



UN-SCRAMBLE



The Official Newsletter of the Valiant Air Command, Inc.
6600 Tico Road, Titusville, FL 32780 - (321) 268-1941
website: <http://www.valiantaircommand.com>
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3rd Quarter Review - July, August & September 2020

This RU-21, our latest acquisition, has been reassembled and sits on the ramp ready for display as soon as the museum reopens. Eventually, it will go to restoration for a little powder and paint.



The RU-21 was used in the Vietnam War; not a fighter but a very important aircraft to the Army. Colonel Terry A. Yon (USA (Ret), VAC Life Member and former VAC Public Relations Officer) flew many missions in the RU-21. Col. Yon gives some insight into the important role the RU-21 played on page 10.

MUSEUM AND GIFT SHOP - STARTING 10/16/2020 - OPEN FRI, SAT & SUN - 9AM TO 5PM

Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

Adults \$20.00 - Senior 60+ or Military \$18.00 - Students 13 to 18 years old \$10.00

Children 5 to 12 years old \$5.00 - Children under 5 years old FREE - Special Group Tour Rates Available

Statement of Purpose

The Valiant Air Command Inc. was formed to perpetuate the history of aviation, to encourage gathering of men and women in camaraderie, research and Warbird restoration, to serve as an educational tool for young and old alike; and to assure that the memory of those who gave their lives in service to their country shall not perish.

501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization Museum Recognized by the Internal Revenue Service

Future Events • October, November & December • 2020

Oct 20 VAC BOD Meeting - 12 Noon
Nov 14 & 15 Veterans' Day Weekend Open House
 Nov 17 VAC BOD Meeting - 12 Noon
Nov 26 HAPPY THANKSGIVING
 Nov 26 Museum closed for Thanksgiving
 Dec 11 VAC Christmas Dinner, Main Hangar
 Dec 12 Warbird Air Museum Fly-In / Drive-In Breakfast 8-10:30
 Dec 15 VAC BOD Meeting - 12 Noon

Dec 18 Membership Appreciation Event, Dinner
Dec 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS
 Dec 25 Museum Closed for Christmas
2021 HAPPY NEW YEAR
 Jan 1 Museum Closed for New Years Day
Please check the VAC website or with the event for last minute changes before going!!!! (www.valiantaircommand.com)



Commander's Report

Norm Daniels, Commander

Email: Commander@valiantaircommand.com
 (321) 268-1941 ext. 4101

Dear Members and Friends,

With all the turmoil in our lives and businesses caused by the COVID-19 virus, I am happy to say that we are planning to reopen the museum. Dates and times to be announced, hopefully this will get us back to square one. Further good news: the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority at their regular meeting on August 20, 2020, approved our request for a lease modification which includes approximately a 6.93-acre parcel of land so that we can continue with our Expansion Project. Survey work is already underway. The survey will define the footprint for the new pad and connector to the runway, event center, hangars, and retention pond specs. A special thanks to CEO Michael Powell and the Board at the Titusville-Cocoa Airport Authority for their support.

On May 5, 2020, the FAA issued the TICO Airport Authority a license to operate a Launch Site. With several Aircraft and Space vehicle operators located nearby as well as many firms supplying space hardware, the designation will help attract visitors to the museum; already, we have had requests to rent hangar space for special events.

By the time you read this issue of the Unscramble, your

museum may be open to visitors. We have been closed since March 15 of this year due to the virus. The Board of Directors meets often to make the call to remain closed or open to the public. If a decision is made to open, masks will be required by visitors and volunteers alike. We will regularly sanitize all areas and strongly encourage social distancing. Our Gift Shop counters will have plexiglass shields in place as well.

Tracy Bohrmann, Finance Officer, is also an RN working at a nearby hospital. She has seen the ugly effects of the virus on those patients who did not make it. Her recommendation to the Board to open or remain closed is based on clear evidence that the virus is beginning to subside, and the number of cases is progressively declining at this moment in time. Brevard County Schools opened the week of August 24 and Labor Day events brought large crowds out to the beaches and other holiday venues. The virus incubation period is approximately 2 to 3 weeks. We will know if the cases of COVID-19 continue to drop or if they are increasing. We have lost the summer tourist business, the booked events, as well as the business from overseas travelers.

It has been *Continued on pg 3*

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Joseph Henry Reus



NOV. 1922 - JULY 2020

Joe will be missed by all at the Valiant Air Command.

For more about Joe, see the Supplement to this issue of the Unscramble.



The Official Newsletter of the Valiant Air Command

1st Quarter - Jan, Feb & Mar
Submission deadline - Mar 24th NL Published - April 1st
 2nd Quarter - April, May & June
Submission deadline - June 24th NL Published - June 30th
 3rd Quarter - July, Aug & Sept
Submission deadline - Sept 24th NL Published - Sept 30th
 4th Quarter - Oct, Nov & Dec
Submission deadline Dec 22nd NL Published - Dec 30st

Editor: Phyllis Lilienthal

Photo Credits: Marvin Juhl, Lorraine Juhl, Dennis Jenkins and Phyllis Lilienthal

Please note:

Items submitted after the submission deadline will not be published or will be published the next quarter if applicable. The Editor reserves the right to not publish submitted items.

Commander's Report

Continued from pg 2

pointed out that the VAC has not paid much attention to our members irrespective of a poor airshow revenue, COVID-19, and the current negative cash flow position. At the September VAC Board meeting, a motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved that the VAC will fund a member's and special guest's dinner as soon as we can be comfortable that the safety of attendees is assured. This event will be at no cost to members and will include an upscale dinner, entertainment, valet parking, and more. Details to follow.

Financially, Tracy continues to keep us informed of our cash position as well as receivables and payables and manages the accounting function so that we know our daily position.

Bob Boswell, Executive Officer, is diligently pursuing Air Show opportunities for next year and working with Cocoa Beach Air Show Group and Melbourne Airport Air Show Group. Our last air show, while very successful from a visitor performance experience, did not draw the crowds expected due to inclement weather. Frankly, the decision to go forward will be determined by the amount of funds sponsors are willing to donate. We traditionally would have received approximately \$70,000 in sponsor funds before an airshow.

Tom Etter, Facilities Officer, this summer continued to deal with roof leaks, orchestrating aircraft movements, aircraft placement changes, and the dozens of other issues: air conditioning, plumbing, building

repairs, rolling equipment repairs, and landscaping to name a few. This dedicated individual managed with his team to accomplish so much in the high heat and humidity conditions we have experienced this summer.

David Shores, Public Relations/Marketing Officer, brought to us an opportunity to utilize the services of a professional fundraiser to help us with our Expansion Program. To accomplish a successful fundraising campaign requires the fundraiser to be supplied with a list of individuals at corporations and companies with a contact name and number. The contact person does not need to be the CEO. We are looking at an individual who can receive our materials and be willing to recommend to the decision-maker that they should donate funds for our expansion. If you know of a friend or relative who works for a company or corporation, please let us know. David negotiated the arrangements between the VAC and Lone Wolf Media Company's initial filming of a documentary about the "Lost Squadron" using our TBM Avenger as a backdrop. Filming started September 6 and was completed on September 8. More about this from David. David is also working with advertising entities to creating advertisements that will reach as many as possible once the COVID-19 issues are behind us.

Dennis R. Jenkins, our Procurement Officer and author of numerous books related to Aviation and Space, through his efforts and negotiations acquired a MIG-17 and an RU-21A for us this year. Dennis has discovered a NASA jet that is available

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Robert "Bob" Frasier



Mar. 1928 - Sept. 2020

Robert (Bob) Howard Frazier, Jr., 92, of North Palm Beach, FL passed away peacefully among family at Ashley River Plantation in Charleston, SC on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. Born on March 1, 1928 in Hartford, CT, he was preceded in death by his loving wife of 63 years, Diane P. Frazier.

An Army veteran and graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, he was a dedicated aeronautical engineer working for Pratt & Whitney (United Technologies) until retirement in the 1980s. An aviation enthusiast, he took great pride in his volunteer commitment with the Valiant Air Command Warbird Museum in Titusville, FL where he worked tirelessly to source historic aircraft for restoration.

He will be missed by all at the Valiant Air Command Warbird Museum. Bob, rest in peace.

Commander's Report

Continued from pg 3

to us at no cost. More about this aircraft from Dennis. I have also attached a list of books authored by Dennis. If you want to know the Who, What, When, and Why of an aircraft or a space vehicle these remarkable books are definitive in their detail and photography. Dennis is also on the hunt for additional vintage warbirds.

Richard Jones, Personnel Officer, apart from maintaining and updating our website also manages all the IT functions: Internet, cabling, installation of and computer updates, software and hardware configurations, and security as well as all other reporting programs that provide historical and current information. Richard along with Bill Bentz and Don Henry coordinate the now automated scheduling program for tour guides based on guest counts, tour groups, and special events.

Marvin Juhl, Maintenance Officer, has the responsibility of covering our flying aircraft as well as the static aircraft. The maintenance logs required by the FAA are numerous and technical. As a pilot, Marvin is more than qualified to fill this need. The FAA often arrives to verify that our logs are up to date. Marvin's diligence in this effort is time-consuming and necessary. Additionally, Marvin oversees many ongoing projects in our Restoration Hangar. With his knowledge and contacts in firms that have the equipment and parts they no longer require, Marvin has been able to negotiate with these firms to donate many items that can be used as trading material.

Leigh Lewis, Flight Operations Officer, has the responsibility to verify that pilots have all their medicals as required and that the pilot's ratings are current. Leigh also has the responsibility for scheduling our C-47 TICO Belle and the TBM Avenger, and negotiating contracts for their appearances, as well as parachute events at various locations. Leigh is also a pilot qualified in various aircraft types.

Jem Golden, Curator, with Jeremiah Turcot and Don Henry has completed the physical inventory of some 8,000 artifacts and identified their location in the Memorabilia areas in the Main Hangar and the Viet Nam Hangar. Jem has continually been arranging artifacts in both hangars along with posting identifying information so that visitors can relate to a specific or group of items.

The STEM Program, since the museum closed to the public, did not stop. Bill Teixeira was able to source software that allows the STEM students to participate in

classes from their homes. In short, Bill was able to keep the STEM program alive and well. Bill Braun and Joel McGinley have worked with the students as presenters and teachers. All the students that participated want to go back to our classroom where they can exchange ideas and work together as a group as they did before we closed the museum. A great deal of credit goes to Bill, Carl, and Joel who had devoted a great deal of their time to keep this program alive and well. The STEM Program opened its enrollment policy to all interested parties throughout the United States while class sessions are online at no charge to students. A few out of state students have already signed up. Parents sign up your interested student - space is limited. Note: Classes started on 9/12/2020. To review what is planned visit the STEM website: STEMATVACTHEFUTURE.COM.

Our Gift Shop also closed along with the museum on March 15. The intrepid Gift Shop Team: Manager Anita Varela, Maureen, Richard, and Lorraine took time this summer to start and complete a physical inventory over 3 days. During this time, some rearranging of displays to better showcase products and foster social distancing has been accomplished.

Louise Kleba, apart from performing the duties as Recording Secretary to the Board of Directors, also does duty as Administrative Assistant to the Commander. She also works with pilot's information and issues Fast Cards throughout the year as needed. She is also the Membership Coordinator, issuing membership cards and mailing announcements to the Membership via Club Express and keeping all of you informed or checking in with you. You know the record-keeping alone is a daunting task! In addition, she assists in Personnel Coordination assisting Richard Jones and Bill Bentz.

Kenita Bushee contributes her services to the VAC by assisting Bob Boswell (XO) and David Shores (PR) by handling all the information and correspondence coming in and going out relating to the air shows and marketing materials, as well as advertising. She's also works diligently in planning and scheduling the Open House (or other museum special events) vendors and entertainments – a truly formidable undertaking!

Phyllis Lilienthal has the task of creating the quarterly Unscramble publication. It takes many hours to receive the input from nine individuals, arrange and edit to make ready for publication. This process normally would be done by face to face; due to COVID-19, Phyllis is managing this process online.



Executive Director's Report

Bob Boswell, Executive Director
Email: ExecutiveOfficer@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4104

For the health safety of volunteers and visitors, our museum has remained closed to the public since the middle of March. A re-opening planning team was formed in August and has prepared a plan for the new normal when we open on Friday, October 16th. Initially the new normal will include mandatory masks, temperature checks at the front door, 6-foot spacing marks from the entrance to the gift shop counter. Social distancing will always be maintained, and extensive cleaning will take place. We will have masks available for purchase. We will open gradually, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday each week, 9-5, returning to our normal hours as the threat of infection from the virus is diminished. David Shores, Tom Etter, Dennis Jenkins, Richard Jones, and Jem Golden have been updating all our display aircraft signs and are adding a QR Code for each sign. Visitors using their cell phone camera will be able to read the QR Code that will link them to information on our web site about that specific aircraft.

It goes without saying that the closure has had a large financial impact on the museum. Commander Norm Daniels, Finance Director Tracy Bohrmann, Ron Davis, and others have applied for all available financial aids, grants, and other programs that would

help with the overall funding shortfall. We are asking our members and friends of the museum to consider a donation to help us get through these difficult times.

Acknowledging that there are no museum events available and that our members are also affected by this pandemic, we are offering some membership dues relief. Those renewing their membership, or new members joining, will have their annual start period pushed back until the museum re-opens. This is also extended to unpaid members, and even to those who have let their membership lapse for several years. You can now re-join without penalty or back payment and keep the original membership number.

Museum expansion plans are continuing as we have begun our survey for site preparation. Some matching grant funds are available, and we are reaching out for sponsors to help build the much-needed aircraft parking ramp and joint use display hangar/conference center. If you know of anyone who may want to provide a donation as a Legacy Sponsor, please contact Commander Daniels or me.

From all of us at the Warbird Air Museum, we hope that you are well and safe during these uncertain times. We look forward to re-opening and invite everyone to visit this outstanding educational and entertaining attraction. Please watch our web site: www.valiantaircommand.com for opening details and future events.

The Valiant Air Command Board of Directors would like to thank the following members for joining and renewing their memberships and supporting the museum despite the Corona Virus Pandemic and its impact on all of us. We look forward to a resumption of activities and welcoming all of you back!

New Members:
Malcolm Brand
Lauren Brand
Peter Jolly
Renewing Members:
David Baranek
Steve Bennett
Brice Bennett
Cecil Berry
Francyne Berry

Jim Brinckerhoff
Charles Dilts
Emma Dilts
Gage Dilts
Jean Dilts
Gary Fritzler
Donald Henry
Bruce Hess
David Knepper
Jonathan Krepps

Donald Leathers
Leigh Lewis
Barbara Czekalska Lewis
Larry Mathis
Denise Mathis
Joseph Miller
Steven Ritzi
Vince Scalise
Bill Teixeira
Eli White, Jr.



Facilities Director's Report

Tom Etter, Facilities Director
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(321) 268-1941 ext. 4105

The VAC facility is still closed to the general public with loss of revenue associated with this closure. We continue to shield most of our Volunteer Staff as many have compromised health conditions making them especially vulnerable to this corona virus.

However, the VAC still is an active organization. Those Volunteers with projects are allowed to work with common sense spacing. Volunteers must have their temperatures checked each workday upon entry. The work includes the F-11 for LAX, S2F, UH-1 Simulator, F-101B, TBM flight operations, H-13 run-ups, C-47 operations, B-25 maintenance, XP-82 maintenance, N2S, and SNJ annuals.

We have moved many aircraft around allowing us to receive and assemble a MiG-17, send the MiG-15 out in exchange; moved the MiG-21, Fouga, and RU-21 to the area outside the North end of the Main Hangar; moved the F-101B into the paint shop, and flown the C-47 and TBM a number of times. The main movers have been Charlie Hammer, Terry Nies, Charlie Mayer, David Shores, and, of late, a new man, Hawk Morris. The F-14 is back in the Main Hangar and the XP-82 in Vietnam Hangar.

We have also worked on roof leaks, air conditioner problems, flag pole problems, plumbing issues, and electrical problems. Terry Nies and Dan McAlexander have been on top of much of it. We also have been maintaining our ground equipment. Joel

McGinley, with help from Roger Tonovitz, has been checking and repairing all that need it. The pick-up's water pump was the latest.

Tom Wilke has been mowing and trimming the grounds so they look really nice despite terrible heat.

The VAC hosted and supported the History Channel film crew doing a story on the loss of the Flight 19 TBM crews. Terry Rush operated the TBM wings and engine for the film. John Makinson gave expert testimony about Flight 19 and the crash remains the film crew brought with them. They thought they had parts to an F4F Wildcat. John showed them it was part of a TBM; Surprise! The 3 days were interesting.

The TBM is parked, for now, with the wings out; what a big plane! The MiG-17 is in the Vietnam Hangar. The Sopwith Camel is out for repairs and MiG-15 is gone, so we did not have to fold the TBM wings.

While I do not see us fully open to the public until a vaccine is available and in use for a few months, we are doing mini-openings. We just finished a 6-person History Channel 3-day affair. The B-25 will be flying next week. The new quarter will see a Car Show next Saturday followed by the Annual QB Dinner Monday. The October/November/December time slots are filling fast with parties, meetings, and weddings. The net result is we will be partially open and learning to cope with the virus. We will be following CDC recommendations so I am hopeful that these events can be safely done, leading to a full opening. Opening ASAP but with Safety for Visitors and VAC Staff.



WEAR A MASK AND PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING

*Stay up-to-date and check the Valiant Air Command's Website regularly.
www.valiantaircommand.com*



Procurement Director's Report

Dennis Jenkins, Procurement Director
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This is the time of year when the national museums (Air Force, Marine Corps, and Navy) inventory their loaned assets and renew their loan agreements. The majority of our modern static display aircraft are on loan from one of these museums since this is the only avenue available to acquire something like a Grumman F-14 Tomcat. Each of the loan agreements come with a myriad of terms and conditions, many of which are getting more stringent as the years go on. This is mostly because many small museums have failed to maintain their aircraft by not cleaning or painting them frequently enough to prevent serious corrosion issues. The national museums all decided that this reflected poorly on them, and have since demanded yearly photographs and inspections.

This is understandable from their perspective but does place a certain burden on us. For one, we have a legal obligation to keep the loaned aircraft clean and well maintained. They also need to be painted on a regular basis. The museums must approve the paint scheme and markings we choose. In addition, there are restrictions on how we use the aircraft, and in general, we cannot allow guests into them. (Commander Norm Daniels has negotiated waivers to many of the normal restrictions based on how well we restore and maintain the aircraft.)

Perhaps the most difficult condition of the loans is to remember to provide proper credit to the national museum. The signs in front of the aircraft have to acknowledge the loan, as do the web pages and any articles or papers we publish. It is an easy thing to overlook or forget. We are currently in the process of verifying we have provided proper credit for every artifact.

We have to submit annual paperwork verifying the condition of the aircraft and send a set of recent

photos to the loan officers. All of the national museums think the VAC does a great job maintaining their artifacts, so there is never an issue with the annual reports, but they still need to be done.

There have been a few aircraft offered to the VAC during the past few months, but we are reluctant to accept anything that is not an outstanding addition to the collection because we are out of space to reasonably display more aircraft, and the pandemic has restricted both funds and movement. We will continue to evaluate each offer and accept those that make sense. Once we open the new ramp (and, eventually, the new hangars) we will become more aggressive in our acquisition of artifacts.

A possible acquisition presented itself from the Keystone Heights Airport near Stark, Florida. Along with many space shuttle artifacts, Learjet 25 N266GL/N566NA (c/n 25-064) had been acquired by the Wings of Dreams Museum. Unfortunately, the museum never gained any traction and folded last December. The airport authority acquired most of the artifacts under court order as payment for unpaid rents and fees. This Learjet was reportedly the first aircraft fitted with winglets as part of a NASA-sponsored test of a supercritical wing. It is in desperate need of a good sanding and paint but does not seem to have anything more than superficial corrosion. The cockpit is mostly complete, but the back of the airplane carried test equipment only, which is all missing. Needs new tires. No engines. There are persistent stories that this is the airplane Neil Armstrong used to set five transcontinental speed records, but further research shows that was a Lear 28 (N128LR, c/n 28-001). John Leenhouts at Sun n Fun is also potentially interested in the airplane, which is free for the taking. After discussing it at a recent Board meeting, the VAC has decided to decline this aircraft, mostly because we do not have space to properly store and display it until after the expansion is completed.

Learjet 25 N266GL/N566NA (c/n 25-064)





Maintenance Director's Report

Marvin Juhl, Maintenance Director
Email: MaintenanceDirector@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4108

Tom Wilke is our VAC Volunteer of this quarter, the man who single-handedly makes sure that the grounds get standard military grass cut for public inspection. The grounds are one of our biggest maintenance projects that require us to be looking our best. It's more than just cutting the grass, it's all the edging and weed whacking, also killing those unwanted weeds. The way the weather is it's required once a week. "A great big THANK YOU, Tom." If anyone has an interest in helping with the grounds, please contact us or Tom.



Bob Filippi working on the F-101 Voodoo "restoration project" in repairing and replacing the corrosive panels along with overseeing the project and personnel for the restoration. The project has a long way to go, but paint should be going on in some parts soon. Larry Knoch is just one of many giving a helping hand. Remember, measure twice, cut once.



Bell 47-D1 work is back on a slow track for now, but we do have a transmission, main mast bearing and other small parts coming in about two weeks. We will be able to evaluate a better progress direction in getting it back to flying condition. On the other hand, the Bell 47-G4 is still in flying condition. A day



will come when we will be able to see both Bell 47's run-up on the ramp together.

UH-1 Huey Simulator progress is getting to the point it should be ready for display come reopening time. We now have the exterior completely painted except frame trim on the windscreen, chin bubble and the front panel door that Roger Franklin and Greg Hale are installing. Interior is completed except as follows: pilot's seats - sand and paint, seat cushions, instrument decals, emergency exit markings and interior/exterior markings yet to be finished. Even though, after it is displayed, we still will have odds and ends to do to help give it a touch of originality.



F-11 continues to progress slowly and that's due to the amount of corrosion involved that requires attention. The cockpit area has a complete makeover that is unbelievable in its outcome; that accomplishment goes to Pete Mascaras, who did a remarkable job putting it back in order. Excellent job, Pete.

To date, we have two aircraft and one helicopter in flying condition (C-47, TBM and Bell 47-G4). We will soon be starting on number four aircraft which is an S-2 Tracker. We received a low time engine for



replacement and have an overhauled engine sitting in a steel container. Both propellers have "0" time SOH, and we just received some spare parts. So we have a good start in restoring this aircraft to flight. Just need to put together a team to start the inspection and repair

Tico Belle gets back to Ramsbury, England

From: Steve Banyard <steve.banyard@xxxxxxxx.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 6:58:50 PM
To: Warbirds <Warbirds@valiantaircommand.com>
Subject: Tico Belle and Ramsbury

Hi there,

We visited the VAC museum back in 2017 and acquired a souvenir piece of C47 Tico Belle at that time. In August 2020 we stayed at a leisure hotel situated nearby to the remnants of Ramsbury Airdrome, Wiltshire UK where Tico Belle was operating from around D-Day. Whilst there we took the opportunity to re-unite this small part of Tico Belle with its former airbase. Hope you like the pictures.

Best Regards

Steve & April Banyard
Wymondham, Norfolk, UK.



Ramsbury North West Runway threshold



Tico Belle Ramsbury Northerly Runway threshold



Tico Belle Ramsbury North West Runway



Tico Belle Ramsbury North West Runway light remains

Editor's note: Way back in time, Tico Belle had a landing mishap and it was necessary to replace one of the wings. Rather than junk the wing the Restoration Group was cutting up small pieces of the wing, attaching a short history of the Belle and selling them for a small donation; this is what Steve and April Banyard took back to Ramsbury, England. Tico Belle was stationed at Ramsbury during WWII.

Incoming..... EMAIL THAT IS.

Hi Norm,

Greeting from Savannah GA. Janet and I have been locked down since March due to the virus but are doing well.

Glad to hear the VAC is enduring and especially excited to hear about the RU-21. From 69-70 I served in Vietnam in the 224th Aviation Battalion (RR). The unit that was not there because of its top-secret mission.

The picture above was me at about 24 years old as pilot of the RU-8D in the background. We also had RU-6A Beavers RU-1A Otters and the RU-21. Although my primary aircraft was the RU-8, I flew many missions in our other aircraft as well and the RU-21 in particular. Great aircraft and a really interesting mission.

Terry Yon



AND NOW FOR THE REST OF THE STORY...

The RU-21 Ute

The "Radio Research" Mission In Vietnam

By: Terry A. Yon, Colonel, USA (Ret)

As a longtime, Lifetime member of the VAC, I was really pleased and excited to hear of the recent acquisition of the very unique RU-21 aircraft.



This aircraft was developed for Vietnam and was first used in 1968. They were assigned to the 224th Aviation Battalion (RR); part of the Army Security Agency structure, which was not there officially.

The purpose of the RU-21 (Beech King Air derivative), as well as other aircraft assigned to the 224th such as the RU-8 (a Beech Queen Air derivative), the RU-1 (De Havilland Otter) and RU-6 (De Havilland Beaver), was Signals Intelligence and more specifically Airborne Radio Detection Finding (ARDF); with a little over 1,000 personnel and some 80 aircraft organized into 5 companies assigned throughout South Vietnam. The RU-21 was the most sophisticated and newest platform to be able to find, track, locate and

listen to enemy transmissions, having first flown in-country in 1968. If my memory serves me correctly, there were a little less than 20 RU-21s total assigned to the companies that flew missions from the DMZ all the way down into the Mekong Delta.

When I arrived in Vietnam in 1969, I was a newly minted 24-year old pilot with about 300 hrs. I had also gotten qualified as a "functional test pilot" (someone who flies the aircraft first, after maintenance, to ensure it's been put back together properly), as well as a short course on the ARDF mission. I was assigned to the 146th Aviation Company (RR), which was located South of Ben Hoa at a little tactical airfield called Long Thanh North. The main aircraft I was qualified in was the RU-8, but because of a shortage of pilots, I also flew as a co-pilot in all the other aircraft including our RU-21s. As I recall, we had about six assigned to us. The original mission call signs for our aircraft was "Lonely Ringer." Our missions were pretty much always four hours long. We spent as much time in our mission area (which was anywhere in III Corps depending on the tasking) as we could and then ran for home, often on minimum fuel. Once you got airborne, the

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The RU-21 U

The "Radio Research" Mission In Vietnam

Continued from pg 10

mission operators got to work on their radios finding an enemy transmission. This normally took very little time and as soon as the pilot said he was ready, the mission operator would say he had a target. Once we got a good signal, then (in the RU-8, RU-1, and RU-6) we had to use cross controlling by full left or right aileron and opposite rudder to establish a flat turn through the signal, so the antenna could get as a precise heading to the target as possible. This was very hard on the aircraft and made maintenance and inspections even more important (but my test pilot stories are a different subject for a different article). Once you had a line from your known point on the ground to the target, you pulled off and turned into the target a second and then a third time to get a minimum of three lines intersecting to the target. IF you flew the maneuver correctly and the mission equipment was functioning properly AND you had your ground position plotted precisely (I will mention more of this as we go on), then theoretically you could fix the enemy transmitter to within 300 yards. HOWEVER, in the RU-1 and RU-6, the crew had to fly over a known reference point such as a bridge or road intersection the get their ground position on a map. This was very difficult and meant that the mission often had to be flown lower than desired and worse it could not be performed in bad weather as you needed to be able to see, to get a ground fix/position. Getting a precise target fix under these conditions was often not possible. In the RU-8, they made a major leap forward by installing a Marconi Doppler. Pilots established a known point on the ground before take-off and the Doppler would follow your path of flight and provided an automatic readout of your 8-digit map coordinates. We could even set the coordinates for the end of the runway and use the Doppler as an unofficial backup for instrument approaches. The Doppler would gradually lose it's accuracy, however, and it too would have to be reset and updated over a known point on the ground about every hour. But, we had all-weather capability and flew many, many missions in and around bad weather, often taking off or landing on instruments. Finally, the RU-21 arrived and it had a host of new innovations to include the Inertial Navigation System.

Remember this was 1969. The system made fixing your ground position much more reliable and dependable through satellites. The RU-21 also had a full array of mission capability to include voice and code capture and target acquisition. Often, because of the caliber of the intelligence these platforms gathered, they would make an operations stop on the way back to base to drop off intelligence for a quicker analysis and distribution to ground commanders. Assessment of these intelligence gatherings, regardless of aircraft source, could result in a decision to return to the area for more information and continued monitoring, requesting a B-52 or fighter/bomber strike or perhaps an infantry assault.

For me, it was 7 days a week flying. I spent days around the hangar doing test flights as needed and then would fly a night mission after a quick dinner, or fill in for other flights when scheduled. I made Captain and left maintenance about halfway through my tour and took over a Flight Platoon. However, I will never forget the mission and tour I had with a top-secret unit, in a top-secret aircraft, that didn't officially exist.

As a quickside note, one of my first assignments in the Army was for primary flight training at Ft Stewart, near Savannah. Fast forward 30 years later after my Army career ended, plus another 18 living the retired life and supporting the VAC and my wife and I decided to move to Savannah. Shortly after arriving, I visited Hunter Army Airfield and there on their tenant's sign was "224 Military Intelligence Battalion." A quick goggle check confirmed that the Vietnam Battalion had gone through several reincarnations and this was its latest descendant; still doing the same mission although with vastly more technologically advanced platforms. In Vietnam we had 5 companies, 1100 personnel and some 80 aircraft. Now they accomplish a "worldwide" deployment mission, 2 operational companies with less than 15 (C-12 derivative) aircraft, Unmanned Aerial Surveillance drones, many, many fewer people and real-time satellite downloads to battlefield commanders. I was able to get a nice briefing from their staff and the Commander invited my wife and me to be their guest of honor at their upcoming "Hail and Farewell" to give a short talk to the entire unit, about what it was like to fly the mission "in the dark ages!"

Note: RU-21 photo on page 1



P R Director's Report

David Shores, Public Relations Director
Email: David.Shores@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4106

Last week we had Lone Wolf Media filming at our museum for the History Channel. They were doing a documentary on Flight 19 that was lost in the Bermuda Triangle. Thanks to Terry Rush, Tom Etter, and John Makinson for their help. We have one of the few flying TBMs that were the type that made up Flight 19. We received some income for our assistance.



We are about half finished with QR codes for

each aircraft and the corresponding entry on our website. There will be a QR code on the sign for each aircraft. When a visitor scans the QR code it will take them to the description of that plane on our website. RJ and his crew are making the QR (3X3) stickers for each sign and expanding the descriptions on our website. Jem Golden and Tom Etter are making sure that we have a sign for each airplane.

I would like to create a History Lecture Series at the museum starting in January. Our planes would be a fantastic backdrop for a history professor to speak on WWII. We will offer a lunch for attendees and generate some income for the museum.

Space Coast Fun Guide will be doing a live podcast from the museum on opening day.

Gift Shop News

Anita, Maureen, Rich & Lorraine.
Email: VAC-PX@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext. 4112

Hope everyone is staying safe and well. We are looking forward to opening soon. We miss everyone's smiling faces.

We have a lot of new products in stock and Christmas is just around the corner, come on in when we're open and get those little kiddies some great presents. While you are here, pick up some for yourself - you deserve it after the year we have had.

We expect to get in several new space items for our reopening. These include children's space flightsuits, NASA jackets, and hats for adults and children, as well as lots of space toys for the kids.

Here's to seeing you soon from all of us here in the VAC gift shop.

Anita, Maureen, Rich and Lorraine

PS: We are going to be offering lay-away again this year. The last day for pickup is December 22nd.



SPACE HELMETS WITH SOUND



SPACE STATION



ASTRONAUT DOLL



SPACE CAPSULE



SPACE BOOTS



PUZZLES



MODEL PLANES



SPACE SUIT



Personnel Director's Report

Richard Jones, Personnel Director
Email: Richard.Jones@valiantaircommand.com
(321) 268-1941 ext.4100

Greetings Members,

Well, 2020 has been a year, we've had many highs and lows this year with our organization. We've had several losses this year from our senior ranks. All in all, our "health and well-being" email blasts the last 7 months have come back favorable. Our membership numbers are steady and we've had several new and many renewing members step up and continue to support us even during our closure due to the COVID crisis. The Board of Directors of the VAC has voted to extend all renewing and new memberships during our shutdown and provide an extension of membership benefits and member start dates held to our opening 16 Oct 2020. That being said, if you are new or renewed since March of 2020 your membership annual start date will be adjusted to 16 Oct 2020.

Our Resto Volunteer staff, many of which are members as well, and our Board members have blessed us with coverage thru our closure, covering some events and many projects that keep us going day to day. Our curator and his volunteer staff have been doing great work on cataloging what we really have in our collection

and found some irreplaceable stuff that we can't even put a price tag on. Our Web IT staff have been redoing and standardizing our web pages to include all our aircraft inventory, with new pictures where needed and updating history as we go.

We will reopen on 16 Oct 2020 to a new normal (limited basis of three days per week in October), visitor and staff temperature checks, masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing is at the forefront to keep our precious volunteers and public safe during this pandemic. In just a couple weeks we will begin looking to our volunteers to help us get our place cleaned up and ready for the reopening. If you can help clean, pickup, do facilities maintenance or yard maintenance, I ask that you contact either myself or Bill Bentz to get you signed up to help. It is a daunting task to get this place ready for the public, but it's what makes our volunteers and members so special to us: you care!

Remember, all those that can, we have several costly projects on the horizon for the VAC. Your donated funds are tax deductible and we depend on our members, fans, and volunteers to keep this place funded. Please use our donation button on the main web page to give online to your favorite project or the General fund.

Here's to a better end of 2020 than we've seen from the beginning, everyone please stay safe and healthy out there.

Robert "Bob" Frazier

Mar. 1928 - Sept. 2020

Published Obituary

Robert Howard Frazier, Jr. (Bob) 92, of North Palm Beach, FL passed away peacefully, among family at Ashley River Plantation in Charleston, SC on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. Born on March 1, 1928 in Hartford, CT, he was the son of Robert H. Frazier, Sr. and Martha R. Frazier. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 63 years, Diane P. Frazier.



He is survived by their 3 daughters Laura Bullock

(Doug), Beth Clarke (Tom), Jean Crocker (Les), and son Robert Frazier, III (Maureen), along with 13 grandchildren, 10 great grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren who will join this grand family in the next 6 months. He was preceded in death by two sons, William (Billy) Frazier and Richard (Ricky) Frazier.

An Army veteran and graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, he was a dedicated aeronautical engineer, working for Pratt & Whitney (United Technologies) until retirement in the 1980s. An aviation enthusiast, he took great pride in his volunteer commitment with the Valiant Air Command Warbird Museum in Titusville, FL where he worked tirelessly to source historic aircraft for restoration. He also closely followed Special Olympics where he supported his wife as she coached swim teams and cheered for Ricky, an accomplished Special Olympian in both swimming and bowling competitions.

Spotlight on A Member • Dennis R. Jenkins

We have read about our authors in previous issues, and perhaps read their books. We have to wonder if any are as prolific as Member Dennis Jenkins. (We'll bet you read one of his publications and didn't know it.) Here's a list of Dennis's publications to date.

Compilations of scholarly papers(peer-reviewed papers)

Space Shuttle Legacy: How We Did It / What We Learned - ISBN: 978-1-62410-216-5, AIAA and Georgia Tech, October 2013.

To Reach the High Frontier: A History of US Launch Vehicles - ISBN 0-81312-245-7, University Press of Kentucky, August 2002.

Full-length scholarly histories (100,000–1,000,000 words, fully-cited, with indices, peer-reviewed)

An Alternative to Wings: The Lifting Bodies - To be published by Specialty Press in June 2021.

United States Air Force Manned Space Programs - To be published by Specialty Press in December 2020.

Thunderchief: The Complete History of the Republic F-105 - ISBN 978-1-58007-259-5, Specialty Press, February 2019.

Space Shuttle: Developing an Icon 1972-2013, three volumes - ISBN 978-1-58007-249-6, Specialty Press, February 2017. Received the 2017 National Aviation Hall of Fame Combs Gates Award.

Coming Home: Reentry and Recovery from Space - ISBN 978-0-16-091064-7, NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, October 2012. Received the 2011 AIAA History Manuscript Award.

Dressing For Altitude: Aviation Pressure Suits From Wiley Post to Space Shuttle - ISBN 978-0-16-090110-2, NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, June 2012. Received the 2015 AIAA Gardner-Lasser Aerospace History Literature Award.

Experimental and Prototype Air Force Jet Fighters - ISBN 978-1-58007-111-6, Specialty Press, May 2008.

X-15: Extending the Frontiers of Flight - ISBN 978-0-16-079285-4, NASA Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, January 2008. Received the 2010 Communicators Award by the Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts.

Valkyrie: North American's Mach 3 Superbomber - 1-58007-072-8, Specialty Press, October 2004

Hypersonic: The Story of the North American X-15 - ISBN 1-58007-068-X, Specialty Press, February 2003.

Magnesium Overcast: The Story of the Convair B-36 - ISBN 1-58007-042-6, Specialty Press, November 2001.

Space Shuttle: The History of the National Space Transportation System – The First 100 Missions - ISBN 0-9633974-5-1, Specialty Press, April 2001

Space Shuttle: The History of the National Space Transportation System – The Beginning Through STS-75 - ISBN 0-9633974-4-3, Motorbooks International, July 1996.

Space Shuttle: The History of the National Space Transportation System – The Beginning Through STS-50 - ISBN 0-9633974-1-6, Motorbooks International, June 1993.

Scholarly monographs (40,000–75,000 words, fully-cited, with indices, peer reviewed)

Cold War Peacemaker: The Story of Cowtown and the Convair B-36 - ISBN 978-1-58007-127-7, Specialty Press, June 2010

Hypersonics Before the Shuttle: A Concise History of the X-15 Research Airplane - NASA-SP-2000-4518, NASA History Office, May 2000

Republic F-105 Thunderchief: Workhorse of the Vietnam War - ISBN 0-07-135511-1, McGraw Hill Professional Book Group, June 2000

Boeing F/A-18 Hornet: A Navy Success Story - ISBN 0-07-134696-1, McGraw Hill Professional Book Group, April 2000

Boeing B-1 Lancer: The Most Complicated Warplane Ever Developed - ISBN 0-07-134694-5, McGraw Hill Professional Book Group, August 1999

Aerospace monographs (20,000–50,000 words, citations at the publisher's discretion)

The History of the American Space Shuttle - ISBN 978-0-76435-770-1, Schiffer Publishing, December 2019.
Received the 2020 Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Silver Award for History

North American XB-70A Valkyrie - ISBN 1-58007-055-8, Specialty Press, May 2002

Grumman A-6 Intruder - ISBN 1-58007-050-7, Specialty Press, April 2002

Lockheed Secret Projects: Inside the Skunk Works - ISBN 0-760309-14-0, Motorbooks International Publishing, July 2001

Boeing 747-100/200/300/SP - ISBN 1-58007-026-4, Specialty Press, July 2000

Lockheed AH-56A Cheyenne - ISBN 1-58007-027-2, Specialty Press, January 2000

Lockheed Martin F-117 Nighthawk - ISBN 1-58007-020-5, Specialty Press, January 2000

Messerschmitt Me 262 Sturmvogel - ISBN 3-8289-5339-5, Bechtermünz Verlag, August 1999

Convair B-36 "Peacemaker" - ISBN 1-58007-019-1, Specialty Press, July 1999. (Republished as an expanded 2nd edition under ISBN 1-58007-060-4 in May 2002.)

Fairchild Republic A/OA-10 Warthog - ISBN 1-58007-013-2, Specialty Press, January 1999

Boeing/BAe Harrier - ISBN 1-58007-013-2, Specialty Press, January 1999

Lockheed U-2 Dragon Lady - ISBN 1-58007-009-4, Specialty Press, July 1998

Lockheed SR-71/YF-12 Blackbirds - ISBN 0-93342-475-2, Specialty Press, September 1997. (Republished as an expanded 2nd edition under ISBN 1-58007-086-8 in November 2004.)

McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle - ISBN 0-93342-472-8, Specialty Press, May 1997

Messerschmitt Me 262 Sturmvogel - ISBN 0-93342-469-8, Specialty Press, September 1996. (Republished as an expanded 2nd edition under ISBN 1-58007-059-0 in May 2002.)

McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle: Supreme Heavy-Weight Fighter - ISBN 1-85780-081-8, Midland Counties/Ian Allan, January 1999

Grumman F-14 Tomcat: Leading US Navy Fleet Fighter - ISBN 1-85780-063-X, Midland Counties/Ian Allan, January 1998

Sukhoi Su-27 Flanker - ISBN 0-942548-51-5, Aerofax, Inc., April 1991

Boeing B-52G/H Stratofortress - ISBN 0-942548-11-6, Aerofax, Inc., January 1991

McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle/Strike Eagle - ISBN 0-942548-44-2, Aerofax, Inc., September 1990

Grumman EA-6A Intruder/EA-6B Prowler - ISBN 0-942548-12-4, Aerofax, Inc., March 1990

Aerospace photo books (no text worth mentioning)

Servicing the Hubble Space Telescope: Shuttle Atlantis – 2009 - ISBN 978-1-58007-138-3, Specialty Press, September 2009

The Apollo 11 Moon Landing: A Photographic Retrospective - ISBN 978-1-58007-148-2, Specialty Press, May 2009

USAF Prototype Jet Fighters - ISBN 978-1-58007-137-6, Specialty Press, April 2009

U.S. Air Force Aviation: A Military Logbook, Volume 1 - ISBN 978-1-58007-137-6, Specialty Press, April 2009

U.S. Naval Aviation: A Military Logbook, Volume 1 - ISBN 978-1-58007-114-7, Specialty Press, October 2007

U.S. Naval Vessels: A Military Logbook, Volume 1 - ISBN 978-1-58007-115-4, Specialty Press, October 2007

Return-to-Flight of Space Shuttle Discovery - ISBN 158007104X, Specialty Press, June 2006

X-Planes Photo Scrapbook - ISBN 7-58007-076-0, Specialty Press, August 2004

American X-Vehicles: X-1 through X-50 - NASA-SP-2000-4538, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, September 2003

B-36 Photo Scrapbook - ISBN 7-58007-075-2, Specialty Press, August 2003

X-15 Photo Scrapbook - ISBN 7-58007-074-4, Specialty Press, June 2003

3rd Quarter Review - July, August & September 2020

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Joseph Henry Reus

NOVEMBER 1922 - JULY 2020

Joseph Reus, a resident of Florida “full-time” for nearly 10 years previously resided in rural Colorado near Colorado Springs. In the 10 odd-years prior to that, Joe & wife, Shirley (now deceased), shared their time as “snow-birds” between winters in Florida and summers in Colorado. Joe loved ‘his mountains’ (foothills of the Rockies) and enjoyed the western lifestyle.

Not many years after returning to Florida, Joe volunteered with the Valiant Air Command, Inc. mainly as a Restoration Machinist serving many years on many significant projects. His pre-WW2 and post-retirement experience as a machinist was of much value and was routinely sought out to continue to improve the Museum’s aircraft restoration efforts. Skilled in fabricating aircraft parts, where no suitable original existed for replacement, Joe made them. Additionally, Joe was a talented draftsman who excelled at blueprint-type work of very high quality, another skill which supported his equally skilled hand-machining work. Later, Joe also served as a museum booster, being perhaps the oldest (WW2 era Veteran) Volunteer still “showing up for work” during an unusually long period. He also enjoyed telling ‘his-story’ as well as promoting the Valiant Air Command, Inc. to nearly everyone he met. Aside from the camaraderie of shop-workers and his favorite breakroom, he was a fixture at most Museum events from Airshows, Fly-In’s, and Veteran’s & specific historical remembrance days.

Joe, nicknamed “Butch” as a young man, grew up on the ‘mean’ streets of Baltimore, MD. He rose above his gritty Northeastern city-neighborhood to excel at various men’s sports (Ice Hockey, Baseball, Football, and Track &Field) His family consisted of father, John F. Reus, and stepmother Margaret (Whelan), a sister Betty, and four brothers (John, (Jr), (Henry) “Hank”, Jim, and young George) all now long deceased. Initially, Joe helped his father, John, a kind man and WW1 veteran who worked as

a Janitor/ Handyman, & Bldg. Manager. In schooling, Joe was selected for and was a proud graduate of the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute. After working as a young man at Read Drug, the Martin Aircraft Company (primarily as an aircraft finish inspector) and as an Apprentice Machinist at Bartlett-Hayward, he later enlisted in the Armed Forces on 18 March 1942 to serve our country as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Forces during the Second World War. Though offered a wartime deferment as a Machinist (an essential “war’ skill much in demand), he declined the offer to help the U.S. defeat the Axis Forces.

Originally, as so many did, Joe volunteered for and was accepted for pilot training. Although he did very well in Basic/ Primary flying the venerable “Stearman” bi-plane trainer (at Dorr Field, Arcadia, FL) and the Advanced Training AT-6 aircraft(at Shaw Field, SC), he fared less well after he elected to pursue twin-engine fighter training (at Moultrie, GA) to “get into combat sooner”. Unfortunately, early WW2 “Air Corps” training was often chaotic and “un-even” with instructor pilots coming from civilian schools such as Embry-Riddle. To Joe’s detriment, he also encountered some less-than-professional RAF veteran’s (“combat burn-out”) pilot-instructors. The resulting impatience, race to train Aircrews/ Pilots for combat, and a seeming clash of cultures led directly to a situation where far too many capable men were “washing-out” (which was corrected later in the war with better training by leaders such as General Ralph Royce of Southeast Air Command) As recently ‘washed-out’ and temporarily set-back, Joe recovered his momentum and was subsequently assigned to Air-Navigation Training using his Poly-Tech math background as an asset. Another fellow pilot-trainee and friend intentionally washed out to become an enlisted Air-Gunner for similar reasons – “getting into combat, before it was over”. Again my Dad succeeded and was eventually posted to the

Joseph Henry Reus

1922 - 2020

445th Bomb Group (Heavy) at Sioux City, Iowa.

During the early part of WW2, Joe was a Bomber Navigator in the Consolidated Aircraft B-24 "Liberator". He was especially proud to serve under (then) Squadron Commanding Officer, (Captain) James M. "Jimmy" Stewart. After an intensive period of Combat Crew Training, the Group flew overseas by way of the Caribbean – Southern America route to the UK, via Morocco. Once settled in southeast England, he flew his first combat mission on 30 December 1943 from Tibbenham, UK (Norfolk area) shortly after the overall group began combat-operations. The successful mission to bomb German war-production ended with his being shot down and "ditching" in the cold English Channel with his crew.

After the ditching, Joe found himself floating in his inflatable "Mae West" in the winter's cold English Channel with two broken arms. As German "E" (Patrol) Boats approached, he was plucked out of the water by British Air/Sea Rescue personnel and to safety.

Unfortunately, not all his crew survived. An obvious hospitalization followed due to injuries sustained in the crash/sea-landing from German machinegun-fire during the return flight's air-battle(s) with German fighters, (a bullet wound to the right lower-leg). In time, Joe recovered and, as many young men did, then opted to stay 'in-the-war'. Although he was offered an understandable chance to "go home", he returned to Tibbenham and the 445th for additional air combat stint toward the "25-mission" goal (later raised to 35 and finally 50). His efforts to get his aircraft 'on-target' would soon be curtailed again.

His next combat-mission came on 24 February 1944 during a series of massive air attacks on (Gotha) Nazi-Germany called the "Big Week". Ultimately, on that day, the USAAF lost more than 40 aircraft over Europe. After a future friend, (a 445th Bomb Group, 702nd Bomb Squadron Tail-Gunner) (S/Sgt) Sam Mastrogiacomo, fired his .50-caliber machinegun at a 210cm rocket-armed FW-190 fighter-plane, a rocket still struck Joe's aircraft (ironically named

"Big Joe" flown by 1/Lt Peter "Pete" Abell). At this point, Joe and his crew "bailed-out" of their burning aircraft over Nazi-Germany. He elected to escape via the bomb-bay, "going out" beside his Bombardier Charles "Chuck" Staley, who was trying to attach his parachute to the harness at the edge of the open bomb bay. Once safely out of the aircraft, he parachuted down to a snow-covered field and was quickly taken prisoner; Once captured, he was processed and questioned by the Gestapo ultimately transferring via the Interrogation Center in Frankfurt to a German Air Force run Prison of War (POW) Camp (Stalag Luft 1 or Air Force Prison Camp 1). At this point, Joe told his story best in his 2011 book "Kriegsgefangener". Joe, never fond of "belly-aching" about being a POW, always asserted that his POW experience ("time-out") taught him much about life and people, and was not as bad an experience as that often portrayed in various other depictions (such as "Stalag 17", "The Great Escape" and many books). Though some other POW's (such as Earl "The Bear" Ratke, who was a Stalag roommate) later disagreed with Joe's positive outlook, Joe maintained his stance on his positive "time out" experience.

After 15-month's as a POW, his camp (all at Stalag Luft 1) and Joe were eventually 'liberated' by the "Shock Army" Soviet Forces in the Spring of 1945. As rumors abounded about the Soviet Dictator's (often referred to as "Uncle Joe" by the left) attempts to have the American POW's "evacuated" to the interior of the Soviet Union to be held for ransom (simply adding to the massive "aid" they were previously given by the U.S.), a plan was devised to move the POW's before the Soviets could act. Soon "stripped-out" B-17 Bombers (from several Bomb Groups) arrived from France to help the POW's escape the Soviets. (Joe later related that he made a 'bee-line' to the nose of his assigned B-17 for a better view of their flight back. Thoughtfully, the pilots made a point of flying (often low) over bombed German cities and the old trench lines of WW1. After landing at Rheims, France, Joe with his fellow POWs were met and greeted by General Eisenhower. A fine lunch followed later. During his short stay at "Camp Lucky Strike" in the Le Havre area, he 'got into' Paris for the first time after "hitching" (with at least one ride

Joseph Henry Reus

1922 - 2020

in a DUKW Amphibious Truck). Before leaving France (living in Tent "Cities"), my Dad was 'liberated' of most of his POW souvenirs, by 'rear-echelon-types' (thieves). He did manage to keep a 1916 dated PO8 "Lugar" pistol once carried by a Camp Luftwaffe Captain (an older man and pilot-veteran of WW1) That Lugar was worn as a side-arm on Joe's Korean War missions until he 'retired' it.

After returning to the U.S., Joe elected to stay in the USAAF, which became the U.S. Air Force in 1947, with peacetime service from the far-flung Adak, Alaskan Territory (an Observer in a P-61 "Black Widow" Night-Fighter Squadron), Langley AFB, VA (photo-reconnaissance work in the B-25), Randolph, TX (debriefing WW2 POW's of the Pacific War, and notably to MacDill Field, near St. Petersburg (the Land Rescue Team - 6th Air Rescue Squadron). On one especially fortuitous off-duty weekend, on St Pete Beach, he met Shirley (Petty). They were married on 26 March 1949 in southeast Georgia.

At the start of the Korean War, Joe was in B-29 "Super-Fortress" Combat Crew Training (CCT) at Forbes Field, Topeka, KS. The training was soon followed by an early SAC (Strategic Air Command) assignment to the 98th Bomb Group (then based at Spokane, WA) followed by an overseas deployment in the Fall of '51 to Yokota, AP, Japan for a 6-month combat tour as a replacement. In this war, my Dad completed 38 (mostly night) Missions over Korea (and occasionally, "points North"!). At this point, Joe was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross during the early '52 period, serving as Wing-Lead Navigator.

The next phase of the recent Senior Navigator's career involved the Nuclear-Jet-Age. With weapons and high-speed navigation training, among others, Joe stayed with "SAC", whose motto was "Peace is Our Profession". Unfortunately, for the Aircrews & Maintainers, this meant often little rest and lots of work to counter the constant Communist threat (collectively now known to most as the "Cold War"). As other crews moved into the last of the piston-engine Bombers, Joe again opted for better.

Acceptance into the B-47 "Stratojet" program followed with the requisite "SAC" training to achieve deterrence (mainly) against the Soviet "Warsaw Pact". Along the way, two daughters were born.

Following training, Joe was based at Lake Charles AFB (LA) with a B-47 Wing (44th) and was involved in an incident that reflects the dangers of (non-combat) military-aviation. Before a "reflex" type deployment to Fairford, UK, his duties necessitated that he remain at Lake Charles for non-flying work there. With his usual 3-man crew, an Officer named Charles 'Chuck' Hutto took his place as the Navigator-Observer with his Pilot/ Co-Pilot crew, for the trip to England. In heavy (IFR) weather, their aircraft crashed while descending more rapidly than the old, outdated Bendix altimeters could 'un-wind'. Though the pilots survived the crash, Chuck died in the crash-crushed nose-section. Of course, this 1955 era loss could just as easily have been Joe's.

During this period, the Airborne Alert system was planned, tried, and improved/perfected. Most have seen, or heard of the claxon, run to the truck, and manning the aircraft (much like an aircrew version of being a 'fireman') to respond to innumerable 'fires' around the world. The training was relentless with alerts (typically without knowing of an actual "war-mission", until an airborne "re-call") coming during sleep, meals, and various ground duties at all times and in all weather. Sometimes "Alerts" could happen multiple times while standing an alert (in the Alert Barracks). Mistakes of any significant kind were often career-ending. Naturally, some Men "cracked-up" as suicides, divorces, and alcoholism were sometimes the result of the strain of maintaining an uneasy "peace" with the communists. Especially disdained/dreaded were the "Chrome Dome" (Airborne-Alert) missions flown over/near the Arctic/Arctic Circle as there was little chance of survival in the event of a mishap. Those missions could be considered a "one-way ride". Those especially dangerous missions were certainly more so in the case of actual war. Joe always maintained that related depictions, such as "Fail-Safe", were predominately "pure-fiction"!

From the often dangerous and "unforgiving" B-47, at the earliest opportunity, Joe moved on and up (again) to the then-new B-52 "Stratofortress" Jet

Joseph Henry Reus

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Bomber. The B-52 was his last and perhaps favorite aircraft. He was proud of it being the 'big-stick' (long before inter-continental missiles) of nuclear-deterrence fame. Of course, more intensive/on-going crew-training was involved at several bases in California (mainly Mather and Castle AFB's). As the training was lengthy, he typically moved to the area with a young family. A usually cold-wintery Cold War tour at Loring AFB (Limestone, ME) followed in the late '50s. After Joe's arrival to get settled, Shirley and the girls followed later. Despite the cold of far northeastern Maine, Shirley arrived dressed only in a skirt and blouse wearing sandals! (Joe used to relate that story, sometimes with a laugh - much to Shirley's usual chagrin! Shirley would counter the mild derision, usually saying she didn't know what 'they' had gotten into!) Well, Joe had gotten into "SAC" where there were occasional "spot-promotions" but fewer opportunities to leave that force. Unlike many, Joe stayed with "SAC" until he retired from The U.S. Air Force. Along the way, Joe earned more awards, including the coveted Command-Navigator 'Wing' qualification. He was eternally and justifiably proud of his achievements.

In the meantime, the next tour occurred at Bergstrom AFB (Austin, TX) with the 340th Bomb Wing, (later 486th Bomb Squadron). Joe and Shirley had a son during that tour (Sept 1960). Joe later related that he was flying an RBS run as Shirley gave birth to the boy at the base hospital; the birth allegedly relayed to the aircraft (probably thru Command-Pilot Major William "Bill" Edge - another WWII USAAF veteran who flew 2 tours in the B-17 "Flying Fortress" and family friend). Bill likely heard something like "Please relay to your Navigator - It's a boy!" Just another day at work! (The beginning of a long, enduring feeling of Military-Duty for Father & Son!)

The following (and what turned out to be his last) tour was to a desert "paradise" outside of Roswell, NM (Walker AFB). On another flight (likely an airborne-nuclear alert flight), Joe's crew got a report that President Kennedy had been assassinated.

Near the end of the last B-52 tour at Walker AFB (6th Strategic Wing / 24th Bomb Squadron), Joe was "passed over" for promotion to Lt Colonel and thus was obligated to retire "just short of" the potential promotion he earned/long-deserved. For many years, he was understandably bothered (and sometimes, frankly, angry) about retiring as a Major. Eventually, he accepted this fate with his common expression "you have to expect losses" (which it's believed originated during WW2).

Following Joe's U.S. Air Force retirement on 31 May 1965, his family moved cross-country to coastal North Carolina. From the small community of Swansboro, "civilian life" began (again).

After roughly a year, the family transplanted again, this time to the west coast of Florida. It seems Joe was impressed by seeing the Sarasota/Siesta Key area during WWII (while training at Dorr Field, Arcadia), and the Tampa Bay/St Pete area (while stationed at MacDill Air Force Base). Predictably, the family ended up in a small town between the two. The small town of Bradenton was home for nearly 20 years. Like Joe, the little neighborhood was populated with veterans of all services, wars, and those classified just "conflicts". Joe was in fine company among other local Veterans and, yes, Heroes.

Eventually, in 1973, Joe joined the local (Bradenton) Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW), a fraternal and patriotic organization founded in 1919 by Veterans of the First World War. A Colonel named Warren Johnson sponsored my Dad's membership; a Membership open to all Officers, but tended to favor more senior Officers, usually with combat-experience. When Joe joined, there were still a small number of Spanish American War Vets "on the rolls". One notable friend who stood out was 2/Lt Lester Morel, a WW1 Balloon Pilot, who routinely wore his WW1 uniform to events. He insisted, specifically, on being referred to as SECOND-Lieutenant! Joe served in the MOWW actively for another 35 years, moving up to and including many significant leadership positions, including (Southeast) Region Commander, as well as serving in the Honorary Hann-Buswell (Leadership) Chapter. The MOWW sponsored many patriotic

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events, ROTC sponsorships, and numerous Youth Leadership events. The MOWW was another form of 'service' that Joe was very justifiably proud of.

Later moves to Central FL, coastal NC (again), and later parts of "colorful" Colorado followed in the 1980s. At first living in Colorado Springs (Shirley's preference), Joe and Shirley eventually had a house built in a nearby S/SW of Colorado area (eastern foothills of the Rockies). Though Joe usually referred to the property as a "ranch", in actuality the house was just that, a house on top of a hill, well-surrounded by 36 acres of pine, juniper, and scrub oak with an especially nice western view. Joe loved the land and area in general, with neighbors far

distant than the 'parade' of roving animal life all-around. Once in Colorado, from the late '80s, my Dad rekindled his passion for machining work. He sought out a program and ultimately enrolled at a local Community College, first as a student and later finishing as an instructor.

The "rest of the story" most of you know. Joe did love and greatly value the time he spent working/volunteering with all of the fine folks associated with the Valiant Air Command, Inc. over many years. He made so many friends who he cherished greatly. He would have been honored to know they felt the same. Joe, 'gone-now', is especially missed by a son, born during an otherwise routine flight, on a fine day, serving his country. Now Joe has taken his "final flight" - we ALL miss him.

By...

C.G. Reus, Joe's Son/ "FLA DET Adjutant"



Joe in Baltimore, Circa 1942



Joe and Shirley, New Years Eve 1949 (MacDill AFB)



B-52 Crew Photo



Joe (Back row, 3rd from left) B-29 crew - Yokota AB 1951



VAC Christmas Party - 2018

Joe's VAC Scrapbook



Joe in his newly acquired half-track leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance at the VAC's celebration of the 75th WWII Anniversary



Joe with Florida Senator Dorothy Hukill



Joe did enjoy Hot Dog Day



Bob Boswell awarding Joe the VAC Certificate Of Appreciation And Recognition



Celebrating Joe's 92nd Birthday in the VAC's breakroom - 2014



Joe pointing out his group in the new 8th Air Force display



Joe peddling his book at the Fly-in Breakfast



Joe entertaining the Channel 6 TV crew The TV people loved Joe as did we