



A message from our president Terry Troy



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Once again we have had a very successful reunion. Fay, as usual, planned and executed an outstanding event which was enjoyed by all who attended. The tours of Tucson's downtown historic area, Davis-Monthan AFB, Tombstone, Boot Hill Cemetery, the Desert Diamond Casino, the Pima Air and Space Museum, and the "Boneyard" were great. The luncheon at the airbase and the dinner at the Pinnacle Peak restaurant in Trail Dust Town were definitely a wonderful time. However, the best part of the reunion was being able to visit with all our "old" friends once again. We missed all those long-time attendees who are not longer with us. For those who were unable to attend this year, you truly missed a superb time. I hope you will be able to join us next year for the reunion in Charleston, SC. Until then, stay well and enjoy life.

Terry L. Troy
"Acting" President/Vice President

margie

Article was written by Sylvia de Matteo and printed in the Tampa Bay Golf & Country Club Tidbits in Nov 2012. Mrs de Matteo is now deceased.

I met this bubbly lady several years ago at a clubhouse function. She was effervescent and seemed to know a lot of people. I learned that she did clothing alterations, did a good job, and her prices were reasonable. But there was something different about her. She had an unusual accent, one I couldn't place. It was nothing I could put my fingers on! It wasn't southern, German, New Yorker, or anything else I could think of. But that's getting ahead of my story.

I had several things that needed altering – shortening of slacks and skirts. Since I had problems seeing the names of the streets, she offered to come out front and watch for me. When I got to her house, she ushered me in and chatted while she measured. All of her equipment was modern and very professional. But I still couldn't place her accent. She seemed a little hard of hearing, but that should come with age, I thought.

Yet, I think her story is quite different. She was born in 1936. As the months rolled by, her parents realized that something was wrong. After numerous doctor visits, it was determined she was deaf. Nothing could be done for her condition. At that time, she would always be deaf, and, therefore, would never be able to talk. The entire family had to learn sign language in order to communicate with the little girl. Margie was very close to her grandmother who lived in Canada. They spent a lot of time together, both in Florida and in Canada. Her grandmother took her to a shrine of the Virgin Mary where they had to crawl up fourteen steps on



their knees. Her grandmother told her that if she really believed and prayed every day, the Virgin Mary would grant her request. She told little Margie, "I promise the Virgin Mary will see you get your hearing. I don't know when, but just believe." Her entire family was very religious and their prayers continued daily for the little girl.

Once when her grandmother was visiting from Canada, one night the twelve-year-old awoke and discovered that her grandmother wasn't moving and was very cold. She ran downstairs and called to her

mother, "Grandmother is cold and she isn't moving!" Her astounded parent exclaimed, "You talked! How could you talk?"

Apparently, her hearing had gradually returned. Soon she was attending school and had to learn to speak rather than to rely on sign language.

It was in school that she met a young man named Goose. He had chosen that nickname because he thought his formal name, Francis, was too feminine. They dated and he entered the military. Because he wanted her for himself, he

gave her an engagement ring when she was just sixteen!

The family continued their religious beliefs, thankful for her gift of hearing. When Goose was home on leave in 1955, he and twenty-year-old Margie married and traveled the world together during his career in the Air Force. She is proud of more than fifty years of marriage!

BANANAS AND MILK DUDS!

Below is an article written by Rick Reilly of Sports Illustrated. He details his experiences when given the opportunity to fly in a F-14 Tomcat. If you aren't laughing out loud by the time you get to 'Milk Duds,' your sense of humor is seriously broken. Now this message is for America's most famous athletes: Someday you may be invited to fly in the back-seat of one of your country's most powerful fighter jets. Many of you already have. John Elway, John Stockton, Tiger Woods to name a few. If you get this opportunity, let me urge you, with the greatest sincerity... Move to Guam.

**Change your name.
Fake your own death!
Whatever you do.
Do Not Go!!!**

I know.

The U.S. Navy invited me to try it. I was thrilled. I was pumped. I was toast! I should have known when they told me my pilot would be Chip (Biff) King of Fighter Squadron 213 at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach.

Whatever you're thinking a Top Gun named Chip (Biff) King looks like, triple it. He's about six-foot, tan, ice-blue eyes, wavy surfer hair, finger-crippling handshake -- the kind of man who wrestles dyspeptic alligators in his leisure time. If you see this man, run the other way, Fast.

Biff King was born to fly. His father, Jack King, was for years the voice of NASA missions. ('T-minus 15 seconds and counting.' Remember?) Chip would charge neighborhood kids a quarter each to hear his dad. Jack would wake up from naps surrounded by nine-year-olds waiting for him to say, 'We have liftoff.'

Biff was to fly me in an F-14D Tomcat, a ridiculously powerful \$60 million weapon with nearly as much thrust as weight, not unlike Colin Montgomerie. I was worried about getting airsick, so the night before the flight I asked Biff if there was something I should eat the next morning.

'Bananas,' he said.

'For the potassium?' I asked.

'No,' Biff said, 'because they taste about the same coming up as they do going down.'



The next morning, out on the tarmac, I had on my flight suit with my name sewn over the left breast.

(No call sign -- like Crash or Sticky or Leadfoot. But, still, very cool.) I carried my helmet in the crook of my arm, as Biff had instructed. If ever in my life I had a chance to nail Nicole Kidman, this was it.

A fighter pilot named Psycho gave me a safety briefing and then fastened me into my ejection seat, which, when employed, would 'egress' me out of

the plane at such a velocity that I would be immediately knocked unconscious.

Just as I was thinking about aborting the flight, the canopy closed over me, and Biff gave the ground crew a thumbs-up. In minutes we were firing nose up at 600 mph. We leveled out and then canopy-rolled over another F-14.

Those 20 minutes were the rush of my life. Unfortunately, the ride lasted 80.. It was like being on the roller coaster at Six Flags Over Hell. Only without rails. We did barrel rolls, snap rolls, loops, yanks and banks. We dived, rose and dived again, sometimes with a vertical velocity of 10,000 feet per minute. We chased another F-14, and it chased us.

We broke the speed of sound. Sea was sky and sky was sea. Flying at 200 feet we did 90-degree turns at 550 mph, creating a G force of 6.5, which is to say I felt as if 6.5 times my body weight was smashing against me, thereby approximating life as Colin Montgomerie.

And I egressed the bananas. And I egressed the pizza from the night before. And the lunch before that. I egressed a box of Milk Duds from the sixth grade.

I made Linda Blair look polite. Because of the G's, I was egressing stuff that never thought would be egressed.

I went through not one airsick bag, but two.

Biff said I passed out. Twice. I was coated in sweat. At one point, as we



were coming in upside down in a banked curve on a mock bombing target and the G's were flattening me like a tortilla and I was in and out of consciousness, I realized I was the first person in history to throw down.

I used to know 'cool'. Cool was Elway throwing a touchdown pass, or Norman making a five-iron bite. But now I really know 'cool'. Cool is guys like Biff, men with cast-iron stomachs and freon nerves. I wouldn't go up there again for Derek Jeter's black book, but I'm glad Biff does every day, and for less a year than a rookie reliever makes in a home stand.

A week later, when the spins finally stopped, Biff called. He said he and the fighters had the perfect call sign for me. Said he'd send it on a patch for my flight suit.

What is it?? I asked.

'Two Bags.'

Highlights of the Tucson's 2014 Reunion!



The picture, above, depicts our ex and current presidents, Francis X. Gosselin, and Terry Troy, displaying the two plaques that were awarded to Francis for his past performance as president of the association. Photo: George Biscoe



The above photo depicts Wil Rodriguez, Newsletter Editor, awarding ex-president, Francis X Gosselin, with the first Hoorah Award for a well done job as president of the Association. More reunion pictures are available in our web site. Photo: George Biscoe.

Highlights of the Tucson's 2014 Reunion!



The members enjoyed a tour of the downtown historic areas and unforgettable visit to the mission of San Xavier Del Bac. They also visited Tombstone and given a show of the shootout at the OK Coral, and finally a visit to the Desert Diamond Casino. They enjoyed the ride to visit the Pima Air and Space Museum, and the dinner/talk at the Davis Mountain AFB's officer club. The annual reunion came to a close with a fantastic steak dinner at the Pinnacle Peak in Trail Dust Town . The annual reunion were five days of awesome sightings and fantastic relaxing weather! (Photos by G. Biscoe)

Tucson's 2014 Reunion Attendees!



First row, l-to-r: LoAnne Zentner, Judy Sharp, Jean Coyne, Amy Von Hatten, Fay Dickie, and Renate Troy. Second row, l-to-r: Anni Kostka, Vana Zepernick, Kathy Holleman, Barbara Martin, Jeanetta Teague, and Jan Willis. Third row, l-to-r: Carole Vitzhum, Joyce Grametbauer, and Mary Tencza. Missing Margie Gosselin.



First row, l-to-t, Ken Zepernick, George Biscoe, Paul Coyne, George Vitzhum, Howard Dickey, Ed Von Hatten. Second Row, l-to-r:, Clifford Karau, Bill Hollerman, Joe Grametbauser, Don Teague, Jim Swalley, Terry Troy. Top row, l-to-r: George Martin, Leroy Kostka, Jerry Sharp, Norm Steele, Wil Rodriguez and Ken Willis. Missing Francis Gosselin.

June 1953

The Man from Mars

Through a Military Amateur Radio Station
601st Personnel May Contact Families in US

"Rothwesten personnel will be able to talk to their families and friends back in the states for almost nothing", said station supervisor, A/1C Robert Wilford, concerning one of the advantages of the proposed Military Amateur Radio System to be set up in this squadron. MARS will provide cheap trans-oceanic communication, according to Wilford, in that various amateur stations may be contacted in the general area of the local caller's home and the transmission then relayed via telephone. This will enable a man in Rothwesten to contact his family in California at a relatively low cost.

World Wide Program

MARS is a world-wide military program that was set up primarily to provide further training and practice for radio mechanics and operators. Besides giving radio men a chance to frequent themselves with equipment, MARS serves as an emergency communications system in time of need or peril.



A/1C Wilford tunes up receiver
8 December 1952

Equipment utilized by MARS is obsolete or surplus military stock that consists of a transmitter, a receiver and test equipment. Parts are replaced by the organization's technical supply section and surplus quarters are also provided for the station by the organization.

Awaits Authorization

Rothwesten's proposed MARS station will become a reality shortly, after authorization has been received from the MARS Director, 12th Air Force. Also, call signs, both amateur and MARS, will be received with the authorization. This will permit the Rothwesten station to contact any such station in the world.

With Capt Richard Schremp as sponsor, the local station will be set up in a vacant room in the Starlight Theater under the full time direction of A/1C Wilford, a man with many years of amateur radio experience behind him.

Teen-Age Ham

Wilford became interested in "ham" radio in his early teens solely as a hobby, but as his experience grew he became proficient as a radio mechanic-operator. He now holds the Radio-Telephone License that is as coveted by radio men as a CPA is to an accountant.

According to Wilford, the Rothwesten MARS station may be in operation by the first of the year with prospects that the whole squadron will find it a good place to spend some of their off-duty time trying to contact the folks in the States.

Trained at Rice

Wilford has also attended Rice Institute where he majored in electrical engineering for two years. This extra knowledge made it possible for him to land a job at a radio station in Kentucky, where he served as a technician and part-time announcer.

Article submitted by
William Hanson, Web Master.

Sometimes, it is not really just luck!

This story is confirmed in Elmer Bendiner's book, *The Fall of Fortresses*.



Elmer Bendiner was a navigator in a B-17 during WW II. He tells this story of a World War II bombing run over Kassel, Germany, and the unexpected result of a direct hit on their gas tanks. "Our B-17, the Tondelayo, was barraged by flak from Nazi antiaircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit.

Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a 20 millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not quite that simple. "On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck.

The crew chief told Bohn that not just one shell but 11 had been found in the gas tanks. 11 unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us. A near-miracle, I thought.

Even after 35 years, so awesome an event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn.

"He was told that the shells had been sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer. "Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were as clean as a whistle and just as harmless.

Empty? Not all of them!

One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling.

Translated, the note read: "This is all we can do for you now... Using Jewish slave labor is never a good idea."



Aviation History:

Last Hercules out of Vietnam

*By Richard
"Dick" Peiffer*

A story that has recently made the rounds of the internet is the little known history of a C-130A, Hercules number 56-0518. It was the 126th built by Lockheed Aircraft Corp. of Marietta, Georgia and accepted into the U.S. Air Force inventory on August 23, 1957.

On November 2nd, 1972, it became part of the Military Assistance Program, and delivered to the South Vietnamese Air Force. Shortly thereafter, the peace talks in Paris

produced a cease-fire agreement and the last U.S. Troops left Vietnam on March 29th, 1973. Nearly everyone knew the South Vietnamese would not be able to withstand a major attack by the communist north. However, the fighting continued for nearly two years then in early 1975 North Vietnamese made their big push to topple the government of South Vietnam. On April 29, 1975, the day before South Vietnam surrendered to the communist north; it became sheer panic for many to get out of the country.

At Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon, hundreds of destroyed aircraft littered the flight line, some still burning, when Major Phuong, a South Vietnamese instructor pilot with crew decided to make a dash for Thailand in the last flyable aircraft, a C-130, serial number 56-0518.

As they prepared 56-0518 for takeoff, hundreds of people rushed to get aboard. This aircraft represented a final ticket to freedom. People crowded aboard packing in tighter and tighter. Eventually, the loadmaster called to Major Phuong that he could not get the rear ramp door closed due to the number of people standing on it. In a moment of inspiration, Major Phuong taxied forward slowly then hit the brakes. The loadmaster called forward saying; that did it, the ramp door closed.

In all, 452 people were on board, including a staggering 32 in the cockpit. Using a conservative estimate of 100 pounds per person, it translated into a load of at least 10,000 pounds over gross. Major Phuong used every foot of the runway and the overrun before it was able to get airborne.

Flying west to an airport in Thailand, flight time should have been an hour and twenty minutes. However, after an hour and a half, the aircraft was over the Gulf of Siam, and they were lost. Finally, a map was located and by identifying terrain-features, they were able to navigate. They landed at Utapao, Thailand after a three and a half hour flight.

Ground personnel were shocked at what "fell out" as they opened the doors. It was clear that a longer flight would almost certainly have resulted in a loss of life. In the end, however, all 452 people made it to freedom aboard this historic C-130.

Upon landing, the USAF reclaimed the aircraft and eventually assigned it to Oklahoma ANG then the Tennessee ANG during the final years of its service life.

On June 28, 1989, 56-0518 made its final flight to Little Rock Air Force Base and placed on permanent display. ➔ <http://wikimapia.org/3660285/c-130>.



Photo by Scott Doremus

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.

2014 REUNION BITS AND PIECES!

LoAnne
Zentner

The 601st & 615th AC&W reunion for 2014 was most enjoyable from the hotel that was our headquarters to the camaraderie of the group to the sights we visited. The layout of the hotel made socializing comfortable and easy!

What a good choice for a reunion! Tucson has beautiful historic sights and the surrounding area shows the Oldie Wild West.

Our bus, complete with guide, took us to the shining beauty of the Spanish - Indian mission, San. Xavier Del Bac (the Dove of the desert). On previous trips, I had seen this from the highway, but this was my first time to see the inside of the mission. This is truly a gem for the senses, full of sculptures, paintings, and surrounded by a highly and potent spiritual atmosphere.

Another view of the old city was the arts and crafts area where I purchased locally made jewelry and paintings. It was fun and lovely.

One bus tour took us to Tombstone to see the OK Corral and the Boot Hill Cemetery, where actors sure have too much fun recreating the story of Doc Holiday and the shoot out with the outlaws at the OK Corral. In the Boot Hill Cemetery, one of the grave markers says, "Here lies Lester Moore, four shots from a 44; No less No Moore! "

A highlight for many of us was the trip to the Air Force Base, the Pima Air and Space Museum, and the regeneration group. This is truly an experience that makes one want to return to learn more about the area!

Another of our trips included a stop at the Desert Diamond Casino for gambling and a meal. Although, I do not gamble, Cliff won on my card. After the gambling, we enjoyed the buffet.

The fourth day of our reunion, we had dinner at the Dinner at the Pinnacle Peak in Trail Dust Town! Fantastic and juicy steaks!

This is a short list of the experiences we enjoyed that week. Renewing friendships and seeing old friends (and making

new ones), is always a high point of these reunions.



Thanks again to Fay Dickey for generously giving of her time and her hours of planning that make these trips possible.

And then, a funny thing happened to us on our trip home from Tucson! Our flight was Tucson to Denver then to Milwaukee. In Denver, Cliff was to get his connecting flight, while I was going to stay in Colorado at my son's and fly home the next Wednesday. Our flight from Tucson left on time and arrived on time, 6:30 p.m. In the sky above Denver, we started going in circles because of the winds that were causing wind sheer, and we couldn't land (smart move). Our pilot informed us that we were diverted to a small airport in Colorado Springs to refuel and wait for instructions. My son was waiting for us at the Denver airport, where he was passing the time drinking beers at of cost of \$6.00 a bottle. At 9:00 p.m., we were cleared for takeoff back to Denver. Of course, Cliff's connecting flight was long gone, so we had to go to the podium for a boarding pass for the next day. The pass they handed him was for 7:30 the next morning for a flight to Phoenix and then to Milwaukee! Not satisfactory to say the least, but a few chosen words later, he had a direct flight to Milwaukee at 10:30 a.m. Good thing my son's house has so many bedrooms. Since my son is good and kind, he drove Cliff to the airport the next morning.

I think my next trip to Denver might be by train!