

FAC NEWS

VOLUME 4, Issue 2

31 July 2003

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Happy New Year, or Hau'oli Makahiki Hou, as we say in the Islands. Well, the blush from our April Reunion is off, and it is time to pour some concrete on the FAC Association as an organization. Our founders laid a great framework for the us, now we have to (one might say) "operationalize" it.

Your new leadership is spread out across the entire country, so conducting business has that extra element of challenge. Fortunately, we have lots of folks who are willing and able to harness up and make things happen.

So far the priorities go like this:

The organization: Firmly establishing the organizational responsibilities for each Board Committee Member and insuring that we have people filling each position.

Membership roles: Solidifying the growing membership roles, so we have current and correct information on the membership as a whole and on each individual member as well.

Dues: Addressing the dues structure required and desired by the membership and insuring each member knows their dues status.

FAC Book: Publishing our FAC Book to insure that the FAC mission, as we have experienced it, and our comrades who did not return, is properly represented in the military history books.

Reunions: Insuring that we have great reunions in order to maintain the friendships that have come to mean so much to us and continue to share those experiences that were, and have become, surprisingly life defining.

Web-site: Continue to update our website as a central feature that properly exposes the organization to the public and promotes our membership and organizational goals.

FACNET: Maintaining the FACNET as a useful tool for, in one way or another, helping to provide cohesion to the organization.

Information on most of these subjects is presented in this Newsletter by those responsible, so I won't belabor them. However, I do want to comment on a couple of areas:

The organization: The Board has been reviewing its responsibilities and those of committee members to insure they are well defined and understood. This process continues. In accordance with the FAC Association By-Laws, I have made two appointments to fill vacancies on the Board. Firstly, I have appointed **Charlie Jones** as Chaplain. This is a position he has held in the past, and he has agreed to serve in this capacity. Secondly, I have appointed **Darrel Whitcomb** as FAC Association Historian. Darrel has had a large hand in shaping the historian function as it currently exists, and recently volunteered to again harness up to this task. Thanks to both of you for agreeing to serve.

We all also owe a big debt of gratitude to **Claude Newland**, for helping, even driving us all through this transition of Association Officers while working to maintain continuity of functions. He's also very busy with the "Rustics." Thanks so much, Claude.

The position of Secretary is vacant: **Howie Pearson** has resigned from that position for personal reasons. That being the case, I am looking for a volunteer to take on that responsibility. The By-Laws of the Association list the Secretary's responsibilities as

recording and publishing minutes of meetings and discussions, and filing of documents, correspondence and papers. When necessary he responds on behalf of the organization. For practical reasons, suggest that a volunteer be comfortable on the internet. This is Important, because most of our "meetings" are virtual (on the Internet) and our votes are posed and voted that way as well. I know there's a volunteer out there that's really anxious to help with this one? Just lemme know please!

Let me also say that we have some really hard working volunteers on our committees. If you would like to help on any of them please contact the fellow(s) in charge and let them know.

Dues: Your Board has really been wrestling with this one [in our initial "virtual meetings"]. The larger issue is whether we will have a lifetime membership option, as so many organizations of our type have. If so, what should the lifetime membership cost schedule be for various age brackets? If you want to be maintained as a member in good standing, better jump on the dues bandwagon. After all, our dues are rather modest don't you think? We are tightening up on these things. More on that later.

Your suggestions: I solicit your comments and suggestions on any aspect of the way your Board can make the right things happen for the Association. We'll do our best to keep you all informed so you can be as active a participant as you choose to be. One thing you all can do right away and on a continuing basis: insure those that might be interested are aware of the Association, and ideally become interested enough to become members.

Aloha,

Toby Rushforth

www.fac-assoc.org

472 Parish Blvd, Mary Esther, FL 32569

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP:

Interim Officers and Committee Chairmen:

President: Toby Rushforth 808-235-0207 - Kaneohe, HI - rushforht@aol.com

Vice Pres: Dennis Crouch 937-426-6246 - Beavercreek, OH - denniscrouch@earthlink.net

Secretary: VACANT

Treasurer: George Ferkes 850-581-4953 - Mary Esther, FL - beachfly@aol.com

Director: Rowdy Hetherington 305-852-8709 - Tavernier, FL - baiglobal@bellsouth.net

Director: Gibber Gibbs 512-253-6868 - Lexington, TX - jegibbs@onr.com

Director: Hen Min Hiu 808-732-2225 - Honolulu, HI - hen.house@verizon.net

FACNET: Skip Smothermon 405- 528-5496 - Oklahoma City, OK - skipsmo@swbell.net

Website: Zot Barazzotto 973-429-2119 - Xenia, OH - zot250@ameritech.net

Newsletter: Hen Min Hiu 808-732-2225 - Honolulu, HI - hen.house@verizon.net

FAC Search: Fred Pumroy 937-878-7357 - Fairborn, OH - flmapumroy@aol.com

All-FACs Database: Glenn Bremenkamp 228-388-2817 - Biloxi, MS - gsbrem@aol.com

Membership Database: Ken Blutt 719-559-0557 Monument, CO - kblutt@csc.com

Chaplain: Charlie Jones 850-936-9688 - Navarre, FL - btrflyfac@aol.com

Mission: Jay Barnes 973-325-6208 - West Orange, NJ - barnesjay@juno.com

FAC Historian: Darrell Whitcomb - nail25@aol.com

FAC Book Project: Charlie Pocock 719-488-9056 - Monument, CO - charmarpock@aol.com

Reunion 2004: Cal Anderson 252-437-0550 - Whitakers, NC - calvindolly@earthlink.net

Reunion Advisory: Jay Barnes 973-325-6208 - West Orange, NJ - barnesjay@juno.com

FAC Memorial: Don Echelberger 850-664-5444 - Mary Esther, FL - echelberg@aol.com

Publicity: Bob Boswell 321-639-7335 - Rockledge, FL - aerix@email.msn.com

Corporate Sponsors: Byron Sutton 407-876-6209 - Windermere,FL - wtcor@gdi.net

FAC Association Membership Application

Yes, I would like to support the goals of the newly formed FAC Association to promote FAC Camaraderie and future FAC reunions.

_____ **Enclosed is my check for \$20.00 to make me a member of the FAC Association. (Add \$10 more if you want the FAC Trivia Book)**

Please make check payable to "FAC Association" & mail to: George Ferkes, 472 Parish Blvd, Mary Esther, FL 32569

Last Name: _____ **First** _____ **M.I.** _____ **Spouse's name:** _____

Mailing Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

Telephone: (____) _____ **E Mail Address:** _____

FAC Call Sign(s): _____ **FAC Aircraft:** _____ **TASS:** _____

FAC Tour Dates: _____ **Locations:** _____

I'd like to work on the following FAC committee: _____

I plan to attend FAC Reunion 2004 in San Antonio: (please circle answer)

Most likely YES

Most likely NO

The Society of Old Bold Aviators

Jonathan Myer, co-director, The Society of Old Bold Aviators in Alexandria, VA reported that on 29 June 2002, the Northern VA SOBA held its fifth annual Flyers' Songfest at Arlington's Ft Myer Officers' Club. Mixing classics from World War II, Korea and SEA with some of the performers' own, this year's songfest again ranged from solos to sing-along.

As Jonathan added, Dick Jonas had enough CDs (including new ones with Big Irv and Bull D.) to cover a table top....We had a full house, folks left happy and there were no horse doovers and only beer foam left when the players departed. And now we're already planning for next year's SOBA-6. For more info: email j-bmyer-alexva@erols.com.

Eugene Rossel, email aircommando1@earthlink.net; in cooperation with Aussie FAC **Garry Cooper** succeeded in lobbying the US House of Representatives for an entry into the Congressional Record of the 107th Congress honoring the efforts of Royal Australian Air Force and New Zealand Royal Air Force pilots who served as FACs with US combat units.

The tribute to each individual named was read into the CR by the Honorable Gary G. Miller of California on Thursday, September 19, 2002. Do internet search of the CR for that date and you will be able to download a copy for framing.

Eugene also invites you to visit **The Forgotten B-17C** website for coverage of the Aussie memorial to 41 U.S. (WWII) troops who perished in a crash at Baker's Creek near Mackay, Australia as they were headed for R&R. See <http://home.earthlink.net/~aircommando1/forgottenb17.htm> for the whole story and how you can support the Baker's Creek Memorial Assn.

TREASURER'S REPORT

George Ferkes

FAC Association Treasurer

Trail 26

Looks like Ken and Zot have a good handle on making FAC names available to our FAC membership. Great job ... thanks. I have had a number of requests that accompanied dues payments which wanted to locate FACs. Making our date base available will help these individuals. Let me know if there are any expenses you need to be repaid for.

Our membership and finances are both in good shape. As I mentioned to Toby in an earlier e-mail we have about 450 paid up members and over \$15,000 in our checking account with no outstanding bills. Expenses anticipated are about \$500 for mailing out the rest of the draft FAC history books and some more trivia books, and about \$1500 for printing the next newsletter. I am still receiving some dues payments but only about 5 a week.

ACTION ITEMS:

1 HONORARY MEMBERSHIP. One of the dues checks I received was from Doris Guillet Maitland. If memory serves me correctly she is a widow of a FAC. Hopefully Charley Jones can give us the background. If she is, I would like the BOD to make her an honorary member. I believe we will need to do this officially IAW our By Laws. Once we do that we can contact her and inform her of our actions and return her dues. We may have some others but I am not aware of them.

2. CARE PACKAGES TO U. S. TROOPS. Request the BOD approve a donation of up to \$1000 to send care packages to U. S. Troops deployed in Iraq. Specifically these care packages (items that have been requested by the troops.....baby wipes, beef jerky, gum etc) would go to the Combat Controllers that are attached to Special Operations units. They are the ground FAC's who have been controlling air strikes for the Special Forces A-Teams and other Special Operations units. The

packages would go to the guys who are on the front lines.....not the staff or ones getting 3 hots and a cot. I belong to an organization (Ft Walton Beach Sailfish Club...lots of retired military) that is more than willing to do all the work..... purchase, pack and send. We are already sending packages to both the combat controllers and to the LRP company of the 101st Airborne Division ... one of the members has a son who commands the LRP unit. The packages for the combat controllers will be sent to the deployed commander of the Special Tactics Group for distribution to the front line troops. Each care package...about the size of an in-flight lunch box.....costs about \$10\$5 worth of goodies and \$5 to mail. So if we donate \$1000 it will fund about 100 packages. They would be shipped out over the next few weeks. *editor's note: The packages have been shipped.*

FROM YOUR DATABASE MANAGER

Glenn Bremenkamp

As an organization of FACs, FANs, ROMADs, Crew Chiefs, Maintenance, Administrative, Intel, Armament and any/all other SEA veterans, we are a finite group that, in order to survive, cannot afford to lose contact with identified members. If you change address, notify me of your new info: Glenn Bremenkamp, 2216 Popp's Ferry Rd, Biloxi, MS 39532. Email: <GSBrem@AOL.com. Tel: 228-388-2817

FACBOOK CD PROJECT

POSITION REPORT

by Charlie Pocock, Chairman

The FACBOOK Committee has been burning the midnight oil to make sure the CD is ready for the 2004 Reunion. Bob Gorman is doing an outstanding job on putting the CD together, and Squadron Editors, Tim Eby, Ned Helm, Mike Morea and Charlie Pocock are getting the final permission slips signed. By the way, we are no longer soliciting inputs to the book. The cutoff date was June 30th. So, if you have a really hot story or great picture that you just didn't get sent in when you should have, well don't despair. You can send it in for the next book or CD.

If you think the stories are going to be great just wait until you see the "Propwash" or appendix section that Chuck Johnson is putting together. The illustrated glossary alone is going to be worth the price of admission. Speaking of which, attendees at the reunion will get a copy of the CD free. Well, not really free but the plan is that the cost will be built into the registration fee. This is going to be a super product, perhaps the equal to a 2,500 page book, with literally hundreds of pictures.

I would suggest that when you see it, you will want copies to give to your kids, grandkids, neighbors, local museums and libraries. Give it some thought and when you register for the reunion let us know how many copies you might like. We'll have extras available, but it would help if we knew how many to have made. The extra copy cost will probably be between \$15 and \$25 and I expect closer to \$15. The bottom line is we're on track and the Book/CD is going to be an awesome thing.

FR2004, The Perfect Way To Start the Summer

Cal Anderson

Hounddog 56, Covey 62

calvindolly@earthlink.net

Route 1, Box 352, Whitakers, NC, 27891

252-437-0550, (FAX) 252-437-0394,

from Cal Anderson, Reunion Chairman, ably assisted by John Hanna and Mike Lovelace

FAC REUNION 2004 DATES

Come to San Antonio May 5th-9th and make the 3rd reunion the best ever. It's a great way to start the summer; so grab your hats, your boots, and your special seniorita, and come join the "wild bunch;" the FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS for a week of fun, relaxation and camaraderie. We have set up a great schedule of events and you don't want to miss out on this great occasion to renew old friendships and meet some FACs you may not have seen in 37 years.

REGISTER ONLINE

<http://64.25.10.178/gateway/FAC2004/index.htm> (secure registration)

or email fac2004@onlinemeetingservices.com.

Carolyn Petty, whose husband Ben is one of us, will be handling all the billing, tour connections, etc. After you sign up, if you don't receive a confirmation, please email or call EEM Worldwide, Inc. at 214-366-9777 or 1-888-TOURS-12 to be sure they have received your registration application/reservations. Online registrations will receive a confirmation containing a personal code that enables you to access your registration and confirm your reservation or make additional changes. Please hang onto this confirmation letter and do not share your personal code with anyone else.

OUR SPONSORS

The Covey FACS assisted by a number of other tactical call signs FACS invite you to a great reunion site—lets gather around the Alamo and party to the end! Great weather, great food and even greater entertainment, and super company.

REGISTRATION FEE

The reunion Registration Fee is \$35 for the FACs and \$25 for spouse/guest. This fee covers costs for: Name Tags, FAC Hooch, Meeting Rooms, Transportation to the Base Tours, and other misc. reunion expenses. (If we have any extra cash, then we would like to cover some of the room costs for the entertainers, whom most are not FACs, and are paying their own transportation and billeting.) Please, everyone attending should register.

REGISTRATION METHODS

All Reunion Registration will be handled by EEM Worldwide, Inc. Make all checks payable to "EEM Worldwide, Inc." and designated to FAC Reunion 2004. There are four methods to register:

- 1) **SECURE ONLINE REGISTRATION:** Online registration can be found on the internet at: <<http://64.25.10.178/gateway/FAC2004/index.htm>>
- 2) **MAIL:** Down load FAC Reunion Registration Form and send to EEM Worldwide, Inc., 4703 West Lovers Lane, Dallas, TX 75209
- 3) **FAX:** EEM Worldwide, Inc. at: 214-366-9888.
- 4) **EMAIL:** Questions and support can be obtained by emailing <fac2004@onlinemeetingservices.com>

FAC REUNION PROPOSED AGENDA

Wednesday, May 5th:

FAC Assoc Executive Mtg & Meeting Conference Area

Hooch

Book/CD Review Committee

Welcome Reception/Cash Bar 7:00pm

Thursday, May 6th:

Golf Tournament

City Highlights Tour / Shopping

Group Meetings (Tact call sign) 1pm-3pm

Practice Beer Call 5pm

Evening Party (Fiesta) 6:30pm La Villita / River Boat backup, Hotel backup

Hooch

Friday, May 7th:

Tour Lackland AFB (Ladies 8:00am) & Gents) Dutch Treat O'Club 12:00

FAC Assoc Mtg 2-5pm

Shopping Trip 2pm Mexican Mart

Dinner at Hyatt Regency 6:30pm and Evening Entertainment (A concert of AF songs w/focus on FAC songs by Lyndia Fish and maybe joined by Dick Jonas, Toby Hughes, Ron Baker, Iru Levine and Jonathan Meyers)

Hooch

Saturday, May 8th:

Tour Randolph AFB 9am

Memorial Service 11-12am

Lunch/O'Club 12-1pm Dutch Treat O'Club

FAC ASSN Meeting (if needed) 1-3pm

Dinner/Dance 7-11pm

Hooch

Sunday, May 9th:

Group Farewell Breakfast

Comments by Covey Host & FAC Assoc President, Board Members

Good Bye's!

***NOTE: The hotel had a changeover in the person handling negotiations for meals, entertainment rooms, etc. Therefore, we could not get final prices to go into the FAC newsletter. However, EEM Tours should have the web site and email, which contains all the prices for rooms, tours, meals, etc, up and running by the second or third week of August All this information will be available and you can register on line with email or at the website; or, you can download the registration form and mail it in. You can then use either this Proposed Agenda or the downloaded sheet as a guide when you telephone EEM Tours to get the prices. We will republish all the Reunion information in the Dec/Jan Newsletter. BUT DON'T WAIT, DO IT NOW!**

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Jonathan Myer (O-1s), Ron Barker (F-100/O-1s), "Bull" Durham (EC-47s), Big Irv LeVine (F-105s), and Dick Jonas (F-4s) do their gig at SOBA-5. Photo by Jan Churchill.

NORCAL Mini FAC Meet hosted by Joe Sowa in Sacramento, CA in July 2003. L to R: Larry Hughes, Derlin German, Dusty Coyner, Ron Hammer, Joe Sowa, Doug Robertson, and Stan Wells. All are regular correspondents on the FACNET. Picture courtesy of J. Sowa.



The Battle for Lang Vei

The excerpts from an account of the Battle for Lang Vei, 7 and 8 Feb 1968, are from the diary of Toby Rushforth, call sign Covey 252, and reflect the facts and he knew them and his feelings upon writing his "FAC Book" submittal.

"Wait a minute, you aren't 'Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo' are you," He looked startled and said, "Yes, I am." I paused, then said, "We had assumed you were killed by the North Vietnamese!"

flashback to 7 Feb 1968...



Defenders are in TOC bunker in center. PT 76 Russian tank has been destroyed at the edge of the fence on the right side of

the picture. Lang Vei was overrun on 7 Feb 1968. Picture by Toby Rushforth, Covey 252. See entire story in the FACBOOK CD.

Gerry Harrington and John Buckles had their work cut out for them last night. Lang Vei was being overrun by a large enemy force supported by at least 9 tanks. They said it was an unbelievable sight, walls of tracers, explosions, what looked like flame throwers, yelling on the radios and tanks rolling right over the tops of friendly bunkers.

Our Special Ops personnel, call sign "Spunky Hanson," were holed up in their Tactical Operation Center (TOC). They were talking to Covey 688 via FM radio. The NVA were swarming all over the TOC, throwing satchel charges, plus smoke and frag grenades down the ventilation shafts and any place they could find access.

(As) I approached the camp and checked in with Covey 688, I could see his O-2 ahead, between cloud layers. Columns of smoke drifted up through the low clouds. It was about 0800 as I fell into loose trail formation with 688 to listen and try to figure out what was happening. I would be taking over shortly.

Spunky Hanson 15A, a Sgt Ashley was killed on the 5th assault to rescue the trip in the TOC at Lang Vei. Tony Sazanovich was the FAC in charge for the chopper evac (and) got all but one of the troops out. Initially, the Helos couldn't take off because they were overweight with people hanging on the skids.

During all this, Tony Sazanovich was contacted by a Special Ops troop who had apparently been evading after the camp was overrun. His call sign was "Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo." Tony was preparing to land on the torn up, bombed out, airstrip at the old camp, however, a large number of NVA arrived first and chased SH28B back into the trees and brush. Last transmission from SH28B was "They're coming up from the other side of the strip." No way SH28B will come out of that alive.

fast forward to Khe Sanh Veterans Assn Reunion, San Diego, CA Sept 2000....

So here I am, with a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye, shaking hands with "Spunky Hanson 28 Bravo" after all these years. His name is Dennis Thompson. I have since found out that he was captured and escaped several times during the next few days. He was a rather belligerent cuss and not amenable to being a prisoner. For this, he got lots of broken bones and worse. After a nightmarish 6 month trek to Hanoi, he was incarcerated with the other POWs, until the end of the war.

Toby Rushforth

Da Nang 1968

HAWAII FAC ASSOCIATION NEWS

Retired Raven Mike Cavanaugh was guest of honor at a meeting held in Honolulu in June, 2003, to brief the membership on the work he and 3 other Ravens completed in several locations in Laos while being interviewed by Lone Wolf Productions. A made for TV documentary will be shown on the Discovery Channel after its debut at the up-coming Raven Reunion Oct. 24, 2003.

The team met up in Bangkok to "acclimatize" themselves for the trek via bus and jeep. Cavanaugh was able to revisit the exact spot in Muong Sung where he was shot down. They also visited Vientianne, Sam Neua, the Plain of Jars, Ban Ban Valley and other locations referred to in the book "The Ravens," authored by Christopher Robbins.

The reigning government appeared to be perpetuating an anti-American spin on the memorials. Yet there was acknowledgement of the USA's peaceful intentions among the holy men.

FAC MEMORIAL

Members of the HIFAC Association individually visited the FAC Memorial at the National Cemetery of the Pacific at Memorial Day and cleaned and decorated it with flowers. It still stands out among the many other markers because of its location at the top of the walk.

TV Documentary consultants in Meng Kwang, Laos, May 2003. Ravens Standing L to R: Fred "Magnet Ass" Platt, Mike Cavanaugh, Ronnie "Papa Fox" Rinehardt, and Larry Sanborn. Picture courtesy of Mike Cavanaugh.



Sister ship to the USS Arizona, the USS New Jersey was often available along the coast of Vietnam. Here is has just completed a FAC directed fire mission 15 miles south of Tuy Hoa using its 16 inch guns. Picture by Hen Min Hiu taken circa 1969.

