



The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 4 Issue 4

Find us on the web at <http://www.araassociation.com>.

Apr., May, June., 2012



“Aerial Rocket Artillery”when called on by those who were in danger, our units were there laying it on the line.

We were proud of our Aerial Rocket Artillery Team then and still proud of it now.

The Straphanger Gazette is a quarterly publication of the Aerial Rocket Artillery Association. Issues will be published on or about the 1st of January, April, July and October. Members who have e-mail will receive a copy as an pdf attachment



President's Corner

NO APRIL FOOL'S JOKE!

LZ PORTLAND IS IN SIGHT

Reunion 2012 is fast approaching and if you haven't signed up yet and/or made hotel reservations you might want to do so before April 23 , 2012. We have contracted for thirty (30) King Deluxe rooms and the Presidential (Hospitality) Suite. The contracted price for the King Deluxe Rooms is \$119.00 + tax (which compares favorably to our Charleston average rate). After April 23, the rate will be the standard rate for the hotel and availability is not guaranteed. As of March 15, nineteen (19) rooms and the Presidential (Hospitality) Suite have been reserved. I have reserved the Presidential (Hospitality) Suite, which has a large living room (holds approximately 50 people) and a separate bedroom. You guys get to party and socialize in the living room and I get to sleep in a Presidential Bedroom for the first (and probably the only time) in my life.

I bring up one problem that we are having at this time and that is that we have members who have made hotel reservations but have not signed up for the reunion and members who have signed up for the reunion but have not made hotel reservations. This makes final planning for events (tours, dining, etc) difficult and we would appreciate getting commitments from members who plan to attend as soon as possible.

Anyone needing information about the reunion may go to our web site (www.araassociation.com) and clicking on Reunion 2012 or click on the Newsletter Section and review the Oct/Nov/Dec issue.

Some information for those who plan to fly and haven't made reservations for air travel. You might want to check out Airtran (www.airtran.com). They offer excellent rates if you can depart from one of the cities that they service and don't mind driving down from Seattle. For example - from Atlanta, GA to Seattle, WA the round trip is currently \$378.00 (includes taxes and fees). Southwest Airlines (www.southwest.com) is also offering some fairly good rates. Again, from Atlanta, GA to Portland, OR and back to Atlanta for \$461 (getaway flight). Also, many hotels in the vicinity of departure airports have a park and fly program. Spend one night in the hotel and you can leave you car there until you return and they will take you to the departure terminal and pick you up when you return. Make sure that you check out the details before you commit.

I have received a request from John Conway, who is with the "Faces on the Wall Project," for a photograph of WO David L. Kaplan. Kaplan was assigned to A/2/20 Arty "Blue Max" and was killed during a Nighthawk mission on August 8, 1970 along with CPT Frank I. Kraxner in AH-1G 67-15519 while flying out of Phuc Vinh. From the information that I received he had only been in the unit for a few days. If anyone who was there in 1970 has a photo please contact me and I will pass it on. The message was passed along by Jim Reese and Brian Russ.

I would also like to remind everyone that this is an election year and that we will also make a decision as where to hold Reunion 2014.

Other business will be reviewing proposed revisions to the By-Laws of the Association. These revisions are considered necessary to define additional/specific duties of the Board of Directors that have been understood for the past eighteen (18+) months. If approved by the General Membership these revisions will be added to Article IV, Section 2.

(1) The BOD shall establish, operate, and maintain a web site for the Association and shall act as content committee and approving authority for the Web Site.

The BOD shall designate/recognize a member in good standing to be the Staff Writer representing the 2/20th Artillery and "F" Battery/79th Artillery for the "SABER" (newsletter for the 1st Cavalry Division) and shall review and approve material for publication prior to submission to the "SABER."

The BOD shall serve as content committee for the Association newsletter ("Straphanger") and will review and approve each issue prior to publication.

All of this having been said I will close for now so that you may move on to the rest of the newsletter.

"See you in Portland."

Jesse Hobby

ARA 6

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The Little Known Story of the Combination of Infantry and ARA Which Saved Many lives and Stopped the Enemy

At the 14th Annual ARA Reunion in Charleston, SC, Life Member Joe Hogg delivered a "Silver Chalice," documents, photographs, and a commentary from the 1970's era troopers of Company "C" 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (AM). It is the history of the courage, skill, dedication and greatness of the men and machines of the 1st Cavalry Division who battled the NVA down to defeat in a private corner of Hell they had never wanted.

It is a distillation of after action reports and eye witness testimony of the man who commanded those brave souls on the ground. His are the opening words:

It is our wish to acknowledge the pilots and ground crews whose professionalism, courage, and dedication to duty often meant the difference in life and death for Charlie Company. Of the many engagements about which that statement is unquestionable, the Battle for FSB Illingworth has been chosen for presentation to the Association. Some of the material is very sobering as it recounts the losses, some is dry "Officialese", and some show the brief time at altitude when we could all get a short respite from the threat of combat, and the tropical heat below. However, regardless of individual subject matter, each item represents a moment of shared service over 40 years ago, a time of which we all must be proud.

With sincere regard and grateful acknowledgement of your service, LTC George K. Hobson, USA – Ret. Commanding C/2/8, 13 March 1970 to 6 August 1970.

The art of war is ever evolving, each change bringing more speed, greater firepower, more efficient maneuvering, and tragically, greater destruction. From the days of marching masses with clubs, spears and swords came cavalry, gunpowder and artillery support. Beyond stones (and cows) hurled through the air against stone walls lay cannon with devastating range and might. Eventually man breached the barriers created by sea and sky with the development of the ships and airplanes. He harnessed the power of the atom, brought civilization to the brink of annihilation, and stands now on the brink of bridging space.



Cobra aloft—the "grunts" best friend.

Late in the 20th century man's relentless pursuit of better ways to move it, destroy it and salvage it, he discovered the helicopter. This strange machine, lacking in aerodynamic grace, but exhibiting untold capabilities denied to mortal aircraft drivers, violates all the principles of remaining airborne, requires the use of every appendage, total concentration, the ability to see beyond the moment, hear what lesser men ignore, and utilize all of the terminal tissue of the butt and a lot of the sphincter it surrounds. In short, it is not for just

anyone to fly.



Grunts en route to an insertion in one of the few moments when they could leave the jungle heat and enjoy the cool wind of the skies

Oddly enough, this cycle returned to a few of the basics from which it had been spawned. One of these was to realize that in the end, only the ground on which you stand is yours, albeit some can be denied to the enemy, but only at the cost of self-deprivation. The infantryman is the heart and soul of the successful army. The Navy is useful for moving the material that the infantryman needs and the infantryman himself. The same can be said for the Air Force (whose very existence arose from the Army). The Marines try hard to be infantry but are lost in the Navy. In the final analysis there has never been a war won from the air or sea – only by the “grunt” slogging his way through the mud and chaos of the land. A grunt is the true reason for the existence of the helicopter. Every helicopter ever flown had one real purpose: To help the “grunt”. It is unfortunate that many helicopters never had the opportunity to fulfill their one true mission in life, simply because someone forgot this fact.



Insertion was never easy. Here are shown possible openings that may take one or two birds—a life or death decision they must make on approach. The NVA were battle-hardened soldiers with 20 years experience. They adapted quickly to US tactics often allowing enough troops to unload to ensure commitment but not enough to defend.. Here the support of ARA was all the difference between success and annihilation. Ground artillery took time to be adjusted but the ARA was immediately on target.

To crown the indispensability of the Army, the invincibility of the infantryman, the versatility of the helicopter is to combine these with the pinpoint accuracy and power of artillery. Thus, came about the Aerial Rocket Artillery, a unique blend of the best, one of the most effective weapons in the Vietnam conflict, and the subject of this article. This is the story of one of numerous times when the ARA figured so vitally in the preservation and success of the brave men who carried the cause of freedom in one of the corners of Hell. This is the story of the battle for FSB Illingworth on 1 April 1970 and the men of Battalion Hqs and Companies C (Charlie) & E of 2/8 Cavalry, B 1/17 Arty (105), A/ 1/30/Arty (155), A/2/32 Arty (8”), B5/2 Arty (Quad .50). A/2/20 ARA was in general support from Tay Ninh Base Camp. As with all ground units, C/8 depended on supporting fires from many places all around. Among these were HHQS & B/2/19 Arty, B/2/12 Arty, 1/11/ARC and B/2/32 Arty, located at Tay Ninh, FSB Barbara, Camp Hazard and FSB Hanna. .

FSB (Fire Support Base) Illingworth was a lonely outpost located in the Dog’s Head from which 2/8 was operating. Captured intelligence indicated the probable location of the 95 C NVA regiment base camp in that area. Enemy probes were not unique to April 1. On 14 February 1970 in what the Charlie Co. survivors will call the “St. Valentine Day Massacre” they suffered 6 KIA , 2 MIA and 1 WIA. The ARA was there with “danger close”¹ support . On 8 March the NVA again struck resulting in 3 KIA and 13 WIA. ARA again provided “danger close” support for a one ship hot extraction PZ. 26 March found Charlie Co. isolated and surrounded on two sides by a battalion sized NVA force for seven hours. Once more the ARA was there to fire “danger close” on two sides, which was critical to Charlie’s survival.

A Troop of the 11th ACR and A/2/8 arrived in support after some five hours of the fight, and all three units were still outnumbered. After two more hours of battle, the action to withdraw under fire, it was the ARA that provided the support to break the NVA tactic of “hugging the belt buckle” of a US force. That is the matter of the enemy consolidating close to the lines or berms where neither ground artillery nor fixed wing aircraft could safely deliver ordinance in the proximity required to disengage the NVA from the three US units.

Base defense was provided by Battalion Hqs. and Companies C and E 2-8 Cav. but it would soon be a matter of every artilleryman and ancillary trooper having to acquit themselves with courage and valor.

Located at the FSB were 6 105’s (B/7 Arty). 3 155’s (A-130 Arty), 2 8” (A/2-32 Arty), 1 Quad .50 (B/5-2 Arty) and one IIFFV 23” Xenon Searchlight. The two 8” howitzers had been moved by direction of IIFFV Arty from Thien Ngon to Illingworth to obtain better physical security—the usual irony of the military.

That the NVA wanted to take FSB Illingworth was not a surprise. Heavy contact had occurred on several occasions since mid- March, all to the north and northwest of the FSB. The 11th ACR operations along the northern neck of the Dog's Head resulted in several contacts. The most recent of these was on the afternoon of 31 March, when 32 NVA were killed and 16 NVA captured. Intelligence reports indicated enemy units were in the Dog's Head area and a heavy volume of artillery fire was being placed on suspected locations. To the south, on 29 March, FSB Jay had repelled a heavy attack from a battalion sized element of the 272nd NVA Regiment.

Evidence of enemy movement in the immediate area of Illingworth was provided by 14 PPS-5 radar sightings from 18-31 March. Four of those occurred between 2000 - 0036 hours the night of the attack. The sightings alerted the defenders to a possible enemy threat and specific measures were taken. The infantry units increased the frequency of their "Mad Minutes" and relocated crew-served weapons. The 2-19 Arty BN FAC imitated "exercise" firing of the prearranged FSB fire support plan using all supporting artillery. A section of ARA conducted firing runs around the base just after midnight. Thus, when the attack began, defensive preparations were in a high state of readiness. Artillery targets on the FSB fire plan had all been fired at least once between 2000 and 0215 hours.

² 1 April 1970 At 0100 hours the "shit" literally hit the fan and the air was full of it. An intense barrage of 107mm, 122mm and 240mm rockets, 82mm mortars and 75mm recoilless rifle fire struck the FSB. This phase continued for a short period of time (est 15-30 minutes) and comprised some 300 or more rounds. Several 107mm rockets employed in a short range direct fire, were heard passing over the FSB. These were apparently intended to destroy several RC 292 radio antennas in the base, which they did. This was followed by a ground attack from the southwest by an estimated two reinforced companies. Automatic weapons, RPG and mortar fire continued to pour into the FSB from three sides. At one point the enemy reached the berm in the 8" battery area and were repulsed after savage hand to hand fighting. During this phase all 105 and 155 artillery returned fire at enemy tree line positions, ignoring the heavy B-40 and mortar fire impacting their area. The B/1-77 FDC received several hits, destroying all radio links except for one short whip PRC 77 to the B/2-19 FDC at FSB Hannas. The other link was from the artillery liaison officer at Illingworth to an ARA officer overhead.³



FSB Illingworth three hours before the attack



FSB Illingworth today as seen by Goggle satellite maps . It now farm country.

For a period of approximately one-half hour, supporting artillery was controlled by the 2-19 Arty BN FDC through the ARA section leader. One 105 was knocked out by enemy fire; the remainder kept up a heavy volume of continuous fire, with one gun firing self-illumination. The quad .50 gunner was then wounded and the gun damaged

by a grenade. One of the 8" storage bunkers began burning and the heat and exploding canisters drove the defenders away from that portion of the berm. Shortly thereafter the other 8" bunker, containing some 190 rounds, apparently struck by enemy fire, detonated with a tremendous blast, blowing a 20 ft. deep crater and knocking both 8" howitzers and the FDC out of the action. Nearly every defender was knocked flat and many were burned and deafened. All indirect fire control equipment (collimators, aiming circles, aiming stakes) in the 105 areas was blown away and the guns partially buried. The blast was followed by a complete lull of 5-10 minutes in which every one, friendly and enemy alike, attempted to recover from the stunning force of the explosion. An unknown number of casualties were caused by it. Also, a vast, impenetrable pall of choking dust covered the base blinding the defenders and jamming weapons.



The 8 inch ammo crater . Perspective on size is gotten by comparing the soldier walking away (arrow) on the rim.

The individual initiative of the infantry and artillerymen brought the defense back to life. The infantry commanders rushed reinforcements to the southwest corner and defensive fire resumed. One of the 105 guns was out of action due to casualties; the B Battery Commander, assisted by several infantrymen, placed the gun back into action.

The 8" ammunition had not been stored underground, as required, and its detonation caused a significant portion of total casualties and damage, including blowing away the southwest portion of the berm. During the entire attack, supporting artillery continuously pounded enemy forces and positions. Fires from B/2-19 Arty raked the enemy attacks from the Northwest and enemy bases of fire in the treelines were struck by medium artillery. The 2-19 Arty Q-1 radar at Then Ngon located several enemy mortar positions which were engaged by medium and heavy artillery and two CIDG 105's at Thien Ngong. The artillery liaison officer at Illingworth effectively controlled tube and ARA fires. ARA observed and engaged 1 .51 AA position and 1 82mm mortar position destroying both and killing 7 NVA. Air Force flare ships and 2 Shadows⁴ were on station but TAG air was not available until 0430.

Total expenditures in defensive and follow-up pursuit fires were:

105mm-2059 rds. 155mm-1046 rds 8"-137 rds 175mm-150 rds ARA – 11 sections

(2156 rockets) Tac Air - 2 sorties Shadow - 2 sections



Destroyed ammo carriers

US losses were: 25 KIA (B/2-77, 6; A/2-37, 3); 54 WIA

(B/2-77, 16; A/2-32, 5; A/1-30, 2);

1 x 105 Howitzer, 1 x 8" Howitzer, 1x23" searchlight, 1 ¾ ton truck, 2 M548 Ammo carriers.

Twenty-one enemy were certified to artillery fire , plus at least seven to ARA A true body count will never be known. ⁴



Destroyed searchlight

¹“Danger close” is the situation when the enemy is near breaching the wire, overrunning the area , or is so close as to preclude support from tube or fixed wing fires. The margin is often so small as to require pin point placement and of effective low burst radius fire. This is a mission made for the ARA

²**LTC Hobson** While there were numerous additional engagements, the following were particularly violent and without the support of ARA Charlie's casualties would doubtless have been much greater. The numbers of casualties are not cited for other than to emphasize the intensity of the given fight, and in particular without the support of ARA in the fights of 26 March and 1 April, Charlie was in dire peril of being overrun and everyone killed or captured. During this period every officer was either killed or wounded, and many of the senior and junior NCOs were lost as well. The two MIA on 14 February were a platoon leader and his RTO. The point of recounting those fights below is to emphasize the significant positive impact on morale that always accompanied the arrival of ARA support in a desperate situation.

³. **LTC Hobson** -. One of the great things about ARA support was the option for any grunt on a PRC77 radio to talk directly to the pilot...no long whip antenna required. Our ARA support was Blue Max, but we just called him Max. If the leader and experienced RTO had been KIA, clam, experienced pilots sometimes had to coach a young grunt about what to do. In general it went something like: “Mark your position with a smoke grenade. I’ll identify the color. You will confirm. Then tell me where you need the support, and ‘Max’ will be right down there with you”.

The ARA pilot was Captain Joe Hogg, and he was the only communication link for some time as evading ground fire and providing strikes on the NVA ground assault. Joe’s interface between the battalion artillery forward observer and the off-illingworth supporting ground artillery was the only means for adjustment of fire for an extended time. Cpt. Hogg stayed aloft as long as his fuel allowed and was replaced by others. It was reported that eleven sections of ARA flew in a four hour support of Illingworth.

4. The Battle for FSB I llingworth was briefed at the White House level . The result of the after action reports caused a clarification in the length of time that forward fire bases were to be left in place. It was also the official position that there had been no penetration of the fire base , but photos by Recon Plt E/2/8 exist of the NVA dead within the compound . With FSB Jay having been penetrated on March 29 and the Batallion Cmdr. LTC Hannas killed, it became too hot a topic to admit two FSB’s had nearly been overrun in less than four days.

**DON'T MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE IN
PORTLAND WITH YOUR FRIENDS!
See the reunion application on page 8**

SILVER DAGGER 9X - *TAY NINH 1970*
 CPT J.C. Hoegs
 THE ENCLOSED IS FROM
 MIDLAND NOTCHER 83C [CPT BILL AHERN *1/77*]
 HE SAID YOU SAVED HIS ASS AND
 RACKED UP 3 DINKS & 2 MORTAR TUBES
 ON THE AM OF 1 APRIL.
 THE \$ IS FOR A CASE OF BEER.

CPT MURPHY
 ARTY LNO
 1ST BDE



The Brass say there was no penetration. The camera says otherwise.

Camaraderie in war runs deep. Captain John Ahern (aka Bill) was the artillery liaison officer to 2/8th Cavalry command group. He was in the Battalion TOC during the attack. The relationship between the ARA and those they supported was lasting and profound.

The years roll past, the events grow dim in memory, people also move on and away. In the Bible many of the legendary figures paused to create memorials for those who came behind to see and remember what had transpired there. C/2/8 has created just such a memorial and here it is. We, of the ARA, can proudly remember that we made a difference in the lives and fates of our brothers in arms.



Company C, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry





LONE ARMOR

1ST PLATOON, BOUNTY HUNTER. 2ND PLATOON, SCOTCH. 3RD PLATOON, LONELY.

A CHALICE AND DOCUMENTS

ARE PRESENTED TO

AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY (ARA) ASSOCIATION

IN RECOGNITION OF THE VITAL ROLE OF THE ARA IN THE SUCCESS OF GROUND OPERATIONS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THE COMBAT AT FSB ILLINGWORTH ON 1 APRIL 1970 EXEMPLIFIED THE VITAL ROLE OF ARA PILOTS IN SUPPORT OF GROUND TROOPS. THOUGH LARGELY UNSUNG, THE DEDICATION AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE OF GROUND CREWS IN GETTING PILOTS TO THE FIGHT WAS KEY TO THEIR SUCCESS. C/2/8, 1ST CAV (AM) PRESENTS THESE IN SALUTE TO THE COURAGE AND SKILL, OF BOTH THE ARA AIRCREWS AND GROUND CREWS, IN THEIR CRITICAL ROLE AS OUR BROTHERS IN ARMS.



LTC. GEORGE K. HOBSON USA-RET

COMMANDING C/2/8 13 MARCH 1970 TO 6 AUGUST 1970

IN A LIGHTER VEIN

ALERTS TO THREATS IN 2012 EUROPE: by John Cleese

The English are feeling the pinch in relation to recent events in Syria and have therefore raised their security level from "Miffed" to "Peeved." Soon, though, security levels may be raised yet again to "Irritated" or even "A Bit Cross." The English have not been "A Bit Cross" since the blitz in 1940 when tea supplies nearly ran out. Terrorists have been re-categorized from "Tiresome" to "A Bloody Nuisance." The last time the British issued a "Bloody Nuisance" warning level was in 1588, when threatened by the Spanish Armada.

The Scots have raised their threat level from "Pissed Off" to "Let's get the Bastards." They don't have any other levels. This is the reason they have been used on the front line of the British army for the last 300 years.

The French government announced yesterday that it has raised its terror alert level from "Run" to "Hide." The only two higher levels in France are "Collaborate" and "Surrender." The rise was precipitated by a recent fire that destroyed France's white flag factory, effectively paralyzing the country's military capability.

Italy has increased the alert level from "Shout Loudly and Excitedly" to "Elaborate Military Posturing." Two more levels remain: "Ineffective Combat Operations" and "Change Sides."

The Germans have increased their alert state from "Disdainful Arrogance" to "Dress in Uniform and Sing Marching Songs." They also have two higher levels: "Invade a Neighbour" and "Lose."

Belgians, on the other hand, are all on holiday as usual; the only threat they are worried about is NATO pulling out of Brussels.

The Spanish are all excited to see their new submarines ready to deploy. These beautifully designed subs have glass bottoms so the new Spanish navy can get a really good look at the old Spanish navy.

Australia, meanwhile, has raised its security level from "No worries" to "She'll be alright, Mate." Two more escalation levels remain: "Crikey! I think we'll need to cancel the barbie this weekend!" and "The barbie is cancelled." So far no situation has ever warranted use of the last final escalation level.

For All You NASCAR Fans

Raleigh, NC

Jeff Gordon announced today he has fired his entire pit crew. This announcement followed Gordon's decision to take advantage of Newt Gingrich's scheme to employ Harlem youngsters. The decision to hire them was brought about by a recent documentary on how unemployed youths from Harlem were able to remove a set of wheels in less than 6 seconds without proper equipment, whereas Gordon's existing crew could only do it in 8 seconds with thousands of dollars' worth of high tech equipment.

It was thought to be an excellent and bold move by Gordon's management team, as many races are won or lost in the pits.

However, Gordon got more than he bargained for. At the crew's first practice session, not only was the inexperienced crew able to change all 4 wheels in under 6 seconds, but within 9 seconds they had changed the paint scheme, altered the VIN number, and sold the car to Dale Earnhardt Jr. For 10 cases of Bud, a bag of weed, and some photos of Jeff Gordon's wife in the shower.

Troubling Indeed, but an Excellent point!!

After reading about the US soldier who shot up Afghanistan civilians, I couldn't help noticing an irony. There is all this clamor to try this guy quickly and execute him, never mind his having suffered a traumatic brain injury.

Yet this Major Hasan, who shot up Fort Hood while screaming Allah akbar, still hasn't stood trial, and they are still debating whether he was insane, even with the clear evidence regarding his motive: slay as many infidels as possible.

So, we have a guy in a war zone who cracks, and he must be executed immediately. But this Muslim psychiatrist who was stateside in a nice safe office all day murders 13, wounds 29 of our own guys, and they try to argue the poor lad suffered post-traumatic stress syndrome, from listening to real soldiers who had actual battle experience.

Two and a half years later, they still haven't tried the murderous bastard

ARA PORTLAND RENDEZVOUS

15TH ANNUAL ARA REUNION, PORTLAND, OR May 23 – 27, 2012

Reunion Registration Form

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN NLT APRIL 24, 2012

INFORMATION	
Name/Membership #	
Wife/Guest Name(s)	
Additional Guests	
Street Address	
City, State, Zip Code	
Telephone #/Email	
Special Assistance?	

Please list name(s) as you would like for them to appear on NAME TAG(S)	Where From
Member	
Spouse/Guest	
Unit(s)	
Dates	

REGISTRATION/EVENT FEES PER PERSON	PRICE	DETAILS	# IN PARTY	TOTAL
Registration Fee	\$30.00	Per Adult Over Age 15		
Oregon Coast Tour	\$40.00	Per Adult Over Age 15		
Columbia River Gorge Tour	\$48.00	Includes lunch		
Farewell Banquet	\$55.00	Per Adult Over Age 15		
Total for Reunion				

What day will you be arriving? _____ Departing? _____

Please contact host if you are bringing children under age 15 so that we can get number and ages and coordinate with caterer for the cost of their meals. Can be paid at time of check in.

Contact information for host: Herb Hirst (hirst@g.com). Telephone # 503-647-4600

Mail completed form and check payable to **ARA ASSOCIATION** to:

ARA ASSOCIATION
C/O Larry Mobley
779 County Road 106
Ozark, AL 36360

In a Blinding Flash— Death from Above

In 1969 a hunter-killer team concept for protecting Camp Gorvad was established that put a “hunter” aircraft, an armed UH-1 Helicopter from Echo Battery, 82nd Artillery in the night sky and escorted by a heavily armed “killer” aircraft, an AH-1G Cobra from Bravo Battery, 2/20th ARA and more commonly referred to as “Blue Max”.

The UH-1 known as Night Hawk flew blacked out at 400 feet and 40 knots over the tree tops patrolling Camp Gorvad AO. Night Hawk’s job was to identify the enemy with an Infra-red searchlight, and then “mark” the enemy targets with 50,000 watts of Xenon white light. Blue Max engaged any target marked by the solid shaft of white light streaming to the ground from Night Hawk. Blue Max, cruising at 1200’ with the nav lights up on flash

several inserted target detection teams and listening posts strategically spaced across the expanse of the Camp Gorvad AO. These ground teams consisted of infantrymen on patrol who were the eyes and ears on the ground reporting movement to the Tactical Operations Command Post back at the camp. With this system of defense, the Camp Gorvad AO was being watched over and guarded by the teams both day and night. When one of the ground teams reported enemy activity and confirmed their location to the TOC, the Night Hawk/Blue Max Team would fly to their location. With powerful infra-red beams emitting from the light, the “Light Man” could see specific detail on the ground through the 10-inch starlight scope, much like watching a football game from the top bleachers with a good pair of binoculars in the day-light. Once the “Light Man” reported the target was sighted, Night Hawk would establish an orbit around railroad flares dropped by the M-60 door gunner at 90, 180, 270 and 360 degrees around the target and now lighting up the jungle floor.



bright, carried a Mini-Gun that was capable of firing 4000 rounds of 7.62 bullets a minute, a 40mm Grenade Launcher capable of firing 150 high explosive grenades in 30 seconds, and 2.75 inch Rocket Launchers capable of firing 76 rockets. Now just imagine you are the enemy, night by night witnessing the capabilities of these two helicopters. What would be your first concern? Mine would be death - especially with the mantra “Stay away from Camp Gorvad” running through my head. The concept worked with the enemy just as well.

Echo Battery, 82nd Artillery and Bravo Battery, 2/20th ARA, were both small company size units. Although they are Artillery by name, they are Aviation by Mission. The team’s mission was to protect Camp Gorvad at night and work to eliminate the ever-present rocket and mortar attacks delivered by Charlie onto the base camp at night. The efforts of the team proved so successful that for 31 straight nights Camp Gorvad did not suffer a single attack. On the 32nd night however, the weather was zero/zero in ground fog and the entire Camp Gorvad AO was socked in. Unable to fly, the Night Hawk team stayed on the ground and the enemy spontaneously bombarded Camp Gorvad all through the night.

Now this is how the night fighters made it work: the two hunter-killer birds would leave their revetments in the black of the night. Once airborne, Night Hawk would begin communication with

Then it was time for the Night Hawk crew to verify the location of the friendly ground troops and confirm all clearances. Then, like an explosion from the sky, the 50,000 watts of light hit the ground to mark the target for Blue Max. Night was turned into day. All ground troops would call clear of the light and Blue Max rolled in but with the white light on. Night Hawk was a sitting duck at 40 knots, 400 feet from the enemy. In self defense the Night Hawk crewman manning the electric-powered mini-gun pulled the trigger, and with an almost intolerable roar, the gun began laying down defensive fire from the Night Hawk, fire that rained down the brilliant shaft of white light. The tracers in the ammo made it look like a fire hose was pouring a solid stream of molten metal in the now-lit jungle below. Simultaneously, 4 to 6 pairs of rockets screamed in from Blue Max impacting into the circle of light below. Suddenly the white light went out, and the signature wop, wop, wop of the Huey rotor blades carried Night Hawk back into the night.

NOTE: This article appeared in the March/April issue of the VHPA Aviator but did not state who wrote it or if it came from another source. If anyone has information on this operation we would welcome comments. It should be noted that HHB 2/20th did this in 67-68, on the rivers with illicit sampans using Xenon lights and the faithful UH-1 B & C. We did not have the benefit of Starscopes—just good night vision.

Ladies of the Association

Did your mother have a clothesline ???

For those who remember the clothesline....
You have to be a certain age to appreciate this.

THE BASIC RULES FOR CLOTHESLINES:

My mother thought these rules came straight from God.
(If you don't know what clotheslines are, better skip this.)

1. You had to wash the clothes line before hanging any clothes--walk the entire lengths of each line with a damp cloth around the lines.
2. You had to hang the clothes in a certain order, and always hang "whites" with "whites," and hang them first.
3. You never hung a shirt by the shoulders, always by the tail! What would the neighbors think?
4. Wash day on a Monday! . . . Never hang clothes on the Weekend, or Sunday, for Heaven's sake!
5. Hang the sheets and towels on the outside lines so you could hide your "unmentionables" in the middle (perverts & busybodies, y'know!).
6. It didn't matter if it was sub zero weather....clothes would "freeze-dry."
7. Always gather the clothes pins when taking down dry clothes! Pins left on the lines were "tacky!"
8. If you were efficient, you would line the clothes up so that each item did not need two clothes pins, but shared one of the clothes pins with the next washed item.
9. Clothes off of the line before dinner time, neatly folded in the clothes basket, and ready to be ironed.
- 10 IRONED? Well, that's a whole other subject!

CLOTHESLINE POEM

A clothesline was a news forecast
To neighbors passing by,
There were no secrets you could keep
When clothes were hung to dry.

It also was a friendly link
For neighbors always knew,
If company had stopped on by
To spend a night or two.

For then you'd see the "fancy sheets"
And towels upon the line;
You'd see the "company table cloths"
With intricate designs.

The line announced a baby's birth
From folks who lived inside -
As brand new infant clothes were hung,
So carefully with pride!

The ages of the children could
So readily be known
By watching how the sizes changed,
You'd know how much they'd grown!

It also told when illness struck,
As extra sheets were hung;
Then nightclothes, and a bathrobe, too
Haphazardly were strung.

It also said, "Gone on vacation now"
When lines hung limp and bare.
It told, "We're back!" when full lines sagged,
With not an inch to spare!

New folks in town were scorned upon
If wash was dingy and gray,
As neighbors carefully raised their brows,
And looked the other way.

But clotheslines now are of the past,
For dryers make work much less.
Now what goes on inside a house
Is anybody's guess!

I really miss that way of life.
It was a friendly sign.
When neighbors knew each other best
By what hung on the line.

Hope you all enjoyed this and hope to see you in
Portland in May.

Gloria Hobby
Falconess 6

gloriahobby@yahoo.com

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP: From a Janitor

-Wharton Leadership Digest, Dec. 2001



By Colonel James E. Moschgat,
Commander of the 12th Operations Group,
12th Flying Training Wing,
Randolph Air Force Base, Texas

William “Bill” Crawford certainly was an unimpressive figure, one you could easily overlook during a hectic day at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Mr. Crawford, as most of us referred to him back in the late 1970s, was our squadron janitor.

While we cadets busied ourselves preparing for academic exams, athletic events, Saturday morning parades and room inspections, or never-ending leadership classes, Bill quietly moved about the squadron mopping and buffing floors, emptying trash cans, cleaning toilets, or just tidying up the mess 100 college-age kids can leave in a dormitory. Sadly, and for many years, few of us gave him much notice, rendering little more than a passing nod or throwing a curt, “G’morning!” in his direction as we hurried off to our daily duties.

Why? Perhaps it was because of the way he did his job—he always kept the squadron area spotlessly clean, even the toilets and showers gleamed. Frankly, he did his job so well, none of us had to notice or get involved. After all, cleaning toilets was his job, not ours. Maybe it was his physical appearance that made him disappear into the background.

Bill didn’t move very quickly and, in fact, you could say he even shuffled a bit, as if he suffered from some sort of injury. His gray hair and wrinkled face made him appear ancient to a group of young cadets. And his crooked smile, well, it looked a little funny. Face it, Bill was an old man working in a young person’s world. What did he have to offer us on a personal level?

Finally, maybe it was Mr. Crawford’s personality that rendered him almost invisible to the young people around him. Bill was shy, almost painfully so. He seldom spoke to a cadet unless they addressed him first, and that didn’t happen very often. Our janitor always buried himself in his work, moving about with stooped shoulders, a quiet gait, and an averted gaze. If he noticed the hustle and bustle of cadet life around him, it was hard to tell. So, for whatever reason, Bill blended into the woodwork and became just another fixture around the squadron. The Academy, one of our nation’s premier leadership laboratories, kept us busy from dawn till dusk. And Mr. Crawford...well, he was just a janitor.

That changed one fall Saturday afternoon in 1976. I was reading a book about World War II and the tough Allied ground campaign in Italy, when I stumbled across an incredible story. On September 13, 1943, a Private William Crawford from Colorado, assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, had been involved in some bloody fighting on Hill 424 near Altavilla, Italy. The words on the page leapt out at me: “in the face of intense and overwhelming hostile fire ... with no regard for personal safety ... on his own initiative, Private Crawford single-handedly attacked fortified enemy positions.” It continued, “for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty, the President of the United States ...”

“Holy cow,” I said to my roommate, “you’re not going to believe this, but I think our janitor is a Medal of Honor winner.” We all

knew Mr. Crawford was a WWII Army vet, but that didn’t keep my friend from looking at me as if I was some sort of alien being. Nonetheless, we couldn’t wait to ask Bill about the story on Monday. We met Mr. Crawford bright and early Monday and showed him the page in question from the book, anticipation and doubt in our faces. He stared at it for a few silent moments and then quietly uttered something like, “Yep, that’s me.”

Mouths agape, my roommate and I looked at one another, then at the book, and quickly back at our janitor. Almost at once we both stuttered, “Why didn’t you ever tell us about it?” He slowly replied after some thought, “That was one day in my life and it happened a long time ago.”

I guess we were all at a loss for words after that. We had to hurry off to class and Bill, well, he had chores to attend to. However, after that brief exchange, things were never again the same around our squadron. Word spread like wildfire among the cadets that we had a hero in our midst—Mr. Crawford, our janitor, had won the Medal! Cadets who had once passed by Bill with hardly a glance, now greeted him with a smile and a respectful, “Good morning, Mr. Crawford.”

Those who had before left a mess for the “janitor” to clean up, started taking it upon themselves to put things in order. Most cadets routinely stopped to talk to Bill throughout the day and we even began inviting him to our formal squadron functions. He’d show up dressed in a conservative dark suit and quietly talk to those who approached him, the only sign of his heroics being a simple blue, star-spangled lapel pin.

Almost overnight, Bill went from being a simple fixture in our squadron to one of our teammates. Mr. Crawford changed too, but you had to look closely to notice the difference. After that fall day in 1976, he seemed to move with more purpose, his shoulders didn’t seem to be as stooped, he met our greetings with a direct gaze and a stronger “good morning” in return, and he flashed his crooked smile more often. The squadron gleamed as always, but everyone now seemed to notice it more. Bill even got to know most of us by our first names, something that didn’t happen often at the Academy. While no one ever formally acknowledged the change, I think we became Bill’s cadets and his squadron.



As often happens in life, events sweep us away from those in our past. The last time I saw Bill was on graduation day in June 1977. As I walked out of the squadron for the last time he shook my hand and simply said, “Good luck, young man.” With that, I embarked on a career that has been truly lucky and blessed. Mr. Crawford continued to work at the Academy and eventually retired in his native Colorado where he resides today, one of four Medal of Honor winners living in a small town.

A wise person once said, “It’s not life that’s important, but those you meet along the way that make the difference.” Bill was one who made a difference for me. While I haven’t seen Mr. Crawford in over twenty years, he’d probably be surprised to know I think of him often. Bill Crawford, our janitor, taught me many valuable, unforgettable leadership lessons. Here are ten I’d like to share with you.

1. Be Cautious of Labels. Labels you place on people may define your relationship to them and bound their potential. Sadly, and for a long time, we labeled Bill as just a janitor, but he was so much more. Therefore, be cautious of a leader who callously says, "Hey, he's just an Airman." Likewise, don't tolerate the O-1, who says, "I can't do that, I'm just a lieutenant."

2. Everyone Deserves Respect. Because we hung the "janitor" label on Mr. Crawford, we often wrongly treated him with less respect than others around us. He deserved much more, and not just because he was a Medal of Honor winner. Bill deserved respect because he was a janitor, walked among us, and was a part of our team.

3. Courtesy Makes a Difference. Be courteous to all around you, regardless of rank or position. Military customs, as well as common courtesies, help bond a team. When our daily words to Mr. Crawford turned from perfunctory "hellos" to heartfelt greetings, his demeanor and personality outwardly changed. It made a difference for all of us.

4. Take Time to Know Your People. Life in the military is hectic, but that's no excuse for not knowing the people you work for and with. For years a hero walked among us at the Academy and we never knew it. Who are the heroes that walk in your midst?

5. Anyone Can Be a Hero. Mr. Crawford certainly didn't fit anyone's standard definition of a hero. Moreover, he was just a private on the day he won his Medal. Don't sell your people short, for any one of them may be the hero who rises to the occasion when duty calls. On the other hand, it's easy to turn to your proven performers when the chips are down, but don't ignore the rest of the team. Today's rookie could and should be tomorrow's superstar.

6. Leaders Should Be Humble. Most modern day heroes and some leaders are anything but humble, especially if you calibrate your "hero meter" on today's athletic fields. End zone celebrations and self-aggrandizement are what we've come to expect from sports greats. Not Mr. Crawford-he was too busy working to celebrate his past heroics. Leaders would be well-served to do the same.

7. Life Won't Always Hand You What You Think You Deserve. We in the military work hard and, dang it, we deserve recognition, right? However, sometimes you just have to persevere, even when accolades don't come your way. Perhaps you weren't nominated for junior officer or airman of the quarter as you thought you should - don't let that stop you.

8. Don't pursue glory; pursue excellence. Private Bill Crawford didn't pursue glory; he did his duty and then swept floors for a living. No job is beneath a Leader. If Bill Crawford, a Medal of Honor winner, could clean latrines and smile, is there a job beneath your dignity? Think about it.

9. Pursue Excellence. No matter what task life hands you, do it well. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "If life makes you a street sweeper, be the best street sweeper you can be." Mr. Crawford modeled that philosophy and helped make our dormitory area a home.

10. Life is a Leadership Laboratory. All too often we look to some school or PME class to teach us about leadership when, in fact, life is a leadership laboratory. Those you meet everyday will teach you enduring lessons if you just take time to stop, look and listen. I spent four years at the Air Force Academy, took dozens of classes, read hundreds of books, and met thousands of great people. I gleaned leadership skills from all of them, but one of the people I remember most is Mr. Bill Crawford and the lessons he unknowingly taught. Don't miss your opportunity to learn. Bill Crawford was a janitor. However, he was also a teacher, friend, role model and one great American hero. Thanks, Mr. Crawford, for some valuable leadership lessons.

Dale Pyeatt, Executive Director of the National Guard Association of Texas, comments: And now, for the "rest of the story": Pvt William John Crawford was a platoon scout for 3rd Platoon of Company L 1 42nd Regiment 36th Division (Texas National Guard) and won the Medal Of Honor for his actions on Hill 424, just 4 days after the invasion at Salerno.

On Hill 424, Pvt Crawford took out 3 enemy machine guns before darkness fell, halting the platoon's advance. Pvt Crawford could not be found and was assumed dead. The request for his MOH was quickly approved. Major General Terry Allen presented the posthumous MOH to Bill Crawford's father, George, 11 May 1944 in Camp (now Fort) Carson, near Pueblo. Nearly two months after that, it was learned that Pvt Crawford was alive in a POW camp in Germany. During his captivity, a German guard clubbed him with his rifle. Bill overpowered him, took the rifle away, and beat the guard unconscious. A German doctor's testimony saved him from severe punishment, perhaps death. To stay ahead of the advancing Russian army, the prisoners were marched 500 miles in 52 days in the middle of the German winter, subsisting on one potato a day. An allied tank column liberated the camp in the spring of 1945, and Pvt Crawford took his first hot shower in 18 months on VE Day. Pvt Crawford stayed in the army before retiring as a MSG and becoming a janitor. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan officially presented the MOH to Bill Crawford.

William Crawford passed away in 2000. He is the only U.S. Army veteran and sole Medal of Honor winner to be buried in the cemetery of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Editor's Note: After many years of being led down the primrose path of social psychobabble, research has now shown that self-respect is not all that it was touted to be. People with high self respect are usually less successful and are generally narcissistic and uncaring of others and things which do not fulfill them or their view of their just deserts.

High quality people are those who derive confidence in themselves (not the same as self-respect) from HUMBLY caring about other people. These are the people who rise to the occasion when the occasion arises. George Washington was a very humble man but because of that he was the man who led this nation to liberty.

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Where We Get Our Heroes Now?

I was swimming with a friend at the Fort Belvoir Pool this morning. I had not seen her for awhile because she had been out with surgery. Her name is Jane Fuller, she is very active in the anti-abortion efforts of the Belvoir Chapel.

I asked about her husband (last I heard he was in Afghanistan). She said didn't you hear, "He was fired."

He is Major General Peter Fuller who was fired for telling the truth about President Karzai. He identified Karzai as a incompetent ass.

I expressed my sorrow at the news. She said it was not the Army who fired him, it was insisted upon by that wonderful lady, Hillary Clinton. Here is a twenty-five year veteran General officer who was drummed out for telling the truth.

I wish more senior officers would stand up and tell it like it is.

Those who kowtow to the Administration only show their lack of courage. I am angry But we all know the system ~ keep your thoughts to yourself! No room for Generals like Douglas MacArthur and George Patton.

Shared by Bruce Wilder



Chaplain's Corner

"The times, they are a-changing!"

A local newspaper writer's article was about the recent change to Daylight Savings Time and how it messed up his getting up times and the fact it is still dark when it used to be light. This change has affected his dog's routine, even her eating habits. He yearned for the day when change didn't occur.

This got me to thinking of a verb tense in the Greek language called "aorist." We seminarians were taught that God's activity in the world is to be considered in the aorist tense because God's work is past, present, and continues into the future.

In traditional grammatical terminology, the aorist is a "tense", a section of the verb paradigm formed with the same stem across all moods. By contrast, in theoretical linguistics, tense refers to a form that specifies a point in time (past, present, or future). A good example is the verb love. God loved, God loves, and God will continue to love. Another use of the aorist tense was that God created, God creates, and God will continue to create in the future

For us, as members of ARA, times are changing. Our reunion at Fort Rucker in 2008 saw changes in the past, more changes occurred in 2009 in Midland during our business meeting, that continued to our gatherings in 2010 at Bozeman, where we elected a new board of directors. At Charleston last year we made changes to our By-laws. Now we are on course for our reunion in Portland where we will elect yet another new board and see more changes.

Throughout all these changes, past, present, and future, one thing remains constant; we are all ARA members with the same possibilities for continued fellowship, support, and communications daily and annually at our reunions.

Our presence is to be used in the aorist tense. As it was in the beginning of the ARA Association, it remains today, and will continue in the future.

As we promise to each other to be present at our next meeting, God promises to be present with us ~ He was, He is, and He will be!

Let us make that "aorist" promise to be present for and with each other.

Peace,

Bruce Wilder
Chaplain

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WE HELPED ONCE AND CAN AGAIN!

We have received another request for information from Charles Brown who served with Hq/1/5th Cav which was part of 2nd Bde/1st CavDiv. On May 5, 1968 they were operating in the vicinity of LZ Peanuts which was west of Khe Sahn and in close proximity to the Lang Vei SF Camp when they were attacked and

overrun by a large force of NVA. They called for and received support from an ARA element which was instrumental in repelling the attack.

Their historian, John McGuire, is writing an account of this action and would like to get in contact with the ARA unit that provided that support to get their input and also to say thanks for their help.

It would appear that this support would have come from B" Battery/2/20th since they normally supported 2nd Bde but also possible that it could have come from "A" or "C" Batteries. It may have been during the time that the 1st CavDiv was relieving the Marines at Khe Sahn.

If any of our readers can provide input please contact Jesse Hobby and he will pass it on to Brown and McGuire.

I'm sure that you have seen pharmaceutical advertising in doctor's



offices on everything from tissues to note pads This one should get First prize... I e-mailed it to my Japanese urologist: he e-mailed back: "If light stay on more than 4 hour, call Erecrician".

Makes you want to rough out roud

Contact information for Board of Directors – Please add us to your contact list.

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AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

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This form may be used for Applying for New Membership or for Renewing Existing Membership. Please circle that which is appropriate.

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List all ARA Units that you served in.

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Association membership is on an annual basis (unless member opts for life membership) running from January 1 to December 31 and is past due on January 31.

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