

# C-7A Caribou Association

Volume 1, Issue 17

Newsletter

February 2003

## Reunion 2002 - St Louis

If you missed this one, you missed a good one! Our hats certainly go off to our St. Louis reunion sponsor, Steve Kelley. To cap off his third year as Association President, he did another outstanding job. Each year it seems that the reunions get better and better. If that is the case, then our next reunion in Charleston, South Carolina will be on a scale of terrific. Steve had the many details pinned down and arrangements made by the time we all arrived at the hotel in Maryland Heights. It was just a matter of checking in with Christine in her streamlined registration process, buying a few T-Shirts and stuff, checking into our rooms and then getting down to the War Room to meet our old friends.

St Louis is beautiful in October. Our outing to Grant's Farms was truly enjoyable. The weather had a slight snap to it, but was bright and beautiful. All of the animals at the farm were out in all their glory, not hunkering back looking for some cool shade. And the many young school children out on their field trips were really fun to watch and enjoy. Also fun to watch were some of our own grown-ups putting coins in the animal food machines getting food for the many kids to feed the animals. The excited shouts and squeals coming from the kids feeding the animals was great entertainment.

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The trip down to the Mississippi River and Laclede Landing and the famous Arch, "Gateway to the West," was a really pleasant experience. The Arch is an awesome spectacle whether you take the ride to the top or just stand beneath it. The museum beneath the Arch is a world-class museum, and from there it was just a brief walk to Laclede Landing, the historic river front and marketplace of very early St. Louis.

Our member turnout, while not the largest, was very impressive. But more impressive was the 537<sup>th</sup> Squadron's turnout. They set an all-time record of having the most squadron members, 24, and the most new members, 16. I heard some other squadron members complaining and making statements that they probably

could get more squadron members together than that. The challenge is on! Who will beat the 537<sup>th</sup>? Be careful what you say. The 537<sup>th</sup> is already saying that they can beat their own record. We shall see, we shall see.

So much work is involved in planning and sponsoring a reunion. As we said before, many thanks go to Steve Kelley and all the people who helped him. Christine and Paul Phillips had a very troubling time. As you know, Christine is the reunion coordinator and she had a full week of work scheduled for her. They arrived late

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## 2003 C-7A Caribou Reunion November 5th – 8th

Our 2003 C7A Caribou Association Reunion will be held in Charleston, SC. The Radisson Hotel Charleston Airport was selected because their management was receptive to our requirements. We submitted our criteria and they built the contract between us around that criteria. Everyone who has visited Charleston is aware of this city's charm.

The hotel is near the airport and provides courtesy shuttles. It is located just off I-26, the main route into Charleston, at the corner of Rivers Avenue and East Aviation Avenue.

This year's reunion will be a 3-day event. We recommend that people arrive NLT Wednesday, November 5, 2003. We will have activities planned for Thursday, Friday and Saturday. If enough people make hotel reservations to be there by Tuesday night, we probably will schedule an attraction for Wednesday. The welcome reception will begin at 5PM on Thursday and will probably last for an hour. The banquet will be on Saturday night. Attendees may arrive as early as October 31<sup>st</sup> and will be able to remain at the hotel until November 14<sup>th</sup> at the same \$74 guest room rate.

Mark your calendars – November 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>. Charleston is a great place for a reunion.

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

### Officers, Board Members, Committee Members

**Wayne Delawter** - President/Board Member

458th 68

**Peter Bird** - Vice President/Board Member

535th 71

**Earl Reynolds** - Treasurer/Board Member

537th 66

**Jim Collier** - Secretary/Board Member/Roster Chairman

537th 67

**Bob Dugan** - Chairman of Board

537th 68

**Stoney Faubus** - Board Member

458th 68

**Rick Patterson** - Board Member

459th 69

**Bill Avon** - Recruitment Chairman

537th 68

**Dave Hutchens** - Newsletter Editor

459th 69

**Peter Bird** - Webmaster

535th 71

**Bob Davis** - Chaplain

457th 69

**Bob Markham** - Bereavement Chairman

459th 69

**Wayne Delawter** - Reunion Advisor

458th 68

**Nick Evanish** - President Emeritus

457th 66

**Christine Phillips** - Reunion Coordinator

Please advise the Association of any change of address, phone number, or e-mail address. Send your changes to:

Jim Collier

5607 Jolly Ct.

Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707

Dues are payable annually. Either enclose your check with your registration form for the annual reunion or send your check to Jim Collier.

I would like to encourage members who might have a humorous incident, interesting anecdote, or an exciting story, to share it with all members of our association. E-mail, snail mail, airmail, or pony express mail it to me, & I will see that it gets published. Pictures are welcome. I will return the originals if specified,

Dave Hutchens

(918) 272-3518

17916 E. 96<sup>th</sup> Street North Printhat@aol.com

Owasso, OK 74055

## Financial Report

### C-7A Caribou Ass'n Cash Flow Report

1/1/2002 Through 12/31/2002

#### INFLOWS

Association Merchandise	3,029.00
Donations	635.25
Members dues	9,641.00
Interest Income	263.72
Dyess Memorial receipts	2,058.00
Reunion 2002 receipts	6,259.00

**TOTAL INFLOWS 21,885.97**

#### OUTFLOWS

Administrative	122.50
Bank Charges	39.02
Memorials	2000.00
Banquet	2,543.70
Merchandise Purchased	1,828.50
Newsletter	3,655.66
Postage and Delivery Expense	243.12
Reunion 2002 Expense	7,347.54
Misc. Taxes	500.00
Website Expense	1,253.64

**TOTAL OUTFLOWS 19,533.68**

**OVERALL TOTAL 2,352.29**

### C-7A Caribou Association Assets Report

1/1/2002 Through 12/31/2002

#### ASSETS

Cash and Bank Accounts	
Caribou Association Checking	3,579.60
Association Reserve Fund	17,925.60

TOTAL—Cash and Bank Accounts 21,505.20

#### Other Assets

Member Merchandise	1,164.00
TOTAL—Other Assets	1,164.00

**TOTAL ASSETS 22,669.20**

#### LIABILITIES

0.00

**OVERALL TOTAL 22,669.20**

<sup>1</sup> Pre-paid dues through year 2013

5,080.00

## President's Column

The board asked me to return to the fold when Steve Kelly decided that three years was enough at the helm. For three years I watched from the sideline as the Association board, officers, and staff operated during Steve and Bob Markham's administration. There was a lot of progress made during these 3 years. Both Bob and Steve are to be commended for their leadership considering the grumpy old men they had to deal with (I'm kidding, guys). If that progress hadn't evolved as nicely as it had, I would have had more reservations about stepping back into the fray.

Bob Dugan, our new Chairman of the Board, and I have been coordinating with the other officers and at-large board members to efficiently work the Association's business. We don't intend to make significant changes because we feel that the type of reunions that we've had are what most people enjoy. If anyone has recommendations for changes we are eager to hear them – our email ad-

resses are listed on our website and in this newsletter.

As president, I hope to tweak the Association's business and procedures and to improve the coordination of the reunions to provide more value. Just as with a new coach of a college sports team, some of these changes won't be fully evident for a couple of years. This is because the next couple of locations are already fixed to some extent. But even though reunions have been proposed for certain sites, we will not accept a location that doesn't meet our requirements.

I will be focusing on keeping the costs of the reunions to the lowest possible amount consistent with acceptable quality. By stressing improvement in planning and execution we will get some savings. Also, with a reserve fund balance the size of our Association's, we will fund any reunion's overruns from the reserve account. We will plan costs as close as possible to break-even in all areas. When we have unexpected costs, we will use the reserve funds to cover those shortages.

One of the things that we will be doing differently than in the past involves the way we select reunion locations. We will consider more fac-

tors than we've used before for the site selection. We will be considering factors like whether the area is serviced by low cost airlines and proximity where members live. While we will accept any member's assistance who may happen to live in the vicinity of the selected reunion site, the Association planner, administrator and the board will be the final authority for the contract and other reunion issues.

A word about the folks that are doing the work — the officer's group, board members and staff spend an inordinate amount of time discussing the details of the Association's business. If they were to use as much of their time and energy in running a commercial business as they spend on Association business they could have one successful company. The work, material and equipment that each volunteer contributes have saved the Association thousands of dollars each year. We have a fairly large fund in reserve only because of their dedication and volunteerism. Everyone is concerned with what each believe is in the best interest of the entire Association. The bottom line is that the focus will be kept on having reunions that are affordable and enjoyable for everyone.

## From Our Webmaster

As I sit here writing this in January, I note that we have broken the 40,000 hits barrier on the web site since it was started in August of 1999. That works out to an average of about 1,000 hits a month. Although I was appointed interim Vice President in 2002



Vice President  
Peter Bird

and was elected to the office at the last reunion, I still spend the bulk of my Association time with the web site. The **Missing Man** section was

added to honor those of our members who have gone on to the great beyond. The **Association Officers** page has been updated with photos, so you can all see what our ugly mugs look like. I have also added both a **Site Search** feature and a **Caribou Poll** page. The site search is actually provided by Google at no cost to us. It isn't bad, but the old adage that "You get what you pay for" certainly applies. Thanks to those of you who have participated in a poll and for those who have not found it, the link is right below the photo on the home page. The poll can be a valuable source of quick feedback from the membership, so I hope more of you

will check it out and give it a try. I would like to get to the point where we can do about one poll a month and get good participation.

I get a steady stream of email comments on the web site, most requiring that I make some correction to a page, but we also get a fair number of new members through the site. These are typically people who were not previously on the roster, so our roster is also slowly growing. I had hoped by now that we would be able to offer Caribou merchandise on the web site, but with my participation in helping to plan the 2003 reunion and problems with how to accept payment, that one is on the back

Bird from page 3

burner for the moment. As always, I welcome comments and suggestions to make the web site more useful to our membership.

In my other Association job, I have been working closely with Wayne Delawter to help plan the 2003 reunion. By this time, it is probably known that after a heroic effort, we were left with little choice but to cancel the Dover location. (*As you know, the reunion has moved to Charleston, SC. Ed.*) If nothing else, I have gained new insight into just how much work it is to plan a reunion! It will all be worth it if we can get the same kind of turnout and enthusiasm in 2003 that we had in St. Louis.

*Peter Bird, Vice President and Webmaster*

## Treasurer's Report

*Earl Reynolds, [537th, 66]*

As Treasurer, I want to thank all of the members for supporting the efforts of the association by paying your dues (Caribou Tax). A special thanks to those who saw fit to make donations to the association. Our tax exempt status means that we don't have to pay income tax on income to the organization and sometimes, depending upon the State, we do not have to pay sales tax for purchases. Our newsletter editor has filed for a lower postage rate for mailing because we are a non-profit organization. Other effects of being a tax exempt organization is that those who make donations to us can take a take deduction on their income tax return. Also, those who are so inclined as to provide for a bequest in a will...we're not trying to kill you off...are assured that the bequest is not subject to taxation from the estate's side. Such donations could be restricted to specific purposes as long as they are within the tax exempt purposes of the association. We have explored other mechanisms to lower the costs for reunions using the tax exempt status.

## A Call for Old Newsletters

I'm looking for old copies of the "The Caribou Courier," the monthly newsletter published by the 483<sup>rd</sup> TAW during 1967 and possibly 1968. I have the June and August 1967 issues #4 and #6. I want to use them for fodder for this newsletter as well as collecting them for the C-7A Caribou Association archives.

I am also looking for early issues of the Caribou Association Newsletter, published by Nick Evanish. I need issues #1, #2, #4, #6 and #9 to make our file complete. If anyone has a copy of the above and is willing to part with it, I would appreciate receiving the original rather than a copy, however, a copy will be next best.

All of these documents will become the property of the C-7A Caribou Association. *Ed.*

## Bereavement Committee

A Bereavement Committee, composed of members Bob Markham, Peter Bird and Jim Collier, has been formed to endeavor to find obituaries of deceased members and spouses. These obituaries will be posted on the web page under "Missing Man." Next of kin of active members will be sent a sympathy card and invited to join the Association as Honorary Associate Members. As Honorary Associate Members they will receive the News Letter and reunion notices. They will not be assessed dues. Next of kin of lapsed members will also be sent sympathy cards.

All members are asked to help in this effort by e-mailing obituary notices to either of the members, or, if you prefer using the mail, send to:

Jim Collier	Jim Collier	jascoll@pacbell.net
5607 Jolly Court	Peter Bird	peterb@petester.com
Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707	Bob Markham	markhambob@juno.com

These lend a complication to the transactions. We would have to be the clearing agent and the total costs for hotel rooms may exceed our ability to pay for them up front while the checks clear to the association.

Our main objective is to let the world know what a small band of dedicated ground pounders and flyers did during a war that was not a popular war. Our objective is to show that we did the task assigned and we did it with creativity, dedication and humor. (You have a lot of time for humor at 125 knots in flight and 80 knots on final. Assuming there were no helicopters.)

Should anyone want to know the details or legal specifics concerning any of these matters, please email me or connect me.

Let me know if you need anything further,

## Hutch on Intercom...

We are up and running in 2003. But where did last year go? 2002 was a good year for the Association. As a result of some outstanding effort on the part of individuals, and the association board as a group, a lot of progress was made during the year.

The year started out with Bob Dugan laying the plans and doing the groundwork for a most outstanding memorial and dedication service at Dyess AFB. One Hundred eighty association members, guests and families came from all over the country to pay tribute to our fallen brothers.

Earl Reynolds completed the paper work and finally received approval for the Association's tax-exempt status. That prompted the need for changes to be made to the Association's By Laws. If you think Congress making legisla-

See **Hutch** on page 20

## C-7A Caribou Association 2002 Business Meeting Minutes

A regular meeting of the C-7A Caribou Association was held on October 11, 2002 at St. Louis, Missouri.

1. Meeting called to order by President Steve Kelley.
2. Chaplain Bob Davis gave the invocation.
3. The President led the members in The Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 4. Reports:

a. Reading of the old minutes. Secretary Jim Collier made a motion that the old minutes be accepted as published on the web page. The motion was seconded and passed by acclamation.

b. Treasurer's report. (Earl Reynolds)

c. Quorum report. The Secretary reported that we had 461 active members and that a quorum was present for the meeting.

#### 5. Old business:

a. Bob Markham reported that the board has voted NOT to fund the repainting of the C-7A Caribou at Hill AFB for \$5,000 as proposed by Jerry York at the 2001 General Meeting.

#### 6. New business.

a. The President asked the members to acknowledge the outstanding work Bob Dugan and Chairman of the Board Bob Markham did in planning and presenting the 2002 Caribou Memorial Dedication at Dyess AFB. The Board elected Bob Dugan as an Honorary Life Member for his work on the Caribou Memorial Dedication and for being the only member to attend all Caribou Reunions since 1992.

b. The nomination of the new officers was presented by the Nominating Committee Chairman Bob Dugan. Nominated were:

President: Wayne Delawter

Vice President: Peter Bird

Treasurer: Earl Reynolds

Secretary: Jim Collier

There were no other nominations from the floor and motions were made, seconded, and approved for election by acclamation.

a. Bob Dugan presented the nominees for at large Board members:

Max Allison

Bob Dugan

Stoney Faubus

Rick Patterson

Otto Terrill.

The members elected Bob Dugan, Stoney Faubus and Rick Patterson as at large Board members for 2003.

#### 7. Association Bylaws:

The president passed the gavel to Vice President Peter Bird who explained the reasons the non-profit status required a change of bylaws. He presented a motion by the Board to accept the new bylaws, which had been given to all members present. Milt Golart presented an amendment to require the bylaws to be mailed to all members. The amendment was seconded and defeated. The motion to amend the bylaws was approved.

8. There being no new business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and approved.

James L. Collier Sr.

Secretary, C-7A Caribou Association

## C-7A Caribou Association By-laws

(Effective Oct. 11, 2002)

### Article 1. Preamble

The C-7A Caribou Association ("Association") is a veterans organization composed primarily of current and former members of the United States Air Force who were associated with the C-7A/B Caribou aircraft and who come together through communication and fellowship to remember their service to the United States of America and to honor the memory of those who were killed in such service during the war in Vietnam.

### Article 2. Name

This Association shall be known as the "C-7A Caribou Association"

### Article 3. Purposes

The Association is formed to:

- Foster fellowship among those who flew, maintained, or supported the C-7A/B Caribou
- Maintain interest in the C-7A/B Caribou and in its mission
- Maintain a roster of persons who may be eligible for membership
- Communicate with persons who may be eligible to join the Association
- Hold reunions of its members; and,

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· Honor the memory of those who died in combat during C-7A Caribou operations in the Vietnam War.

#### Article 4. Membership

**1. Eligibility for Active Membership.** Persons eligible to be an Active Member are U.S. Air Force personnel or veterans who:

- Flew,
- Maintained, or
- Supported

the C-7A/B Caribou or the US Army CV-2.

a. **Active Members and Dues.** An "Active Member" is one who is eligible for membership and who has paid membership dues for the current calendar year. The Board of Directors ("The Board") or the active membership shall determine the amount required for dues, privileges or benefits of the Association.

b. **Active Member Rights and Privileges.** Only Active Members may vote or serve as an Officer or a Board Member. Active Members are entitled to receive the Association newsletter and such other membership benefits established by The Board or the Active Members.

c. **Honorary Lifetime Member.** The Board may designate an Active Member as an Honorary Lifetime Member ("HLM") for outstanding service to the Association. HLMs are accorded all the rights and privileges of active membership without the payment of dues.

d. **Roster of Possible Eligible Members.** The Board shall designate a person to maintain a roster of possible eligible members. The Board shall encourage contact with these persons to verify their status and encourage them to become Active Members of the Association.

**2. Other Categories of Relationship to the Association.** In addition to the categories described below, The Board is authorized to establish other non-voting categories of relationships to the Association under such terms, conditions, and benefits, as it deems appropriate.

a. An "**Associate Military Member**" is one who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces who does not qualify for active membership and who pays dues for the current calendar year. An Associate Military Member is entitled to all benefits and privileges of membership except shall not be entitled to vote or serve as an Officer or a Board Member.

b. An "**Honorary Associate Member**" is a spouse of a deceased Active Member and shall be entitled to all benefits and privileges of membership as an Associate Military Member without the payment of dues.

c. "**Honorary Friends of the Association**" are relatives of a deceased Active Member who shall be

entitled to such benefits and privileges as determined by The Board, without any payment, but who shall not be entitled to vote or serve as an Officer or Board Member.

d. "**Friends of the Association**" are those who apply to receive newsletters or other products offered by the Association under such payments or terms as The Board may set.

**3. Meeting of Members.** An annual meeting shall be held during a reunion for the purpose of reviewing the Association's financial status, plans, and actions, electing Officers and The Board Members, and conducting such other business that is properly brought before the meeting.

a. **Additional Meetings.** Additional meetings may be called by The Board or by the Active Members according to the procedure for amending the Association By-laws.

b. **Rules of Order for Meetings.** Meetings are to be conducted in accordance with the C-7A Caribou Association Rules of Order, as modified by the Board or the Active Members. Minutes shall be taken and published.

**4. Quorum.** Ten per cent (10 %) of the Active Members present or represented by written proxy held by an active member at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. The affirmative vote of a majority of active members voting shall be an act of the Association. The Secretary shall publish the results of any vote.

**5. Voting by Mail.** A vote of the Active Members between meetings may be performed by mailing a ballot to the Active Members. The ballot shall have the issue to be voted upon with an explanation of the issue and the effects of the issue if it is passed. The affirmative vote of the majority of the votes cast shall constitute an act of the Association. The ballot shall specify the date on or before which the ballot has to be received by the Secretary in order for the ballot to be counted. The Secretary shall publish the results of any vote.

#### Article 5. Authority and Management

**1. Authority.** The Association shall be governed by its active membership unless delegated to The Association Officers or Board of Directors ("The Board") by these By-laws or the active membership.

**2. Management.** The Board and the Officers shall manage association business between meetings.

**3. Communications.** Board members and Officers may use any means of communication (including, but not limited to email) to conduct business or actions of the Board.

**4. Board Votes.** The Secretary shall record Board member's votes.

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## Article 6. Management Structure

**1. Board of Directors.** The Association shall have a Board of Directors.

**a. Election and Composition of the Board of Directors.** The Board shall be elected by the active membership at the same time as the election of the Association Officers. The Board shall be composed of seven active members. The Board shall be composed of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and three (3) Board Members-at-Large. The Board should reflect the general make-up of the active membership.

**b. Number of Members of the Board of Directors.** The number of the members of The Board may be changed, from time to time, by the vote of the active membership. The Board may select an active Association member to fill a vacancy on The Board during its term.

**c. Chairman of the Board.** The Board shall elect a Chairman who shall serve during its term. The Chairman shall coordinate issues, activities, motions, and receive the Board member's votes.

**d. Authority of the Board of Directors.** In the absence of specific direction by the active membership or the By-laws, the Board may decide and carry out actions in accordance with these By-laws and the vote of the active membership.

**e. Actions by The Board.** Actions by The Board shall be by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board members. Any Board action may be vetoed by a vote of a majority of the active membership at an Association meeting in which a quorum is present. Actions taken by The Board prior to any rescission or veto shall not affect third parties.

**2. Officers and Appointments.** The Association Officers are: President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

**a. Office Vacancy.** Should an Office become vacant, The Board may appoint an Active Member to fill that vacancy until the next election of Officers.

**b. Other Positions, Committees, and Offices.** The Board or the active membership may establish, for specific purposes, other positions, committees, and offices. Active Members shall fill these positions and shall serve under such terms and conditions as The Board deems appropriate.

**3. Terms of Office.** Association Officers and Board Members shall serve for one year or until a successor is elected. There is no limitation on successive terms.

## Article 7. Adoption of and Amendments to By-laws

**1. Adoption.** The By-laws may be initially adopted by the vote of the active membership according to the procedures for membership voting.

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

## Article 8. Dissolution

**1.** Funds and properties of every nature and kind shall be expended for the non-profit and exempt purposes of the Association as authorized by the By-Laws, Active Membership, or Board of Directors, through dissolution, from time to time.

**2.** Upon dissolution of this Association, in accordance with law, if any funds or property remain, the same shall be transferred to any other organization qualified and exempt under Sections 501(a) or 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. The transferee organization shall share similar purposes as this Association, and such organizations shall include but not be limited to the Air Force Museum or the Air Force Association.

Any voluntary sale, lease, exchange, or other disposition of any major asset, such as real property or substantial movable assets or investments or substantially all the assets, of the Association shall be authorized in accordance with the By-Laws of the Association. The disposition of such assets shall be in accordance with the exempt purposes of this Association, its By-laws and its Articles of Incorporation.

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## Why Dover Didn't Work Out

*Wayne Delawter*

The change from the Dover DE area to Charleston SC was necessitated by the refusal of the only suitable Dover area hotel to deal with us, primarily due to lack of competition. They wouldn't provide us with a hospitality room that would be large enough to accommodate the size of our group. Furthermore they wouldn't allow us to have our own snacks and beverages in the War Room. On top of that they wanted to charge us several hundred dollars per day for a War Room that would have been too small to accommodate us. We are sorry that there wasn't an acceptable hotel at Dover because Bill Hardie worked so hard to make it happen. We're confident everyone will be much happier at Charleston.



## Reunion News

### REUNION DE-BRIEFING

*Jerry Presley, [483, 68]*

Now that I have my first reunion behind me, I would like to take this opportunity to make a few comments.

When my wife and I arrived at St. Louis on Wednesday I knew maybe 5 or 6 people that were there. By 10:00 o'clock that night (and a few cool ones later) I had met and become acquainted with numerous good people. As the reunion progressed, I met even more good folks.

The activities were great and the banquet was very good. I was also impressed with the way the business meeting was conducted. My wife enjoyed the shopping trip and met some really nice ladies on their outing.

As I was driving home on Saturday, I couldn't help but think how glad I was that I had decided to attend this year's reunion. I really urge all members of the association with any thoughts of attending the next reunion DO IT!! You'll be glad you did.

To Christine Phillips. Thanks a million for the hard work and effort you put into coordinating the reunion. You did a magnificent job and did us all proud.

To Steve Kelley. Thanks for sponsoring this year's reunion in St. Louis and for the hard work and great effort you put into being the association's president.

To Pete Bird. Thanks for being the association photographer and taking the pictures of the squadrons and significant others at the photo session.

To the 537<sup>th</sup> guys. Congratulations on the great turnout you had. You set the standard for the rest of us to shoot for. (By the way, I want to party with you animals sometime!)

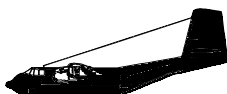
To Jim Elder. Thanks for the great job you did on the wine glasses at the banquet. You did the 483<sup>rd</sup> proud.

I have volunteered to serve as squadron rep for the 483<sup>rd</sup> CAMS and would like to see us well represented at the next reunion. If I can be of any assistance to any of you concerning the association or the reunion, don't hesitate to contact me at [jpresley630@aol.com](mailto:jpresley630@aol.com) or 405-691-3952.

On a final note, please check the roster to assure your "Caribou Tax" is current. If you find your tax isn't current, you can send it to our hard working secretary Jim Collier whose address is on the web site. These taxes are used to support our fine web site, maintained by Pete Bird, Newsletter, edited by Dave Hutchens, reunions, memorials and other expenses the association acquires in its day-to-day operations.

Take care and the best to all of you.

Jerry Presley Sgt.483<sup>rd</sup> CAM SQD.CRB RVN 68-69



### Reunion Planner

Jim Collier, our secretary, has always worked to make our Association the best it can be. A couple of years ago Betty, Jim's wife, (our wives are really running everything) learned about an organization that specializes in training military reunion planners. The Reunion Network holds 3-day training seminars throughout the country at about a dozen different cities each year.

Jim and Betty thought that it would be good for one of our members to become "planner qualified" by attending some of their seminars. Jim asked us to go to one of the training sessions. We agreed, but that was well before the thought of pushing me back to the board. Believe me, wearing both the hats of the president and the planner is more than I had bargained for.

Patty and I became members of the Reunion Network

See **Reunion Planner** page 20



**Reunion** from page 1

Sunday night. Paul's employer called him back to work and he was on a plane going back home at 6 a.m. the next morning. Then later on Monday afternoon Christine became ill and had to go to the hospital. Not a very good start for a very busy week. Paul re-joined us on Friday afternoon. Christine, a bit game, and with the help of many volunteers, made it through the week. Those guys are real troopers. Like they say, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. Thanks to all of you for a great event.

St Louis proved to be a very enjoyable place to once again renew old friendships and make many new ones. If you didn't make this reunion, you missed a good one. Be sure to attend the next one. And some of you older guys, and younger guys as well, had better start putting these reunions in your schedules. It isn't the cheeriest thought, but we each have only so many reunions left to attend. Better get while the getting is still good. Be sure to put Charleston, South Carolina on your calendar for November for the 2003 Reunion. You won't be sorry that you did. I'll see you all in Charleston. *Ed.*



## Reunion Demographics

The St. Louis reunion, while not the best in numbers of attendees, was one heck of a good reunion. Thanks to the 537th our numbers looked really good. We hope the 537th turnout will prod the other squadrons to get off of their duffs and get their members out.

Here are the statistics on the 2002 reunion:

Total number of members and guests	132
Members	78
Guests	54
First Time Attendees	28

Members by organization:

4449 - 2	458 - 12	483 - 5	536 - 09
457 - 9	459 - 11	535 - 8	537 - 24

Members by year in country:

1966- 16	1968- 22	1970- 4
1967- 09	1969- 17	1971- 4

Members by State:

AL- 1	GA- 3	MD- 1	NH- 1	OR- 1	UT- 1
AZ- 1	ID- 2	ME- 1	NJ- 8	PA- 1	VA- 4
CA- 11	IL- 5	MO- 2	NV- 3	SC- 1	WA- 2
CO- 1	KS- 1	MS- 1	OH- 1	TN- 2	WI- 3
FL- 5	LA- 2	NE- 1	OK- 5	TX- 5	WV- 1

Numbers for the past four years are:

		Members	Guests	Total
Tucson	1999	84	55	139
College Park	2000	58	36	94
Las Vegas	2001	100	61	161
St. Louis	2002	78	54	132

## Reunion 2002 Attendees

Max & Shirly Allison  
 Richard "Andy" Anderson  
 Francisco & Marcella Archibeque  
 Bill Avon  
 William & Mary Berta  
 Alvin & Audrea Balak  
 Peter Bird  
 Brian Bowen  
 Robert & Evelyn Bower  
 Kirk & Debra Bridgman  
 Ken & Venita Chrisman  
 Jim & Betty Collier  
 William & Karen Combest  
 Robert Cooper  
 \*Deane Fulcomber  
 Bruce & Angie Cowee  
 John & Nadine Craig  
 Al & Shirley Cunliffe  
 Robert & Georgia Davis  
 Wayne & Patty Delawter  
 Steve Donovan  
 Dan Drescher  
 Robert & Pat Dugan  
 \*Robert & Wynell Slade  
 Roy & Burma Dunn  
 Jim Elder  
 Steve Elsasser  
 Stoney & Melva Faubus  
 Thomas Finkler  
 Ralph & Evelyn Fitzgerald  
 Huey Frye

Larry & Trisha Garrison  
 Tom Gaston  
 Bruce Gerrity  
 Larry Gill  
 Milt Golart  
 Bill and Lorraine Grant  
 Gus & Tina Gustafson  
 Robert Hamrin  
 Ted & Cathy Hanchett  
 George Harmon  
 Felton & Mary Catherine Havins  
 Robert & Eula Mae Hopkins  
 Dave & Jill Hutchens  
 Jim Kelso  
 Steve & Gail Kelley  
 \* Don & Mrs. Ballard  
 \* Alex Belko  
 \* Ronnie Belko  
 \* Don Dunphy  
 \* Judy Schaaf  
 \* Brenda & Gene Heckner  
 \* Harlin Hubbs  
 \* Robert Murphy  
 \* Glen Rappold  
 Dan Kelly  
 Kenneth Kimseu  
 Dave Kowalski  
 Steve & Sandra Lentz  
 Bob & Noni Markham  
 Juan Martinez  
 \*Sandra Hill

George Moore  
 Mike Murphy  
 Mike Nassr  
 Robert & Iola Neumayer  
 Terry Obermiller  
 Rick Patterson  
 William Perry  
 Paul & Christine Phillips  
 Jerry & Evonda Presley  
 Billy Quinn  
 Ralph & Gabriele Renfro  
 Earl & Pamela Reynolds  
 Russell Riggelman  
 Allen Rodda  
 Charles & Norma Sanford  
 Charles Schmidt  
 Rudy & Gina Schwartz  
 Michael & Debbie Seidelman  
 Allen & Karen Shanahan  
 Jerry Smolinski  
 \* Charles Calhoon  
 Robert Strang  
 Ray Tanner  
 Charles Taylor  
 Don & Sue Tippetts  
 John Thomas  
 Charlie Tost  
 Jerney "JW" Trolinger  
 Clyde Wilson  
 Roger Woodbury  
 Franklin Woznicki

\* Guest of preceding member

## Prelude to Memorial Service

13th Caribou Reunion, St. Louis, Mo., 11 Oct. 2002

It was just 13 months ago that our Commander-in-Chief declared war on the 9/11 perpetrators. The tragic loss of life of those Firefighters, Law Enforcement Officers, innocent civilians and our Pentagon Compatriots created a horrible wound. It has been said that wounds will, in time, heal but the scars will never fade. I am certain that the 9/11 survivor's memory scars will be with them for a lifetime.

All the veterans here this evening are survivors. Each one of us knows that but for the grace of the Good lord, in another time and place, it could have been us. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all the military forces who are now in harms way. We have all been there and done that, in one form or another.

Being able to refer to ourselves as survivor has a certain pleasant sound. If you have any doubts about that, just ask that distaff family member sitting at your table.

Next month, exactly 30 days from today, this Nation will pause to honor its military veterans. It will be a day for us to display our National Emblem, to march in a parade, go to a military cemetery, attend a patriotic Veterans Day program, or visit a veterans hospital. If you can't do any of those things at least talk to your children or grandchildren about your military experiences. It's a part of your family heritage and should be shared with your offspring. Make it a part of your responsibility as a United States Air Force veteran.

To paraphrase our honored guest "Doc" Ballard, who is the recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor; Veteranism is the primary reason that Americanism and patriotism exists in these United States of America.

This country is the greatest nation in the history of mankind. It's only taken us 226 years to do it. Thanks to the military veterans who have fought, bled and died to protect this great democracy. Many hundreds of thousands have given some, but many other thousands have given their all.

There are yet, others for whom there has been no accountability- the Prisoner of War and the Missing in Action.

May we have a moment of silence for those very special veterans, the POW and MIA of all wars.

AMEN



## Eulogy

After the Prelude Mike Nassr was asked to present the following eulogy for General Greenleaf, who passed away on June 22, 2002.

Lieutenant General Abbott C. Greenleaf was Vice Commander and Commander of the 483<sup>rd</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing from 1969 to 1971, longer than any other commander. Not known by most of us was the fact that General Greenleaf served in three different services and in three different wars. During World War II he was a Navy enlisted man. He became a cadet at West Point and after graduation he became an Air Force pilot who served in Korea as a flight commander and operations officer of a Bombardment Group.

During his outstanding career he accumulated over 5,000 flying hours and served in high level positions on the Air Staff and for the Secretary of Defense. No assignment was as near and dear to him as that of Commander of the 483<sup>rd</sup> TAW. When the display of a C-7 was established at Dyess AFB, TX in 1992, he was there to give the dedication address. He attended our last two reunions and earlier this year he was at Dyess AFB again for the unveiling of the Memorial Plaque in front of the C-7, just three months before his death.

General Greenleaf, we salute you for your leadership while in Vietnam. We miss your not being with us today, but we honor and thank you for your steadfast support throughout the years, both for our Association and for the legacy of Air Force Caribou operations in combat.

## Memorial Service

As a finale to the 13th reunion of this Caribou Association, it is traditional to pay our respects to our deceased comrades with a Memorial Service.

As the candles are being lighted, let each of us in our own manner, and as our conscience dictates, offer up a prayer for all of our departed colleagues.

A candle will be lighted for each major base of operations.

VUNG TAU	Bob Bowers
PHU CAT	Brian Bowen
CAM RANH BAY	Huey Frye

Lest we forget- Lest we forget- We must never forget. They will forever be memorialized in our minds and hearts.

May the Good Lord hold them in the hollow of his hands and cause his face to shine upon them.

May their souls rest in peace.

AMEN

Robert A. Davis

Assn. Chaplain (non frocked)

## War Stories!

### Taking One Over To RVN

*By Bob Dugan, 537th - 68/69*

Sometime, during the check-out process at Sewart AFB in the summer of 1968, I was selected to fly a Caribou to Cam Ranh Bay. Nobody asked me if I wanted to do this, I was just notified that I would be paired with Bill Barrett, a Lt Col whose claim to fame was as an attorney with a Base Staff Adjutant's Office. I was not too thrilled to act as a copilot for someone who maintained his flying proficiency as a 4-hour-per-month type. However, he appeared as a nice guy when I met him, and we got to fly the airplane once to see if we thought it would make it over OK. It did...I had my automobile with me at Sewart, and tried to use it as an excuse to not take the flight, but since my family was located at Lubbock TX, the powers to be figured I could meet up with the crew and airplane at Reese AFB TX. We also had assigned a brand-new UPT grad named Dodson to be our 3rd pilot, along with a Sergeant of some rank I have since forgot. Upon leaving Reese, the first thing I did was to check the actual mag heading of the runway with the whiskey compass to make darned sure they agreed, and ours did. I had checked it back at Sewart and had wanted a new compass, since the old one was badly out of whack. We flew non-stop to McClellan AFB CA, on which I kept an accurate check of the fuel and oil usage on that one leg.

We were a flight of two, the other one being flown by a Col who was destined to be the Deputy Wing Co upon his arrival at CRB. Upon leaving McClellan, we had a flight plan which had been generated by a computer. Whoever ran that computer didn't seem (to me) to be fairly knowledgeable with the characteristics of the Caribou. When we passed the Golden Gate Bridge, we were in-

dicating 108 knots. I had passed it many times before in both WB-47Es and WC-135Bs, and it sure did look as if it was going to be hours before it passed under us. It finally did, and we began to look for the C-130 Duck Butts who we had been told were going to escort us all the way to Hawaii. After about 2 or 3 hours, the Duck Butts informed us they had decided we were going to be OK without their help, and since their constant S-turns had goofed up their compass, they were going back to their base in California. The bit about their compass being goofed up was a bunch of BS - all they had to do was to fly straight and level for a few miles and resynchronize their N-1 systems. We had no such niceties as a 'compass system' per se...all we had was a B-16 whiskey compass and a DG which had to be reset periodically. As we followed the Colonel leading this pack of two, I noticed that he kept veering continually to the left quite a bit, and after questioning him about this, he finally asked me what my compass was reading — I told him — and he said his was correct and I should follow him.

I queried him about checking his compass with the runway heading before takeoff, and he admitted he hadn't done this at any takeoff point. Swell!! Here we were flying across a huge expanse of water with an unknown compass in the lead aircraft, and it's pilot telling me to follow him. Barrett and I had a short "discussion" about this, and we convinced the Col we would give him headings to fly often enough to keep him in sight ahead of us and we would navigate ourselves to Ocean Station November and then on to Hawaii. I had taken the precaution of making up my own flight plan, drawing charts (lots of mostly blank charts showing nothing

but salt water and a course line) and ran it out all the way to Hawaii with a few heading changes for the predicted winds I had obtained from a source other than Base Weather. It turned out to be of great help, and we hit November right on the nose. When we were about 2 hours out from Hawaii, the lead aircraft reported having a fire warning light, and they called for Rescue to escort them in. I told Barrett we'd better alter course 45 degrees to the right, hold it for about 10 or 15 minutes, turn on every light we had and make sure nobody ran us down from behind as they closed in on our leader. We got to Hawaii OK, and spent an extra day or so there making sure the fire warning circuit was repaired.

At Hawaii, I requested a computer flight plan from the MAC ACP, but was rebuffed rather strongly, saying that since we were not MAC aircraft, we'd receive no help from them. A phone call to MAC Hq at Scott AFB changed this situation immediately, and although they bitched about having to reprogram their computers from 480 KTAS down to 115 KTAS, we got the flight plan and departed Hickam. Again, I had worked a flight plan myself, and both my plan and the MAC plan agreed pretty well. We spent 2 or 3 days at Midway, because of some 'difficulty' with the other Caribou. Our bird ran like a watch - no problems. Of course, we had no radar, no HF, no VHF, but we did have UHF and FM and that was about it! I got a really bad sunburn snorkeling at Midway, but managed to crawl in the bird and laid on a mattress we scrounged and watched Midway fade away. Got some great color slides of that! Again, we had to wait on the other plane at Wake Island. Finally, we left Wake and on the way to

Dugan from page 11

Guam, I had misgivings about the Colonel's compass again. He kept veering off to one side, and I finally told him we were going our own way and he could follow our directions or not — his choice. Bill Barrett agreed and the Colonel again agreed to follow our headings. About half way to Guam, I dialed up the MAC in-flight common frequency and asked if any MAC airplanes were within range of us. Two answered — a C-124 and a C-141. Since I knew both of them had UHF direction finding availability on board, I got an instantaneous bearing from them to us, plotted it out on my chart, and altered course about 15 degrees to the right. Was I right? Altering course that much in the middle of

the ocean?

When the Guam TACAN finally locked on, it was about 2 degrees off the nose to the left and the DME told me we were right on speed — felt good to be right on course!

From Guam to Clark, it was 15.0 hours, with about 12.5 hours of thunderstorms — the only time in the weather I saw the other plane was when we had a break in the weather and I spied him going back and forth in front of me about 2 miles away. He was deviating like I was. The last 2.5 hours was beautiful, with a nice sunset to end the day. We only spent about 2 days at Clark, and it was here that during preflight, I was hanging on the cowling on the left engine, looking inside, when the Crew Chief hit the

starter switch and the prop knocked me down on the ground. I came up off the ramp mad, and he took off running. He learned to look outside after that before he hit any switches anywhere in the cockpit! The flight to CRB was boring, for once, with not much to do except sit and enjoy the ride. After we got to CRB, it was only an hour or two before I caught a ride to Phu Cat, and never saw Dodson again, but I saw Bill Barrett once, when he came to Pleiku to make one air drop on Ben Het for his "DFC flight"...seems as though the Wing Weenies got their DFC after one air drop. (Rank hath it's privileges?) After that day, I never saw Bill Barrett again. One of these days, I'm gonna look at my 500 or 600 color slides and see what number Caribou I ferried over.

## Dak Seang

*(The following two stories came seperately, both since the last newsletter, without either of the authors knowing that the other had written. It is not really coincidental that the two stories tell about the same day, the same flight, the same event. Several Dak Seang articles have appeared in our newsletters. Dak Seang was probably the most significant single C-7 operational event in terms of lost airmen, lost aircraft and inovative on-the-spot strategy development. But it is only one of the several truly heroic operations that the 483rd TAW crews flew in support of the Vietnam War. In time we hope to have an accounting of all of the missions. Ed.)*

### Tim Black, 457th, '68

I recently read the Caribou newsletter for August 2002 and especially was interested in the article on Dak Seang. I was a Captain at the time, assigned to the 457th TAS (the blue tail boo) out of Cam Ranh Bay. I am the individual who came up with the night airdrop idea and presented it to Col. Larivee. I would like to relate to you, for publication if you desire, the way it happened.

On the morning of April 2nd, 1970, I was giving a check-out on airdrops to LtCol. Bob Davis (presently our Chaplain) somewhere in the central part of Viet Nam. I was an instructor pilot with the 457th TAS and on my second tour to Viet Nam. My first tour was also in the 457th TAS from March 1968 thru March 1969. (I had volunteered for a second tour and came back in the A-26, flying night air strikes over Laos from NKP Thailand. In January 1970, the A-26's were phased out and sent back to the states. There were four of us who were on our second SEA tours.

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

While doing our airdrops on that April 2nd, we received a radio call over HF that we were to proceed immediately to Pleiku for an emergency airdrop situation. Upon arrival at Pleiku, we met up with several other C-7 crews who had been diverted also. We were briefed on Dak Seang and loaded up for our first airdrops into the camp. Our orders were to drop inside the walls of the camp because the Viet Cong/NVA were into the barbed wire surrounding the camp. Col. Roger Larivee, the 483rd TAW Deputy Commander for Operations, was the OIC of the Caribou operation from Pleiku. Over the next couple of days, we tried several different tactics to get our loads into the camp without taking too much ground fire. We came in with a train of six Caribous from the same direction; we came in from different directions almost simultaneously; we came in from different directions at different times; we tried single-ship tactics and multi-ship tactics. On all of our missions, we took heavy anti-aircraft fire. Most of the time when we were making our drops, F-4's were dropping hard bombs, A-1E's were dropping nape, and F-100's were dropping smoke to try to hide our approach. During that first 2 to 3 days of the re-supply, the Cari-

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

After having made several airdrops into Dak Seang, and realizing the amount of ground fire we were receiving on every drop, I figured there must be a better way. I sat down with a map and did some study. After coming up with a plan, I took it to Col. Larivee. My plan was this: single-ship night airdrops. His first reaction was, "you've got to be kidding me. We don't practice night airdrops." My suggestion for night airdrops was based upon my night air strike experience from the A-26. After listening to my plan, he decided that he and I would make a night drop to see if it would work before sending in other Caribou crews. We coordinated with the Army personnel and other agencies to make the plan work. The plan: take off after dark from Pleiku without making any radio call and leaving all our outside lighting off. Proceed to the Dak To tacan and fly off the 270-degree radial for x number of miles at an altitude of 8 - 10,000 feet. That would put us at the south end of the valley where Dak Seang was located. We would then turn north and begin a descent with our engines at idle. A code word was passed over the radio to the camp and at a certain time, they would light a fire within the walls of the camp to give us a target to aim for with our load. We would hit our drop parameters over the light from the camp and call "green light". That meant the load was on the way out and they could extinguish the light. We would then go to full power, make a 180-degree turn and fly back out the valley on a south heading. While at max power, we would keep the props out of sync, so the enemy would not have one sound to aim at. By doing this in that valley, it kept the aircraft noise from being a steady target.

When Col. Larivee and I made that first night drop, our load went long, but he saw that the procedures would work. That next day the Army decided that if we could get six loads into the camp each day, they could live on that. Col. Larivee chose the most experienced pilots for those first night drops. He picked three crews. Myself, Tom Bame, and Neil Crist were the Aircraft Commanders who would make 2 drops each per night. We would take a co-pilot in with us to start with, but then we would take in another Aircraft Commander in our right seat to show him the night procedures we were using. That way he could increase the number of crews who were qualified to make the drops. I know the Cam Ranh Bay squadrons and the squadrons from Phu Cat were involved, but I do not remember if Vung Tau had any aircraft there.

As our night drops went along, we refined our proce-

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

To all the crews who flew in support of the operation at Dak Seang, I would like to offer this footnote. I was attending a memorial service and dedication in Atlanta last year for Pat Jaeger, one of the 3rd Caribou crew to be shot down. Al Ghizzoni, Mark Erickson, Bob Davis, and I were approached by an Army sergeant who had been in Dak Seang while under siege during April 1970. He just wanted to say "thanks." Not just to us, but to all the crews who flew in support of Dak Seang. He said if it wasn't for the Caribou, and her crews (the aircraft commanders, the co-pilots, and the flight engineers), he and his buddies would not be here today.

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### **Bob Davis, 457th, '69**

#### My Recollections

Siege of Dak Seang (VA 2-283) SVN  
2 April 1970

These recollections are being recorded in August 2002. They have been reinforced by references to my personal notes of the missions flown during my tour of duty with the 483rd Tactical Airlift Wing, Cam Ranh Bay, SVN, October 1969- October 1970. I have also made constant referral to my Form 5 which is the Air Force Pilots Individual Flight Records of all accumulated flying time during my career as an Air Force pilot. The Form 5 reflects a grand total of 4219.7 hours of which 649.3 hours were in combat. The combat hours were 75 in Korea (B-29) during 1953, 16.75 from Thailand (C-47) during 1966-67 and 557 in SVN (C-7A). My Flight Record Master File indicates that I have recorded flying time in 18 different types of airplanes.

My assigned duty in the Wing was Operations Officer in the 457th Tactical Airlift Squadron based at Cam Ranh Bay. We were flying C-7A Caribou aircraft manufactured by de Havilland, of Canada, for the US. Army. There were six squadrons in the Wing, two at Cam Ranh Bay (457, 458), two at Phu Cat (459, 537) and two at Vung Tau (535, 536).

It was in December 1966 that the last of 144 Caribou aircraft had all been transferred from the Army to the Air Force so that all incountry fixed wing airlift service was consolidated under one authority. The transfer of airplanes was a joint decision between the Chiefs of Staff of the Air Force and Army and approved by the Department of Defense.

Davis from page 13

The aerial lifeline of the Special Forces camps in Vietnam proved to be the C-7A Caribou airplane. The ability to land on very short unimproved strips, capacity for carrying relatively large loads of many type cargo, the stalwart construction, maintainability and reliability made it the logical choice for resupplying those boondock isolated outposts of the Special Forces.

The C-7A Caribou, was a high-wing twin engine monoplane, reversible propellers with a long upswept tail that permitted using the rear door cargo loading ramp. The fuselage was just over 72 feet long, and wingspan was just over 95 feet 7 inches. The vertical fin was over 31 feet high and the plane had an empty weight of about 17,600 pounds. Powered by two Pratt & Whitney R-2000 1,400 horsepower engines, the Caribou had a cruising speed of 182 *mph* at 10,000 feet and a stall speed of 65 *mph* when fully loaded. A favorite with the air crews who flew them, the C-7A was a work horse of an airplane that really found a home in Vietnam supporting those gallant Special Forces troops.

My involvement with the Dak Seang siege began with a radio call from "HILDA" which was the call sign for the 834th Air Division Control Center on Tan Son Nhut airport in Saigon SVN (VA3-1). The date was 2 April 1970, approximately 1400 hours, just after we had taken off from Bu Krak (VA2-176). Captain Tim Black, who was a squadron instructor pilot, took the radio call. I, as the Squadron Operations Officer, was being checked out on an air drop mission. The Load master/ Engineer was Master Sergeant Travis Paramore, who was a first rate N.C.O.

The check-out mission had begun with a briefing at 0530 hours in the 457th TAS operations. We were to fly to Nha Trang (VA2-7) to load air drop

pallets for delivery to Duc Lap #2 (VA2-293). Duc Lap #2 air strip ramp had recently been resurfaced and was closed to fixed wing aircraft traffic. The air drop pallets that we were to deliver was diesel fuel for the Special Forces camp generators.

We had completed the air drop checkout with two round trips between Nha Trang and Duc Lap #2, delivering six pallets, when the S.F Chief Warrant Officer asked us to deliver a load of rations to Bu Krak (VA2-176). After the cargo was loaded and the plane refueled, the crew had lunch in the S F mess hall at Nha Trang. We Caribou air crews knew where all of the good mess halls were all over SVN and tried to time the noon stops accordingly.

The Bu Krak sortie was rather uneventful. The rations turned out to be crated hogs, chickens and live eels that were in 10 gallon cans all loaded on pallets. Bu Krak was located very close to the Cambodian border and overlooked the Ho Chi Min infiltration trail. The landing strip was a type I for C-7 aircraft, nothing more than a leveled off hilltop subject to all kinds of unpredictable winds.

The radio call from "Hilda" informed Captain Black that this was an emergency tactical diversion and that we were to proceed directly to Pleiku (VA2-4). Upon arrival at Pleiku and reporting to the Airlift Control Element (ALCE) we were briefed on the reason for the emergency diversion. Dak Seang (VA2-283) was under heavy siege by the Viet Cong and was in immediate danger of being overrun. The camp desperately needed munitions, rations, water and medical supplies.

The Pleiku Tactical Unit Operations Center (TUOC) was in radio contact with the Dak Seang camp operations center receiving blow by blow reports of the siege. TUOC was coordinating the assembly of the air-drop pallets with Pleiku Army Aerial

Support Company. The pallets were being delivered to the aircraft loading area as rapidly as possible while the planes selected to fly were being refueled and made mission ready.

The OIC of the ALCE had queried the five or six air crews, that had been diverted, to determine those pilots qualified for airdrops. Captain Black, myself and two others from squadrons based at Phu Cat (VA-213) were selected along with co-pilots and engineer/load masters to fly the four ship early evening re supply mission. It was a race with the clock to complete the airdrops during daylight hours.

While the pallets were being loaded on the planes, under the supervision of the load master, the pilots were collectively discussing the terrain features, enroute navigation, exit route and studying the available photographs of the camp. One of the Phu Cat pilots had flown into Dak Seang and was familiar with the area, was selected to be the leader of the four participating air crews. I was the ranking officer and chose to be the deputy lead, flying in the number four or last in-trail position.

As part of the pilots briefing the ALCE OIC informed us that a forward Air Controller (FAC) would be directing A1-E (Sandy's) for suppression of ground fire from the NVA. He further advised us that the FAC had reported medium to heavy anti-aircraft fire from the hills to the west of the camp. We could expect to see a lot of smoke in the camp area, however some of it had been laid down as a smoke screen by the Sandy's.

It was late in the afternoon by the time that both aircraft and air crew were ready to depart on the mission. Flying time to Dak Seang was about 40 minutes which made the round trip from Pleiku about 1 plus 30 hours, considering drop zone maneuvering time. We took off at 45 second intervals to provide proper spacing in

flight, flying in-trail at 6000 feet altitude. Dak Seang airstrip, as published in the Tactical Airdrome Directory, was 2000 feet elevation. The Directory was published by the Air Force Aeronautical Chart and Information Squadron and had an aerial photo of the landing strip and adjoining Special Forces camp. It was the air crews indispensable reference for flying into SVNs several hundred airstrips. The airdrome remarks section provided information about approach/departure terrain, runway condition, overrun distances, load/unload areas, any hazards to aircraft operations and radio frequencies for contact with the camp command center.

Our flight of four maintained radio silence until the flight leader contacted the FAC. He advised that the camp was under heavy mortar attack and that the Sandy's were laying down fresh smoke to conceal the camp from the NVA spotters. The flight leader told the FAC of our intended route of flight, that we were blacked-out. The FAC approved the route, cleared us for the drops and advised the Sandy of our intentions.

Dak Seang was strategically located at the junction of two valleys. It blocked one of the main infiltration routes of the Ho Chi Min trail into the central highlands of SVN. Our route of flight was to fly north, up the east side of the east range of hills, proceed north of the camp, then fly south down that valley to the drop zone. As we proceeded north we could hear the FAC working with the Sandy's and we could see the area of the camp concealed with a white smoke.

It was very close to sunset as we made our descent power settings and headed down towards the besieged camp. We had been monitoring the FAC frequency and heard him report that the three aircraft ahead of us had all made successful drops. He also

told us that we could expect a "Sandy" to make a fire suppression run across our path of flight. We were about 25 seconds from the drop when that "Sandy" streaked in front of our plane about one half mile ahead. He was passing from port to starboard in a dive somewhat below our altitude.

Photography had been my hobby for many years so I had a super eight mm camera along on the flight. As we were making the descent the copilot, Lt. Nemec, was photographing the descent. There was a lot of white smoke on the ground partially concealing the camp from our view. The film shows the "Sandy" making his strafing run to suppress the NVA gun positions on the hill overlooking the camp.

As we proceeded on the descent from 6,000 feet altitude, to the drop altitude of 2500 feet, the engineer, Master Sergeant Paramore, was removing the tie down straps from the pallets and hooking the parachute static lines to the overhead cable. The three pallets that we had on board contained munitions and water that was so urgently needed. Sergeant Paramore had opened the rear cargo doors just as we reached drop altitude and airspeed. The procedures for a drop was to be straight and level, 500 feet above the terrain at an airspeed of 100 knots. As the drop area passed under the nose of the plane the pilot would advance the throttles to take off power while pulling back sharply on the control column. This maneuver had the effect of raising the nose of the plane and rapidly increasing the airspeed. As a result the unsecured pallets exited out the rear cargo doors via the track rollers installed on the floor of the cargo compartment.

Sgt. Paramore called on the intercom that the pallets had cleared the aircraft, that the chutes were good and the pallets were landing within

the camp perimeter. He was closing the rear cargo doors while we were climbing back up to 6,000 feet altitude as rapidly as possible to escape the ground fire. The tracers coming at us were easy to see in the fading light of day. The time was about 1830 hours as we reached altitude and proceeded in trail with the rest of the flight towards Pleiku.

We were nearly half way to Pleiku when the flight received a radio call from "Hilda" directing us to recover at Phu Cat for several reasons. Pleiku did not have crew accommodations for us nor was there enough secure ramp space for our planes. Phu Cat had two squadrons of Caribou's stationed there and logistics support was readily available. By the time that we had diverted, made a night weather GCA landing, the time was nearly 2000 hours. It had been a very long and eventful day with nine sorties and 8.3 flying hours. We were very happy to be on the ground, safe from harm, knowing that our mission was a success. We were, however very much in sympathy with our military comrades still under siege at that Special Forces camp. We had done all that we could do for today but we fully expected that we would do it again tomorrow or for as long as it took.

The next morning, 3 April 1970, as the aircraft were being inspected for damage, there were holes caused by three bullets in the C-7A, number 63-9765, that we had flown. Fortunately the projectiles had merely passed through the skin of the plane without striking any other components. We were thankful that there had been no injuries to any of the air crew members.

#### POSTSCRIPT 1

I did fly another re supply mission the next day, 3 April 1970, in a six ship in trail formation, with out incident.

The Dak Seang siege lasted for another four weeks. The 483rd TAW



Davis from page 15

lost three airplanes and crews to ground fire within the next four days. As a result of the tragic losses, multi-aircraft deliveries were terminated and single plane night missions were flown. The night drops were facilitated with the aid of a C-119G type airplane, from Phan Rang (VA2-28), that shone a powerful spotlight on the camp during the brief time of airdrop.

As the Pleiku Detachment Commander, while TDY from Cam Ranh Bay, I flew on three of the night missions with an air crew from Phu Cat. I was awarded the US Air Force Distinguished Flying Cross for the five air drop missions into Dak Seang SVN during the month long siege.

POSTSCRIPT 2

It was during a memorial service for Captain Pat Jaeger, one of the downed pilots, in Atlanta, Georgia during March 2001, that I met John Liner, Ontario, NY. He had been a Special Forces Advisor to the SVN Forces at Dak Seang during the siege. John was quite enthusiastic about the re supply missions flown by the Caribou crews. He repeatedly remarked that if it had not been for their skill and daring to deliver the cargo, within the camp perimeter, the camp would have been overrun by the NVA. John credited the air crews involved with saving his life along with many others of his military colleagues and SVN friends.



## A Real Plum Especially for an FNG!!

*Rick Patterson, [459, 69]*

I don't remember being told about Santa Boo. All I remember is being told that all crewmembers had a mandatory formation when we returned home to Phu Cat AB after spending all day hauling "trash" around South Vietnam. But I better start at the beginning.

In early December, 1969 we arrived in South Vietnam – and DaNang AB welcomed us with open arms! We were 1Lts Dan Ahern, "Cuffy" Kelso, Tom McCloy, and me. Right out of pilot training, we were among the first graduates of the C-7A Upgrade School which recently had moved to Dyess AFB, TX. Boy were we green! Everything was new- we were new officers; new pilots; and, now, new war combatants. But we were motivated and fresh!

So a couple of days after arrival we started our co-pilot training and Vietnam indoctrination. We were ex-

cited to be flying – we were excited about almost everything. Right – we may have been excited but we sure didn't know much! But we fit in to the squadrons, tried to learn as fast as we could, accepted a few additional duties (all 1Lts get 'em) and did our best.

About a week after arrival I was told about the meeting. Not sure I remember where the meeting was but I think it was at the O'Club. Anyway, all the experienced crewmembers were anticipating this meeting - for it was here that the crews of the Phu Cat 1969 Santa Boos would be selected. I do remember, though, that when the Ops Officer read "1Lt Patterson" everyone said, "Who's that?" And I remember saying, "What's a Santa Boo?"

So that is the story about how a brand new 1Lt who had been in-country less than two weeks got to fly on the premier flight of the year – it was pure luck – "Even a blind squirrel finds an acorn once in awhile!" That's me on the far right.



Can you name any of the players above? From left to right.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. Rick Patterson

Send your answers to the editor.

## Dawning of a new day...

heading back to the Big BX. On 14 September 1971, a ferry force commander, an operations officer, 15 Caribous flown by their intrepid aviators, plus one spare crew, left Cam Ranh Bay AB for Hamilton AFB, (just north of San Francisco in Marin County), California. Our 15 'Bous island hopped from Cam Ranh to Clark AB, Philippine Islands (6.1 hours), on to Anderson AFB, Guam, (10.1 hours), then to Wake Island (11.3 hours), on to Midway Island (7.5 hours), to Honolulu IAP/Hickam AFB, Hawaii (9.5 hours), and finally on to Hamilton AFB, California. Not making the Hickam-Hamilton leg due to a family medical emergency that sent me home early, I missed out on the projected 18 to 19 hour flight of a lifetime. Only one 'Bou was lost during the operation, that happening on the Hickam-Hamilton leg when the unfortunate crew lost an engine right at ETP and wound up ditching just west of the Farallon Islands, which are 30 miles west of San Francisco, California. USAF parajumpers, heroes always, rescued all three crew members before the airplane sank.

*(The above description of the flight back home is taken from one of Jim Hathcoat's photos that is posted on our web site.*

*The crewmembers of the ditched Bou, Tail number 62-4173, were Capt. Donald A. Henderson (Pilot), Lt James L. Breitenstine (Copilot), and Ssgt Richard E. Jackson (Flight Engineer). Both Breitenstine and Jackson are members of the Caribou Association. The following story is an account of the ditching of 4173.)*

## The Longest Flight

An hour before dusk, the Caribous lumbered into the air on the last leg of a ferry mission that began in SEA and was to end in the land of the big BX. It was to be a seventeen and one-half hour flight that would drone away from a setting sun and would not see land again until the sun had completed its journey and was once again high on the horizon.

Each of the four aircraft in the section were crewed by a pilot, copilot, and flight mechanic. The aircraft had been equipped with special bladder fuel tanks carried in the cargo compartment to increase the range of the normally short-legged C-7s. There was no autopilot to decrease the pilot workload; the beast had to be hand flown the entire distance.

The flight climbed eastward and rendezvoused with a C-130 duckbutt who was to provide the navigation expertise and lead the aircraft across the big waters.

The first ten hours of the flight were uneventful save for numerous heading changes to avoid the cumulus build-ups which littered the flight path. The ETP (equal time point) had been left behind over an hour previously; now there could be no turning back.

At about ten hours and fifteen minutes into the flight, the low oil quantity light for the left engine illuminated in the number two airplane in the stream. There was nothing alarming or unusual about it; the engine had been steadily using about a gallon of oil per hour on the previous legs. The pilot sent the flight mechanic to the rear of the airplane to reservice the oil quantity from the on-board reservoir. He completed the servicing and then began to transfer fuel from the bladders. Moments later he heard over the interphone, "Something is wrong with number one engine." He scrambled back up to the cockpit and couldn't believe what the engine instruments were telling him. They had lost number one engine. The pilot notified the mission commander who was in a trailing aircraft; then shut down the engine and feathered the prop. The copilot advanced the power to METO on the remaining engine as the airspeed bled off and the aircraft began to descend from 10,000 feet. The pilot had his hands full trying to control the airplane in night weather conditions. With METO power, the pilot was able to level the airplane at 3700 feet; then as the airspeed slowly built back up he was able to climb to 4100 feet. Some structural icing had been evident prior to the time the engine was shut down. As the aircraft descended to a lower altitude, the outside air temperature was warm enough to rid the airplane of ice. When the pilot had the airplane under firm control, he told the copilot and flight mechanic to put on anti-exposure suits, LPUs, and parachute harnesses. After returning to the flight deck, the copilot flew the airplane while the pilot donned his survival gear. The airplane was equipped with parachutes (chest packs) and a seven man life raft carried in the cargo compartment.

The flight mechanic then jettisoned everything possible to lighten the aircraft weight. The fuel bladders still contained some usable fuel but they too would be jettisoned when their usefulness had expired.

For the next two hours, the pilot was able to maintain airspeed by alternately selecting METO and climb power.

At the time of engine shut down, the interphone went dead and the crew could not hear themselves transmitting on any of the radios; however, they were able to hear incoming transmissions. They discussed the possibility of attempting a restart on the left engine and decided to wait until first light to give it a try.

The first couple of hours after engine shutdown, the crew concerned themselves with keeping the machine in the air. This was not the time to be overly concerned about the fuel ... that would come later. Initially, it looked as if the fuel remaining on board would be sufficient to get the airplane to the nearest airport. However, flight following agencies in the states had already begun to voice concern about the endurance.

Flight from page 17

At first light the crew attempted a restart on the left engine. Any hopes they might have had of once again having a two-engine airplane vanished as the pilot pressed the starter button. The engine was frozen. A windmill start was not attempted for fear of not being able to re-feather the prop.

The C-130 duckbutt aircraft which had been providing escort service was relieved by an Air Rescue C-130. Positions relayed by the rescue bird indicated that the fuel situation was going to be close. Then the C-130 began having difficulty with its navigation equipment, making accurate positioning impossible. Meanwhile the Caribou had squeezed all of the fuel out of the bladders and had jettisoned them. It looked at this time as if the crippled C-7 would arrive over the nearest airfield with about five to fifteen minutes fuel remaining.

The crew had discussed the possibility of bailing out of the airplane versus ditching. They were well aware that bailout was the preferred method. The pilot gave the crewmembers the option. The copilot felt that he had but one choice; since he couldn't swim, he decided to stay with the airplane. The flight mechanic also decided to ride it down if it became necessary.

Air Rescue had been alerted hours previously and they now had a Jolly helicopter (HH-53C) en route.

When the escort 130 came within TACAN range of the coast, the DME locked on and indicated 197 miles. From this position, it became painfully obvious that the C-7 could not make landfall prior to fuel exhaustion. The crew had been airborne for over seventeen and a half hours with seven hours of that time on a single engine.

A group of islands just off the coast appeared to offer the next best course of action. Although there was no landing field, the beach had al-

ready been cleared for the eventuality that the C-7 could make it that far. The pilot had queried the Jolly, who had by this time intercepted the aircraft, on the possibility of a carrier landing. However, none were within range.

The pilot decided to try for the islands, but if he couldn't make it, to begin the ditching run when the fuel on board was down to 50 pounds. It was imperative to ditch while engine power was still available. As he turned the Caribou toward the islands, the Jolly began relaying ditching information. The water surface was glassy with swells of two to three feet. In turn, the pilot of the Caribou relayed to the Jolly the ditching characteristics of the airplane, location of the emergency exits, and the position of each of the crewmembers. He had sent both the flight mechanic and the copilot into the cargo compartment where they would remain until the airplane either ditched or landed. The flight mechanic opened the cargo door and jettisoned the right rear passenger door in preparation.

The pilot continued his slow descent still heading for the group of islands. The first island was no more than a rock jutting up through the surface of the water and offered no hope of a landing site. The larger island with the cleared beach was ahead ... too far ahead. The fuel gauge read fifty pounds when the pilot turned the Caribou to the ditching heading. He lowered forty degrees of flaps, calling each ten degree increment to the Jolly. As the C-7 approached within ten feet of the water, the Jolly pilot could see the prop wash making a trail on the water. The airplane touched down on the aft fuselage slightly nose high in what appeared to be a good touchdown, then suddenly the nose dug in and the airplane stopped abruptly. The flight that had lasted over nineteen and a half hours was over.

In the cargo compartment, the wa-

ter began pouring in immediately. By the time the copilot and the flight mechanic got unstrapped, the water was chest deep. They made their way to the rear of the airplane which had ankle deep water by the time they began unloading the raft. The flight mechanic put the raft into the water, inflated it, and the copilot jumped into it. The flight mechanic then jumped into the water alongside of the raft and then boarded it. Neither man was injured.

In the cockpit, the force of the impact had dislodged portions of the instrument panel and had pinned the pilot in the cockpit. He briefly lost consciousness, then came to and could see the surface of the water over his head. He was able to move around slightly to get his head above water but was not able to free himself of the debris. He managed to move enough to get his arm through the copilot's window. He began waving.

The Jolly had quickly lowered two para-rescue men who swam to the airplane and began tugging at the debris to free the pilot. The pilot was struggling for air with each wave that passed over his head. After the parajumpers were in the water, the Jolly maintained a hover position over the airplane. The pilot of the helicopter was intentionally maintaining this position to force the tail of the airplane down so that the cockpit would stay as high above the water as possible. It was a superb decision. Both of the rescue men began frantically tugging at the pilot and managed to free him of the debris. They laid him on top of the airplane and inflated his LPUs. Moments later, the airplane sank beneath him; it had remained afloat for only thirteen minutes, yet all the crewmembers survived. Only the pilot had any injuries and those were very minor.

In retrospect, it is easy to glean from this accident why ditching is a

last resort in an aircraft of this type. However, there can be no fault leveled at the pilot. His primary concern was his crew and he brought them through in fine shape. Faced with the circumstances, the pilot did an outstanding job.

Not enough credit can be given to the crew of the Jolly rescue helicopter. Through their action the Caribou crew is still around to tell one hell of a war story. *(This story was first published in the TAC ATTACK, a publication of the Tactical Air Command, May 1972. I came by the article through the efforts of Doug Lamerson who sent me the official Accident Report. Through the accident report I found Richard Jackson, flight Engineer on 62-4173. Richard then sent me the above story. Both Doug and Richard are active members of the Association. The copy of the Accident Report will be part of the C-7A Caribou Association archives and will be available for viewing at the next reunion.)*

## The Lesson at Ham Tan

*Peter Bird [535, 71]*

I was once given instruction by an honest-to-by-God two-star General. The incident started innocently enough. We were flying a routine sortie into Ham Tan, which, although the runway was laterite (euphemism for dirt), it was agreeably long at 3400'. It was a nice sunny morning as I recall and we landed, shut down, and unloaded without incident. When we jumped in and started to crank up for the next sortie, it became almost immediately apparent that the Number 1 engine was not going to start. I am more than a little mechanically inclined and have enough rapport (if that is what you call it) with the machinery I operate to know when something is wrong. After two attempts to light off the engine failed, I decided that we had better use the remaining energy in the battery to radio for some maintenance assis-

tance. A Caribou, although it has two 2000 cubic inch engines, has an ordinary lead-acid battery of about the size you would find in a passenger car. You don't get a lot of cranking time from one.

My copilot and flight mechanic concurred with me that we probably had a bad magneto or high tension cable and that the radio was the most prudent use of the battery. We fired up the HF and called the command post in Saigon to arrange for some assistance and then went out to enjoy the fine weather. Shortly, another Caribou landed and taxied up in a great cloud of dust. Out of the dust cloud walked the General. It seems the commander of 834<sup>th</sup> Air Division was out punching his flight pay ticket that day and wanted to know why we were sitting around doing nothing. I informed him of our plight and he stomped off in the direction of my aircraft muttering something about these youngsters and what do they know about getting Pratt & Whitney radials started? He stormed into the left seat, saying "I'll show you how to start an R2000!". After he had run the battery dead flat, leaving us without communications, he allowed, with a red face, that we must have a problem with the engine and proceeded back to his own aircraft, promising to radio for assistance.

That was not the end of the lesson. The General cranked up his own Caribou and pushed up the throttles to taxi, but nothing happened. He pushed up the throttles some more, raising a great cloud of dust, but, still, nothing happened. At about the time his engines reached METO power, his aircraft jumped the chocks he had neglected to remove. (Generals usually do not have to worry about such minor details as removing the chocks.) Having jumped the chocks at a very high power setting, the aircraft now was headed for the weeds at an alarming rate. The General (or perhaps the IP in the right seat) man-

aged to get the power off and the brakes on before any tin was bent. After bringing the machine to a stop and dispatching the flight mechanic to recover the chocks, the General was on his way. Yes, sir, thank you very much, sir. Divine justice seldom is meted out before one's very eyes, but I do believe this incident was such a case.

## Roof TopCoffee

*Steve Ellaser [458, 71]*

The call has gone out for us to write down tales of our experiences with the C-7 Caribou and submit them for all of us to enjoy. I will now confess to doing something at Cam Ranh Bay that I never told anyone about for a good twelve of fifteen years. Maybe I shouldn't be telling it now.

This happened during the monsoon season in the fall of 1971. I was a copilot assigned to the 458<sup>th</sup> TAS. The job of Duty Officer was one of the least favorite things for us to do. Our squadron ran this duty as a 24-hour shift, from noon one day until noon the next; so this meant we would not fly for two days.

As I mentioned, it was the monsoon season and rain was pouring down. We had recovered all of the aircraft and the aircrews had left the squadron. I was the last one in the building and was preparing to lock up for the night.

Brewing coffee was one of our duties; this was complicated by not having any plumbing in the building. We had to descend the flight of stairs and walk about 150 yards to another building where we could wash out the coffee pot and fill it with water. Hard as it may be to believe, I was not a coffee drinker and after more than 20 years of flying in the Air Force, I am still not a coffee drinker. I disliked making coffee!

I carried the coffee pot out the door and stood on the second floor landing and just watched the rain pouring down with the water cascading off of the

Roof from page 19

gutterless roof. I took a long look where I would have to walk through the torrent.

Despite being only a lieutenant, and a co-pilot to boot, I devised a crafty plan. From the second floor landing, I dumped the used coffee grounds on the asphalt below. There was plenty of water coming off the roof to wash everything off and fill the pot with water.

Returning to the break room, I put the coffee pot in place, wiped it off and prepared it to be plugged in the next morning. Thoughts crossed my mind as to what kind of germs, bacteria, or maybe some exotic thing, that might have been in the water that came off of the roof.

Morning came and a trip to the command post for frags and a stop at the weather shop preceded my arrival at the squadron. I unlocked the door and never gave a thought about what I had done the previous evening. I flipped on the light switch and headed for the break room and plugged in the coffee pot.

Soon enough, people began arriving for the day. I know our Squadron Commander, LTC John Polk was one of the first to come in. I recall several people talking; probably LTC Loren Kula, Captain Phil Pignatoro, our scheduler, Captain Charlie Jordan and maybe even our clerk, Airman Roger Baldwin. Seated behind the counter I was busy doing something and didn't really pay attention when LTC Polk walked by and went into the break room. He still didn't draw any interest from me when he walked back to his office – carrying a cup of coffee. I paid no attention to the conversation going on until I clearly heard LTC Polk say, "This coffee is really good today." That is when I sat straight up and thought, "Oh S - - t!"

There is no way to know how many people drank my roof-top-water-coffee. Quietly I paid attention for a few days, but no one seemed to suffer any

ill affects. Maybe you can understand why I didn't tell anyone about this for so many years.

**Reunion** Planner from page 8

and attended a seminar in August. We learned that the Association could probably do a more professional job if we created a comprehensive request for proposal (RFP) to layout our criteria. We also learned how to enlist the support of convention visitor's bureaus (CVB) to help locate prospective hotels and tours. Other issues dealt with were related to negotiations, contracts, insurance and planning.

The professionals have found that selecting two or three reunion cities from which to choose each year works well. Also, we will try to select cities or areas that have more than one hotel that can meet our requirements. All of this will provide competition and give us some leverage. We have found that without competition the hassle to get a reasonable contract is hardly worth it.

As the reunion planner, I will do the best that I can to set up good reunions. With Earl Reynolds's legal counsel, plus inputs from our Reunion Administrator, Christine Phillips, and all the other board members and who represent each of you, I feel we will continue to have great reunions.

**Hutch** from page 4

tion can be compared to making sausage, then you should have seen the activity of your board re-writing the by laws by use of e-mails. Imagine, seven grown men sending e-mails containing suggestions and counter suggestions, remarks, quibbels, approvals and disapprovals. Each e-mail solicited an answer from each of the other six board members. And each of those answers generally would require some sort of response..., and so on and so on. Instantly you have a flood of e-mails that I know must have bogged down the Internet. And this went on for months and months. How they kept track of

who said what about what, I don't know. But finally there emerged a new set of by laws that were overwhelmingly approved by the membership at the last business meeting.

In June we lost one of our senior members, Lieutenant General Abbott Greenleaf. Fortunately several of our members were able to attend his funeral services.

We had a terrific reunion in St. Louis. The 537<sup>th</sup> showed us, **by example**, how to get out the members. Congratulations on a really outstanding job of rallying your guys to come on out.

I had thought that I might step back and let someone else take over the editor slot for the newsletter. I was persuaded to not give it up quite yet. It does bring up the need to be looking for someone to step forward in the not too distant future. And we do need some help in the form of a reporter. And a photographer. If someone has an interest please get in touch with me.

In previous issues I have put out a request for stories and articles to fill our newsletter. The response from the last plea has been really good. I want to thank all of you who have sent in articles. If you don't see your pieces in this issue it is because they are being saved for the next one.

You will notice that we have created a new look for the newsletter. Joe Spooner [576,70], a thriving graphic artist in Portland, Oregon (Website: joespooner.com) contacted me and offered some ideas and help in designing the new front page. Thanks Joe. We really appreciate your help. Nick Evanish created the original cover when he first started the newsletter about ten years ago.

Pay your dues, visit the web site, recruit a new member and bring him to the next reunion. Send an article to your editor. And put Charleston on your calendar for November. Hope to see you all in Charleston in November.

*Dave Hutchens, Editor*



## LIFE IN THE SQUADRON

*Jerry Presley, [483, 68]*

I arrived in Cam Ranh Bay Vietnam on Oct 17 1968. As I stepped off the 707 that had been my home for the previous 20 hrs with the other 130 "FNGs" that flew over with me, the first thing I noticed was the heat. The smell of the jet exhaust fumes mixed with the fishy smell of an ocean breeze and maybe a little mildew and burning crap mixed in was the next thing to get my attention. It was definitely a unique smell that I had never experienced before or after!

There were two distinct lines as we entered the terminal to begin processing in country. One was composed of the guys coming in and the other was the short-timers on their way "back to the world". I'll let you guess which line was the happiest!

After we had collected our duffel bags and completed what processing was required at the terminal, we were told to make ourselves comfortable until some transportation could be found to get us to the other side of the base where my squadron was located. By this time it was close to midnight and the only thought I had was "How the hell are you supposed to be comfortable in a situation like this?"

After an hour or so of waiting around the terminal and doing what processing we had to do there, a Captain that had been on the flight over with me came over and said he had commandeered a 1 1/2 ton flatbed truck and driver that was going to our side of the base. He said that he could take some of us along if we wanted to go with him and drop us off at the transit quarters. I was getting tired of watching people go home so I grabbed my bag and fell in with him along with ten or twelve other guys. During the ride to our side of the base I was amazed at the amount of sand that was everywhere. I also remem-

ber the slap-flares going off in the sky and occasional burst of small arms fire. I thought to myself "Presley, what the hell have you gotten yourself into this time?" I could just imagine all kinds of scenarios that could happen such as some crazy VC shooting up the truck we were on or shooting rockets at us. I was ready to get somewhere and light for a while.

We finally got to the transit quarters and unloaded our baggage and ourselves. The good Captain stayed around until we were all issued a sheet and pillow, without a pillowcase, and assigned a bunk, then he headed off to wherever it was that officers went when they got there. The previous occupant of my bunk had to have been a plow mule judging from the smell and nasty condition of the mattress. I never knew what his name was but Captain, if you're reading this, thanks for caring enough to take care of us enlisted troops that rode over with you.

After a few hours of trying to sleep, morning finally came and it was time to try to get to the squadron. I climbed back into the 1505s that I had been wearing for three days, put the ole cunt cap back on, grabbed my duffel bag and headed for CBPO to clear in and get to my squadron. The first thing I remember seeing were the Vietnamese workers in their black pajamas and conical shaped hats walking around the base. After another few hrs of clearing in, the squadron sent the clerk over in a jeep to pick me up. Home at last! I was ready to get squared away and get some well-earned shut-eye.

"Home" turned out to be a plywood shack about 20x40 ft with a slate type roof and louvered vents about the top 3 feet of each side. I wasn't expecting the Hilton but this little guy was about as close to being a dump as I had ever had the privilege to live in! Each hooch housed from 4 to 6 men and gave each troop

just enough room for a metal GI bed and a locker or two for a divider between you and the guy in the next bunk. There was about 18 or 20 inches between your bed and the lockers. (Just enough room for you, a couple of Terrier sized rats and about 16 million cock roaches) Most hooches had a small refrigerator and a hot plate of some sort that we all shared. When no hot plate was available, we used cans of sterno to heat up our groceries. (A hooch fire waiting to happen.) Each hooch had a maid that kept the place swept out, did the laundry and picked up the empty beer cans for a nominal fee from each of the occupants.

The latrine was a scene right out of a Ma and PA Kettle movie! It was another plywood building on a smaller scale with six or eight holes with cut off 55 gal drums to catch what my grandson calls the "poopoo and peepee" in. Now, I'm the grandson of an Oklahoma sharecropper and I know my way around an outhouse, but this bad boy made those one-holers I was used to smell like a breath of fresh air! A place you didn't linger around in very long at all.

The showers were one temperature, cold tap water. They were also made of plywood and had maybe 8 or 10 showerheads in each building. I could handle the cold water but it took me a while to get used to Mama San coming in and doing her laundry in the shower next to you. I was a pretty open-minded guy back then but I didn't like the idea of an audience while I was in the shower! After a few months in country, you could shower and not even know she was around! The latrine and shower was replaced in early 1969 with a modern facility. Then you had the added problem of Mama San mopping between your feet while you were sitting on the throne! What a war!

At that time we were confined to

Squadron from page 21

the base. Except for "civic action and humanitarian activities" (none of which I was ever aware of while I was there) we were restricted to the base. The reason they gave us in our incoming briefing was to prevent inflation of the local economy and black market activities. I always thought the real reason might have been the equation: (*Young Airman + Young Cyclo Girl*=1 *Case of Brand X*). Some of the guys found ways to "sneak off" to the village at night but I was a little leery of that. I could see me ending up as some K-9's midnight chow or some trigger-happy AP or Augmentee using me for target practice. I opted to confine my Cyclo Girl/Saigon Tea activities to my occasional sabbatical to Vung Tau for a few days to visit my old roommate from the states. (That's another story in itself.) The base had an outstanding Airmen's club for the enlisted men across the street from the BX. Other than for the riot in early 1969, I had a lot of good times with my friends there. There was usually a Philippine band there and plenty of beer to drink. There were also slot machines you could spend your \$200.00 a month paycheck on if you wanted to. Occasionally they had burgers or steaks there to break the monotony of chow hall food. Usually, after a hard night of partying, we would change into our work clothes, get a midnight chow pass from the CQ and head for the chow hall for SOS and eggs before turning in. Not a bad setup.

The South China Sea beach was just a short distance from the squadron area and was one of the main sites of entertainment. It was one of the most beautiful beaches I have ever seen. I went there a few times but I didn't care much for saltwater swimming. I had heard all kinds of stories of the different types of "sea critters" that were swimming around out there, i.e. jellyfish, sharks, stingrays and deadly eels, so I didn't tempt

fate. Some of the guys from California would body surf on the waves.

There was an outside theater across from the consolidated chow hall that showed the latest releases. I remember watching *Coogan's Bluff* and *Midnight Cowboy* there. That was quite an experience watching a movie with slap-flares floating down around the perimeters of the base and APCs running up and down the road to the beach. Whenever the villain would appear on the screen he would usually get bombarded with empty beer and soda cans filled with sand until the projectionist would threaten to stop the film!

At that time reel type tape recorders were popular with the troops. We could get the latest and greatest Sansui recorders at the BX for a very reasonable price. The guy in the hooch next to me had every Hank Williams Senior song he ever recorded on his and loved to play them just about the time I wanted to go to sleep. The drunker he got the louder he played it. He was the prototype for the phrase "Boom Box". By the time he left there I knew all the words to "Poor old Kawliga" "Move it on Over" "Lovesick Blues" and "Your Cheatin' Heart". Hell, sometimes I wished we would have a rocket attack to get him to shut that stuff off! I wasn't into electronics at that time so I never bought a recorder.

Other entertainment consisted of a library, a nice photo lab, where you could develop film, a Bank of America across from the Airman's club, Donut Dollies (off limits to enlisted swine) on the flight line giving out cookies and Kool Aid and a base chapel to serve the troops' religious needs.

We had a nice consolidated chow hall operated by the 12<sup>th</sup> TFW (the F-4 guys). The food wasn't Steak and Ale but it was plentiful and not bad at all to me. They had great SOS, real milk, pancakes and good wholesome

meals. I think the mess Sgt did a great job the year I was there.

The ultimate form of entertainment was the R&R that was awarded to each troop after he had been in country long enough. Most of the married guys would meet their wife in Hawaii. The single guys would usually go to Australia. After six to eight months it was the best place to see some "Round Eyed Women". I was saving my money to get married to my "First Ex Wife" when I went home, so I didn't take an R&R. (The way things turned out later, I would have been better off to have taken the R&R and forgotten about getting married) I had to be content at listening to the exploits and looking at the pictures of my friends that did get to go there.

The main thing that kept us all going was the mail from home. We spent a lot of time reading our mail and writing letters to our friends and loved ones. A letter or Care Package from home would always make a guy's day a little more bearable. We would always check our mail after we came from our noon meal at the chow hall. It was always nice to see that envelope with the familiar handwriting or the pleasant smell of the perfume the wives or girlfriends had splashed on it. Mail from home did a lot to offset the loneliness, long working hours and pressures of war to a young airman.

Aside from the "fun things" to do that have been previously mentioned, a lot of time was taken up by details, KP, squadron detail, Augmentee training, CQ, and sand bag filling to mention a few. I guess the old saying that "enlisted men are extremely sly and cunning and bear considerable watching" was true in The Nam and the details were a good way to keep us off the streets and out of trouble.

Was CRB the best place to be in Vietnam? To me, as I see it now as an old fart, it was the best place I



could have been in the war. I wouldn't trade my experience there as a 20 year old troop for anything.

*( Stories such as this one by Jerry Presley bring back the real, everyday experiences of life in CRB, or for that matter, Vietnam. When the USAF Caribou history is finally written, these kinds of articles will describe much of the fabric of life during those years. Jerry, we will be waiting for your next edition of "Visiting you old roommate". I Can hardly wait. Ed.)*

## Francis R. (Dick) Scobee

Lt. Col., USAF

*As I am putting the finishing touches on this issue of the newsletter the tragic news broke about the lose of the Columbia space shuttle and her crew of seven - a gut-wrenching loss for our country and our world, already staggered by tragedy. It is time to remember one of our own, Dick Scobee, Caribou driver, AC of the Challenger shuttle that was lost on January 28, 1986. The following is a short excerpt of a biography of Dick Scobee [535, 68].*

Dick Scobee was born on May 19, 1939 in Cle Elum, Washington. He enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1957. He trained as a reciprocating engine mechanic and was subsequently stationed at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas. He attended night school there and acquired 2 years of college credit which led to his selection for the Airman's Education and Commissioning Program.

Scobee graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aerospace Engineering in 1965. He received his commission in 1965 and, after receiving his wings in 1966, completed a number of flying assignments including a combat tour in Vietnam with the 535<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Squadron at Vung Tau where he was also the Flight Safety Officer. He excelled in all his duties, especially at flying the C-7A "Caribou." During his tour he was awarded several medals, including the Air Medal.

Dick returned to the United States and attended the USAF Aerospace Research Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base, California, and graduated in 1972. As an Air Force test pilot Scobee flew more than 45 types of aircraft, logging more than 6,500 hours of flight time.

He was selected as an astronaut candidate by NASA in January 1978. On his first Space Shuttle mission, Scobee was pilot of STS 41-C. With the completion of this flight on April 13, 1984, Dick had logged a total of 168 hours in space. In 1984, NASA honored him with the Space Flight medal and two Distinguished Service awards.

The Challenger shuttle crew, of seven astronauts — including the specialties of pilot, aerospace engineers, scientists, and a teacher — died tragically in the explosion of their spacecraft during the launch of STS-51-L from the Kennedy Space Center about 11:40 a.m., EST, on January 28, 1986. The explosion occurred 73 seconds

into the flight as a result of a leak in one of two Solid Rocket Boosters that ignited the main liquid fuel tank. The crewmembers of the Challenger represented a cross-section of the American population in terms of race, gender, geography, background, and religion. The explosion became one of the most significant events of the 1980s, as billions around the world saw the accident on television and empathized with any one of the several crewmembers killed.

***"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the devotions, and spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither defeat nor victory."***

***THEODORE ROOSEVELT***

## Preserved DeHavilland C-7 Caribou

C7	57-03079	Sep 95	Fort Eustis (VA)
C7	57-03080	Mar 95	Fort Rucker (AL)
C7A	57-03082	Oct 99	Linear Air Park Dyess AFB (TX)
C7	57-03083	Jul 98	Fort Bragg(NC), 82nd AB Div War Memorial
C7	60-03767	Oct 94	Travis AFB (CA)
C7	62-04149	Mar 94	Army Aviation Heritage Foundation, Hampton (GA)
C7	62-04188	Oct 95	New England Air Museum
C7A	62-04193	Jun 95	Wright Patterson AFB (OH)
C7B	63-09756	Mar 96	Robins AFB (GA)
C7	63-09757	Jul 94	Hill AFB (UT) Museum
C7	63-09758	Nov 87	Pima County Museum (AZ)
C-7A	63-09760	Jan 01	Air Mobility Command Museum Dover AFB (DE)
C7	63-09765		Edwards AFB (CA)

The above C-7's can be viewed at the following Web Site:<http://www.coastcomp.com/av/pres/presc2.htm>

### How Well Do You Remember...?

Base	Squadron	Tail Markings	Color	Call Sign
Vung Tau	535th	KH	Green	Tong
	536th	KL	Yellow	Iris
(Note: 535 <sup>th</sup> & 536 <sup>th</sup> moved to Cam Ranh in 1970)				
Cam Ranh	457th	KA	Blue	Cuddy
	458rd	KC	Red	Law
Phu Cat	537th	KN	Orange	Soul
	459th	KE	White	Ellis
Da Nang	459 <sup>th</sup> Detachment			Adams
834 <sup>th</sup> AD command post in Saigon				Hilda
Bien Hoa	ALCE	"Rocket Alley ALCE"		
Cam Ranh	ALCE	"Sandbox ALCE"		

**Following are the names of our 28 first timers. Note that 16 of them are from the 537th. We hope that this reunion is just your first of many more to follow.**

Bill C. Berta [537, 68], Kirk Bridgman [483, 66], John Craig [457, 66], Steve Donovan [537, 69], Dan Drescher [457, 70], Tom Gaston [535, 67], Bruce Gerrity [459, 69], Robert Goebel [537, 69], William Grant [537, 68], Robert Hamrin [536, 69], Ted Hanchett [537, 67], George Harmon [537, 68], Felton Havins [537, 68], Jim Kelso [537, 70], Dave Kowalski [---, 75], Steve Lentz [458, 68], Terry Obermiller [537, 68], Jerry Presley [483, 68], Billy Quinn [537, 69], Allen Rodda [537, 69], Rudy Schwartz [536, 71], Michael Seideman [483,66] Jerry Smolinski [537, 69], Robert Strang [537, 69] Charles Taylor [537, 69], Don Tippetts [535, 67] Charlie Tost [537, 68], Clyde Wilson [537, 69]

### VITAL STATISTICS: February 2003

**Check your vital statistics and mail label to insure that the information is correct. Send changes to:**

C-7A Caribou Association  
 Attn: Jim Collier  
 5607 Jolly Ct.  
 Fair Oaks, CA 95628-2707



TAX YEAR	SQUADRON	ARRIVAL YR.	RANK	AREA CODE	TELEPHONE
LAST NAME			FIRST NAME	MIDDLE INITIAL	
STREET ADDRESS					
CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE PLUS 4	E-MAIL ADDRESS		

February 2003



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