



# The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 12 No. 3

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

January—March, 2020

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**“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

This is the  
**season**

This is the  
**reason**



## *President's Corner*

Dear Members, Family Members, Readers, and Guests,

I trust all of you had a Joyful and Blessed Christmas; and here's wishing all of you a Happy, Healthy, Blessed and Prosperous 2020!!!

Our 23rd Annual Aerial Rocket Artillery Association Reunion is at the Holiday Inn Express, 199 East Bay Street, Savannah, Georgia, August 31 - September 4, 2020. Join us in Georgia's oldest city and first capital for a truly unique experience that Ann and Jerry Hipp have planned. I encourage you to make your hotel reservations early by calling 1-912-231-9000 or 1-888-978-6498 and using the code "2020 ARA Reunion" to secure our \$119.00 plus tax and fees rate. Ann and Jerry are working to make this Reunion a relaxing, enjoyable and memorable experience for us all.

A special issue of the Straphanger will be issued with detailed Reunion information and the 2020 registration form.

NOTE: Our website will be down in January updating and refreshing the site.

Please reach out to everyone you know that served in our history making units, and their family members to join us in Savannah.

Billy Wood is performing the painstaking and diligent task of assembling an ARA Association directory so we can better reach out to, and stay connected with, those we know. I highly encourage you to respond to Billy's request for input regarding the directory. This directory is strictly in house and for membership use only. We never know when we may be in a city or county and need the expertise or knowledge of one of our members.

Vice President Jim Castillo is using all means available to him reach those who served in ARA units to invite them to join us in Savannah; and to become members. We will have ARA presence at the VHPA Reunion with a TOC, May 21 - 24, 2019 at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, Denver, CO, as a part of this outreach effort.

The ARA Cobra that served in A Battery, 4/77th is being restored for exhibit in the Field Artillery Museum at Fort Sill. This restoration is near completion with wings, rocket pods, and nose turret attached. Museum Director Gordon Blaker is seeking ARA Vets in the Fort Sill Area to help with final restoration projects. Those willing to assist; please contact Gordon at the Field Artillery Museum, Phone 1-580-442-1819.

Speaking of Fort Sill; there is the ongoing project to capture ARA history at the Morris Sweet Library. Please send copies of any ARA history in your possession; written or audio, to:

MORRIS SWEET LIBRARY, 730 SCHIMMELPFENNIG ROAD, FORT SILL, OK 73503

Again, wishing all of you a Happy, Healthy, Blessed and Prosperous New Year!!!

Looking forward to seeing you in Scenic, Historic and Relaxing Savannah!!!

All the Best,

Clovis Jones, Jr.

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## LIVE OAKS AND SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

The 2020 Reunion of the ARA is slated for Savannah, GA, August 31 through September 3. Savannah is one of the most beautiful and enjoyable cities in lower 48 and consequently a huge tourist attraction. Jerry and Ann Hipp, our hosts, have wisely adjusted the usual dates to avoid the high hotel rates inherent in the weekend.

We will set up station at the Holiday Inn Express, Savannah Historic District, 199 East Bay Street (intersection of Bay and Abercorn) which is virtually the center north of old Savannah. Final details on reservations are still being worked out but rooms will be \$119 Sunday 8/30 through Thursday 9/3 (as opposed to \$155 on Friday 8/29 and \$195 on the following weekend 9/4 & 9/5). Savannah is worth a few extra dollars to see at leisure. The rates DO NOT include 13% taxes and a \$6 City Occupancy fee. Parking is available at two nearby city garages at about \$10/night and valet parking only at the hotel for a reduced rate of \$25. Breakfast is included and a hospitality room on the lower level have already been contracted by Herb Hirst, as well as the site of the Farewell Banquet 9/3 ("Vic's on the River" – across the street from the hotel).

The Welcome Banquet will be at world renowned Mrs Wilkes Boarding House. Mrs. Wilkes is normally open for lunch only, 5 days a week, and serves old fashioned Southern food for a fixed price and in a family style (that means large dishes of food for self-service with refills coming as needed. This reporter has eaten there and can vouch for its quality and quantity as well as its ambiance. We have a [special](#) booking there Monday evening at 6 p.m. The menu includes a dozen southern veggies, plus beef stew, pulled pork and fried chicken - ALL YOU WANT! Arrangements will be made for bus/trolley transportation to/from Mrs. Wilkes'. **NOTE: Only 82 can be accommodated so it is first come/first served on the signup.**

Hotel amenities include a rooftop pool overlooking the city and the Savannah River (which is right across the street from the hotel), a full service bar open every evening, use of the Hospitality Room for our annual meeting and the bar area for the Ladies meeting. Some free transportation about the city is available and the hotel is a scheduled stop for all tour companies. Dozens of restaurants are within walking distance.

Reservation phone numbers, attendee codes and other information will be forthcoming expeditiously when it becomes available.

### RECREATION:

We are arranging for a guided trolley tour of the entire Old Historic District for those interested on Tuesday, mid-morning 9/1. The goal is to maximize the time and opportunities for sightseeing as you desire. Tuesday and Wednesday dinners are the attendee's choice and the final official meal is right across the street.

Savannah is a great place to visit and wander about. River cruises are available (lunch and/or dinner buffets included) with the dock within easy walking distance. Also, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum with tours and food available (near Savannah

Airport), several historic forts of earlier wars and Tybee Island National Seashore with lighthouse and beach, etc. There is a big nightlife, many great restaurants and Ghost tours are a part of the scene.

Plans for a visit to Hunter Army Airfield (in Savannah) with tour and dining hall lunch are being developed. It is home to the Combat Aviation Brigade of the US Army Third Infantry Division (currently deployed to the Middle East but with a rear detachment in place). They have an Apache Attack Helicopter Battalion (as close as anything in the modern Army to what we were), the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operation AVIATION regiment (SOAR) and a battalion of the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment.

More in future editions.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** All non-life members are expected to pay their annual dues on Jan 1. The Association has expenses between reunions that must be met to maintain the quality of our gatherings, ie. Upfront deposits on the hotel, banquet sites and transportation, etc. Waiting until you fill out your application for the reunion makes it difficult for the Treasurer.

This is one good reason for becoming a life member. Another reason is the easy installment plan.

If you don't think you have ten years left, "Lấy làm tiếc" (Sorry).

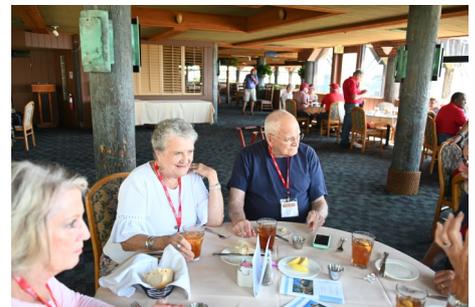
## LUNCH AT THE SAN DIEGO HARBOR



Ann Hipp has the undivided attention of Jerry, Joe Pulano and Billy Wood



Alan Klink listens as Doc Talbot chats with Marilyn McAlister and Rodger disapproves.



Bruce and Patti Wilder share the quiet of early arrival with Mary Tichenell.



The Trevinos and the Hobbys break bread while Claude Gomez hides in the corner,



WOW! We got Claude and Milly out of the corner.



The scenic harbor and a missile cruiser, part of the passing parade of ships.



This replica of schooner serves as a sightseeing boat for the harbor.



No one goes anywhere without the indispensable tugboat.

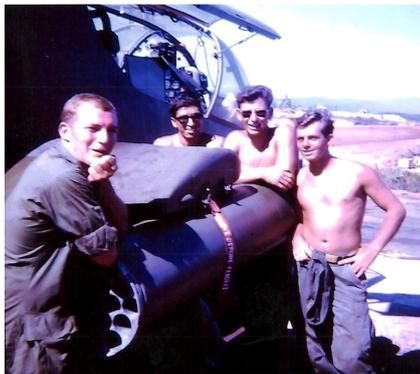


The backbone of the fleet. The presence of the U.S. Navy is impressive!

## HELP WANTED

Jesse Hobby has received an email from, and had a conversation with, Mrs. Tracy Himes, whose brother Larry Smith, served with A 2/20th from August 1967—January 1969. She is in the process of publishing a book entitled **"99 Letters from 'Nam"**. There will be four or five pictures that were taken during his tour and she would like our help in identifying the persons in these photos. Her brother is the person on the right in picture #1 and is the person on the left in picture #2. The person wearing glasses in picture #2 (being held up by the other person) and in the center of picture #3 has been identified as Barry Brady. If anyone can identify the other persons in these pictures please contact Ms. Himes at 704-661-2901 or email at [verdemom@gmail.com](mailto:verdemom@gmail.com) or contact me at 229-378-2281 or [jesse\\_hobby@hotmail.com](mailto:jesse_hobby@hotmail.com). There is a Facebook Page: **99 Letters from 'Nam** and a Website: **Tracy Himes.co**

#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



Wayne Sweigard <[wcsweigard@aol.com](mailto:wcsweigard@aol.com)> needs help verifying a injury.

It happened just before Thanksgiving 1970 at FB mace. I do not have an exact date but I have a letter I sent home in November and mentioned it there. We were going out to the ammo dump "I think to load birds" But for some reason the Radio guy "SGT Emound Sledge" jumped in the drivers seat of the mule and was driving. He either hit a berm or a hole or just missed the corner, but ended going up the side of one of the berms and the mule rolled over the top of me but Sledge jumped free. They brought out a jeep ambulance to pick me up and took me to a MASH- like tent to have x-rays. I hurt my back and ankle but mainly just the ankle. They had to put books on each side of my ankle because I just could not hold it up by its self for the x-rays. They decided it was just a bad sprain and sent me back to the Blue Max hooch's with a pair of crutches. I should have gone back to the main base at Bien Hoa but everyone said they would help me with my chores until I was better., so I just sat around the radio shack or bed for a couple of weeks until I could get around. The problem came when I got home and the ankle was still bothering me and I was kind of dragging the foot.. Went to Doctor at home and after many different X-rays he said I had broken my ankle and there were bone chips causing my pain. He said it was too late to do anything about it now so about all I've done over the years is to wear high top lace boots for support and some pain killers. The VA says there is no medical records or anything to prove my claim. And there is not-- other than letters to home. SGT Sledge and SGT Simons where the Two radio guys-Simons just passed away and I cannot find Sledge anywhere. I'm not sure if there is anyone else that remembers this and maybe it's just not worth the bother. Like most of us I was just glad to make it home in one piece and put it all behind me. Thanks Wayne Sweigard --- {Re-Arm} HHC 229th ASSAULT HELICOPTER BN "STACKED DECK" 1st Cav Div. [Airmobile] along with but not part of the 2nd Battalion 20th artillery Blue Max redesignated F Battery[AFA] 79th Artillery on August 1 1971

# WHEN YOU THINK YOU ARE HAVING A BAD DAY.....

By Cliff Judkins

"Jud, you're on fire, get out of there!"

Needless to say that startling command got my attention. As you will read in this report, this was just the beginning of my problems.

It had all started in the brilliant sunlight 20,000 feet above the Pacific Ocean as I nudged my F-8 Crusader jet into position behind the lumbering, deep-bellied refueling plane. After a moment of jockeying for position, I made the connection and matched my speed to that of the slowpoke tanker. I made the graceful task of plugging into the trailing fuel conduit so they could pump fuel into my tanks.

This in-flight refueling process was necessary, and routine, because the F-8 could not hold enough fuel to fly from California to Hawaii. This routine mission was labeled "Trans-Pac," meaning Flying Airplanes across the Pacific. This had been going on for years.

Soon, after plugging-in to the tanker, my fuel gauges stirred, showing that all was well. In my cockpit, I was relaxed and confident. As I was looking around, I was struck for an instant by the eeriness of the scene: here I was, attached, like an unwanted child, by an umbilicus to a gargantuan mother who was fleeing across the sky at 200 knots as though from some unnamed danger. Far below us was a broken layer of clouds that filtered the sun glare over the Pacific.

In my earphones, I heard Major Van Campen, our flight leader, chatting with Major D.K. Tooker who was on a Navy destroyer down below. Major Tooker had ejected from his aircraft, the day before, in this same area, when his Crusader flamed out mysteriously during the same type of refueling exercise.

At that time no one knew why his aircraft had flamed out. We all supposed it had been some freak accident that sometimes happens with no explanation. One thing we knew for sure, it was not pilot error. This accident had to be some kind of mechanical malfunction, but what? Our squadron had a perfect safety record and was very disturbed because of the loss of an airplane the day before.

"Eleven minutes to mandatory disconnect point," the tanker commander said.

I checked my fuel gages again, everything appeared normal.

My thoughts were, "In a few hours I knew we'd all be having dinner at the Kaneohe Officers Club on Oahu, Hawaii. Then after a short rest, we'd continue our 6,000-mile trek to Atsugi, Japan, via Midway and Wake Island." Our whole outfit - Marine All Weather Fighter Squadron 323 - was being transferred to the Far East for a one-year period of operations.

"Nine minutes to mandatory disconnect."

My fuel gages indicated that the tanks were almost full. I noticed that my throttle lever was sticking a little. That was unusual, because the friction lock was holding it in place and was loose enough. It grew tighter as I tried to manipulate it gently.

Then - thud! I heard the crack of an explosion.

I could see the rpm gauge unwinding and the tailpipe temperature dropping. The aircraft had lost power - the engine had quit running - this is a flame-out!

I punched the mike button, and said, "This is Jud. I've got a flame-out!"

Unfortunately, my radio was already dead; I was neither sending nor receiving anything via my radio.

I quickly disconnected from the tanker and nosed the aircraft over, into a shallow dive, to pick up some flying speed to help re-start the engine. I needed a few seconds to think.

I yanked the handle that extended the air-driven emergency generator, called the Ram Air Turbine (RAT), into the slipstream, hoping to get ignition for an air start. The igniters clicked gamely, and the rpm indicator started to climb slowly, as did the tailpipe temperature. This was a positive indication that a re-start was beginning. For one tantalizing moment I thought everything would be all right. But the rpm indicator hung uncertainly at 30 percent of capacity and refused to go any faster. This is not nearly enough power to maintain flight.

The fire warning light (pilots call it the panic light) blinked on. This is not a good sign. And to make matters worse, jet fuel poured over the canopy like water from a bucket. At the same instant, my radio came back on, powered by the emergency generator, and a great babble of voices burst through my earphones.

"Jud, you're on fire, get out of there.!!"

Fuel was pouring out of my aircraft; from the tailpipe; from the intake duct; from under the wings, and igniting behind me in a great awesome trail of fire

The suddenness of the disaster overwhelmed me, and I thought: "This can't be happening to me!"

The voices in my ears kept urging me to fire the ejection seat and abandon my aircraft.

I pressed my mike button and told the flight leader, "I'm getting out!"

I took my hands off the flight controls and reached above my head for the canvas curtain that would start the ejection sequence. I pulled it down hard over my face and waited for the tremendous kick in the pants, which would send me rocketing upward, free of the aircraft.

Nothing happened! The canopy, which was designed to jettison in the first part of the ejection sequence did not move. It was still in place and so was I.

My surprise lasted only a second. Then I reached down between my knees for the alternate ejection-firing handle, and gave it a vigorous pull. Again, nothing happened. This was very surprising. Both, the primary, and the secondary ejection procedures had failed and I was trapped in the cockpit of the burning aircraft.

The plane was now in a steep 60-degree dive. For the first time, I felt panic softening the edges of my determination. I knew that I had to do something or I was going to die in this sick airplane. There was no way out of it. With great effort, I pulled my thoughts together and tried to imagine some solution.

A voice in my earphones was shouting: "Ditch the plane! Ditch it in the ocean!"

It must have come from the tanker skipper or one of the destroyer commanders down below, because every jet pilot knows you can't ditch a jet and survive. The plane would hit the water at a very high a speed, flip over and sink like a stone and they usually explode on impact.

I grabbed the control stick and leveled the aircraft. Then I yanked the alternate handle again in an attempt to fire the canopy and start the ejection sequence, but still nothing happened. That left me with only one imaginable way out, which was to jettison the canopy manually and try to jump from the aircraft without aid of the ejection seat.

Was such a thing possible? I was not aware of any Crusader pilot who had ever used this World War II tactic to get out of a fast flying jet. I had been told that this procedure, of bailing out of a jet, was almost impossible. Yes, the pilot may get out of the airplane but the massive 20-foot high tail section is almost certain to strike the pilot's body and kill him before he falls free of the aircraft. My desperation was growing, and any scheme that offered a shred of success seemed better than riding that aircraft into the sea, which would surely be fatal.

I disconnected the canopy by hand, and with a great whoosh it disappeared from over my head never to be seen again. Before trying to get out of my confined quarters, I trimmed the aircraft to fly in a kind of sidelong skid: nose high and with the tail swung around slightly to the right.

Then I stood up in the seat and put both arms in front of my face. I was sucked out harshly from the airplane. I cringed as I tumbled outside the bird, expecting the tail to cut me in half, but thank goodness, that never happened!

In an instant I knew I was out of there and uninjured.

I waited . . . and waited . . . until my body, hurtling through space, with the 225 knots of momentum started to decelerate. I pulled the D-ring on my parachute, which is the manual way to open the chute if the ejection seat does not work automatically. I braced myself for the opening shock. I heard a loud pop above me, but I was still falling very fast. As I looked up I saw that the small pilot chute had deployed. (This small chute is designed to keep the pilot from tumbling until the main chute opens.) But, I also noticed a sight that made me shiver with disbelief and horror! The main, 24-foot parachute was just flapping in the breeze and was tangled in its own shroud lines. It hadn't opened! I could see the white folds neatly arranged, fluttering feebly in the air.

"This is very serious," I thought.

Frantically, I shook the risers in an attempt to balloon the chute and help it open. It didn't work. I pulled the bundle down toward me and wrestled with the shroud lines, trying my best to get the chute to open. The parachute remained closed. All the while I am falling like a rock toward the ocean.

I looked down hurriedly. There was still plenty of altitude remaining. I quickly developed a frustrating and sickening feeling. I wanted everything to halt while I collected my thoughts, but my fall seemed to accelerate. I noticed a ring of turbulence in the ocean. It looked like a big stone had been thrown in the water. It had white froth at its center; I finally realized this is where my plane had crashed in the ocean.

"Would I be next to crash?" were my thoughts!

Again, I shook the parachute risers and shroud lines, but the rushing air was holding my chute tightly in a bundle. I began to realize that I had done all I could reasonably do to open the chute and it was not going to open. I was just along for a brutal ride that may kill or severely injure me.

I descended rapidly through the low clouds. Now there was only clear sky between me and the ocean. This may be my last view of the living. I have no recollection of positioning myself properly or even bracing for the impact... In fact, I don't remember hitting the water at all. At one instant I was falling very fast toward the ocean. The next thing I remember is hearing a shrill, high-pitched whistle that hurt my ears.

Suddenly, I was very cold. In that eerie half-world of consciousness, I thought, "Am I alive?" I finally decided, and not all at once, "Yes, I think I am . . . I am alive!"

The water helped clear my senses. But as I bounced around in the water I began coughing and retching. The Mae West around my waist had inflated. I concluded that the shrill whistling sound that I had heard was the gas leaving the CO2 cylinders as it was filling the life vest.

A sense of urgency gripped me, as though there were some task I ought to be performing. Then it dawned on me what it was. The parachute was tugging at me from under the water. It had finally billowed out (much too late) like some Brobdingnagian Portuguese man-of-war. I tried reaching down for my hunting knife located in the knee pocket of my flight suit. I had to cut the shroud lines of the chute before it pulled me under for good. This is when I first discovered that I was injured severely. The pain was excruciating. Was my back broken? I tried to arch it slightly and felt the pain again. I tried moving my feet, but that too was impossible. They were immobile, and I could feel the bones in them grating against each other.

There was no chance of getting that hunting knife, but I had another, smaller one in the upper torso of my flight suit. With difficulty, I extracted it and began slashing feebly at the spaghetti-like shroud line mess surrounding me

Once free of the parachute, I began a tentative search for the survival pack. It contained a one-man life raft, some canned water, food, fishing gear, and dye markers. The dye markers colored the water around the pilot to aid the rescue team in finding a down airman. All of this survival equipment should have been strapped to my hips. It was not there. It had been ripped away from my body upon impact with the water.

"How long would the Mae West sustain me?" I wondered.

I wasn't sure, but I knew I needed help fast. The salt water that I had swallowed felt like an enormous rock in the pit of my gut. But worst of all, here I was, completely alone, 600 miles from shore, lolling in the deep troughs and crests of the Pacific Ocean. And my Crusader aircraft, upon which had been lavished such affectionate attention, was sinking thousands of feet to the bottom of the ocean.

At that moment, I was struck by the incredible series of coincidences that had just befallen me. I knew that my misfortune had been a one-in-a-million occurrence. In review, I noted that the explosion aloft should not have happened. The ejection mechanism should have worked. The parachute should have opened. None of these incidents should have happened.. I had just experienced three major catastrophes in one flight. My squadron had a perfect safety record. "Why was all of this happening?" was my thinking.

In about ten minutes I heard the drone of a propeller-driven plane. The pot-bellied, four-engine tanker came into view, flying very low. They dropped several green dye markers near me, and some smoke flares a short distance from my position. They circled overhead and dropped an inflated life raft about 50 yards from me.

I was so pleased and tried to swim toward the raft. When I took two strokes, I all most blacked out due to the intense pain in my body. The tanker circled again and dropped another raft closer to me, but there was no way for me to get to it, or in it, in my condition.

The water seemed to be getting colder, and a chill gripped me. I looked at my watch, but the so-called unbreakable crystal was shattered and the hands torn away. I tried to relax and surrender to the Pacific Ocean swells. I could almost have enjoyed being buoyed up to the crest of one swell and gently sliding into the trough of the next, but I was in such excruciating pain. I remembered the words W.C. Fields had chosen for his epitaph: "On the whole, I'd rather be in Philadelphia."

In about an hour, a Coast Guard amphibian plane flew over and circled me as though deciding whether or not to land. But the seas were high and I knew he couldn't make it. He came in very low and dropped another raft; this one had a 200-foot lanyard attached to it. The end of the lanyard landed barely ten feet from me. I paddled gently backward using only my arms. I caught hold of it and pulled the raft to me. Even before trying, I knew I couldn't crawl into the raft due to my physical condition. I was able to get a good grip on its side and hold on. This gave me a little security.

The Coast Guard amphibian gained altitude and flew off. (I learned later that he headed for a squadron of minesweepers that was returning to the United States from a tour of the Western Pacific. He was unable to tune to their radio frequency for communications. But this ingenious pilot lowered a wire from his aircraft and dragged it across the bow of the minesweeper, the USS Embattle. The minesweeper captain understood the plea, and veered off at top speed in my direction.)

I was fully conscious during the two and a half hours it took the ship to reach me. I spotted the minesweeper while teetering at the crest of a wave. Soon, its great bow was pushing in toward me and I could see sailors in orange lifejackets crowding its life-lines. A bearded man in a black rubber suit jumped into the water and swam to me.

"Are you hurt?" he asked.

"Yes," I said. "My legs and back."

I was now very cold and worried about the growing numbness in my legs. Perhaps the imminence of rescue made me light-headed, for I only vaguely remember being hoisted aboard the ship. I was laid out on the ship's deck as they cut away my flight suit.

"Don't touch my legs! Don't touch my legs!" I screamed.

I don't remember it. Somebody gave me a shot of morphine and this erased part of my extreme pain.

An hour or so later a man was bending over me and asking questions. (It was a doctor who had been high-lined over from the USS Los Angeles, a cruiser that had been operating in the area.)

He said, "You have a long scar on your abdomen. How did it get there?"

I told him about a serious auto accident I'd had four years earlier in Texas, and that my spleen had been removed at that time.

He grunted, and asked more questions while he continued examining me. Then he said, "You and I are going to take a little trip over to the USS Los Angeles; it's steaming alongside."

Somehow they got me into a wire stretcher, and hauled me, dangling and dipping, across the watery interval between the Embattle and the cruiser.

In the Los Angeles's sickbay, they gave me another shot of morphine, thank God, and started thrusting all sorts of hoses into my body. I could tell from all the activity, and from the intense, hushed voices, that they were very worried about my condition.

My body temperature was down to 94 degrees; my intestines and kidneys were in shock. The doctors never left my side during the night.. They took my blood pressure every 15 minutes. I was unable to sleep. Finally, I threw-up about a quart or more of seawater. After this my nausea was relieved a bit.

By listening to the medical team, who was working on me, I was able to piece together the nature of my injuries. This is what I heard them saying. My left ankle was broken in five places. My right ankle was broken in three places.. A tendon in my left foot was cut. My right pelvis was fractured. My number 7 vertebra was fractured. My left lung had partially collapsed. There were many cuts and bruises all over my face and body, and, my intestines and kidneys had been shaken into complete inactivity.

The next morning Dr. Valentine Rhodes told me that the Los Angeles was steaming at flank speed to a rendezvous with a helicopter 100 miles from Long Beach, California.

At 3:30 that afternoon, I was hoisted into the belly of a Marine helicopter from the USS Los Angeles's fantail, and we whirred off to a hospital ship, the USS Haven, docked in Long Beach, CA.

Once aboard the Haven, doctors came at me from all sides with more needles, tubes, and X-ray machines. Their reaction to my condition was so much more optimistic than I had expected. I finally broke down and let go a few tears of relief, exhaustion, and thanks to all hands and God.

Within a few months I was all systems go again. My ankles were put back in place with the help of steel pins. The partially collapsed left lung re-inflated and my kidneys and intestines were working again without the need of prodding.

The Marine Corps discovered the cause of my flame-out, and that of Major Tooker, the day before, was the failure of an automatic cut-off switch in the refueling system. The aircraft's main fuel tank was made of heavy reinforced rubber. When the cut-off switch failed, this allowed the tank to overfill and it burst like a balloon. This then caused the fire and flameout. We will never know why the ejection seat failed to work since it is in the bottom of the ocean. The parachute failure is a mystery also. Like they say, "Some days you are the dog and others you are the fire-plug."

Do I feel lucky? That word doesn't even begin to describe my feelings. To survive a 15,000-foot fall with an unopened chute is a fair enough feat. My mind keeps running back to something Dr. Rhodes told me in the sickbay of the Los Angeles during those grim and desperate hours.

He said that if I had had a spleen, it almost certainly would have ruptured when I hit the water, and I would have bled to death. Of the 25 pilots in our squadron, I am the only one without a spleen. It gives me something to think about. Maybe it does you as well.

Cliff Judkins

[Author's Note: Amazingly, Cliff Judkins not only survived this ordeal but he also returned to flight status. He was flying the F-8 Crusader again within six months after the accident. After leaving the Marine Corps he was hired as a pilot with Delta Air Lines and retired as a Captain from that position.



**Clings to Life Raft Until Rescued**  
**Pilot Survives 3-Mile Fall**

LONG BEACH, Calif. (UPI)—A Marine pilot, who plunged 3,000 feet from a crippled jet fighter near the ocean when his parachute failed to open was in critical condition today.

The Navy said Lt. Cliff J. Jenkins III, 26, Atlanta, was being treated aboard a hospital ship here for broken legs and possible back and internal injuries sustained in the fall Wednesday.

Not until Thursday was it learned that his parachute failed to open after he bailed out of his F4U Corsair jet about 600 miles off the coast.

He and another Marine pilot, Maj. Donald E. Towner, 37, San Diego, whose F4U Corsair crashed Tuesday in a similar accident, were flown by helicopter from the Cruiser USS Los Angeles to the hospital ship here Thursday.

Rear Adm. Ralph E. Johnson, commander of ground-destroyer Flotilla II, told of Jenkins' experience after his flagship, the Los Angeles, docked.

"THE PARACHUTE CAME out but didn't open, so he dropped virtually three miles without anything to stop him," Johnson said.

"He didn't lose consciousness throughout the fall or when he hit the water," the admiral said.

He said Jenkins swam to a life raft dropped from an aerial tanker, but it was nearly three hours before he was picked up by a mine sweeper. He then was transferred to the Los Angeles.

Both fighters apparently caught fire during refueling exercises. Tanker spent without incident and was rescued after about 30 minutes in the water.

Jenkins, whose wife, Harriet, lives in Atlanta, was with the all-weather Fighter Squadron 323 at El Toro Marine Air Station some 50 miles north of Los Angeles.

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**Just something to think about... What IF the country votes Democrat in 2020 ??**

**Democrat Platform Suggestions for 2020**

- 1 Fred Stevens, a welder, and Joe Frisco, a bartender, neither of whom went to college, will have to pay off the student loans for Eric, an Art History major, and Emma, a Gender Studies major, because they cannot get jobs. (Elizabeth Warren)
- 2 Yusef Hussein, who killed 23 children by bombing their school, will be allowed to vote from prison. (Bernie Sanders)
- 3 Grace Thompson, who worked hard for 47 years, must give up her employer furnished medical plan and join the National Health plan. (The whole slate)
- 4 La'Darius Washington, who has never had a regular job, will receive a monthly income from the federal government to spend as he pleases. (Amy Klobuchar)
- 5 Billy White, age 16, who has trouble with subject/verb agreement in English class, still has trouble with fractions in math class, and who thinks Judge Judy is on the Supreme Court, will get to vote. (Kirsten Gillibrand)
- 6 Stan Billings, an avid deer hunter, will have his semi-automatic rifle (fires one shot each time you pull the trigger) taken away, or go to jail, because it looks like an AR 15. (Eric Swalwell)
- 7 Sven Johannson, whose grandfather immigrated to the US in 1953, will have to pay reparations to Sha'lyndia Jefferson because she THINKS her great-great-great grandfather MIGHT HAVE BEEN a slave. (Cory Booker)
- 8 Thomas Finch, who is an ambitious and motivated adult, cannot get a job because he doesn't want to join a labor union. (Kamala Harris)
- 9 Sammy Thomas, a farmer, will no longer be able to haul his crops to market in his 3/4 ton diesel pick-up, but will have to make 43 trips in his Toyota Prius. (The whole slate)
10. The population of the US will become 76.4% Hispanic because all of the existing border wall will be torn down. (Beto O'Rourke)
11. NONE OF THIS WILL MATTER BECAUSE THE WORLD IS GOING TO END IN TWELVE YEARS. (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez)

Have you ever noticed that Rolls Royce and Bentley don't have commercials?  
**REASON:** They know the value of their product brings customers to them.  
**LESSON:** When you know your value, you don't have to beg people to like you, to be your mate, to spend time with you or to love you.  
 Be confident in who you are.  
 Everyone can't afford the LUXURY of your friendship.



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## **ATTENTION ALL ARA MEN:**

**DO NOT DELETE THIS PUBLICATION UNTIL ALL SPOUSES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AND COMPANIONS HAVE READ IT. THE INFORMATION IS FOR ALL IN THE FAMILY.**

**BE ADVISED! ALL DUES ARE DUE IN JANUARY:**

**NOT DISTRIBUTED OVER THE YEAR.**

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOU CONSIDER LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR \$250 WHICH CAN BE PAID IN 5 CONVENIENT PAYMENTS OF \$50.**

**PAID IN ONE YEAR—NOT OVER FIVE YEARS!!**



## Chaplain's Corner

### *“Disillusioned, but not without Hope”*

When Patti and I started the Lutheran Mission Church in Haymarket, Virginia in November 1993, I was ready for the challenge. By the fall of 1994, I was running on empty and expressed this concern to my supervising pastor, Reverend Jarrett Hanson. He looked at me and said, “I understand your plight. You have given this mission start all of your energy and time and there is not much to show for it materially. You have about 35 new members for worship each Sunday and you need one hundred in order to charter. I know your may be disillusioned, but never without hope!”

Yes, Jarrett was right. I was working on my schedule and not God's schedule. I expected the people of Haymarket and surrounding communities to flock to Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church the moment they heard the word of a new church start. I had knocked on over 1000 doors the first year of the mission church's life and only saw three families join.

I changed my focus to the existing members and the church's programming. I concentrated on my sermons to ensure that I was true to the Gospel in my preaching, ministered to the families in crisis, and the church started an afternoon educational program in conjunction with the local elementary school to help students in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic. Slowly, the church began to grow in numbers. By the end of 1996, we had over a hundred members and could charter as a new congregation in the Metro Washington, D.C. Synod. The growth had come by word of mouth from the existing 35 members and the families we touched by our participation in the local community.

What happened reminded me of the movie The Shawshank Redemption when Andy Dufresne said, “Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies.” God planted Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Haymarket, Virginia for a reason. It was a good thing and we had the faith to believe. Shepherd of the Hills did charter in January 1997 and built it first church building in Haymarket in June 2013 and today are in the process of building their second phase. Hope is the longing for that which we confess and believe. Hope is a good thing indeed!

Peace, Bruce



Shepherd of the Hills

## *Final Flight*

### *CW2 Frederick G. "Ted" Rist III*



Ted Rist

He graduated from North Royalton High School in 1962 and joined the US Army, attending and graduating from Flight Classes 67-17 and 67-19. He served in Vietnam, in HHC 15 MED 1 CAV (68) and B/2/20 ARA 1 CAV (68).

He received the Silver Star for bravery and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

After his military service, he started his flying career, which included being the pilot for Nelson Rockefeller when he was vice president. He flew all over the world for Time Magazine and Sports Illustrated for many years and the last 10 years before retiring he flew for the Boston Red Sox.

Ted and his brother had the opportunity to fly fish in many parts of the world with some great friends. His three favorite things were fly fishing, upland bird hunting and playing polo.

Ted was also an avid reader and in 2012, Ted published a book titled, “Mystic Dancer,” which is available on Amazon, about a pilot in Southeast Asia during the war in Vietnam. The book is based on real events and the main theme is about the secret war the U.S. fought in Laos. Some of the characters are based on real people who were there at that time but have been changed to fit the story.

# Ladies of the Association

Dear Ladies of ARA,

I am hoping that at this time that each of you is looking forward and getting excited about the holiday season. I am very excited considering this is the first holiday that I will be spending with my husband, Clovis Jones, Jr.

I have become friends with some of you ladies on Facebook. We have shared information about our families and especially our grandchildren. This is a great tool for communicating with each other, but feel free to email me any news you want to include in the Straphanger.

Please remember to order your shirts and/or visor to have for our convention in Savannah, GA, August 31- September 4.

We will make sure each of you receive an itinerary of the schedule in Savannah. As soon as we know something it will be sent to each of you.

I hope and pray everyone will have a wonderful, joyous holiday season. Enjoy your loved ones and be safe.

Diane Jones

## Email addresses for the ladies

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**Remember, if you lose a sock in the dryer, it comes back as a Tupperware lid that doesn't fit any of your containers.**

**I DON'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT PEOPLE I JUST RANDOMLY REMEMBER THINGS & GET REALLY EXCITED**

**I had my patience tested.  
I'm negative.**

# Who's Not Afraid of Alzheimer's ?

## An Important Test

In the following analysis the French Professor Bruno Dubois, Director of the Institute of Memory and Alzheimer's Disease (IMMA) at La Pitié-Salpêtrière - Paris Hospitals, addresses the subject in a rather reassuring way: "If anyone is aware of his memory problems, he does not have Alzheimer's."

1. I forget the names of families ..
2. I do not remember where I put some things ...

It often happens in people 60 years and older so that they complain that they lack memory. "The information is always in the brain, it is the "processor" that is lacking. "This is "Anosognosia" or temporary forgetfulness. Half of people 60 and older have some symptoms that are due to age rather than disease .

The most common symptoms are:

- forgetting the name of a person,
- going to a room in the house and not remembering why we were going there ...
- a blank memory for a movie title or actor, or an actress,
- a waste of time searching where we left our glasses or keys ...

After 60 years most people have such a difficulty, which indicates that it is not a disease but rather a characteristic due to the passage of years

Many people are concerned about these oversights hence, the importance of the following statement: "Those who are conscious of being forgetful have no serious problem of memory."

"Those who suffer from a memory illness or Alzheimer's, are not aware of what is happening." Professor Dubois reassures the majority of people concerned about their oversights: "The more we complain about memory loss, the less likely we are to suffer from memory sickness.

Now for a little neurological test:

### Only use your eyes!

1- Find the C in the table below!

OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO  
OO

2- If you have already found the C,

Then find the 6 in the table below.

999  
999  
999  
699  
999  
999

3- Now find the N in the table below.

Attention, it's a little more difficult!

MMNM  
MM  
MM  
MM  
MM  
MM

If you pass these three tests without problem:- you can cancel your annual visit to the neurologist.- your brain is in perfect shape!- you are far from having any relationship with Alzheimer's



ORDER FORM FOR APPAREL, CAPS, PATCHES, STICK-ONS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

CAPS, Men's, come in one size (has adjustable headband) and will have the ARA Logo embroidered on the front and can have your name on the right side and call sign on the left side, if desired. Cost will be \$10.00

Print name as you want it to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

Print call sign as you want it to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

CAPS, Women's, come in one size and in two (2) styles – Short brim and low profile or as a Headband (both have adjustable headband) and will have the ARA Logo embroidered on the front and can have your name on the right side, if desired. If you would like to give yourself a call sign such as DRAGON LADY, LADY TORO, GRIFFIN MISTRESS, BLUE MAX MISTRESS, FALCONESS that can be put on the left sign. Cost will be \$10.00

Print name as you want it to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

Print call sign as you want it to appear: \_\_\_\_\_

Shirts for men and women are available in sizes Small, Medium, Large, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL, and 5XL and will have the ARA Logo embroidered on the left side.

Men's Polo Shirt(s) - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_  
# ordered

Women's Polo Shirt(s) - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_  
# ordered

Women's Long or 3/4 Sleeve Button Shirt(s) - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$25.00 = \_\_\_\_\_ Size \_\_\_\_\_  
# ordered

Patches, Cloth – \_\_\_\_\_ X \$5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify Unit

Bumper Stickers - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$2.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify Unit

Patches, Stickers - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$1.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Specify Unit

Please add 7% GA ST and \$14.35 shipping charge to your order:

**TOTAL =** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send form and check(s) made payable to **ARA ASSOCIATION** to:**

**ARA ASSOCIATION**

**c/o Herbert L. Hirst**

**P.O. Box 220**

**North Plains, OR 97133-0220**



## AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

### Membership Application/Renewal Form

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Wife's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

(At time of service in ARA)

(If known)

Retired Rank (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ Service Number \_\_\_\_\_

List all ARA Units that you served in.

<u>Battery/Battalion</u>	<u>Dates of Service</u>	<u>Call Sign</u>
_____	From mo/yr to mo/yr	_____
_____	From mo/yr to mo/yr	_____

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street or PO Box

\_\_\_\_\_

City	State	Zip Code
------	-------	----------

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Home

Work (if okay)

Cell

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**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.**

Annual dues are **\$25.00** regardless of when submitting.

Life membership (if paid in full) is **\$250.00**. Life membership may also be paid in **\$50.00** installments on a quarterly basis until paid in full.

Total amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_ (Please indicate in remarks section of check whether this is Initial Membership, Membership Renewal, Life Membership in full, Life Membership payment #.

Mail completed application to: Aerial Rocket Artillery Association

C/O Herbert L. Hirst

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Check Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Date Rcvd \_\_\_\_\_

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