50' version with a dedicated pilot so just let me know if ever you want to use it."

And so it was that I belatedly re-lived that moment of the exploding bubbly in grainy black & white 16mm (after all fellas, this was the '60s !!).

Fast forward to the present. Something told me recently to investigate the epilogue of my Hatteras connection. Alas, my copy of Ohio Boating sporting a photo of a much younger version of yours truly was lost in one of my many moves as an Army wife, and the publication was long ago out of print.

However, I did reach an old timer with the Hatteras company who was able to fill me in on some of its history during the Vietnam Era. CEO Willis Slane, together with his naval architect, Jack Hargrove, and several other luxury boat owners, were summoned to Washington under the premise of creating large river craft for use in Vietnam. However, when they arrived, they were told the mission was for smaller boats to navigate the narrow waters to ferry the Navy SEALS into the interior where the VC had receded.

Willis had first proposed their 50' fiberglass version, but it was judged too large to be shallow worthy, so he offered one of his 31' smaller sport fishing boats. When asked how soon he could have one of these models modified for combat purposes, he replied, "Two weeks!!" which would have caused his employees to toil day and night to fulfill. But when Willis, a World War II pilot and trainer, was told of the requirement to have an inspector on site, he vehemently roared, "No one is going to set foot on my property to supervise my work !!"

Marilyn Weitzel
Young and Beautiful

Consequently, the Hatteras concept which removed the flying bridge, made several modifications to the operating systems and contained no armor thus making it nimble and fast, was the model used by other boat companies to build the craft which subsequently served with the U. S. Navy in Vietnam to bring Navy SEALS to patrol interior areas.

On a sad note, Willis died of a massive heart attack at age 44 within a few short weeks from that fateful visit to DC. His cohorts told me, "We had a big party in his honor as he would have understood. He was known as a hard-charging character, and his idea of drinking was a pint a day!! He lived large and we honored him in the same spirit."

As a footnote, I'm told the History Channel has aired a segment chronicling this bit of VN naval history entitled "Boats of Vietnam" and may be available on line for download or purchase.

Postscript:

A Navy Vietnam veteran friend with firsthand knowledge of river navigation shared that the craft described were Patrol Boat River (PBR). The PBRs were fiberglass, 33 feet long and able to penetrate very narrow waterways and shallow water because of their small draft.

In contrast, Swift boats were 50 feet, aluminum and configured very differently. They were operated from the same bases as PBRs, but the mission assignments depended on the capabilities of the respective boats.

AOCA 2020 REUNION

CANCELLED

Due to the extreme danger posed by Covid - 19 to our beloved age and health challenged members. Plans, however, remain in effect for a Grand Reunion next year. See you then.

Aviation officer finds friends through service

By SKIP VAUGHN
Rocket editor
skip.vaughn@theredstonerocket.com

An old photo of a 5-year-old Mel McLemore in uniform provided a hint of his eventual profession. He became a Soldier and he served two tours in Vietnam. The Athens native treasures his friends from Athens High School, where he played football, and from his 30 years in the Army. He retired in 1991 as a colonel and he worked for the aviation industry until 2015. "Life is really what you make it, what you contribute to it, and to your contribution to America, to the United States, to the nation. And of course concurrently with your family,"McLemore said. "And it's the friends that you will make from your earliest memory in school, your college, your universities, your military career and industry. Those are friends you make and that you keep forever." After Athens High from 1952-56, he went to Florence State which in 1974 would become the University of North Alabama. He entered ROTC and became co-captain of the rifle team. McLemore was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1960 at age 20 and graduated with a bachelor's in business. While a Soldier, he would receive his master's in management in 1974 from Troy University. He was commissioned in the Signal Corps. After a one-year assignment, he entered flight school at Fort Rucker and graduated in November 1962. The young lieutenant joined the newly-activated 73rd Aviation Company and served his first Vietnam tour from May 1963 to May 1964. "We were the first fixed-wing company that was assigned to Vietnam,"the Madison resident said. The company earned the Meritorious Unit Citation. Based in Qui Nhon, he piloted a Cessna 0-1 airplane commonly called the Bird Dog. The light aircraft was used for surveillance. The two-seater had a Vietnamese observer in the back seat, an officer from the 9th Infantry Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. "We were always getting shot at," McLemore recalled. In August 1963, he flew a surveillance mission out of the Tau Hoa airfield with a Vietnamese lieutenant in the back seat. They were flying their usual low altitude, 1,500 feet, while watching an element of the division unit advance from the valley to the hills. "Suddenly the whole aircraft windshield exploded,"McLemore said. "It came back on me and part of it on my observer. The windows and doors flew out. I took the evasive action to head back toward the coastline. I got the aircraft back under control and made it back. Of course I had to keep my observer calmed down. I knew the airfield had severe crosswinds from the coast. Fortunately I was able to land on a very short maintenance strip without further damage to the aircraft." The aircraft was repaired and returned to duty. There were no bullet holes. McLemore surmised that "we had a major bird strike, probably a hawk or something." Fortunately he was uninjured, "just had a few scratches," he said. He received the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for valor. His unit next deployed to Vinh Long for about four months in 1963 after moving with the Vietnamese 9th Infantry Division to the Mekong Delta. That Nov. 2, McLemore flew a senior Vietnamese colonel to Saigon for a conference. They landed at Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The Soldiers were told that all aircraft were grounded; so they got out and walked to a hangar. They watched in astonishment minutes later when the Vietnamese military conducted an air strike in support of a coup to overtake the then South Vietnam president. But the antiaircraft fire from the capital nearby began to rain shells on the airfield where many U.S. aircraft and crews were grounded for nearly an hour. "We all had to take any shelter available until control was established by the new controlling military that was friendly with the U.S.," McLemore said. "An exciting time to remember always." On the night of Nov. 22, McLemore and his fellow Soldiers learned that President Kennedy had been assassinated and they later learned that the United States would continue the buildup in Vietnam by President Johnson. He finished his tour in Nha Trang by taking single ship aerial photos of all the airfields and associate information for intelligence throughout South Vietnam for about two and a half months. He joined the 11th Air Assault Division Test at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he transitioned to a multi-engine cargo aircraft named the Caribou CV-2. He flew the aircraft day and night operating from unimproved airstrips with heavy loads to test the Caribou's capability,prior to deploying the aircraft to Vietnam. The aircraft and test proved successful. McLemore returned to Vietnam as a captain from February 1967 through February 1968. He commanded the Army airfield operations unit for the 1st Aviation Brigade based in Nha Trang. The enemy's Tet Offensive,which began Jan. 30, 1968, extended his tour another two weeks in February."We all had to man our weapons around the airfield," he said. Most of his combat flight hours were in his first tour. McLemore finished with 954 combat flying hours and 22 Air Medals. "It was a great experience. One that I wouldn't trade for anything. Based on the people I served with and even the South Vietnamese for whom we were fighting for their freedom," he said. "It was a proud time then. It was a proud time when we came back." During his Army career, he commanded at all levels from signal company, battalion and the Aviation-ATC Group. He was brigade selected to command the group after completing Air War College in 1981 and assignment at MacDill Air Force Base,Florida, as the commander of a special aviation unit supporting the four-star Readiness Command. He and his wife of almost 59 years, Wanda, have two daughters and four grandchildren. Wanda was a safety model for the Army Aviation magazine for nearly four years in the 1970s. Their oldest daughter, Stormy Sandi Ripley, of Madison, served 26 years in the Army. The Panama veteran was selected NCO of the Year and she was brought to the White House to meet President George H. W. Bush. She went to flight school and became a Black Hawk helicopter pilot. After retiring from the military,she now works at Redstone as an Army civilian in the safety profession. Debbie McLemore Baugh, of Hazel Green, is a graduate of the Army War College and she works for the Aviation and Missile Command. McLemore is president of the Army Otter Caribou Association. He serves as treasurer of the Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 511 in Athens. He is on the board of the Alabama Veterans Museum in Athens. He also belongs to the Army Aviation Association of America and the Vets With Vettes. He shared his thoughts on this nation's commemoration of 50 years since the Vietnam War. "I am so proud that our nation, the administration, has certainly recognized all of these veterans," he said. "And of course we honor those that are on The Wall (memorial in Washington, D.C.). We'll never forget them. And I have personal friends who are inscribed on that wall and who I served with in Vietnam. They are the real heroes."

Courtesy photo

Retired Col. Mel McLemore, in his Madison home, shows the camera that survived his two tours in Vietnam. "The camera still works," he said.

The Flight of Phoenix II

P.T. Smith

(Disclaimer: this is an Air Force mission my C-130E crew flew to escort a damaged C-5A Galaxy from Shemya AFB, AK, non-stop to Dobbins AFB, GA. If the term "Air Force" is distasteful to the reader, as it may be to some of the membership, please do not hesitate to pass over this article and continue your reading pleasure.) **Ed. Note:** *No AOCA member would dare to by-pass a story written by the former (and much loved) Logbook Editor, Philip "P.T." Smith*

On July 31, 1983, an Air Force C-5A Galaxy (70-0446) crashed during landing at Shemya AFB, AK, by flying below the glide slope in heavy fog on the approach and landing short of the runway. The aircraft struck the runway approach lights with the extended main landing gear, hit an embankment short of the runway, then bounced back airborne and came to rest after skidding off the runway. The two aft landing gear assemblies were sheared off, the aircraft keel and two structural mainframes were broken, and most of the fuselage 'belly bands' (supporting the

cargo compartment flooring) were cracked / broken.

A joint Lockheed / Air Force engineering team assessed the aircraft condition and determined that it was repairable. The aircraft was made flight worthy over a two-month period and cleared for a one-time non-stop flight back to the Lockheed factory at joint use Dobbins AFB, GA.

My crew was selected to fly the close-in escort mission for the flight, dubbed "The Flight of Phoenix II." As happens from time to time, not everyone got the missions requirements. We flew an in-flight refuel configured C-130E from McChord AFB, WA, to Shemya AFB, AK, in late September. During the pre-launch mission briefing, the multiple refuel locations / procedures were briefed in detail as I sat with my crew; none of us having ever refueled in flight! Following the briefing, I brought this up with the mission commander and was told in short order that my crew's training & certification would be 'OJT' (On the Job Training), starting shortly after takeoff! If we accomplished the refueling, we would be certified on the spot and would continue the mission. If not, we could either ditch & swim in the Bering Sea or find land. That evening, my crew poured over the aircraft operating manual's in-flight refuel section deep into the night!!

We took off at first light and proceeded to the first KC-135 tanker refuel track about 100 nm into the flight (the C-5A took off with absolute minimum fuel in case of an aircraft controllability issue and had to ditch). The C-5A refueled first and then it was our turn! I had closely listened & observed how the C-5A did it. I stabilized in the pre-contact position aft of the tanker and then, on command, moved up and towards the tanker. The boom operator must have noticed something about my flying (?) to cause him to ask how many times we had previously refueled in-flight. Before I could say anything, my copilot told him, "including this time?" The boomer, being a very experienced boom operator and with a good sense of humor, slowly coached me into the refuel position, giving me excellent tips and advice all the way in. We successfully refueled our aircraft without having to 'break away' so we became air refuel qualified. Later in the flight on subsequent air refueling, we had to refuel from a KC-10 (centerline engine in the tail which played havoc with my rudder & directional control!) and then we had to refuel at night on a track that required refueling during turns. I had to fight from over controlling the aircraft while flying 20 ft tucked in under the tanker. If the reader hasn't been in that position, he has no idea how big the belly of a tanker appears. When we de-briefed the mission at Dobbins AFB, I gladly bought the boomer all the beer he wanted / could drink!

AS WE GET OLDER

(Army Aviators and Crew Members)

Author unknown

Submitted by Sam Kaiser

As we get older and we experience the loss of old friends, we begin to realize that maybe we ten-foot tall, bulletproof Army aviators (and crew) won't live forever. We aren't so bulletproof anymore. We ponder. . . if I were gone tomorrow, "Did I say what I wanted to my Brothers?" The answer is "No!" Hence, the following random thoughts:

When people ask me if I miss flying, I always say something like, "Yes, I miss the flying because when you are flying, you are totally focused on the task at hand. It's like nothing else you will ever do (almost)." But then I always say, "However, I miss the unit and the guys even more than I miss the flying."

Why, you might ask? They were a bunch of aggressive, wise ass, cocky, insulting, sarcastic bastards in smelly flight suits! They drank too much, they chased women, they flew when they shouldn't, they laughed too loud and thought they owned the sky, the bar, and generally thought they could do everything better than the next guy.

Nothing was funnier than trying to screw with a buddy and see how pissed off they would get. They flew helicopters that leaked, that bled RPM, that broke, that couldn't hover, that burned fuel too fast, that never had all the radios and instruments working, and with systems that were archaic next to today's new generation aircraft.

But a little closer look might show that every guy in the room was sneaky smart and damned competent and brutally handsome in his own way! They hated to lose or fail to accomplish the mission and seldom did. They were the laziest guys on the planet until challenged and then they would do anything to win.

They would fly with rotor blades overlapped at night through the worst weather with only a little position light to hold on to, knowing their flight lead would get them on the ground safely.

They would fight in the air knowing the greatest risk and fear was that some NVA anti-aircraft gunner would wait 'til you flew past him and open up on your six o'clock with tracers as big as softballs.

They would fly in harm's way and act nonchalant as if to challenge the grim reaper.

When we flew to another base we proclaimed that we're the best unit on the base as soon as we landed. Often we were not invited back. When we went into a bar, we owned the bar. We were lucky to be the Best of the Best in the military. We knew it and so did others. We found jobs, lost jobs, got married, got divorced, moved, went broke, got rich, broke some things, and knew the only thing you could count -- really count on -- was if you needed help, a fellow Army Aviator would have your back.

I miss the call signs, nicknames and the stories behind them. I miss getting lit up in an O' or NCO' Club full of my buddies and watching the incredible, unbelievable things that were happening.

I miss the crew chiefs waiting as you got to your ship for a Zero-Dark:30 preflight.

I miss pulling an armful of pitch, nosing it over and climbing into a new dawn.

I miss going straight up and straight down.

I miss the tension of wondering what today's 12 hours of combat flying would bring.

I miss the craps table in the corner of the O-Club and letting it ALL ride because money was meaningless.

I miss listening to BS stories while drinking and laughing until my eyes watered.

I miss three man lifts.

I miss naps on the platoon hootch porch with a room full of aviators working up new tricks to torment the sleeper.

I miss rolling in hot and watching my rockets hit EXACTLY where I was aiming.

I miss the beauty and precision of a flight of slicks in formation, rock steady even in the face of tracers flying past you from a hot LZ. I miss belches that could be heard in neighboring states.

I miss showing off for the grunts with high-speed, low level passes and abrupt cyclic climbs.

I even miss passengers in the back puking their guts up.

Finally, I miss hearing In-Coming! called out at the bar and seeing and hearing a room full of men hit the deck with drinks spilling and chairs being knocked over as they rolled in the beer and kicked their legs in the air—followed closely by a Not Politically Correct Tap Dancing and Singing spectacle that couldn't help but make you grin and order another round.

I am a lucky guy and have lived a great life!

One thing I know is that I was part of a special team of guys doing something dangerous and doing it better than most. Flying the most beautiful, ugly, noisy, solid helicopters ever built. . . an aircraft that talked to you and warned you before she spanked you! Supported by really talented Crew Chiefs and Gunners committed to making sure we came home! Being prepared to fly and fight and die for America. Having a clear mission, clear vision, and having fun.

We box-out bad memories from various missions and events most of the time but never the hallowed memories of our fallen comrades. We are often amazed at how good war stories never let truth interfere and how they get better with age.

We are lucky bastards to be able to walk into a reunion or a bar and have men we respect and love shout our names, our call signs, and know that this is truly where we belong.

We are ARMY AVIATORS and CREW MEMBERS. We are Few and we are Proud to have been one of the first combat helicopter FLIGHT CREWS the world ever saw.

I am Privileged and Proud to call you Brothers. Clear Right! Clear Left! Pullin' Pitch!

What It Takes

Judge Dane P. Nash
Captain, Artillery
U.S. Army (Ret)

Special thanks go to Dane Nash and the Combat Helicopter Pilots Association

Already qualified as a fixed-wing aviator in the U.S. Army, and with about one thousand hours under my belt, mostly flown in Europe, I was not favorably inclined toward rotary-wing flight. The helicopter, to me, appeared to be a machine intent on its own destruction achieved through its normal use. I didn't look down on helicopter pilots, but I did feel sorry for them, struggling along in ungainly flight.

Wiser now, I look back on my attitude as being uneducated and narrow-minded. Although now qualified as a rotary-wing aviator, I can't claim I had the vision to reach out for it on my own. I was much too conceited and arrogant. No — to make the switch, I had to be forced by an edict straight out of the Pentagon for all fixed-wing aviators, wherever situated, ordering transition training into rotary-wing. I had every intention of happily returning to fixed-wing flight just as soon as I was out from underneath the thumb of the Pentagon.

I struggled, as all rotary-wing aviators have, with learning to hover. After acquiring a basic skill in that endeavor, my rotary-wing skills took flight. I enjoyed the training, and to my surprise, I enjoyed flying a helicopter, an H-13 in this particular case. I remember one day, in the UH-1B phase, our instructor told us to return to our training area that evening shortly before sunset. Without a clue as to his intentions, all of his students showed up at the appointed hour. With a twinkle in his eye, our instructor advised us that that we were going to shoot auto-rotations (engine failure procedure) in the dark. What!? My mind said: "You're nuts." Auto-rotations in the dark, right. Now that seems not smart, though I've since realized that, yes, helicopters do suffer engine failures in the dark.

Preliminarily our instructor advised us that in the event of an engine failure in the dark. . . Right here, I was questioning the wisdom of flying a helicopter at all. I much preferred my trusty parachute, the prescribed method of dealing with an engine failure at night in a fixed-wing aircraft. Our instructor continued: "In the event of an engine failure in the dark, the first thing you do is turn on all of your lights. If you don't like what you see, turn them off because what you see is what you get." Consistent with all things in my helicopter training, auto-rotations in the dark proved to be a delightful rush. After we'd all shot several successfully, our instructor was prepared to dismiss us, but first asked if there were anything we'd like to do as there were a few more minutes left in our time slot. Uniformly, we all responded in unison: "Let's shoot some more auto-rotations."

Young Dane "Pat" Nash

The reason behind this forced transition was that additional helicopter pilots could not be trained from the ground up in sufficient numbers to meet the Army's demands. The attrition in the combat zone was just too heavy. The result of the helicopter transition was the complement of pilots in my unit in Europe was very soon reduced to one. That one was yours truly, no CO, no EXEC, no contemporaries, just this lonely, overwhelmed person. I didn't know what my CO did when I wasn't watching him, which, in the first place, was almost never. I was one very lost puppy. I couldn't put in enough flight hours to keep the seals wet on all our aircraft. We had H-13 helicopters, O-1 (L-19) Bird Dogs, and one U-6 deHavilland Beaver. There was no one to run my parts department; there was no one to do anything except for what I could do. And that wasn't much. Though loath to admit it, I was out of my depth. I was incompetent to do that required of me, but the combat zone had picked Europe clean of Army aviators, and what was left was my pot to stew in.

Soon, my ego having been completely deflated, it was my turn to report to the combat zone. My replacement arrived just a few days before my departure, one lonely soul replacing another. My family and I packed up and made our way to CONUS (Continental United States) for a short leave before shipping out to the other side of the world. My POV (Privately Owned Vehicle) was dropped, I think literally, off the ship with a busted exhaust system. We rattled our way from New York to Indiana with no muffler, frayed nerves, and exhausted spirits. It was nice to be home after being away for so long. Even though it was Christmas time, a cloud of sadness hung over all our celebrating because my oldest brother was MIA (Missing In Action). That, coupled with everybody knowing where I was going next, added a cloud of dread to the overall cloud of sadness and made that Christmas bitter sweet in the extreme.

Soon, too soon, I was winging my way toward my first combat assignment. Upon arrival, experiencing all the jolts to my sensory system as was everybody else, I had a few days free to scout around while the assignment machine decided my final destination. I was originally assigned to the First Infantry Division, and that's where my carefully packed duffle bag was shipped. Ultimately I was assigned to the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Air Cav Troop, and never saw my duffle bag again. I was caught up in the confusing process of acquiring new uniforms, learning new duties, and meeting new strangers, soon to become friends.

Our days were busy, our calendars full. I soon lost track of day and time, because we never had a weekend off; each day was always the same, essentially. We would fly, fight, eat, and sleep. If you weren't flying, you were filling sandbags or some such thing. There were some meetings but mostly fly, fight, sleep, and eat. In truth, there was some downtime, but not much, and my memory grows dim as to what we did during the little downtime we had.

I remember being somewhat confused because my new contemporaries were laughing inappropriately, at least that was my impression. They were laughing

at things that weren't funny. I soon learned that these were difficult times during which we were confronted by many things that would make a normal person want to cry. Military pilots, especially combat military pilots, don't cry. . ., so. . . we laughed. You don't think about death much. To the extent it is on your mind, you developed a sense of immortality without realizing it. You also developed a callousness toward mayhem and gore. Such callousness would never be your conscious choice, but it was necessary for your mental health, and a callous attitude did evolve. It was the brain's method of coping with the horrors visited upon all soldiers who've experienced combat. It's not fun, and it's not healthy. But, through the ages, it's been necessary. We call it necessary and drape ourselves in patriotism without thinking that our opponent is similarly draped. We accomplish acts which non-veterans would call heroic, but we, the initiated, know are just a natural response to our warm regard toward that soldier standing or flying next to us. We care about each other, so we naturally take care of each other. This instinct, once absorbed in battle, lasts throughout all the years that follow.

My best guess is that all persons wonder if they have what it takes. Certainly, I did. It was a casual inquiry as a young person, but on my airplane ride to my own testing ground, the question became much more distinct. I was consciously questioning if I had what it takes. Would I let myself down; would I let my companions down? I knew how I wanted to act; I knew how I expected to act. I also knew that I wouldn't know how I would act until the circumstance arose.

Then my day came. It started just before midnight. Rousted from my sack, I gathered my necessities, helmet, flak vest, maps, and such, reporting quickly to the flight line. As you might imagine, the flight line was a flurry of activity. We were flying what was then called gunships with four persons to a ship, each with different pre-flight duties. The flight line was a zone of intense activity accomplished under the added pressure of knowing comrades were somewhere in trouble. Understand, this was all performed in the dark. Lights were a dangerous attraction to unknown enemy troops that might be observing. Also, the wrong kind of light ruined your night vision, which was important. All of it was rather like a well executed football play, except the "goal post" was miles away, and the "football" was an expensive helicopter. But it wasn't as if we hadn't done it before. All had trained for months, some for years.

The whole platoon was involved, not just one team. A gunship team consisted of two gunships; a heavy team was three gunships but seldom used. I think we were all assigned a different area, or we were run out in series. Usually, if you're in series, you'd see one team coming out as you returned. We fought from just before midnight until the late afternoon of the next day, about seventeen to eighteen hours. Except for my teammate, I never saw another gunship in the sky, concluding we were all on individual missions. We flew, fought, refueled, rearmed, and fought some more. I recall the possibility of getting some reconstituted eggs sometime during that period, but I'm not sure. I only remember flying and fighting. I did learn that you could run with four 2.75 inch rockets in your arms. The pilots (2) rearmed the rocket launchers while the door gunners (2) refueled and replenished the door guns and mini-guns.

Okay, so you've got the picture. The weather was CAVU (Ceiling And Visibility Unlimited) and warm. In the afternoon, we were working a large clearing in the forest. It was an elongated rectangle in shape. Small arms fire was being taken from the long sides, but when and from where remained a mystery. We were testing the water, recon by fire, in the general area, concentrating on the clearing. It wasn't healthy to just hang around, so we would take a peek and leave, come back, take a peek and maybe attack or leave again. By this time, all the other helicopters in our platoon had been shot down or disabled by fire, according to the rumor mill. Realizing that help from our platoon would not be available made for kind of a lonely feeling as we conducted our business on that sunny afternoon. Compared to the weather in the United States, our weather was hot and humid, but for that area of the world, it was moderate.

We were ordered out of the clearing by higher headquarters because an artillery bombardment was about to begin on and about that clearing. So we orbited nearby and watched the show. And what a show it was. I would not want to be the subject of an artillery bombardment. It looked like a pure kind of hell on earth. That bombardment having been concluded, we were on our way in again when a FAC (Forward Air Controller) warned us out of the area because a strike by fighter bombers (F-100 Super Sabres) was about to begin. I thought the artillery was colorful, but it was pale compared to the air strike. We just orbited outside of the strike zone and watched those Air Force pilots at work. Spectacular! Absolutely spectacular! You could see the bomb start its lazy arc from the plane to the ground as the pilot released it and pulled out of his fairly shallow dive. Between us, the artillery, and the Air Force, you wouldn't think there could be one living thing in that area. We were told by the FAC that the next fighter bomber would be the last, and we would be free to resume whatever it was that we were involved in before the FAC's arrival. That plane came in on its horribly beautiful, shallow dive, prepared to release death on those below.

When those planes initiated their climb out after dropping the bomb, their nose would come up, but because of the plane's velocity, it would continue to mush through on its original path even though its nose was now oriented upward. Soon, after that gentle mush, the airfoils would catch the air, and the aircraft would accelerate away in a smart climbing, left hand turn. The bomb would release; you could see it come free from the shackles underneath the wing. Even though free from the aircraft, they appeared still mated as the mushing of the aircraft caused it to continue to follow the falling arc of the bomb for a second or two before they separated.

This last fighter bomber and its brave pilot deceived us for a short time. It continued its shallow dive directly into its zone of greatest danger from ground fire. The bomb appears to detach from the fighter bomber, and the aircraft oriented its nose upward to initiate its pull out. With its nose up, we were waiting for his airfoils to catch the air and begin his exit from the danger below. But . . . it never caught the air. The plane, even with its nose pointed toward a climb, continued its descent, perfectly following the arc of the bomb, with the bomb and the plane both hitting the ground at almost the same time. We were, of course, stunned and just rode along in stupefaction for a moment.

Nobody could believe what we'd just seen. We continued in our orbiting position, stunned into silence. I don't write this next statement lightly. We were certain that the pilot of that plane was dead. Nothing existed of the plane except for tiny parts so far as we could see. As we tried to absorb what we just saw, we also tried to gather our wits and begin our deadly game of cat and mouse anew with the enemy below. It was particularly ticklish since we'd just witnessed the still, very real ability of those below to harm those above. The loss of that fighter bomber could have been some kind of mechanical failure, I don't know. Considering the immediate circumstances, it was most probably ground fire that brought it down. Not a very comforting thought for us about to re-initiate the fray.

For some reason, I don't recall being very concerned for our safety, despite the rather obvious warning signs. Some special kind of stupid, I guess. We were re-evaluating our attack plan based on this altered set of facts, and after some additional reconnaissance, we heard a radio call to "army gunships in the area." In every airplane and helicopter, military or civilian, there are guard channels, frequencies 121.5 kHz (VHF - Very High Frequency) and 243 MHz (UHF — Ultra High Frequency), each on two separate radios. Those "guard channels" are always tuned in and never assigned for normal use. They are strictly reserved for emergency use. Any aircraft can transmit on one of the two channels and know that other aircraft can hear. So we received a message over a guard channel: "Army gunships in the area — this is Air Force Rescue #." We switched to "guard," and responded: "aircraft transmitting on guard; this is Thunderhorse #; you're 5x5 (clear and strong)," meaning we hear you clearly and sharing our call sign. When receiving a call on "guard," it's required that you soon switch to an agreed upon frequency different than "guard." This conforms to the requirement to keep the guard channels free. In our excitement and the urgency of the moment, we did not switch frequencies. It was as if there wasn't time. At any rate, we didn't switch.

After the aircraft on guard identified itself, we started looking for it, and here, as if by magic, was a Kaman HH-43 Huskie. Now you want to talk about a weird helicopter; this one qualifies. It has no tail rotor. It has two main rotors that sit just above the cockpit, beside each other, set out at an angle. The two main rotor blades intermesh like an old fashioned egg beater. The arc of each blade actually turns well within the arc of the other. It sounds impossible. It looks impossible even while you watch it right in front of you. I'd heard about this helicopter but had never seen one up until now. This was our Air Force rescue helicopter.

We communicated the impossibility of the situation. The thought we tried to

Kaman HH-43
Huskie "Pedro"

share was: "Look, there's no need to investigate this crash scene. In fact, there are several reasons why you shouldn't." Why "no need?" The pilot of the downed plane was dead ten times over. There wasn't anything left except maybe some teeth, if you could find them. No purpose could be served by coming in to rescue somebody that wasn't there. "Reasons why you shouldn't?" Earlier today, we lost an F-4; now, we've lost an F-100, plus at least five armed helicopters in that immediate area. Right now, there's no one to rescue, but if you come in here, you're going to get shot down, and then we could have friendlies on the ground with a need for rescue. I don't know how much of this was communicated as opposed to what was on my mind. I know we told the rescue chopper the F-100 pilot is dead; this area is super dangerous; there's no need for you to expose yourself. He transmitted back that he had a moral and regulatory obligation to fulfill, which necessitated his physical presence over the crash site or words to that effect.

We transmitted: "Give us a second to get prepared, and we'll escort you over the crash site." We then got on either side of the rescue helicopter, but several hundred yards back, prepared to lay down suppressing fire as the pilot of the rescue helicopter overflew the crash site. This we did at nearly maximum speed. Everything was going great until, to our surprise, the rescue helicopter pulled up to slow down . . . for a closer examination, I guess. And you could hear the ground fire starting as we passed him. I wasn't going to pull up. There's nothing I can do when I'm standing still, plus my helicopter couldn't hold a hover in that hot air. I couldn't believe it. I earlier thought, with a little luck, we can help the rescue helicopter fulfill its moral and regulatory obligations and get him out of here in one piece. But it was not to be. As he slowed, I could hear the popcorn noise indicative of ground fire, and watched while passing in dumbfounded wonder as pieces of the rescue helicopter began to fly off from multiple hits of small arms fire. It began to settle like a seriously wounded, but not dead bird fluttering to the ground. As we passed, I looked back to see four live souls exit the rescue helicopter now on the ground, with one of the four seriously wounded, barely able to walk, let alone run.

Well, shit!!! That's exactly what I'm thinking, and there's no better way to say it. We went from all gauges in the green to SNAFU (Situation Normal All F****d Up) in about thirty minutes. We went from one pilot, unfortunately, but positively dead, and two gunships with stores (ammunition and rockets) remaining, to four, live Air Force personnel on the ground, a result of their bravery and dedication, definitely worthy of rescue. But by whom? We looked around, and all we saw were two Army gunships not well suited to the rescue they were duty-bound to attempt. On the one hand, I knew we had to try; on the other, I knew that pretty soon, we'd have three helicopters on the ground with a new total of twelve souls wishing for a rescue that wasn't likely to come before the enemy finished us off.

We quickly agreed that we'd strafe the wood line of the clearing, encouraging the enemy, hopefully, to keep its head down and being careful not to expend all our stores. Then we'd come around again with the lead ship expending one hundred percent of its remaining stores, blowing its mini-guns while it attempted a rescue. The gun ship had explosive bolts, which allowed the pilot to blow the heavy mini-guns and rocket pods away in an emergency. If that ship didn't make it out, the second ship was to come in, doubting that he could lift twelve adults, expend all

remaining stores, blow its guns and attempt a rescue. I knew exactly how this was going to turn out, and it wasn't good. Oh, ye of little faith. As the seconds became like minutes, and the minutes like hours, I contemplated my fate and found my heart in my throat. I was going to die today if I had what it takes. At this point, I was talking to myself. You've made this plan on the spur of the moment based on all facts known, and you're stuck with the result. There was no way to fly away into the sunset, not if you wanted to live with yourself afterward. It's time to pony up. Oh! I didn't want to do it. I can remember it freshly to this day. But I had to; there was no other way. I had to. Did I have what it takes?

In the haste of developments and the urgency of the situation confronting us, we never did switch away from "guard." Therefore, every transmission we made went out over "guard," so every aircraft in range heard of our dilemma. It's a little embarrassing, but true. We became aware of this when an Army helicopter hailed us: "Thunderhorse # — this is [call sign not remembered]", an empty Army slick, a UH-1D, commonly called Huey, a troop transport/med evac helicopter. We advised this slick of the same information shared with the Air Force helicopter. Of course, I now see the slick pilot may have already known. At any rate, we discouraged the slick from unnecessarily endangering its crew; it wasn't their problem. In response, the slick rejected our warning indicating he was going to try a rescue, and we were free to help or not. I didn't know about my gun team partner, but I was partially relieved. The slick's words had a ring of determination to them that instilled in me some hope, however minuscule. My gut said nobody going into that mess is coming out. I felt we would have an even worse situation on our hands, a fight we couldn't win, but couldn't avoid. But we could escort the slick though we would probably expend one-hundred percent of our remaining stores. Oh well, it wouldn't make much difference in the end, an end I could clearly see, and it didn't look good.

As the slick approached, we lined up on either side of it in preparation for giving it some kind of advantage in its attempted rescue. We were well back of the slick, but in a good position to give it some covering fire upon its approach. The slick knew we could only protect the approach. There would not be time or ammo to protect the departure. It came in hot, the nose well down, the main rotor pulling for all it was worth. Then, as the slick approached the crash site of the other rescue helicopter, it reversed its orientation, with nose now well up, vertical in fact. And its "stinger" (a metal rod on the tail of most single rotor helicopters, designed to protect the helicopter in situations just such as this) was dragging through the high grass as the pilot extracted maximum thrust to halt the forward progress of the helicopter. Upon reaching near-zero forward airspeed, the slick lowered its nose, settling into a light hover. This was accomplished just as we passed the slick on our suppression run. When our guns could no longer bear on the tree line, and while the slick was still in its light hover, here came the sound of popping corn.

I knew the slick was done for; there was no way under the sun that it could survive this hail storm of small arms fire coming from all along the tree line. You could see the slick shudder from time to time as the survivors of the first rescue helicopter raced to their guardian angel, today in the form of an olive drab, Army, UH-1D. Of the three survivors who could run, two ran carrying the injured survivor between them. All veritably flew from their hiding spot to the awaiting Huey. The first survivor jumped aboard, the uninjured two threw the fourth on the helicopter like a log, the first survivor softening his fall. Following the injured crew member, the last two were aboard in a flash. I could hear the popping corn; I could see the Huey's tail come up, indicative of his intention to take off with his fresh load of previously lost human beings.

I winced as I heard the small arms fire increase to a crescendo of hot lead directed toward the struggling Huey. I could see it tremble between the small arms fire that was hitting it and the maximum power the pilot was demanding from it. The plane of the main rotor pitched forward; the blades flexed to their extreme limit as all the power available was directed to its twirling mast in an effort to save all souls aboard, souls I still viewed as lost. In spite of all the abuse and punishment being absorbed by the Huey, it seemed to get a second breath, stabilized, got ahold of the air, and began a distinct forward movement and a shallow climb. My breath caught in my throat. Is the slick going to make it? Maybe, unbelievable, but maybe. It continued its tentative but determined forward acceleration and added feet to its altitude as it went. Yes! Maybe, yes! Am I watching a miracle? Could it be real? The Huey continued its struggle. It was still very exposed and taking fire. In spite of all the reasons why this couldn't be, the slick continued to gain forward airspeed and add additional feet to its still low altitude. Then, in the blink of an eye, the slick was out of the clearing, over the approaching tree line, promptly sticking its skids right down into the trees to minimize its exposure to the continuing small arms fire. I could not believe what I was seeing. Suddenly, I gasped for air, only then realizing I hadn't taken a breath for the last forty-five seconds or so. That unbelievably stubborn, incredibly brave pilot and his crew pulled it off; they pulled it off. Oh! I can't describe the relief, for the slick, for the survivors on the ground, for us, for all of us. That Huey dropped out of the sky and solved the unsolvable. It did the undoable. It presented an opportunity to observe what can be done when somebody has what it takes.

I didn't learn that day if I had what it takes. The whole scenario left me clearly in doubt about myself on that score. But it was thrilling to watch, and I'm proud to have been in the air with such a person as the pilot of that Huey was. It is important, here, to point out that all the helicopters mentioned today had pilots and crew. In our case, for instance, we had two pilots and two door gunners. The crew can see all that's going on; the crew can hear all that's being transmitted over the radio and the intercom. The crew could have voiced concern, fright, or objection. They could have made any displeasure known. But they never uttered that first syllable, not one peep. They suffered quietly and bravely through it all. In truth, I owe my life to a door gunner, but that's another story. © Dane P. Nash, January 26, 2020

I got this story from Earl Burley and found it very interesting and well written. So I called Captain Nash and asked for permission to use it in the Logbook. He wanted to know why I wanted a helicopter story in a fixed-wing publication. Any of you Caribou pilots who went to Huey school after the AF took our planes want to tell him? **Bill Upton, PIO**

A PLEA FOR HELP. . .

Submitted by Don Joyce

Reprinted from the November 2004 Logbook

Hi Mate,

I am writing to you, because I need your help to get me bloody pilot's license back (you keep telling me you got all the right contacts, well now's your chance to make something happen for me because, mate, I'm bloody desperate). But first, I'd better tell you what happened during my last flight review with the CAA Examiner.

On the phone, Ron (that's the CAA bleep head) seemed a reasonable sort of bloke. He politely reminded me of the need to do a flight review every two years. He even offered to drive out, have a look over my property and let me operate from my own strip. Naturally I agreed to that.

Anyway, Ron turned up last Wednesday. First up, he said he was a bit surprised to see the plane on a small strip outside my homestead because the ALA (Authorized Landing Area) is about a mile away. I explained that because this strip was so close to the homestead, it was more convenient than that strip, despite the power lines crossing about midway down the strip (it's really not a problem to land and take-off because at the half-way point down the strip you're usually still on the ground).

For some reason Ron seemed nervous. So, although I had done the pre-flight inspection only four days earlier, I decided to do it all over again. Because the bleep was watching me carefully, I walked around the plane three times instead of my usual two. My effort was rewarded because the colour finally returned to Ron's cheeks - in fact they went a bright red. In view of Ron's obviously better mood, I told him I was going to combine the test flight with farm work as I had to deliver three poddy calves from the home paddock to the main herd.

After a bit of a chase I finally caught the calves and threw them into the back of the ol' Cessna 172. We climbed aboard but Ron started getting into me about weight and balance calculations and all that crap. Of course I knew that sort of thing was a waste of time because calves like to move around a bit, particularly when they see themselves 500 feet off the ground! So, it's bloody pointless trying to secure them as you know. However, I did tell Ron that he shouldn't worry as I always keep the trim wheel set on neutral to ensure we remain pretty stable at all stages throughout the flight.

Anyway, I started the engine and cleverly minimized the warm-up time by tramping hard on the brakes and gunning her to 2,500 rpm. I then discovered that Ron has very acute hearing, even though he was wearing a bloody headset. Through all that noise he detected a metallic rattle and demanded I account for it. Actually it began about a month ago and was caused by a screwdriver that fell down a hole in the floor and lodged in the fuel selector mechanism. The selector can't be moved now, but it doesn't matter because it's jammed on "All Tanks," so I suppose that's OK.

However, as Ron was obviously a real nit-picker, I blamed the noise on vibration from a stainless steel thermos flask, which I keep in a beaut little possie between the windshield and the magnetic compass. My explanation seemed to relax Ron because he slumped back in the seat and kept looking up at the cockpit roof. I released the brakes to taxi out but unfortunately the plane gave a leap and spun to the right, Hell I thought, not the starboard wheel chock again. The bump jolted Ron back to full alertness. He looked wildly around just in time to see a rock thrown by the prop wash disappear completely through the windscreen of his brand new Commodore. Now I'm really in trouble, I thought.

While Ron was busy ranting about his car, I ignored his requirement that we taxi to the ALA and instead took off under the power lines. Ron didn't say a word, at least not until the engine started coughing right at the lift off point, then he bloody screamed his head off, "Oh God! Oh God! Oh God!"

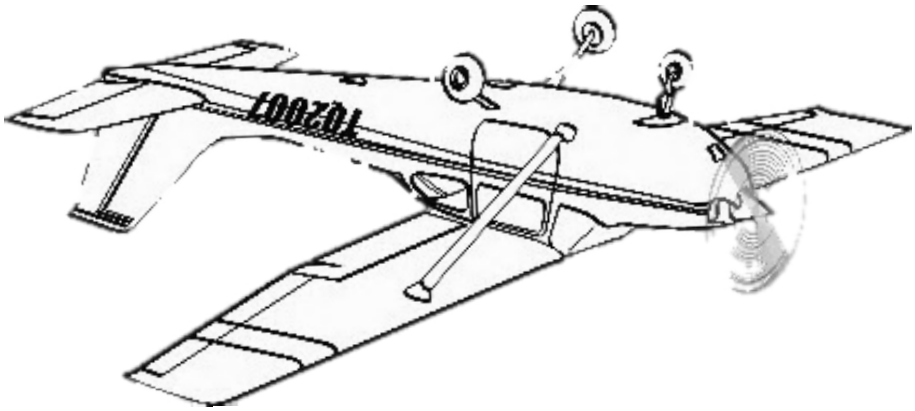
"Now take it easy, Ron" I told him firmly, "that often happens on take-off and there is a good reason for it." I explained patiently that I usually run the plane on standard MOGAS, but one day I accidentally put in a gallon or two of kerosene. To compensate for the low octane of the kerosene, I siphoned in a few gallons off super MOGAS and shook the wings up and down a few times to mix it up. Since then, the engine has been coughing a bit but in general it works just fine, if you know how to coax it properly.

Anyway, at this stage Ron seemed to lose all interest in my flight test. He pulled out some rosary beads, closed his eyes and became lost in prayer (I didn't think anyone was a Catholic these days). I

selected some nice music on the HF radio to help him relax.

Meanwhile I climbed to my normal cruising altitude of 10,500 feet (I don't normally put in a flight plan or get the weather because as you know getting Fax access out here is a bleeping joke and the bloody weather is always 8/8 blue anyway. But since I had that near miss with a Saab 340, I might have to change me thinking). Anyhow, on leveling out I noticed some wild camels heading into my improved pasture. I hate camels and always carry a loaded .303 clipped inside the door of the Cessna just in case I see any of the bastards.

We were too high to hit them, but as a matter of principle, I decided to have a go through the open window. Mate, when I pulled the bloody rifle out, the effect on Ron was bleepin ' electric. As I fired the first shot his neck lengthened by about six inches and his eyes bulged like a rabbit with myxo. He really looked as if he had



been jabbed with an electric cattle prod on full power. In fact, Ron's reaction was so distracting that I lost concentration for a second and the next shot went straight through the port tyre.

Ron was a bit upset about the shooting (probably one of those pinko animal lovers, I guess) so I decided not to tell him about our little problem with the tyre.

Shortly afterwards I located the main herd and decided to do my fighter pilot trick. Ron had gone back to praying when, in one smooth sequence, I pulled on full flap, cut the power and started a sideslip from 10,500 feet down to 500 feet at 130 knots indicated (the last time I looked anyway) and the little needle rushing up to the red area on me ASI. What a buzz, mate! About half way through the descent I looked back in the cabin to see the calves gracefully suspended in mid-air and mooing like crazy. I was going to comment on this unusual sight but Ron looked a bit green and had rolled himself into the fetal position and was screamin' his bleepin' head off. Mate, talk about being in a bloody zoo. You should've been there, it was so bloody funny!

At about 500 feet I leveled out, but for some reason we continued sinking. When we reached 50 feet I applied full power but nothin' happened; no noise no nothin'. Then, luckily, I heard me instructor's voice in me head saying "carby heat, carby heat", so I pulled carby heat on and that helped quite a lot, with the engine finally regaining full power. Whew, that was really close, let me tell you!

Then mate, you'll never guess what happened next! As luck would have it, at that height we flew into a massive dust cloud caused by the cattle and suddenly went I.F. bloody R, mate. BJ, you would've been bloody proud of me as I didn't panic once, not once, but I did make a mental note to consider an instrument rating as soon as me gyro is repaired (something I've been meaning to do for a while now).

Suddenly Ron's elongated neck and bulging eyes reappeared. His mouth opened wide, very wide, but no sound emerged. "Take it easy," I told him. "We'll be out of this in a minute." Sure enough, about a minute later we emerge; still straight and level and still at 50 feet.

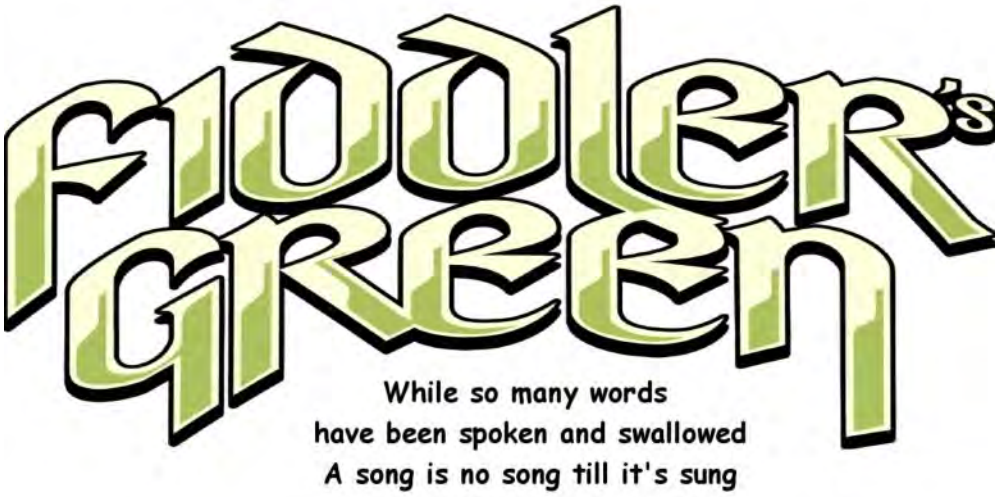
Admittedly I was surprised to notice that we were upside down, and I kept thinking to myself, I hope Ron didn't notice that I had forgotten to set the QNH when we were taxiing. This minor tribulation forced me to fly to a nearby valley in which I had to do a half roll to get upright again.

By now the main herd had divided into two groups leaving a narrow strip between them. "Ah!" I thought, "there's an omen. We'll land right there." Knowing that the tyre problem demanded a slow approach, I flew a couple of steep turns with full flap. Soon the stall warning horn was blaring so loud in me ear that I cut its circuit breaker to shut it up, but by then I knew we were slow enough anyway. I turned steeply onto a 75 foot final and put her down with a real thud. Strangely enough, I had always thought you could only ground loop in a tail dragger but, as usual, I was proved wrong again!

Halfway through our third loop Ron at last recovered his sense of humour. Talk about laugh. I've never seen the likes of it; he couldn't stop. We finally rolled to a halt and I released the calves, who bolted out of the aircraft like there was no tomorrow. I then began picking clumps of dry grass. Between gut wrenching fits of laughter Ron asked what I was doing. I explained that we had to stuff the port tyre with grass so we could fly back to the homestead. It was then that Ron really lost the plot and started running away from the aircraft. Can you believe it? The last time I saw him he was off into the distance, arms flailing in the air and still shrieking with laughter. I later heard that he had been confined to a psychiatric institution - poor bugger! Anyhow, mate, that's enough about Ron.

The problem is I just got a letter from CASA withdrawing, as they put it, my privileges to fly; until I have undergone a complete pilot training course again and undertaken another flight proficiency test. Now I admit that I made a mistake in taxiing over the wheel chock and not setting the QNH using strip elevation, but I can't see what else I did that was so bloody bad that they have to withdraw me flamin' license. Can you?

These Comrades we send off to



John D. Young
September 28, 1929 - October 30, 2018

Billy Joe Huff
April 16, 1934 - October 24, 2019

Alvin Sneckenberger
October 06, 1942 - November 11, 2019

John C, Neamtz
December 17, 1927 - February 3, 2020

Cecil G. Christian, Jr.
October 23, 1932 - February 7, 2020

LTG Ellis D. Parker
November 1, 1932 - March 26, 2020

Benjamin L. Collins
July 1, 1926 - April 3, 2020

Mary Lynn O'Day
Wife of Nat
March 21, 1938 - January 11, 2020

Forever Remembered Forever Missed

BILLY JOE HUFF

Bill Huff had been a Life Member of our association 26 years. He and his wife, Barbara, had been regular attendees at reunions for as long as I can remember. Bill had been assigned to the 187th Transport Airplane Company, 11th Air Assault Division as a GCA Radar Controller and many is the time he was involved in getting our Caribous down on the ground during adverse weather conditions; both during the Air Assault exercises and while on duty with the 1st Air Cavalry in Vietnam.

Billy was born in Dorchester, VA to Olen Clayton and Lilly Mae (Williams) Huff. Billy was raised in Wise, VA, and while growing up, he enjoyed playing football and attended Wise High School.

When Bill was 17, he boldly enlisted in the U.S. Navy. His mother had high hopes for his future and didn't want to see him go into coal mining, so she signed off on the paperwork allowing him to join. He enlisted during the Korean Conflict and the military was a perfect fit for Bill. He made his way through the ranks and became a crew chief on an aircraft carrier.

Bill was in his hometown when he met a lady named Barbara Tipton and she stole his heart. The two married on May 12, 1962, in DC. They were blessed with two sons, Randy and Michael, and Bill had a son, Bill Jr, from a previous marriage.

After Bill was honorably discharged from the Navy, he re-enlisted, but this time in the U.S. Army. He served during the Vietnam War and made it through two tours. He specialized in Air Traffic Control during his time in the Army. After a 23-year military career, Bill retired in 1978 as a SFC. Bill earned several medals during his military career, one being a Bronze Star Medal.

Bill was able to become a civilian Air Traffic Controller and continue working doing what he loved. He loved his job so much that he claimed he would work in the tower without pay if they'd let him. He worked in Enid for a short time and later worked for Max Westheimer Airport in Norman for nearly 27 years. Bill and his wife, Barbara, were very active in their community. The two were faithful members at Woodland Hills Baptist Church. They were in charge of sending care packages to active duty family members that were associated with Woodland Hills.

Bill was also active with the Veteran's Readers Group at Bridge Creek Elementary and was involved with the U.S. Army Otter Caribou Assoc., American Legion Post 261, the Blanchard -VFW, and Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Bill was preceded in death by his father, Olen Clayton Huff; mother, Lilly Mae Huff; two sisters, Sandy and Mabel; two brothers, Curtis and Bobby Wayne; and grandson, Alex Huff. He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Barbara Huff; son, Bill Huff, Jr. and wife Ruby; son, Randy Huff and wife Stephanie; son, Michael Huff and wife Anita; 11 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren; and twin brothers, Jim and John Huff. Bill's family was a patriotic family. He and his three sons served in the military and he has a grandson who is currently serving.

ALVIN RAY SNECKENBERGER

Major (Ret.) Alvin "Al" Ray Sneckenberger, age 77, of Tuscaloosa, Ala., passed away November 11, 2019 at Hospice of West Alabama. Al was preceded in death by his mother, Ruth Naomi Sneckenberger of Greencastle, Pa. He is survived by his wife of 50 years, Mary Jon Sneckenberger of Tuscaloosa; son, Chris Sneckenberger (Julianne) of Tuscaloosa; son, Michael Sneckenberger (Lyndsay) of Chattanooga, Tenn.; sister, Connie Ryder of Bedford, Texas; brother, Ed Sneckenberger (Scottie) of Morgantown, W.Va.; sister, May Moore of Greensboro, N.C.; grandchildren, Ethan, Sage, and Paxton Sneckenberger of Tuscaloosa; grandchildren, Evie and Cass Sneckenberger of Chattanooga, Tenn.; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Al was a career Army officer with three years of combat in Vietnam, where he received the Bronze Star for Valor flying for the Special Forces. He spent the remainder of his career with tours in West Germany, Korea, and across the United States. After retirement from the military, he continued in the civilian sector as Director of Instrument Training for the Army helicopter flight program.

He was passionate about service to others while living in Enterprise, Ala. He was an active leader in the Boy Scouts, Habitat for Humanity and St. Luke UMC. After moving to Tuscaloosa in 2013, he became active in OLLI at UA, Tuscaloosa Symphony Guild, and Friends of the Library. He was a member of First United Methodist Church Tuscaloosa.

JOHN C. NEAMTZ

John Neamtz had been a member of the Army Otter Caribou Assn for 22 years

Major John C. Neamtz, USA, (Ret.), 92, of Avon, formerly of Camp Hill, PA, widower of Elizabeth (Nichols) Neamtz and Mary (Giornesto) Neamtz, passed away peacefully Monday, February 3rd, 2020. Born December 17th, 1927 in Indianapolis, IN, son of the late Charles and Mamie (Darlington) Neamtz. John entered the Army program at Ohio State University (ASTRP) in 1944 and was called to active duty on his 18th birthday in 1945. He served in the Army until his retirement in January of 1966 with honors.

During this Army career, he became an aviator pilot in 1956 and flew both fixed wing and helicopters through his military retirement. In February of 1966, John became a test pilot for the DOD (Department of Defense) and flew until 1980. Then served as director of the Naval Defense Supply Depot in Mechanicsburg, PA (as a civil servant) until his full retirement in January of 1989. His total military flying time was over 17,000 hours.

John is survived by his son, J. Steven Neamtz and his wife Rosemary P. Neamtz and grandchildren, Kendall and Morgan Neamtz all of Avon, CT.

CECIL G. CHRISTIAN, JR.

Cecil had been a member of the Army Otter Caribou Assn for 26 years and attended many of its reunions. He had flown with the 3rd Aviation Company (Otters) from 1956 - 1960

Cecil G. Christian, Jr., a native of Birmingham, died on Feb 7 in Columbia, MD. He was 87. Christian graduated from Parker HS and briefly attended Miles College before transferring to Howard University in Washington DC. He

graduated in 1953 and entered the US Army where he had a 20-year career, retiring as a lieutenant colonel. Subsequently, he had a 21-year career as a federal civilian at the National Archives and the Immigration & Naturalization Service. He maintained his Birmingham roots by establishing a scholarship at 6th Avenue Baptist Church in his parents' names. The scholarship is awarded annually to a college-bound senior at the Church. He was predeceased by his wife of 48 years, Marian, and is survived by three children, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

LTG ELLIS D. "DON" PARKER

Retired Army LTG Ellis D. Parker, former commanding general of the U.S. Army Aviation Center and Fort Rucker in the 1980s, died Thursday night.

Born Nov. 1, 1932, Parker was commissioned in the Army in 1957 as a distinguished honor graduate from the Field Artillery Officer Candidate School, according to information on the Army Aviation Association of America website.

Parker became an Army aviator early in his career and commanded aviation units at every level from platoon to brigade.

He was promoted to brigadier general and brought his aviation expertise to bear, first as the Army aviation officer, Department of the Army, and subsequently as assistant division commander of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

When Army aviation became a branch, he was named commanding general of the Aviation Center. He served as the aviation branch chief and school commandant for 5½ years, setting a tenure record while leading the fledgling branch to "its important and rightful place in the Army," according to the website.

One of the most influential initial Army Aviation Branch Chiefs, Don was also a record setting OV-1 Mohawk pilot, Past AAAA National President, and Director of the Army Staff. He was one of the first Order of St. Michael Gold recipients and an 1995 Army Aviation Hall of Fame inductee. He is the name-sake for the U.S. Army top aviation battalion awards presented at Fort Rucker each year.

JOHN DANIEL YOUNG

John Daniel Young of Macungie, PA passed away on October 30th of 2018. Born in Hamburg, PA, he was the son of the late John W. and Rosetta A. (Miller) Young. John attended Kutztown Teachers College and Stanford University. Later, he graduated from Troy State College with a Bachelor's Degree in History. John was a Lt. Colonel in the US Army. He served as a pilot in Vietnam and the Korean War. John was sales representative for Bell Helicopter. Also, he worked as a project manager for DynCorp in Germany. He was a member of the Boyertown Rotary Club and the Elizabethtown, KY Masonic Lodge. John was member of the Boyertown Historical Society, where he served as its first president.

BENJAMIN L. COLLINS, SR.

Colonel Collins was born in Portland, Oregon, July 1, 1926. He enlisted in the military service in September 1943, serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He served with the U.S. Army in Korea and Vietnam. During his tour with the Navy, he met and married Lois G. Salinas in January 1946. After being together for 48 years, she predeceased him on May 5, 1994.

His combat awards as an Infantry Officer and as an Army Aviator included the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bronze Star for Valor.

He married Suzanne Wall on June 26, 1999. They lived in Camino, California for 16 years, then moved to Roseville, California.

Special thanks to Suzanne Wall, Kim Wall, James Kurek, staff at Sutter Roseville Hospital, and staff at Mather and McClellan Veterans Hospitals.

He loved his family, getting together with them, Dixieland Jazz music, and the San Francisco 49ers.

REMEMBERING BEN COLLINS

Ben will be missed by all who knew him. He was truly an outstanding aviator. I flew many times with him when he operations officer at Crissy Field. Later he returned as Det CO. May he Rest In Peace. **Vern McNamee**

Ben pinned my Captain bars on me in Germany in 1959 while were in the 3rd Aviation Company at Kitzingen. I believe Ben was in command of the Schweinfort flight detachment. A fine officer and a true gentleman. Spent time with him at several of the AOCA reunions. I'm sorry he will not be with us physically at the last one. However. I am sure he will be there spiritually. **Eugene Diamond**

MARY LYNN O'DAY

Lynn was born in Fort Worth, Texas, on November 21, 1938, to Alliene and Norvell Mullendore. Lynn grew up in the Meadowbrook neighborhood of Fort Worth and graduated from Polytechnic High School, where she excelled as a student, tennis player, and violinist. She attended the University of Texas at Austin and was a member of the Alpha Phi sorority. While in college, Lynn (a tall and beautiful coed), met her future husband Nat on a blind date arranged by friends. Nat, an Army aviator, was in flight training school in Mineral Wells and Lynn happened to be home in Fort Worth for the weekend. When Lynn's mother looked out the front window and saw 6 foot 3 inch Nat coming to the door for the date, she told Lynn to go change into her high heels! They quickly fell in love.

Lynn left U.T. to marry Nat in 1959 and to embark on the adventure of being the wife of an Army officer. Nat and Lynn moved to Stuttgart, Germany where they celebrated their first Christmas together, and daughter Robin was born the next year. Their next assignments brought them to Fort Monmouth, New Jersey and Fort Benning, Georgia where they were blessed with sons Steve and Tim. Nat's first tour of Vietnam was in 1966, and Lynn and the children moved to Fort Worth to be near family. It was during that year that Lynn completed her degree in mathematics from the University of Texas at Arlington (while also being a single parent for three children under 5 years old). Three wonderful years in Hawaii followed, when Nat was assigned to Schofield Barracks on the island of Oahu.

Nat then got orders for Vietnam again. Prior to leaving for his second tour in 1969, Nat and Lynn purchased their home in North Richland Hills where they would live together for almost 50 years, raising their family and making an impact on their

An Army Aviator's Farewell Lament

As the bells toll, the 13 folds, and the slow salute, the crack of the three, the 24 sounds fades into silence and the evening sun sets. The moonlight on the granite reflects grateful smile's, as we still remain, "Above the Best!"

Author: Paul Allyn Herrick, CW4 Retired Master Aviator, Duty: 16 Sep 1963 – 1 Dec 2004
Born 18 Jul 1943, 23,000 + "Accident Free" Flight Hours 14000 Military, All by the Grace of GOD and His Blessing.

community. They recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

Lynn was a wonderful wife, mother, grandmother, sister, friend and volunteer. Through the years, she had several interesting jobs, including work as a flag designer, substitute teacher, and reference librarian. But her real passion, other than her family, was helping her community and making a difference in the lives of others. She was a devoted volunteer, supporting numerous organizations including the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, ACH Child and Family Services, and United Community Centers. She was a member of the Executive Board of the Texas Association of Symphony Orchestras and served as its president. For many years she was a member of the Fort Worth Symphony Association Board of Directors and Executive Committee. She also worked tirelessly as a member of the Fort Worth Symphony League, including serving as its president and Oktoberfest Chairman. Lynn gave unselfishly of her time as a member of the Board of Directors of the All Church Home for Children and the United Community Centers Foundation. She also volunteered as a member of the North Richland Hills Library Board for years. Lynn was a very active member of City Point United Methodist Church (formerly Richland Hills United Methodist Church) for 50 years, participating in the United Methodist Women, Circle and Bible study.

Nat and Lynn shared a love of music and enjoyed attending Fort Worth Symphony concerts at Bass Hall, the Van Cliburn piano competitions, and Concerts in the Garden. In recent years they discovered they were a great team for doing jigsaw puzzles and enjoyed that time together. Lynn loved talking sports with her son Steve, checking in with son Tim almost daily during his commute to work, and Sunday nail appointments and dinners with daughter Robin.

Lynn was a great friend and loved to have fun. She enjoyed spending time with her friends playing bridge, Bunco, Mahjong, and monthly lunches with the Birthday Group. Friends and family alike enjoyed her quick wit and quirky humor.

One of the greatest joys of her life was being "Gram Lynn" to her grandchildren, Kelly, Michael and Kyrah. Lynn was a role model for her children and grandchildren, showing by example how to live life with a generous and loving heart. She will be greatly missed, but her kind and compassionate spirit shines through the countless lives she touched.

Survivors: Lynn is survived by her husband Nat O'Day, daughter Robin Dettmer, son Steve O'Day, son Tim O'Day and wife Tammy, sister Kay Granger, grandchildren Kelly Dettmer, Michael Dettmer and Kyrah O'Day, and a host of nieces, nephews, friends, and extended family members.

Self-Quarantine

So, here it is, Day 72 of my 14 day self isolation due to the wide-spread covid-19 virus. I've run out of booze, TV dinners, regular coffee, those little chocolate drops with raspberry filling, hand sanitizer and underarm deodorizer. But, thank the Lord, I was able to hoard enough toilet paper to last a while. Does anyone out there know if toilet paper spoils if it's not kept frozen?

The other day, I went over to Publix Supermarket to see if they had any toilet paper (One can never have enough, can one?) Before getting out of my car, I put on my thrown together Hazmat gear which consisted of waist-high fishing waders, a plastic garbage bag into which I cut armholes, a flowered bandanna over my nose and mouth, some yellow rubber gloves and topped it off with a welders helmet with clear glass. Ain't nobody better sneeze on me. So, protected, I went into the store. I was pleased when so many shoppers stopped and looked at me, obviously in amazement at my ingenuity in protecting myself. Of course it was all in vain as the toilet paper shelves were empty. Turns out it wouldn't have mattered. I could never have gotten to my wallet dressed as I was.

On the way back to my car, another fellow with an improvised mask walked towards me. He looked like a bank robber. I lifted my welders helmet long enough to jokingly say, "No need in going in there. I just robbed it."

He stopped dead in his tracks. "Damn," he said and went back to his car.

Do you know what "binge-drink-watching" is? It's when you combine watching a three season, ten episode Netflix series or all the episodes of Game of Thrones with enough booze to get through it all. It's fun, but I always fall asleep somewhere in the middle of the second episode and have to start all over again.

Since there's no sports on TV, I've been able to spend some time with my wife. I've since learned that she's pretty, a nice dresser, has a totally different view of politics than mine. She's quite a good talker and I now know that the earth is, in fact, round, and that having me use Viagara would be like erecting a flagpole on a condemned building. One other thing, I was unaware we had gotten a dog.

You know, until isolation, I never realized that there were so many cities and towns across the United States and other countries until I clicked Google Earth on my desktop. I'll bet you didn't know that the world's smallest city block is in (none other than) Dothan, Alabama. Another thing I didn't know: On my 12th day if binge Internet surfing, I came to it's end. Just copy this into your browser and it will save you a lot of time: http://www.endoftheinternet.com No need to thank me, consider it a public service.

By the way, I don't care how many times you might read "Catcher in the Rye," it always ends the same.

Just wanted you all to know how I'm dealing with self-quarantine. . . **Bill Upton**

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

From Dawn Lewis

I don't understand why prescription medicine is allowed to advertise on TV or why anyone would think of trying one of the medicines after listening to the laundry list of warnings of possible side effects. But this is definitely an exception!

Do you have feelings of inadequacy?
Do you suffer from shyness?
Do you wish you were a better conversationalist?
Do you sometimes wish you were more assertive?
Do you sometimes feel stressed?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist about Cabernet Sauvignon.

Cabernet Sauvignon is the safe, natural way to feel better and more confident. It can help ease you out of your shyness and let you tell the world that you're ready and willing to do just about anything.

You will notice the benefits of Cabernet Sauvignon almost immediately and, with a regimen of regular doses, you'll overcome obstacles that prevent you from living the life you want.

Shyness and awkwardness will be a thing of the past. You will discover talents you never knew you had.

Cabernet Sauvignon may not be right for everyone. Women who are pregnant or nursing should not use it, but women who wouldn't mind nursing or becoming pregnant are encouraged to try it.

Side Effects May Include:

Dizziness, nausea, vomiting, incarceration, loss of motor control, loss of clothing, loss of money, delusions of grandeur, table dancing, headache, dehydration, dry mouth, and a desire to sing Karaoke and play all-night Strip Poker, Truth Or Dare, and Naked Twister.

Warnings:

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may make you think you are whispering when you are not.

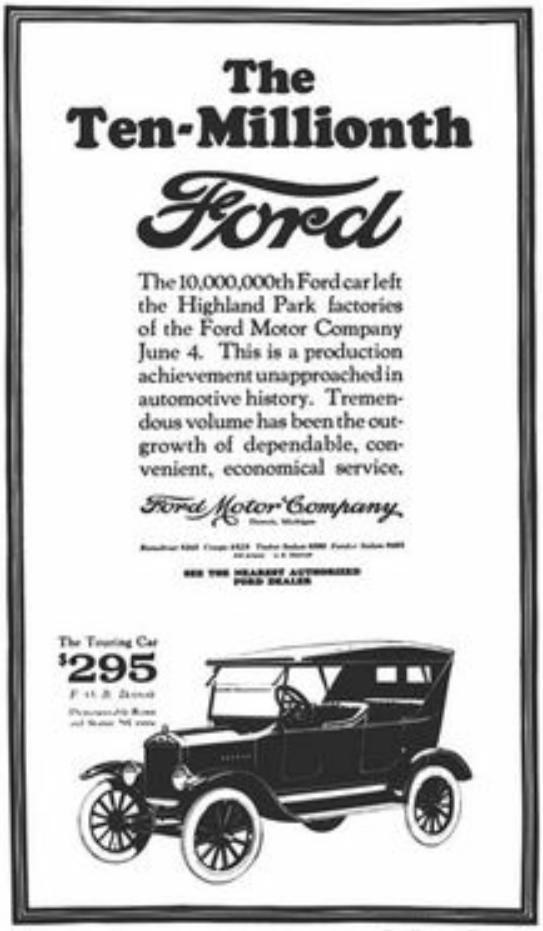
The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may cause you to tell your friends over and over again that you love them.

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may cause you to think you can sing.

The consumption of Cabernet Sauvignon may create the illusion that you are tougher, smarter, faster and better looking than most people

Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Scotch, Vodka or Bourbon and of course Beer may be substituted for Cabernet Sauvignon, with similar results.

This Public Service Announcement was brought to you by, "That Little Old Wine Maker, Me!"



AOCA REUNIONS AND PRESIDENTS

This chart shows Presidents elected during reunion

Year	Reunion	Location	New President
1985	Assn Started	Columbus, GA	Sam Pinkston
1986	1st	Columbus, GA	Sam Pinkston
1987	2nd	Columbus, GA	Ken Blake
1988	3rd	Enterprise, AL	Jim Lybrand
1989	4th	Seattle, WA	Jim Lybrand
1990	5th	Dallas, TX	Floyd Burks
1991	6th	Reno, NV	Hal Loyer
1992	7th	Hampton, VA	Bob Richey
1993	8th	Colo. Spgs, CO	Paul Herrick
1994	9th	Orlando, FL	John Stanfield
1995	10th	Boston, MA	Jim Johnson
1996	11th	San Antonio, TX	John Williams
1997	12th	Albuquerque, NM	Bob Echard
1998	13th	Charleston, SC	Leon Wiggins
1999	14th	Nashville, TN	Jim Davis
2000	15th	San Diego, CA	Bill McIntyre
2001	16th	Corning, NY	Don Seymour
2002	17th	Branson, MO	Bill Potts
2003	18th	Reno, NV	Cecil Ramsey
2004	19th	El Paso, TX	Ed Shuster
2005	20th	Dallas, TX	Lew Pipkin
2006	21st	Dothan, AL	Ron Sprengeler
2007	22nd	Washington, D.C.	Dave Benoit
2008	23rd	St Louis, MO	Perry Brausell
2009	24th	Rochester, MN	Earl Burley
2010	25th	Columbus, GA	Ken La Grandeur
2011	26th	Corning, NY	Ed Fodor
2012	27th	Chattanooga, TN	Jim Greenquist
2013	28th	Charleston, SC	Reggie Edwards
2014	29th	Pensacola, FL	Dennis Toaspern
2015	30th	Dayton, OH	Glenn Carr
2016	31st	Savannah, GA	William Upton
2017	32nd	Kansas City, MO	Samuel Kaiser
2018	33rd	Virginia City, VA	Dick Drisko
2019	34th	Columbus, GA	Mel McLemore

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