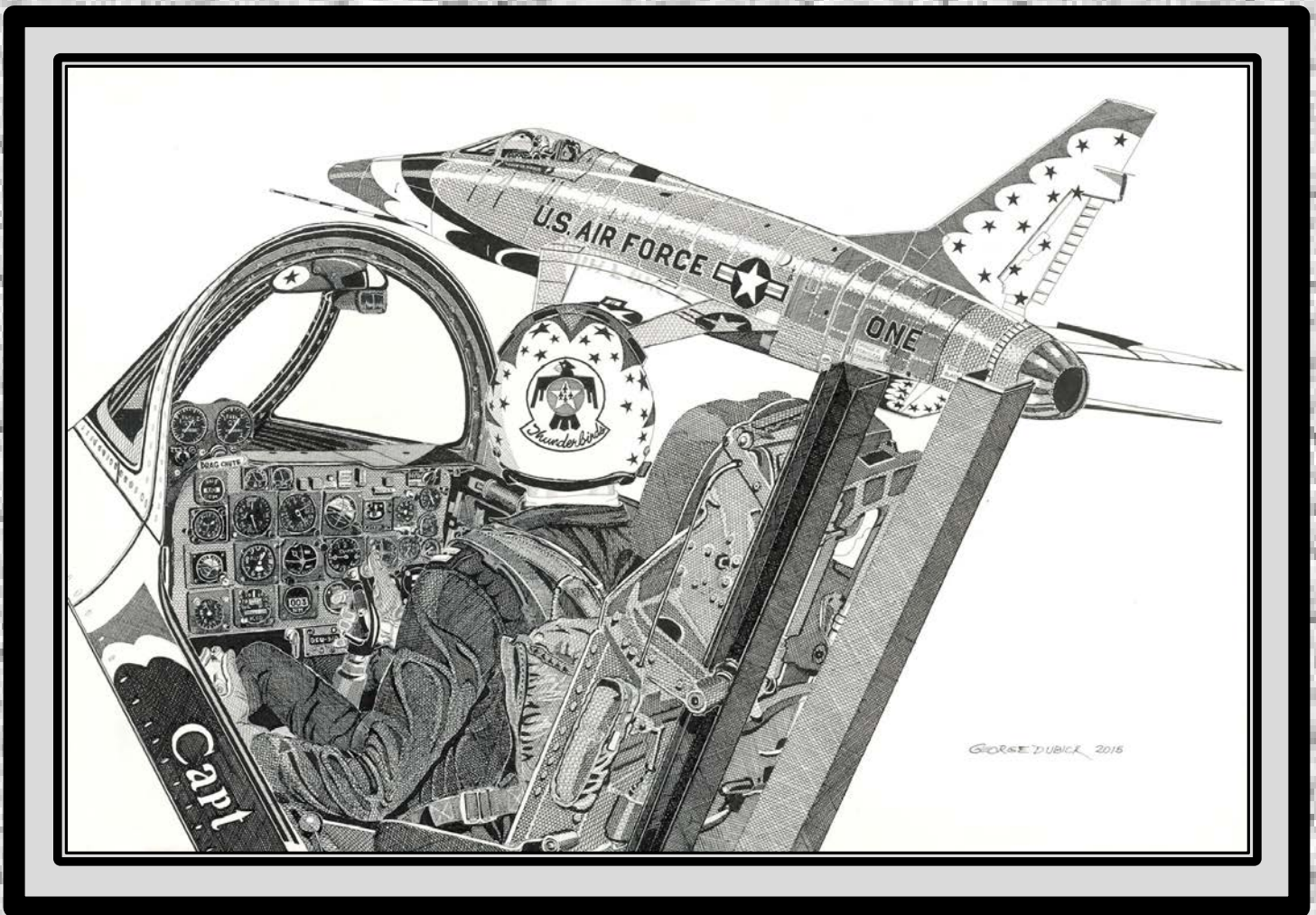


# *The Intake*

Journal of the Super Sabre Society  
Published Thrice a Year: March, July and November



— “Hun Fine Art Collection” —

George Dubick’s Pen & Ink “Thunderbird Joinup” (Credits, page 2.)

“A Fighter Pilot Decides to Earn Army Jump Wings” (Article by Mark Berent, page 8.)

POW’s Wife Sandy Gruters’ Story: “Now it Begins ... .” (Featured article, page 16.)

# The Intake

Fall 2016, Vol. 2, Issue 32

JOURNAL OF THE SUPER SABRE SOCIETY

- 3 Staff Corner: Pres. & Editor
- 4 Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence
- 6 Stake Your Claim (SYC) Dept.
- 7 NAA F-100 Publicity Document
- 8 A Fighter Pilot Decides to Earn Army Jump Wings, By Mark Berent
- 10 Lost Over the Atlantic, By Carl Schneider *NORDO and no Nav aids!*
- 12 Saving the Tong Le Chon Special Forces Camp: Another Part of the Story, By John J. Schulz
- 14 More About Front Cover Artist, SSSer/Hun Pilot George Dubick
- 16 Sandy's Story: "Now It Begins ... ," By Sandy Gruters
- 19 What Goes Up Must Come Down, By Jim Icenhour
- 20 The Way We Were, By Shaun Ryan  
*Popular Center Spread Dept.*
- 22 Peterson's Garden of Memories, By Charles "Pete" Peterson
- 25 The Hits Kept Coming ... , By Vito Tomasino
- 30 My Two Shortest Flights: A Tragedy and a Crop-dusting Show, By Gary Tomkins
- 32 Don Shepperd's F-100 Dedication Speech
- 34 Looking Back, By Joe Breen
- 35 Super Sabre Snapshots ... .
- 36 Final Approach, By Gordon Lamb
- 38 DFC Society: Worth Looking Into, By J. Bruce Huffman
- 39 Laughter-Silvered Wings & More  
*SSS Contacts, Dues Due, Back Cover Credits/Notes, Closing Remarks*



We asked the Artist, SSSer/Hun Pilot George Dubick, to "succinctly" describe for us his inspiration/motivation for this abstract and worthy piece of Pen & Ink aviation art.

"Joinup...a word that embraces a whirlwind combination of mass, motion, energy, perception, body, mind, heart and spirit, fully committed.

"This winged steed, yielding to almost imperceptible control pressures by gloved hands, flight boots and minute thrust adjustments, answering the call for precision alignment position on Lead. Focus, Anticipate, Faith, Trust, Unified. We fly as One." — *G. Dubick*

A good Twitter-like work, George! Learn more about this talented SSS artist and how he qualified for the SSS on page 14.

## **LAST CHANCE !!!**

***If your DUES STATUS (printed on the envelope this came in) is "2016 DUES NOT PAID," your membership BENEFITS will be SUSPENDED and this is the very last issue of THE INTAKE you will receive until you get paid up!! See page 39.***

***If you're not sure of your dues status, take action to find out! Contact: CFO (David Hatten) at email, [david@housofhatten.com](mailto:david@housofhatten.com) /phone (512) 261-5071, or***

***Membership (Dewey Clawson) at [deweyclawson@hotmail.com](mailto:deweyclawson@hotmail.com) / phone (724) 336-4273.***

Founder — Les Frazier



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## Staff Corner

## From the President's Desk

The 2016 SSS Board of Directors Election ended on 31 October. The preliminary results, as of press time, were: Of 733 votes cast for Vice President, 508 for Eddie Bracken and 225 for Les Frazier (69% vs. 31%). And, of 683 votes cast for Director-at-Large, 368 for Dick Pietro and 315 for Dave Mosby (54% vs. 46 %). Hearty congratulations go out to our elected Board members. There is an official “certification process” by the Election Committee that occurs after *Intake* press time. Any final changes in vote count will be recorded and provided by email. Thanks to all who voted. And thanks to those who took the time to run, for their interest in the Super Sabre Society and for their willingness to serve if elected. There is some heavy lifting by your Board and Officers that goes unseen and unappreciated. All of us elected Board members hope to be worthy of your votes and confidence.

The next big event for the SSS is our 6<sup>th</sup> biennial reunion coming up 25-28 April 2017. We'll be back at the Gold Coast Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas and are expecting a fairly large turn-out once again. We have lots of interesting, new activities worthy of your attendance; however, the main attraction is—THE GUYS—those with whom we flew, fought, drank, cussed laughed and traveled all over the world in good weather and bad, day and night, in one of the world's GREATEST fighters. Please plan to join the crowd for one really good time. The F-86 Sabre Pilots Assoc. is holding its “last” reunion just prior to ours, then will stand down. Time marches on and none of us are getting any younger. So, let's enjoy being together again—while we can!

For details and procedures, please see first the Reunion Reservations article on page 11, and then the separate, four-page “UNCLASIFIED ‘Need to Know’ Booklet” you'll find enclosed in the envelope that brought you this issue of *The Intake*. It tells how to make room reservations, explains the various reunion events and includes a registration form for cost info and advanced planning. DON'T WAIT! Get your rooms early and select the tours/activities that interest you.

Behind the scenes, much is going on that will be reported at the reunion membership meeting: plans to capture our legacies for the long run (where, how and when); ideas for a monument; plans for a book; ideas for a DVD; a report on the Friends of the Super Sabre; report on the MAPS museum displays; plans for a Keith Ferris F-100 painting; latest status of *The Intake*; Website update and future plans; recording missing biographies; and video interviews.

Remember Friday night fighter pilot Beer Calls at the O' Club? Well, this reunion will be a microcosm of the old days—starting with a flight suit party, music, tasty food, videos and a new “Toasting Cabinet,” we'll kick off a gala three-day event. We'll visit the new Air Force, new kids with new machines—the times they are a-changin'. We'll get a great view of the new ways of war and the kids who are creating an Air Force that can do what we always wanted to do—find and hit targets day and night in all kinds of weather—YA'LL COME! — *Shep*

## From the Editor

As you wend your way through this 32<sup>nd</sup> issue of *The Intake*, you will find a number of somewhat unusual items, including a cartoon and also the second installment of a “caption contest” that we hope to make a small but permanent part of our journal. That said, perhaps unique among new editors, I have no desire to “put my stamp on the product” or change the general tenor and tone of things in any way. Why mess with perfection?

Moving on, I want to alert you to an idea that requires your input. I'm planning to do a four-part series on the impact of the '68 Tet Offensive at the four “in country” F-100 bases during that historic and impactful time. The idea came from a series of emails that circulated among members of the 90<sup>th</sup> TFS “Dice” who were at Bien Hoa when Tet erupted. While contributions will only be from a relatively small percentage of all Hun Drivers on active duty at that time, Tet—and our collective participation in it during those halcyon days—was of great significance in the “history of the Hun and the men who flew her.” Certainly it was historic, and there was plenty of heroism and humor worth preserving from that really busy time.

The series will focus on one base at a time, and I envision that the anecdotes, adventures and recollections will come to me as emails, which will be blended into a “tapestry” of stories about what went on at each base. I'll want an “author” picture to insert with each item. *See most any member article for examples. TWWW pics=Good!*

The squadrons at Bien Hoa will kick off the series. Photographs of significant aspects of Tet are welcome (I can still picture the stack of NVA bodies, 10 or more high, about 20 bodies across, placed beside a revetment wall in those first terrible hours). So, “h-e-l-p”! Please start doing some thinking and writing, and send me the “product.” I have a place for items from each base.

Please note that despite this “Tet series” initiative, we are still blessed with a backlog of articles that date back several years, and the plan is to continue to pull as many as possible from that grab bag, with “first in, first out” being the guiding principle. As is evident in this issue, certain “current events” and important news items must be included in new issues, and the Reunion news, and the loss of Bob Hoover are examples. I saw Bob do a Hun “demo” at the “Heath” circa 1970; we all concluded (humbly) that we were the “world's *second* greatest fighter pilots!” We're all gonna miss this aviation legend! — *“JJ” Schulz*

## Incoming/Outgoing — Correspondence

Here are several items of interest received from members or other sources since Issue 31 hit the streets. Here we also publish other pertinent information we consider worthy of note. As always, we welcome comments, additions and especially corrections (heaven forefend that we ever need correcting!).

As most SSS Members know (and as mentioned in several places in Issue 31), we are in a transition period from Medley Gatewood as Editor to yours truly, John “JJ” Schulz, as a newbie Editor. Apparently, some of our readers didn’t get the message, because Incoming email and snail mail since the last issue was split, about 50-50, between the two of us. That’s understandable. But as time marches on, Medley and I hope the Mail/Email/Phone Calls to the Editor will tilt more to me. That said, as a reminder, please see the SSS & The Intake Functional Contacts Dept. on the last inside page of each issue for my email, phone number and snail mail address.

Medley, of course, still welcomes Incoming mail of a personal nature, but will pass purely Editor stuff (for sure the complaints) on to me. So, here’s my solo “go” at this Dept., a blend of some things sent to me and some to Medley. **Ed.**



### General Comments on Issue 31

As expected, we received nothing but positive comments on the overall content, professional construction and likability of Issue 31. And there were many of what I’d call the “Hail and Farewell Party” pattern of kudos and expectations from this transition period. Here’s a good example sent to Medley of what we’re talking about: “You have done a remarkable job as editor and publisher of The Intake, and along with many SSS members, I salute you and thank you! This is a first class publication and has been since the first edition. The new editor has a tremendous challenge—your shoes to fill.” — **Bud Stoddard** (recently RIP). And another, similar one to Medley posted on the Hoz-List Blog (forwarded to Medley by Dewey Clawson): “Sad to see Medley hang it up! [He’s] always done an outstanding job. JJ has a tough row to hoe, following Medley down that path. Many thanks to all involved in the publishing of our proud journal.” — **Roy Moore**

And so it went. I’m aiming at seeing similar judgements by the time I get the hang of this job, and that’ll be soon!



### Specific Comments on Issue 31

► **Omissions & Corrections:** **Dick Pietro** passed on the ID of the person who sent the outstanding front cover picture to our Photo Editor, Shaun Ryan. It turned out to be SSS Charter Member **Mike McLean** of the 174<sup>th</sup> TFS. Thanks to Mike and Dick for passing that missing credit on. There were three other SNAFUs we’ve learned about, but in the email shuffles between Medley and me, we’ve misplaced the finders who submitted these. In the TWWW Dept. on page 20 we had the first name of the first Hero Pic wrong: It says “Ken” when it should be Kent. In the David Baker article on Pages 30-33, it mentions John Boyd’s first name twice; sure ‘nough, none of our steely-eyed Editors or Proofreaders picked up the fact we had it as “James” both times. Sorry about that. Humm, now we can’t seem to find that third SNAFU. Will keep looking.

► Several folks sent kudos for the FSS Website “tutorial” on page 5. First was **Michael Dean**, CEO of the FSS: “Thank you for bringing to light (to the SSS membership) the great job Bob Weston is doing for the FSS website in issue #31 of The Intake. This is clearly a pro-active position you have taken for the FSS’s benefit and we’re very appreciative of your support. We hope to have more material for you to consider for issue #32. Keep you posted in the near term. As always, the job you, John, and the staff are doing continues to outpace previous issues and expectations. Great work!” — **Mike**  
FSS CIO and Webmaster **Bob Weston** followed up with this: “I received my Intake yesterday. Another great issue! How do you and the Intake staff keep climbing the ladder of greatness? Thanks for the section on the FSS website and Huns on Display. Wonderful write-up and it will give the FSS much more exposure.” — **Bob**

► Then came Assoc. Member and Aviation Artist **David Tipps**, who lives in the north woods of his native NM. He liked several articles: “Hey, have really enjoyed the latest INTAKE. I especially liked the story by Greg Butler. LOL at the name of the imaginary Lt. Budabushcheck. In the future, I think I’ll do a tri-media work of a 474<sup>th</sup> TFW F-100D with that name on the canopy rail. I’ll bet I can come up with some nose art (sorta like *Pretty Penny*) for his wife, ‘Passion.’ Also think I can find out who the drama professor at Eastern was, as my Dad was a sociology professor there for many years. Will have to research it. Cannon has always been special to me and I have plans (among many) to do pictures of all the 27<sup>th</sup> TFW. Growing up listening to the distant thunder of F-100s coming back from the Melrose bombing range was always a joy.

Also enjoyed the heart-warming story by David Baker, but had to laugh at the picture of Capt. Tony McPeak’s canopy on the desert floor. I was in college at Eastern when that incident occurred and I read about it in Martin Caiden’s book *Thunderbirds* when he flew along with the team as a writer and wrote about it. Month’s afterwards, I found Tony’s canopy at a junkyard in Portales and STILL kick myself for not buying it. I think they wanted something like \$200 at the time, which was a lot of money back then for a college kid. Lastly, I was enamored by Don Emigholz’s article. I already have plans to do an F-100C with Skyblazer markings, so I can do a diamond picture much like I did with the F-80Cs the original team flew. I agree that the *Intake* is the best association journal in the world. Great job!” — **Dave** We eagerly await all!

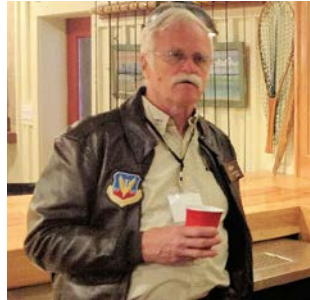


### Smithsonian Wall of Honor SSS Airfoil

Since starting this project in 2009, we've been trying to fill our airfoil with the 1,007-names it can handle. By the time we made a small pitch about this project on page 10 of Issue 30, member participation had dried to a tiny trickle.

That small plug for getting more member participation in this stalled-out project may have been the stimulus for Dewey Clawson to come up with a campaign plan to fill the vacant 100 or so Honoree name spaces with eligible members. Suffice to say that Dewey's plan was simple (four or five volunteers calling the 400-600 eligible members)—and it worked! On 22 August 2016, Dewey sent out an email that reported "Mission Accomplished." Here's his text:

"Gentlemen. Our Airfoil at the Smithsonian Wall of Honor is now full.



Dewey at ease.

Mission Accomplished!

We have all 1,007 names signed up and paid for, and the last spot, #1,008, will be the dedication date. Thanks go out to Hoppy, Medley, Leo Mansuetti, and Fred Abrams for calling a lot of our guys and signing them up. I know they were sitting around home with nothing better to do than call strangers and make new friends and tell and listen to a bunch of war stories. THANK YOU!!!" — Dewey

And thanks to Dewey for a job finally (and well) done. Now we just need to start another campaign to educate the Honorees about the Wall of Honor's database of not only their names on the airfoil, but the opportunity to submit a "Profile" (a short bio and picture) for themselves or other honorees they may have sponsored. Ah, but that's a project for another time, and we'll

publish it separately when the time is right.



Dedication of the SSS Airfoil at the Smithsonian Wall of Honor on 8/9/2014. Now the project is finished, thanks to Dewey and friends.



### Member Contact Data Availability

On page 32 of Issue 30 we put out the word that we need any copies of Issue Two that members may have to spare, because our extra copies of that particular edition was down to ONE, and we'd like to get a few more, while they may still be available. It must have been a poorly written article 'cause we'd only received two copies since the request went out.

Now comes a third copy that Ken Ramsay came up with at the MAPS Air Museum in a stash of memorabilia stuff collected by the FSS. He let Medley know about it. Medley told Ken to send it to him and Ken "rogered" the deal. In good time, Ken emailed back with a request for Medley's mailing address. Ken put it this way: "I have INTAKE Issue 2 ready to mail to you, but I can't find your address anywhere. Please send."

Puzzled, Medley replied thusly: "Medley Gatewood, 622 Stagecoach Rd. SE, Albuquerque, NM 87123. If you log in to the Members Area (little rectangle in upper right of the website's Home Page), you can access the Member Roster with your email and personal password and get personal contact data for all members of the SSS. If you haven't selected a personal Password yet, let me know what you'd like to have and I'll set it up for you. Thanks, Medley" It's now on its way.

Case closed. Maybe not. How many other SSS Members don't think about using our Member Roster when they want to contact/communicate with fellow members? I'll bet it's a high percentage. So, keep that resource in mind, and IF YOU DON'T have a personal password, get one soon. You'll be glad you did! If you have problems navigating to do that on our website at [www.supersabresociety.com](http://www.supersabresociety.com), contact our CIO, Win Reither at [winreither@gmail.com](mailto:winreither@gmail.com) or in FL at 904-254-1892, or, our Membership Committee Chair, Dewey Clawson, at [deweyclawson@hotmail.com](mailto:deweyclawson@hotmail.com) or in PA at 724-624-4302. They'll be glad to walk you through the Password process, or set you up with one if all else fails.

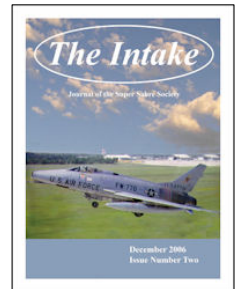


### Archived Collection of Our Journal, The Intake



Speaking of things accessible in the secure "Members Area" of our website, we'd like to remind members that full PDF copies of all published issues of The Intake are available for members to read—if you have your personal password! (If you don't have one, see above item.) We've recently learned that some members have forgotten, or in some instances, never known of this valuable perk of membership.

This is especially useful for NEW MEMBERS who have never seen any of those issues published prior to their join-up, whenever that may have been. So, if you're in that category, it's time to take advantage of this perk. You've got a lot of wonderful eye-candy-quality past issues just waiting for your attention! Enjoy your reads! Ed. ■



Still looking for more copies of Issue Two!

## And The Beat Goes On ... And On

### Stake Your Claim (SYC)

By **Jim Brasier** [Jim's contacts: [f100sabre@cox.net](mailto:f100sabre@cox.net), (602) 757-2636]

We have only four submissions for this edition of the SYC "game"—one challenge and three new. Read on.

**Claim Challenges** — ► **Phil Drew**, after a review of his AF Form 5, claims he, not **Joe Breen** (I-17), is the youngest pilot to fly the F-100 as a student. Phil was born 11 December 1939 and first slipped the surly bonds in an F-100 on 23 August 1960. That data adds up to be 20 years, 8 months and 12 days from birth to one of the most "accelerating" experiences in his life. Joe's age was 20 years, 11 months and 21 days. It was close, but Phil's claim trumps Joe's claim, so the coveted title of "**Youngest pilot to fly the Hun (as a student) = 20y, 8m, 12d,**" is now held by **Phil**. Sorry 'bout that Joe. But that's the way the SYC game goes.

**New Claims** — ► **Vern "Mouse" Nordman** says he has pulled the most positive "Gs" (+10) and negative "Gs" (-4) on the same Hun flight. Say what? Good grief—that's higher than the max Gs in either direction (+7.33 and -3 for clean birds)! Vern further says that **Phil Drew** was a flight member that day, and can vouch for the facts of his claim. [What a **coinkydink**, as Jack Doub would put it—**Phil** showing up in his own SYC (above) and another SYC (Vern's) in the same *Intake Issue*.]

On its face, Vern's SYC seemed unbelievable, but after reading his fascinating story (which involved an "intermittent artificial feel system" malfunction), we're going to award him the valid claim title of "**Highest recorded positive and negative Gs pulled in a HUN on the same flight (with a control system malfunction) = +10, -4**" You can read Vern's full story behind his claim on page 29. It's a doozy!

► **Harry Brown #1**: First of two SYCs, both while in the 612<sup>th</sup> TFS at Phan Rang in FEB, 1971, Harry claims he was the youngest Hun Driver to get checked out as a F-100 IP in a combat zone. This is a new SYC category, and we hereby award him the valid title of "**Youngest to get a unit F-100 IP checkout in a combat zone = 29y 6m.**"

► **Harry Brown #2**: Harry's second SYC is that he was the youngest Hun Driver to become a squadron Flight Commander in a combat zone. This also happened in the 612<sup>th</sup> a few days after the IP checkout. This claim, too, is a new SYC category, and we hereby award Harry the valid title of "**Youngest to become an F-100 squadron Flight Commander in a combat zone = 29y, 6m.**"

**Parting Thoughts** — ► "Facts is facts," and we don't quibble over Harry's facts in his two new SYCs. But given the time span that Huns were in the Vietnam War combat zones, and with one-year tours for pilots, we expect challenges to both of them. After all, that's the aim of the game in the Stake Your Claim Dept., isn't it? Let's see what turns up. **JB** ▣

### "Hun History in Cloth Collection" Rises Again

#### A Situation Report (SITREP) By R. Medley Gatewood

One of the most striking features on the Home Page of the Original SSS Website, to many members at least, was what we called "The Hun History in Cloth and Group Photos Collection." Unfortunately, it's been mostly MIA since we began a major up-grade of our website (back in early 2014) because of conflicting priorities in the design and construction phases of the two follow-on SSS Website improvement efforts. I am pleased to now report that we're again on the road to rebuilding that original collection of *Unit Patches & Other F-100 Associated Imagery*—and then taking it on to higher levels of utility.



Jack Paddock

This rescue from MIA status was made possible by two very talented individuals. First is our new/current Webmaster, Jack Paddock, and second is Associate Member David "Randy" Troutman whom we might call "the Owner" of our World Class Patch Collection and who has become a volunteer Administrator of this to-be Major Section of our rapidly improving website in its third incarnation.



Randy Troutman

After Jack set up the framework for this reconstituted area and trained Randy in his Admin duties, Randy, who had previously "redone" the patch collection, has worked through the placement of the new patches in a hierarchical order similar to that of the original, but including additional historical data about the many Hun Units (particular the upper level units), with plans to add historical data at the squadron levels, and eventually add historical pictures when and where appropriate.



Old 20<sup>th</sup> TFW



New 20<sup>th</sup> TFW

Stand by for periodic updates from Randy about this continuing "rehabilitation" project. Meanwhile, take a good look at the comparisons of quality between examples of original and "redone" patches. Man, that's progress!

Thanks to Jack & Randy (and CIO Win Reither).

**Pub Med** ▣



Old 79<sup>th</sup> TFS

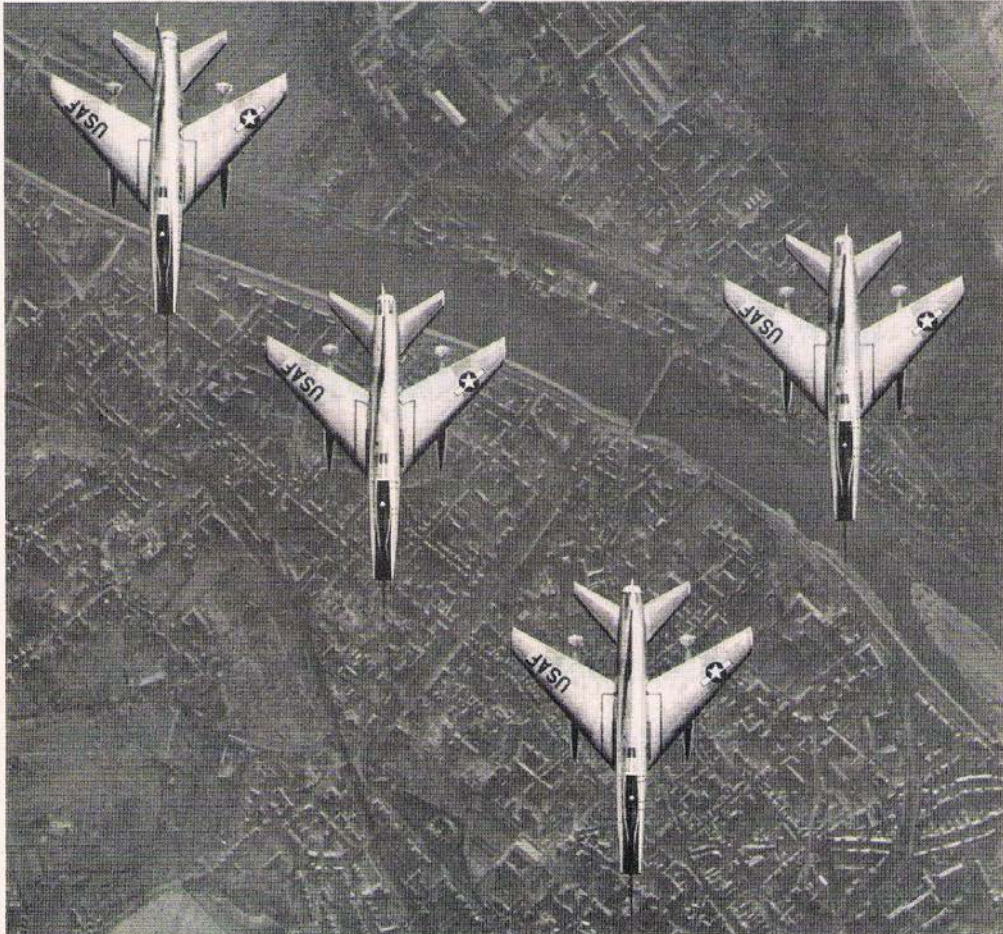


New 79<sup>th</sup> TFS

## North American Aviation's F-100 Publicity Document Circa Mid-to- Late 1950s

Pete Davitto sent in two North American Aviation Hun publicity articles in the early days of our journal. We published the first in Issue Four, and recently re-discovered the second he sent in on 9/4/07. The text of Pete's second email submission was: "Gentlemen, I found the attached 'Mach On The Rhine' on eBay and I was lucky to be the successful bidder. Please consider it for a future issue of The Intake." Sorry for the delay, Pete. The article speaks for itself. **Ed.**

NORTH AMERICAN HAS BUILT MORE AIRPLANES THAN ANY OTHER COMPANY IN THE WORLD



F-100 Super Sabres, flying faster than Mach 1 (the speed of sound), cross the Rhine on a training flight over West Germany.

### MACH ON THE RHINE

Today the F-100 Super Sabre patrols the perimeter of the free world. This supersonic shield of the Tactical Air Command and our NATO allies is the fastest and most powerful fighter on operational duty—in squadron strength—anywhere in the world. Using new in-flight refueling techniques, U.S.-based F-100s have crossed the Atlantic in less than five hours.

Its fighter-bomber version, the F-100D, lifts a bigger payload than a World War II bomber...

can carry atomic weapons at supersonic speed. The F-100 was designed for the Air Force by the Los Angeles Division of North American Aviation, and is produced in North American's Los Angeles and Columbus plants. The F-100 series is an example of what free men working with the U.S. Air Force can accomplish for our nation's security.

Engineers: Write for details regarding challenging positions now open.

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*Selling airplanes was a vital part of Hun history ... and national security!*

■

**“What are you?” “I’m a Fighter Pilot, Sergeant!” was not the right answer.**

## **A Fighter Pilot Decides to Earn Army Jump Wings**

**By Mark Berent**

*In Issue 31, we promised this prequel to the story of Mark’s misbegotten adventures in the jungles of Vietnam, which came some years after this story of his “fun and games” at Army Jump School. Here’s a synopsis of the prequel: In an effort to avoid the cold, mud and snow of a French winter, Mark Berent signed up for Army Jump School in 1956, and as near as he knows, became the first active duty Air Force fighter pilot to win Army jump wings—possibly a SYC! It was far from fun and games, and, being a hard-headed fighter jock, he refused to “play the game” when the NCO jump instructor shouted the “standard question” at all the jump candidates. As you will see, he paid a high price for his stubbornness. Ed.*

It was cold, that winter in 1956 in Etain, France. Snow and mud formed a slushy goo that stuck to my boots as I walked into the squadron operations shack on the flight line after a lengthy TDY in much more pleasant weather. (I had been in the U.K. **ferrying MkIV Sabres to the Italian Air Force—and dating Diana Rigg!**) On the bulletin board, I found a week-old notice about one volunteer needed to attend parachute training with the United States Army over at some place called Bad Tolz in Germany. My pulse raced; here was my chance! As I tromped through the mud up to wing headquarters I just knew the assignment was long gone. What fighter pilot wouldn't jump at an opportunity to leap from an airplane (pun intended)?



**Mark Berent**  
*Outstanding published author.*

None, it turned out. Absolutely no one else in the three squadrons of the 388<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing had any desire to do such a thing. I had it all to myself. The next day, driving down the autobahn en-route to Bad Tolz, I had that familiar flip in my stomach that always happened when I was about to stick it out and had time to think about it. “Berent, you've done it again,” I said to myself.

In those days, to tool around war-torn Europe, I had a 1951 yellow and black Oldsmobile 98 hardtop convertible that I bought used for \$800 from a captain about to return to the States. I didn't feel particularly self-conscious as I drove into the Bad Tolz *kaserne*, though I did notice a few looks from some rather sinister guys running around in fatigues. Some, in fact, looked about ready to bite the hubcaps off my car. I shrugged. “They must be some left-over Nazi SS types,” I thought. I walked into the duty sergeant's area and got some more odd looks. When I presented my orders to Captain Warren, 10<sup>th</sup> Special Services Group Hq., he got a particularly wolfish smile on his face, I thought—and wondered why. After all, this was to be a gentleman's club with some good food, lots of drinks and laughs, and, oh yes, some parachuting onto a lush German meadow, wasn't it?

It wasn't. I was wrong about everything except the lush German meadow, and that had a hard-baked gumbo road running through it. And I was to be everybody's lunch.

I signed into the bachelor officers' quarters and was roomed up with an Army captain who had shot (he told me) a North Korean infiltrator next to his tent in Korea—right between the eyes, just below the red star on his winter cap. I was with the big boys now, I breathed in exultation. Just how big they were, if not in stature then in ability to kill, I was to find out the next morning.



**M/Sgt. Vince Fafek**  
*“What are you?”*

Our instructors, M/Sgt. Vince Fafek, Lt. Medaris, and their crew of sadistic runners were trying to kill us by exhaustion. They had us fall out about 0500 to begin the day's sporting events. First we removed all metal rank from our fatigues then, thus lightened, they proceed to exercise us by the numbers, followed by three or four hundred miles of running. There were 28 of us ranging in rank from PFC to colonel, and our instructors didn't give a rat's posterior about such unnecessary encumbrances as rank. We were all the lowest form of life: “straight legs.” They ran us until we were staggering, panting, red-in-the-face nonentities who, they told us, were fit only for clerical or mess hall duties.

And because I was the only USAF fighter pilot in the class, I felt an extra burden because I was bearing the weight of my profession on my shoulders. You know, being a fighter pilot is easy. Living up to the reputation is what's debilitating!

As we would run, these demonic, khaki-clad creatures, most of whom spoke English as a third language, would scream one main question, “What are you?” And we were to shout out, “We're straight legs, Sergeant!”

Well, shit, I was a fighter pilot and had to let them know that. A little hint to those who haven't been around fighter pilots: if you are at a function of some kind and wonder if that gent over there is a fighter pilot, don't bother asking, he'll tell you. Conversely, if he isn't, you'll have just embarrassed him no end.



“I’m a fighter pilot, Sergeant,” I’d scream back, every time.

The first time, a flabbergasted “Drop down and give me ten,” was the response. How could a “leg” dare do but what was demanded? After that it was loudly exponential; ten, fifteen, twenty. And the runs, oh my God. Obviously our instructors talked among themselves and I was frequently singled out to be asked “the question.”

“What are you?”

“I’m a fighter pilot, Sergeant.”

“Drop down and give me thirty.”

And so it went until one day after a long, grueling evening run, as Lieutenant Medaris was dismissing us, he asked the question one last time and I screamed out my usual answer. He promptly turned the others loose and informed me we were to take a little run through the Bavarian foothills.

Thirty minutes later, when I was hoarse from screaming the same fighter pilot answer, retching and gasping for breath, Medaris ultimately took pity and turned me loose probably thinking “Jeez, are they all this nuts?”



*My first jump; from a C-119 at Neubiburg AB, Germany.*

Finally the day came for our first jump. We were trucked to Neubiberg and loaded into C-119s, the old Flying Boxcar. I thought I was quite cool, because I was so relaxed that I was sleepy and yawning all the time. Only later did I find out what a nervous yawn was.

I made my jump and I remember exactly that as I kept my eyes on the horizon, my breath strangely became very short. Then I was involved in a horrendous automobile accident complete with clangs and bangs. I wound up flat on my back, T-10 parachute and risers tangled all over me, blinded for life. The car's horn inexplicably was still honking. Sight returned when I tipped my steel pot off my eyes and the honking became the laughter of some squat sergeant who had been left over from Neanderthal days. He could barely contain himself as he spoke several words in a language that sounded like rocks tumbling in a cement mixer.

So ended my first jump into the lush fields of southern Germany. We made our second jump the same day, two more the next day, and a night jump on the third. I tucked my camera in my jacket on the last day jump.



*Note the unopened ‘chute with an arrow pointed at it, and the word “Berent.” That’s our boy leaving a perfectly good aircraft.*

Each day we would bus to the base and truck back to the *kaserne* after the jump.

I remember we had only one serious incident. I believe it was Colonel Djerbian who had to pull his reserve when his main ‘chute romancandled. In those days the reserve was attached to your harness in such a way that you are not suspended vertically but are instead in a leaning back position. It was thus that the good colonel impacted the only road running



*Berent is among those in this cluster of mushrooms arriving alive and safe on the ground the hard way.*

through the huge grassy meadow. He lay stunned for a second, got up, brushed himself off, grinned, and gathered his gear. Just another day on the job.

Finally it was graduation time. I had learned how to blouse my *trou*, jump out of perfectly good—albeit lumbering—airplanes, and do PLFs off the bar. To my knowledge I was the first-ever fighter pilot in the whole USAF to have earned Army jump wings while serving as a fighter pilot. There are several guys, such as Bob Titus, who earned jump wings before entering the Air Force. These days, it is *de rigueur* to have jump wings. ■



*Early in this narrative, Mark expresses surprise that none of the pilots in the three squadrons of the 388<sup>th</sup> FBW had signed up for Army Jump School. No surprise to me: I did all I could for nearly nine years to avoid having to jump out of an airplane! I always delight in telling current and former paratroopers: “I know they don’t tell you this, but you don’t really have to jump out. The planes that carry you to the jump area always come back and land safely.” — Ed.*

“Hours of boredom punctuated by ... .”

## Lost Over the Atlantic

By Carl Schneider as told to Stanley Corvin

We recently learned that Charter Member Carl Schneider is working on a book about his exploits over the years and we invited him to send us a sample, “sneak peek” (or call it what you will). His ghost writer, Stan Corvin, sent us this jewel that tells another tale having to do with a certain popular stopover paradise in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy! **Ed.**



A more mature Carl relives an episode from his '56-'59 Hun tour with the 36<sup>th</sup> Fighter Day Wing.

*“I can’t believe it. Here we are, lost over the Atlantic with no navigational aids or radios, flying at 500 knots and with no alternate landing field available out on the barren sea. If we have to bail out, because we run out of fuel, no one will ever find us. The search area will extend from the eastern coast of Newfoundland to the West Coast of Portugal ... and we’ll die from*

*hypothermia within 30 minutes.”* I grimly thought all this to myself as I looked over at my wingman. We had lost radio communication with each other and were using hand signals to indicate that we could not transmit or receive over our UHF radios. To make matters worse, my navigation aids were not working properly and I had to rely solely on my magnetic compass to maintain the easterly heading to our refueling base in the Azores.

We had just completed the worldwide gunnery competition at Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas and were flying home to Bitburg, Germany. I was leading a flight of four, first of a group of eight F-100s headed back to Europe.



36<sup>th</sup> FDW

Earlier that morning we had departed the United States and were flying at 35,000 feet to Lajes Field in the Azores. Upon departure, the destination weather was forecast to be overcast with a ceiling of 1,500 feet and 3 miles visibility. But a front had moved into the area since we departed Newfoundland and dropped the ceiling and visibility down to 300 feet and a mile.

After several hours of using “dead reckoning” navigation, which consisted solely of figuring time, distance and heading, we reached what I thought to be the location of the airfield. Our fuel gauges indicated that we had minimum fuel and the tanks were almost empty. Also, with no altimeter settings being provided by the tower, we

really had no idea about our actual height above ground level. I had landed at the field before and knew there was a small mountain near the air base.

Suddenly, barely visible, I saw the mountain peak jutting out of the clouds and knew we were only 100 miles south of our destination. It may be that “all’s well that ends well,” but there were some mighty tense minutes before that happened.

Looking over at my wingman, I pointed down with my right hand, indicating we were going to begin a descent into the thick cloud cover below. Entering the overcast skies, I lost sight of my wingman, tucked in tight beside me. Within a few seconds, we broke out of the clouds and I saw the runway ahead. There were no aircraft in the traffic pattern, so we made a circling approach and safely landed on the 10,000 foot runway. Taxiing to the airport terminal and base operations, my engine flamed out from fuel starvation—and so did my wingman’s.



Lajes Field was **THE** transient home for many an F-100 crisscrossing the Atlantic Ocean for many, many years of the Cold War.

All the other aircraft landed safely and after refueling and making repairs to our radios and navigational aids, we departed the next day for Bitburg. Being lost over the Atlantic with no communications or ability to navigate precisely had been a harrowing experience; but we survived the encounter, and I was forever grateful that my flight and I had been spared a cold, watery grave. ■

*We might add that the title of the book Carl is working on is Jet Pioneer: A Fighter Pilot’s Memories and should be out this December, available via AMAZON. Oh, and it happens that Carl’s ghost writer, Stan, was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam and has his own book out with AMAZON titled Vietnam Saga. Why not take a gander at **both** books when you look up Carl’s new offering as a possible addition to your collection of true aviation adventures. — Ed.*

## 6<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reunion 2017 — Reservation Process Overview

We didn't have room in last summer's issue to talk much about the 6<sup>th</sup> biennial SSS reunion coming up 25-28 April next spring other than to indicate it would be held again at the Gold Coast Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV, per reasons and decisions announced by the Board of Directors at the 5<sup>th</sup> reunion in Dayton. So here's a preview of our current approach to reunion planning you need to know about, and to then make your plans to attend another of the "Best Ever" SSS reunions—again, or for the first time! Read on.

As you read this in late November, it'll be time to commit as soon as possible to attending the reunion, and that means doing the paper work by making your **reunion reservations** and **room reservations** early. Here's what you need to know about that process.

For the second time, after our evaluation of the quality and cost effectiveness of their services in helping us set up and conduct the 2015 **Dayton** reunion, we have elected to again use "Military Reunion Planners" (MRP) of Grapevine, TX, to do a lot of the "nitty-gritty work" involved in planning and executing first-class reunions, such as our coming return to the **Gold Coast**. You can read all about the MRP and its services on their website at <http://www.militaryreunionplanners.com>. As we write here in early November, they are busily working with SSS officers and volunteer members to finalize the specific events and costs that need to be covered by our Reunion 2017 Reservation Process (registration fees; banquet; optional events like, guided tours, etc.; and other miscellaneous costs per person).

That said, when the list of reunion events and costs per person is finalized, MRP will provide us with both an *online* avenue (the recommended "way to go") to complete your reservations and pay your fees and event costs, *and* a *paper* version of that avenue. For those wanting to use the online avenue, we expect to have a prominent link on our SSS website ([www.supersabresociety.org](http://www.supersabresociety.org)) no later than 15

November that will take you to the 2017 SSS Reunion Reservation Process on MRP's website. Note: We expect the MRP's Reservation Process to be straightforward, tested, and easy to use, as we found it to be for our 2015 Reunion.

For those without online capabilities, or who don't want to use the MRP's online process (for whatever reason), the envelope that brought you this issue of *The Intake* also contains a separate, four-page "Unclassified Reunion 2017 'Need to Know' Booklet" that provides an overview of all Reunion 2017 events, times and costs, and other pertinent reunion information. It includes a Reservation Form on the back page that you should make a copy of and then fill in both the original (for your records) and the copy. After filling in *both forms*, mail your completed Reservation Form Copy and your check (made out to "MRP") to: MRP, Box 1588, Colleyville, TX 76034.

(Note: for either online or paper reservations, consider this: 12 March is the Reunion Reservations due date. After that, payments are non-refundable unless you have purchased cancellation insurance. Also, there is a nonrefundable, late registration fee of \$15. Both these cautions are covered in the Reunion Booklet.)

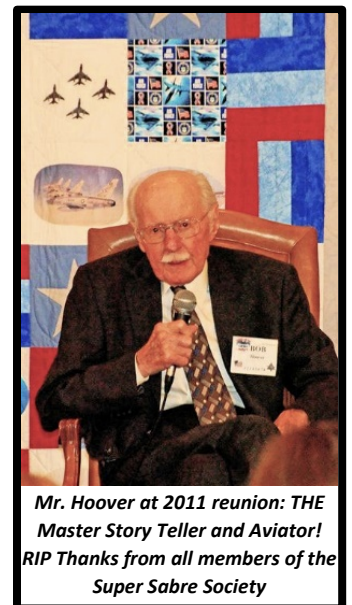
This is only an overview of our **Reunion Reservations** process. Complete details, including how to make separate **Room Reservations** at the Gold Coast Hotel & Casino, are in the Reunion 2017 Booklet enclosure. **Ed.**

SSS Reunion Attendance Stats FYI: 2007=470, 2009=630, 2011=650, 2013=450, 2015=335, 2017=Who Knows? See you there! ▣

### Tribute to a Giant—R.A. "Bob" Hoover Flew West on October 25, 2016

The World will note with much sadness "Mr. Hoover's" passing—and long remember him as a Giant among other giants of his profession. So, we here will not attempt to paraphrase the numerous plaudits and biographical info that appears elsewhere. Rather, we here will take time and space to recount our appreciation of Mr. Hoover—as a fellow member of our organization.

*The Super Sabre Society has been blessed to have many giants of Aviation among our membership since our founding. Bob Hoover ranks high in that "above and beyond" constellation of extraordinary men and will be sorely missed at our coming 6<sup>th</sup> biennial reunion. Why? Well, for starters, among many of his "firsts" and celebrated achievements of note, Bob served as our first reunion banquet speaker at our third reunion in 2011. And it wasn't a one-night-stand. Bob was all over the place, from long stints autographing and chatting with members at the authors' table, to telling impromptu "war stories" in the Hospitality Room, to the gala banquet itself. You can read all about it in the reunion After Action Report in Issue 16 of The Intake. The bottom line, at that reunion AND at his second SSS reunion in 2015 at Dayton, was that Bob really appreciated being an SSS member, and enjoyed mixing with all our members—telling his "war stories" and listing to ours. That's classiness worth remembering. And we will! We close with a brief "tweet" from Tom Haines (AOPA Ed.) "Saddened by the death of the famed "Bob" Hoover, one of the truly great ones. Died at 2 a.m. PDT today while telling one of his stories." How perfectly fitting! Pub Med*



## Saving the Tong Le Chon Special Forces Camp: Another Part of the Story!

By John J. Schulz

In Issue 31’s Palm Springs Air Museum’s “Annual Gala Report,” Al Dempsey devoted the first two paragraphs to the main theme of this year’s event, which was to “honor the courage of some of our outstanding heroes.” Specifically, the Gala’s guests of honor were members of the eight-man Special Forces (Vietnam) “A” Team that survived a massive NVA attack on their camp at Tong Le Chon on 6 August 1967 and the F-100 pilots from the 614<sup>th</sup> and 615<sup>th</sup> TFSs, whose multiple night alert missions out of Phan Rang helped break the attack and saved the camp and the men stationed there. In this article, we focus on the two night alert fighter pilots from Bien Hoa who also participated that night. As this extract from my book, *Songs From a Distant Cockpit*, underscores, it was a night that none of the pilots from either base will ever forget. *Ed.*

In an effort to eulogize the unknown dead who were buried by an impersonal artillery shell in a forest in France called the Rouge Bouquet, noted American author and poet Joyce Kilmer wrote a lengthy and intricately metered poem that has lived long after his own death in WWI.

It begins:

*In a wood they call the Rouge Bouquet  
There is a new-made grave to-day,  
Built by never a spade nor pick  
Yet covered with earth ten meters thick.  
There lie many fighting men,  
Dead in their youthful prime,  
Never to laugh nor love again  
Nor taste the Summertime.  
For Death came flying through the air  
And stopped his flight at the dugout stair,  
Touched his prey and left them there,  
Clay to clay.*

Perhaps at the time, that WWI tragedy went mostly unnoticed by anyone but the sensitive and talented Kilmer. In contrast, an intense and terror-laden night mission in the Vietnam War by two of the pilots from my own “Dice” squadron over the Special Forces Camp at Tong Le Chon was the talk of the entire base for days afterward.

The two pilots recounted their “little adventure” in great detail at the Dice Bar the next night. The FAC credited them with over 300 killed by air (KBA). They were later told by the Special Forces camp commander that they had personally helped save the camp. He said he had already given up any hope of survival when this flight of two F-100s swept down over the isolated compound and began their multiple attack passes along the camp walls. Agents later confirmed that the attacking force had been between 1,200 and 1,400 men. No reliable tally was ever given on the actual KBA, but the attackers left over 300 dead on the field of battle as they beat a hasty retreat.

Although the Dice pilots had, between them, flown more than 500 missions, they were still pretty shook up and feeling lucky to be alive as they tried to describe their experience to their squadron mates. Not only had they faced a lead curtain of bullets and a fireworks display of tracers on their 20-odd passes on the first mission, but they were also in constant danger of hitting the nearby trees, or even the ground, as they flew through the area at 200 feet and

below. Moreover, they were faced with the problem of insuring that their accuracy was “surgical” because they had to drop much of their ordnance and do their strafing on the outside edge of the poorly lit perimeter wall of the camp and even inside it, scant feet from the camp defenders!

In addition, they also had to make a number of dry passes because sometimes the ground fire was too intense, and sometimes they weren’t exactly sure their attack would be accurate enough.

When they returned to base, almost out of fuel, they assisted the load crew as much as they could to make the fastest possible turnaround. An hour and forty minutes later they were back over the camp. In all, they made 42 “hot” passes that night, often straight and level at 300 feet above the ground, as was required for CBU deliveries. Intel officers said at the time that the attacking force was the largest ever committed until then to come across the border from nearby Cambodia. Their report cited local intelligence sources as saying an estimated 14,000 North Vietnamese troops were involved in a plan to start at that entry point, and using Tong Le Chong as a first objective, they would then be moving to take other objectives on a track to eventually take Saigon. About one-tenth of that total force was involved in the attack on the Tong Le Chon Special Forces Camp.

In the weeks and months after that awful August night in 1967, we all came to learn how all the Hun pilots must have felt out there alone in those non-bulletproof Plexiglass-covered cockpits in the middle of the night. As the war heated up very noticeably, beginning in late October and throughout November, and most especially during the month-long Tet Offensive of the following February, I sometimes wondered what those attackers’ thoughts and feelings were as they exulted over certain victory just ahead in their bid to take a lonely piece of real estate.

But then, so suddenly they found the tables turned as they faced thundering death raining from the night skies, delivered in waves, two ships at a time, by brave, sometimes near terrified, but very skillful Hun pilots, on night alert at two different bases, whose job it was to provide “close air support.”



“JJ” Schulz  
celebrating the last  
of 275 missions.

***FYI:** When I heard the two Dicemen report their KBA, the first thing that came to mind was Kilmer's poem, which I had memorized as a high school assignment. So, a few hours later that evening, I wrote the Kilmer "Revisited" poem you see below, which I hope readers will enjoy. Note: Some of the preamble narrative of this article and throughout my "Songs" book was extracted from letters written home at the time of various events during 1967-8. The fuller narrative about Tong Le Chon was not written until 1974, and by then some details were lost in the mist of fuzzy memory and poor recall. — Ed.*

## ROUGE BOQUET REVISITED

In the grass outside of Tong Le Chon  
 One hundred and eighty men are gone,  
 And in the woods that stretch away,  
 Two hundred more are dead today.  
 These were guerrilla fighting men  
 Killed on a monsoon night,  
 Fighting with odds of one to ten...  
 Now, nevermore to fight.  
 For death was dealt by just a pair  
 Whose Sabres sliced forbidding air  
 Again and again like they didn't care  
 If they survived.

Though tracers laced the midnight sky,  
 They knew that they must make a try,  
 So, in they dived.

At dawn the grass and clay will all  
 Be damp and still.  
 While sleeping these two got the call  
 To fight and kill.  
 Scramble Dice!  
 Scramble Dice!  
 Though your bed may, instead,  
 Be with the dead,  
 Brave the clouds, and the flares,  
 And hungry lead.  
 Special Forces men are dead  
 Those alive  
 Cannot survive  
 Fight and dive.

"Green Berets" and Montagnards  
 Ordered here as frontier guards,  
 In this jungle no-man's-land,  
 Dug in for a last-ditch stand.  
 Suddenly, through inky skies  
 Their last prayers are heard.

O'er the guns and dying sighs  
 Roars a thundering bird  
 Shells and bomblets fill the air,  
 Hit beside defenders' lair,  
 Kill attackers swarming there,  
 And stun good friends.  
 Do not fear,  
 Dice is near....

Hiding there, in your lair, attack with care,  
 Or you shall be  
 Where your friends have gone,  
 In the grass outside of Tong Le Chon.  
 And beware  
 The deadly air  
 Treetop high.  
 They delivered airborne Hell  
 All around you, comrades fell.  
 Then it stopped and they were gone!  
 "Now we can take Tong Le Chon!"

But they returned.  
 Spreading Death with every pass  
 Underneath the bright night flare  
 Then...silence—they were gone.

By dawn's light, men highly trained  
 Lay in silence as it rained  
 Nevermore to laugh, or fight,  
 Killed in instants on that night  
 As death came flying through the air  
 Touched them each and left them there  
 Unawake in the morning light.  
 Mark the name of Tong Le Chon,  
 Mark how many now are gone—  
 "Killed by air."  
 Swiftly gone as swift they came,  
 Later we may learn the name:  
 "Dice" was there.

— John J. Schulz, *Bien Hoa*, 1967 ■

Departures: The following members of the Super Sabre Society have flown west. RIP, Good Friends ... .

Robert M. Sumner  
 January 1, 2016

Albert Lee Logan  
 May 10, 2016

Richard "Dick" R. Clark  
 June 14, 2016

Garrett Lynn Redeske  
 July 12, 2016

Frank C. Gioco  
 July 20, 2016

William/Bill "Chops" Lamb  
 August 4, 2016

Kenneth "Sam" Alton Shealy  
 17 September, 2016

William D. "Don" Castleman  
 September 19, 2016

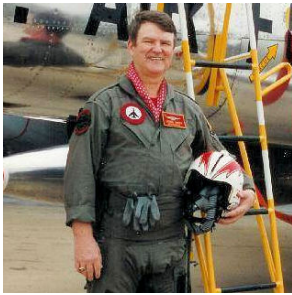
James E. Williamson  
 October 13, 2016

R.A. "Bob" Hoover  
 October 25, 2016

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## More About Front Cover Artist, SSSer/Hun Pilot George Dubick

As indicated in the art work credits on page 2, there is much to tell about relatively new SSS member and Hun pilot George Dubick. He's among the very few members who became a Hun driver via an unconventional route, i.e., not with military or civilian fighter backgrounds. Here's how George did it, in his own words; a succinct version, at our request. **Pub Med**



George was one of the Wild Weasel Air Museum pilots when he finally fulfilled his dream of flying the Hun.

My first conscious memory of an airplane was at about age three in 1942 when I was hoisted up to stand in the cockpit of a yellow biplane at a Cleveland, Ohio, airshow. The smell of dope on fabric, the touch of the leather binding around the cockpit never left my memory. I noticed the squinty look of the pilot and immediately adapted that "pilot look." I then announced

to my Mom and Dad that I was going to be a pilot.

Fifteen years later, I enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and found myself in SAC (Strategic Air Command) at Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma, where I joined the Aero Club and learned to fly. As much as I wanted to fly in the Air Force, I was not qualified for Aviation Cadets due to less than 20/20 vision. So, I followed the sage advice of the Aero Club's President, and my flight instructor and mentor (Captain George Morauske), to pursue an aviation career via an aggressive civilian route. That I did.

During my five years at Altus, I obtained my Private Pilot License, then Commercial Pilot and Flight Instructor ratings and was preparing to obtain my Instrument Pilot Certificate immediately after separation from the service.

I did get my Instrument Pilot Certificate from the FAA examiner flying out of Cleveland-Hopkins Airport, and a few weeks later passed my "check ride" for becoming an Instrument Flight Instructor. But I get ahead of my story.

In 1962, during my fifth and final year of enlistment, I was assigned to Transient Aircraft Navigation Radio Maintenance at Altus. Occasionally, a flight of F-100s passing through would need a replacement VOR or TACAN unit, and we would do that, also providing the needed cockpit checks. I fondly remember taking a lot longer than necessary to do those tests and equipment checks while sitting in the Super Sabre cockpits; the draw of the Hun was strong!

At the time, I was instructing in the Aero Club's T-34s and wished that I could fly something like those Huns. So, flying the little T-34 was my frustration relief valve for wanting badly to fly one of those magnificent Super Sabres.

Now, back to real time: Six months after separating from the service, I was hired by Allegheny Airlines as a co-

pilot; a job which ended when I was furloughed after six months. Six months after that, I was hired by Delta Airlines. There, I enjoyed 32 years of flying everything from two- and four-engine propeller planes, to two-, three- and four-engine jet aircraft.

Because I was always a "wannabe" fighter pilot, after my retirement from Delta, I was privileged to work and fly as a volunteer with what eventually became the "Wild Weasel Air Museum" in Dallas, Texas. There, I flew six different single-engine jet fighter and trainer aircraft, including the venerable Lockheed T-33 "T-Bird" and the US Air Force's North American F-100F "Super Sabre."

Early in that association, the company decided to obtain and certify (in the EXPERIMENTAL Category) one of a trio of ex-Turkish Air Force F-100s that had been released from TRACOR Flight Systems to an aircraft broker.

[These were the C-, D-, and F-models brought to the states under the supervision of SSSer J.R. Alley, as told in his article titled "The Long Journey of the Turkish Huns" in Issue 14 of *The Intake*.]

Amazingly, I was asked to go to Mojave and "pick one out"! After having been half-owner of an ex-Swiss Air Force de Havilland "Venom"



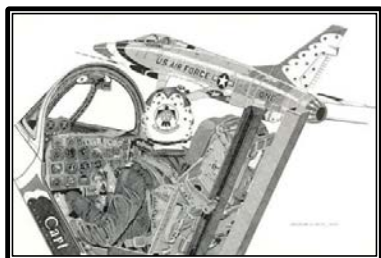
F-model "948" en route to Mojave.

single-seat jet fighter, I was convinced that the two-seat F-model was the wise choice. After six months of maintenance work and preparation, "948" received her FAA Certification of Airworthiness, and we flew at airshows for about two and a half years before the then-owner sold it to Dean "Cutter" Cutshall. (Cutter has truly made "948" a wonderful example of a magnificent aircraft.)

Bottom line: my 1962 fantasy dream to fly the F-100 eventually came true, and even though I only logged 63 precious hours, I'm honored to be a SSS Regular Member. My hat's off to you gentlemen who flew the Hun into battle, and truly know how well *she* served.

Oh, and about my artistic interest and career in pen & ink drawings: I started creating my list of favorite aircraft and "doing them" in pen and ink from 1983 through 1990. And, after a long lull, I took up the craft (no pun intended) once again in 2014 as a relaxing and enjoyable "old time retired" pilot's hobby. And I continue that avocation today, to my great enjoyment, still! — **George Dubick**

George has a website that further describes his love of pen and ink drawings of “his favorite aircraft.” Check it out at URL <http://georgedubick.com/>. Dive in and explore it, particularly the full collection of his works, under the “Works” link (wouldn’t you know!). You can see details of each work of art by clicking the work’s name just below its image. In addition to particulars, such as the size of the original, George makes personal comments about many of the drawings.



“Thunderbird Joinup”

For instance, take a look at “Thunderbird Joinup,” our I-32 front cover art. The size of this one is a modest 12x18 inches, and it turns out George was inspired to do this illustration, because of his respect for one of the Thunderbird Advance Pilots and Narrators named Russell C. Goodman, after reading about his exploits in that capacity and after his Thunderbird tour. He was shot down over the North in 1967 flying an F-4, just two days after a hairy CAS mission for which he was awarded the Silver Star! But he didn’t get to “come home” until January, 2010, after his remains were finally found and identified!

There are lots more magnificent aircraft illustrations to enjoy during your exploration of Dubick’s website, including two other F-100s and a host of aircraft from other services and nations. The prices attached for each piece are given, and they are all very modest for their individual sizes. What’s not to like? Well, it turns out there’s a lot to like, particularly for SSS members.

Here’s the deal: as George and I were discussing his amazing story of how he got to be a Hun driver, he pointed out how grateful he was to have found our Society and become a member. Indeed, he closed his story with, “I’m honored to be a SSS Regular Member. My hat’s off to you gentlemen who flew the Hun into battle, and truly know how well she served.” Our conversation continued and I mentioned he’d probably get a bunch of orders for the front cover art and maybe some of the other drawings, as art savvy members browsed his website. Then came the Dubick bombshell.

Without hesitation, George said something like this: “Yes, the price is right. But for SSS members who’d like to have one, I’d be happy to email them a high resolution file of “Thunderbird Joinup,” and if they wish, they can have a high-grade copy suitable for framing made at a local photo shop for their personal use and enjoyment.” WOW! Such a deal. I told George I’m looking forward to meeting him at the Vegas reunion and buying drinks!

Then George doubled down on his offer, saying, “As a matter of fact, I’d be happy to offer, for SSS members only, the same option for other aircraft in my collection.” Double WOW!! That’s a lot of gratitude for our relatively new member, but I know the offers are genuine. I’m going to be first in line to take him up on this, and with many thanks to George for sharing his treasures with fellow SSS members.

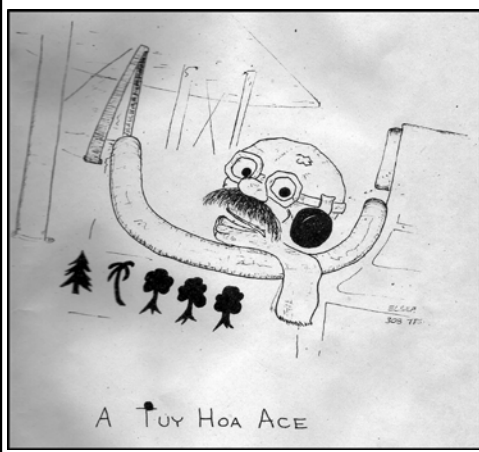
For those who would like to buy prints rather than take this “print your own” route, or to sign up with George for his kind offer(s), give him a call at 972-248-4386 in Dallas, TX, or email him at [gdubick@live.com](mailto:gdubick@live.com). Thank You, George! ■



SSSer George Dubick.  
The artist, still enjoying his avocation.

**By Popular Demand, SSSer & Artist George Elsea’s Pen & Ink Cartoon Works Continue Into INTAKE Decade Two!**

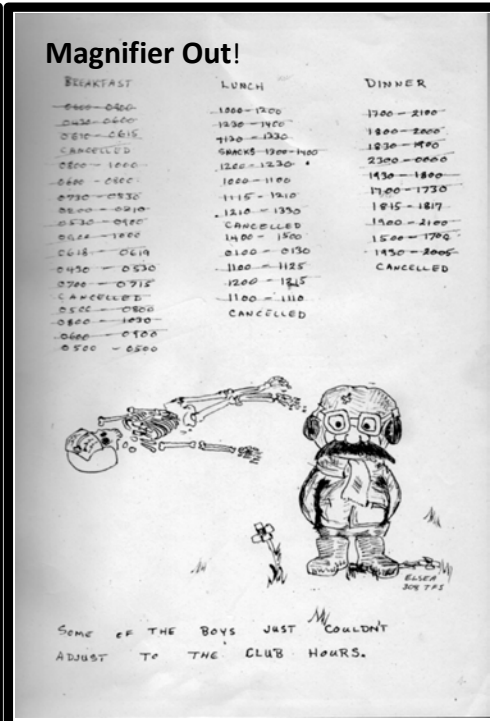
Back in Issue 7, we introduced SSSer George Elsea’s Vietnam-era humor that he penned in black and white cartoons in a book he published titled “A Tuy Hoa Ace.” Since then, we’ve published about 24 pics, all of which were spot-on. As we move into our second decade, we reintroduce the main character here and will continue sharing Elsea’s works—truly priceless!



A TUY HOA ACE



THE  
TYPICAL  
FIGHTER PILOT.



SOME OF THE BOYS JUST COULDN'T  
ADJUST TO THE CLUB HOURS.

## Sandy’s Story: “Now It Begins ... .”

By Sandy Gruters

Don Shepperd first heard Sandy’s story over dinner one night, and urged her to write it for *The Intake*, and this is the result of her efforts. She and Guy (her husband) also provided Shep with some added context and background and he sent us this note: “Guy was shot down twice in what became his last three Misty missions. Sandy didn’t know he was flying over the North. Nor did Guy have medical clearance to resume flying after his first bailout; he just chipped the arm cast off, went to Ops and told the CC he finally felt great; those were the days before paperwork!” This is the fourth in our new series, “From a Wife’s Perspective.” Each one has been met with rave responses, and certainly this one will be as well. **Ed.**

**(Some Background:** When Guy Gruters was finishing his F-100 checkout at Luke AFB, he tried to volunteer for an immediate Vietnam assignment, only to be told he could not do that for at least two years. So he instead volunteered for FAC duty, and between 1 March, and the end of September, 1967, he flew 400 FAC missions with the Army’s 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade at Dak To. He then joined Misty on October 1 and on November 9<sup>th</sup>, on his 10<sup>th</sup> mission, he was shot down the first time. When he returned from home leave, where he recuperated from injuries from that bailout, he flew one “safe” mission before he was shot down *again*, on December 20<sup>th</sup>, while on his 12<sup>th</sup> Misty mission. — **Ed. End of Background.)**

### Sandy’s Story

On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1967, I was at home and the telephone rang. I answered it and heard someone say, “Mrs. Gruters, did you know your husband was shot down this morning?” Then there was a pause.

I was stunned. Finally I said, “No, I don’t know anything.”

The woman on the phone then said, “This is the *Sarasota Herald*. Oh, and it’s OK, he’s rescued, your husband’s rescued.”

“Thank you very much,” I replied, “but I don’t know anything about this,” and hung up the phone.

I was shocked. I couldn’t imagine why I hadn’t heard anything if the call from the newspaper was true. At the time, I was well aware that a lot of pretty unusual things were going on in the country. Other wives had received crazy phone calls, for example. But I immediately called Guy’s folks, “I just got a call from somebody who said they were from the newspaper. Did you hear anything about Guy being shot down?”

“No, we haven’t heard anything.”

“Well, we’ll just wait and see what happens. I’ll call you if I hear anything.”

About half an hour later, the phone rang again. It was a MARS (Military Auxiliary Radio System) network man. He said, “If you’ll hold, I have a call from Lieutenant Guy Gruters.”

“Of course I’ll hold.”



Guy at Phu Cat in October '67, just after joining Misty and prior to his first bailout.

There was clicking and static, then I heard Guy’s voice, and I said, “Guy, are you all right?” “Yes, I’m fine, don’t worry about it,” he said. “We had a little incident this morning; we were shot down, but we’re OK. They are going to take us to the hospital, but it’s nothing to be worried about. I’ll be in touch later.”

“OK, you’re sure you’re OK?”

“Yes, I’m fine.” And that was the last I heard, until the letters came.

I called his folks and told them he had called, he had been shot down, but rescued, was fine and would be in touch. I didn’t know at the time, but his wrist was shattered, tendons severed, and he had to have surgery on his hand. He had to wear a cast on his lower right arm.

Guy went to the hospital, was operated on, and we exchanged letters and audio tapes. Then, while he was in the hospital, he read a religious pamphlet that said, “Ask, and you shall receive.

Believe and it shall be given unto you.” So he prayed and asked to go home, because he could not fly and they would not take off the cast until January 1<sup>st</sup>.

He talked to his commander, who OK’d a two week leave to go home if he could get space available travel, but he also said he didn’t think it was possible. Of course, Guy didn’t say a word about this to us because it was such a long shot.

Guy packed a bag and went to Cam Ranh Bay, where transports were arriving and departing. After two days of being unable to get on a plane going to Travis AFB in California, he was able to get a flight to Charleston, SC, which was much better. In Charleston, he walked across the airport and took a civilian plane to Tampa, Florida. Then an airport limo brought him down Rt. 41 to Sarasota to less than a block from his parent’s house. He had not realized it, but it was Thanksgiving Day, 1967.



Student Sandy at Florida State, circa 1962.



Meanwhile, I had gone up to Palatka, just south of Jacksonville, to visit my family, but I had promised Guy's mother, Marian, that I would be back for the Thanksgiving Day dinner at her house, with all her extended family and Guy's brothers and sisters. So I left my folks early on the morning of Thanksgiving Day with our two little girls, aged one and two, and drove to Sarasota, about 200 miles across Florida. My plan was to go home first and get us all cleaned up and changed into appropriate clothes.

Meantime, while the girls and I were at home getting ready for the party, Guy had been dropped by the limo at the entrance to the alleyway behind his parents' house, and walked along the alley to their back yard. His cousins and the little children were all outside playing and saw him first. They shouted in delight, "Guy!" But he managed to quiet them down, telling them he was trying to surprise everyone.

It was about three in the afternoon when he entered the house via the back porch. There was a long central hallway from back to front (in the old design style before the days of air conditioning) and everybody was in the front living room having cocktails.



*Both families gathered in Lafayette, IN, on November 30, 1964 for Guy and Sandy's wedding. Later, they all had a long, worried wait for five years and three months.*

His uncle Al saw him first at the far end of the hall and shouted, "Guy!" His mother had a fit and ran to greet him, hugging and kissing and crying. Then his dad, brothers and sisters, cousins and everyone took turns giving him a big warm hug. It was perfect! And such a wonderful gift that God had given to us.

Guy asked his mother to call me and when I answered, she said, "Sandy, where are you, everyone is here!"

"Marian, I just got in, I'll be there as soon as I can."

But Guy couldn't wait. He asked his sister, Mary Ann, to drive him over to our house, a few miles across town. She did, and, once again he went to the alley at the end of the street, approached the back of the house, and then knocked on the back door.

I was running around, trying to get the children ready, and all of a sudden there was a knock on the back door. When I heard the knock, I thought, "Oh, it's probably the paper boy." That shows how overwhelmed I was—why would the paper boy be coming by on Thanksgiving Day? So

I went to the back door, and there was this huge body silhouetted through the jalousie glass door. I thought, "That's not the paper boy!" I opened the door, and there stood my husband, Guy. "Surprise!" he said.

It's a good thing I had a strong heart. The gigantic surprise just about knocked me over. I couldn't believe it.

We drove to his parent's house and what a beautiful day we had—a warm and wonderful reunion with all his family and relatives. It could not have been a finer Thanksgiving Day.

That 10 days of Guy's home leave in November of 1967 was such a blessing. He had not seen the house where we were staying, but he could see that we were OK and in a safe area. He also met many of my new friends from the military wives' group that we had formed, consisting of wives whose husbands were deployed to Vietnam. It also gave him a chance to see the changes in the children, because he had been away nine months, and of course, in those days there was no Skype or Facebook or cellphones, etc. We also drove up to Palatka for a visit with all of my family.

All too quickly, it was time to put him back on a plane headed for Vietnam. In those years, there were many men leaving for Vietnam each day from the airports near military bases, so when we got to the airport, there were a good number of families saying goodbye to their loved ones leaving for war. I thought to myself, "Oh, those poor people, they have to wait a whole year. Thank Heaven we are so lucky, we only have to wait about three months." Little did I know it would be a lot longer than three months before we would again see Guy.

I went back to visit my folks for a couple of days, then drove back to Sarasota. We resumed our normal activities with the military wives' group and their children. It was a great group of people, with many activities for the wives as well as for the children. However, there were moments of sorrow too. We had friends who lost husbands or traveled to the hospitals for the seriously wounded. We were there for each other to help in any way we could. I thank God we had each other for those tough times.

On December 20<sup>th</sup>, Guy's sister was home from college, and she volunteered to come over and help put up Christmas decorations. I really appreciated her help, and we were busily working away when I happened to glance out the window and immediately saw an Air Force car pulling into the driveway. So, because I had never been officially notified about the first shoot down I said, "Oh, Mary Ann, the Air Force is finally coming by to tell me that Guy was shot down!"

I went to the door with a big smile on my face as the young captain walked up to the door and said, "You've come to tell me my husband was shot down!" I'm sure he thought I was flat out nuts!

He said, "Mrs. Gruters, may I come in and talk to you?"

"Of course, come in."



*On his 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Misty missions over the North, Guy was shot down.*

“Mrs. Gruters, your husband, Captain Guy D. Gruters, was shot down this morning over North Vietnam and is listed as missing in action.” [Note: Guy was promoted to Captain soon after returning to Vietnam to resume his Misty tour.]

I looked at him and said, “I’m sorry, you’ve made a mistake. My husband is in the hospital in Da Nang, and there is no way he could have been shot down over North Vietnam.”

He said, “Mrs. Gruters, the Air Force tries very hard not to make this kind of mistake. Would you please read the letter?”

Well, I took it and read the letter and there it was in black and white: Guy had been shot down *for the second time!*

“I can’t believe it. Why, just this morning I received his letter saying he would be in the hospital until January 1<sup>st</sup>.”

“I don’t know anything about that, Mrs. Gruters, but your husband definitely was shot down this morning.”

The captain was a lovely person, a lawyer by profession, and he gave me a great deal of good advice. I was so blessed. God was so good to me. Because there were a number of other wives who did not have everything so clearly explained to them. Thank God he was able to give me all kinds of information about how to handle everything in the future, including the financial procedures and everything else.

As he was leaving, he said, “Mrs. Gruters, I will only come back for one of two reasons, either we know your husband has been captured, or we know he has been killed in action.” Then he left.

Mary Ann called all of Guy’s family and everyone came over. They were all so kind and tried to help me get through the day. It was then that I had an out-of-body experience—a unique gift. It was like God lifted me above the room and I could see everything going on. I could see me and knew it was me, but there was no emotional connection. I watched as I fixed food and drinks for the children and everyone, but with no emotion. God was getting me through a tough day.

People stayed until really late, and offered to spend the night. I told them, “No, no, I’m OK, I don’t need you to stay, thank you.” So they all left.

I put the children to bed and went to bed myself, but I couldn’t sleep, so I got up and thought, “Well, I’ll just write Guy a letter.” Guy and I wrote each other every day, and I felt compelled to write one that night. I wrote, “I feel that if you were dead, I would know it.” I also told him I would just carry on as if he was coming home. We would just keep doing all the things we had been doing. I would just wait until he returned.

The next morning, I fixed and served breakfast. Guy’s brother, Terry, was home from the Air Force Academy and was there with his dad. His family seemed to be taking turns being with me.



Guy back from the Hanoi Hilton (1973), reunited with Sandy and their daughters, Dawn (8) and Sheri (7).

I was sitting in a rocking chair while the children were finishing breakfast, when I looked out the window and said, “The Air Force car has just pulled into the driveway again.” It was one thing or the other. Guy was a POW or dead.



Sandy and Guy at a POW reunion in Washington in the 1990s.

The same Captain got out. He had volunteered for Christmas duty, bringing news to the family members of all of the wounded, missing or KIA. I opened the door, and when he saw me, he broke into a smile and said, “Mrs. Gruters, I have a much better Christmas present for you today, your husband is a POW.”

He came in and told us all the information he had been given. He said I would not be seeing him again, but the Air Force would keep me informed of any information they had on the POWs or Guy in particular. We thanked him for his concern and told him we would just do what we could and be standing by for any and all further news.

Little did I know that five years and three months would pass before Guy and I were reunited. But that’s a story for another day. ■



*This is the latest in a recent series of articles we call “From a Wife’s Perspective.” Another one just came in, but after that one, alas, we’ll be out of these articles and we want more—because with the strong positive response, we need to keep the series going. So, gentlemen, please share this article with your wives, and also show them the articles by Rose Sheppard (I-27), Alice Murch (I-30) and Jackie Douglass (I-31). Then encourage your mate to write her story, adventures, incidents or insights to share with us what they were thinking and doing while we were out playing around in airplanes. Get on it right away, please, we want that story bin to refill quickly.*

*Separately, we just learned from Guy a bit before sending this issue to the printers that he wrote a book about his Vietnam experiences with Misty and in the Hanoi Hilton. We will be reviewing it soon. He is also quite close to completing a film on other war-related topics—a joint project with several other Vietnam Veterans. — Ed.*

## What Goes Up Must Come Down

By Jim Icenhour

*Most of us have had our opportunities to see how close to the deck we could get at 400 knots or more, and some have even returned home with tree branches or other “bits” that sent the message: “A bit too low this time!” But this vignette from Jim Icenhour has to be unique: we’ve all flown through rain showers and snow storms. But mud storms? Not likely! Ed.*

It was a bright, clear sunny day about halfway through my tour in Vietnam with the 309<sup>th</sup> TFS at Tuy Hoa (April 1969-’70). I was no longer a “new guy” and had settled into my role as a wingman with reasonable experience in theater. I don’t remember who my flight lead was, but we were on a scheduled mission down in IV Corps, south of Saigon. That was somewhat unusual since we rarely went that far south. At this point in my tour I was already getting frustrated with “tree busting.” It seemed that the only time we had clear, pinpoint targets was during “troops in contact” missions. The rest of the time we were going after an enemy in heavy jungles, where we could neither see precise targets nor observe precise results. This day was quite different because it was one of the few times when we had a clearly identifiable target.



*Jim Icenhour did 195 missions at Tuy Hoa, 1969-’70.*

The trip down from Tuy Hoa to the target area was memorable because the visibility was excellent—there wasn’t a cloud in the sky (a factor that will become important as my tale unfolds). It seemed like we could see every rice paddy in the Mekong Delta—all the way to the southern tip of IV Corps. We were carrying our usual load: Lead had four Mark-117 High Drag Bombs with .025 second delay fuses and I had four BLU-27 un-finned napalm cans. As we checked in with the FAC and got our target briefing, it became obvious that he was excited at being able to offer us a real target for a change: a large two-story tan cinderblock building with a red tile roof. It was sitting all by itself out in the middle of a wide expanse of rice paddies with no trees within miles. We could see it from 10 miles away!

Our fangs were out, and target fixation had already set in. Lead decided to drop everything in one pass, which was unusual because we typically dropped singles. But this decision made sense because we were not probing in heavy foliage. We knew where they were so why not give them everything at once? As I took spacing on Lead, it began to dawn on me that he might wipe out the target and leave me nothing but a smoking hole to attack. I was so focused on watching him roll in on the target that I failed to achieve the usual 30 second separation between attacking aircraft. He made a very tight curvilinear approach to the target, resulting in a short final that was steeper and faster than planned. All four of his bombs passed just over the top of the building and impacted in the rice paddy right behind it. As the smoke cleared I observed the building still standing. I was elated. It was all mine now!

It was just like being back on the gunnery range at Luke AFB. I made the turn to final and lined up on the target with my dive angle and airspeed spot-on the desired parameters. As the pipper drifted up to the front door of the building, I rippled off two pairs of nape cans. It was absolutely perfect! The first two cans bounced off the front yard and went through the front door. The second two cans hit the upstairs windows on the fly. As I pulled off, 3,200 pounds of flaming napalm engulfed the building. Success!!!



309<sup>th</sup> TFS

My smug sense of satisfaction was quickly wiped out by the reality of my situation as I pulled off target. When Lead’s bombs went off in the rice paddies behind the target they sent tons of stinking mud into the sky. Had I been at least 30 seconds behind Lead, the tons of mud might have settled to earth before my arrival over the target. But my eager fixation on the target caused me to arrive a little too early, and I met said tons of stinking mud head-on as it all settled back to earth. Fortunately it was just mud. Had it included fragments of lead’s bombs this story might have been quite different.

As the nose of my aircraft came through the horizon, my forward visibility went to nil due to a thick coat of mud on the front of the canopy. I could see out the sides of my canopy but a thin coat of mud made even that difficult. Flying half blind was not going to be fun.

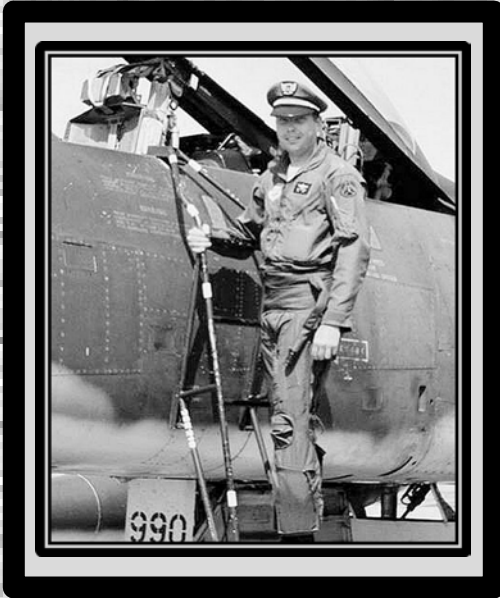
But the most memorable aspect of this little adventure was what my nose sensed: a vile stench. The discharge of a sewage plant spewed all across my aircraft would probably have been less offensive.

My visibility was so restricted that I could not locate my leader—I had to have him find and rejoin on me. On the way home we searched in vain for any rainstorm that might help wash off some of the mud. On almost any other day, finding a rainstorm in Vietnam would have been easy—but not on this CAVU day. As we approached Tuy Hoa I began to worry about how I was going to see well enough to line up on the runway and land. It definitely wasn’t the prettiest F-100 landing of my career, but I got it on the ground safely. Probably the most difficult part of the mission was facing my crew chief after engine shut down. I left him with a stinking mess that probably took a full fire truck to hose down.

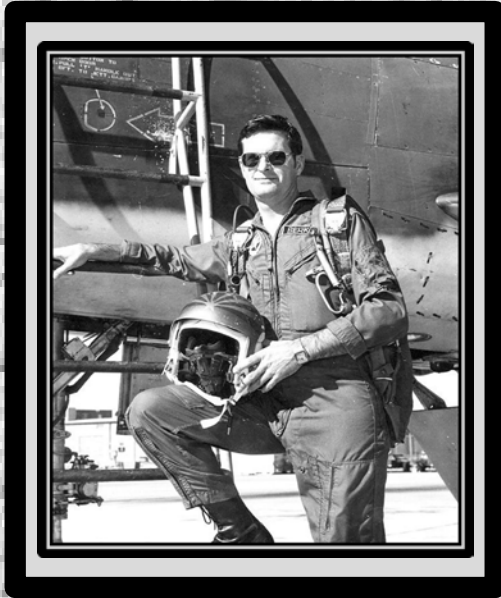
For the rest of my tour, I never forgot the basic law of physics that “what goes up must come down,” and I always planned my spacing accordingly. ■

# *The Way We Were*

*Fifty years younger and 40 pounds lighter, we were always ready to kick the tires, light the fires and belly up to the bar at happy hour. Those were the days!*



*Ivan "Andy" Anderson*



*Bill Berkley*



*Harry Brown*



*Pat Parks*



*Tom Rush*



*Ed "Moose" Skowran*

**RED ALERT – ALERT!!** We have about 48 “Hero Pictures” left in our dwindling supply (out of 1,962 total members since our founding –including Inactives & RIPs). We’ve now published 324. It’s time to add lots of others to our supply, before more of our heroes fly west. So, please dig out your favorites and participate ASAP! We prefer scanned photos (at 300 PPI) emailed to Photo Editor Shaun Ryan at ([f100plt@gmail.com](mailto:f100plt@gmail.com)). If you have no way to scan, snail mail it with a return address to Shaun at 6610 Sutherland Ridge Place, Tucson, AZ 85718, and we’ll return the originals. Thanks! P. Editor



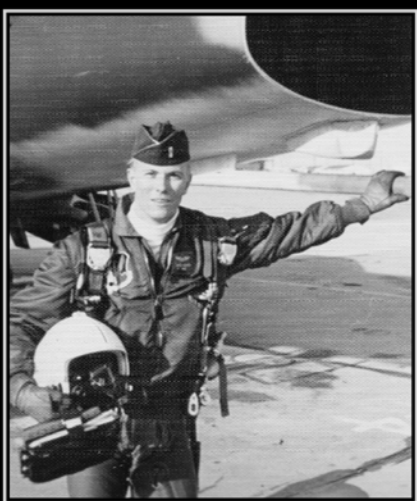
*Bob Coleman*



*George Dubick*



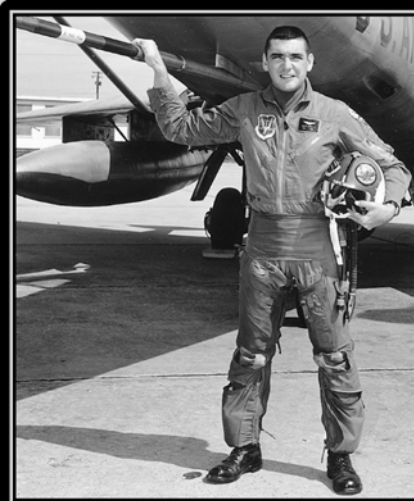
*John Edelblute II*



*Stan Swenson*



*Richard Weizenegger*



*James Wolff*

Peterson's Garden of Memories

By Charles "Pete" Peterson

*"Dear Editor: I read every issue of The Intake from cover to cover and most stories remind me of something I experienced in the Hun. You have neat accomplishments and great war stories to tell and I love them all. But in The Intake I do not see many of the little and stupid things I did, or remember. (This may be because I'm one of the few who did all those stupid things!) So I thought, heck, I'll just write down some of what I remember. It will be fun, and I am certain will bring back interesting memories for anyone who flew the Hun in particular—or fighters in general. So, what follows are simply my memories and thoughts in no particular order." — Pete.*



*Pete, back in the day.*

I reported to Luke in the summer of '69. After checking in, my family and I wearily climbed the old wooden steps in the VOQ. It was just after sunset, and as I looked out at the runway, a formation of two Huns was just lifting off with burners blowing—Lord, it was beautiful—I will never forget that sight! (And it was a sight I never tired of—in Vietnam even, sitting up at the O' Club at Phan Rang watching the night sorties take off and land.) Luke was a great six months for me; I was finally going to get to do what I wanted all my young life (although the Wing lost three Huns and pilots while I was there).



*"That sight" Pete will never forget probably looked something like this piece of Hun Fine Art by Mary Lee then-Fulton showing two Luke Huns taking off near sunset. In Issue Three, it was the first of many works of Hun fine art to follow in our quest to preserve the history of the Hun and the men who flew her.*

I was about average or a little above in all the gunnery etc. for my class. But I specifically remember two things: I hit the dart on my first mission. I thought the IP in the back seat was going to have an orgasm ... made me feel good! Then there was Basic Fighter Maneuvers #1 with, as I recall, Ed Cole. I was tooling along fat, dumb and happy and he came from behind and below at warp eight and pulled up directly in front of me. How he missed the pitot boom I'll never know. Oh, yeah, and it was at Luke's O' Club that I learned you don't walk into the bar with your hat on! That cost me about \$40, which was a small fortune then.

So, off to war and assignment to Phan Rang in the 615<sup>th</sup> TFS, 35<sup>th</sup> TFW. (I had been to Happy Valley/Phan Rang before, in '67-'68 as academic instructor/IP/SEFE in O-1s and O-2s at "FAC U," i.e. Forward Air Controller University, where I always envied the Hun guys for their air conditioned hootches and bar maids!) Well, I must now confess, as I have had to do everywhere all my life—I flew B-52s. And I even qualified as an Aircraft Commander puke, then completed that checkout on a night combat mission from Guam to Vietnam, refueling at night on seven motors (yes seven!—I had a fire light on #1 during climb-out; no actual fire, so I shut it down and pressed on) and carried 108 Mk 82s—I'm impressed!



*Confession time: "I flew 'The Long Range Penetrator.'"*

Anyway, when I returned to Phan Rang, the fact I'd flown the Buff came to the attention of a crusty old major who must have been born in a fighter cockpit and took it upon himself to see if I could hack it. We proceeded to become highly inebriated into the wee hours and, yes, you guessed it, we had an oh-dark-thirty brief a few short hours later. Off we went, me on the wing, in the weather, etc. I hung in there and dropped good bombs and I guess I passed. By the time my tour was up, I was a Flight Commander /IP/SEFE.

Aha! So I must have been pretty sharp Huh?

Nope! There was the time Lee Seymore and I were returning from a mission and I did the old "waggle wings into formation," then gave the speed brake signal and immediately lit the burner and the fight was on! We wound up on the treetops (where the bad guys were) in a Lufberry, under 300 kts—real smart, right? Of course, it's important to remember that at that age, we were all immortal, indestructible, irreplaceable and even invisible.

Then there was the "laughing box." Remember, those plastic things in a cloth bag? You could press the button and get a recorded laugh. I used to carry one with me on every mission. Many times I almost busted my arse taking off my oxygen mask, pushing the button, sticking it in my mask,

and pushing the transmit button to humiliate someone for dropping a bad bomb or some other thing almost as stupid as what I was doing. I was probably the only one who really thought it was funny—but I enjoyed it. (I continued this pastime in the A-7D world later on).

Remember curvilinear approaches? They complicated the 9-level gunners' chances of hitting us. We (F-100s) were much better at them than the F-4 pukers (well, of course they hardly ever got close enough to the ground to be in range) or just about anybody else (that's a fact, as I saw it from my FAC viewpoint also). Well, I was so good at it that on one mission I whipped off and back to the target at under 400 kts, on target and then off into a rising hill in front of me. I pulled all I thought the machine could take without a stall (we all know what would have happened if I had tried to light the burner) and considered myself "done fer." I'm surprised I didn't bring home tree limbs or, for that matter, a soiled flight suit. I have gun camera film to show this dumb act and still marvel how I made it over the top of that hill.

For some really smart moves, we used to fire flares at the 352<sup>nd</sup> TFS hootch right across from us. And, of course, smoke grenades down the hallway. The field grade guys tried to control us, God bless 'em. The "Bookie Bus Stop"—now for all who were not there when it happened I will try to make this succinct.

The trash haulers on base (call sign Bookie) had a little covered bus stop shack they used to go from their hootches to the flight line, etc. It sat on our "property," right by the 352<sup>nd</sup> TFS.

We used to write and draw uncomplimentary things about trash hauler pilots, etc. on the bus stop. The 35<sup>th</sup> TFW commander finally told us to cease and desist, but we got him back. With the assistance of the ADO we painted the bus stop, then had it hauled up on a big flatbed and met the wing CC with it at the end of the runway on his last flight—that was fun!



Vol. 25, No. 325 Saturday, Nov. 22, 1969  
*7<sup>th</sup> AF no doubt ran the article in this venerable rag.*

While on the F-100 tour at Phan Rang, 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force did an article on me as the "Triple Threat Pilot," because I had flown the B-52, O-1 and O-2 as a FAC, and F-100/other fighters all in the Vietnam War '67 to '71. Great, just what I needed! Another reminder for everyone that I flew B-52s! (In my other life I remember taxiing the Buff in after a nice short 12-hour mission and the control tower calling and telling me my wife had called to let me know my F-100 assignment had just come in! Hot Damn! I almost shut down the wrong engines; we always shut down 1, 2, 7 and 8 before getting to the chocks—*arrgghh!*)

There was a "visual" experience I will always remember: At Phan Rang, we would sometimes do an alert launch (call sign "Blade") at night as a single ship for a radar-controlled level bomb drop from 20,000' or so. One night after doing the drop, and with plenty of petrol, I lit the burner and climbed to 40,000'. The glow around the cockpit was really neat and on a clear night overlooking most of South Vietnam, all the little lights were a beautiful, peaceful sight. Then, back to reality: some of those little lights were blinking and people were dying as I looked.

Then there was "Misty South." I don't remember how it got started or whose idea it was, but Harry Brown and I attempted to do the Misty thing in an F-model with the GIB using a map and camera and tooling around low level to find bad guys. No armament except guns, which we were not supposed to use. However, it seemed that we did have to use the guns often (enemy water buffalo?). Anyway, I don't think the program was very successful. I'm sure Harry has much better recollection about it than I do. That said, the real Mistys up north remain some of my heroes! Speaking of Harry Brown, wasn't it he who pulled up as #3 in one of our many missing man formations and did an aileron roll at the top? I think he was "debriefed" on that. And I remember that there were two or three of our guys at the end of their tours who bought the farm in the back of a C-130 when it ran into a mountain on the way to Cam Ranh Bay for their flight home. But there were a lot of sad things like that I would prefer to forget.

Then they told us to take all the Huns back to the States. I was going to be leading a flight and was really looking forward to it, but came down with amoebic dysentery (not fun, believe me). So I stood on the flight line and watched the whole gaggle take off. Many of the guys gave me a formation wing dip—I'll never forget that either!

As an aside, while I was in the hospital a bunch of the guys snuck in through my hospital window and brought adult entertainment and beverages. I still remember going down the corridor pushing my IV pole to watch the "movies" in the conference room, but a nurse caught us and that ended the fun! (I recall she was a field grade—good 'ole big 'un).

So it was back to the States to the 357<sup>th</sup> TFS/355<sup>th</sup> TFW, the first operational A-7D Wing (I think) for a couple years. I was proud to have been selected for that. Then a desk job at AGOS at Hurlburt for a couple years and THEN: three choices: (1) ANG advisor to a national guard unit converting from Huns to A-7Ds meaning I would have to



*Harry Brown has contributed several stories to The Intake.*

(GET to) check out in the Hun again, (2) F-4s, or (3) F-104s to train Germans at Luke. After about a millisecond's consideration, I took the ANG/RAFSOB (regular air force son of a \*\*\*\*\*) job because, and only because, I would get to fly the Hun again. F-4s at that time would have been much better for a career, but that didn't bother me.

It is hard to keep this focused on just the F-100. So, here's just one little deal on each of the other airplanes I flew.

The A-7D: Wow, how 'bout trying to outdo the Marine F-4s at Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station on who could pull the most contrails and make the most noise on initial and pitch out to land—450 kt+ initials! Someone put a stop to that. Or trying to find the nudist camp by air (I *found* it!). Or my being on the receiving end of a little ACM on the way home—Tom Tapman did that to me. We wound up in a vertical scissors over the ocean. Or A-7Ds at Davis-Monthan and a conflict with SAC about fighter pilots not being allowed in the main O' Club wearing goat bags. Soon after that, somehow, O' Club furniture found its way into the swimming pool.



OK, so these are Korat SLUFs. But they were flown by pilots assigned to or trained at Davis-Monthan.

How 'bout O-1s/FAC in Vietnam where I stole, er, borrowed, uh, traded Willie Petes for some Army 2.75 HEs to load on my 8-tube O-1 fighter with crew chief in back

with a BAR and grenades. The crew chief rigged some elastic ropes to hold that BAR in the rear window and it worked great because we did not shoot our own airplane even once (but a few hot empty shells did hit the back of my neck)!

We were awesome—the number of rules and regs we violated would have taken up a few pages.

Back to the Hun, at Red Flag in '77 or '78 with ANG F-100s, tried to get the lock off the beer cooler in the O' Club after hours. Then there were those fire extinguisher fights in the BOQ—I remember the ANG/CC had to go to the base commander the next day to plead forgiveness. And I also remember writing a check for damages to the O' Club and BOQ.

B-52s? Well, it is the only airplane I ever took a dump in. And I once crawled clear back to the tail gunner just to say I did it. It was hard to do anything out of the ordinary because everything required a committee of six reading 12-page checklists.

Well, that's enough—it was fun putting all this down, but there is so much more. And hey, guys, it was 30-40 years ago, and I didn't research anything and my memory may be slightly hazy, so feel free to correct or critique this. I should mention that I did not grow up back then—and still haven't! One thing for sure though: Ernest Hemingway's statement: "... a man has only one virginity to lose in fighters, and if it is a lovely plane he loses it to, there his heart will ever be." I certainly agree with that—mine of course was lost to the Super Sabre! ■



Charter SSS Member Charles "Pete" Peterson lost his to the Super Sabre.



**Medley's Mea Culpa:** Pete originally sent an email with this offering from his "garden" on 4/1/2009! After being patient for SEVEN YEARS, I got another email from him on 4/20/2016, saying he had stumbled over his MEMORIES story and had a good chuckle upon reading it again. AND, he sheepishly said he couldn't clearly remember whether he had already sent it to us, etc. After a lightning pass through our Story Stash, I found the wayward email and document. I quickly replied to Pete that I had found it and offered this flimsy excuse: "Somehow it got buried in the sands of time, and I apologize for letting that happen. Thank you for finally 'following up' on this matter."

So, here's a public apology to Pete for a failure in our "First In, First Out" (unless overcome by events) policy on publishing priority for items submitted for consideration. This policy is still in place, and we're delving into the Story Stash to find similar lost items in need of resurrection and a nudge toward the front of our publishing agenda. Please bear with us in this effort. Again, mea culpa! — Pub Med



Interesting Trivia  
Vital Statistics about Our Journal

Issue One  
Pages: 20 Word Count: 12,295  
Characters: 55,327  
Paragraphs: 383

Go figure.  
More than  
double the  
pleasure!

Issue 32  
Pages: 40 Word Count: 28,948  
Characters: 131,926  
Paragraphs: 878

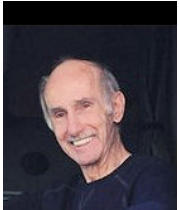


## The Hits Kept Coming: My Most Satisfying Mission in Vietnam

By Vito Tomasino

As he continues work on his new book (Close Calls and Other Neat Stories), Vito decided to send us Chapter Three, “The Hits Kept Coming,” which recaptures his most memorable mission in South Vietnam in late 1965. Good writers bring their readers along for the ride, and in the case of flying stories, “the ride” is literally the topic. As you read this, you’ll discover that “being there” is certainly the case from the opening sentence to the end of this story.

**Author’s Note:** Most of the targets we struck in South Vietnam were obscured by thick jungle canopy. We’d routinely drop our bombs on the FAC’s smoke, strafe the area and head home. We called them “Toothpick Missions.” If anyone was shooting back at us, it was usually just small arms fire; which, if it did find its mark, was unlikely to do any serious damage to the F-100. On occasion we would launch in support of a higher value target such as friendly troops under attack. That was the situation in Vietnam in late 1965. Two years later, the war would turn much uglier, and losses of pilots and aircraft began to increase dramatically. Despite its anxious moments, this story recaptures the most personally satisfying mission I flew in “Nam.” — *Vito*



Vito Now



Vito Then

**South Vietnam, October 1965** The sun hovered low in the western sky as three bomb-laden F-100s from the 429<sup>th</sup> TFS—the iconic “Black Falcon” painted on their yellow-banded tails—lifted off the runway of Bien Hoa Air Base, South Vietnam.

Their assigned target was an enemy arms cache located one hundred and thirty miles north of Saigon. Minutes before they could get there, Paris Control—under orders from 7<sup>th</sup> Air Force—redirected them to a new target. A U.S. Army convoy had been ambushed by the Viet Cong a few miles south of the fort at Plei Mei and was in imminent danger of being overrun.



Falcon Flight heading into the night ... for a CAS rescue.

We were over the ambush site in less than ten minutes, but not before the sun slipped behind the mountains, leaving us over an unplanned target that was quickly going dark, with no flare ship to light it up, and no qualified Forward Air Controller (FAC). There was, however, an Army Artillery Officer on scene flying a spotter aircraft similar to that used by our FACs, and he knew a target when he saw one.

“Bulldog, this is Falcon, Flight of three F-100s with bombs, rockets, and 20 mm. What have you got for us?”

“Copy that, Falcon, glad you could join the party. We were on a resupply mission to Plei Mei when the Viet Cong hit us just as we were passing through a sharp bend in the road.”

He continued: “They split the convoy in half, making it nearly impossible for our guys to establish an effective defense ... one of the slickest ambushes I’ve ever seen, I’ll give them that. But, we’re out-gunned and on the verge of being overrun. It’s also getting dark and we have no flare ship. What’s more, I’m not a qualified FAC. I don’t even have smoke rockets to mark the goddamned targets! Do you still want to do this?”

“Are you kidding? This is what we live for. It beats the hell out of what we were about to do with our “stuff.” Just tell us where you want it, Bulldog ... we’ll do the rest.”

“You’re on, Falcon. Do you see the tracers pouring in from both sides of the road?”

“Hard to miss in the dark.”

“The automatic weapons keeping our troops pinned down are on the other end. Take them out first.”

“Our pleasure Bulldog. Falcon, set the switches for bombs. Lead has the west gun, Two and Three take the two east of the road.”

Each of us dropped two 750 pound bombs on the first pass, destroying all three enemy positions. But “Charlie” wasn’t done ... not even discouraged. Three more guns opened fire on the convoy. At least one of them came from the same location we had just hit. Apparently our bombs killed the shooters, but not the gun, which had been taken over quickly by another crew.

“Falcon, let’s try this again. Arm for rockets.”

Given the 2.75 inch Folding Fin Rockets greater accuracy, we took out the second set of automatic weapons, expending only one of our pods. The lethal saturation coverage of 19 high-explosive warheads ensured that, even if the gun itself survived, it would take some time before a replacement crew could be formed.

Bulldog then directed our attack to the enemy force that had our troops under fire from both sides of the road.

We hit them with our remaining rockets, then with 20 mm cannons. Pulling off my first strafing pass, I saw tracer rounds from anti-aircraft artillery tracking Falcon Two as he completed his run. Bulldog also saw it. “Falcon, we’ve got AAA located just west of the bend in the road.”



*Working the target area in the dark near Plei Mei.*

“Roger that. Two and Three hold east of the convoy. I’ve got this. When the tracers stop, jump back in.”

Falcon Three questioned the wisdom of my plan. “You can’t knock out ‘Triple-A’ with twenty mil.”

“I know, but I can kill the crew and buy us some time; enough, maybe, for the next flight to get here before we run out of gas.”

I climbed to an altitude that would allow me to attack at a steeper angle. It would give me a better look at the target and a few seconds more firing time. The gunners must have been expecting me, because they had my aircraft bracketed with 120 mm high-explosive cannon shells before I completed my roll in. But, I was already committed to the attack, and found myself staring straight down the muzzle of their gun—fascinated by the strangely beautiful light streaks that sailed by my canopy in apparent slow motion. It felt as though time had been suspended. I had experienced the euphoria of being “in the zone” before, but that evening the concept was raised to a whole new level.

Ironically, the tracer rounds they were using to adjust their fire made it easier for me to home in on their position. Aiming through the lighted path they provided me, I fired a long burst from the F-100’s four cannons, showering the crew with 20 mm high-explosive shells at the rate of six thousand rounds a minute, permanently relieving them of their duty. I also did enough damage to the gun to keep it out of action long enough for the next group of “Huns” to get there and finish the job of forcing the “Cong” back into their jungle.

We continued our strafing runs until we were well past bingo fuel to give our troops the “breathing room” they needed to reform the convoy.

“Bulldog—Falcon One, we’ve pushed our fuel as far as we can. We’ve got to head back.”

“Roger that. The other fighters are less than five minutes out and, with any luck, we’ll have a flare ship here

as well. And Falcon—thanks! That was one hell of a demonstration of close air support. Never seen anything like it, even under ideal conditions. You guys did it in poor visibility over serious mountainous terrain without target illumination, not to mention an unqualified Forward Air Controller. You saved a lot of good men today.”

“Our pleasure Bulldog. This is the kind of mission every fighter pilot wants to be a part of. As for your qualification as a Forward Air Controller, I’ve never worked with a better one.”

“Thanks Falcon. Safe return.”

“Same to you. Falcon, Lead’s off right. Let’s go home.”

I completed a climbing turn to the south as Two and Three joined in close fingertip formation—checking me, and each other for battle damage and hung ordinance before positioning themselves on my wing.

“Lead, this is Three, we’re clean ... so are you.”

“Roger that. Check all armament switches safe and say fuel.”

“Two has 1,350 pounds remaining.”

“Three has 1,450.”

“Roger that. Lead has 1,500.”

That should be enough to get us home, I thought. Then, I saw it ... a line of thunderstorms about 30 miles in front of us, stretching across our flight paths far as the eye could see. I estimated the tops to be over forty five thousand feet. We were level at twenty five, and could not climb over them without burning up the little remaining fuel we had. Going around was out of the question.



*A monstrous line of thunderstorms ... and way under Bingo fuel.*

“Falcon, stay close, we have no other option but to go through this monster. If you lose sight of me, get on your instruments and turn ten degrees away from my heading. Hold that heading for four seconds, then turn back to parallel the original course. We’ll rejoin in the clear on the other side.”

“Sounds like a plan, Lead,” Three quipped. “Think they’ll extend ‘happy hour’ for us at the club?”

“Let’s get back and find out, Sammy.”

Our last two casual transmissions may not have been exactly as I remember them here, but they are not unlike the kind of nervous banter that fighter pilots resort to in a tight

situation. An old fighter pilot (he was a few years older than me) gave me this bit of sage advice early in my career: “If you’re going to die, there’s no sense dying all tensed up.”

He had a wily grin on his face when he imparted those words of wisdom to me and I assumed he was just kidding. Since then, however, there have been more than a few occasions when I called on that bit of philosophical wit to carry me through a difficult situation and, oddly enough, it worked.

I saw a slight break in the cumulonimbus giants that were about to swallow us whole. “Falcon, I see a sliver of light coming through the clouds at 11 o’clock. It’s not much, but it’s all we got.”

“Falcon Three has it. It’s worth a shot, Lead.”

“Exactly what I was thinking.” As we got closer, the small sliver appeared to be expanding—enough, as it turned out, for all three Super Sabres to fly through in a loose formation. We managed to hold the flight together in the severe turbulence, but a dazzling 360 degree display of lightning discharges turned the night into day, while playing havoc with our night vision. However, the weather was relatively clear on the other side of the storm cell, and we would have more than enough time to recoup full night vision. Still, it was a dark, moonless night and we were a hundred miles from home. I switched us over to Paris Control.



*“Black Falcon” Hunts RTBing to Bien Hoa with Min fuel.*

“Paris, this is Falcon, how do you read?”

“Loud and clear Falcon ... squawk ident.”

“Falcon squawking.”

“Copy. We have you 97 miles northeast of Bien Hoa. The field is VFR, with five miles visibility and thin scattered clouds at three thousand feet, altimeter 3-0.3-2.”

“Roger, altimeter 3-0.3-2. Be advised Paris, we’re approaching emergency fuel. My number two man is practically there. Request direct vector to Bien Hoa with a handoff to GCA and clearance for an en-route descent.”

“You’re cleared to 2,500 feet. Call leaving Flight Level 2-5-0. We’ll hand you off to Bien Hoa GCA 15 miles out.”

I eased the throttle back to 80 percent rpm and started a gradual descent, leaving the speed brake up to conserve fuel. “Falcon Flight, reduce power to 80 percent.”

“Two, copy.”

“Three.”

They remained in loose finger-tip formation. My plan was to have Falcon Two make the first approach, since he was lowest on fuel. Three and I would then take separation on him for a formation approach and landing. That was the plan, until I received a call from Paris minutes prior to our handoff to Bien Hoa.

“Falcon, this is Paris, we have problem.”

“We do?”

“Bien Hoa has lost all power to its runway lights.”

“Are you kidding me ... no runway lights?” Jesus, what next?

“Afraid not. Flare pots have been set up on the first third of runway. They’re doing what they can to get more in place, but it’s not likely to improve much before you arrive. Other pilots have reported difficulty in seeing the runway more than a mile out.”

“Copy that, Paris. That pretty much changes our game plan.”

“Say again.”

“I’ll tell you about it later over a cold beer at the club.”

What I didn’t have time to explain to Paris, was that all three of us were approaching emergency fuel and may have only one shot at a safe recovery. And now, I couldn’t risk splitting up the flight on the chance that Two and Three—who had been staring at my wing tip lights for the last half hour—could safely make the transition to instruments and land on a nearly invisible runway. No, we’ll do this together.

If the flare pots couldn’t be seen until we were practically over them, then we would stay on top of them by flying a “360 Degree Overhead”—the standard fighter landing pattern under VFR weather conditions. GCA could align us with the runway and bring us in close enough to visually acquire the flares. I called for a fuel check.

“Falcon Two ... 550.”

“Three ... 650.”

“Roger that, Lead has 700. Given our fuel and the runway lighting conditions we can’t risk individual GCA approach and landings. Instead, radar will line us up with the runway for a ‘360 overhead.’ It’s our best option. Make it good.”

“Falcon One, this is Three, remind me not fly with you again.”

“I knew it wouldn’t last.”

“What?”

“The honeymoon.”

Paris Control interrupted our gallows humor. “Falcon, this is Paris, we have you at 15 miles, descending through 5,000 feet. You’re cleared to Bien Hoa GCA. I’m looking forward to that cold beer.”

“So am I, Paris ... thanks.”

I switched the flight over to GCA frequency. “Bien Hoa, Falcon here, how do you read?”

“Loud and clear, Falcon. We have a good ‘paint’ 13 miles east of Bien Hoa at three thousand feet.”

“Roger, request vector to initial for a ‘360 Overhead Approach’ for full stop landings. We’re below emergency fuel and can’t afford a miss.”

“Will do.” “Falcon flight go echelon right and tighten it up.” I leveled off, just as Three completed his cross-under to join on Two’s right wing. “Falcon, level at 1,500.”

“Roger Falcon, we have you at two miles on the runway centerline. Cleared to Bien Hoa Tower.”

“Falcon, go Channel Two.” When Two and Three checked-in I made my call: “Tower, Falcon on a two mile initial. Request full stop landings for three thirsty F-100s.”

“Roger that Falcon, cleared as requested. Call the break.”

“Falcon, I’ve got a visual on the flares. Take three seconds in the break and roll out on downwind just outside my jet wash. Two, keep me in sight until you start your turn to final. Three, do the same off of Two. Say fuel.”

“Two, copy. I’m reading 400 pounds.”

“Three ... under 500.”

“Roger that, Lead has five. Make this one good, gents. Tower, Falcon is in the break.”



*In the break for a 360 overhead with Emergency fuel.*

“In sight, Falcon ... cleared full stop landings. Call turning base with gear and flaps down.”

The flare pots were barely visible from about a mile out, but provided the “marker” we needed to keep us oriented in the overhead pattern until we rolled out on final. Then, as we crossed the runway threshold, our aircraft landing lights provided all the illumination we needed.

The three of us landed on the first attempt with good drag chutes, which were jettisoned when we cleared the runway and pulled into the de-arming area. Maintenance and armament personnel checked us over, disarmed the guns, and installed all safety pins before giving us a “thumbs up” to taxi.

*All of us who had a flying tour of duty in Vietnam, and indeed every Hun driver who ever flew that bird, can certainly relate to Vito’s memorable mission, and so can the casual readers who flew other aircraft, or are and always were ground-pounders. Vito’s skill and talent is to tell his stories in such a way that every reader is “along for the ride,” and can know and even feel what is going on, every step of the way. That is a special talent, and can simply be summed up as, “Vito can really write, and he brings every reader with him wherever he, or his fighter jet, decides to go.” In a future issue of The Intake we will be reviewing Close Calls and Other Neat Stories when it is published. — Ed.*

Back in the parking area, “Brack” reinstalled the chocks and climbed up the ladder to hand me a cold beer before I could get out of the cockpit. That same scene was played out with two other Falcons. Word had gotten back to our crew chiefs before we landed. I think they were happy to see us.

The Bomb-Damage Assessment Report—as debriefed by Intelligence—confirmed that we did, indeed, get to the ambush site in time to inflict enough damage to force the



*Vito’s Hun “EZDY” (his wife): Safely home and headed for a beer.*

Viet Cong to momentarily pull back. This gave our Army friends the time they needed to rejoin the convoy and get back on the road. Although still under heavy small arms fire, they made it into Plei Mei with minimum casualties.

“Bulldog,” the Army Lieutenant Colonel who directed our attack, noted his appreciation of our work in his After Action Report. As a result, we were awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses—an honor to be sure. Our real reward, however, was helping him and our guys on the ground fight their way out of a deadly ambush, not to mention getting back to Bien Hoa for that cold beer.

But, it was the Colonel’s skill and courage under fire that impressed me most. He was flying a light, unarmed Cessna aircraft at 110 mph, a thousand feet above the thick of the action, and well within the lethal range of every Viet Cong guerilla on the ground wielding an AK-47. Moreover, he stayed right in the middle of the “hot zone” for us, and the fighters that followed. No one was more deserving of a medal for the mission than he—as was every man in that convoy.

We had our beers that night, and we told our “war story” to every fighter pilot in the bar sober enough to listen. But we didn’t get too carried away with our instant celebrity because we knew that the very next day, we would be “strapping on” another airplane and would have to do it all over again! ■

## High G Flight

By Vern “Mouse” Nordman

As promised in the SYC Dept., here is Vern’s full submission for a SYC involving a hairy adventure he had at the mercy of an “artificial feel system” gone mad. Fortunately, Vern survived a wild ride that could easily have killed him! **Ed.**



Author in his prime.

In 1964, just before the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, I was TDY to Clark Field in the Philippines with the 531<sup>st</sup> TFS, and out on a regular training flight. Capt. Paul S. Moore was Lead, I was 2 and Capt. Phil Drew was 3. As we headed home, we were in trail formation doing some lazy acrobatics of wingovers and rolls. I was tucked in tight and could feel that Paul was setting up for a loop because we were pointed steeply down with the airspeed building rapidly. Everything was delightful and groovy; we were doing what we all enjoyed about flying fighters, particularly the Hun. That good feeling didn’t last very long, because in a microsecond, my Hun pitched up violently! My natural instinct was to pop the

stick forward to correct this maneuver. When I forced the stick forward at such a high speed, I immediately got into the proverbial “JC” maneuver. I was experiencing negative Gs like I had never felt before. I probably did this swapping of ends two or three times and realized that I could handle positive Gs or negative Gs but not simultaneously.

While I was going through these gyrations, Phil said he moved to the side because he could not believe that my aircraft was going to hold together. In the meantime, Leader Paul was oblivious to what was happening behind him and continued to do his loop. Finally, I chose to accept the positive Gs and released the throttle, put both hands on the stick and pulled.

Even though I had been tucked in fairly tight, I had not gone through Lead’s jet wash until I just pulled back on the stick and held it. Now the aircraft was pointed skyward, losing airspeed, and conditions rapidly started to stabilize. I eased the throttle back, kept the stick centered, and used left rudder to bring the nose of the aircraft down to the horizon. I then gently rolled to a wings level attitude. About this time, Phil called and asked, “Mouse, are you all right?” Well, I was seeing spots from the horrific G maneuvers I had encountered, but told him, “I think so.”

Now Paul, hearing this conversation between his wingmen, knew that something was amiss and circled around to find his flight. I said I wanted to make a straight-in approach to land because I didn’t want to pitch out, not knowing what to expect from this plane *with a mind of its own*. The landing was uneventful, thank goodness. As I taxied in, I checked the G-meter. It was pegged out in both directions! If I remember right, the max on the G-meter was 10 on the positive side and 4 on the negative side.



“Five Thirsty Firststers.”



“Mouse’s” G-meter.

Believe it or not I had not popped any rivets or wrinkled the skin.

The maintenance diagnosis confirmed that the Artificial Feel System was intermittent and needed to be replaced. When I returned to the squadron ops, two other pilots said that they had had similar experiences with that AC. One said that while he was flying formation on the wing, the AC initially did not respond to his correction but suddenly popped up; the other said that while landing, he tried to round out but nothing happened. But then, the AC suddenly popped up. He indicated that he was a little “hot on the airspeed” and just held what he had until touchdown.

The next day when I was in the shower, I found bruises on the top of my thighs from the seat belt as well as bruises across my collarbones from the shoulder harnesses.

Therefore, I would like to put in my claim for the most positive Gs at 10 and the most negative Gs at 4, all in the same flight. — Vern “Mouse” Nordman

*A most gripping tale. By the way: While researching Mouse’s claim, we discovered that his “G-meter’s” real nomenclature is the “Burton Accelerometer” with a scale of +10 to -4 Gs. We also stumbled upon a technical description of the Hun’s “Artificial Feel Bungees,” by a maintenance guy, which we deem worthy of sharing below. Overall, great story, Vern. Ed.*

“The F-100 artificial feel bungees were a dual spring cartridge-looking affair. The dual springs for push & pull, or compression & extension, gave the pilot the feel necessary to control the aircraft. As a flight line mechanic we removed and replaced these bungees. However, when installing them or rigging the flight controls, the bungees had to be rigged also. *This is where one not paying attention to detail or not knowing exactly what you are doing, can get you into very serious trouble.*

“The Horizontal Stabilizer rigging, by far was the most complex, and troublesome. Aside from rigging the stabilizer actuator itself, plus the control valve linkage, plus the trim linkage, *and the artificial feel bungee*, it was very easy to accidentally pre-load one or the other if you did not follow each step very carefully. But aside from following each step, you had to realize what effect adjusting one part would have another part. If you were not very careful, whatever setting you had just adjusted into a piece of linkage, you might have changed that setting, by allowing another piece of linkage to bottom out or stop before full travel on another was reached.

“Lubrication of these components was very critical in that the exact lube called out in the tech order is what was required. If you substitute lubricants, some are more susceptible to moisture and can freeze at altitude.” *SSS Thanks to Tom Suglio!* ■

## My Two Shortest Flights: A Tragedy and a Crop-Dusting Show

By Gary Tompkins

*The Hun was like the most beautiful, high-maintenance and demanding woman we ever met, requiring complete focus and never boring, and somehow, always, well worth the effort. Some flights were routine, but there were also those that remain vivid in our memories. To this day, we can recall virtually every detail like it was an hour ago. And those little “Hun surprises” could happen anytime, even during takeoff, as was the case in the first of these two stories from Gary Tompkins. Clearly both incidents have remained vivid for him, and in the first instance, burned into my memory as well. Ed.*

### An unexpected tragedy.

All of us who have made long deployments with air refuelings have logged flights of many hours. As a Misty, I routinely logged 4.5+ hour missions over North Vietnam. In South Vietnam, most F-100 flights to III and IV Corps were logged in at less than two hours. Back at Wheelus AB, flights were shorter still; some were mixed time on the gunnery range followed by burning off fuel to land. With the AB cooking, you could empty the machine in 15 minutes.

And, of course, if you hit the silk on takeoff, you really had a short flight! Blessedly, I had an equal number of take offs and landings in my 1,500 hours in the Hun, but my shortest flights were .1 and .3 hours respectively. Logging my shortest flight in the AFF 781 (or was it the 249 by then?) by rounding would have resulted in “0.”

Just a few days before “Tet” exploded in late January of 1968 with surprise attacks all over South Vietnam, I was leading an early morning three ship, a preplanned mission out of the 90<sup>th</sup> TFS at Bien Hoa. My #2 was a new guy just out of UPT and a shortened Hun conversion course whom I was checking out in-theater. My #3 was fellow SSSer and dear friend, John “JJ” Schulz, who was flying chase on each of the checkout missions for the new guy. When we were armed and lined up for takeoff, I looked at #2, who nodded his head as if ready to roll. Only one problem: his canopy was still up! I should have known.



*“Dice,” created in WW1, is the 2nd-oldest AF squadron.*

That fixed, I rolled, and just as I pulled gear up the FIRE LIGHT came on. I declared an emergency and cleaned off the bombs, napalm and pylons with the External Load Emergency Jettison Button (the Panic Button, you know: the red guy!), which dropped the ordinance safe into the pre-designated dump area just off the end of the runway. It was amazing what an upward trajectory that caused. It

had an elevator effect allowing me to do a Chandelle to downwind.

Meanwhile, with 30 seconds less time to accelerate, JJ, my golden-handed #3, lifted off with a full load at absolute

minimum speed, raised the gear and kept the flaps down as he banked steeply and babied the plane through the right turn to find me as I climbed to downwind. He wanted to make sure my plane wasn't burning.



*Gary Tompkins at Bien Hoa. 1967-8.*

Dropping all call-signs he called me to confirm: “Gary, this is John. Negative smoke, negative fire, do you copy?” Former Thunderbird mates Buster McGee and Hank Canterbury were taxiing out just then and later said Schulzie's right wing never got more than about four feet off the ground all the way around his turn until he rolled out and started climbing. They said he looked like he was on the ragged edge of a stall during the whole turn.

I thought that all was well, even if it had caused the kind of adrenaline rush you could do without. But then I became aware of the tragedy part. As I set up on downwind, about to lower my gear for the base-to-final turn, the tower call on Guard said, “Attention all aircraft in the Bien Hoa area, we have an emergency with Dice 2 off the end of the runway.”

JJ responded on tower frequency saying, “Negative, Tower, the emergency aircraft is Dice 1, and he is on the downwind for landing.” The tower replied, “Negative, Dice 2 is the new emergency.” It turned out my #2 had augured into the Tac Han River just off the end of the runway.

JJ later told me that as #2 climbed out near the end of the runway, he apparently forgot momentarily that all takeoffs at Bien Hoa in that direction required a right turn out of traffic for join-up (outgoing artillery was a near constant from just left of the runway). Just before going into an even steeper bank, JJ looked over the left rim of his cockpit and saw #2 reverse to the right—but with the nose lagging left!

Apparently adverse yaw turned into a snap-roll straight into the river.

Naturally, logging the flight time was the least of my concerns, but the log read “.1” hours.

### A passing comment about those “dusty old films in our heads.”

*For all of us, I'm sure, there are a few flights that remain vivid after all these years and are like replaying a film in our heads, with every detail still as true and accurate as if it was a real film. This story by Gary, which involved me to some degree, is one of those where the “film” is still on file in my mind to this day. I recall thinking (many times) afterward that I was assigned to help supervise our “number Two” that day, and somehow failed in that assignment. No matter how*

many times I replay the sequence of events, I still don't know what I could have done to keep him alive. That "film" keeps telling me that he had induced the fatal adverse yaw in parts of a second, and anything I could have said would have been too late to save him. In those unforgiving seconds after the first emergency call, my only concern was to find Gary's Hun and let him know whether to stick with it or bail out. At least I succeeded in that part of the job. **Ed.**

### Turning an emergency into a crop-dusting "show" for the Tower guys.

An earlier short flight (circa 1965) had a much happier ending. As a young 81<sup>st</sup> TFS captain based at Hahn AB, I was the front seater as number four in an "F" with Major Cvitanovich—a 50<sup>th</sup> TFW wing something-or-other (but one heck of a squash player)—in the rear. We took off from Ramstein (the Hahn runway was being repaired) headed for Wheelus with full 450-gal. tanks (there were no 335-gal. tanks in the 50<sup>th</sup> TFW, just 275s and 450s). As I made the straight-ahead join-up near the French border, Lead said, "Turn around Four, head back to Ramstein, throttle back, declare an emergency, and do *NOT* light the afterburner!"

I like clear instructions, so back to Ramstein we went with number Three chasing. By the time I got on an easterly heading I noticed that the fuel tank gages for the 450s

showed "0." Darned maintenance crews! But no, they really were empty and the internal tanks were also emptying fast. Good grief, after FIVE MINUTES?

Later, the tower chief said that our "F" looked more like a crop duster on downwind, so much fuel was venting from the underside of the aircraft. We landed and shut down the aircraft on roll out—an unnecessary effort because all of the JP-4 was out of the aircraft anyway.

It turned out that all but one of the bolts on the cover for the main fuel line into the J57 had stripped and the only gas going into the engine was splashing off the cover. I think I logged .3 or .4 hours on that one. ■



81<sup>st</sup> TFS

### An Ode to the RSO

#### Maj Ron Barker

*Upper Heyford RSU (East End) 1972*

Mobile Control is a lonely old hole,  
A worthless place to be.  
Just a high paid jerk, playing runway clerk,  
With no authority.

They give you a kit, full of worthless shit.  
Vintage? World War Two!  
With a pat on the back and a new time hack,  
You're off to the RSU.

You sit there alone with four telephones,  
Three radios, two rusty guns,  
A pair of "binocs" to check gear down and locked,  
And a hard old stool for your buns.

Now, if you don't know why they made you go,  
You're a flippin' ding-a-ling.  
'Cause if something goes wrong, they need you along  
So they've got someone to swing.

Will you ever return? No, you'll never return,  
And there's no way you can win.  
You missed one call sign, and a takeoff time,  
So don't expect soon to come in!



**Mobile!—Look Out, Bail Out!!**

### Picture Caption Contest



**Bill McCollum's caption:**

*"With zero launch and a quick Immelmann, I'll be at Fox 2 in a flash."*

It was Hoppy Hopkins who suggested the Caption Contest and he is the sole and unchallengeable judge and jury for picking the winner.

As we move to Round Two, with the challenge to all to properly caption this Hun in the Sun at dawn or dusk, (below) there's a bit of a procedural change for the sake of efficiency: Send your captions to the editor, [jjschulz@bu.edu](mailto:jjschulz@bu.edu)\* and they will be relayed to "Hoppy."

(\*No appointment necessary)



*Your Caption will go here.*

*(I don't know about any of you, but I always "hated myself in the morning" when I left the Dice Bar at 3:30 and had to brief at six a.m.)*

Not a caption, just an editorial comment and some bad memories. ☺ — Ed.

## Don Shepperd's F-100 Dedication Speech at Joint Base Andrews, MD

*First, a little background: Don Shepperd is no stranger to the Air National Guard's (ANG's) Readiness Center at what's now known as Joint Base Andrews (since 2009). In his long time at the Pentagon on consecutive tours (Deputy Director of the ANG, 1989–1994, and then Director, until retirement in 1998), the Readiness Center was a familiar, nearby element of the ANG and of great interest to Don. And in 2010, at a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony, the ANG recognized his contributions by naming a major Readiness Center building addition "Shepperd Hall." In his remarks at that event, "Shep," in so many words, said, "This building's not about me, it's about YOU, the Guard." And so, when he was invited to give a dedication speech on 13 Sept. 2016 for a restored F-100F with his name on it, which was recently installed in front of the ANG Readiness Center, Shep used the same theme, "It's not about me... ." And he was spot-on—as you shall see in this article, which includes his unabridged speech, plus a sidebar about the new "Hun on a pedestal." Ed.*

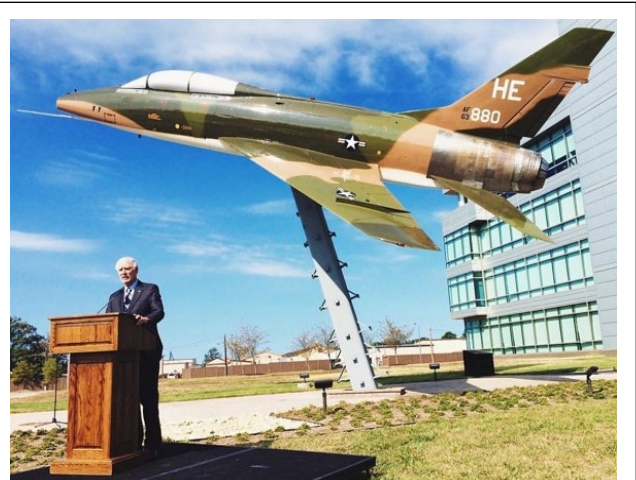
**Here is Don Shepperd's speech:** "Thank you Gen. Rice, Gen. Grass (our just-retired and now smiling former Chief of the National Guard Bureau), general officers, distinguished guests, family, friends, and beyond all, my beloved Guard men and women. Thank you for today. This is an emotional day for me, but for reasons you may not understand. It is NOT because my name is on this airplane but for what it represents.

"This aircraft happened because of Lt. Gen. (ret.) Sid Clarke, former Director of the Air National Guard. He understood the importance of history and culture and where we as Guard men and women came from and who gave it to us and why we need to be reminded of such.

"This aircraft was the first of the Century series fighters. It ushered in the era of supersonic flight. It was a true mainstay in the Cold War, the big war that we won without firing a shot. It was flown by active duty ANG units. We flew it in peace and war, over deep oceans, wide deserts and thick jungles, day and night in all kinds of weather. I checked out in this aircraft over 50 years ago as a 23 year-old kid. At 24, I strapped a nuclear weapon onboard and sat alert in Europe. I don't think I scared the Russians, but it would certainly have concerned my neighbors in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, to know their former paperboy had a nuke. We would have blown the world up to save it.

"And then, there was war. I left for Vietnam from Stapleton Field in Denver, Colorado. As I walked down the ramp to the airplane, I looked back at my wife, Rose, who was crying. I didn't understand. It was everything I had dreamed about. I was going to be a fighter pilot in real war, a jungle war for men with hair on their chests. There were missiles and MiGs and SAMs and Triple-A and our bases were attacked at night with rockets and mortars. What was not to like? Many decades later, I understand why Rose was crying. I fully understand the toll on families, the wives, husbands and children of war.

"You see, when I look at this beautiful airplane on a pedestal, I don't see just an airplane. I hear voices. I hear the voices of men in terrible danger and on fire. I smell smoke. I see flames. I hear the thump, thump, thump of Triple-A passing close to the canopy and I feel the impact of shells hitting the airplane. I see ejection seat rockets and I hear parachute beepers and I see the bravest of



### DON SHEPPERD DEDICATES THIS F-100 ON DISPLAY

*The plaque at the base of this static display of F-100F 56-3880 traces the history of the plane. The inscription begins by saying the display commemorates MG Don Shepperd's service as a Misty pilot in the Vietnam War (he flew 58 Misty missions from Dec. '67 to April '68.), his service as the former director of the ANG, and honors the 10,700 ANG personnel who served in Vietnam.*

*The plaque says that 880 "depicts" the F-models used by the Misty FACs. All the Misty planes were dismantled and unrecoverable when Lt. Gen. Sid Clark, former Director of the ANG, came up with the idea of a static display in front of the ANG's Readiness Center at Joint Base Andrews.*

*In fact, the only F-model left in the boneyard was 880, which, in Dec. 1957, was initially assigned to a wing in USAFE and in 1961 was reassigned to the Sioux City ANG. In 1977 it was retired and sent to the Davis-Monthan (D-M) boneyard; in 1990 it was earmarked to become a drone.*

*Once the decision was made to turn it into a static display, and once the restoration work was done at D-M, 880 was disassembled and sent to the Sioux City unit, where it was reassembled, painted in the colors for Misty Huns in Vietnam and tail-coded with the Phu Cat designation. It was then disassembled and sent to Andrews for set up.*



the brave, Jolly Green helicopter pilots, hovering to pick up our downed pilot while being riddled with gunfire, and us strafing desperately to keep the bad guys away. And, I hear the worst radio call of all, ‘They’ve got me. I’m breaking my radio. See you after the war.’ And of course, some we did, some we didn’t.

“I was part of a group of 157 men who flew a special, and at the time, top secret mission over North Vietnam. Our mission was to seek out SAM sites, Triple-A anti-aircraft and ammunition storage dumps, and truck parks and POL. Our missions lasted four to six-and-a half hours, with two or three aerial refuelings. We went back in to North Vietnam two or three times on each mission, depending on weather, marking targets for bomb-laden fighters.



“It was a desperately difficult and dangerous mission and 28% of our pilots were shot down, some twice. WHY? —Well, that is why this airplane is important. The reason we were shot down is that we didn’t have what you now have—we were in SAM and Triple-A country and we had no reliable RHAW gear, no chaff, no flares, no ECM, no night vision equipment, no radar, no precision weapons. We did not have what we

needed to win and survive.

“The men who flew this aircraft, and others like it, gave you what you have today. They came home from a difficult war, one we did not win, and rebuilt the Air Force and the Guard with what you have today—modern equipment, relevant training and great facilities worthy of true professionals. In return, you have used what we gave you to construct a combat-ready force, an OPERATIONAL force (NOT a strategic reserve) that can fight side-by-side with our active duty counterparts on a moment’s notice and you can’t tell the difference. That is truly amazing, and you are doing it today in Iraq and Afghanistan and all over the world.

“Just behind my name on this aircraft is the name of Capt. Jim Fiorelli, a great Arizona Guardsman. Jim was one of the finest and most natural pilots I have ever known. He passed away several years ago while investigating an F-16 crash east of Tucson. I still see his smiling face and hear his voice.

His wife, Mary, is a dear friend of ours still living in Tucson. When I found out this aircraft was to be put here and my name was to be put on it, I asked that Jim’s name be placed alongside mine because we flew many Misty missions together in Vietnam.

“As you look at this aircraft on your way to work, remember the men who gave you what you have and thank them, because they will be looking down at you and smiling and saying, ‘Thanks for what you have made the Air National Guard’.



*Shep, “Rosie the Riveter,” children and grandchildren were all in attendance.*

“Time flies swiftly. I have been retired over 18 years but some of you [older folks] may remember the little girl whose image I used to start my Power Point slides [each time I gave briefings way back when] that spoke about the future?—Well she’s here today, my granddaughter ‘Paigey Pooh’ Shepperd Sallee, now graduated from college and married along with the rest of my family, grandson Christian, a college sophomore and granddaughter Isabelle, a high school freshman, son Tyler, a former USAF AC-130 gunship pilot, his wife Rebecca, and of course, my beautiful wife, Rosie the Riveter, who followed me through the ups and downs of life’s journey through military flying.

“I want to sincerely thank everyone who had a hand in placing this aircraft here. They are too numerous to mention. I accept this beautiful aircraft on behalf of all who flew it in peace and war, active, Guard and Reserve—a testament to where we came from long, long ago.

“Col. Robert ‘Hoppy’ Hopkins, USAF (Ret.) is here. Hoppy is CEO of the Super Sabre Society, an organization of old surviving F-100 pilots. There are about 1,400 of us. Hoppy has brought our ‘Last Man Standing’ toasting cabinet, which we use at reunions and events to toast our departed comrades. Like the Doolittle Raiders, the last two F-100 pilots will share a final toast. I fully intend to be one of those last two men!

“Please take a look at and enjoy that cabinet on the left as you enter the Hall.

“Thank you for being here today.” ■



*I told Shep the cake was creative, but was it appetizing? His answer: “Both.”*

## Looking Back

By Joe Breen

*In late July, Joe sent a letter to the editor saying, "I was reading Jackie Douglass' I-31 story titled 'Nothing Is As It Appears' in your 'From a Wife's Perspective' series, and in my mind, what she so eloquently said reflected a poem I'd scribbled a while back—one that recognized the courage we all drew from those who sat alone and waited for our return. I wanted to share it. It is a tribute to Jackie and to all those others who held their breath during our absences in peace or war." When Medley and I read Joe's scribbled "poem," we realized he had provided us with reminiscences eloquently touching on many experiences—some unique to those who've "roamed the vastness of the sky." He added: "Looking back you still sense and recall with wonder that life spent well in the airman's world." When you read his work, we think you'll appreciate it much the same as did we. Ed.*



Joe Breen  
"Looking Back."

**There was a legacy born when a forgotten name, yet remembered face, sent you aloft, *alone*, for that first flight. In friendly skies, you nurtured skills for tomorrow.**

**Not all learned those lessons well, but you clung hard to that path trod first by the Bishop's boys on Kitty Hawk's winter sands.**

**A path hard etched by others, known and nameless both, who took the path higher and farther with each passing year, and beckoned you to follow ... and follow you did.**

**Uncounted, the years flowed. Your eyes and edges sharpened, and with them you forged memories and friendships unshared by most ... perhaps envied by others.**

**A life woven on the same loom as that of other men, but of a different thread.  
Neither greater, nor lesser ... but of a warp and weft setting one apart.**

**Looking back you still sense and recall with wonder that life spent well in the airman's world. In the quiet moments, memory renews long dimmed scents, sights and distant murmurs of that life:**

- The red of Madagascar's rivers, bleeding that island's earth into a silt-stained ocean.
- Seeing again the Arctic's borealis, pouring cold shimmers across black wintered skies,
- Memories of the Southern Cross before you, a thousand miles to the South of Pago Pago,

- Kilimanjaro's dawn-sharpened shadow, etched hard on Tanzania's plains,
- Siam's Gulf where it weds the South China Sea,
- Aconcagua's peak lording over Chile and the Argentine,
- Struck reverent by morning's first light on the sea washed green of the Irish coast.
- Ayres Rock's flat grey turned molten crimson as an Outback dawn again sends night west.
- A Paris evening's last light from Sacre Coeur

**Then memory's coin turns ... and you remember a nether side as well:**

**-Blind errors, still held captive in your own heart, that went unpunished, yet were fatal to others. Luck? Skill? You never knew ... but you knew humility in their happening.**

**-Your nerves coming of age with that first grip in the reasoned fear of fatal conflict ... fear full reasoned by the imminence of death.**

**-Too many farewells at Arlington's stone gardens.**

**-The Cold War's icy grip coming home, high over the Baltic Sea ... as eyes of an unseen enemy seek your spoor.**

**-A thousand times you've set compass far from home, watched dawns and sunsets from the lofty throne of an airman's world. Awed by the fortune, was it luck or skill that earned those glimpses of The High?**

**-And as often, singly grateful again to touch earth gently, and to return to those in whose love you lived.**

**And now, looking back from this distant place, you know the price for this legacy. Even more dear than the coin of your own life ... was that paid by those in whose love you have lived all those lofty years. ▣**

## Super Sabre Snapshots ... and Other Important Imagery

This department provides a venue for stand-alone imagery of note, or imagery with connections to other articles where space for supporting photos was limited, etc. In this case, we have one fine pic directly related to Issue 30's article about Yeager's Hun named City of Barstow, and another pic casually related to that same story, that were not available at press time for Issue 31. So, here they are in Issue 32, contributing more info to that original article. **Pub Med**

This first pic was sent by John Edelblute II, who enjoyed the *City of Barstow* article, and made a call to tell us that he had a pic taken somewhat later than the event rolling out the Hun by that name, but that DID include an image of *Miss Armed Forces Day Jaque Funderburk*, a pic we didn't have at the time ... but wished we had. John said that this pic was taken in front of Ops at a party (after the squadron came back from a deployment to Spain) at which the former "Miss Barstow" was held up in the air on a chair to celebrate their safe return.



*Holding Jaque aloft are Capt. Harry Schurr (Asst. Ops) and 1st Lt. Brad Terry. Looking on in the front row are LC Yeager and the hatted Mayor Geo. Oaks. John himself is just behind Schurr Looking on admiringly. Such a deal!*

We're indebted to John for this treasure of a pic that allows us to picture in our minds what Ms. Jaque would have looked like had we been there on 7 May 1958 enjoying her company at the celebration of the *City of Barstow* roll-out as described in the Steve Smith article. Thanks for adding this eye candy to the original story!

The other pic was sent by Associate SSSer Dave Tipps (the artist of the front cover art of Issue 30), who got it from a friend of his. It is an NAA publicity pic, featuring the X-1 and shows a smiling Chuck Yeager next to "his" rocket ship named *Glamorous Glennis* ... AND all the support people and equipment (ground and air) involved in the record-breaking achievement of that pioneering bit of aviation history.



Thank you Dave. It's an astounding bit of marketing magic, typical of most leading edge advertising techniques in the halcyon era of the 50s. Ah, the good old days when every Hun pilot got a few perks from the companies. I still have my NAA "solid plastic" Hun on a stick! ■

*Variations on this bon mot about pilots—and especially fighter pilots—never growing up have been around since Wilbur and Orville discovered the fun of flight. The Intake preserves our history, heroism and humor, so this fits nicely.*



*You may know that the motto of the New York Times is "All the news that's fit to print." You could say that our editorial philosophy is similar: "All the things that fit, we print!!" Ed. Chicken Wings' Book 5, "Turning Crosswind" is on sale now.*

## Final Approach

By Gordon R. Lamb (American Mensa Member)



Gordon at four with "Daddy" Thud-pilot.

SSSer Pete "Flash" Fleischhacker, also a member of American Mensa, suggested we consider reprinting an article he read recently in that organization's *Mensa Bulletin's* 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, 2016. The article's title is "Final Approach" and was originally published in the April 1992 *Mensa Bulletin*. Flash says it tells of another way of dealing with the loss of a fighter pilot father, the main theme of David Baker's well-received article about the loss of his father, Duane Baker, in Issue 31. After reading the *Mensa* article, we agree with Flash that this similar, but rather "different" take on the same theme would be a worthy follow-on, call it a "companion article" for Issue 32.

So, after obtaining permission to use the article from the author, Gordon R. Lamb, with assistance from Chip Taulbee, Editor of the *Mensa Bulletin*, we are pleased to treat our SSS members to some high-level thinking and writing about how to deal with the loss of a fighter pilot father. Enjoy. **Ed.**



Cover of *Bulletin* Anniversary Edition.

I BECAME AWARE of another sound, softly curling though the trees. I leaned back against the massive stone, knowing what the sound meant, just waiting for the magic to happen. Slipping through the trees like a mist rising over a lake, the sound built up to a silvery, rushing thunder. As so many times in my 35 years on Earth, I was helpless not to stare upward, hungrily.

As gracefully as a figure skater, the aircraft glided overhead, huge, massive, tons and tons of metal drifting down as lightly as a thistledown on final approach to landing. I watched until it was out of sight, the sound winding down and keening away, until I couldn't hear it over the mutter of a distant lawnmower and a mother yelling at Bobby that they were ready to leave, so get over here now.

This is my favorite spot to watch aircraft come by overhead. I love coming here, and have nearly all of my life, both for the beauty of the trees and landscape and for the frequency of air traffic overhead. By happy coincidence, this beautiful spot lies beneath the final approach corridor for the international airport west of the city. I settled myself a little more comfortably against the massive stone and waited for the next one. It didn't take long.

"That was a DC-9, wasn't it, Dad? Just slipping down the mystic mountain."

He didn't reply.

The "mystic mountain" was his talisman, really. When I was little enough to be barely housebroken, my Daddy would take me to the airport. I was fascinated by these large bird-like things with people inside—they came down from the sky, seemed to hesitate for a heartbeat, and reluctantly touched the ground to become awkward, lumbering beasts with none of their former elegance in motion.

I remember standing next to Daddy, my little hand in his big hand, the air full of summer light worn down to burnished gold of evening, in the sweet, green smell of high summer. Near the runway we stood, and as each aircraft floated in, fairy-like, I was convinced that it was held up by magic. I knew there was no rational explanation for them being able to defy gravity. I had, after all, performed

extensive experiments in levitating objects (as four-year-olds do). Test subjects included our puppy, my mother's good china, and myself on occasion. As we stood there, my Daddy *the fighter pilot* would identify each aircraft on final approach and explain how it was sliding down an invisible slope to touchdown. I pictured an enormous mountain that they were sliding down, one that I couldn't see. Later that day, Daddy found me with a blanket stretched from the foot of the bed to the floor, sliding my toy airplanes down to a runway marked out with crayon. "They're gliding down mystic mountain, Daddy!"

He didn't reply.

I loved airplanes passionately, completely. I knew that I was going to be a fighter pilot. I had so many model military airplanes that, had they been real, I'd have been a superpower at age 9. At 10 I was conversant with the most exotic aspects of point-to-point aerial navigation, although I occasionally got lost on the way home from school. At 11 I could recite by memory the strategic and tactical weapons load of every aircraft in the world, even while getting my head slammed into a locker by a bigger kid. At 12 I got my first pair of glasses and could see clearly for the first time. I could see most clearly, however, that because I lacked perfect vision—a non-negotiable Air Force requirement—I *wasn't* ever going to be a fighter pilot. Ever. That thought ate at me like acid on soft skin. I was scared, confused, angry, guilty. I told Daddy how disappointed I was.

He didn't reply

The tendency to look up at any aircraft passing overhead has given me a few anecdotal moments. While attending an open-air theater performance of *Othello* I became aware of the rumble of engines overhead. As I glanced up, I remember being amused by the dichotomy of being lost in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Italy but being unable to ignore the intruder from the 20<sup>th</sup> century passing by. One glance upward, and I was on my feet, screaming in utter astonishment, "SON OF A BITCH—THAT'S A FORD TRIMOTOR!" I knew my excitement would be contagious; there are, as everyone knows, possibly [only] three Tin Gooses in flyable condition left in the world. I slowly

became aware of complete silence. Everyone at the performance—including the actors—was staring at me as if I had grown a breast on my forehead or something. The only exception was my date, who had apparently lost something on the floor. I must say, the theater management was rude to the point of being tacky.

On another occasion, I was driving a tractor-mounted cultivator in a field of half-grown soybeans when I spotted a shadow slamming across the field ahead of me. I was amazed to see that it was chasing a WWII-vintage P-51 Mustang fighter, racing past about silo-high. I cast envious, lustful eyes over its bubble canopy and the slim, elegant nose and razor-like wings that made the fighter appear like a raptor from hell. The pilot was grinning, and why not? He knew what I was thinking. I watched him until he was out of sight, which didn't take long. With a couple of grand of horsepower in something that doesn't weigh a lot more than a station wagon, 400 mph is a gentle stroll to the mailbox. Must have taken longer than I thought, though. I had enough time to drive through the fence, cross a gravel road, and drive through the fence on the other side before he was gone. While I was repairing the fences the next day, I told Daddy how foolish I felt.

He didn't reply.

I finally did learn to fly from the most foul-mouthed, sawed-off gargoye of a man it has ever been my pleasure to be abused by. Shorty Graves has been flying since before FDR's first term and had more hours in the air than I had been alive. He can make a student faint from his chewing out. I'd be driving that Piper Cub down short final, trying to remember all of the things I was supposed to do, when this cigar-chomping dwarf would nearly blow off my head. "WATCH YOUR %s@8& AIRSPEED, KNUCLE-HEAD! YOUR'RE FIVE KNOTS TOO FAST! YOU HURT MY %6&s\*{\$ AIRPLANE, AND I'LL \$\*96@&#\$ SHOVE IT IN YOUR \$\*&96#, SET IT ON FIRE, AND @\$96&# ON IT TO PUT IT OUT!" He was kinda like an attack hamster. With rabies. The day I soloed, he looked up from endorsing my logbook, noticed my awed expression, grinned, and growled, "This is like the first time you ever 96\$#\*&, boy. There ain't never gonna be another first time." He was right, and I couldn't wait to tell my Dad about the rapture of being alone in an airplane for the first time, the sweeping joy of nailing those four landings, and the swagger it puts into your step when you get out of the airplane as a pilot.

He didn't reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

[My memories were interrupted by the realization that the daylight was flowing away over the western horizon,](#)

*Intrigued by Mr. Lamb's cryptic description of where fellow pilots can find the general location of his father's grave, we did some research following his clues. Using the ILS RWY 23R IFR Plate, we found the [now-RACEN?] Outer Marker and it was smack over the Washington Cemetery Association's Cossell Rd. Cemetery. Mags out: Check out the IFR Plate and the Google Earth pic of the probable cemetery where that "stone" mentioned often by the author is! Ed.*

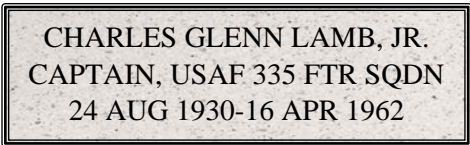
and my Favorite Airplane Watching Spot was slowly drowning in shadow. I got up from the stone I had been sitting against, stretched, and while my lower legs were being astonished by the return of blood, I remembered the first time I had ever watched airplanes from here.

With my little hand in my mother's big hand, I craned my head upward as Daddy's squadron of F-105 Thunderchief fighters ripped the April morning sky in half with smoke and thunder. Even though I was only 5, I recognized that the formation was incomplete—there was *one aircraft missing*. They told me that my Daddy wasn't up there. He was in the box with the American flag on it, a concept I couldn't comprehend. My Daddy's place was up there, in the sky. If he were here, he'd be holding my hand and looking up at the airplanes with me. I was too little to understand that his hot, furious blood was now cold and still as a pond. That his hands that could control a jet aircraft with the deftness of a scalpel-wielding surgeon—those strong, gentle hands that used to pick me up and hug me—were as motionless as those of a statue. That the ears I used to laugh and cry into, that had heard my dreams of being a pilot like him, were now tideless channels filled, not with my love and longings, but with darkness and drifting dust motes.

My Daddy wasn't a war hero. I was too little to realize that he had been killed in a routine aircraft demonstration for then-President Kennedy, just before his squadron was sent to Vietnam. His name isn't inscribed on black granite in Washington, visited or remembered or honored by thousands. It is in no news dispatches or books on the conflict in Southeast Asia.

[Routine Training Accident. A Regrettable Incident. Just One of Those Things. Part of the Price We Pay for a Strong National Defense. It was ... routine.](#)

Before I left, I looked at the [white granite] stone where I had been sitting.



Fellow pilots, as you fly the ILS RWY 23R approach to Indianapolis International, just before the Outer Marker at RIBER intersection, you'll overfly my Daddy. At night, it [Daddy's grave] is the pool of utter dead blackness surrounded by the softly glowing living lights of the city.

Please—let the magic of what we do fill you; feel alive, feel privileged, and feel free. It's not much of a memorial, but it's the best I can do.

I love you, Daddy.

There's no need to reply. φ



[IND ILS RWY23R Plate!](#) [The "Stone" is here?](#)

## Another Society — Well Worth Looking Into



The Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) is our nation's highest award for aerial achievement. As a valor decoration, it ranks fourth in order of precedence, and is awarded to recipients for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight. The DFC has been awarded to pilots and air crew in all five of our services (United States Army, United States Navy, United States Marine Corps, United States Air Force and the United States Coast Guard). Recipients represent a diversity of backgrounds, ethnicity, rank and gender whose aerial achievements were chronicled from the chaos of combat, to epic rescues, out to the very edges of space.

The Distinguished Flying Cross medal was established by an Act of Congress on July 2, 1926 to recognize the heroism of World War I pilots. However, the first Distinguished Flying Cross [citations](#) were [presented](#) to civilian [Pan American Flight crews](#) on 2 May, 1927 by President Calvin Coolidge, for their five ship, [22,000 mile flight](#). President Coolidge presented the first Distinguished Flying Cross [medal](#), on 11 June, 1927, to then Captain Charles A. Lindbergh of the Army Air Corps Reserve, for his solo flight of 33 ½ hours and 3600 statute miles; beginning from Long Island, NY and landing in Paris, France. Lindbergh, the '*Lone Eagle*,' is a legacy member of The Distinguished Flying Cross Society.

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society itself (DFCS) was founded in 1994, as a 501(c) (19) nonprofit organization, headquartered in San Diego, CA, and is made up of those men and women who were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and their relatives. The Society currently has more than 6,000 members and was founded on the fraternity and fellowship among military fliers. It seeks to preserve the rich heritage and historical narratives of those who are recipients of the DFC and to educate the general public, especially the youth of America, on the values of courage, patriotism and character; those very characteristics upon which America was founded. By doing so, it elevates the awareness of the award itself and demonstrates to the public that a very small cross section of ordinary Americans can and have accomplished extraordinary things under extremely difficult conditions while in flight.

The DFCS recently published "*On Heroic Wings: Stories of the Distinguished Flying Cross*," with the Foreword written by President George H. W. Bush and the Introduction written by Captain Jim Lovell; both recipients and members. The book is based on oral history accounts, Distinguished Flying Cross citations and other associated primary source documentation. Visual images gathered from personal collections and archives illuminate the comprehensive content of this volume. While the acquisition of the factual data was essential, capturing the personal feelings and perspectives of American aviation heroes added to the richness of the publication.

The DFCS is also moving forward to produce a syndicated film documentary on the Distinguished Flying Cross that will honor the legacy of the award as well that of its recipients. The Character Development Program (CDP), produced by the Medal of Honor Foundation as an educational outreach, has recently been recognized by the DFCS as an extremely worthy cause and efforts are underway to lend the support of our membership toward that effort. A robust scholarship program exists for the descendants of DFCS members.

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society recognizes the strong historical connection between its origins and those of the United States Air Force and its predecessor, the U. S. Army Air Corps. The DFCS looks toward the ranks of the Super Sabre Society and its members, who are recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross, to join with us in the preservation of their personal histories and to help us further our educational goals. Just as your mission is to preserve the history of the F-100 Super Sabre and the men who flew it, ours is to preserve the histories of your deeds. As Kenny Chesney said in his 2007 hit '*Don't Blink*', "*Trust me friend, a hundred years goes faster than you think; so "don't blink," act today!*"

If you are a DFC recipient and would like to see the historical narrative of your award preserved to serve as an inspiration for future generations, go to the DFCS website at ([www.dfcsociety.org](http://www.dfcsociety.org)) for information and requirements for joining our ranks. Families of a deceased DFC recipient are also encouraged to enroll their loved one posthumously and to become an Associate member. For additional information, call our Toll-free number at 1- 866-332-6332.

— Chairman of the DFCS Board, J. Bruce Huffman, Col., USAR (Ret.), Master Army Aviator ■

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Call contacts for their snail mail address or mail your material to *Contact's Name*, c/o Super Sabre Society, P.O. Box 341837, Lakeway, TX 78734.

Note: The Intake – *Journal of the Super Sabre Society* is published three times per year. Mailings are planned for delivery (stateside) in mid-March, mid-July, and mid-November. If you don't see yours by the end of the next full month, contact the Editor. It might be a simple address problem, or your dues status may be way overdue!

## *\*Reminder\**

SSS Membership Comes With Annual Dues, Due On or BEFORE Jan 1.

If You Haven't

Paid Your **\$35 2016** Dues Yet, Your SSS Benefits Are **Now Suspended & This Is Your LAST ISSUE of "The Intake"**

Until You Get **PAID UP**

AND Ahead of the Power Curve!

If this applies to you, why not pay your **\$35** for 2016 AND **\$35** for 2017 online at our website or send your **\$70** total to REINSTATE Your Membership to the SSS PO Box given in the Contacts text box on this page.

## *Laughter-Silvered Wings*

*This is the 15th installment of the LSW "mini-department," featuring short, humorous "fun in the Hun" anecdotes. We all have funny yarns to share, and my bag is near empty, so please get on the stick and send yours to Intake Editor John J. Schulz, [jjschulz@bu.edu](mailto:jjschulz@bu.edu). My job? Make it fit."*

o-0-o

The penalty for DWI was stiff in the '60s and '70s in England (and maybe still is). Knowing that a first violation meant a six-month suspended license, and that a second DWI meant a full year suspended, pilots in the 48<sup>th</sup> TFW at RAF Lakenheath tried to be extra careful when driving off base after a hearty evening at the stag bar.

Four or five of the bachelors in our 493<sup>rd</sup> "Yellowtails" squadron rented a big house some miles off base. One of the guys (nameless here forevermore) realized as he headed for home late one drink-filled evening, that it was an especially foggy night in the hills and vales.

It was very late, and he was aware that he had a pretty good snoot full. Determined to avoid any problem with the highway patrols, he concentrated on driving very slowly, and given the fog in the lower parts of the hills and vales, he leaned forward, concentrating on avoiding any telltale weaving back and forth in the lane as he looked as far ahead as he could.

Progress was good, and with sheer force of will, staring straight ahead in utter concentration, he managed to keep his car from weaving from side to side. Then he came over another low hill and down into the vale below, where, as in all the vales, the thickest of the fog lived. "Keep it straight. Don't drive too fast," he told himself over and over.

Then, most unexpectedly, he heard a "tap, tap, tap," as if someone were knocking on his side window. He glanced over, and sure enough, someone WAS knocking. It was a member of the British highway constabulary, who was WALKING beside his car. He asked our brave and skilled fighter jock to pull over, stop the car and get out.

Well, he *had* succeeded in driving straight and slow—he just didn't realize *HOW* slow!

His squadron mates at the bachelor pad made sure he got to work on time for the next six months. ■ — JJS

## *Back Cover Credits*

Pic "Rudderless" Provided by Thunderbird Neil L. Eddins 1960

This picture and Neil's explanation were posted in the What's New section of our website by Win Reither on 7 July 2016:

"Our team was flying low level in spread formation from Fairbanks to Elmendorf in 1960 when I got a good vibration and then things smoothed out. I climbed to about 2,000 AGL and one of the wing men took this photo. We continued to Elmendorf and having no cross wind, managed to land without any problem!

"Our Maintenance crew replaced the rudder and we flew the next day!"

This posting was indeed providential, because we had just decided on the "Thunderbird Joinup" pic for the front cover, and now the front and back cover pics complement each other perfectly!

## *Parting Shots about Your Dues*

If you owe dues, pay on the website or send the money direct to Treasurer David Hatten via the Lakeway P.O. Box on page 2. If something's wrong with your personal data, you can fix your profile yourself or send the corrections to Dewey Clawson at his email address: ([deweyclawson@hotmail.com](mailto:deweyclawson@hotmail.com))

Because (now, 2016 and beyond) \$35 dues are payable on or before 1 January every year, it might be a good idea to remember that (and take care of it regularly). To do that, try putting the SSS on your Christmas Card List and include your check for \$35 every year. "Works good and lasts a long time!" (Quoting the many Luke Hun academic IPs.)

\*\*\*Happy Holidays! Ed.\*\*\*

