



Newsletter of the 601st-615th ACW Association - Vol 3 No 2 Sept 2012

**A message from our president
Francis X Gosselin**



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Happy
80th
Birthday,
Goose!



Captain Ed Freeman, USAF

Medal of Honor Recipient

You're 19 year old kid. You're critically wounded and dying in the jungle somewhere in the Central Highlands of Viet Nam .. November 1, 1967. LZ (landing zone) X-ray.

Your unit is outnumbered 8-1 and the enemy fire is so intense from 100 yards away, that your CO (commanding officer) has ordered the helicopters to stop coming in.

You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns and you know you're not getting out.

Your family is half way around the world, 12,000 miles away, and you'll never see them again.

As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day.

Then - over the machine gun noise - you faintly hear that sound of a helicopter. You look up to see a Huey coming in. But.. It doesn't seem real because no Med Evac markings are on it.

Captain Ed Freeman is coming in for you.

He's not Med Evac (Medical Evacuation) so it's not his job, but he heard the radio call and decided he's flying his Huey down into the machine gun fire anyway.

Even after the Med Evacs were ordered not

to come. He's coming anyway.

And he drops it in and sits there in the machine gun fire, as they load 3 of you at a time on board.

Then he flies you up and out through the gunfire to the doctors and nurses and safety.



And, he kept coming back!! 13 more times!! Until all the wounded were out. No one knew until the mission was over that the Captain had been hit 4 times in the legs and left arm. He took 29 of you and your buddies out that day. Some would not have made it without the Captain and his Huey.

Medal of Honor Recipient, Captain Ed Freeman, United States Air Force, died at the age of 70, in Boise, Idaho

May God Bless and Rest His Soul and guide his Huey eternally.

As suggested by an email from Carl Kitchens

MY FIRST REUNION

By George A. Vitzthum

Last September 2011, as I looked through my American Legion magazine, I noticed there was an item advertising the Association Reunion of the 601st-615th ACW. The reunion was to be held on April 23-26, 2012 in Nashville, TN. Although I had noticed other squadrons having reunions, this is the first time that I read about the 601st-615th!

But before giving you my impressions about the reunion, I must tell you a bit about myself. I served in the 615th ACW while stationed at Bitburg AFB, south of Prum, as a Ground Powered Support Technician around F-100-C aircrafts. I got to the 615th in July 1956, completed the German Driving School and helped out with the construction of the bowling alley.

The 615th commander was Lt Col Wolfe. After a month, I was notified that a Ground Powered Support Supervisor was needed at Det 1 at Duren, east of the German's village of Kleinhaus. Kleinhaus was about 50 or 60 kilometers north of Prum. In February of 1957, we left on maneuvers to Landshut, Germany, 30 or 40 kilometers northeast of Munich. We set up and operated our radio and radar equipment there for 90 days. In June 1957, we were relieved by another USAF unit and returned to Kleinhaus. Upon arrival, we had permanent change of duty assignment orders and convoy with all our equipment to 601st ACW, Kassel/Rothwesten.

We arrived at Kassel and told to continue north to Wunstorf as part of Det 7, 601ACW. At Wunstorf, we end up on an RAF base. We set up our equipment and began operating from this location. I stayed with this Detachment until rotation back to the US in late July 1959.

From the above, now you know my previous association with both the 601st and the 615th ACW.

I called the number listed American Legion Magazine and got hold of Fay Dickey. After telling her a bit about my military background and her telling me about the reunion, fees, annual fees, and additional web information, I was very excited about meeting all the people associated with the organization. I looked up their website and found several guys I was stationed with in Germany. I told my wife, Carole, that even if I didn't know anyone at the reunion, I would get acquainted with the people and we would have some new friends.

APRIL 23, 2012 -- MONDAY

From our home in Rockford, Carole and I packed our suitcases and headed for Nashville, TN. Rockford is about 15 miles southeast of Knoxville, TN, fairly close to the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. We headed west on I-40 and continued on I-40 until we reached Donelson Pike in Nashville. We found the Wingate Motel fairly easy, parked out front and went in to the Hospitality Room for the 601st and 615th.

Our first meeting was with Fay Dickey, who was signing people in. Fay gave us a directory, a schedule of events and our name tags. We met more people and introduced to the group. We unpacked our suitcases. After getting settled in, we went back to the Hospitality Room to visit with the group and had some snacks and drinks. I did not find anyone that I knew from previous assignments, but it did not take long to get acquainted with other military veterans. We visited, talked for some time and browsed several photo albums and scrapbooks. To make sure that I was ready, I brought a book assembled of my time in the 615th and the 601st, and a book assembled on the different countries, coins and bills kept during my tour in Germany. At 5:00 PM, several large pizzas and some German beer were delivered to the hospitality room. Our tour guide for all the Nashville Events brought his assistant, Emily, a pretty model currently attending nursing school at Belmont University in Nashville. Ken Wilcoxson did some magic tricks to entertain us the first evening. We all visited and met different people until around 9:30 PM or so and called it a night.

APRIL 24, 2012 -- TUESDAY

Carole and I got up and went to the continental breakfast held in the Main Lobby. It was a hot breakfast with eggs, bacon, sausage, all different types of cereal, waffles, bagels, toast, fruit (apples), juice and coffee and hot chocolate. The Wingate's continental breakfasts were outstanding! It was nice getting to eat and visit with all the members. After breakfast, we got ready for a Nashville Bus Tour as part of the Blair Tours. Carl, a very nice gentleman was our tour guide for the entire week. We drove through the downtown area of Nashville, stopped near the Titans Football Stadium on the Cumberland River, and took several photos. We drove past the old Ryman Auditorium, Ernst Tubb Record Shop, and several other famous shops.

We were let off in front of the "Country Music Hall of Fame" and given tickets to tour the facilities. There are so many exhibitions of the country legends which are impossible to list everything that we saw. They had costumes, musical instruments, and recordings of these famous stars. They were displaying one of Webb Pierce's automobiles. The walls were filled with gold and platinum records. We then drove to the Bi-Centennial Park area to unload the bus and had lunch at a nearby foot court. After lunch we were had time to walk around the Bi-Centennial Park and all plaques regarding the history of Nashville. They also had a World War II Memorial.

The bus driver picked us up and drove over to the Ryman Auditorium. The Ryman was originally built as a church. In the late 1920s, it became the home to the Grand Ole Opry and the outstanding place of country music. We enjoyed having the bus driver letting us off close to cut down on the amount of walking. We had tickets to watch a 15-minute movie of the Ryman's history. The group walked around to see several exhibitions. A guitar, a banjo and a mandolin were available on state, and Carole with the guitar and I with the banjo, had our picture taken on that historical stage. On a personal note, the lady taking the picture paid me a compliment by telling me that I look like Tom T Hall. Since the rest of the afternoon was free time, Carole and I drove to Lebanon Pike to eat at a Whitt's Barbecue. We learned about Whitt's years ago when we were living in Nashville. Upon return from Whitt's, we went back to our motel room, rested, and visited at the hospitality room until the bus took us to the Grand Ole Opry.

The first entertainer at the Opry was Connie Smith, one of Carole's favorite country western songs. Casey James was next. We had never seen him before, but he sang "Poke Salad Annie", one of Elvis Presley's and one of Carole's favorite songs. "Little" Jimmy Dickens was third. Jimmy is barely five

foot tall, 91 years "young." He sang a couple of his old songs, performed some magic and told some jokes. He had a little problem singing as he said he had laryngitis and allergies. He did show his comedian side as he told quite a few jokes. George Hamilton IV came next, followed by Del McCoury and the Charlie Daniels' band. Charlie Daniels lit up the stage up especially when he fiddled the "The Devil Came Down to Georgia."

APRIL 25, 2012 -- WEDNESDAY

We started the day with a hot breakfast.



We visited the hospitality room and got ready for our tour of the "Andrew Jackson's Hermitage Mansion." We loaded up the bus in front of the motel at 09:00 AM and headed north on Donelson Pike to Lebanon Road and headed east to the Hermitage. We passed by the Emmanuel Lutheran Church where Carole and I used to attend church previously. We unloaded and got our tickets and went into a building to watch a 20-minute movie on the life of Andrew Jackson and the historical background of the Hermitage. They only took 12-13 people at a time and guided them through the building. Each group had a tour guide. The tour through the building took about 20-30 minutes. Each stop in the building had a different tour guide. The tour took us to the grounds and the tombs of Andrew Jackson and his wife Rachel and the graves of some of his children and grandchildren.

After the tour, we stopped at the "Hermitage House Smorgasbord" restaurant and had a very enjoyable lunch with a good salad and every type of meat and vegetable you could think of. The owner, originally from Czechoslovakia, had come to America after World War II. She spoke to our group before we ate.

The rest of the evening was free to do what we wanted. Carole and I wanted to check another Nashville's restaurant we used to go to see if they were still open. We drove around in our vehicle and drove to the restaurant on Nolensville Road. The place we were looking for, Sylvan Park is now a Mexican Restaurant. The food was as good as it always was. I took a piece of coconut cream pie back with me. We finished eating and drove past the place we used to live and went back to the motel. It was a fairly busy day, so Carole went to our room and I spent some time in the hospitality room and had a couple of German beers.

APRIL 26, 2012 -- THURSDAY

Again, another hot breakfast! At 10:00 AM, we all gathered in the hospitality room for the Annual Meeting of the Association. Francis Gosselin, the president, ran the meeting. Others attending the meeting were: Vice-President, Terry Troy; Fay Dickey, Secretary; Howard Dickey, Treasurer; and LoAnne Zentner, Assistant Secretary. The previous annual minutes were read and the Treasurer report was approved. A discussion was held on the topic of holding reunions every two years instead of annually. It was decided to have our reunions every two years. Francis said he would continue on as president job until then. Fay also stated that she would continue perform as Secretary and coordinator's job until 2014. All the officers were re-elected until 2014. The president asked for nominations for locations for the 2014 reunion. Three locations were suggested for the 2014 reunion. These are: Tucson, Arizona, Charleston South Carolina and another location. After the vote was taken, Tucson, Arizona was number one and Charleston, South Carolina came in second. Charleston is to be the backup location, in the event that Tucson didn't work out. The meeting was adjourned and a picture of the group was taken.

We all gathered in the motel lobby and waited for the bus to take us to the "Nashville Nite Lite Dinner Theater", located north of the Opryland Hotel and next to the "Ernest Tubb - 2 Record Shop." We were greeted by the owner and seated on two long tables, fairly close to the stage. It was a buffet meal. After eating, a gentleman by the name of Mark (I can't recall his last name) came out on stage with a piano player, drummer, and electric guitar player and performed for us. There were also two ladies that performed on stage. One lady, Brenda Best, sang the song "Golden Years" that she wrote. It was a 50th Anniversary song. It was a very nice evening of entertainment. This entertainment, I believe our tour group enjoyed better than the Grand Ole Opry. It lasted about 2 1/2 hours. Even Carl, our tour guide, got on the stage and blew his trumpet. He played "Cherry Pink and Apple Blossom White." After the show, we went to the back of the building where the entertainers sold their CD's. I was talking to Mark and asked him if he knew some friends of ours, Dee and Dodge Raymer. He said he was originally from Wentzville, Missouri. Dee and Dodge lives close to Wentzville. He said Dee and Dodge got him started in country music. He told us to tell them "Hi" the next time we see them. We loaded up on the bus and went back to our motel. We said "Good-Bye" to Carl and thanked him for all he did for us. He really was a very nice tour guide. Our bus driver was very nice also.

APRIL 27, 2012 -- FRIDAY

We didn't get up too early as we did not want to get into the Nashville work traffic. We ate our last good hot breakfast and visited with some of the group before checking out of the motel. We loaded our suitcases and headed back east for Knoxville, TN.

In Closing I would like to comment on several things. First of all, I would like to say that Fay Dickey did an outstanding job setting up the motel and hospitality room. She also did an outstanding job setting up all the tours, lunches and dinner. I know it took a lot of time doing this and coordinating everything. I know there were other people who helped supply the hospitality room with snacks and drinks. My hat goes off to all these dedicated people. I'm sorry I didn't get in contact with these group years earlier and enjoyed all the activities that took place. One morning while eating our breakfast, we were sitting at a table with Don and Jeanetta Teague. The conversation led to a discussion on The Professional Bull Riding (PBR) which Carole and I truly enjoy. Don and Jeanetta also enjoy bull riding. Don's cousin, Tom Teague, is a bull contractor and brings a lot of the bulls to the PBR events. One of Tom's bulls, "BONES," won bucking "Bull of the Year in 2010." Carole and I had a "GREAT" time at our first reunion.

Thanks to everyone.



The Most Scenic Aviation Routes

By Dick Peiffer

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal identified the most scenic routes in America that airline pilots said were the favorites of both passengers and crews. This is not high altitude geography – earth seen from 37,000 feet. The article included a number of the most scenic visual approaches in the country. A visual approach is the final 10 -15 miles following a route, sometimes directed by Air Traffic Control (ATC), in visual conditions.

Listed were approaches into Portland, Maine, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York's La Guardia, Washington's Reagan, Juneau, Alaska and of course the view over Niagara Falls.

I can vouch for all but Las Vegas. It would be difficult to pick one as the best, all are simply awesome aerial views and if you have flown any, I am sure you agree.



The article brought back memories of flights I will always remember, some of the most beautiful and amazing scenery - seen only from the air.

One was a frequent trip we made to Toronto, Ontario. It took us over Niagara Falls and if the weather was cooperative, we always requested a 360 overhead. Our passengers, company employees, always asked if we could make a turn over the falls. Many had cameras just in the hope of that rare aerial view. ATC was always accommodating.

Another I made frequently was to pickup employees at West Chester Co., NY (just north of NYC) with additional stops along the New Jersey shore. In those days, the Air Traffic Control preferred route between the West Chester and Jersey shore airports, could have been better listed as, "you can't get there from here." However, if the weather that day

was half-decent and you knew the proper request, the routing was easy, quick and spectacular. The route was down the Hudson River from the Tappan Zee Bridge to the Statue of Liberty. The clearance: "direct Tappan Zee, the River to the Lady, direct." Best when issued in a Brooklyn accent. On a clear day, flying down the Hudson River at 2,000 feet with Manhattan on the left was awesome.

On my first visual into Reagan or Washington National, its name back then, I was a little too busy to sight-see those final five or so miles. Later and more comfortable with the route, the view was just great.



I agree the other scenic routes mentioned in the WSJ were amazing. But I must say there are many others around the country that are as incredibly beautiful particularly at the right time of the year.

However, for endless scenic beauty, I will always treasure, my five-years flying in Alaska. I saw most of the state from the air. From the Panhandle on the southeast, to Shemya an island near the very end of the Aleutian chain, to a village named Kotzebue north of the Arctic Circle and through many of the mountain passes. The scenery is spectacular and difficult to put into words.

As a pilot, if you have not flown in our 49th state, add it to your bucket list. You won't regret it. Only one suggestion - do it in the summer. I remember at one airport that had no refueling, sitting on the wing, in freezing cold temperature, pouring fuel from a five-gallon can, through a chamois. I was a lot younger then.

Finally, if you fly commercially into any one of these airports on a clear day, pick a window seat and hope you are on the photo side. However, the view from the front is far more thrilling and magnificent. →

R. J. "Dick" Peiffer was in the 601st in Ops on Alpha Crew, from May 1954 to May 1957. Entered on duty with the FAA in 1958 in ATC and retired 1990. Then until 2003, he was a corporate pilot flying for a half dozen companies in a variety of business aircraft. Still an active pilot he gives required pilot flight reviews, instrument competency checks and conducts aviation safety seminars.

...more computer stuff!

By
William Hanson

The 601st/615th Association has compiled a database of over 700 people who were, at one time connected to one, or in some cases, both of the units. The information is stored on a computer based program that has several purposes. It helps us to stay in contact with members to inform them of reunion plans; it allows us to inform individuals that an old friend is looking for them or an old friend has died. It serves as a historical document for the 601st and 615th, and several other purposes.

One of the features of the program allows us to email an individual or a group, such as all members, just 601st members, only 615th members, members in any certain state, or active (paid members).

Wil Rodriguez created this program and has donated it to the Association. He has spent many hours creating and refining the program so that it performs a multitude of tasks. The information stored is very minimal and is not considered to be too personally intrusive. In fact anyone can choose to not enter any one of the fields of the database.

We do have one problem with our emailing function. That is if someone gives us an email address that has an error. it throws a monkey wrench into the system and restricts our use of this feature. We want to stress that everyone entering his/her data be sure to submit the address correctly. Also, if that address changes, be sure to inform us of that fact. If you have not received an email from us

for a long time then you might want to submit to us your current address. On our web site <http://www.601st-615th-acw.org/index.html> and on the Membership section found on the Menu page, such information can be submitted. Here, it only asks for minimal information. Just enter that and you will be contacted for other data you want to enter.

Following is the entire form for the information on each person who chooses to have his/her data entered:

Last Name:
First Name
Middle Initial
Male or Female:
Address 1:
Address 2:
City:
State:
Zip Code:
Anniversary Date:
Telephone Number:
Date of Birth:
Wife's Name:
Email Address:
Years of Assignment:
Location of Assignment:
Remarks: (To expand on any of the above items)

It is reemphasized that the information in the database is confidential and not shared outside the membership, published on the web site, or the newsletter

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your membership dues are still \$20.00. Please renew your membership as soon as possible and/or before December 31st of each year. Make your check payable to Howard Dickey, 27382 450th St., Leonard, MN 56652 . Howard is the Association Treasurer. Thanks.

I'm Fine

*There's nothing whatever the matter with me,
I'm just as healthy as I can be,
I have arthritis in both knees
And when I talk, I talk with a wheeze.*

*My pulse is weak and my blood is thin,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
I think my liver is out of whack
And a terrible pain is in my back.*

*My hearing is poor, my sight is dim,
Most everything seems to be out of trim,
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.*

*I have arch supports for both my feet,
Or I wouldn't be able to go on the street.
Sleeplessness I have night after night,
And in the morning I'm just a sight.*

*My memory is failing, my head's in a spin,
I'm peacefully living on aspirin.
But I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.*

*The moral is, as this tale we unfold,
That for you and me who are growing old,
It's better to say, "I'm fine" with a grin,
Than to let them know the share we're in.
- Cardinal Cushing*

(As suggested by Amy Van Hatten)

...FIRST GIS, NOW RACCOONS....!



Raccoons have become such a problem in Kassel the city is offering to sell, for 20 Euro, garbage cans with locks. They open automatically with the vehicle's dump operation. The owner is furnished two keys.

(Contributed by William Hanson)

HELP!

Please help us keep the membership database current. If you changed your address, telephone numbers, e-mail address or made any changes to your profile, please notify us by going to our web site, www.601st-615th-acw.org/index.html, and leaving us a message. This action will ensure that you receive all our correspondence as well as our newsletters.



MARTHA RAYE

The most unforgivable oversight of TV is that her shows were not taped.

I was unaware of her credentials or where she is buried.

Somehow I just can't see Brittany Spears, Paris Hilton, or Jessica Simpson doing what this woman (and the other USO women, including Ann Margaret & Joey Heatherton) did for our troops in past wars.

Most of the old time entertainers were made of a lot sterner stuff than today's crop of activists bland whiners.

The following is from an Army Aviator who takes a trip down memory lane:

"It was just before Thanksgiving '67 and we were ferrying dead and wounded from a large GRF west of Pleiku. We had run out of body bags by noon, so the Hook (CH-47 CHINOOK) was pretty rough in the back. All of a sudden, we heard a 'take-charge' woman's voice in the rear. There was the singer and actress, Martha Raye, with a SF (Special Forces) beret and jungle fatigues, with subdued markings, helping the wounded into the Chinook, and carrying the dead aboard. 'Maggie' had been visiting her SF 'heroes' out 'west'. We took off, short of fuel, and headed to the USAF hospital pad at Pleiku. As we all started unloading our sad pax's, a 'Smart Mouth' USAF Captain said



to Martha.... "Ms Ray, with all these dead and wounded to process, there would not be time for your show!"

To all of our surprise, she pulled on her right collar and said"Captain, see this eagle? I am a full 'Bird' in the US Army Reserve, and on this is a 'Caduceus' which means I am a Nurse, with a surgical specialty....now, take me to your wounded!"

He said, "Yes ma'am.... follow me."

Several times at the Army Field Hospital in Pleiku, she would 'cover' a surgical shift, giving a nurse a well-deserved break.

Martha is the only woman buried in the Special Forces Cemetery at Fort Bragg, NC.



The Seagull



It happened every Friday evening, almost without fail, when the sun resembled a giant orange and was starting to dip into the blue ocean.

Old Ed came strolling along the beach to his favorite pier.. Clutched in his bony hand was a bucket of shrimp. Ed walks out to the end of the pier, where it seems he almost has the world to himself. The glow of the sun is a golden bronze now.

Everybody's gone, except for a few joggers on the beach. Standing out on the end of the pier, Ed is alone with his thoughts...and his bucket of shrimp.

Before long, however, he is no longer alone. Up in the sky a thousand white dots come screeching and squawking, winging their way toward that lanky frame standing there on the end of the pier.

Before long, dozens of seagulls have enveloped him, their wings fluttering and flapping wildly. Ed stands there tossing shrimp to the hungry birds. As he does, if you listen closely, you can hear him say with a smile, 'Thank you. Thank you.' In a few short minutes the bucket is empty. But Ed doesn't leave. He stands there lost in thought, as though transported to another time and place.

When he finally turns around and begins to walk back toward the beach, a few of the birds hop along the pier with him until he gets to the stairs, and then they, too, fly away. And old Ed quietly makes his way own to the end of the beach and on home.

To the onlooker, rituals can look either very strange or very empty. They can seem altogether unimportant maybe even a lot of nonsense. Old folks often do strange things, at least in the eyes of Boomers and Busters. Most of them would probably write Old Ed off. That's too bad. They'd do well to know him better.

His full name: Eddie Rickenbacker. He was a famous hero

back in World War II. On one of his flying missions across the Pacific, he and his seven-member crew went down. Miraculously, all of the men survived, crawled out of their plane, and climbed into a life raft.



Captain Rickenbacker and his crew floated for days on the rough waters of the Pacific. They fought the sun. They fought sharks. Most of all, they fought hunger. By the eighth day their rations ran out. No food.

No water. They were hundreds of miles from land and no one knew where they were.

They needed a miracle. That afternoon they had a simple devotional service and prayed for a miracle. They tried to nap. Eddie leaned back and pulled his military cap over his nose. Time dragged. All he could hear was the slap of the waves against the raft.

Suddenly, Eddie felt something land on the top of his cap.

It was a seagull!

Old Ed would later describe how he sat perfectly still, planning his next move. With a flash of his hand and a squawk from the gull, he managed to grab it and wring its neck.. He tore the feathers off, and he and his starving crew made a meal - a very slight meal for eight men - of it. Then they used the intestines for bait.. With it, they caught fish, which gave them food and more bait.....and the cycle continued. With that simple survival technique, they were able to endure the rigors of the sea until they were found and rescued (after 24 days at sea...).

Eddie Rickenbacker lived many years beyond that ordeal, but he never forgot the sacrifice of that first life-saving seagull... And he never stopped saying, 'Thank you.' That's why almost every Friday night he would walk to the end of the pier with a bucket full of shrimp and a heart full of gratitude.