

The Intake

Journal of the Super Sabre Society



Standing After-burner Shock Waves at Twilight Time

“Break, Break!”

First Ever SSS Reunion – Las Vegas – 10-12 April 2007,
Full Coverage at “Reunion 2007 – After Action Report,” Page Six



It was indeed ...
“The Happy
Hour to End all
Happy Hours!”



The Intake

Summer 2007, Vol. 1, Issue 4

JOURNAL OF THE SUPER SABRE SOCIETY

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Front Cover Top Photo
“Twilight Time” – Featuring
standing AB shock waves.
Credit: Andy Anderson, Ohio ANG

Reunion Photos Credits:
Top: Joe Broker
Bottom Two: “Moose” Skowron



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From the President

As most of you know by now, one of the great Air Force Warriors has gone west. Brigadier General Robin Olds passed away at his home in Steamboat Springs, Colorado on 14 June. He was interred at the Air Force Academy on 30 June 2007. When it comes to our community of fighter pilots, past and present, none would question his skill as a fighter commander and patriot. We have inducted him posthumously as a full member of the Super Sabre Society and, as requested by his family, have made a donation to the Red River Valley Fighter Pilot's Association to provide scholarships for the children, or to assist the spouses of Armed Forces aircrew members killed or missing in action. A triple ace, Robin Olds was a fighter pilot's fighter pilot and a true warrior. He will be missed.

Turning now to recent SSS events, it seems as though our gathering in Vegas was a success in every aspect. Orange hats were prominent at the bar each night till the wee hours. The dinner and entertainment were right on the money. Speeches were brief and Bill Hosmer's "Hun Riders in the Sky" is now high on the charts and will soon be number one—somewhere. (Five will get you ten that we are going to hear it again in San Antonio, but more about that later.) Of course successful events don't just happen. Pete Peterson had the lead on the mission and along with his able wing men Les Frazier, Sloan Brooks, Pete Davitto, and Sue Peterson, along with the help of many others, hit the target dead center. I have not heard of any collateral damage nor any members MIA.

As was announced at the dinner, our next reunion will be in San Antonio in 2009. (As of now we are planning to skip a year between reunions so that we can have sufficient time to recover.) Phil Edsal is leading the mission in San Antonio and will be reporting back on likely target locations and strike dates. We have had a number of suggestions as to events we may schedule for the reunion. One that we are looking at is attending a graduation parade and ceremony at Lackland AFB. I did that a couple of years ago at my Aviation Cadet class reunion, and it was very impressive. Other activities are also under consideration, such as a stag bar and Bill Hosmer cooking up an SOS breakfast. We'll keep you posted as we fill in the blanks but considering the success of our Vegas event, I am sure we can look forward to another outstanding reunion. More to come.

And finally, we are still growing as an organization. But keep passing the word around. With all the Hun drivers out there, I am sure there are plenty that don't even know of our existence.

Cheers,

Bill Gorton
SSS President

From the Publisher's Desk

The vision for *The Intake* was established by the founders early on. The idea was simple: publish an attractive magazine with a professional look that is interesting and fun to read—a place for members to remember and be remembered. In the first three issues, we tried hard to develop and expand on this vision, filling them with stories and photos written by members covering a variety of subjects from historical events to heroics and humor. There have been both quantity and quality improvements as well from issue to issue. *The Intake* has grown from twenty pages to thirty six pages, and for the first time, Issue Three was sent by first class mail instead of Pony Express.

But simply *trying hard* to publish a first class magazine is not enough. To succeed, we need more people willing to donate their time and skills to the effort. Thanks to Medley Gatewood's recruiting efforts at the reunion, for example, we added two new members to the staff—Jim Quick and John Schultz. Both are skilled writers with publishing experience.

Speaking of volunteers, we still need someone to edit all the great photos we've been receiving from SSS members. This job takes someone with the software and smarts to speak in the exotic language of rgb, cmyk, and dpi. Like the guy who punched out of three Huns (see *Stake Your Claim* for the latest), we know he's out there—it's just a question of finding him. Any volunteers?

Cheers and Check Six,

Ron Standerfer
Publisher

Letters, Emails, Other Media

Incoming – Correspondence

We are pleased to receive long, short, mostly great, and a few not quite so great correspondence items via various sources. The overwhelming volume is very positive. Here are some samples since the last issue came out.



UPT Class Reunion Announcement –

I'm organizing a Flying Class 56F reunion in Tucson in October '07 and would appreciate your placing a notice about it in the next "Intake." Details are; Reunion for Class 56F, being held in Tucson, AZ., October 10th through 14th.

Contact Chuck MacGillivray: Email CMac@Carlsontravel.com, 480 894 5533 Work. Or 602 956 4428 Home, or go to our Web site WWW.Class56F.com. (Call or email for "log-in" code to Cheri Sigurdson at 1 800 722 1177 {no charge line} or csigurdson@carlsontravel.com.)

Thank you for any help you can provide to get a good turn out. **Chuck MacGillivray.**



Special Request –



The first person to be awarded the DFC was Charles A. Lindbergh in 1927, but he certainly was not the last. All SSS members who hold one or more DFCs and haven't yet joined the Distinguished Flying Cross Society are encouraged to do so. Go to the web site www.dfcsociety.org to learn about the Society and get an application form; or e-mail Bob Krone for one—he's on the DFC Society National Board, at BobKrone@aol.com. When you join, your DFC citation(s) will be added to the Web site permanently. The DFC Society is only eleven years old but has 4,000+ members and eighteen chapters. One of our recent new members is President George Herbert Walker Bush. Thanks for getting the word out, and for joining. Turner and Itazuke Hun Driver—**Bob Krone**



Cross Feed –

This note came from HH-43 driver Jay Strayer who was co-author of The First Successful SAR of a Hun Pilot in Sea story in Issue Two. He points out an interesting Web site featuring "the little helicopter that could" and their treatment of Ron Bigoness' rescue. It is really quite good. [Ed.]

Two HH-43 firefighters have collaborated on writing the HH-43 PEDRO story and have done a fine job. See their Web site at <http://users.acninc.net/padipaul/pedrohome.htm>. They have been after me to provide stuff about my experiences at Nakon Phanom AB and part of that included the rescue of Ron Bigonnes which appeared in their April 18, 2007, Newsletter. It's a bit different from *The Intake's* version but pretty good nonetheless. Go via direct to the story at http://users.acninc.net/padipaul/PNL018_03_07/sea.htm and enjoy! **Jay Strayer** PDG (Pretty Damn Good), in fact, the computer graphics and photographs are fantastic. Ed.



First "Incoming" after Issue Three –

As Paul Harvey would say, here's "the rest of the story." Col. George H. Laven was the 405th FW CO when I arrived on TDY to the 614th in August 1964, and he made no bones about it. He would pick one of the TDY Huns with a tail number ending in five, and have the painters put red/yellow/blue bands around its intake and the noses of both drop tanks and then his name on it with 48-24 underneath. This meant 48 years old and 24 years in the AF! I have some slides of his leading that June flight from Clark and the lead a/c has the colors on it big as life. He was gutsy, that was for sure. I do not believe he got to serve in Korea, however, as he was group commander of the 86th FBG over in Germany with F-84Es during the early 50s. Not saying that he probably tried to get over there like Robin Olds did, but someone must have decided that neither was to go. Shame, as I bet they would



**Model of Colonel Laven's F-100C at
George, c. 1957.**

have gotten a few MIGs. After Col. Laven retired, he went to work for MacAir out of St Louis, with duty station over in Israel as an advisor on the F-4. In reading between the lines of his notes to me, I am positive he flew combat in the Six Day War and got at least one more kill. We will never know for sure, unless the IAF owns up to it someday?

One correction too, if you do not mind. That photo on page nine could not have been from 1964 as General Sweeney ordered all unit markings off ALL TAC aircraft starting in January, 1960, and they had to be off no later than next PE inspection (done at 100 hour intervals in those days). So all TAC birds got the TAC badge and yellow lightning flash by the middle of that year. *(Dave is correct. While recently visiting Lloyd Houchin, author of referenced story, I saw a flight line photo of the 615th birds and they all wore the TAC paint job. Lloyd also pointed out another error in the story—they did not deploy via C-130s, it was -135s. [Ed.]* We had to cease wearing unit patches too, which really went over big! How close that man came to crushing TAC and remolding it into a mini-SAC was frightening indeed. And JFK wanted him for COS of the whole AF! Yikes.

While at Misawa, we had a BGen Division Commander who usually flew in an F with his aide in the back seat. One day, he came back and wrote up that “the stick moved sideways on takeoff.” So the auto-pilot troops and aero-repair (who jacked up the a/c and ran the hydraulic mule) spent almost two days trying to duplicate [that malfunction]. Finally, the A/R NCOIC called the aide and asked if there was anything unusual about the take off the previous day. So the captain said, yep, the old man was drifting a bit off center so he tapped the stick! Almost two days of work for basically nothing. Ah, well, life went on!

I served for over seven years continuous in Hun maintenance units, with the 50th in France and Germany, Misawa for two years, then PCS with both Hun units to Alex to help form the new 3rd, then a loaner TDY with the 401st to Clark in the fall of '64, a TDY with the 416th to Da Nang and Bien Hoa in '65, then PCS (my third Hun wing movement in six years!) in Nov '65 to Bien Hoa. It was amazing how many Huns from previous units would pop up almost like old chums.

The magazine is just wonderful. Keep up the great work. Cheers, **Dave Menard**



Missing Incoming Email—

(Hot on the heels of Dave's email, within a day or so of Issue Three coming out, I received an email from someone who very much supported Lloyd Houchin's version of "The First F-100 Mission in the Vietnam War." Somehow {mea culpa} that email is lost, or maybe I just dreamed it up. I think the sender said he was there (at Clark) and named several others who were there, who would agree with his judgment too. Would the sender of such a message around 2-6 April, 2007, please re-transmit it to me, please? I think Lloyd would like a copy. Thanks Ed.)



Issue Three Back Cover Blunder –

*We made a serious mistake by giving credit for the beautiful back cover photograph of Issue Three to Paul "Yost" when it should have been **Paul Rost**. We discovered the error ourselves but ... "Alas, it was too late as the final version had already been signed off and delivered to the printer. Rest assured that we already have a correction prepared to publish with our sincere apology in Issue Four, coming to a mailbox near you in late July/early August, we expect." The above quote was part of a letter to the correct Paul. From the additional info about the photo gained by all readers in his reply (below), the mistake may have been worth it. [Ed.]*

Thanks for the update, Medley. I had noticed the mistake, but was happy enough to see the picture in print. Bob Marshall was in the front seat with me in the back helping with the timing, etc. *The Intake* says it was a 48 TFW flyby, but it was actually a combo of six from the 48th, six from the 20th and six from the 50th; which adds up to two more than in the planned formation (four diamonds of four). The other two were spares who also flew high above to help us make sure all the guys flying “lights on the stars” were also maintaining the correct/same spacing. Best Regards, **Paul**



Post-2007 Reunion Snail-mail message –

Dear Les, I ran across this article (enclosed) after attending the 2007 SSS reunion. Thought it might be interesting to the SSS troops! Also, included are a few reunion photos with names on the backs. By the way, I really am glad to have attended the reunion, and also *The Intake* is such a great effort—and I really enjoy the stories. As you know, I flew the Hun some 3,400 hours, and it took good care of us. Keep up the great work. I am already looking for a fun time in San Antonio and enjoying Phil Edsall's effort! **D. O. Neary** *(The enclosed article is from the D-M Desert Airman base newspaper of November 16, 1979, titled "Requiem for the Hun." It is a classic about the last Hun to be delivered to the "Bone Yard" and will appear in a later issue of The Intake, perhaps shortened a bit. Ed.)*

And The Beat Still Goes On!

Stake Your Claim

By R. Medley Gatewood

“Belly up to the bar—lay it on the table and see if it gets stepped on.” That’s what Ron Standerfer said in Issue One, and the beat still goes on. The only record of note to fall since Issue Three is the one for the most non-consecutive years flying the F-100 held at 41+ by Harv Damschen. The new holder at 45.5 years, submitted at reunion time, is **Bill McCollum** of Skull Valley, Arizona. Some of Bill’s time was in a restored F-100F owned by a Mr. Tokopf, an airline entrepreneur from South Africa who maintains and occasionally flies it in the U.S.



Bill McCollum with Mr. Tokopf's T-bird painted Hun.

Bill is expecting to get another mission in Mr. Tokopf’s Hun when it comes out of maintenance this summer. If and when that happens, it will push Bill’s record to fifty years. Another interesting claim by Bill is that his wife got a ride in an F-model a number of years ago. The pilot? **Harv Damschen!**

That wife-ride category was unexpected, but it is either tied or maybe topped by **Greg Butler** who, way back when, took his new wife Lorraine, an AF nurse, for a Hun ride in his own back seat!

Bill had a number of other claims in several sorta one-of-a-kind/no one could duplicate categories that we have elected to not track or print here because of space limitations. Be sure and ask Bill about them at the next reunion.

Forrest Fenn’s record for back-to-back barrier engagements didn’t exactly fall, but was at least tied. Paul Rost, who flew with Forrest at Tuy Hoa in ’68, reports he saw one each **Bill Collette** take two barriers in two consecutive flights, both with AC generator failures on 23 July 1966. “The first was when we air aborted back into Wheelus after an early Saturday morning departure that surely woke all the hung over guys in the BOQ, plus the wing commander. After Bill’s bird

was ‘fixed’ we took off again for Aviano and almost got there before the generator failed again and Bill made another barrier engagement.” The key fact here is that Bill made his back-to-back claim in the same aircraft, whereas Forrest’s first bird was totaled when he snagged the approach end barrier. So his second engagement was in a different bird (F-model that came to pick him up. So as judge, I declare the back-to-back category tied, for now. But surely there’s a three-peat out there somewhere?

An interesting new claim category came in from **Don Wolfe**. The staff loves the Reunion stimulus that motivated him. He writes, “After attending the SSS reunion where almost everyone had been shot at, blown up, or ejected out of something; I humbly stake the following claim: Youngest member, born 9/18/’53. I first flew the F-100 at the age of 21 from 7/’75 through 9/’79 in the Ohio ANG. I have approximately 800 hrs in the Hun.” (He went on for several more hundreds of hours in the SLUF.) Has Don got this Hun record locked up already? Stay tuned.

Ed “Hawk” Wells has a claim that will be hard to top. He writes, “Briefly, I claim the highest percentage of rounds fired hitting an air-to-air dart target: Fifty percent, or seven of fourteen fired rounds. Other possible but not definitive hits were not counted because they could have been ricochets or from debris off the dart. 1967 at Luke. Details available if required.” Any questions?

Wally Mason recently submitted a claim that might or might not stand. He writes, “**Shortest Flight In A Hun Without Returning To Base With An Emergency.**

F-100A George AFB 1955: Took off, remained in burner to 40,000, got in a dog-fight, stayed in burner until ‘bingo,’ about 1000 lbs, and recovered. Normal landing. Total time: about 17 min (as my musty memory recalls).”

I can’t top it, but there’s lots of golf shoe-stomping, B.S. flag wavers out there. Give it your best shot, guys.

And now for the Stake Your Claims Department’s *pièce de résistance*, the long-sought **triple punch-out trophy winner** has been found ... and the winner is—**Rezk “Mo” Mohamed!** We had heard rumors from the field, but we actually ran into him at the Vegas Reunion. What a tale he has to tell, but the full story will have to wait till the next issue for, shall we say, “logistical” reasons. But here are the salient points according to Rezk.

All three ejections happened when he was flying C-models out of Soesterberg Air Base in Holland. Number one happened on 1 October 1956, over the town of Osterhout when he had major A/B and structural failures

at high mach. Number two was on 18 October, 1957, over the North Sea when he suffered complete engine failure.

The unlucky third ejection came just a month later on 14 November when the cockpit area burst into flames shortly after takeoff. No one was injured in the first two, but in the third, Rezk injured a leg doing his PLF on a tile roof, and tragically, six Dutch soldiers were killed and several others injured when the bird crashed into a two story barracks near the Headquarters of the Royal Netherlands Air Defense Command.

So this record tops the several known double punch-outs. But, how long will the triple stand or could it be

tied? Who knows, there are rumors of at least one more triple being out there, but no firm evidence of a tie has surfaced. Then there's the tantalizing prospect of a quadruple ... Naw, probably not.

Meanwhile, break out your B.S. flags and let us know what you think about the current claims by emailing me at rgatewood@comcast.net ☺

We've had some significant Departures since the last Issue of *The Intake* came out. Here's how things stand.



Departures

The following SSS members have left us. They will not be forgotten. Our sincere condolences to their families.

Patrick Lee O'Brien
March 5, 2007

Paul Edwin Orf
March 18, 2007

Robert Irving Marshall
June 2, 2007

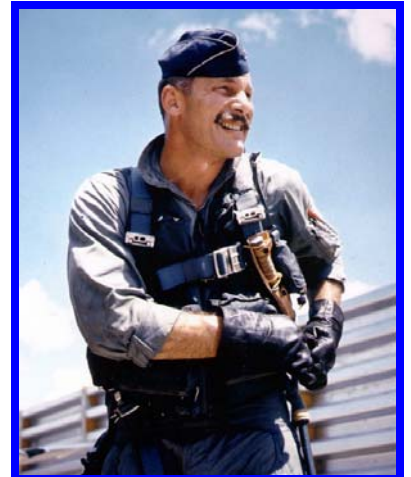
Robin Olds
June 14, 2007

Alonzo L. Ferguson
June 15, 2007

Charlie "Buzzard" White
July 5, 2007

Please provide departure information to *The Intake* as soon as it is known.

Tribute To A Giant



Robin Olds was larger than life. He was a giant in his profession. A Triple Ace, his many accomplishments, leadership qualities, and legends have been and will be further heralded broadly, and often, elsewhere in other media. Yet, the SSS would like to thank Robin for being a member of our august society, albeit silently. Even so, he is the only member ever to be prominently mentioned and referenced in direct connection with the Hun, in three different Hun stories, in each of the first three issue of our journal, *The Intake*. It is only fitting that we take time and space in *Issue Four* to say a proper goodbye to this American hero. Thanks for the memories, Robin!

The Way We Were Are

Reunion 2007 – After Action Report

By R. Medley Gatewood

Several of The Intake volunteer staff members arrived at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino a couple of days early to meet each other for the first time since the SSS was formed and conduct some much needed face-to-face business. When we got there, we found ourselves very much strangers in a huge sea of freakish “conventioners (?)” heavily tattooed, rainbow-colored hair, and dressed in some pretty wild outfits. My first thought was that this crowd would not mix very well with the “First Class or Not at All” SSS troops who were inbound for a Tuesday afternoon ETA. Fortunately, the freaks checked out on Tuesday morning, and the SSS reunion kicked off and ran as scheduled with no problems. Congratulations and thanks to George “Pote” Peterson and his experienced reunion organizing and running crew. Here’s an after action report to jog the memories of the 470 or so members and more than 100 guests who attended; and to whet the appetites of those unable to make it to Vegas—such that they do attend the next reunion. More on that later.

As usual, registration was the first official activity of the FIRST EVER SSS Reunion. Sign-in began at 1500 on Tuesday, April 10. It was well organized and situated just outside the “Arizona” grand ballroom, which was the scene of all major events except the golf outing and the Red Flag tour slated for Wednesday. Typical action at the sign-in table was ably described by Les Frazier in an April Toss-Bomb.

“Picture this as a typical scenario where I sat at my computer. A guy comes up to me and our conversation was: **Guy:** Sign me up. **Me:** Sign you up for what? **Guy:** The thing. **Me:** You mean the reunion? **Guy:** Yeah, sign me up for the reunion. **Me:** Are you a member of the Super Sabre Society? **Guy:** What’s that? **Me:** That’s the group you have to belong to come to this reunion. **Guy:** Well, sign me up for that. **Me:** Are you a Hun driver? **Guy:** Of course, I was stationed with xxxx, xxxx, and xxxx. **Me:** You have to fill out an application to join. When you have joined, you have to fill out a reunion registration form. **Guy:** Okay, let me have the forms. **Me:** [downloading forms] Can I help someone else? **Next guy:** Sign me up ...

“And so it went. Once I had them signed up and registered, I had to make name tags and cross check the functions they wanted to attend. When I made name tags, I had to make six at a time [don’t ask me why], so I would ask ‘who needs a name tag?’ The guys who needed them would tell me their names. But it wasn’t all exactly so smooth. After I filled out walk-in Dave Grove’s name tag, since he looked so young, we had the following conversation:

“Me: Where did you fly the Hun? **Dave:** Huh? What’s the Hun? **Me:** You are here for the Hun reunion aren’t you? **Dave:** I’m here for a dentist’s convention. Am I in the wrong place? **Me:** Dave, your people are meeting in that room over there, but by God, I’ve made you a name tag, and you’re going to wear it into that dentist convention. [Dave left, name tagged clipped to his sports coat. I think if I knew how to get in touch with Dave, we should make him an honorary member and SSS Staff Dentist; he seemed like a nice guy.]

“Meanwhile, checking in SSS members who had pre-registered was easy. If there was a single breakdown in the flow of traffic, it was because of lots of guys, like my first example above, showing up who had not joined the SSS/registered for the reunion, and we had to process them on the spot.”

After completing the sign-in ritual, SSS members and guests moved on into the adjacent Arizona ballroom for “Welcoming” activities. It was the beginning of a three-day marathon of catching up with hundreds of comrades and friends. Naturally it included telling tall tales, war stories, and outright lies—all in the spirit of one-upmanship, a fine fighter pilot tradition. Pote Pete’s recollection of the sign-in and welcoming activities is a good summation.

“The fine work by Tom Henry in having the packets ready for registration was the key to not having long lines at the check-in. During the welcoming activities, Colonel Lusby came to the registration desk to tell me that we had to turn down the music in the big room. I went in and there was not any music just a markedly loud ‘hum’ emanating throughout from all the people talking.



"I saw that the line for drinks was VERY long and considered having another bar opened. But I didn't because when I asked those in line how long the wait was; they said 'what wait!' Everyone was talking and didn't even notice they were waiting. The bartenders thought it was funny when two or three guys were talking and didn't realize they were holding up the line after they got their drinks at the bar. A couple of times the bartenders just took the money out the guys hands, gave them change, and told them to move along. A real problem we had frequently throughout the whole reunion was preventing people from blocking the top of the escalator as they found friends and *could not quit talking.*"

"Welcoming" officially ended and the Arizona ballroom closed (for a massive clean-up) at 1900. "Reunioneers" fanned out to continue activities at all sorts of other venues. A popular one from then on, until the bitter end of the reunion, was the main bar just off the table games gambling floor. Sample photos of that scene, busy at any given time for the whole three days, bear witness to the camaraderie that seemed never to end.



Early Wednesday morning, at precisely 0600, the Golf Outing detachment departed for the base course at Nellis. Gus Guenther was our "embedded" reporter and passed this version of events on to us. "There were about 40 of us who set out to play a 'Best Ball Foursomes' event. I can not recall who was in charge, but for some strange reason, the foursomes were pre-picked—alphabetically yet! The net result was that Roy Anderson and Al Bartels were paired in the first foursome. Roy and Al are both VERY GOOD/low handicap golfers, so the outcome was never in doubt (*or was it rigged?*) and their foursome won decisively. The golfing tab also featured a very nice Mexican lunch at the 19th hole. It was a great outing, but a long bus ride back, so we returned a wee bit tired and thirsty, just in time for the pre-banquet happy hour!"



A little after the golf outing departure, the Red Flag Tour formed up and headed for Nellis at 0700. There were two buses almost full of eager SSS folks turned tourists. After a minor security delay at the gate, we unloaded and filed into the Red Flag Visitor Center. A wing staff-level Colonel spent about a half hour bringing us up to date about the growth of Red Flag since any of us would have had opportunity to participate. Then he turned us over to a Red Flag staff officer for the details. It sure has changed, lots! The full briefing took about an hour and a half. When it was over we filed out into a large room filled with Red Flag memorabilia. It was about 1000 by then, and just before we were to be split up into three groups to continue the tour, our guide suggested that before that, if anyone needed to use the restrooms, now was the time to do so. The sound of about 80 guys headed simultaneously in quick step to the nearby (and small) facility was thunderous!

A rack of six photos from this tour is on the next page. The one on the right of the first row captures the very moment before the quick step thunder started.



After the pit stop, the group split into the three groups to tour the hands-on threat collection that was acquired by Red Flag over the years. For those who had never seen those threats before, up close and personal, this part of the tour evoked lots of memories for those who had frequently faced the real threats ... sometimes winning ... sometimes losing. Chilling remembrances in any case.

Passing our thanks along to our guides, we boarded the buses and were treated to a drive down the whole flight line. Seemed like old times. You could almost feel the heat and smell of bunches of all kind of different aircraft cranking up for a realistic onslaught against the “enemy” within the “vast training complex known as Nevada.” (*Many thanks for the phrase, Dan Druen. Ed.*) Of particular interest were the new F-22 Raptors with several “things we couldn’t talk about capabilities.” Just like the good ol’ days.

We were back at the Gold Coast way before the golfers got back. But that didn’t stop some of us from starting happy hour a little early.

The highlight of the whole reunion was, of course, the Banquet featuring a Hawaiian buffet back in the Arizona Room. Les says the head count was 571, but it seemed to be more, especially with that “Reunion Hum” in the air. Here are larger versions of the two shots on the cover showing the west and east side of the Arizona room filled with SSS folks.



At the appointed hour of 1800 (well, about then), Mr. Master of Ceremonies Ron Barker strode to the podium to start the official program for the evening. Ron first introduced Reunion CINC George Peterson to do the Invocation. After a few introductory remarks, George came forth with a prayer that only a Pote could come up with for such an occasion. The full text of his moving prayer is provided in a text box on the next page for those unable to be with us that evening.

The second agenda item was a POW tribute featuring the popular (and always impressive) “Missing Man Table & Honors Ceremony.” This solemn ritual was ably performed by George Acree and Art Oken. You could hear a pin drop

Ron then introduced the SSS President, Bill Gorton. Bill was appropriately brief. I do remember him introducing Ron Standerfer and me and thanking us for good volunteer work on *The Intake* by leading a standing ovation. From there on things got kinda fuzzy in my mind. But I remember him closing with a cryptic remark: something about the terminal velocity of a cow?

Next up, Ron introduced Bud Hesterman and Dick Suhay (on the accordion) who (with very little practice) manfully sang an original song written by Bill Hosmer called “Hun Drivers in the Sky.” Naturally it is sung to the popular tune “Ghost Riders in the Sky,” and Bill himself was standing, singing along with the daring duo. In any case, the words were wonderful (see below), and they received the second standing ovation of the evening. Reporting space limits us to providing only the first stanza and chorus. If anyone wants a copy of the whole thing (five stanzas), send me an email.

1st Stanza “Hun Drivers in the Sky” by Bill Hosmer

The first Century fighter was a bird they called the Hun.
Its huge intake and swept back wings gave pilots flights of fun.
But, the thing that made that airplane and really gave it poise,
Was the afterburning engine (hold) and its ever loving noise.

Now the cannon and wing stations gave it wherewithal to kill,
And men by hundreds used those things to fight with all their will,
So when you think F Hundred and the part it played in life,
Remember those you flew with (hold) during all those days of strife.

Chorus: Close it up, Lads;
Close it up tight;
Hun drivers in the sky.

With the chorus resounding in our ears, we began the four serving-line Hawaiian buffet. It was finger linking good!

Shortly after dessert was served, Ron Barker again mounted the stage; this time with a Band of Brothers we can fondly call the SSS Singers. And sing they did. It wasn’t exactly bar-room songs and back-room ballads, but it was borderline—and PDG!



PRAYER

My friends, it was once said “O Lord, we have long known that prayer should include confession.” Therefore on behalf of the aviators and their guests gathered here this evening, I confess their sins and my sins.

Lord, they’re just not in step with today’s society. They are unreasonable in clinging to old-fashioned ideas like patriotism, duty, honor, and country.

They hold radical ideas believing that they are their brothers keeper and responsible for the aviators on their wing. They have been seen standing when colors pass, singing the National Anthem at ball games, and drinking toasts to fallen comrades. Not only that, they have been observed standing tall; taking charge, and wearing their hair unfashionable short. They have taken Teddy R’s and JFK’s words too seriously and are overly concerned with what they can do for their service and country instead of what they can do for themselves. They take the Pledge of Allegiance to heart and believe that their oath is to be honored.

And they know bringing the troops home early is not victory but defeat, and they know well what the definition of “is” is.

Forgive them, Lord, for being stubborn men and women who hold these values as genuine. They are aware of the price of honor and with total command of their spirit, they have been willing to pay that price. After, all, what more can you expect? They’re aviators!

O Lord, our God, bless these men and women. Continue to raise up in this nation strong leaders and deliver us from “me first” managers and “don’t ask” followers.

Be OUR HONORED GUEST THIS DAY, O Lord, and join with us in laughter, good food, good drink, and telling of tall tales and legends that may occasionally exceed the truth.

We bow our heads to those aviators who were lost protecting our freedom and their ability to praise you.

Watch over and keep safe all those who wear this nation’s uniform and give special attention to their families and loved ones everywhere.

We thank you for your grace during this reunion and all the days and nights in our future. God bless you all, God bless this great nation, and God bless the President of the United States of America.

Amen, Amen, Amen

From left to right, the SSS Singers were: Dick Suhay, Tommy Sanford, Jack Sanders, Ron Barker, Keith Connolly, Ron Miller, Herb Myer, and Bud Hesterman. Attaboys to all.

When the entertainment was over, Ron dismissed the troops with lofty and appropriate Master of Ceremonies remarks, bringing the crowd to its feet for the third (and final) standing ovation of the evening. From there it turned into a table-hopping, rehashing, m el e of camaraderie. The cameras were going wild all over the place, so we now offer a crop of the best of the best for your viewing pleasure. Unfortunately time does not permit the research needed to identify folks by name. Since this is "The Way We Are," not "The Way We Were" (in which case, it wouldn't be nearly as hard), it's a tough one-man job. But I'm sure the owners of all these faces will recognize themselves instantly.



When the hotel folks shut down the Arizona room, the rehashing moved on to private and public gathering places, so that's the end of the tale about the gala banquet evening. However, there was another whole day to go.

Thursday, the 12th saw some partings as some SSS folks had to bail out. But a surprising number stayed on for more rehashing. As well, the SSS authors and artists had another busy day signing and selling their wares. A table was set aside for this activity in the Arizona room, and by all reports they went home with much lighter luggage. Here are two shots showing four SSS author/artist guys hard at work: Ron Standerfer in the left photo; and Mark Berent, Don Shepperd, and George Acree in the right photo.

Meanwhile, the Hospitality Suite was open with tables full of people; all telling of true exploits, deeds of heroism and derring-do, one-uppers, many versions of the same tall tale, fabrications, and the occasional out-right lie. It was a fun time!

Several major decisions were made over the course of our mass gaggle get-together, but the most



important one concerned future SSS reunions. The Board of Directors, having duly convened and considered the subject, announced that we'd go with reunions every two years and that the next would be held sometime in April, 2009. The venue will be the San Antonio area where there's always plenty to do (rehash if all else fails). There must have been some arm twisting involved, but everyone was very pleased to learn that the Reunion 2009 CINC will be Phil Edsall, ably assisted by Gus Guenther as his deputy. I hear they have already formed a good team and are working on places, times, and an exciting agenda. Pote Peterson's Vegas bash will be tough to top. Go for it, guys! "Onward and Upward." **End of Main Report. R. Medley**

In reviewing this After Action Report in its entirety, I note that The Intake is truly in need of an experienced and competent Photo Editor. Wally Mason had to depart the fix for other personal pursuits, and it is pretty clear that I am not expert at photo color control; not to mention size control, and a whole lot of other desired photographic technicalities. So forgive my mal-manipulations. Unfortunately, time does not permit a do-over. Any volunteers fully qualified to replace Wally are encouraged to do so ... and the sooner, the better, please.

Regarding the photos used in this article: they all came from only five contributors; Joe Broker, D. O. Neary, Herb Myer, "Big D" Simmonds, and "Moose" Skowron. We were quite surprised that many others did not respond to our request for photos and reunion anecdotes sent out in a 3 May, 2007, Toss-Bomb. Be that as in may, we were very pleased with the 200 or so photos submitted by these individuals. Each has at least one of their photos within this report. We thank them all for their inputs—and plan on calling on them for more excellent photo support of future SSS initiatives. We hope others will join in photo support of those initiatives.

Had we published all of the photos submitted, we would probably have shown only a small fraction of the 571+ faces/folks who attended this first ever SSS reunion. However, a large percentage of those individual attendees were captured in photos taken by the reunion's official photographer and crew (they did a great job, quality wise). Those "small group" photos can be viewed on the SSS Web site by clicking on the Reunion link, scrolling down a little bit, and clicking on the "Reunion Photos" link. Lots of faces ... lots of friends! (Even if you can't remember all the names.)

To wind up this article, I have included the following thoughts about our type of Brotherhood. This piece by an unknown author has been circulating of late. It speaks volumes more than its simple words say ... to those of us who have "been there – done that". Enjoy! ED.

The Brotherhood

I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not [really] to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not [really] to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family ... and my comrades.

Such GOOD men! **Author unknown** ☺

SONIC BOOM — Milepost of Aviation Progress

Submitted by Pete Davitto

This is a reproduction of an early 1950s North American Aviation Public Relations release attempting to mitigate adverse public reactions to noisy consequences attending the birth of "The Supersonic Age." Given the sonic boom glee experienced by early Super Sabre drivers (see "The Golden Years ... " in Issues One, Two, and Three), this is a very sober article. But one that gives us "offenders" certain insight to the "official sonic boom view" of the military-industrial complex at that time. Ed.

SONIC BOOM explosive sound announces to John Citizen that aviation has reached a new milestone and that National Defense is more secure.



By **RAYMOND H. RICE**
V.P. & Chief Engineer
North American Aviation
Inc.

THE SOUND of thunder has become so commonplace to man that even a thunderclap in the spring is hardly enough to make him register alarm. But now that a thunder-like sound has come out of a clear

sky, it has caused widespread comment. It is news because it is out of its proper place, and the public press has recognized it as a newsworthy sound. It is the phenomenon of sonic boom, caused when an airplane is flown through and beyond the speed of sound.

These sounds will become more intense as the speed of airplanes increases, because the shock wave which causes the sound will also become stronger at increased airplane speeds. The aircraft industry and the Air Force have recognized that there is a problem, and have made plans to eliminate it. This can be done by conducting flights away from populated areas when they must be made at a speed greater than that of sound for test purposes.

Sonic booms have become more frequent with the introduction of more airplanes capable of pushing through the sound barrier, where the sound is born. They may again become rare as both industry and service pilots perform their high speed flights in remote desert or ocean areas. Actually they are rare today, when you compare the number of flights made at supersonic speed with the

reports of sonic booms. North American Aviation pilots alone have flown some 4,000 flights over the speed of sound, and Air Force personnel have flown thousands more, but you could count on your fingers the total number of "booms" reported in metropolitan Los Angeles because high speed flights are carried out away from the metropolitan area, and normally over ocean areas directed away from land.

Sound is caused when pressure waves strike the ear. The process has often been described as similar to the waves which are seen when a rock is thrown into a still pond. The water waves represent the pressure waves in air, which are interpreted by the ear as sound. Ordinary conversation is actually a series of pressure waves which are interpreted by the ear as varying sounds. The louder the conversation, the greater the difference in pressure on each side of the pressure waves. A very loud sound, where there is a very great difference in pressure on either side of the wave, is interpreted by the ear as an explosive sound.

A loud explosive noise can be created by a sudden release of energy, such as a dynamite blast. Violent pressure disturbance is caused by this release of energy, and the pressure waves move outward away from the source of the blast. The pressure waves are also called compression waves, or shock waves. When these shock waves pass the ear, an explosive noise is heard. Its loudness depends on the amount of pressure built up by the shock waves

When an airplane flies at speeds faster than sound, it creates shock waves in the air, just as a motor boat on a still lake creates surface waves, or as the

dynamite blast has created a shock wave. Under certain atmospheric conditions, these shock waves created by the airplane reach the ground and are heard as explosive noises or supersonic boom.

Most of the booms heard so far have been caused by diving airplanes. In the typical dive, an airplane is pushed over into the dive from level flight at about 40,000 feet. It accelerates from below the speed of sound to the speed of sound and above. At a speed slightly over the speed of sound, a pattern of shock waves is formed by the airplane and move toward the earth, in the direction of the airplane's flight and at the same speed.

In addition to the shock wave pattern attached to the airplane, there is a trailing tail wave which is shed from the airplane as it passes through the speed of sound during its dive. During the portion of the airplane's flight which is above the speed of sound there are five or six shock waves of varying intensity, springing from the wing, canopy, and tail. These are in addition to the initial "bow wave" formed at the nose of the airplane, and the trailing tail wave.

Now we have the airplane diving at a speed above the speed of sound, with a shock wave pattern including the bow wave, tail, wave, and other shock waves in between. The pilot begins pulling out of his dive at about 20,000 feet, and as he does so the airplane slows down, but the shock waves do not. They spring forward from the airplane toward the ground.

There is a change in the shape of the shock waves, now that they are not "pushed" by the airplane. Originally, they were cone-shaped, but as they travel forward they are distorted rapidly and

become bell-shaped. Just as a dynamite blast cannot be heard if it is far enough away from a listener, the intensity of the wave is reduced by the spreading out of the wave if the airplane is high enough. Dust particles in the air, and the scattering effects of air currents and atmospheric turbulence cause additional reduction in the strength of the shock waves.

Assuming that the airplane pulls from its dive at 20,000 feet, the shock waves travel toward the earth and as they do, the stronger waves absorb the weaker ones, so that the original group of six or seven waves is collected into one, two, or three booms when they strike the ear of a listener. More than three booms can be created if the airplane is accelerated or decelerated through the speed of sound several times.

The loudness of these explosive sounds depends upon the top speed of the airplane in relation to the speed of sound, plus the rate at which it slows down in pulling out of its dive, and its altitude at the bottom of the dive.

Since the shock waves are strongest near the centerline of the airplane, and since the central portion of these waves travel along the path of the airplane, booms are heard loudest in the region ahead of it in a dive. Temperature differences at varying altitudes will cause the shock wave path to vary. Ordinarily they will curve upwards, but if there is a temperature inversion (where higher temperatures are found at higher altitudes), the path of the shock wave will curve downward.

Although the varying of atmospheric conditions from day to day makes it difficult to predict the intensity of these sonic booms, they can actually be aimed by the pilot at a ground target with fair accuracy. One of the loudest sonic booms created so far was made

experimentally by North American Aviation's senior engineering test pilot, George Welch. In a study of the blast effect, Welch nosed his airplane to the speed of sound and pulled out at an altitude of 3,000 feet.

Men who heard this boom said it was "like heavy thunder—only louder." The hangar used as the target for these sound experiments was the Air Force's experimental testing station at Edwards Air Force Base, located in a remote desert area.

This cautious probing into the effects of sonic booms has given warning that future aircraft flights in which a potential sonic boom exists must



YF-100 exceeded Mach 1 on first test flight.

be made in remote ocean or desert areas, or at high altitudes for the sake of courtesy to the civilian population. The aircraft industry in Southern California has agreed that flights in which high speed dives are necessary to comply with military test requirements will be so conducted. Similarly, all high speed, low altitude speed runs for the purpose of instrument calibration, which may be required to meet contract specifications, will be conducted either over ocean areas at a reasonable distance offshore, or in desert areas.

In a low altitude pass at a speed over that of sound, the boom will not be heard until the airplane has flown past the listener. That is because the shock

waves "bend" backward, behind the airplane and will reach the listener after the airplane has passed.

Since the shock wave will be traveling at the same speed as the airplane, the interval between the airplanes's passing and the arrival of the shock wave will be very brief, and of course will be dependent upon the altitude of the airplane above the listener. The loudness of the boom will be dependent upon the size and speed of the airplane and also upon the distance of the observer from the line of flight. Studies have indicated that the boom will be very loud at distances closer than one-half mile to one mile. The force of these shock waves is not surprising when you consider that an appreciable part of the tremendous horsepower required to drive a typical jet fighter airplane through the air at a speed greater than that of sound is expended in the creation of shock waves.

Based upon the knowledge we have today, it appears that as a measure of safety and courtesy, supersonic speeds should not be attempted within one mile of other slow flying or approaching aircraft, or within one mile of personnel or ground installations. Over residential areas level supersonic flight should not be made below 20,000 feet. If dives are made, the airplane should be slowed down from supersonic to subsonic speed at least 20 miles away from a residential district.

With the observance of these simple safety and courtesy rules by pilots flying supersonic aircraft, there will be no need of these pressure waves being any more that interesting phenomena heralding the achievement of supersonic flight in the development of military aviation.

First of the true tri-sonic Fighters, the new F-100 Super Sabre exceeds Mach 1 in normal, level flight ... flying faster than the speed of sound. Mach (pronounced "mock") is the only really accurate way of evaluating jet plane speeds. This special standard of measurement is needed because the speed of sound varies with changes in temperature and altitude. At sea level, for instance, sound travels at speeds ranging from 760.9 MPH at an air temperature of 60° to 790.7 MPH at 100°. However, using the Mach numbers, a jet traveling at Mach 1 is flying at the speed of sound, no matter what altitude or temperature.

North American Aviation, Inc.

How we either prevented or almost started WW III

TU-104 Escort Duty

By Don Volz

My first assignment after pilot training and survival school at Stead AFB, Nevada, was to the 461st Fighter Day Squadron at Hahn AB, Germany, in April, 1958. The 36th Tactical Fighter Wing had five squadrons of the C model which we flew off of 8,000-foot runways that were usually wet. This story involves fellow SSS member Wally Mason and yours truly.

In late '58 or early '59, Russia was routinely flying its first jet transport, the Tupolev TU-104, along the German corridor to (I think) Brussels. A pair of "Deadly Jesters" from the 461st was usually scrambled to intercept the Russian and keep an eye on him during his transit of German airspace. On this particular day in the late afternoon, Wally and I were on Zulu (day fighter) alert and were scrambled. Wally, as lead, was an old head in the unit, and I was a fairly new guy (FNG).

We were directed by radar to intercept the TU-104 and we did. The Russian was at about 25,000 feet and the two of us were at about 30,000 feet flying parallel with him. It was a beautiful evening with the sun going down as we observed the sleek jet transport heading southwest towards Brussels.

Flying along on Wally's wing, I heard him say, "Cover me, Don. I'm going down for a look see."

I responded, "You're covered, lead."

Wally peeled off, headed down toward the transport, and joined up on his wing in CLOSE formation. After a minute or so, Wally lit the afterburner and rolled over the transport with the AB flame streaming from the tail

I thought this was Sierra Hotel and said to Wally, "How about if I take a look, Wally?" and he says, "You're covered," as he pulled up to the high perch.

Well, not to be outdone by my lead, I slid in to a CLOSE formation with the Russian and saw the people in the plane waving and taking pictures. I waved back and then lit the burner and pulled a "Mason," rolled up and over the TU-104, and then joined up with my leader.

On the ground, after the mission, I looked at Wally and said, "Wally, we were stark crazy to pull that stunt. This is going to be reported to the highest levels, and we will both be thrown into the deepest, darkest, dungeon and never see the light of day again!" I don't remember his reply, but nothing more was heard of the incident.

In retrospect, I can just imagine the delight of the passengers on that plane with our air show. No doubt they were probably disappointed that it wasn't repeated. Wally says perhaps we prevented WWII—

I say maybe we almost started it! We'll never know.



Charter member Don flew the C model with the 461st FDS at Hahn and the 22nd TFS at Bitburg '58-'61. Then served as AFLC Hun Project Officer at Sacramento '61-'66.



Disembarking Russians pondering the "Deadly Jesters' Air Show?"

By 1966, Wally was flying for Western Airlines. He convinced Don that the airlines were the only way to go. So, Don applied and three months later he was in training with American Airlines where he spent the next 28 years.
Editor

Super Sabre Society Store = Hot Deals

There are several items for sale on the SSS Web site under the link **Auxiliary Equipment**. The items shown below (which are a sub-set of those on the Web site) DO bring some cash into the SSS coffers. So belly up and get a hat that's Not Orange, and buy some other sew-on or stick-on items to help you celebrate being an SSS member. Sloan Brooks will process and deliver your order if you send a snail-mail letter with your selections and a check to "Auxiliary Equipment," SSS, PO Box 500044, Austin, TX, 78750, or I'll bet he'd even take an email order from you addressed to sloanb@swbell.net and send the goodies when he gets your check. Good stuff, good cause, good deal!



Not an Orange Hat!
\$15



Small Patch
(3.5"x3") \$5



Large Patch
(7.71"x9") \$15



F-100 Patch (3.5")
\$5



Stick-on Decal (2")
2/\$5



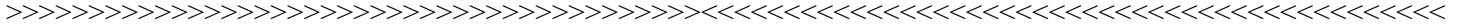
Stick-on Decal (3")
2/\$5

How I almost “Bought the Farm”

Deadstick in the Dirt

By Ralph Taylor

I once flew a Hun that performed a surgical incision on my forehead, in May of 1960, which required 28 stitches to close. It was a career-changing event! Here’s what happened.



I was on a night cross-country flight into Williams AFB near Chandler, Arizona, in my F-100C. My engine flamed-out at about 300 feet AGL on final approach to land. I was too low to eject, so I tried an unsuccessful air start, and because the F-100C glides like a lead crowbar, the ground came up really fast. I had never landed at “Willie” at night and it was really pitch black, so I had no idea what I was landing on or in! F-100C pilots called every landing a “controlled crash,” because our typical landing speed for the fuel load that I had was 165 knots (190 mph), and we actually flew the plane into the ground!

Well, this landing was just a little harder than most.

I was very lucky to be bouncing along at 190 mph guiding that thing with my feet (the rudder pedals controlled the nose-gear steering and rudder). I could see the threshold lights at the end of the runway about three-quarters of a mile away, and I thought I would make it there before this ride was over. About that time, I hit something in the dark, and things immediately went topsy turvy in the cockpit. But I quickly realized I had come to a stop and that the aircraft was on fire. I jerked at what I thought was the seatbelt latch, but it didn’t work, so I continued to grab at everything possible to get out of that inferno.

Eventually, I was able to crawl out of the cockpit, exit the airplane, and put some distance between me and the fire. (The whole egress drill was like one of those nightmares, where you try to outrun some danger, but you are moving in slow

motion—except this was real, and I could hardly move.)

Then my head cleared enough for me to realize that I was all tangled in my parachute shroud lines, and I was dragging my burning chute with me. I beat out the fire, got untangled and released my chute harness, and took off running across the desert like a scalded tom cat.

Ditched in a Ditch

I found out later that I had landed at the edge a plowed field. It was a pretty good landing under the circumstances. I didn’t blow a tire or shake off a wing fuel tank during the touchdown. After rolling about a quarter of a mile, I had hit a large irrigation ditch just inside the base boundary fence (which I had plowed right through). The ditch was about fifteen feet deep and twenty-five feet across. I had slowed to about 140 mph, so I was no longer flying and the plane dropped just enough for me to smack into the lip of that ditch, which wiped out the landing gear and broke off the nose of the aircraft forward of the cockpit. Then the fuselage broke right behind my seat, and during the subsequent half-mile slide, the cockpit flipped over so that my inverted head was just inches off the ground. (I was eating dust and sand, and my mouth, nose, and ears were full of it.) When I blindly crawled out, I went through a small 17-inch opening between the aircraft and the ground. There was no other way out!

The accident investigators never could figure out exactly why the chute opened; whether I pulled to cord or if it ripped open when I

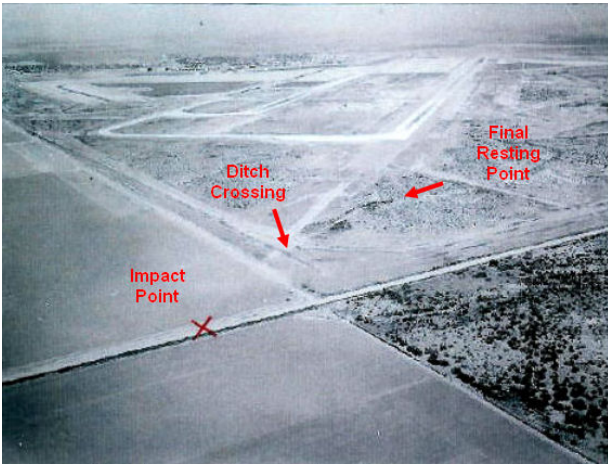
exited the cockpit. They couldn’t find my helmet or the oxygen mask



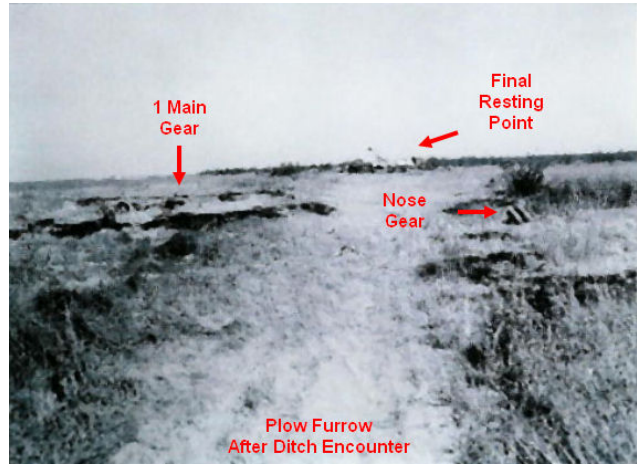
Ralph had a short but enjoyable go at a Hun career. 32 Months with the 461st FDS at Hahn and 5 months with the 333rd TFS/4th TFW at Seymour Johnson. After this hairy adventure he voluntarily gave up the cockpit and retired in '82 with 28.5 years of service.

attached to it. They think that gear might have been ripped off when I rolled over, and that both may have gone down the intake into the windmilling engine, where they were ground up, and consumed by fire. (That could have been my head!)

After I got free of my chute, I could see the fire trucks coming down the runway. Then they got off into the desert and headed right towards me. I had to jump out of their way to keep from being run over by the first fire truck! The fire chief was in the next vehicle, and he picked me up. I started yelling at him about that first truck almost hitting me. The chief then explained that they were in radio contact, and that the first truck driver saw that I was in reasonable shape and proceeded on to the aircraft to put out the fire and remove anyone else that might be in it (I was, of course



Shots taken for the accident investigation. My touchdown/impact point was at the start of a very faint arc (where I inserted the red X) beginning at the dirt road and ending at my resting point. It was fortunate that I didn't mow down that row of Center Line Lights or I could have been hurt).



This image shows the furrow I plowed after leaving the ditch. One main gear is over to the left and the double wheeled nose gear is on the right. I apologize for the poor quality of these images, but these scans were taken of Air Force proof prints that are now 46 years old.

solo, but they didn't know that at the time).

At some point I remember taking off my flight gloves to assess the damages because as I could feel blood running down my face. I found a vertical gash on my head and pulled the skin apart. I took my finger and rubbed the skull to assure that it was not cracked. (With all the adrenalin flowing, I didn't feel a thing.) I am very vain, so I then rubbed my teeth with a finger to be sure that I still had them all. I did. My face was a filthy mess, and I started rubbing it. When the chief got there he told me that I shouldn't rub my face, but I ignored him and kept rubbing. He told me again not to rub my face, and I asked him why. In exasperation he told me that I was rubbing the skin off my face! I held up my hand to the truck lights and could see rolled up black skin in my hand. About 90% of the skin was burned off my face. (Eventually the burns healed and the scar from the 28 stitches it took to close the gash has been replaced by wrinkles.)

When I got to the emergency room and was being treated, I kept asking for water because I was so parched. Finally an older gentleman in civilian clothes came up to my bedside to try to calm me down. I started giving him a hard time about



Night or day, the wreckage looked unsurvivable. The day photo shows the section of the plane that Ralph was in, with the gaping holes on what was the bottom of the cockpit. It had been turned over slightly so that they could get shots of the inside of the cockpit. The dark surface at the front is the bulkhead that was just in front of Ralph's feet.

needing some moisture in my mouth. He finally told me that they couldn't give me any liquids because they hadn't yet checked for internal

injuries. I was insanely thirsty so I begged him to give me a gauze pad that was dampened with water so that I could chew on it.

After thinking about it, he relented and did that, for which I was forever grateful. The next day the same gentleman came to my room for a visit. It turned out he was the hospital commander: a full colonel. He had been notified at home about the aircraft accident. I apologized quickly for my earlier conduct and thanked him for the moist pad. I don't even remember his name.

The most painful part of the experience was three broken ribs (two on the left and one on the right) from the beating I took in the cockpit. Broken ribs are extremely uncomfortable and modern medicine has not found a way to ease the discomfort. Finding a way to sleep was difficult, and I was miserable for several weeks.

After twelve days they released me from the hospital, and I flew back to Goldsboro, North Carolina, by commercial air. When I got to the base I had to sign a statement for the destruction of Air Force property valued at \$665,000.00 (they didn't ask me to pay for it!). A fighter like that today costs many millions of dollars.

I should have been dead 46 years ago. Then and now there are very few locations where you can touch down about a mile short of the runway—at nearly 200 miles per hour—and live to tell about it.

But that spot in the desert off the end of the runway at Williams AFB marked with that red X was one of them.

I was darned lucky to find it—at night yet. More fun than eatin' dirt!

Post Mortem.

The Air Force could not determine the exact cause of the accident because the bird was nearly totally destroyed and the engine had ingested so much desert and aircraft parts. Officially, it was just ruled a “mechanical failure.” The prime suspect, however, was the engine oil cooler, which is vital to lubricating the engine bearings. (This is a sealed assembly that has a radiator inside

through which the hot engine oil was cooled by jet fuel en route to the main fuel controller for the engine.) The inspectors found this assembly smashed so badly they couldn't perform a useful failure analysis.

But given the engine oil cooler's known failure record in those days, it could well have been the culprit that ended my otherwise enjoyable flight to Willie ... just a bit prematurely.



Bonus: More Reunion Photos – 140 Attendees



I was a last minute add-on to a RESCAP for Robbie Risner.

Two Tales: My First Combat Mission and a DFC for Multiple Missions!

By Ronald R. Green

I joined the 416th TFS on Easter Sunday, 1963, at Misawa AB, Japan. Although this was to be a three-year tour, in June '64 I found myself in the last flight of F-100s leaving Misawa. We were being transferred to England AFB as a part of Project Clear Water (Muddy Water, as we affectionately called it).

I was named the Squadron Mobility Officer, but was told not to worry, as it would be at least six months before we could be sent anywhere else. True to form, however, in September (yet) we were given two weeks notice to deploy to Vietnam.

In exactly two weeks, after painting many of the boxes myself, we marshaled the last box for the deployment. At that moment we received a call saying we weren't going after all.

Although we were disappointed, (especially me) all our work was not for naught as we found ourselves at Clark AB in March of 1965. We were TDY to Clark and were on call for deployments to Da Nang AB, Vietnam, if a response force was needed.

We didn't have long to wait. On that first afternoon at Clark we were told to deploy a flight to Vietnam for missions North. I begged the ops officer to let me go and was told that when I unloaded the last C-130 the next morning, and loaded it with equipment required for TDY support, I could get on board and accompany it.

We met the C-130 the next morning and with the help of the previous mobility officer in driving the fork lift, I was soon on my way to Da Nang. I quickly completed the necessary mobility duties and accomplished my in-theater briefing so that I was ready to fly—except for picking up my local survival vest, gun, and combat radio. I was even able to sweet talk my way onto a mission the next morning, March 21, '65.

After the in-briefing, I decided it was time to take my one B3 bag and check into Billeting to get my tent bed. I figured that I would unpack my clothes and then bring my flying gear back.

I was standing in front of the Quonset waiting for a ride when three pilots ran out. I recognized one of them who was from my squadron. He hollered at me that I was number four of a RESCAP for an F-105 pilot who had just been shot down (we later learned he was Robbie Risner). We were to provide support for an SA-16 (Albatross) that was on the way to pick him up.

(It turned out that all the other pilots had already flown and were at the Club eating lunch.) All this information was shouted to me as the guys ran past. (I had



Vintage Grumman SA-16 Albatross Rescue Bird

never seen the other guys before—lead and number two, as it turned out.)

I tore my flying gear from my B3, threw the bag back inside the Quonset hut, and started to follow in the direction of the now disappearing pilots. I was putting on my flying gear as I ran and saw several crew chiefs standing in front of an airplane in a revetment waving at me, so I hurried on to that plane. Ever put a G-suit on while running?

The other three airplanes were just starting to taxi, so I told the crew chiefs to pull whatever pins they could and button me up for taxi. No preflight was made in this case, as I didn't have the time.

The radio came on-line, and I heard the flight going to tower freq—this verified the flight call sign for me. I taxied on the chief's signal and strapped in as I taxied.

As I pulled into the arming area, three was just lighting his burner. I quickly armed, got clearance for takeoff, and saw the flight already into their turn out of traffic. I plugged in the burner when about thirty degrees from alignment with the runway. When airborne, I pulled up the gear handle and started my turn. Reaching the proper speed I pulled up the flaps and aimed at the flight for join-up (I was in trail, of course) and continued to accelerate.

I then checked my airspeed and, to my surprise, saw I was going through 500 knots. As we had a 395 knot speed limit with 335s and fuel, I brought it out of burner and called the flight. They immediately came out of burner and I was able to join up when we were about forty miles north of Da Nang. We continued up the coast and leveled at around 20,000 feet.

This gave me ample time to think about things and assess my situation. I had a parachute, water wings, g-suit, and the survival kit in the airplane; but no combat survival radio, survival map or gun. This caused me to ask myself several times what I was doing there and to question my judgment about going along on this flight in the first place. The fact that I definitely knew they were shooting in this area made me question the sanity of that rather hasty decision of mine!

We sighted the SA-16 in an orbit just to the east of the downed pilot and set up in an orbit around it and the



Ron logged 3100 hours and 231 combat missions as a jock, IP, and maintenance test pilot in the Hun before it was retired at Luke while he was there. Somehow, he later added 61 more combat missions in the F-4.

pilot in the water. After coordinating with us, the SA-16 set up for landing. During this time we saw occasional plumes in the water showing that the North Vietnamese were shooting mortars, but the pilot was slightly out of their range.

As the SA-16 touched down, there was a big spray of water, and it completely disappeared under water. The spray was even settling when the SA-16 bobbed up again. We asked if he was OK and were told "Yes, but I have one engine missing very badly." He said that it was good enough for him to taxi in and pick up the pilot.

He picked up the pilot and then taxied farther out before turning south for takeoff. He applied power, and as I remember, we had time for three complete turns before the wake of the SA-16 stopped, indicating that he was airborne. He then climbed to 4,500ft and continued on to Da Nang.

We jettisoned our bombs at sea, because we were prohibited from landing with them, and made an uneventful landing. As we pulled into the de-arming area, I breathed a sigh of relief and said to myself, "All's well that ends well!"

For this first mission I was credited with 1/25th of an Air Medal. I was to earn the Distinguished Flying Cross about six weeks later as the North Vietnamese tried to cut the northern area of SVN off just below Da Nang. As we attempted to get the maximum number of missions off and fly necessary night missions, I, as one of the few qualified for night missions, volunteered and flew day and night missions on four consecutive days and the three encompassing nights. The DFC was awarded due to the sustained flying activities during that intense period.

One of the more interesting missions was particularly exciting: three planes of a four-ship flight were hit by ground fire and RTB'd while lead hung on at the target.

This was on one of the day missions when our ground troops were defending Da Nang from several platoons of the enemy. The situation had developed as the

enemy organized a hard line just a few miles from Da Nang and started an attack from a tree line with a trench behind it for their mortars and heavy machine guns. I was leading a four ship flight, and this target was so close that we could easily see the runways of DaNang from base leg on our weapons delivery runs.

We dropped ordinance from our wing stations and then rolled in to strafe down the trench for maximum effectiveness. On the first strafe pass, four called off with a hit and returned to base. I said, "Roger that, we'll keep you in sight till you're on final, and if you bail out we'll come and cap you." He rogered and went to channel two for landing.

We continued our mission, and on the next pass two called off with a hit and returned to base to land. Again I rogered the hit and gave him the same instructions I had given number four. Two rogered this, and we continued our work.

On the next pass, three called off with a hit and returned to base. I rogered this and said I'd stay high and dry till he was on final. After that, I continued to strafe for two more passes, expending all my 20 mm ammo. I never took a hit, and when the ground troops took that area, they reported no significant opposition.

I did get the third afternoon off. First thinking of getting some much needed sleep, I instead decided to unwind for a little while by soaking up a little sun outside our bunker—then I'd get some sleep. While sitting there tanning and reading, a sniper's bullet whizzed by my ear. At that point I gave up all thoughts of sleeping till my four days of alert duties were over. I found it amazing how lots of adrenaline can eliminate the need for sleep for such a long time. But I have to say, it definitely is not something I would ever like to repeat! ☹



Toss-Bomb Alert

Les Frazier has an important message about an important means of SSS communications. "Many computers treat mass-mailings like the toss-bombs as spam and remove them from your computer without you ever seeing them. My suggestion is to go to <http://www.supersabresociety.com/bomb.htm> once or twice a month to see if you are missing anything. This is where we put the toss-bombs after they go out." *I agree. We only got four responses to our request for reunion photos in a Toss-Bomb of 3 May, 2007. Ed.*

Bailout at Plei-Me

By Mel Elliot

Even though this story is not about the F-100, I did fly the Hun from 1957 till 1972, taking a 15-month “break” to fly the Spad in Vietnam. I got about 3500 hours in the F-100 C, D, and F models. My last flight in 1972 was with the 48th TFW at RAF Lakenheath, UK, the last active duty Fighter Wing equipped with the F-100. I certainly have some wonderful memories of that old bird, some of which I will forward at a later date when I can jog the memory and remember them more clearly.



Charter member. See story intro for Mel's Hun service.

On 19 October, 1965, I was assigned to lead a flight of four A-1Es from the 1st Air Commando Squadron, then stationed at Bien Hoa AB, RVN, scheduled for a routine “0-dark-thirty” combat mission in South Vietnam.



Venerable A-1E Skyraider at Bien Hoa.

Just before our takeoff, we were told to divert to the Plei-Me Special Forces camp, about 30 NM south of Pleiku. The departure and flight to Plei-Me were uneventful. Arriving just before dawn, we circled and watched a flight of F-100s working in the area with a C-123 flareship with a FAC aboard. When the F-100s had expended their ordnance we were directed into the target area, and told the compound was in trouble from an attack by what was later determined to be regular North Vietnam troops (the first confirmed in South Vietnam).

We were sharing an FM radio frequency with the flare ship and the American compound commander. The compound commander directed us to drop our napalm right on the perimeter of his camp. At times, the igniters from the napalm cans were going over the wall into the trenches inside the compound. After we expended all ordnance we returned to Bien Hoa without incident. After landing we discovered that three of our four planes had several small caliber bullet holes in them.

Back to Plei-Me ...

Two days later, on Sunday, 21 October, I was in the officer's club having a drink with a friend from Hurlburt who was flying the AC-47, (PUFF) gunship, and he asked me what medals I had been awarded during our tour there. I replied, "The only ones left are ones that hurt or scare you." Right about then the phone in the club rang. It was the command post asking for A-1E pilots to go on alert.

The alert duty pilots had just taken off on their third mission of the day, after which they would have to be

replaced. I told the duty officer I would round up four new pilots and report to the command post ASAP.

The four new pilots, including me, arrived at the command post where we were briefed and assigned aircraft. We picked up our flight gear, proceeded to the aircraft, and “cocked” the birds for alert. We had just loaded our gear in the planes when the command post called and ordered two planes to launch. My wingman and I were to be the second two to launch so we proceeded to the alert trailer to get any rest possible. But about two hours later the two of us scrambled and were told that we should proceed to Plei-Me and to then rendezvous with a flare ship and an Army Caribou at 12:30 AM. As soon as we completed the rendezvous with the flare ship at Plei-Me the weather in the area was about a 1,000 foot ceiling with good visibility under the clouds. We then set up an orbit around Plei-Me to wait for the Caribou while the flare ship was keeping the area lit from above the clouds.



Day view of Special Forces Camp/Fort at Plei-Me, RVN

I'm hit ...

After about an hour of orbiting, I advised the flare ship that we would be able to stay in the area longer if we expended the external ordnance we were carrying: napalm, CBU and rockets. The compound marked an area with a mortar round, and we expended our external ordnance; then I then set up an orbit again to wait for the Caribou assigned to re-supply the compound. About 2:15 AM, I requested the status of the Caribou and told it had been canceled for that night. I told the flare ship and compound that we would have to leave the area shortly, but that we could strafe any likely areas with our 20mm

cannon before leaving. The compound again marked an area with a mortar round, and I rolled in on a strafing pass. As I pulled off the target I noticed that things were quite bright. I looked at my left wing and it was ablaze!

I called my wingman, Robert Haines, to tell him that I was on fire, and he asked me to turn on my lights so he could see me. My thoughts at that point were that if he couldn't see me with the fire that was burning, he for sure wouldn't see the lights of the aircraft. I decided my best plan was to maneuver over the compound and bail out (no Yankee extraction system back then). Before I could get into position over the compound, the flares went out, so it was impossible to see the ground. I continued in the orbit, at approximately 800 feet AGL, waiting for more flares, so I could see the ground, but suddenly my aircraft controls failed and I notified all concerned that I was bailing out immediately.

Over the side ...

As I was attempting to bail out, I got stuck against the rear part of the left canopy. My helmet was blown off immediately when I stuck my head out of the cockpit (a few days earlier I had cut the chin strap off my helmet because the snap on it had become corroded and wouldn't unfasten after a mission). At this point the aircraft was out of control and was rolling, due to the fire burning through the left wing. I finally freed myself from the aircraft and reached for the D-Ring, but it was not in the retainer pocket on the parachute harness where it was normally stowed. Luckily, I found the cable and followed it to the ring, pulled it, and the chute opened. Shortly after that, some flares lit, and I could see that I was going to land in some trees outside of the compound. Stuck in the trees about fifty feet above the ground, I bounced up and down to make sure that the chute was not going to come loose, then swung over to the trunk of the tree and grabbed a nearby vine. I had lost my hunting knife during the bailout, so I was forced to abandon the survival kit that was a part of the parachute as I worked my way out of the chute harness.

After climbing down the vine, I sat down for a short time to think about my situation and take stock of what remained of my survival equipment. I had a .38 caliber revolver with five rounds of ammo, a pen-gun-flare, a strobe light, a two-way radio (which at times was a luxury to A-1 pilots), my Mae West, and a brand new "chit book" from the Bien Hoa Officers Club.

After regrouping, I got out the two-way radio and contacted my wingman, who was orbiting the area. I told him I had him in sight and advised him when he was directly above me. Then I instructed him to fly from my position to the compound so I'd know which direction to head in my attempt to make it to safety. About thirty minutes later, Haines had to leave the area and proceed to Pleiku because he was running short on fuel.

A failed rescue attempt ...

I proceeded toward the compound, and just when I thought I was getting close to the perimeter, a heavy fire-fight broke out, so I found a likely place to hide and stayed there the rest of the night. Shortly after dawn, I spotted an O-1 aircraft orbiting the area, turned on my radio, and called him several times before getting an answer. Because I had forgotten my call sign, I had to use my name to call the Bird Dog. Then, by identifying some different landmarks, the Bird Dog was able to pinpoint my position. I stayed



O-1 Bird Dog FAC in the area.

hidden where I was all day, and just after dusk the Bird Dog (same pilot) told me that a Huey was coming to get me out. Shortly afterward, the Huey and I made radio contact, and he told me to get into the best position I could to get picked up. The Huey arrived on the scene, and I moved from my hiding place onto a small trail through the brush. When the Huey came around with lights out, I turned on my strobe. The Huey made two orbits and on the third circle came in and turned on his floodlight. At that point a .50 caliber machine gun opened fire about fifty yards from my position.

The Huey turned his lights off and left the area. I put the strobe in my pocket and got off the trail into the brush and laid low. About ten minutes later, two North Vietnamese soldiers came down the trail with a flashlight. I was about twenty feet off the trail and flat on the ground. The soldiers were chatting as if they were out for a Sunday stroll, sweeping their flashlight from one side of the trail to the other. One of the sweeps came to within about two feet of me; the next sweep was beyond me. After the two soldiers were satisfied that I was not in the area, I moved to a new hiding place and settled down for the rest of the night. By this time it was about 8 PM. But there was no sleep for me because aircraft were in the area the entire time I was on the ground. Between them and the mortars, it was quite noisy. One thing I learned during my "tour at Plei-Me" was that a bomb has to hit pretty quite close to anyone flat on the ground to cause any great grief.

As dawn approached (my second on the ground), I heard the familiar sound of a C-47. I got out of my hiding place and saw an AC-47 orbiting with the business side toward me. The aircraft made a couple of orbits as I was going around the trunk of a large tree much like a treed squirrel who is being hunted. Soon after that, the AC-47

opened fire with a short burst, and then departed. (I later learned that they had an engine problem and had to RTB.)

After two nights in the jungle ...

Around 8 AM I contacted a Bird Dog in the area, and by identifying landmarks, he pinpointed my new position. The FAC (USAF) said he was going to throw smoke grenades to get a better position on me. I didn't really think that was a good idea, but the FAC threw all the smoke he had and never got any close enough for me to see. He told me he was going for more smoke and left the area. At this time another Bird Dog arrived and advised me that a chopper was coming to pick me up and told me to get into a suitable area. I moved into an opening clear of brush but full of five to six feet high grass, that was swampy. Upon reaching the middle of this clearing I contacted the FAC and was advised that the chopper had been diverted on a "HIGHER PRIORITY" mission. This was really the only time while I was on the ground that I was completely demoralized. I proceeded back to my nighttime hiding place and decided that I was going to move away from the Special Forces compound to make it easier to get picked up. During the move, about a half to three-quarters of a mile, I came across a small stream, washed my face up a bit, and washed my mouth out. This made me feel somewhat better.

I came upon rising terrain and climbed up till I came upon a fair sized clearing. I spotted a clump of bamboo suitable for a hiding place and headed for it. Suddenly, something darted out of it, scaring me half to death. After my heart started again, I saw that it was a wild pig. I proceeded into the bamboo thicket and contacted a Bird Dog orbiting overhead. I again pinpointed my position with the Bird Dog, who said he was going to go for some food and water for me, because they didn't know how long it would be before I could be picked up. After he left, I realized that the only can opener I had was my pistol and the five rounds of ammo.

Picked up at last...

About thirty minutes later, I contacted the Bird Dog, and he said to come on the air again in fifteen minutes. When I turned my radio on again, I heard several pilots talking on "GUARD," several of whom I recognized as A-1E pilots. The FAC said that an HH-43B AF rescue chopper was about five minutes out and that the A-1Es would be dropping napalm along a tree line about one hundred yards from my position. He advised me to move into the middle of the clearing as soon as the A-1Es flew over. Doing this, I spotted the H-43 coming directly toward me, about twenty feet off the ground. The pilot

got into position, but had to hover because of brush in the grass. This created a huge wave of grass, so I was forced to crawl through it to the chopper. When I clambered aboard, I was dragging a tangle of vines that grew in the grass.



Ever protecting HH-43B Husky approaches a CSAR pick-up.

The PJ on the chopper was hanging out the door, and I stepped on what I thought was a skid—but instead it was a wheel! As soon as I reached up, the PJ told the pilot he had me, and away we went. The wheel rotated, and I slipped off it. This left me hanging in mid-air, arm in arm with the PJ as we rose quickly from the grassy field. I looked up at him and told him I was not going back down there alone, which no doubt inspired him to even greater efforts as he pulled me into the chopper.

The pickup was at about noon. I had been on the ground for about thirty-six hours—it seemed like that many days!

When we arrived at Pleiku, there was no immediately available transportation for me back to Bien Hoa. So we scrounged around and eventually an A-1 driven by Gail Kirkpatrick was diverted into Pleiku to pick me up.

When I got finally got back to Bien Hoa, an intelligence sergeant from Saigon was waiting to debrief me. The most redundant question was, "Captain Elliott, were you scared at any time?"

After debriefing and being checked over by the Doc, I asked if my wife in Phoenix had been notified of this episode, but I could not get a definite answer. I asked the Wing CO if I could call back on the Hot Line to talk to her. By this time it was 5 AM in Phoenix. I got through to the operator at Luke AFB and gave her my home number, but she told me she could not ring off base numbers. I explained why I was calling, and she put the call through immediately. My wife had not yet heard anything about my bailout and ultimate rescue, so I briefly told her about my adventure.

After we hung up, she got a copy of the local newspaper which had my picture on the front page, along with the rest of the story.

There is no way of saying thanks to all the people involved in a successful rescue mission and there is no way to tell someone who has not been through such an ordeal what it is really like.

"Thanks to all involved!" **Mel Elliott.** ☺

(Written shortly after Mel's retirement in '74—nine years after the incident and now 33 years ago. Editor)

The Lieutenant Was New!

By Jack Hartmann

Whoo-whee! Here I was, a new lieutenant, flying Hun combat missions in Vietnam only a year and a half after graduating from Luke! My gun IP at Luke, Major Wyc Steele, had cautioned me that “New lieutenants had a bad habit of making ‘smoking holes’ in the ground early in their careers.” So, I was being careful, I thought, especially since I had a wife and baby boy over at Clark AFB, Philippine Islands.

But I was a Fighter Pilot! And I was bullet proof too!!!

The 308th TFS had sent me through “Night Owl” training back at Homestead to prepare me for night ops under flares and here I was in early '66 at Bien Hoa AB, RVN, scheduled for night (five minute) alert. The bad news was my flight lead that night was my flight commander, Major Bob G___, a SAC B-47 retread with about 80 hours in the Hun. Major Bob was so weak that our ops officer, Major Swede Saunders, usually scheduled Ben Briggs or me to be Maj. Bob’s “seeing eye lieutenants” and keep him out of trouble.

Sure enough, at 0200 hours local, the klaxon went off. Cart start while strapping in and 4.2 minutes later roaring down the runway in the rain trying to wipe the sleep out of my eyes. Paris Control confirmed that it was a real “Flaming Arrow” scramble: troops in contact needing immediate assistance.

We were briefed that a triangular fort down in the Delta was under heavy attack. They usually had a Green Beret team and a company of SV Rangers—trying to “pacify” and help out the locals during the day (and hoping to stay alive during the night). Our flare ship, a C-130, was almost there, having just finished a pre-planned strike near the Cambodian border.

Just as we came up on the strike frequency, our flare ship took some heavy ground fire and had to shut down an engine that was on fire. They immediately headed back toward their base—saying they’d call ahead for another flare ship, but it would be almost a half-hour before they could get there. An American voice came up on the strike freq and identified himself as the Green Beret team leader. We saw a large fire on the ground which he said was the fort burning. He said they needed help and they needed it now!!! We each had two napalm, two CBU-12s, and a full load of 20mm HEI.

Major Bob was speechless and out of ideas, so I volunteered to drop one can of nape to see if we could use that for illumination. (The Hun wasn’t designed to do that, but what the hell; I knew how to screw with the pylon load switches!) It was a pitch black, moonless night, and the lights on the ground looked just like the stars. Guided by rough vectors from the fort (and also remembering to use the large altimeter corrections the Hun had), I then began a descending “Instrument” roll-in using the burning fort as my altimeter. (Boy was I being a dumb ass; but I was too scared to notice!) As luck would have it, the nape was right-on, and the fort screamed, “GOOD HIT Sabre Two. That’s where they are!” (I learned later that I’d forgotten to turn off my nav lights and was picking up intense ground fire on each pass. Nice of Major Bob to alert me to this critical oversight.)

This was crazy! Instrument gunnery patterns in a pitch black bowl? But by the cheers from the fort, we were apparently turning the tide. That was when the panic call came: “Sabre flight—got the fire on our west wall?” “Roger, I’ve got it



SSS charter member Jack is a contributing editor of The Intake staff. With over 5,000 hours of single-seat fighter time, his favorite aircraft remains the F-100.

in sight” Major Bob responded. “They’re coming over the west wall—STRAFE THE WALL!” To me, the west wall looked like a small burning ember in a huge universe of black. (Those guys must be in deep kimchi if they want us to strafe their own positions with HEI, I thought.) Well ... vertigo be damned, in we came for some instrument strafe. We each had 1200 rounds and made that wall sparkle like a fountain of fireworks! Ever see the ricochet pattern of HEI? Whew! It made a believer out of me to make a six-g pullout! Of course the new lieutenant still had his nav lights on, drawing all the ground fire. How could I think about that when my knees were shaking and my heart was pounding so loud?

The last call from the fort as we left—with below bingo fuel—made my day (er, night!): “We owe ya one, Sabre. Looks like the VC are backing off for now.” Whew! Time to relax—all we had to do was get back to Bien Hoa without running out of gas.

Major Bob checked in with Paris Control, the he gave 'em the BDA, and checked the weather: 200' overcast in rain. Piece of cake after what we’d been through. Major Bob wisely decided we should split up for

separate GCAs instead of doing a formation landing because of the rain. I smiled into my mask at the thought of NOT flying on Major Bob's wing at night. (He was the roughest stick in the squadron.)

After we split-up, I lowered my seat slightly and got comfortable. I had learned instruments in the T-Bird (yeah... the J-8 black ball), so the Hun's layout was a pure delight. I also noted the new, very tiny, standby attitude indicator in the upper corner of the panel (they were adding them to all our birds). Why re-invent the wheel, I thought, we'd gotten along fine without them since the Hun was born!

The final controller came on the air with, "Sabre Two, turn right heading 275 degrees. This is your final controller. Do not acknowledge further transmissions." Here we go: a smooth 30-degree banked turn; right on 230 knots; almost time for the gear; here comes 275 degrees; slowly lead the rollout; increase the rollout, more ... and ... NOTHING'S HAPPENING!!! Rollout!!!

My heading's turning to crap; my airspeed's increasing; my altitude's dropping fast! WTF? YIKES, ROLL OUT!

My heart was in my throat, and my brain was spinning—severe vertigo? I was in a perfect 30-degree banked level turn! Gotta trust your gauges!

Then I saw it ...

The standby was inverted 20 degrees nose low and the main was stuck in 30 degrees of bank WITH NO OFF FLAG!!! So I rolled and pulled with all my might using that little itty-bitty standby. The Hun was shuddering and bucking like a wild stallion. I can remember seeing the altimeter stop around 100 feet before it started back up. I was shooting straight up in a 30 degree climb, but I WAS ALIVE!!!

Now for a vertical recovery in the weather—don't use the main indicator stuck at 30 degrees bank; use the itty-bitty standby; add power; level out. Aahh ... good.

Where am I?

The startled controller finally spoke up, "Are you OK Sabre Two?"

I answered, "Aahh ... I had a little problem with one of my gauges; but, it's OK now," I stammered, "How about another approach? I've got 600 pounds of gas left, so make it a short pattern." I'm sure he thought he was dealing with a screwball—

every so often I caught a glimpse of my main attitude indicator and start turning left to "roll out." So the controller sees my heading varying +/- 20 degrees from assigned. I finally got tired of this "weenie weave" and covered the frozen attitude indicator with my line-up card. And problem solved! Smooth approach—nice landing.

When the crew chief climbed the ladder with the usual, "How's the bird, Sir?" I simply pointed at the stuck attitude indicator, still frozen in a 30 degree level turn. Silence. He almost cried—and actually hugged me. (I almost cried too; and I was still shaking.)

As for the mission, the reports (when translated from Vietnamese) confirmed 179 dead VC. Both of us (yes, Major Bob too) were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (with star). Two of the Green Berets from the fort came up to Bien Hoa to personally thank us for saving their lives. It was then when I fully realized that being a Hun driver was the best job in the world.

Postscript: I was relating this story to Ben Briggs the next day and he made the astute observation, "You know Jack, if you'd of made a smokin' hole off the end of the runway, they all would have said ... 'Well ... the Lieutenant was new!'" ●



Hun Fine Art

Prompted by the fine art painting and story on page 11 of Issue Three, we've had several nice pieces of **Hun Fine Art** submitted to add to our growing collection. We'll be "showing" them in alternate coming issues. This oil on canvas belongs to Ed Haerter and was painted in 1990 by his friend and budding aviation artist, Lloyd Giles. Named by the artist "Duty Calls," it depicts Ed's Hun # 54-1827 at Phu Cat (nose art is "Nubile Nancy," after his wife) with the usual "soft load" (two napes and two 750# high drags) on alert. Curiously, the clouds in the sky look a lot like a map of South East Asia. Thanks for your contribution, Ed.

Still accepting more Hun Fine Art for future issues. Send them in to the Editor: rgatewood@comcast.net.

Poet's Corner — First Intake Appearance — There Will Be More.

<p><i>Requiem For A Fighter Pilot</i></p>	<p><i>"What the Captain Meant" ... or ... The Poet Reflects on His Opus</i></p>
<p>By John J. Schulz *mini-bio, p. 29</p> <p>I've reaped the harvest of the moon, Skimmed silver fields of clouds at night, And in the terror rain monsoon I've dived too low in deadly fight.</p> <p>In a beauteous brute that takes your breath I've roamed the pagan sky, And danced a pirouette of death To strafe those next to die.</p> <p>How often have my lead and I Seen beauty that bombards our senses! The battle nears...who's next to die? The beauty's gone--the work commences.</p> <p>There's no time now for God's distractions, There are a million things to do We've previewed Heaven's vast attractions, Now many guns await just two.</p> <p>But we are skilled, work in an office In kingdoms where there is no air. Our great war birds would kill a novice, So few e'er rock in my high chair.</p> <p>Yes, now the long commute is done, And cordite mixed with blurry fear Combines with lasting color dreams While War thuds loud within the ear.</p> <p>Thuds...erupts...blurs past in inches, Hangs on moments stalled, undone... Precision slammed, <i>by will</i>, on chaos Till something near to flight is won.</p> <p>Then, too soon, it all is o'er The great excitements all subside. Too soon the fight, and yes, the War, And slowly... we each die inside.</p> <p>We few who hunt will soon roam skies Where we must search, or teach or train. Then we must veil our Hunter's Eyes, But life...will never...be the same.</p> <p><i>(In a farewell speech to the 90th TFS by the author at his DROS party, Bien Hoa, April, 1968. "Not a dry eye in the place." Jack Doub)</i></p>	<p>My "larger question:" why "fight" in 1st and "flight" in 7th stanzas? Posed by a non-poet—the Editor. <i>(Powerful thoughts behind the simple words.)</i></p> <p>In stanza one, I wanted to start by giving readers a sense of the beauty of flight at night above moonlit, silvery clouds, but then to quickly jolt them into the realities of what a fighter is all about ... machines we strapped on that came with us as we went into a fight. And in this case, bring them to the "dark side" of those clouds, where monsoon rains and tough combat ... a fight ... was lurking, a fight that could prove deadly for the pilots because those "rain monsoons" forced us to fly "too low"—there was just no way to maintain target acquisition and get high enough to rebuild speed for the next dive, making the whole proposition of rolling in and attacking a sporting event. (While "rain" monsoon may seem redundant, technically, a monsoon is a wind, which brings rain six months a year to South and East Asia.)</p> <p>Then the idea was, for a stanza or two, to swing back and forth between the beauty of the "beautiful brute" we flew, and the beauty of flight in so many instances, and the end of that "commute to and from a battle."</p> <p>The seventh stanza's first line refers back to the last line of the previous stanza, "While War thuds loud within the ear." ... "Thuds...erupts...blurs past in inches (this referring to the clanks and thuds while taking hits, and the eruption of fire that would then blur past our faces at night, like fireflies all round our faces)</p> <p>NOW comes the tricky part that may have prompted your larger question. The last three lines of stanza seven read: "Hangs on moments stalled, undone... Precision, slammed, <i>by will</i>, on chaos Till something near to flight is won."</p> <p>Here is what I was trying to convey: Imagine being below a low, rainy cloud deck on a dark night, attacking a big concentration of guns, which send up crap that "thuds...erupts...blurs past in inches." Then I start conveying further imagery, without a "bridge phrase," but related to what is going on in the cockpit, where flying and fighting in "the war" involves being at the top of the pullouts, on the edge of the overcast and on the edge of stall, and the plane is simply not flying--it is being manhandled by the pilot, who is, by sheer "<i>willpower</i>" forcing the plane, and all of its instruments, to return to parameters that will bring about the precision combination of airspeed, dive angle, aim point, etc. from the "chaos" of near stall, slushing around on the ragged edges of a too-low ceiling of clouds. Once achieved in microseconds [by sheer pilot skill and honed instinct, mostly], we thence transitioned into the next diving attack in a plane that is again <i>flying</i>.... I.E. we have "won" from chaos and near stall "something near to flight." [And as we would all recall and appreciate, we sometimes did that kind of ragged-edged maneuvering over and over again, 10 to 25 times under very low ceilings, never getting high enough to gain airspeed in the dives, so that the same problem at the top of the pullout and reversal was repeated, over and over again.]</p> <p>I hope this is clear, and explains why I chose the "fight" reference in the first stanza...a contrast from the beauty of silver fields of clouds at night, and the reference to "flight" [extracted from a ragged stall and instruments in chaos] in the 7th stanza. <i>(I'm glad I asked. Great poetic insight in the reply. [Ed.] ☺</i></p>

“Thoughts of two lost Turkish pilots came into my mind.”

Sleepless at a Cigli ORI

By Don Schmenk

In a letter to the Editor just after Issue Two was mailed, Don wrote he had just finished reading that issue and while the story “Sleepless on the Alert Pad” was still fresh in his mind, he thought that he’d offer one of his own that is similar to “Sleepless.” Here is his story. Editor

From 1966-1968, I was assigned to the 494th TFS, 48th TFW, RAF Lakenheath, UK. We shared nuclear alert duties at Aviano Air Base, Italy, and Cigli Air Base, Turkey, with the 20th TFW at RAF Wethersfield/Woodbridge, UK, and the 401st TFW at Torrejon, Spain. Before I go further, let me paraphrase Brigadier General Yeager by saying, “This may not be exactly what happened, but this is the way that I remember it!”

We were scheduled to replace one of our sister squadrons at Cigli Air Base near Izmir and were to be blessed with two air refuelings en-route. The flight was uneventful, and the weather was beautiful. I ended my four+ hour flight with touch-and-goes until the fuel level dictated a full stop landing.

After we all landed, we were told that an ORI Team had arrived a little earlier and was in the process of evaluating the rote (rotation) unit. The team was debating whether to continue the inspection with the unit that was there when the ORI started, or allow us to replace them and continue from where they were when we arrived.

This high-level decision making was moot to me, because I was there for two weeks regardless of the outcome. So I did the normal arrival drill by gravitating to the Officers Club for some cold ones and the pleasant company of Hassan (the well known Turkish bartender) and my likewise thirsty squadron mates. We all did a good job of performing the arrival ritual, but perhaps we over did it a bit, particularly me. I was the squadron targets officer, was very familiar with the itinerary of an ORI, and should have been more focused on the “paused” ORI continuance options. But I figured those the guys currently being inspected should have no problems ... nooooo problems whatsoever!

But fate intervened. While we were renewing our acquaintance with the O Club, the powers-that-be decided the new arrivals (us!) would take up the rote unit duties where they were when the ORI “paused,” and that the other guys could go home. This changed everything!

The next morning, our squadron’s rote guys all managed to arrive at the rote squadron building at the appointed time. We were all looking forward to relaxing in our favorite lounge chairs while aircraft downloading and uploading was going on. We expected that when our birds got swapped in and cocked, the ORI would culminate with a “scramble” to our aircraft and perhaps a runway exercise.

As for the morning in-briefing, I recalled hearing that two Turkish F-104 pilots had bailed out the night before. They had been found—but not before the wolves found them first. Poor bastards! But not to worry, I would be catching up on a much needed rest—or so I thought!

I had just about drifted off when I felt a tap on my shoulder. It was an inspector asking me if I was the targets officer for the 494th. I acknowledged that I was, and he led me into the Top Secret vault. He asked me if I was familiar with the term. “xxxx” (it was classified then, and I will treat it as such now). I said that I was. “Well,” he said, “we’ve decided we’re going to exercise that option and that you have been chosen to ‘cut and paste’ the route.”

I’m sure everyone remembers the odor of rubber cement and its effects on a hangover ... and I had a BAD one!

But I put up with it and completed my assigned task—with visions of the stuffed chair I had just vacated still fresh in my mind. This will be over soon, I thought, and I’ll be able to return to much needed rest.

You can imagine the suppressed expletive that crossed my mind when the inspector told me I was actually going to fly the route I had just prepared. Seething silently, I mentally reviewed past stories I’d heard about ORI inspectors actually staking out turn points to be sure that the examinee wasn’t just hiding behind a convenient mountain, biding his time until the planned route time had expired, then arriving on initial with a flourish exactly at the appointed time.

As the inspector accompanied me out to my aircraft, past all of my sleeping comrades, I was silently cursing the god of grapes who had allowed me to over-imbibe the night before. Thoughts of the two lost Turks pilots also came back to me about that time!



Don flew the Hun for almost five years total at Lakenheath - 48th TFW/494th TFS from ‘66 -‘70, and at Tuy Hoa, RVN. After 50 years as a pilot, he still flies his ‘47 Ercoupe – just for fun.

Fortunately, the flight was pretty uneventful, and as I remember it, I hit all of my turn points right on time (I never did find out if they were checking on me!). I was very relieved to be back, and restful visions of the recliner in the pilot's lounge danced in my head.

The inspector who had set me up for all this was there to meet me when I shut down. But instead of a pat on the back and an "O Deserving One, go now to your appointed chair" greeting; he coolly informed me I had done so well that they were going to upload WRM tanks and let me fly the route again. Yea for me!

All went well the second time around too, and when I got back to the alert shack, everybody wanted to know where I'd been. Seems they'd been sitting around all day, just checking on the download/upload process from time to time. There was no scramble or runway exercise; just an uneventful ORI—for them. Laugh? I thought I'd die!



Turkish Hun pilots planning a similar mission for a Turkish Air Force competition. Photo provided by Soner Capaglu, son of Squadron CC.

It's a good thing that I love to fly, and the HUN, in particular. I flew the Hun for almost five years, and ended up with about 1,100 hours in it. I still cherish every minute. ☺

Odds and Ends

Navigation in a Nutshell By Greg Butler

In the early 60s, at the birth of "Night Owl," about ten of us from the 478th at Cannon spent a week at Nellis flying three quick sorties a night to the range with flares, 25 pounders, and 20mm. We got pretty good at night air-to-ground operations (*Night Owl*), something no one even dreamed about a year or two before.

Rather than return directly to Cannon at week's end, Bob McCall and I (*both Class A bachelors at the time*) got ops officer Dick French to OK a weekend cross country to Bob's hometown near Harrisburg, PA. Considering the high drag configuration of our tanks, flare dispensers, and bomb racks, we opted for a two hop flight with a very scenic low level hop to Buckley for a gas stop. Bob planned and led that first leg.

After zipping around the south end of Sunrise Mountain, we dropped down to skim Lake Mead and headed northeast. However, at each of the conspicuous terrain reference turn points along the lake, Bob had to make a major correction to the left to get back on course. By the third such correction (and before we even reached the end of the lake), I pushed the mike button and transmitted "East is least and west is best." Bob immediately changed heading 30 to the left and never got more than a half mile off course again en route to a wild weekend with a bunch of summer-theater showgirls who lived at Bob's mom's B&B in Harrisburg. ☺

How "Sierra Hotel" Started By Les Prichard

I was assigned a BOQ room upon arrival at Bitburg in 1960 next to a Capt. Charles G. "Moose" Healey, an F-100 pilot in the 22nd TFS, and one of the "all time" characters. There are many, many stories of his antics, in the air and on the ground. He could drink more beer faster than anyone I've known in 50 years of pub-crawling. Anything that pleased Moose (results of dice games at O-club bar, jokes, etc.) would be proclaimed by him, on the spot, as "Hot Shit" in a booming voice. We teased him that after about three years in Germany, he still didn't know one word of German. Moose therefore went to the *Oases Bar* in Bitburg and a bar girl, Mona, aka "The Big M," taught him how to say "Hot Shit" in German, which is "Scheiss Heiss."

After that, another "Berlin crisis" brought the George AFB F-104's TDY to USAFE/Bitburg, and some 104 guys (like Dick Lougee, Jim Torson, Bob Kelly, Snake Pitts, et. al.) sitting at the Bitburg bar wondered what this big guy (Moose) at the other end of the bar was bellowing frequently (Scheiss Heiss, of course). They asked the young German bartender, Bernie Schultz (15 years later he moved to Las Vegas and ran the Nellis stag bar for years), what he was saying? Bernie explained "scheiss" was shit and "heiss" was hot. So the 104 drivers decided he was saying "Shit Hot," really liked it, and took that back to George AFB where the 8th TFW was regenerated in 1965 with F-4's—and the term propagated from there to Ubon, Thailand, then to the rest of SEA, and eventually, throughout the fighter pilot world. Add encryption from the SEA standard "Alpha" words, and that's the *Sierra Hotel* truth! **Les Prichard** ☺

Although friend Les was not a Hun driver, he's provided us another Hun History 101 run-down on an important part of modern fighter pilot terminology and lore, which had its origin in the F-100 community. Thanks Moose, wherever you are and thank you Les, for passing this tidbit on to The Intake through Les Frazier. Editor

Rutan followed him out of “desperation ... the psychology of combat.”

The Air Force General's Final Flight

By Jack Doub

PROLOGUE: Dick Rutan is a famous aviator. In 1992, he became the first pilot to fly around the world un-refueled in the now-famous Voyager aircraft designed and built by his brother Burt. Before he achieved aviation immortality, Dick was a regular-type F-100 pilot in Southeast Asia. It was early in this tour that he volunteered for “Misty”, a TDY assignment with the original Fast FACs at Phu Cat AB, RVN, flying F-100Fs. This story tells of a mission on which a Misty crew helplessly watched as the only USAF general officer to die in combat during the war in Southeast Asia met his fate.

With Dick Rutan flying from the back seat (a common practice to rest the usually very tired Misty front-seater during refueling), this Misty crew had just backed off the tanker when a Mayday call came through. An RF-4C, call sign Strobe 01, was exiting North Vietnam after taking a hit—and its rear cockpit was filling with smoke. Water Boy, a GCI site, confirmed the dire situation that Strobe 01 was dealing with: they were losing hydraulic pressure and heading for feet wet.



Misty to the rescue.

The DMZ, and Dick urged their Super Sabre onward even faster. Rutan called Water Boy, offering to make a visual check of the battle damaged fighter. In response, Water Boy vectored the F-100F towards the RF-4C.

As the Mistys joined with Strobe 01, Harland spotted a small hole in the forward belly area of the recce bird where flames flickered ominously inside the lower camera bay of the RF-4C. As they moved closer, they could see smoke coming from the seams in the belly area just aft of the camera bays. Moving to the right wing, they could see flames in the right camera bay too. Crossing back to the left side, they relayed the information to the Strobe crew.



RF-4C in trouble.

The nearest SAR package was located at Da Nang AB, RVN, and could be there in short order. Rutan remembers thinking, “Good! These guys won't be in the water long.”

As Misty cruised on their left wing, the crew aboard Strobe 01 began what should have been a picture perfect controlled ejection: straight and level at 10,000 feet, ideal

speed, under control, and a rescue package already en-route. Rutan recalls thinking this would be quite a sight; since he had never seen an actual ejection up close, and had heard all about the F-4's notorious Martin Baker seat, known as the “back breaker” for its complicated system. They waited expectantly.

Then, things began to go awry. Two minutes went by and no ejection. Rutan later learned from the back-seater that the front-seater did not want to be automatically ejected after the back-seater went, but instead wanted each cockpit to command their individual ejections. And so, because he was the ranking crewmember, the decision was made: each pilot would eject themselves individually.

As the Mistys watched, the back-seater's ejection went perfectly: the rear canopy opened and separated cleanly, clearing the tail by a good twenty feet, the seat rose in its tracks, the rocket fired, the seat shot straight up, and was very stable. When the rocket burned out the drogue chute opened, tilting the seat back 90-degrees so that the pilot was flat on his back as the seat cleared the tail. Looking back over his shoulder, Rutan watched the chute canopy deploy normally and the seat separate cleanly.

As the back-seater swung serenely beneath the fully inflated canopy, the Mistys turned their attention to the front-seater's ejection.

Rutan now says he couldn't believe the horror they then beheld! The front cockpit was filled with smoke and fire, and the white dot of the pilot's helmet was barely visible through the smoke and flames. The pilot sat motionless, head erect, seemingly oblivious to what was happening. The flames seemed to be coming up from the front foot wells, through the cockpit and out the open rear cockpit. As the flames streamed over the back of the Phantom a thick cloud of black smoke obscured the tail; and still, the pilot sat there—motionless.



Charter member Jack is also a contributing editor of The Intake. He flew 3 Tours in Vietnam, including 82 missions with Misty. He is attributed with more combat missions in SEA than any other F-100 Pilot.

Rutan screamed over the radio, "Strobe 01, Bail out! Bail out!"

The Misty pilots watched in grim horror as the RF-4 entered a shallow dive. Rutan made several radio calls to the doomed fighter and moved in quite close, as if being closer would allow the pilot to hear him.

Harland yelled, "Oh my God! Look at it burn!"

Rutan, quite close now, screamed again, "Strobe 01! BAIL OUT! BAIL OUT!"

At one point Rutan was so close that the stricken Phantom began rolling into a right bank. Then, as he pulled away quickly, the RF's wings rolled level, and its descent steepened, headed directly for the beach.

The intense heat had charred the top of the canopy, and the pilot was no longer visible. Paint began to blister all over the fuselage, and small explosions rocked the plane as the oxygen system cooked off, sending panels flying and leaving the entire nose a charred mess.

At about 500 feet the old Phantom gave one last gasp, pitching up slightly, and then dove straight into the beach, hitting about a hundred yards from the surf. Rutan, still barking on the radio, had stayed glued to the wing until he heard Harland screaming, "Goddammit Dick! Pull up!"

(Today Rutan freely admits, had it not been for Harland's impassioned pleas he might've plowed right into the beach on Strobe's wing.)

Dejectedly, the Mistys turned back to find Strobe 01 Bravo and notified Waterboy of 01's fate. Asked if there was any chance of survival, Rutan replied, "Negative survival, negative survival."

They located Strobe 01Bravo still descending in his chute at about 5,000 feet. To the west, however, a motorized sampan was heading straight for the helpless back-seater.

Not knowing if it belonged to the good guys, they buzzed the boat in an attempt to turn it around. When the sampan continued on course, they put a burst of 20mm close across their bow, prompting the boat to come about and head back to the beach.

Soon the Jolly Green arrived and picked up Strobe 01 Bravo. Amazingly, the Mistys returned to the North and continued their morning mission. (Most of us would've considered landing, I would suspect?)

When they landed they were met by a sea of bird colonels. It was then they learned that the front-seater was General Bob Worley.

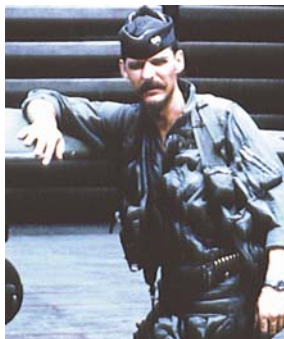
Rutan had recorded the mission, and they were dispatched to Saigon on a Scatback T-39 courier. Everyone wanted to hear "the Misty tape."

Sadly, General Worley had been on his champagne flight. With his death, TAC air and all fighter pilots lost one of their strongest, most vocal advocates at Tan Son Nhut, which was chiefly populated with SAC and Army folks running things.

It was a sad day as well for the two Misty pilots. As Rutan looks back on it all these many years later, he says that to this day he can not explain what made him stay on the general's wing for so long.

"Desperation," he says after thinking about it, ... "the psychology of combat."

EPILOGUE: *Dick Rutan flew with Misty from January to August, 1968. He was shot down on his 105th, and last, mission over North Vietnam, becoming one of only twelve Mistys to fly more than 100 Misty missions. Fittingly, he and Chuck Shaheen ejected ten miles out to sea and were picked up by Jolly Green helicopters. (In all, Rutan flew 325 combat missions.)*



In 1986, after retiring from the Air Force, Rutan made his record-setting flight around the world in The Voyager, the first un-refueled flight of such length. Four days after the flight, President Ronald Reagan awarded him the Presidential Citizens Medal of Honor. He was also a co-recipient of the 1986 the Collier Trophy for outstanding aviation achievement.

In a quote from his book, "Misty. First Person Stories of the F-100 Misty FACs in the Vietnam War," Major General Don Shepperd says, "Dick is famous. He is an unusual man, a gifted pilot, an adventurer, a world record holder; but most of all, he is our Misty comrade and friend." ☺

Continued from page 27 ... Author Pic and Mini-bio



John Schulz got his BA in Journalism at Montana in '62, was an ATC IP for two years at Vance AFB, then went to Bien Hoa in 1967 in his beloved Hun (275 missions). After three years at RAF Lakenheath, and with over 1,000 Hun hours, he resigned to join Voice of America News in 1971. At VOA he covered five wars of various sizes in East and South Asia, got his doctorate at Oxford ('81), and became VOA's Deputy News Director. He was "on loan" as a Professor of National Security Affairs at the National War College ('89-91); became editor-in-chief of *Arms Control Today* magazine ('92-'95); and at Boston University since '95, he rose to become Dean of the College of Communication. He is now on a one-year sabbatical (i.e. golfing).

“The Right Stuff is a very specific term ...”

The Right Stuff: Hun Pilots To Astronauts

By Bob Krone

Tom Wolfe, the author of *The Right Stuff*¹ was interviewed on February 12, 2007 by FOX TV News. He was asked, “Wouldn’t you say that one can also speak of ‘The Right Stuff’ in journalism or in the business world where everybody’s up against tough moments?”

Tom Wolfe replied: “The Right Stuff is a very specific term applied to the code of military pilots who have the moxie to hang their hide over the great gulf of death, be smart enough to bring it back, then go out again tomorrow and do it all over again. People don’t really know how dangerous it is just to take off in an F-Series airplane. When a businessman dies, it’s usually choking over a hunk of chateaubriand in a classy restaurant. The Right Stuff term has no application to anyone but pilots and astronauts.” Tom ended his 1979 book with the sentence: “‘The Right Stuff’ is an amalgam of stamina, guts, fast neural synapses, and old-fashioned hell raising found in the fraternity of flying.” The “Right Stuff” phenomena, as Wolfe first defined, and as illustrated and redefined here, is the core of this article.

The Super Saber Society (SSS) was founded by a group of Hun Pilots who believed it was time to celebrate and document The Right Stuff of those who flew North American’s F-100 supersonic fighter.² Part of the SSS Mission Statement reads: “... to perpetuate in the memory and hearts of all Americans the spirit in which these magnificent aircraft were flown in defense of our great nation ...” Before this Issue Four, there were thirty-four Right Stuff stories published in *Intake* Issues One, Two and Three. This article will add to those stories and continue the transition to astronauts that Tom Wolfe first documented.

Tom Wolfe’s story compared the Mercury Seven astronauts with test pilot Chuck Yeager, whose flying career Wolfe considered the epitome of Right Stuff. Project Mercury was the first U.S. operational manned space-flight program, 1961-1962. We now have, in 2007, almost fifty years of humans rocketing into space and building the International Space Station. And starting the execution phase a 2004 Presidential Vision for Space Exploration will mark the beginning of humans departing earth for permanent settlements in other parts of our Solar System.³ The Right Stuff has been a catalyst for all these happenings.

In Chuck Yeager’s autobiography,⁴ he provides his personal definition of Right Stuff for pilots: “All I know is I worked my tail off to learn how to fly, and worked hard at it all the way. And in the end, the one big reason why I was better than average as a pilot was because I flew more than anybody else. If there is such a thing as ‘the right stuff’ in piloting, then it is experience.”

Tom Wolfe and Chuck Yeager are both right about military aviators and astronauts. Guts, brains, experience, ego, risk-taking, and optimism are all components. Luck also played a role for those who survived to die of natural causes. Later in this article some astrophysics and biological sciences factors will be added to the mix. When we review the last one hundred years of men and women flying airplanes, it’s obvious that the farther back we go, the more important was the luck factor due to aviation’s experimental risks and mishaps in developing systems.

Pre-Hun

This article focuses on F-100 pilots, but the Right Stuff has existed for over one hundred years. It fits civilians as well as military, and women as well as men. The Wright Brothers had it. Charles Lindbergh had it and was awarded the first United States Distinguished Flying Cross medal. Photo 1 (next page) is the classic



Charter member and Contributing Editor. See his Hun history and other credentials at the end of story.

¹ Tom Wolfe, *The Right Stuff* (1979, ISBN 0374250332). The film version was released in 1983.

² See the roster of those leaders in THE INTAKE, Vol 1, Issue 1 (July 2006), pg 3.

³ See Bob Krone, Ph.D., Editor, *Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space* (Apogee Space Press, 2006).

⁴ Yeager: An Autobiography by General Chuck Yeager and Leo Janos (Bantam Books, 1985), p. 319.



Photo 1

French postcard showing Amelia Earhart and the French aviatrice Maria Marvingt having tea. I submit that this is the only picture postcard ever created showing two aviators having tea. It's a reverse Right Stuff perception by a 1930 French photographer. Photo 2 at right is Maria in 1911 ready to takeoff in her "Monoplan Antoinette." Certainly Amelia Earhart's Right Stuff is legend.

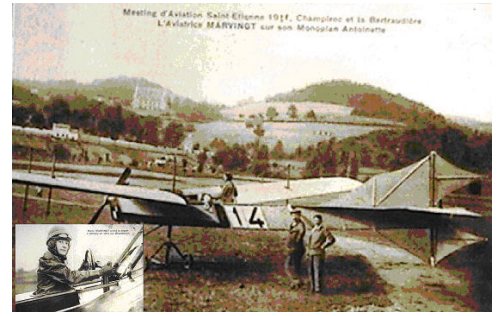


Photo 2

My long-time friend in Idyllwild, California, Dorothy "Dot" Lewis—horsewomen, artist, teacher, author, and WWII WASP pilot—and all her WASP colleagues, had the Right Stuff.⁵ Jackie Cochran, the Director of WWII WASPS, saw "The Stars at Noon" as a pioneer woman jet pilot.⁶ Research for this article has energized me to expand the Right Stuff theme to its many logical aviation and space points, but *Intake Journal* space constraints dictate sticking here to only the Hun Pilot and astronaut scope. The point that will need to be developed in a future article is that the Right Stuff and aviation are natural partners whenever and wherever airplanes or space ships have been, or will be, flown.

The 31st & 8th Tactical Fighter Wings of the 40th Air Division

In March of 1957, Colonel Gordon "Gordie" Graham, Major Art Johnson, Captain Fred Treyz, Captain Bill "The Hawk" Mol, First Lieutenant Eugene Devlin and First Lieutenant Bob Krone were the first 31st Strategic Fighter Wing (F-84F) pilots to check out in the F-100D at George AFB, California. For the two-wings (31st and 8th) of the 40th Air Division at Turner AFB, Georgia, that began an historic transition from F-84Fs operating under the Strategic Air Command to the USAF's first operational supersonic jet operating under the Tactical Air Command. When that transition became official during the summer of 1957, the new Hun/Hun-to-be pilots at Turner threw a three-day celebration party that culminated with the implanting of Colonel Gordie Graham's butt imprint up on the wall over the fireplace at the O'Club. (A large aviation painting covered it—probably until Turner AFB closed years later.) Gordie Graham was the perfect Right Stuff wing commander. We would have flown anywhere for any mission under his leadership.



Photo 3 Captain Krone and friend cruising the Islands of Japan.

In 1959-1961, at Itazuke Air Base, Fukuoka, Japan, the supersonic Right Stuff was optimized. The environment for that development was perfect.

We cavorted daily in our Huns around Japan, Korea, Okinawa, the Philippines, and Taiwan. We sat alert at Osan, Korea, fired and bombed on the Okinawa ranges, took R & R cross-country flights to Clark Air Base, ferried F-100s to Taiwan for repairs, and cruised the Islands of Japan (Photo 3). All this with minimal government constraints and daily gatherings at the Officer Club bars to build the military aviation oral history—most of which never left the bars. It was the height of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was the enemy. But we were preparing, not fighting. There was plenty of party-time and humor. Our 36th Squadron Patch (Photo 4) takes the prize for the ugliest fighter squadron patch ever in the Air Force. All over the world, Hun pilots were doing the same serious, important, and fun things. The Right Stuff was developing globally.



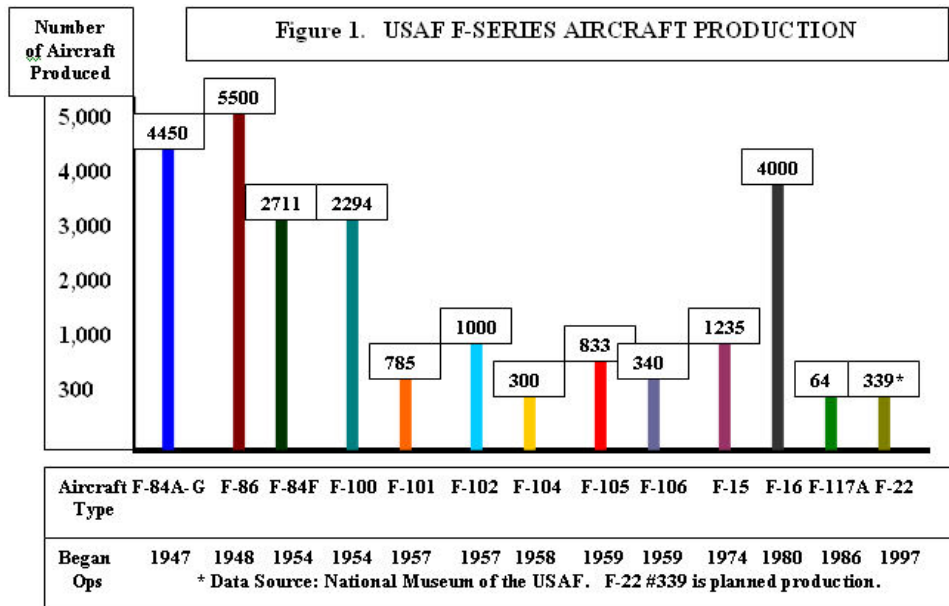
Photo 4 Captain Krone, Hun Model (Straight Probe), 36th Patch, Fighter Weapons Team Patch.

Figure 1 (next page) shows F-Series USAF jet fighter production over a fifty-year period beginning after WWII in 1947. North American's F-100, with a

⁵ For Dot Lewis' Right Stuff life, see Ann L. Cooper and Dorothy Swain Lewis *How High She Flies: Dorothy Swain Lewis WASP WWII* (Aviatrice Publishing, 1999).

⁶ Jacqueline Cochran, *The Stars at Noon* (Boston, Little Brown & Company, 1954).

production of 2294 aircraft, meant that the Hun had more planes and pilots flying than any F-series jet between 1955 (throughout the Vietnam War) and 1980 when the F-16 was in full production. All the facts discussed above provide the best answer for “Why the Super Sabre Society took off beginning in 2006 with over 1,000 members and brought over 500 Hun aviators to Vegas for the first reunion in April 2007.” Congratulations to the Founding Members.



Astronauts, Astronautics, and Right Stuff for Space

As of this writing, there have been a total of 187 former U.S. astronauts in space since Yuri Gagarin and Alan Shepard made the first human flights; with another 134 current NASA Active and Management Astronauts; and 30 International Astronauts (see www.Jsc.nasa.gov/Bios, data as of 2005).

Why have these astronauts risked their lives to go to space? For eighteen months I worked with the forty-one career space experts, including astronauts, who created the 2006 book, *Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space*. (See footnote ³). Our book was listed among the “Best Space Books in 2006” by *Universe Today* (a prestigious scientific web site: <http://www.universetoday.com/>). I began the Acknowledgments section with the sentence: “Editing this work has been the most rewarding intellectual experience of my three careers.”

Those forty-one space professionals held the following three assumptions throughout our work on the book: and we still hold them today.

First, the urge for flight is part of our human nature.

Second, even if these urges were ignored, the continual improvement of the quality of life for the human race on Earth, and perhaps even our race’s ultimate survival, may hinge on the success of human exploration and habitation of space.

And third, we are all aware that this is a critical time for the space movement, and for human kind. Human society around the world is in turmoil, and some prospects for our future are frightening. But we remain optimistic that we will overcome these challenges, and we see clearly that our generation can use the opportunity presented by our outward expansion into the solar system. First, to design a rewarding and exciting future for human collaboration, and second, to capitalize on the lessons from venturing into space to redirect human history on Earth toward peace and cooperation.

It was those *Beyond Earth* authors’ conviction that even those very significant space penetration steps taken since the dawn of the space age in 1957, will, in retrospect, appear as tiny ones compared to what lies ahead during the coming extra-terrestrial human settlement within the Solar System.

Remember when Carl Sagan, one of the world’s best known astronautics and physics scientists, introduced his 1979-1980 *COSMOS* TV series with the statement: “We are star stuff?” I’m proposing that we enlarge Tom

Wolf's definition of The Right Stuff to include the finding that the human urge for **flight**, which is evidenced throughout history, has its source in the "Big Bang," which eventually put humans on earth. Arthur C. Clarke, now 92-years old and recognized as a leading world space thinker and author, wrote in his 1953 book *Childhood's End*, that the story of human childhood on Earth is a precursor to something even more important for humans later and elsewhere in the universe. We are progressing in that direction.

At California State University in San Diego, pilots and astronauts are now participating as instructors in a program titled "Life Wings." They are teaching hospital surgical teams the critical elements of Right Stuff teamwork that was basic, for instance, to the nine crew-members of B-24 Liberator Bombers' successes in WWII and the crews of B-29 Super Fortress Bombers in the Korean War.

But, I digress.

Evidence to support that astronauts are able to do what they do because they possess the Right Stuff can be found throughout NASA's and the news media's archives of interviews and writings. It's the same Right Stuff that put Hun pilots and Bears into the F-100 series cockpits for twenty-five years! It's the Right Stuff that sustained over five hundred pilots as Prisoners of War in Hanoi for up to seven years; and who, on 12 February 1973, "Returned with Honor!" If we ever lose The Right Stuff, we will have also lost the best prospect for the future progress of human civilization.

Stand by for continual documentation of "Right Stuff" examples in future issues of *The Intake Journal of the Super Sabre Society*. Hopefully, the one major difference between Hun aviators and astronauts will be the mission—F-100s for conflict and war, and astronauts for peaceful international collaboration and space exploration to help Earth and its people. That difference is not assured in 2007.

**This article is dedicated to Right Stuff
military and space flyers who never came home.**

FINI

Mini- Bio

Bob Krone, Colonel, USAF (Ret.) flew the F-100D/F at Turner AFB, George, and Itazuke Air Base, Japan, 1957-1961, with a 1958-1959 break to fly F-86s with the Republic of Korea Air Force at Osan Air Base. He was a William Tell Fighter Weapons Team Member at Itazuke. On 3 June 1966 he became the first USAF Squadron Commander (469th TFS, F105, Korat, Thailand) to reach 100 Missions over North Vietnam. Since USAF retirement in 1975, he has been an International Business University professor. In 2006, his edited book, Beyond Earth: The Future of Humans in Space (Apogee Space Press & Amazon.com) was published and listed in the Universe Today as one of the "Best Space Books of 2006." He is a member of the National Board of Directors of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society and will be the Guest Speaker at the National Museum of the Air Force, 23 October 2007. Search Bob Krone on Google. ☺



Everyone loved "Fleagle," the lovable main character in a "Safety-strip" featured for many years in the old *TAC Attack* magazine. Pete Davitto suggested we try and resurrect it for *The Intake*. Thanks to Crow Wilson, we've managed to get the artist, Stan Hardison's copyright OK, and ACC HQ has provided about a 10 year supply. Watch for the very first Fleagle strip in Issue Five of our Journal.



Back Cover – "Huns in Space!"
Composite photo of a Five Pack of Huns escorting the International Space Station. Background photo by NASA titled "A Blue Crescent Moon from Space." Composite Credit: Chris Gatewood using clones from front cover to build the five-ship flight and superimpose them on the NASA background.

