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FAC NEWS

July 2009



www.fac-assoc.org

1849 Southlawn Drive
Fairborn, OH 45324

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP:

Officers and Committee Chairmen:

President: Dennis Crouch 937-426-6246 Beaver creek, OH denniscrouch@earthlink.net
Vice Pres: Robert (C3B) Green, King George, VA, numba1cc@crosslink.net, 540-775-2830
Secretary: Joseph "Jay" Barnes, West Orange, NJ, 973-325-6208 barnesjay@juno.com
Treasurer: Bob Gorman, Newbury Park, CA, 805-376-9893 jake4404@hotmail.com
Director: Cal Anderson 252-437-0550 Whitakers, NC calvindolly@earthlink.net
Director: Tom McGrain 480-460-1969 Phoenix, AZ Nail28@cox.net
Director: Phil Litts, Elk Grove, CA, 209-329-6970, philliplitts@sbcglobal.net
FAC Historian: Rick Atchison 703-569-2418 Springfield, VA Ricka61@verizon.net
Legal Advisor: J. D. Caven, Sunrise Beach, MO, 573-374-8275, jcaven002@charter.net
Website: Bob Gorman, 805-376-9893, Newbury Park, CA, jake4404@hotmail.com
Newsletter: Tim Eby 254-796-4850 Hico, TX teby540@embarqmail.com
FAC Search: Jon Alexaitis 817-581-8381 Bedford TX jalexaitis@sbcglobal.net
Membership Database: Fred Pumroy 937-878-7257 flmapumroy@aol.com
Chaplain: Howie Pierson 415-893-1862 Novato, CA howie.p@comcast.net
Mission: Jay Barnes 973-325-6208 West Orange, NJ barnesjay@juno.com
FAC Book Project: Al Matheson 435-586-9762 Cedar City, UT citabriair@yahoo.com
Reunion Advisory: Zot Barazzotto, Beaver creek, OH, 937-429-2119, zot250@ameritech.net
Reunion Advisory: Claude Newland 850-654-2955 Destin, FL rustic19@cox.net
Reunion Advisory: Cal Anderson, Whitakers, NC, 252-437-0550, calvindolly@earthlink.net
FAC Memorial: Don Echelberger, Mary Esther, FL echelberg@aol.com



Dennis Crouch

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dennis Crouch FAC Association Pres.
NAIL 23 NKP 70-71 & 504 TASG 71

Greetings to all and Happy Birthday America. We are privileged to live in a land where we can speak out, share our views and ensure that our representatives know what we believe. We are indeed, "the

land of the free and the home of the brave." That obviously didn't come easy. We just celebrated Memorial Day, a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service. We are about to celebrate our Independence Day, July 4th. Our military has ensured the freedoms that our entire country has enjoyed from the beginning of the United States to today. We thank those who served before us, we thank those who served with us and we thank those who serve after us. Most importantly we thank those who have and will give their lives in defense of our freedom and for the freedom of others. May God Bless America.

Also, it's timely to re-emphasize the importance of recognizing our brothers at their time of passing. This can only be done through your help. When you know that one of our brothers has passed or that JPAC has performed another miracle and returned a brother from Southeast Asia after these many years, we NEED TO KNOW. The FAC Association put in place a procedure that is working well but it does depend on you. Without your help, we are unable to recognize all of our departed brothers. Our primary POC is **Bob Green**, VP, Phone 937-878-7257, e-mail numba1cc@crosslink.net and our secondary POC is **Fred Pumroy**, former VP and currently our Membership Database Manager, phone 937-878-7257 or e-mail flmapumroy@aol.com. You can review the complete procedure by reading the "President's Corner" in the July 2007 issue of the FAC Newsletter on the FAC Association website, www.fac-assoc.org.

A few changes have been made to the officers and board members of your FAC Association. In accordance with the authority contained in the Bylaws I have appointed a new Secretary, **Joseph "Jay" Barnes**, Jake 26. Jay served as a Director and agreed to accept the position of Secretary and I know Jay will serve us well. Thanks, Jay, for accepting the position. **Skip Smothermon**, Helix 41, had previously served as Secretary for some time and decided he needed to do other things, and we'll miss him. Skip remains as one of our two FACnet moderators along with **Alex Dyer**, Covey 577. **Phillip "Phil" Litts**, a later Jake 26, indicated his desire to serve the FAC Association at our last Business Meeting in Colorado Springs and quickly volunteered to serve as a Director. We are fortunate to have Phil on board. Also, we have **Fred Pumroy**, Nail 21, as the new Membership Database Manager. **Ken Blutt** served in that position and as a Director and resigned from those positions due to disagreements with the decisions made relative to the "bedpan incident" that occurred at the FAC Association reunion in Colorado Springs. His work in the interest of the FAC Association has been greatly appreciated. In addition, I'm pleased to announce that **James "J.D." Caven**, Covey 569/Nail 51, is the FAC Association's newly appointed Legal Advisor. J.D. we thank you for your service and the service of all

those who support the FAC Association.

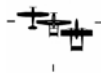
I want to inform you that we've established a committee to determine the possibility of establishing a FAC Association Scholarship for the future. This is one more way to ensure that the history and legacy of the FAC and the FAC Support personnel are remembered. I've appointed a committee of three persons to examine this. The committee consists of **J.D. Caven, Tom McGrain, and Phil Litts**. The results of this committee's work is due this September and will be briefed to your officers and board members. With their approval, the membership will be asked for your concurrence at or before the 2010 reunion in Fort Worth, TX. On another front, **Rick Atchison**, FAC Historian, has been working with Texas Tech University to complete an agreement that will result in all our historical data being on file and accessible at TTU. Much of the data maintained by **Al Matheson**, FAC Archivist, will be moved to that location for permanent access. Website access is anticipated in the future. We've moved slowly on this and our goal is to finalize the needed actions in September. In addition, "Cleared Hot", Book 1, placed many of the stories from the FAC History Book CD into a 500 page Table Top book that has been well received. **Peter Condon** did a superb job on "Cleared Hot" and he willingly took on the added task to build Book 2 which will contain the remaining stories from the CD as well as any other stories that haven't been told. You can still buy the Cleared Hot, Book 1 at www.lulu.com/content/2813093. I don't have a date for Book 2 currently, but it's in work.

I've received several inquiries over time for FAC memorabilia to include patches, jewelry, shirts, hats, etc... In many cases I've referred them to the OV-10 Bronco Association/ FAC Museum. **Ned "Crash" Helm**, Rustic 15/Nail 27, is going to sell military and FAC Memorabilia through his sportsman website at www.wingset.com. Those items sold by the OBA/FAC Museum are now going to be carried on Ned's sportsman website and he will add other items. If you have any FAC items you would like to sell, Ned's contact info is on his website. Thanks Ned for your efforts in this area.

In closing, I'd like to share something I received from our esteemed FAC Chaplain, **Howie Pierson**. Howie said, "Faith, audacity, and courage are inadequate to capture the FAC requirements and job description. Faith is primary. Faith in one's country, cause, and comrades. The basic elements of flight, the unknowns of weather, mission changes and the enemy's unpredictable advantage await the FAC. Whatever level of spirituality you take into battle, Faith was in your heart, mind, and soul. Always remember that our brothers' last OER/APR reads, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant.'"

We are fortunate to live in this great country and to have fought for its causes. Our country is great because of the freedoms we enjoy. I urge all of us to use our voices to speak out and remember that freedom rings. And continue to keep our troops and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

Happy Independence Day to All,
Denny Crouch



TREASURER'S REPORT

Bob Gorman

1 July, 2009



Before you read much further, turn to the back page of this newsletter and look closely at your mailing address information. If you see the words "Membership Expired" you will probably receive just one more copy of the FAC NEWS. This ought to be a sort of wake up call for those who haven't paid any dues for the past four or more years. There will be a Board of Directors meeting in September where this subject will be one of our agenda items. While our existing bylaws (<http://www.fac-assoc.org/membership/By-Laws.pdf>) generally address this

....."Members shall be in arrears after a period of delinquency established by the Board. Delinquent members may be reinstated after payment of past dues."

subject, it's my feeling that we need to be more specific and define just what constitutes "period of delinquency" and what are the procedures for "payment of past dues". Your Board of Directors would appreciate any thoughts you may have on this subject.

As of 2 June this year our financial position, INCLUDING Residual funds in our Colorado Springs account, stands at \$148,110.35. The Life Membership roll has increased by about 10% and now stands at 718.

When we met in Colorado Springs I spoke to you about the future funding of a scholarship program. The proposal I had presented to the Board of Directors was referred to a committee who will be presenting their recommendations in September. We have set aside \$5000 in the 2009 budget as initial funding for this program and I will be recommending a like amount in the 2010 budget. One of the sources of income for this program will be the royalty dollars we receive from the sale of "Cleared Hot". To date we have received \$1350 from Lulu Press.

Let me suggest that if you feel the urge to directly support such a program just write a special tax deductible check to the FAC ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, send it to me as your treasurer and I will setup a special fund management account that will be visible to all members on request.

GO LAKERS !!!! (Ed: Unabashed abuse of position, but left unedited out of respect for the elderly.)

Bob Gorman, Jake 44



IN MEMORIAM

“To fly west, my friend, is a flight we all must take for a final check.” — *Author unknown*

Emil Brunnelle	31Dec 08
David E. “Bull” Baker	29Jan 09
Carl Dahlin	Nov 07
Wilbur V. Kaven	15Jun 08
Charles A. MacIvor	01Jan 09
Charles N. Valentine	06Jan 09
Ian Cooke	2008
James DeVaney	20Feb 09
Gordon Ziegler	19Mar 09
Jack Koppin	16May 09
Richard E. Leal	08May 09

Cowtown Warbird Roundup Recap

April 25, 2009—The **Veterans Memorial Air Park**, Fort Worth, TX, just completed the sixth Cowtown Warbird Roundup, in conjunction with the OV-10 Bronco Assn.’s seventh BroncoFest including a reunion of former Bronco pilots, crews, and supporters. With 70 plus Nails and 140 total participants, this was one of our largest reunions. Part of the festivities was the rededication of one of the VMAP OV-10s with the addition of the names of two former crewmembers on the canopy rails. Howie Pierson, Nail 01, named on the front seat, and Jerry Dufresne, Rustic India, the first French language interpreter to fly with the Rustics, on the rear seat, were honored by a gathering of Nails and others. Members of Marine Observation Squadron Two also held a dedication of VMAP’s second OV-10.

The CWR brings warbirds of all eras from WWII to current and active, to allow our community to touch the airplanes and speak to the crews that are defending our freedom. This year nearly 55 airplanes were open to inspection including: V-22 Osprey, EA6B Prowler, F-18 Hornets, A-10 Warthogs, AH-1W Super Cobra, UH1N Twin Huey, C-47 Dakota, T-28 Trojan, O-2A Skymasters, O-1 Birddogs, F-4 Phantom II, F-14 Tomcat, T-6 Texans (old and new), two hot air balloons, and more.

The event also included several briefings by aircrews to educate the public on how airplanes are being used in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, along with Darrel Whitcomb’s lecture on the combat rescue in Vietnam of BAT-21. In addition, over 25 antique farm tractors participated in an old fashioned tractor pull. A classic car show topped off the attractions with over 40 vintage cars, hot rods, and sports cars present.

This year’s Flight Suit Dinner and Reception honoring visiting crews included over 220 attendees. Our theme was “A Gathering of Yankee Air Pirates” as a salute to combat pilots from Vietnam to the present. Pirate flags, decorations, and costumes added to the festivities.

CWR drew 3,500 plus people who enjoyed the weather, food, fun, and friends. Around 20 vendors also supplied visitors with a large assortment of memorabilia, gifts, and souvenirs.

The CWR is conducted as the annual fund raiser to help VMAP in its education and restoration efforts. VMAP is a non-profit organization operating under the 501(c)3 charter of the OV-10 Bronco Association. VMAP operates the Bronco Ready Room, FAC Museum, and the air park. Visit us at www.ov-10bronco.net and www.facmuseum.org. Or call at **800-575-0535**.
Jim Hodgson, president

(Photos opposite by Robert Green, Gregory Reddin, Samantha Baxter)

The Story In Pictures



Captain Steve Bennett’s (MOH) daughter, Angela, and family



Jim,
I just wanted to thank you for allowing the kids that come to my home for day-care to come on a field trip to the event. They all had a great time and I came back with my family on Saturday. We had a great time both days. Thanks again,
Samantha Baxter



Nail 21 Walt Want presents FROG, also Nail 21 with a copy of the book

“CLEARED HOT” signed by all attending FACs who contributed.



A few good NailsRustics Jerry Dufresne and Claude Newland

More CWR Fun in Pictures



Ken & Helen Semmler and Karen Brinkley, the lady Duck driver. (Those Aussies never have any fun)

Photo by Doc Lambert

USAF V-22 Osprey special ops bird



Photo by Gregory Reddin



Someone old, someone new, Crash, those legs belong to you??

Note the current warriors' interest in their predecessors' stories.

Photo by Crew Chief Bob

Away From the Fun,

another quiet event was taking place: Nail Charlie Yates (famous for his rendition of Turkey in the Straw on Guard—on numerous occasions) was meeting with Steve Bennett's daughter, Angela, and his grandson, Jake. Steve, as we all know, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for ditching to save the life of his backseater, Mike Brown, USMC. Charlie took Jake flying, then later on Saturday they both sat in one of the VMAP's OV-10s, then attended the evening's festivities. An emotional day for everyone involved.

Crash Helm

FACM Ready Room briefing

Photo by Carl Ramsey



Bill Beckett, OV-10 Designer, RIP

I regret to inform you of the passing of **Bill Beckett** 17May09. Bill and **KP Rice** were the two Marines that invented the OV-10. Without the efforts of these two men, none of us would have the OV-10 in common and our lives would have been different. Bill's name will be placed on our memorial prop along with the names of other Bronco Association members who have headed west. Below you will find the news from Bill's long time friend, KP Rice. God's speed, **Jim Hodgson**, OV-10 Bronco Association

Subject: Bill Beckett - Jim -- Just got word that Bill Beckett passed away this evening. He was a great Marine as well as a gentleman and a true military scholar. Bill taught me a lot, not only about being a Marine aviator but also about how to think and how to live with integrity. I'll miss our long telephone debates on every subject in the world. I had known Bill on a nodding basis since 1946, during my flight training, but I really first got to know him when I went to my first real squadron, 223, in 1949. I didn't really have my feet on the ground there before a jaunty young captain came up to me in the ready room and asked me if I wanted to learn how to become a real fighter pilot which of course I thought I already was. We subsequently spent hours in the sky pushing a pair of Corsairs to the limit with Bill getting the best of me 99% of the time. Lots of tours in the same area, as well as a couple in the civilian world, really forged an unbreakable bond between us. Thanks again for the honor of making both of us a part of a great organization, one that used our bird in every way we envisioned for it as well as several you guys improvised on the spot. Semper Fi, KP



Photo, with respect, by Tim Eby Thank you, Colonel Beckett RIP

Fort Worth Star-Telegram 1June 09

FORT WORTH — The confessional and classrooms of the former Our Lady of Guadalupe school on the city's north side will soon be torn out and remade into a different kind of learning environment.

The OV-10 Bronco Association, with its growing collection of warbirds from the Vietnam era, has signed a lease with the city to take over the closed Catholic school on the southern edge of the Meacham Airport property and fashion it into the city's newest aviation-related museum.

"We're tickled to death to be down here," said Jim Hodgson, executive director of the group and a commercial pilot who lives in Grape-

vine (TX). The association and its Forward Air Control Museum and Memorial Air Park have leased space from the Vintage Flying Museum adjacent to Meacham for about a decade.

But the group, which has been aggressively acquiring airplanes with local ties such as an F-14 Tomcat, F-111 Aardvark and RF-8 Crusader, needed more room and flexibility, and a city aviation museum is still years away.

The association approached the city about leasing the old school, which the city bought several years ago as part of its effort to clear out owners around Meacham's noisiest corridors.

The Bronco Association hopes that a new building and greater visibility on Long Avenue will generate more interest and visitors, including school field trips. "There are 22 schools within five miles of this place," said Hodgson, who was a Marine Corps pilot in Vietnam.

The B-36 Peacemaker Museum, which has been either transient or homeless for the last few years, will also set up in the new museum. Most of the city's aviation-related nonprofits have been working toward a permanent and comprehensive museum, but because financial problems have affected government, foundations and corporations, virtually no one expects that effort to take off for some time.

The Bronco Association hopes to open by August, after the volunteer-driven remodeling of the school.

CHRIS VAUGHN, 817-390-7547

Jerry
Stephan,
Howie Pier-
son, Don
Brown at
BroncoFest
'09



Photo by
John Boll-
werk (?)

NAILS ON A RAIL

"There I (we) was"...surrounded by Air Force warriors, on a ramp next to a Bronco! The most distinguished people present were family members of Medal of Honor recipient Captain Steve Bennett. FACs of several call signs were also witnesses as well as many dear Nails, a backseater "Frenchy" DuFresne (first Cambodia combat interpreter), and many "Bravos" (spouses). The occasion was the Cowtown Warbird Roundup/ Broncofest VII, at Meacham Field, Ft Worth, coupled with a Nail FAC gathering. You had to be there.

Nails came out of the woodwork, and a few had never been to a FAC get-together! I watched/heard dozens of moving first meetings between combat comrades after 35-40 years. Even a few tears were noted.

It was a gathering of unique personalities totally committed to our country, the mission, and each other, unparalleled in any other profession. Each one exudes pride, trust, and loyalty to your God, family, country, and comrades-in-arms. You are the last of a breed.

When I learned that my name was being considered to be on the left rail beside Captain Steve Bennett, I was humbled (a humble FAC---oxymoron?). I respectfully deferred to other more deserving FACs: POWs Steve Long and "Gunner" Guenther, previous General Officer Commanders, SAR heroes, highly decorated (AFC) FACers, and many KIA/MIA buds. Denny Crouch, Ned Helm, Jim Hodgson, Terry Tabor,

Jim "Boomer" Bloomberg, coupled with a FAC survey resulted in yours truly getting the nod.

My heart, spirit, mind, and pilot recognition are touched deeply. Each KIA, MIA, POW, FAC, backseater, support personnel, crew chief, maintenance type, "load toad," and "staff weenie" are all intertwined with "LTC Howard Pierson." I am honored to represent you. We were/are one. I love you all. "Cleared Hot on Life!"

In His Grip, Howie Nail 01, FAC Association Chaplain



504th TASG and 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd & 23rd TASS Plaque Presentations

(FAC Association to FAC Museum, Ft Worth, TX)

The original 504th TASG and TASS plaques which hung in the 504th TASG at Cam Ranh Bay, VN are now on display in the "hootch" in the FAC Museum in Fort Worth Texas. The 504th TASG moved from Cam Ranh Bay in late 1971 to Ton Son Nhut, and the group was deactivated in March 1972. Denny Crouch, President, FAC Association, presented the plaques on behalf of the FAC Association to Chuck "Igor" Burin, FAC Museum/OBA, at the Veteran's Memorial Air Park, in April 2009. The plaques will be placed on indefinite display in the "hootch" at the FAC museum. Colonel Pat Long, the last 504th TASG Commander, had kept the plaques for the last 37 years in his home. When he decided to move from Virginia, he transferred the plaques to the FAC Association through Darrel Whitcomb, FAC Historian at that time. We decided that the FAC Museum was the perfect place for the display. Col Pat Long now resides in Missouri and we thank Pat for giving these historically significant plaques to the FAC Association.



Chuck
Burin and
Dennis
Crouch
Photos by
RR
Lamothe &
Darrel
Whitcomb



1Lt Jerome Elkins

If this name rings a bell with you, please note the following from Crew Chief Bob, as well as the short article concerning our association's priorities to serving the families of the fallen, page 7:

"I've been trying to locate anyone who knew or flew with 1Lt Jerome Elkins in Vietnam. Lt. Elkins was KIA on 27Aug65. His daughter, Carole, was 5 years of age when she lost her father and has been trying for years to learn about him.

Please post a notice in the next newsletter asking anyone who may have known Lt. Elkins to contact me at numba1cc@crosslink.net, or at 540-775-2830. Mail at 17292 Round Hill Road, King George, VA 22485-4432."

Robert B. Green

RUSTIC BACKSEATERS

This is a story that not enough of us are aware of, and needs to be told. Thanks to Ron Dandeneau for a short overview of the beginnings of the Rustic French translators program. It's an unusual Air Force story. Ed

In mid-June 1970, President Nixon's decision to provide air support to Gen Lon Nol's Cambodian forces created a need for French speaking translators to bridge the language gap between Cambodian/French speaking ground commanders and English speaking American Forward Air Controllers.

The request for French speaking Air Force personnel first went out to air bases in the Republic of Vietnam. The initial search yielded four French speaking NCOs from French Canadian heritages in New England; MSgt Ron Dandeneau, TSgt Robert Paradis, SSgt Jerry Dufresne, and SSgt Vaillancourt. By December 1970, their numbers had grown to 18 and was comprised of airmen from all over the U.S. with various forms of French language capabilities and training.

These men had no prior flight or survival training. Within hours of their recruitment, they found themselves plane side getting a ½ hour OJT session on how to operate the OV-10's radios; the survival vest's contents and strict instructions not to touch that "ring" between their legs in the back seat unless specifically told to do so by the pilot. In August '70, higher headquarters realized that they had some enlisted personnel flying without any training, so they did send a SAR Team to Bien Hoa to brief the backseaters on how search and rescue operations worked and what kind of support they could expect in case of ejection in enemy territory. *(It was all enemy territory. Ed.)*

Initially flights to Cambodia were made from Tan Son Nhut AB, RVN; however, operations soon moved to Bien Hoa AB. Due to the highly classified nature of the mission, Rustic commanders determined that both Rustic officers and enlisted personnel would have to share the same living quarters. Upon arrival at Bien Hoa AB, the backseaters were moved into the 19th TASS BOQ and given the beds of 19th TASS officers who were on R&R or emergency leave. Eventually the Rustics were given their own living quarters.

It soon became apparent that speaking the French language and knowing French military terms were not one and the same. SSgt Vaillancourt, who had served in France in addition to his French Canadian heritage, was appointed to teach French classes to raise the proficiency level of all the backseaters. Additionally, a locally developed "French Dictionary" of military terms was created and carried by all the backseaters. Any new military term that surfaced during a mission was added to the dictionary nightly so that the translators would have the most current information available. Eventually, the mission of the backseater grew from one of radio translator to map reader and aerial photographer to assist the Rustic FAC in his mission.

Because the Air Force did not recognize the backseaters as an official flying position, these men did not receive any flight pay for the hundreds of hours of combat flying they performed and many did not receive any awards/decorations until some 30 years later.

Your editor can vouch for these men's outstanding contribution, from his 30 days TDY in August, 1970 as a Rustic. They went from wide-eyed passengers who barely knew a bomb from a rocket to full FAC participants in an incredibly short time. They were invaluable to the Rustics. Note that Jerry Dufresne's name was selected to represent all of them on the rear canopy rail of the OBA's Bronco in Fort Worth. (page 5 and Jerry's picture page 3)



Tire cover photo by CC Bob

Rustic patch photo by Crash Helm



One Last Reminder Get 'em while the store is still open!



Walter W. Want is keeping the shop open a little longer, making prints of Andy Whyte's O-2A painting, commissioned by Toby Rushforth, available to the public. The original is on display at the NMUSAF at Wright-Patterson AFB. Print sizes range from 8X10 to 16X20, framed or unframed, with or without pilot wings and medals. Prices range from \$12 to \$340 plus S&H.

See the FAC website for full details or contact Nail21www@aol.com or **Walter W. Want, P.O. Box 1029, Newburg, OR 97132-8029.**

Reunion 2010 in Fort Worth, Texas "It's a moving target at this point"

The Fort Worth planning committee members report that their FAC talents are being challenged by the fluid nature of events for our next reunion. Hey, what is FACdom if it ain't "fluid"? Whoever saw a battle go exactly as planned? They will soon sort out the problems and put down a smoke that we can all hit with certainty.

This reunion will coincide with a sure-enough, big-time airshow at Alliance airport, just north of Fort Worth. The Alliance people have not yet settled on a date, but promise it will be a weekend in October, 2010. So hold high and dry for October!

The FAC Museum and Veterans Memorial Air Park troops are in the midst of their move to new quarters on Meacham Field. They will be fully established and ready for us to enjoy by reunion time. Meanwhile, those valiant volunteers are "fully engaged" in that transition.

Other priorities for the reunion planning center around activities that some of us always enjoy such as golf, other area aviation attractions (*Lockheed-Martin tours come to my mind*), and more time for simply visiting with new and old friends. They understand that free, unstructured time seems to become more important as we age.

So safe up your switches, hold high and dry, and look for the pre-strike briefing in the next issue of this newsletter.
Tim Eby



A Raven FAC Story Circa 1972 Somewhere over the PDJ in Northern Laos

Seems there was this Raven named Steve. Now Steve was a Texas Tech linebacker type; no neck. Really. His body went from chin to shoulders; nothing in between.

Anyway, he is out "Ravenging" one day in his deadly O-1 with his trusty Hmong interpreter in the back seat when this ground team calls and asks for help. Seems the guys had gotten themselves in a bit of a scrap and needed a little airstrike to help out. "No problem," says Steve, as Cricket tells him that a flight of God's finest Phantom-4s from Ubon Ratchitani are inbound and looking for a target. Steve thanks him and hears the bombers check in with a full load of enthusiasm and Mk-82s. Steve admired such spunk and two minutes later, he looks up and there they are, entering the orbit just above his position. Great!

Steve rocks his wings and the bombers call tally on him. He checks with the ground team and things are getting tense. They are really ready for that airstrike; like right NOW. OK. So Steve rolls in to mark the target. Now he liked to use a real steep dive for his shot for better accuracy. "Whooooosh," goes the rocket and splashes the enemy location. But as part of his expert rocket technique, Steve also liked to do a steep recovery to escape gravity and the enemy gunners. But as he got the nose up way high God decided, at that exact moment, that the front bolts holding Steve's seat in the aircraft would release. And they did. Well, gravity being what it is, Steve and his seat rotated back until Steve's head was in the lap of his backseater. To which the surprised Hmong replied, "Steve, what you do?"

Well, unfortunately as Steve rotated into the back seat, he held on to the only thing that he had a hand on, which was the stick. Now the throttle was full and the airplane was smart and knew that stick back meant go up. So it did. Except that the O-1 does not have a lot of smash for going up much. Aerodynamics being what they are, the airspeed reduced.

Now Steve liked to fly with the windows open. As the airspeed got real low, all his maps went out the window and the airplane stalled. But all that torque from that full throttle told the nose to go left and the aircraft started to spin.

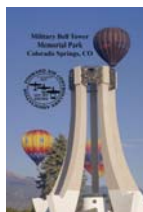
The ground team wanted to know what Steve was doing. He didn't answer. The enemy gunners all thought that it was real neat and they celebrated with lots of groundfire.

But Steve was cool. He grabbed hold of one of the side braces and got the seat back forward. Then he did some real neat pilot stuff and got his machine flying again—the guy puking in the back seat didn't faze him at all. Then he decided to take a few minutes because he knew that the most important thing for a FAC was to sound good on the radio and a few minutes might settle the voice.

So, back to the air strike. Steve checked with the ground team and "Yes, they were ready." He checked with the fighters and, "Yes, they were ready too." Just to be on the safe side, Steve asked them if they still had the target. "Oh yes," they replied. So Steve cleared them in hot.

But instead of rolling in, the flight lead asked for another mark. Steve was confused and asked what the problem was. "No problem," the leader replied, "We've got you and we've got the target, we would just like to see that rocket pass again."

Contributed by Darrel Whitcomb in memory of Steve Neal, a good friend and great guy recently deceased.



Captain Hilliard Wilbanks, MOH

February 21st was a crisp, clear day at Cornelia, GA's Community Center as the Habersham County Chapter of the Georgia Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), dressed in colonial uniforms and buckskins, hosted another ceremony to honor the memory of Capt. Hilliard A. Wilbanks, Medal of Honor recipient from our Southeast Asia war. It was attended by members of his family, local officials, townspeople and Junior ROTC cadets, and veterans from WW-II though Iraq and Afghanistan to include, of course, Vietnam vets and fellow FACs—all of whom wished to honor Captain "Willie" Wilbanks's heroism and sacrifice. FACs attending were: "Crazy Charley" Morrison (and wife Starley); Brad Wright (who took the pictures below); Mack Secord; Jim Glanton; Jonathan Myer (and wife Brenda); also Bill and Mike Hester, sons of FAC K.L. Hester (deceased).

With Georgia SAR Ted Smith presiding, Captain Wilbanks's son John introduced Jonathan Myer, Hilliard's 1966 classmate at O-1 FAC school at Hurlburt Field, as keynote speaker. Jonathan presented a comprehensive description of our various FAC missions and aircraft, with a focus on their "life and times" as 1966-67 province FACs in II Corps' Central Highlands, ending with a summary of Hilliard's final mission: Having discovered an NVA ambush awaiting an ARVN Ranger force near Di Linh in Lam Dong Province, he revealed the enemy's position by firing WP smoke rockets and then his own M-16 rifle until he himself was hit and crashed between the two forces. Thus, he saved the lives of about 100 Vietnamese Rangers and their U.S. Army advisors, but at the cost of his own life.

The ceremony also included the presentation of wreaths (by Hilliard's widow, Rosemary Wilbanks, and sister Pat Wilbanks DeWitt), musket volleys by Georgia SARs in buckskins, a bugler's "Taps," and flyovers by half-a-dozen O-1 Bird Dogs provided by the International Bird Dog Association. Refreshments and reminiscences followed, both around Captain Wilbanks's memorial and inside Cornelia's Community Center.

Photos by Brad Wright



*Thanks to all of you who make the effort to honor our dead, and especially to minister to the families of our brothers, fallen on the battlefield or more recently deceased. Our Association has no higher priority than this. Please help us reach out to families when you hear of a fellow FAC or member passing, by notifying VP Robert Green immediately. Contact info on the first page. Give him all the information you can as quickly as possible, and he will handle the rest. **Please help!***

Please mail in your dues to Treasurer Bob Gorman today. Use the form on page 8 of this issue of the FAC Newsletter.

FAC Association

1849 Southlawn Drive
Fairborn, OH 45324

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THE FAC ASSOCIATION

Annual dues are \$20

Life membership dues depend on your age

55yrs and under—\$225
56 to 60 yrs — \$200
61 to 65 yrs —\$175
66yrs + —\$150

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