

# “CLEARED HOT”

## BOOK THREE



### FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER STORIES FROM THE VIETNAM WAR

*A COLLECTION OF HISTORIES BY US AIR FORCE AND ALLIED  
FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS FROM THE SOUTHEAST ASIA WAR  
1961—1975*

**FAC Association, Inc.**

***LET ME TELL YOU HOW "CLEARED HOT" CAME ABOUT***



**Charlie Pocock**

After completing my 1966 tour in Vietnam I went to C-141 school and was building up my time to become an aircraft commander. I was flying home to Mc Chord AFB one day when the news reported that the North Korean's had captured the U. S. Navy spy ship Pueblo. As soon as we landed I was told that I was one of the unlucky 100 Forward Air Controllers (FACs) that had been home less than a year and was selected to go to Korea, for six months TDY. I picked up my cold weather field gear at Fort Lewis and the next day I was on a DC-8 bound for Seoul Korea.

I had a nice comfortable bed on a pool table in the Service Club at Osan AB along with a thousand other Task Force members. There I became acquainted with a Staff Sergeant Jack ‘Spider’ Webb who had been a ‘Butterfly’ FAC in Laos (Before the ‘Raven’ program). Spider said, “Why don’t we get a Mark 108 Jeep and get the hell outta this mess at Osan.” I gave him an affirmative answer and using his enlisted man’s skill and cunning we did just that. Spider and I spent the next six months with the U.S. Army Advisory Team at the Second ROK Corps working with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> ROK Divisions on the DMZ.

After six months Spider and I went our separate ways. Some 25 years later, in the spring of 2000 I got a phone call from Spider, who had retired as a Chief Master Sergeant. Spider said there was going to be a FAC Reunion at Fort Walton Beach Florida, where we had all initially trained.

I dug out my Vietnam diary and Spider polished it and had it published as a book, *Viper 7*. At the reunion I sold a few copies and a few of us met as a committee to discuss how we might document the Forward Air Controller’s History in Southeast Asia. Darrel Whitcomb, as the designated FAC Association historian, was to be the committee chairman. With our various myopic views based on when we served in Southeast Asia, we couldn’t even agree on when the wars started or what should be included. Some wanted the history to start when the French were defeated, others said no we should start when the first FACs were deployed. We finally agreed to start with the deployment of Detachment 2 Alpha (Jungle Jim) to Bien Hoa AB, RVN on 16 November 1961 and to end with the Mayaguez Incident on 15 May 1975. Furthermore, we agreed that there had been several different wars being fought simultaneously; and that a comprehensive FAC History must include all of those experiences.

A couple of weeks after the reunion Darrel Whitcomb called me and said he would be too busy to chair the FAC history committee and because of my publishing *Viper-7* he had selected me to replace him. I reluctantly agreed and with only the start and finish dates I started to collect stories and photos. I knew I couldn’t write a chronological history without a great deal of study and even then I would surely miss many important facts; an assortment of stories, pictures and other data would

probably be better any way. From our original committee I selected a representative from each squadron and the Ravens and we started to beat the bushes for stories and pictures.

Two years later, at the Honolulu reunion, we had about 400 stories and 1000 photos; way too much for a book, or even five books. Our best approach would be to put everything on a CD. But I didn't have the knowledge to do that. A couple of months later Bob Gorman (a squid) stepped forward and said he would do it. So after another two years, at the San Antonio Reunion we had a CD for every member of the FAC Association.

Bob did a marvelous job on the CD and we were all very appreciative, but it still wasn't what everyone wanted. They wanted a coffee table top book. Peter Condon (an Aussie) had published a 'print on demand' pilots hand book on the Lear Jet and he decided that using whatever help we could send him he could publish the book. In 560 pages and in a coffee table top size, the book *Cleared Hot* was an immediate success. That wasn't enough for Peter, he went on to publish *Cleared Hot II* and now Bob Gorman is following that up with this final book, *Cleared Hot III*. The first two books are available from Lulu Press at \$25 each and we hope this book will cost about the same.



Dennis Crouch,  
Bob Gorman,  
Peter Condon,  
Darrell Whitcomb

Certainly Bob, Peter and I didn't do all the work ourselves. Everyone who contributed a story or a picture helped make these history books complete. And now, 41 to 55 years later, there are still some unwritten stories out there that should be told.

A few of those who also supported the *Cleared Hot* series include: Rick Atchison, Darrell Whitcomb, Dennis Crouch, Gary Dickers, Al Matheson and many, many others.

*This book, “Cleared Hot Book III”, is being compiled by Bob Gorman and will probably be the final volume in this series.*

Please read and enjoy "Cleared Hot". And now you know how it came about.

**Signed,** Charlie Pocock, Viper-7;  
Bob Gorman, Jake 44;  
Peter Condon, Tamale 15.

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