



# The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 13 No. 1

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July-September, 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

## “THESE ARE THE TIMES THAT TRY MEN’S SOULS”

### ‘The American Crisis No. 1’ by Thomas Paine



#### *President’s Corner*

Dear Members, Family Members, Readers and Guests,

It is my sincere desire that all of you and your Loved Ones are safe, well, healthy, prepared, and protected as the first wave of COVID-19 infections. This virus has gotten a second wind and is on the increase in 35 of our 50 states, including Georgia. I highly encourage you to use your skills, wisdom, insight, resources, and knowledge to protect yourselves and your family because the challenges are so varied from place to place and it is up to us to protect ourselves.

The Board of Directors met via Zoom conference on June 2<sup>nd</sup> and decided to postpone the Savannah Reunion until August 30 – September 3, 2021 with the same schedule and hotel. Ann and Jerry Hipp have reset the Reunion for this timeline with accommodations at the Holiday Inn Express, 199 E. Bay Street, Savannah, GA 31401.

Those of you who made reservations at the Holiday Inn for our 2020 Reunion; please cancel your reservation by calling 1-912-231-9000.

Jule Szabo, our Virginia Reunion Host, was on the Zoom conference and this Reunion has been rescheduled for September 14 – 18, 2022. Jule has been working on this Reunion for years so ARA would be recognized at the Army Museum. Further details will be presented at our 2021 Reunion.

Billy Wood has completed the directory agreed upon at our San Diego Reunion and it is being produced as of this writing. Billy did an awesome job of collecting information, sorting, and assembling this document. A hard copy will be mailed to each member as well as an electronic copy emailed.

On to more good news for ARA... Cobra 15654 has been restored, rolled out, and placed in the Field Artillery Museum at Fort Sill. An article was published in Vertical Magazine entitled “An old Cobra returns to its artillery roots and finds a new home in Oklahoma”. The Cobra is on a pedestal in the Vietnam section with a display case showing cutaways of the 2.75 inch rockets we used. Museum Curator and Director Gordon A. Blaker is in need of a 300 – 500 word history of ARA to be used

on a panel so visitors get a summary of what ARA was. Jesse Hobby is working to collect, compile, and condense our history to fit on this panel. In particular, if you have information regarding the ARA Battery that operated at Fort Sill from 1971 to 1973, please pass this information along to Jesse.

Another case is being made to display items such as the pilot's gunsight, a grease pencil for marking windscreen, a mapbook with Cobra drawn on cover, ARA patches. Anything else you can think of that should be in there?" If you have any of these items or know where a gunsight can be located, please send or pass on this information to Gordon at:

Gordon A. Blaker  
Director/Curator  
U.S. Army Artillery Museum  
238 Randolph Road  
Fort Sill, OK 73503  
Email: [Gordon.a.blaker.civ@mail.mil](mailto:Gordon.a.blaker.civ@mail.mil)

Work: 580-442-1819  
Mobile: 303-854-7598

Jim Mitsche is spearheading a Zoom conference on July 23, 2020 of ARA pilots, Air Force FACs, Special Operations soldiers, and VHPA Historian Mike Sloniker to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1970 Emergency Rescue of Special Ops troops in Laos. The helicopter that Jim flew on this mission was 68-17058. Cobra 058 was involved in three separate emergency rescues via the ammo bay doors. One was flying C Battery Commander, Major Lida and CW2 Loren Gee out of the Ashau Valley after being shot down in their Cobra. This Cobra is now on a pedestal at Yuma Proving Grounds, Arizona.

This Zoom conference is an effort to further capture the history of the 4/77<sup>th</sup> and to connect its legacy to the formation of the 160<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne). Assets and tactics of the 4/77<sup>th</sup> were an integral part of the formation of the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR. The 4/77<sup>th</sup> was deeply involved in Special Operations missions in Vietnam. The goal of this video conference is to capture more ARA history to be preserved at the Field Artillery Center, Field Artillery Museum and Library of Congress.

Remember to send copies of your books, notes, journals, mission briefings, personal accounts of missions; and audio recordings to the Morris Swett Library to be archived to document ARA's history. Send to:  
**Morris Swett Library, 730 SCHIMMELPFENNIG ROAD, FORT SILL, OK 73503**

Blessings to you and your families. **STAY SAFE, WELL, HEALTHY, AND PROTECTED!!!**  
All the Best,  
Clovis Jones, Jr.  
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## The Best Laid Plans.....

The sun was shining, the sky was a cloudless blue and all the weather reports were positive. The destination was laid on for Savannah, GA and the 23rd annual ARA reunion. Jerry and Ann Hipp had scouted out hotel accommodations and venues for dinners and sightseeing. What could go wrong?

Suddenly a dark cloud appeared on the horizon bringing with it sickness, death and an imminent threat to our fellowship in Savannah. This cloud, unlike any that had been seen before (as it was not natural, but man made) concentrated its wrath on those who had lived long enough to have seen the horrors of Vietnam and who may bear in their bodies the scars obtained from such longevity. It created an aura of doubt as to whether we could continue our mission.

Headquarters, ever hopeful and optimistic, carefully gathered intelligence, weighed the pros and cons, and withheld a final start order. The LZ was under siege of COVID-19, as was the rest of the nation. Due to governmental restrictions, closures of venues and accommodations, it appeared that the target was unapproachable and unattainable. A decision to launch or abort was fast becoming mandatory. The Commander huddled electronically with his staff and the final decision was made. The dangers and difficulties of the mission demanded caution and abandonment.

But, FEAR NOT! Jerry and Ann Hipp our stalwart scouts and S-3's were on site and immediately leapt into action, resealing the accommodations with Holiday Inn Express at the exact same prices for almost the same dates. The 23rd ARA Reunion will held in Savannah, GA August 30 through September 3, 2021—with availability for those who wish it from August 28-September 5, 2021. IF YOU MADE A RESERVATION FOR 2020, YOU MUST CANCEL IT PER PHONE OR ONLINE. You can do that while you make your reservation for 2021. (1-912-231-9000 or 1-888-978-6498) .

As we speak our hosts, the Hipps, are working on the other venues which had to be cancelled. They will do all possible to rebuild the great reunion which was planned.

Speaking of great reunions, your Editor received the following message from a former reunion location.

To the 2020 ARA Association Board of Directors –

“I am the new Director of Sales for the Homewood Suites in Lawton, OK. I was reviewing our past group agreements and noticed we hosted you and your association for your annual meeting and to celebrate an anniversary at Fort Sill back in September of 2018. Well, to be honest this led me down a rabbit hole on your website of reading your newsletter and checking out the photos you have posted. I just wanted to take the time to thank you all for your service and for putting the work into this website and association (especially the bits of humor I found throughout). I know it’s not veterans day or some other holiday, but that is exactly my point. You all deserve to be honored every day. I hope your event in Georgia is worked out soon if you have not already met up. Please travel safe. I hope you will keep us in mind for a future visit. We would be more than honored to have veterans like you staying with us again. Please let us know if we can serve you in any way possible”.

Signed Colby Ingram

This not the first time hotels have been glad to have us.

## NEWS

News from Jule:

The virus halted the work on the U.S. Army Museum, so it will not be ready for us in 2021

As of the board decision last night to cancel the 2020 reunion and push back both reunions one year. The ARA 2022 Virginia Reunion Dates will be 14 Sept - 18 Sept 2022

Breakdown of dates and major events as follows:

- 14 Sept Welcome
- 15 Sept Visit Vietnam Memorial and Army Museum; Welcome Dinner
- 16 Sept Visit Smithsonian Udvar-Hazy Museum
- 17 Sept Board/Membership meeting and Farwell Dinner
- 18 Sept Depart for home

I have moved the ARA reunion photos to a new web site called "Flickr" since we could not get people login or with difficulty on the google web site.

•Go to the Flickr web page, "Sign in" center white box title “Choose an account”; click on “Use another Account” ([https://identity.flickr.com/account\\_picker](https://identity.flickr.com/account_picker))

•Enter login, click next Login: [arareunionphotos@gmail.com](mailto:arareunionphotos@gmail.com) –•

Enter Password, then click “sign in” ([click off remember email address if do not want it to remember](#)) –

Password: **Rocket2020#\$**

•A page will appear, go to **top and click on the word “You” and then scroll down to “Photostream”** That will take you to the photos for 2019 ARA reunion.

•For More photos: Scroll down to the bottom , then click on the numbers for additional pictures  
To logout: go the top of the page, far right symbols, click and scroll down to logout

From the Quartermaster:

If you wish to order patches, hats, etc use the form in this issue or the one from Volume 12 No.4.

Prices and things have changed.

# **WELCOME TO A WORLD GONE MAD!**

As with so many of us in the ARA, I m old. I have lived long enough to see six wars, fourteen Presidents, the birth of civil rights and the death of common sense; as well as the transition from The Greatest Generation to that of whiners, wimps and wishy-washy crybabies with no sense of what went before, what is to come, and a total centering on what is in it for me right now.

We have gone from a nation with its collective hand over it heart as the flag passed by or the Star Spangled Banner was played, with its head bowed in prayer to a gracious and loving God, with an eye fixed on the future which pretty much mirrored the successful one of our parents to a nation embroiled in bickering, name-calling, rejection and obstruction of a legally elected President, abolition of our history, constant cries for reparation for mistakes that occurred long before any of the complainers were born or even thought about, and rejection of the God that created us and was the guiding light and force in the making of this once-great nation .

The major issues tearing America apart are racial, medical and political. Following are some contributed commentaries, criticisms and perspective declaring facts. Sometimes you must laugh or cry, sometimes you need to know things which go against the popular opinion or "hot" interpretation.

## The summary of our lives ala Larry Mobley

I hope they give us two weeks notice before sending us back out into the real world. I think we'll all need the time to become ourselves again. And by "ourselves" I mean lose 10 pounds, cut our hair and get used to not drinking at 9:00 a.m.

New monthly budget: Gas \$0 Entertainment \$0 Clothes \$0 Groceries \$2,799. Breaking News: Wearing a mask inside your home is now highly recommended. Not so much to stop COVID-19, but to stop eating.

Low maintenance chicks are having their moment right now. We don't have nails to file and paint, roots to dye, eyelashes to re-mink, and are thrilled not to have to get dressed every day. I have been training for this moment my entire life!

When this quarantine is over, let's not tell some people.

I stepped on my scale this morning. It said: "Please practice social distancing. Only one person at a time on scale."

Not to brag, but I haven't been late to anything in over 6 weeks.

It may take a village to raise a child but I swear its going to take a vineyard to home school one.

I wanted zombies and anarchy. Instead we got working from home and toilet paper shortages. Worst. Apocalypse. Ever.

You know those car commercials where there's only one vehicle on the road - doesn't seem so unrealistic these days ...

They can open things up next month, I'm staying in until July to see what happens to you all first.

Day 37: The garbage man placed an AA flyer on my recycling bin.

The spread of Covid-19 is based on two things:

1. How dense the population is.
2. How dense the population is.

Appropriate analogy: "The curve is flattening so we can start lifting restrictions now" = "The parachute has slowed our rate of descent, so we can take it off now".

People keep asking: "Is corona virus REALLY all that serious?" Listen y'all, the churches and casinos are closed. When heaven and hell agree on the same thing it's probably pretty serious.

Never in a million years could I have imagined I would go up to a bank teller wearing a mask and ask for money.

Home school Day 1: I'm trying to figure out how I can get this kid transferred out of my class.

Putting a drink in each room of my house today and calling it a pub crawl.

Okay, the schools are closed. So do we drop the kids off at the teacher's house or what?

For the second part of this quarantine do we have to stay with the same family or will they relocate us? Asking for myself ...

Corona virus has turned us all into dogs. We wander around the house looking for food. We get told "No" if we get too close to strangers and we get really excited about going for walks and car rides.

The dumbest thing I've ever bought was a 2020 planner ...

I was in a long line at 7:45 am today at the grocery store that opened at 8:00 for seniors *only*. A young man came from the parking lot and tried to cut in at the front of the line, but an old lady beat him back into the parking lot with her cane. He returned and tried to cut in again but an old man punched him in the gut, then kicked him to the ground and rolled him away. As he approached the line for the 3rd time he said, "If you don't let me unlock the door, you'll never get in there."

**Enjoy your day. You don't have anything else to do.**

*Editors Note: In the continuing saga of our world's breakneck hurtle to intellectual oblivion; thus "trying our souls", we are reminded that during this current crisis of respiratory illness people responded by mass purchasing of toilet paper. I am familiar with the race to buy bread and milk when the weather is threatening, BUT TOILET PAPER? We Are grateful to Larry Mobley and Jesse Hobby; two halfwits who together make quite a whole wit, for this history lesson.*

### The History of Toilet Paper—the fearful combo if Mobley and Hobby

1. The first recorded use of toilet paper was in 6th Century China.
2. By the 14th Century, the Chinese government was mass-producing it.
- 3.. Packaged toilet paper wasn't sold in the United States until 1857.
4. Joseph Gayety, the man who introduced packaged TP to the U.S. had his name printed on every sheet.
5. Global toilet paper demand uses nearly 30,000 trees every day.
6. That's 10 million trees a year.
7. It wasn't until 1935 that a manufacturer was able to promise Splinter-Free Toilet Paper.
8. Seven percent of Americans admit to stealing rolls of toilet paper in hotels.
9. Americans use an average of 8.6 sheets of toilet paper per trip to the bathroom.
10. The average roll has 333 sheets.
11. Historically, what you use to wipe depended on your income level.
12. In the middle ages they used something called a gompf stick which was just an actual stick used to scrape.
13. Wealthy Romans used wool soaked in rose water and French royalty used lace.
14. Other things that were used before toilet paper include: Hay, corn cobs, sticks, stones, sand, moss, hemp, wool, husks, fruit peels, ferns, sponges, seashells, knotted ropes, and broken pottery (ouch!).
15. 70-75% of the world still doesn't use toilet paper because it is too expensive or there is not sufficient plumbing.
16. In many Western European countries, bidets are seen as more effective and preferable to toilet paper.
17. Colored toilet paper was popular in the U.S. until the 1940s.
18. The reason toilet paper disintegrates so quickly when wet is that the fibers used to make it are very short.
19. On the International Space Station, they still use regular toilet paper but it has to be sealed in special containers and Compressed.
20. During Desert Storm, the U.S. Army used toilet paper to camouflage their tanks.
21. In 1973 Johnny Carson caused a toilet paper shortage. He said as a joke that there was a shortage, which there wasn't, until everyone believed him and ran out to buy up the supply. It took three weeks for some stores to get more stock.
22. There is a contest sponsored by Charmin to design and make wedding dresses out of toilet paper. The winner gets \$2,000.
25. There is still a virtual toilet paper museum called Nobody's Perfect.
26. In 1996, President Clinton passed a Toilet Paper Tax of 6 cents per roll, which is still in effect today. Obama tried to triple that but the House wouldn't pass it.
27. The Pentagon uses, on average, 666 rolls of toilet paper per day.
28. The most expensive toilet paper in the world is from Portuguese brand Renova.
29. Renova is three-ply, perfumed, costs \$3 per roll and comes in several colors including black, red, blue and green.
30. The CEO of Renova came up with the idea for black toilet paper while he was at a Cirque du Soleil show.

## How to Stir Up the Masses

In the most powerful country on the planet its people say goodbye to one of its best sons.

Even presidents are not buried like this. A golden coffin, hundreds of thousands of mourners and sobbing, thousands of kneeling apologize to the black population of some states. The Mayor of Minneapolis clutching the coffin with the body of the most worthy of the worthy citizens of America. His sobs are interrupted by cries of "SOO.....OOOORY again continue on the rise.

Choking on saliva, the ex-wife of the murdered weeps, though, the last time she saw him was 6 years ago. That's when he left her with her three-month-old daughter. He hadn't sent alimony to his daughter over the years. However, the unhappy widow has been crying for a week that she was left without a breadwinner. Therefore compassionate Americans collected oodles of money for her. She's received around \$ 20,000,000 from the world and money continues to flow in.

The University of Massachusetts has established a George Floyd scholarship.

The great Floyd's rap sheet listed robberies, drug trafficking, armed robberies (last time, holding a pregnant woman by the throat and putting a gun barrel to her belly while demanding money) . Then he worked a deal with the investigators. Floyd handed over all his accomplices so they reduced his sentence by several years.

Floyd's autopsy revealed drugs in his blood. This is the national hero of America of the 21st century.

But there were followers. The Floyd love affair lives and grows.

Mass robberies and violence, as a sign of respect and grief for George, swept the US and now grow into a world wide event.

The most beautiful areas of our cities, including New York and Los Angeles plus many others have now been destroyed. Probably never to return to their former elegance.

89 policemen were killed.

A 17-year-old girl was terribly raped, hundreds of police officers were burned, and not just cars, streets, squares, parks were burned as well.

US presidential candidate Joe Biden also fell to his knees.

This didn't bother hundreds of thousands of admirers of " St. Floyd". On their knees?

*EDITOR'S NOTE: No matter his color, religion, political opinion, alleged crime or even his sexual orientation, no one should be brutally murdered by any one. However, neither should anyone take the right on themselves to commit crimes in the name of any person, destroy the property of others, and join in a mob being fed by agitators bussed in by those who perpetrate unrest for their own interests. Crimes have been committed by police and they should be arrested (as they have been), and tried for their crimes (as they will be). Reform where there is corruption or dishonesty, racism, maleficence, but do not surrender our true liberties to the mob mentality and those who would "fundamentally change our nation". If you think we have trouble now, defund the police and see what happens.*

*I grew up in New York City where when a cop said move, you moved; if he said put your hands up, you did just that. We were taught that if we had a problem, find a cop. Many of us got phone money or subway money from a policeman when we were stranded. My mother used to tell me about the older policeman named Smitty who would catch the kids gambling on the Lower East Side and break it up. Then he would call over a youngster and have them count the money and divide it up among other uninvolved kids to take to their struggling parents. Smitty never touched the money. He also was known to chase a perpetrator up six flights of stairs and across rooftops until he caught him.*

*Bill Donovan, Police Commissioner of New York around the turn of the 20th Century is said to have commented, "There is more law in the end of a nightstick than in all the books in the Courthouse." Yes, we feared the police, but, like the ARA, when you needed them, they were there.*



Sheriff D. Clarke says it best!

It's not the police who need to be retrained, it's the public. We have grown into a mouthy, mobile phone wielding, vulgar, uncivil society with no personal responsibility and the attitude of 'it's the other person's fault', 'you owe me'. A society where children grow up with no boundaries or knowledge or concern for civil society and personal responsibility.

When an officer says "Put your hands up," then put your hands up! Don't reach for something in your pocket, your lap, your seat. There's plenty of reason for a police officer to feel threatened, there have been multiple assaults and ambushes on police officers lately. Comply with requests from the officer, have your day in court. Don't mouth off, or fight, or refuse to comply...

Police officers are our sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters. They're black, white, brown, all colors, all ethnicities, all faiths, male and female, they are us. They see the worst side of humanity... the raped children, the bloody mangled bodies of traffic victims, the bruised and battered victims of domestic violence, homicide victims, body parts... day after day.

They have extensive training, but they are human. When there are numerous attacks on them, they become hypervigilant for a reason, they have become targets. When a police officer encounters any person... any person, whether at a traffic stop, a street confrontation, an arrest, whatever... that situation has the potential to become life threatening. You, Mr & Mrs/Miss Civilian, also have the responsibility of keeping the situation from getting out of control. They work holidays while we have festive meals with our families. They miss school events with their kids, birthdays, anniversaries, all those special occasions that we take for granted. They work in all types of weather, under dangerous conditions, for relatively low pay.

Many law enforcement officers are Veterans. They've been in service to this nation most of their lives, whether on the battlefield or protecting us here at home. They are the only thing that stands between us and anarchy in the streets.

If you want to protect your child, teach them respect.

**There was once a time when the president was honored, police were respected, newborns were treasured and vets were revered. Let's bring that back.**

**We have a virus.. but 99% of those who contract it will survive.**

**We have some racists... But 99.95% of the people you meet are color blind and don't have a racial bone in their body**

**We have some bad cops... But 99.95% of the law enforcement personnel you meet would risk their lives for yours.**

**If you choose to see evil, then evil is all you will see..**

## JEWISH MOTHER

The year is 2024 and the United States has elected the first woman as well as the first Jewish president, Susan Goldstein.

She calls up her mother a few weeks after Election Day and says, "So, Mom, I assume you'll be coming to my inauguration?"

"I don't think so. It's a ten-hour drive, your father isn't as young as he used to be, and my arthritis is acting up again."

"Don't worry about it, Mom, I'll send Air Force One to pick you up and take you home. And a limousine will pick you up at your door."

"I don't know. Everybody will be so fancy-schmancy; what on earth would I wear?"

Susan replies, "I'll make sure you have a wonderful gown, custom-made by the best designer in New York."

"Honey," Mom complains, "you know I can't eat those rich foods you and your friends like to eat."

The President-to-be responds, "Don't worry Mom. The entire affair is going to be handled by the best caterer in New York; kosher all the way. Mom, I really want you to come."

So Mom reluctantly agrees and on January 20, 2025, Susan Goldstein is being sworn in as President of the United States. In the front row sits the new President's mother, who leans over to a Senator sitting next to her and says, "You see that woman over there with her hand on the Torah, becoming President of the United States?"

The Senator whispers back, "Yes, I do."

Mom says proudly, "Her brother is a doctor."

## ITALIAN MOTHER

Giuseppe excitedly tells his mother he's fallen in love and that he is going to get married.

He says, "Just for fun, Mama, I'm going to bring over three women and you try and guess which one I'm going to marry." The mother agrees.

The next day, he brings three beautiful women into the house, sits them down on the couch and they chat for a while

He then says, "Okay, Mama, guess which one am I going to marry?"

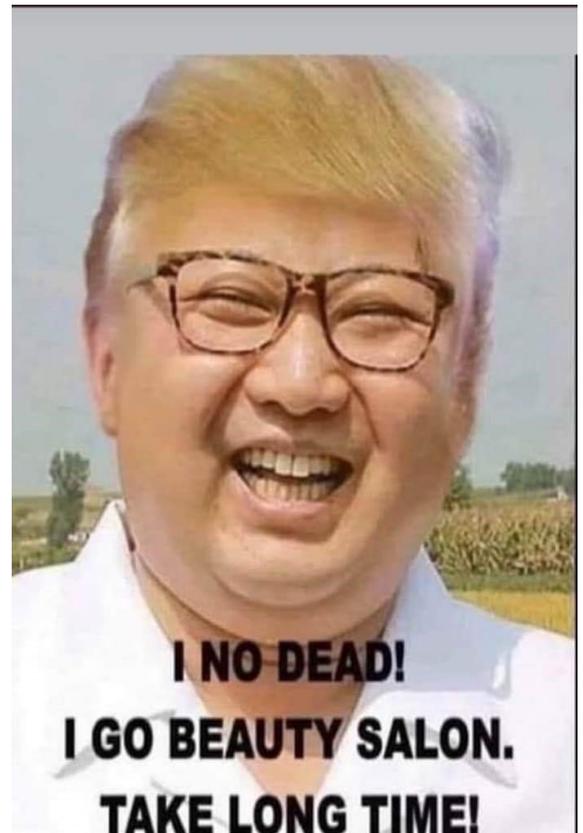
Mama says immediately, "The one on the right."

"That's amazing, Mama. You're right. How did you know?"

People start coughing and worry they have the coronavirus, I cough and just pray I don't pee myself...

Anyone else getting a tan from the light in the fridge?

It's been a great blessing to be at home with the wife these last few months. We've caught up on everything I've done wrong in the last 20 years.



## WHAT THE HELL WAS ON 527'S RIGHT WING?

Contributed by Jess Hobby

The result of McNamara's ordnance shortage in 'Nam.....we 'gave them everything we had..... EVERYTHING!' A true story from VA-25. Just as this AD was being shot off, we got a 1MC message from the bridge, 'What the hell was on 572's right wing?'



For those too young to remember, during the Vietnam conflict, carriers were so woefully short of ordnance that missions were often launched with only a half load just to keep the sortie rate up so that the REMF's in DC would not send out blistering messages about failure to support the war effort, etc.

Given that the loss rate approached, and sometime exceeded, one aircraft a day, all will understand that there was a degree of reticence to launch with less than a full load -- if I must dance with the elephant at least let's make it worth while. Nevertheless, the indomitable spirit of the carrier aviators, and their squadron-mates, prevailed in some rather perverse way.

I have every hope that today's successors to the mantel left at the Cubi 'O' Club bar persevere as well. Kick the tires, light the fires, bolt for the blue

and brief on guard -- last one up is lead. Back in 'Nam', if you weren't on USS MIDWAY in Oct 1965, I thought you'd get a kick out of one squadron's ingenuity. Yes, this really happened. Once again history is stranger then fiction, and a lot funnier:

### The USS Midway VA-25's Toilet Bomb.

In October 1965, CDR Clarence J. Stoddard, Executive Officer of VA-25 'Fist of the Fleet', flying an A-1H Skyraider, NE/572 'Paper Tiger II' from Carrier Air Wing Two aboard USS Midway carried a special bomb to the North Vietnamese in commemoration of the 6-millionth pound of ordnance dropped. This bomb was unique because of the type... it was a toilet!

The following is an account of this event, courtesy of Clint Johnson, Captain, USNR Ret. Captain Johnson was one of the two VA-25 A-1 Skyraider pilots credited with shooting down a MiG-17 on June 20, 1965. Clint Johnson was also a classmate and Company-mate of mine at the Naval Academy.

572 was flown by CDR C. W. 'Bill' Stoddard. His wingman in 577 was LCDR Robin Bacon, who had a wing station mounted movie camera (the only one remaining in the fleet from WWII).

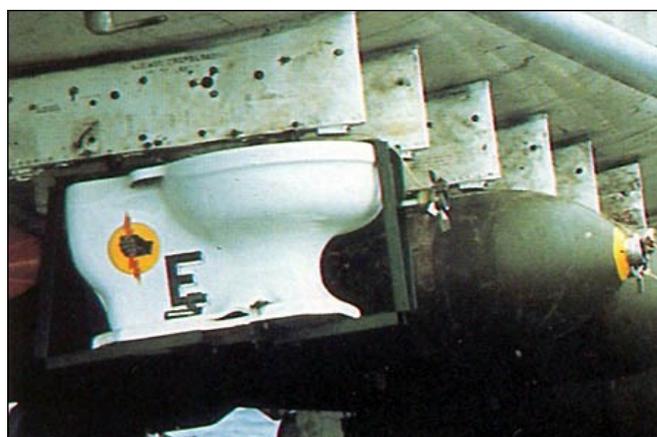
The flight was a Dixie Station strike (off South Vietnam) going to the Delta. When they arrived in the target area and CDR Stoddard was reading the ordnance list to the FAC, he ended with a one code name 'Sani-flush'.

The FAC couldn't believe it and joined up to see it. It was dropped in a dive with LCDR Bacon flying tight wing position to film the drop. When it came off, it turned hole to the wind and almost struck his airplane.



It made a great ready room movie. The FAC said that it whistled all the way. It was a damaged toilet which was going to be thrown overboard.

One of our plane captains rescued it and the ordnance crew made a rack, tailfins and nose fuse for it. The squadron flight deck checkers maintained a position to block the view of the Captain and Air Boss while the aircraft was taxiing onto the catapult.



- Just as it was being shot off we got a 1MC message from the bridge, 'What the hell was on 572's right wing?'

Did we know some pilots and crewmen like that?

# An old Cobra returns to its artillery roots and finds a new home in Oklahoma

- Gently lifted from *Vertical Magazine*

U.S. Army Cobra 15654 began its career with three years of combat during the Vietnam War, and almost ended its days in Minnesota with birds nesting in its engine compartment.

Now it has been fully restored to its original configuration as an aerial rocket artillery helicopter and found a new home with the folks who will care for it at the U.S. Army Field Artillery Museum at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Known as attack helicopters and the precursor to the AH-64 Apache, the AH-1 initially served the Army in aerial rocket artillery units providing close air support to troops on the ground in Vietnam, said Jon Bernstein, a Cobra historian and director of the Air Defense Artillery Museum at Fort Sill.



The Cobra, now restored to AH-1G configuration, outside the Artillery Museum in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. *Jon Bernstein photo*

It was for this reason that Bernstein decided the artillery museum should have its own Cobra, so he went hunting for one in the collection of old vehicles and other artifacts the Army keeps from past conflicts. Artifacts on the so-called “de-accession” list typically end up at museums outside the government system or are reused by the Army for other purposes.

“I looked through the entire collection to see what Cobras were there and to see if any of them had aerial rocket artillery provenance and I came across this one, which was due to be de-accessioned,” Bernstein said. “I said, let’s grab this one while we can.”

Before arriving at Fort Sill, the helicopter lived outdoors at the Minnesota Air National Guard Museum in St. Paul, which was hoping to “get rid of it,” Bernstein said.

The 50-foot-long AH-1S Cobra attack helicopter arrived at the museum in March 2019 and has undergone extensive restoration by Bernstein and exhibits specialist Zane Mohler since. During the recent shutdown, Mohler had time to finish painting the entire fuselage in preparation for it being installed in the museum.

Entering service in 1966, the Bell AH-1 was a production model gunship for the U.S. Army, with one 1,400 shaft horsepower (1,000 kW) Avco Lycoming T53-13 turboshaft engine and shared fuselage commonalities with the UH-1 Huey.

This particular Cobra was flown by A Battery, 4th Battalion, 77th Aerial Rocket Artillery (ARA) in Vietnam and Laos from December 1970 to March 1971, when it was blown up during a sapper attack on the Marine Corps fire base at Khe Sanh.

“Aerial rocket artillery was a very specific role and there were actually only three units that performed that mission through the entirety of the war,” said Bernstein. “Their main mission was support of troops on the ground. They weren’t like Cavalry where they use Cobras to seek and destroy the enemy and they weren’t like assault helicopter company Cobras, which were designed primarily to escort Hueys in and out of hot landing zones, although Cobras in ARA units did all that, as well. They were supposed to be on-call fire-support units for ground troops in contact.”



A still from a Vietnam War-era film shows Cobra 67-15654 at Khe Sanh. *Jon Bernstein photo*

"I started digging a little deeper and we actually were able to find video of it at Khe Sanh on the morning after the sapper attack," Bernstein said. "You can clearly see all the damage to the tail boom and other things."

The helicopter then went back to manufacturer Bell for a rebuild, after which its operational history becomes "a little fuzzy," Bernstein said. It might have been rebuilt as a G-model at that point or as an AH-1Q, which introduced the M65 tube-launched, optically tracked, wire-guided (TOW)/Cobra missile subsystem, M65 telescopic sight unit (TSU), and M73 reflex sight. It was those sighting systems that sat in the nose turret the aircraft sported when it arrived in Oklahoma.

In any case, by the late 1970s the helicopter was sporting new 1,800 shp (1,300 kW) T53-L-703 turboshaft engine that classified it as a baseline AH-1S, Bernstein said. It flew with the Minnesota National Guard for an unspecified amount of time before being demilitarized and placed on static display outside the museum in St. Paul.

"It was in rough shape," Bernstein said. "It had been outside for years. There were 18-inch deep bird nests in the engine compartment."

It went into the museum workshop in December 2019 to emerge during the Covid-19 lockdown and will be installed atop its piling in the coming weeks as the museum prepares to reopen.

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"Pretty much from December through [May 27] we've been working on it, of course with the quarantine and everything, Zane [Mohler] has been the only person in the exhibit shop and he was able to get the entire thing painted and stenciled during those two months."



Before that, the pair had to remove all the anachronistic add-ons of its later service, including wire-strike protection devices, and replace the tail rotor and tail rotor gearbox. They also had to replace the AH-1S nose housing, which features the later addition of a swivelling turret.

Bernstein was able to track down an older, smoother AH-1J nose to back-date the helicopter to its aerial artillery days in Vietnam. But when the helicopter had its nose job in the 1970s, one of the forward fuselage bulkhead was widened to accept the new turret. Those had to be narrowed by about 1.5 inches in order to accept the older nose.

"It was more involved than I thought it was going to be, but definitely a challenging and rewarding experience," Bernstein said.

The Cobra, now outfitted as an AH-1S, arrives at the Artillery Museum in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. *Jon Bernstein photo*

Much of the credit goes to Mohler, Bernstein said. As the lone person with access to the museum shop during the shutdown, Mohler continued the work. He was able to hand-build four "impossible to come by" M200 rocket pods by borrowing the real deal from the Army Aviation Museum at Fort

Rucker, Alabama, and copying it using PVC pipe, plexiglass and sheet metal.

Mohler also had to build proper pylon fairing from scratch by molding fiberglass using original technical drawings and Vietnam-era photos.

For Bernstein, a former Apache pilot, returning this Cobra to its aerial artillery roots is a complete circle. After the battle of An Loc in 1972, the Army realized that helicopters could kill tanks, Bernstein said. For the past two decades, the Apaches he flew as tank killers have been performing air support for troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"The Army shifted focus from a fire-support platform to a tank killer and that's how the Apache evolved," Bernstein said. "And now, the Apache now has been doing a very similar role to what the ARA Cobras did in Vietnam."

*Home at Last in Fort Sill:*



*What a pretty Bird!*



## MURPHY'S LAW OF FLIGHT

OR

Signs That You Are About To Have A Really Bad Day

(Or "clues" for the clueless Flight Crew)

PRE – TAKE OFF

The ground units organic aviation company normally responsible for the unit's extraction can no longer muster sufficient extraction birds.

The elusive Brigade Chaplain is a the takeoff brief.

The Intelligence Officer indicates possible light enemy contact.

On leaving the mission briefing, you note:

The S1 is typing requests for aircrew replacements,

The S2 scurries chuckling from the room,

The S3Air is erasing lines from the flight crew board,

The Chaplain wants to touch you with some holy water,

Your fellow aviators seem to be dividing your things,

The First Sergeant salutes you for the first time,

Your Company Commander smiles for the first time since your problematic demonstration in POL last week of that reverse spin WP grenade toss,

Your assigned aircraft is the company's hanger queen,

Maintenance has cleared the aircraft for a "one time only" flight before correction of those pesky Red X's,

The more cerebrate crews in the unit have all volunteered for all-day sandbagging duty or have crowded into the latrines,

The co-pilot is pending FEB,

A recess in the crew-chief's court martial enables him to make the flight,

The door gunner has completed his testimony against the crew chief,

Both are sitting behind you with loaded weapons,

As you hover clear you note that the ground crew is painting new aircraft number on your revetment space,

On waiting for take-off release, it is raining too hard to see if the ground fog has cleared any. Fortunately, the tower gives you a radar departure. Sadly, you recall missing that in flight school.

Rest of mission to follow quarterly.

Shamelessly copied from another aviation publication by:

Jesse Hobby

Armed Falcon 29 Fox 1

People are scared of getting fined for congregating in crowds. As if catching a deadly disease and dying a horrible death wasn't enough of a deterrent.

The Spread of COVID-19 Is Based On Two Factors:

1. How Dense The Population is
2. How Dense The Population is

I see a big baby boom coming our way in 9 months. They will be called the C-19 Babies & the #1 baby names will be "Charmin & Scott"

Is it too early to put up the xmas tree yet? I have run out of things to do.

When this virus thing is over with... I still want some of you to stay away from me.

# Ladies of the Association

Dear Ladies of ARA,

Tis your editor, trying to fill in for Diane Jones and bring you a word of cheer in the gloom and frustration of this pandemic and all the cancelations and restrictions that it has brought on us. Obviously I do not have the feminine touch (nor do I cross dress, desire to use the Ladies Room, have confusion about who and what I am, and have been queer for girls for many years) but I did not have a hairdo (no hair) nor attempt to do so.

Speaking of hairdo's, I understand we have been on the verge of a national crisis with all the hair stylists shut down, or even now, limited to so few people in the shop at a time that getting an appointment has been like purchasing diamonds. It is little consolation but the men of America have been looking like the Wolfman for want of barbershops.

I think I am finally grounded for all things I did as a teenager but didn't get caught for. Jean did a BIG load of pajamas so I would have enough clothes for the work week. If we have learned nothing else from this pandemic it is that stupidity travels faster around the world than any virus.

Let face it! We are between a rock and someone to hit with it. Finland just closed its borders. No one can cross the finish line. There are so many Covid-19 jokes it has become a pandemic. I would tell you one but I'd have to wait two weeks to see if you got it.

The World Health Organization has discovered that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. All the impounded dogs must be released. Let's be clear WHO let out the dogs!

By the way, what do you call panic buying of sausage and cheese?—THE WURST KASE! The grocery stores in France look like tornadoes hit them. All that is left is DE BRIE!

Well, now is no the time to surround yourself with positive people. I ran out of toilet paper and had to use old newspapers. I tell you—*THE TIMES* are rough.

How long will this social distancing go on? Jean keeps trying to get back in the house.

OK! Enough of this. Keep well, keep safe and be healthy. Let's think about Savannah in 2021.

Love ya all,

Doc Talbot

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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

### *"We are in this Together"*

Just how many days have we been in isolation? Patti and I started our own fourteen (14) days self quarantine on Saturday, March 21, 2020, just to be safe and to protect our family and friends. We had no way of knowing with whom we had been in contact. So we took the safe route and stayed home! That day our new journey started. One we never expected and one we had never experienced. Social distancing, washing hands for twenty seconds, or as long as it took to sing "Happy Birthday" twice, wearing mask when in public, and not shaking hands. We chose to watch lots of television – old and recently released movies, YouTube video of church services, games shows, and the weather channel. Oh, yes, we went through many boxes of old photos and memorabilia sorting, categorizing, filing, and organizing for short term distribution to sons, grandchildren, and great grandchildren!

With all the reports of Coronavirus cases and deaths on the increase we fear for our own safety and well-being. Where is the next hot spot, how does one really get the virus, and just how safe are our towns and cities? I'm not going around like Chicken Little with the fable's central phase, the "**sky is falling!**" But I am fearful for what could happen in the worst case scenario if the current count of 4.1 million cases and 289,000 deaths worldwide, and 1.4 million cases and 84,000 deaths in the United States continues unchecked and summarily discounted by the populace.

I find solace in the readings in the Gospel of the Evangelist St. John, Chapter 14: 1, "*Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe in me.*" and 14:14, "*If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.*"

We are not alone on this journey. God is with us and he has got it! Really, God's got it! God was with us and has seen us through our creation from the very foundations of this earth, our birth, our Baptism, our childhood, our growing up years and maturing, our relationships, our failures and successes. God will be with us through this pandemic of a proportion we have never seen before. God is waiting for us to act!

He provided this great creation for us to enjoy and protect for the future generations. God's not ready to toss in the chips. God's timing is still in his hands. We have lost our way and need to get back on course. We need to accept the fact that God is in control and has made it possible for us to enjoy his Kingdom on Earth and his Kingdom in Heaven. We must believe that and live into that blessing with our whole being. We need to start loving our neighbors as ourselves. This is not a bad world or bad life; it just out of synchronization a bit and we failed to correct it then.

Have you noticed how people are starting to appreciate the work of others and the sacrifices made by those on the front lines of fighting COVID 19? Yes, we are in this together, but we are not alone.

God has empowered us to do the work of getting back in synch, setting a new course, and establishing a "**new normal.**" My friends, let us all step up to the plate and make a difference in this new order of things coming our way as we struggle through this challenge. We can change the outcome of this pandemic because "**God is in this together with us!**" to see us continue our journey.

Peace,

*Bruce Wilder*

*Chaplain*



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

Patches, Cloth - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
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Bumper Stickers - \_\_\_\_\_ X \$2.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
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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: \_\_\_\_\_

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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

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