



# The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 3 Issue 4

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

April, May, June 2011



**“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

## Reunion No. 14 is coming to Charleston, SC.

**“Where History Lives”** May 18-22, 2011

*You will want to be there*



### *President's Corner*

Reunion 2011 is rapidly approaching! If you need information please go to <http://www.araassociation.com>.

My wife and I made another trip to Charleston to take care of some required details so I am providing some additional information picked up during this trip.

Our hotel is now providing a complimentary (buffet style) breakfast. It will feature bacon, eggs, hash browns, waffles, hot and cold cereals, assorted pastries and breads, fruit, coffee, tea, milk, etc.

The hotel will also offer courtesy transportation in/about Charleston.

I would also like to remind everyone that hotel reservations need to be made by April 18 (Tax Day). After that the hotel releases any un-booked rooms from our block and will no longer guarantee that rooms will be available.

The trolley system (which is the best way to get around the city) is now free. We will have the new schedules available upon check in.

I also learned that parking in metered spaces in Charleston and that admission to the parking areas of some attractions (such as Patriots Points) is free for anyone having a “Disability Tag” or “Disability Parking Permit.”

By now most of you are aware that we have a new web site. As previously stated this is a work in progress. We are receiving photos and stories from members and finding new information about ARA on various web sites. These will be posted in the near future as well as a guest book and the ARA Alumni Membership Roster. This is our web site – we can make it whatever we want. It is for us, about us and by us.

I am also saddened to report that we have lost another member, Fred Beck, who died on February 12, 2011. Fred was a good friend to all and will be missed at this year's reunion. His obituary is posted on another page of this newsletter.

*Editor's Note:* Not all members of the C 2/5 Cav family were assigned to the company. As with any infantry unit, they traveled with three men whose job it was to coordinate the artillery. These Artillery Forward Observer Teams consisted of a lieutenant (forward observer), a sergeant (Recon Sergeant) and a radio operator (RTO.) Charlie Dickey was from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, and was attached to C 2/5 Cav in May of 1969. He stayed with them until February, 1970 - a long time to be out in the weeds with the grunts. As with all artillerymen, these men are not authorized to wear the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

Blue text is written by Charlie Dickey. Red text was given to Charlie by the pilot for publication in this article. Following the article is a special note.

## **A Few Minutes in the Life of a Forward Observer and a Cobra Pilot**

### **Birth Control 28 Delta, Forward Observer - Recon Sergeant.**

On or about 4 October, 1969, C Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) was inserted into a clearing northwest of Fire Support Base Ike. Our mission was to locate and destroy North Vietnamese Army Forces crossing over from Cambodia to mount an attack on Tay Ninh, a Provincial Capital. The following morning we made contact with the enemy and thus began a running firefight that lasted to its climax on 6 October. We thought we had encountered a supply party aided by a small contingent of NVA Regulars. This, however, was not correct. We had run into a well-trained, well-equipped, disciplined and dedicated unit of soldiers numbering at least our strength (100) or more.

I was a member of Artillery Forward Observation Team assigned to the Infantry Company. Our job was to bring Tube Artillery and close in support from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 20<sup>th</sup> Aerial Rocket Artillery (Cobra Gunships). I was senior man on the Team based on length of service in the field.

6 October dawned much like another day in the jungle. But that morning there was apprehension; somehow we all knew that this day would be very different. After breaking up the night position, we moved out. The company was in the standard three files. My position was behind the Infantry Company Commander, center file. What we did not know was the NVA had set up a large U-shaped ambush and they were trying their hardest to suck the entire company into their kill zone.

Luck or Divine assistance caused us to stop just short of the ambush. A machine gun opened up on the right flank, killing the point man. We first thought that we had run into a linear ambush. According to the tactics of the time, I moved to the left flank and joined 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon and attempted to move around and behind the ambush.

In a very short time we ran into the left U machine-gun. Taking heavy fire, the platoon broke and a few of us moved to the right front while the rest of 3<sup>rd</sup> took to ground. In the space of a few seconds those of us in the front encountered a fixed .51 caliber machinegun which opened up on us at a distance of about 15 meters. The fire drove us to ground.

At this time I sent word over the radio to "Bounce Max." (Max was the call sign of Blue Max the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 20<sup>th</sup> Aerial Rocket Artillery Battalion). This call meant that we needed close in support to defeat the enemy or to save our lives. The Cobras of the 2/20th stood 24-hour watch. Upon receiving a call to bounce, they could be airborne in as little as two minutes and en-route to render assistance to Sky Troopers in contact. Words cannot express how I felt when a Cobra flight leader came up our net. His call sign was *Bravo27*, and he and his wingman were inbound to our location with a full load of 2.75 Rockets, 40-MM grenades and 7.62 mini-gun.

This flight of ARA performed in a most exemplary manner, laying down the fire where I wanted it and holding back the enemy. During the time *Bravo 27* was on station, their helicopters were subject to intense enemy fire every time they rolled out. I could hear the enemy fire shift as the snakes began their runs. (Note: Most of us referred to Cobra gunships as "snakes.") To this day I can still hear the sound of bullets impacting the thin metal skins of the ships. When *Bravo 27* had expended his ammo, and another flight was inbound, *27* returned to base to do a "hot turn around" (rearm and refuel) and return to the battle. It was this flight that saved not only my life, but also the lives of the other four men who were cut off with me.

During the time *Bravo 27* was off station, the other Cobra flight did a good job of trying to keep the enemy away from our position. However our situation on the ground was becoming extremely deadly. Our small force was not only cut off from the rest of Charlie Company, we were also being reduced in number by intense automatic weapons, rocket propelled grenades, and Chi-Com hand grenades. It had been a long, terrible ordeal. The men I was with were wounded and the enemy was pushing closer to our small circle. We could see them maneuvering to attack and overwhelm us. There is no doubt in my mind that they intended to kill all of us.

But, a familiar voice came up on my radio - the warbling, reassuring voice of flight leader *Bravo27*. At the same

time I was talking to him, the NVA began a rush of our position. I remember 27 telling me he was at 3000 feet, inbound, but still a few minutes out.

### **Bravo 27, Cobra Flight Leader.**

I will always remember the missions I flew for you that day. The noise, smell and pulling out of rocket runs, wondering if my fire was getting too close to the friendlies and being very scared - and someone (probably you) telling me that I was taking a lot of ground fire each time I rolled out.

After completing a hot turn-around at Tay Ninh, I was returning to the area of contact. The RTO (you) was screaming at me to fire, but I was too high and too far away. When I told you that, you told me to fire anyway, but I wasn't sure where you were. All I could see was jungle and a little smoke coming through the trees.

As I closed on your position, you were screaming that you were being over-run and to fire on your location. I had to guess where you were and hope and pray that I wasn't going to hit any friendlies.

### **28 Delta:**

As I talked with 27 Bravo. I could see the enemy rushing our position and I knew that our small group was in serious danger of being wiped out. The only chance we had was the inbound Cobra Flight. I screamed for the Flight to shoot. We were going to die by the hands of the NVA or live by the grace of God and the skill and courage of 27 Bravo. As I was speaking with 27 Bravo, there was an explosion in front of me.

### **Bravo 27:**

Still unsure of your exact location, but knowing you were in serious trouble, I just blasted away. On my first run of the second mission I put down 19 pairs (38 rockets) in an area about 50 meters long and 10 meters wide. My goal was to try and put as much firepower as I could between you and the bad guys. I knew that anyone under them was going to be hurt because most of my rockets were going off in the trees and only a few were making it to the ground. I can still see my rockets hitting and going off in trees. I remember hearing them explode over your radio because you had a hot mike. Suddenly everything went silent.

This mission has always been on my mind. As I was circling around trying to re-establish radio contact with you, another RTO came on and told me that they had just gotten to your area and that my fire had hit the RTO (you) and several others. I got sick. I stayed on station for a little longer, was released, flew back to Tay Ninh and reported the friendly fire incident to my CO and Ops Officer.

### **28 Delta:**

The explosion that went off in front of me was NOT an ARA rocket. Bravo 27 was still too far off to fire. As Forward Observers, we relied on three very important events to guide the Snakes.

1. The pilots would tell us when they were starting their run.
2. We could hear the pitch of the rotor blades change.
3. We could hear the sound of the rockets being fired.

This information helped us on the ground to direct fire on the enemy. None of these three had happened when that explosion went off in front of me.

I believe to this day that the explosion to my front was from a B-40 (Rocket Propelled Grenade). I was blown backward and knocked out by the blast. Sometime later, (10-15 minutes?), as I came to my senses, I was leaning against the stump of a tree; an infantryman was to my right and about 10 feet behind me. I remember me telling him not to go up there, that the whole area was solid NVA.

I was wrong - 27 Bravo laid down the most perfect ordnance on target that any human had a right to expect. The area worked by the gunships was right on the money. The enemy assault was broken. Troopers from Charlie Company moved the five of us to safety and secured a perimeter. I was told later that when the explosion went off, I had the handset on the radio keyed (hot mike) and kept it that way for some time, rendering the net unusable until I released the button.

April, 2000

Birth Control 28 Delta:

How does a story like this get put together after such a long time? For one thing, I never forgot that my life was saved by the skill and daring of a Cobra flight leader. It has been over 30 years since that incident in the jungle. But almost every day something jolts my mind, the wop of a bird's blade, an oldie on the radio, a sight, a sound, a smell, that takes me back to that place where the courage of the crewmen of the 2<sup>nd</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> ARA gave me my life while others were trying to take it from me.

The years have taken a toll on my memory but the name of the Flight Leader, Captain Hogg, remained etched as if in stone. I have dreams about that day. No, they were not the horrible dreams of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. They were good dreams - dreams that would leave me with joy in my heart. I knew each day was a gift from God and a Cobra pilot. However when I awoke, I knew I would always feel incomplete. I had to find this man and thank him for giving me my life.

Then came the Internet. Coming on line in 1999, the first sites I surveyed were military, especially the First Air Cav Association, and this led me to the 2<sup>nd</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> ARA site. I sent accounts of the incident and asked if anyone could help me find *Bravo 27*. I received very little information, just enough to keep me going.

The 2<sup>nd</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> ARA web site gave me the full name, Joseph C. Hogg, and an old address. First attempts to find Old Joe were fruitless. However, in my spare time, I would surf the Net looking for clues. Bingo! One day I landed in a nest of Hoggs. I got lucky; the second number I called directed me to Captain Joseph Hogg.

I called him. At first I don't think the good Captain believed me. Thirty years is a long time. However, as I reported actions of that incident he came to realize that I was there on the ground as he brought fire on the enemy.

I sent him my account of the action and he sent me his account. We crossed in the mail. After reading his account I called him again. I asked him if he remembered me; his response was "Yes, we met one day in the jungle of the Republic of Vietnam."

My object in writing this down is three-fold. First, I wanted to thank the man who gave me my life. Second, after reading Bravo 27's account, I realized that this man had spent the last 30 years thinking he might have killed or at least wounded American soldiers on the ground.

Bravo 27 Flight not only did not hit any friendlies that day, he saved the lives of five young American soldiers whose lives were about to be cut short by the enemy.

The RTO who reported that we had been hit by friendly fire had not been close to our position that day. He could not have known of the heavy fire laid down on us by the NVA. He was not in a position to see the final assault. But I was there and I know that the skill and daring of Bravo 27 Flight saved our lives.

Third, I want this man to be recognized for the hero that he was and is today. We were all heroes in those days (We Were a Band of Brothers). But there were true heroes. I was awarded the Silver Star for my actions that day. For what? I looked to my front and saw the enemy advancing on my position. I knew that I could not hold them off. Knowing that I was about to die, I called for Bravo 27 to fire. I believed I had a better chance with the Cobras.

The Cobra Flight Leader had a serious problem. He knew that he was not to fire without knowing exactly where the friendlies were located. On the other hand he had a young soldier on the ground being overrun and about to die. Captain Hogg used his memory of the battlefield from his mission earlier in the day, coupled with his own initiative and personal bravery, and chose to fire.

The result of his action was the saving of five young American lives. This man received no recognition for his heroic deeds of that day. This issue should be rectified.

The name of Joseph C. Hogg, Captain, United States Army, needs to be added to list of true American Heroes.

Charlie B. Dickey

AKA Birth Control 28 Delta  
C 2/5 Cavalry and A 1/77th Artillery  
First Air Cavalry Division (Air Mobile)  
Republic of Vietnam

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**The following request has come in from Brian J. Russ.**

**On May 24, 1970 I was flying front seat C Btry 2/20 ARA at "Medivac Meadows" in Cambodia where we lost a Medivac to hostile fire. My microphone was blown off my helmet and I sustained multiple cuts on my face when the canopy shattered. We never turned it in. I need two people to verify this minor injury. I replaced my helmet when we returned to Quan Loi and we all continued to support at the mission site most of that day, so the injury was forgotten and not turned in.**

**Thanks, Brian J. Russ (Blue Max 68P)  
April 1970 to August 1970 with C Btry 2/20th  
August 1970 to March 1971 with A Btry 2/20th  
March to mid April 1971 with F/79th**

**If anyone can assist with this request please contact Brian. E-mail is [Brian1russ@aol.com](mailto:Brian1russ@aol.com).**



According to Gene Wilson this is how the concept of aerial rocket artillery was born.

# A Connundrum for the Brass Hats!

Wayne Hague always wondered whatever happened to the pilot whose crippled plane he refueled and escorted to safety over North Vietnam in 1967. Ron Catton always wondered about that pilot who kept him from having to bail out of his F-4C Phantom fighter and right into a suite at the Hanoi Hilton.

More than 43 years have passed since they were linked by their meeting in the skies over Southeast Asia, even though they never knew each other's names. But fate has a way of working things out. This head-spinner happened because two men who live more than 900 miles apart told their versions of same story to the same people who helped them finally connect.

Here's the gist of it: Hague, 76, retired from the Air Force, spent 20 years teaching and now is a volunteer counselor at the Merced County Rescue Mission in Merced. Catton, 78, owns a financial services business in Spokane, Wash. In December, Catton spoke to a group of students at a high school that his grandchildren attend in Yakima, Wash. Among his flying stories was his near catastrophe during the Vietnam War and how a pilot and crew of a KC-135 refueling plane disobeyed orders by flying about 100 miles into North Vietnam to get him.

That story sounded very familiar to Rick Van Beek, the school's principal. Van Beek had heard it from his wife, Lolly, who heard it from the tanker pilot during a medical missionary trip to Kenya. "The bells started going off in my head," Van Beek said. "How can these be separate stories?"

After seeing Catton again a couple of weeks later, Van Beek went to his office and called his daughter, who also had gone on the Africa trip. She knew the tanker pilot's name. Van Beek then did a Google search on Wayne Hague. He printed out the info, returned to the gym and handed it to Catton. "I said, 'Here's another pilot who seems to have the other half of your story,'" Van Beek told him.

The story had its roots in the fall of 1967, as the Vietnam War was heating up. Catton served in the 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. On this particular day, he flew the lead plane among Phantoms providing cover for bombers on a mission over Hanoi.

Once the bombers emptied their loads, they returned to their bases. Then the Phantoms zoomed down and dropped their bombs as well. As Catton bombed a railroad bridge, enemy rounds ripped into the intake of his right engine.

As he maneuvered his crippled plane, Catton said, enemy fighter jets appeared. "I looked over my shoulder and there were three MiGs on me." After another pilot flew in to run off the MiGs, that threat subsided.

Catton faced another: a plane with one blown-out engine and other major problems, including the fact that he was still above North Vietnamese real estate. "I was heading back toward Laos, all shot up and leaking fuel," Catton said. "I wanted to bail out over Laos. If I bailed (over North Vietnam), I would have ended up in the Hanoi Hilton." He put out what amounted to a "Mayday" call, and Hague – flying over Laos in his KC-135 answered. "When I heard his voice," Catton said, "it was like the voice of God. I told him I was heading west toward Laos. He said, 'Negative, Cadillac Lead (Catton's code name). I'll come and get you.'"

Just one problem: Hague had strict orders not to cross over the border into North Vietnam. With a pilot in trouble, though, he didn't hesitate. Hague hooked up with Catton over the Black River, roughly 100 miles from Laos. "I just went in and got him," Hague said.

As they positioned their respective planes to connect the refueling boom, Catton radioed: "Understand I've got a fire warning and smoke in the cockpit. You don't have to take me on."

Hague's response? "Cadillac Lead, get your sorry ass in position for a hookup before I change my mind!"

Catton's plane leaked the fuel as quickly as the tanker could pump it in. So they stayed connected for more than 200 miles until Catton detached to land at an air base in Thailand while Hague returned to his own at Takhli. Just as Catton touched down, his left engine quit, too.

Hague never told anyone at Takhli about the incident. Someone must have. His superiors knew, and the rumor mill soon began to churn. A day or so later, on the ground at Udon, Catton heard that the tanker pilot likely would be court-martialed for going over into North Vietnam, putting his crew and plane at severe risk.

So Catton went to his commanding officer, who had a solution: He'd recommend the tanker pilot for a Silver Star. Neither Hague nor Catton can say this for certain, but both heard that the Silver Star recommendation arrived at headquarters the same day as the court-martial papers, leaving the brass to weigh an act of heroism that saved a pilot's life against the military crime of blatantly disobeying orders.

Hague never got his Silver Star, but he didn't get court-martialed, either.

Through all of this, neither Hague nor Catton learned each other's identity.

It stayed that way until Feb. 6, 2011, when Hague got a phone call that went something like this:

"Are you Wayne Hague?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

"Were you in Vietnam in 1967?" the caller continued.

"Yes, I was."

"Did you enter North Vietnam to pick up a fighter pilot, shot up and going down?"

"Yes, I did."

"I'm the pilot."

Only then did Hague learn the name of the man he'd rescued more than 43 years ago. They met a few days later. Hague already planned on traveling to Lewiston, Idaho, to watch grandson Jason Hague play baseball at Lewis-Clark State College. So he drove two more hours to Spokane, and the two pilots saw each other face to face for the first time.

Indeed, Hague had always wondered about the fighter pilot whose life he saved so long ago.

Likewise with Catton.

"All this time, it's been, 'Gee, I wish I knew who it was,' " Catton said. "Then to have it happen like that. He's a really nice guy."

## As Things Were Once—Now Gone



Early days of ARA –UH1B of 3/377/11 AAD  
Ft. Benning, GA 1963 Note Artillery insignia on nose.  
Photo by Chuck Voeltz.



Millard Garrison, Crew Chief, HB/2/20/1<sup>st</sup> CavDiv  
July 65 – August 1966

This looks like the ship that Doc Talbot (Red Baron 16) used to fly in with LTC Knowles and 6 Xray (Jim Amos) in 1967.

### *Late Breaking and Tragic News:*

LTG (Ret) Gus Cianciolo passed away April 4, 2011, at Fairfax Hospital. Gus was in a car accident last Thursday night (March 31, 2011) along with his son Marty. Max Bunyard visited with Gus in the hospital on Saturday and he seemed to be progressing satisfactorily. He had some broken ribs and a broken wrist along with cuts and bruises.—not life threatening. He had been hospitalized a week earlier concerning heart problems. Marty remains in the hospital and we do not know the extent of his injuries at this time.

When we get more details we will pass them along but thought you would like to know. You might want to inform the other Blue Max people who served with Gus in his two tours in Vietnam with Blue Max.

The Association will send condolences and flowers and a formal obituary will appear in the next Straphanger.

## ***FINAL FLIGHT***

Our beloved friend and fellow ARA trooper Fred Beck made his last flight to a better landing zone on February 21, 2011. Funeral services for LTC (Retired) Frederick S. Beck, 76, Lawton, were held at 10:00 a.m. Friday, February 25, 2011 in the First Baptist Church of Lawton, OK with Shane Hall, Pastor, officiating.

Burial with full military honors was in Highland Cemetery under the direction of the Becker Funeral Home & Cremation Service.

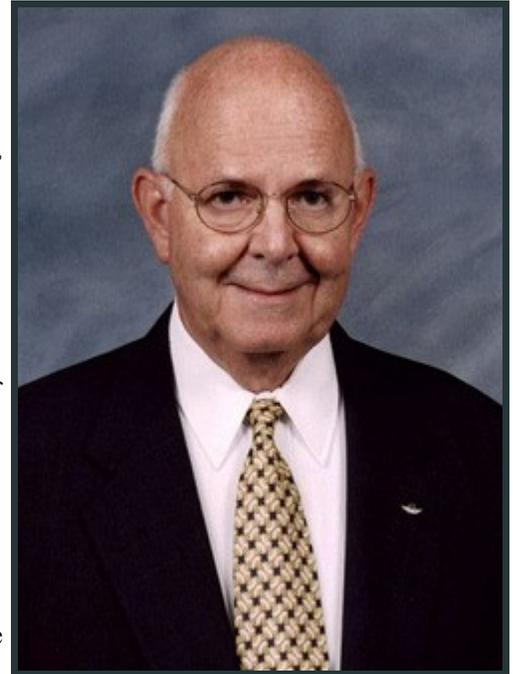
Colonel Beck was born December 26, 1934 in Indiana, Pennsylvania, to William L. and Barbara (Blakely) Beck. He graduated high school in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and earned his bachelor's degree from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania, majoring in history with a minor in geography while participating in the Army ROTC program. He married Adele Helen Skrdle on June 17, 1961 at the First Christian Church in Lawton. She preceded him in death on April 28, 2010.

He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant upon completion of the ROTC program. He was an aviator and served two tours of duty in Vietnam where he flew the first successful nighttime aerial rocket mission. His awards include the Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross Unit Citation with Palm, Distinguished Flying Cross with First Oak Leaf Cluster, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with 60 device, Air Medal with Fifteenth Oak Leaf Cluster, Four Overseas Service Bars, Master Army Aviator Badge, Presidential Unit Citation, Army Commendation Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Army Aviator Badge, Vietnam Service Medal, Senior Army Aviator Badge and the Bronze Star Medal with First Oak Leaf Cluster. He was also inducted into the Order of Saint Barbara. Colonel Beck retired at Fort Sill on October 31, 1977 after twenty-one years of service.

Following his retirement he continued to fly recreationally and began a fifteen year career as a senior Army instructor in the MacArthur Senior High School Junior ROTC program until his retirement in 1992. He was a member of the First Baptist Church where he sang in the adult choir and had served as choir president as well as having taught the College and Career Sunday School Class. He was a member of the Aerial Rocket Artillery Association and the Military Order of World Wars. He was an avid supporter of the Lawton Community Theater and participated in the cast in two LCT productions. Colonel Beck enjoyed boating and traveling and had traveled to all fifty states as well as thirty-seven countries. He also enjoyed music and was a talented trumpet player.

He is survived by a daughter and son in law, Brenda and Jason Buschman, Lawton; a son, Barry Beck, Dallas, Texas; a granddaughter, Tiffany Buschman, Lawton; a brother, William L. Beck, Fredericktown, Pennsylvania; two sisters, Carol "Mitzi" Symonds and her husband Gordon and Susan B. Harclerode, all of Lancaster, Pennsylvania; a brother in law and sister in law, Joe and Lacreata Skrdle, Lawton; several nieces and nephews.

His parents and a sister, Norma "Cutty" Larsen, also preceded him in death.



### **Facts**

*Born:* December 26, 1934

*Place of Birth:* Indiana, Pennsylvania

*Death:* February 21, 2011

*Place of Death:* Lawton, Oklahoma

We of the ARA were privileged to know him and honored to serve with him. He and his late wife Adele were always a center of fun and laughter at reunions which he attended faithfully.

We were saddened by the death of Adele just before the 2010 reunion and gladdened that his son, Barry, insured he was able to attend even in the absence of Adele.

A large floral tribute was sent by the Association to honor his memory and his service.

**We have received word that CW4 Gary S. Arnold, who served with A Battery, 4/77th Artillery, 101st Airborne Division, took his final flight on February 16, 2001. When more information is available we will pass it along.**

Once again, we are reminded of the fragility of life and the need to cherish our friendships and relationships through gatherings and correspondence. Our next reunion could be our last. Don't let it slip by.

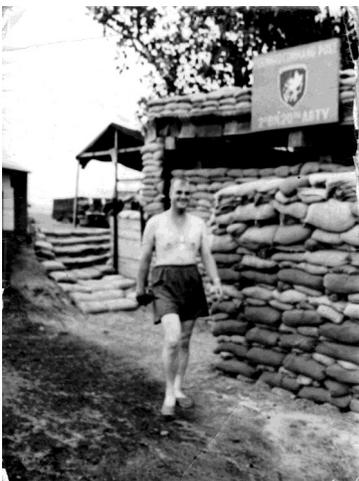
## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It has been a busy and profitable season. Your Board of Directors has accomplished much. President Jesse Hobby and wife, Gloria, in coordination with co-hosts, Ray Hatfield and Martha Williams, have planned and organized another great reunion for May 18-22, 2011, in Charleston, SC, a place "Where History Lives." I hope you all have made reservations and sent in your registrations. One of the first commanding officers of the ARA concept and its adaptation to combat in Vietnam, MG (Ret) Morris J. Brady, will be a guest speaker at the banquet. LTC (Ret) Larry McKay, the commander of the last ARA unit in Vietnam, will be a guest speaker also, and will present a review of the "Battle of An Loc." This should be a memorable banquet for members and guests.

Also, your board has assumed the responsibility for writing the ARA bimonthly article for the First Cavalry Division Saber Newsletter. We felt that the stories of the members within the ARA community needed to be told. The Saber will ensure that a wider population of interest will be able to share in these chronological stories from the beginning (Feb 1963) to the end. I have been asked by the board to write the articles. I request that all members please submit your stories to me in any form. I will ensure that they are published.

Bruce Wilder  
Vice President

## THEN AND NOW—HOW THINGS CHANGE OR DO THEY?



**Doc Talbot, the health conscious Flight Surgeon, on his way to enjoy the luxury of the Australian Water Bucket on the edge of the ravine at LZ Two Bits (Summer of '67)**



**The good doctor experiencing a moose hunt at the Bozeman Reunion, 2010**



**Lacy Polk with a cane in his hand (cigar in mouth) was taken in March of '66--about 3 weeks before he came over to the 2/20th. He narrowly escaped being decapitated by shrapnel from one of our howitzers that fired a round and hit a tree--He ended up with a small shrapnel cut on his left foot--several others were not so lucky. That was a couple of months after arriving in-country.**



**Forty-four years later, time has been kind to the old door gunner/crewchief. In the background is "The Wall" on Memorial Day 2010.**

*Editor's Note: Last issue we began the saga of CWO Vern Estes as the 1st Cav. and the ARA evolved in 1965. Since then we have obtained an improved and illustrated version which we will begin over with in the first issue of the new year (post-reunion).*

## ***AN UNSUNG HERO AND UNLIKELY CANDIDATE FOR FAME***

**"You will find that dying is very easy; living, living is the difficult thing."**

*This is the story of Dr. Hal Kushner, a very brave and dedicated U.S. Army Flight Surgeon, as told to his peers at the 1st Cavalry reunion at Ft. Hood. Those who man the rockets and the guns can justifiably fear the horror of capture and torture by the enemy. This soldier should never have been exposed to this threat. While Dr. Kushner and I were contemporaries in RVN and the 1/9th Cav. Were in our area, I never knew him until he became a "living legend" among the medical people. Years later, we were again contemporaries as we took our individual residencies at the Medical College of VA, and again "passed in the night." We are indebted to Bert Toepel for this insight.—The Editor.*

The words of Dr. Hal Kushner.....

"I want you to know that I don't do this often. I was captured 2 Dec. 1967, and returned to American control on 16 Mar. 1973. For those of you good at arithmetic 1931 days. Thus it has been 32 years since capture and 26 years since my return. I have given a lot of talks, about medicine, about ophthalmology, even about the D Day Invasion as I was privileged to go to Normandy and witness the 50th anniversary of the invasion in Jun. 1944. But not about my captivity. I don't ride in parades; I don't open shopping centers; I don't give interviews and talks about it. I have tried very hard NOT to be a professional POW. My philosophy has always been to look forward, not backward, to consider the future rather than the past. That's a helluva thing to say at a reunion, I guess.

In 26 years, I've given only two interviews and two talks. One to my hometown newspaper, one to the Washington Post in 1973, and a talk at Ft. Benning in 1991 and to the Military Flight Surgeons in 1993. I've refused 1,000 invitations to speak about my experiences. But you don't say no to the 1-9th, and you don't say no to your commander. COL Bob Nevins and COL Pete Booth asked me to do this and so I said yes sir and prepared the talk. It will probably be my last one.

I was a 26-year-old young doctor, just finished 9 years of education, college at the University of North Carolina, med school at Medical College of VA, a young wife and 3 year old daughter. I interned at the hospital in which I was born, Tripler Army Med Center in Honolulu, HI. While there, I was removed from my internship and spent most of my time doing orthopedic operations on wounded soldiers and Marines. We were getting hundreds of wounded GIs there, and filled the hospital. After the hospital was filled, we created tents on the grounds and continued receiving air evacuation patients.

So I knew what was happening in Vietnam. I decided that I wanted to be a flight surgeon. I had a private pilot's license and was interested in aviation. So after my internship at Tripler, I went to Ft. Rucker and to Pensacola and through the Army and Navy's aviation medicine program and then deployed to Vietnam. While in basic training and my Escape & Evasion course, they told us that as Doctors, we didn't have to worry about being captured. Doctors and nurses they said were not POWs, they were detained under the Geneva Convention. If they treated us as POWs, we should show our Geneva Convention cards and leave. It was supposed to be a joke and it was pretty funny at the time.

I arrived in Vietnam in Aug. 1967 and went to An Khe. I was told that the Division needed two flight surgeons; one to be the div. flight surgeon at An Khe in the rear and the other to be surgeon for the 1-9th a unit actively involved with the enemy. I volunteered for the 1-9th. The man before me, CPT Claire Shenep had been killed and the dispensary was named the Claire Shenep Memorial Dispensary. Like many flight surgeons, I flew on combat missions in helicopters, enough to have earned three air medals, and one of my medics, SSG Jim Zeiler used to warn me: "Doc, you better be careful. We'll be renaming that dispensary, the K&S Memorial Dispensary."

I was captured on 2 Dec., 1967 and held for five and a half years until 16 Mar., 1973. I have never regretted the decision that I made that Aug. to be the 1-9th flight surgeon. Such is the honor and esteem that I hold the squadron. I am proud of the time I was the squadron's flight surgeon.

On 30 Nov. 1967, I went to Chu Lai with MAJ Steve Porcella, WO-1 Giff Bedworth and SGT McKeckney, the crew chief of our UH-1H. I gave a talk to a troop at Chu Lai on the dangers of night flying. The weather was horrible, rainy and windy, and I asked MAJ Porcella, the A/C commander, if we could spend the night and wait out the weather. He said, "Our mission is not so important but we have to get the A/C back." I'll never forget the devotion to duty of this young officer; it cost him his life.

While flying from Chu Lai to LZ Two Bits, I thought we had flown west of Hwy. 1, which would be off course. I asked Steve if we had drifted west. He called the ATC at Duc Pho and asked them to find him. The operator at Duc Pho said that he had turned off his radar at 2100. He said, "Do you want me to turn it on and find you?" MAJ Porcella replied "Roj" and that was the last thing he ever said.

The next thing I knew I was recovering from unconsciousness in a burning helicopter which seemed to be upside down. I tried to unbuckle my seat belt and couldn't use my left arm. I finally managed to get unbuckled and immediately dropped and almost broke my neck. My helmet was plugged into the intercom and the wire held me as I dropped out of the seat which was inverted.

The helicopter was burning. Poor MAJ Porcella was crushed against the instrument panel and either unconscious or dead. Bedworth was thrown, still strapped in his seat out of the chopper. His right anklebones were fractured and sticking through the nylon of his boot. SGT Mac was unhurt but thrown clear and unconscious. I tried to free Porcella by cutting his seatbelt and moving him. However, I was unable to. The chopper burned up and I suffered burns on my hands and buttocks and had my pants burned off. While trying to free Porcella, some of the M-60 rounds cooked off and I took a round through the left shoulder and neck. My left wrist and left collarbone were broken in the crash, and I lost or broke 7 upper teeth.

Well, after we assessed the situation—we had no food or water, no flares, no first aid kit or survival gear. We had two 38 pistols and 12 rounds, one seriously wounded WO co-pilot, a moderately wounded doctor, and an unhurt crew chief. We thought we were close to Duc Pho and Hwy 1 and close to friendlies. Bedworth and I decided to send Mac for help at first light. We never saw him again.

Later, 6 years later, COL Nevins told me that SGT Mac had been found about 10 miles from the crash site, shot and submerged in a rice paddy. So on that night of 30 Nov. 1967 I splinted Bedworth's leg with tree branches, made a lean-to from the door of the chopper, and we sat in the rain for three days and nights. We just sat there. We drank rainwater. On the third morning, he died. We could hear choppers hovering over our crash site and I fired most of the rounds from our 38's trying to signal them, but cloud cover was so heavy and the weather so bad, they never found us. I took the compass from the burned out helicopter and tried to go down the mountain towards the east and, I believed, friendlies.

My glasses were broken or lost in the crash and I couldn't see well: the trail was slippery and I fell on rocks in a creek bed and cracked a couple of ribs. I had my left arm splinted to my body with my army belt. My pants were in tatters and burned. I had broken teeth and a wound in my shoulder. I hadn't eaten or drunk anything but rainwater for three days. I looked and felt like hell. One of the cruel ironies of my life, you know how we all play the what if games, what if I hadn't done this or that, well, when I finally reached the bottom of the mountain, I estimated 4 hours after first light, the weather cleared and I saw choppers hovering over the top. I knew I couldn't make it up the mountain, and had to take my chances. But if I had only waited another 4 hours.

I started walking up the trail and saw a man working in a rice paddy. He came over and said Dai-wi, Bac-si- CPT Doctor. He took me to a little hootch, sat me down and gave me a can of sweetened condensed milk and a C-ration can, can opener and spoon. This stuff was like pudding and it billowed out of the can and was the best tasting stuff I ever had. I felt very safe at that point. One minute later, my host led a squad of 14 VC with two women and 12 rifles came upon me. The squad leader said, "Surrenda no kill." He put his hands in the air and I couldn't because my left arm was tied to my body. He shot me with an M2 carbine and wounded me again in the neck.

After I was apprehended, I showed my captors my Geneva Convention card, white with a red cross. He tore it up. He took my dogtags and medallion which had a St. Christopher's (medal) on one side and a Star of David on

the other, which my dad had given me before leaving. They tied me with commo wire in a duck wing position, took my boots and marched me mostly at night for about 30 days. The first day they took me to a cave, stripped my fatigue jacket off my back, tied me to a door and a teenage boy beat me with a bamboo rod. I was told his parents were killed by American bombs.

We rested by day, and marched by night. I walked on rice paddy dikes, and couldn't see a thing. They would strike these little homemade lighters and by the sparks they made, see four or five steps. I was always falling off the dikes into the rice paddy water and had to be pulled back up. It was rough. On the way, I saw men, women and kids in tiger cages, and bamboo jails. I was taken to a camp, which must have been a medical facility as my wound was festering and full of maggots and I was sick. A woman heated up a rifle-cleaning rod and gave me a bamboo stick to bite on. She cauterized my wound through and through with the cleaning rod and I almost passed out with pain. She then dressed the wound with mercurochrome and gave me two aspirin. I thought, what else can they do to me. I was about to find out.

After walking for about a month through plains, then jungles and mountains, always west, they took me to a camp. I had been expecting a POW camp like a stalag with Hogan's Heroes; barbed wire, search lights, nice guards and red cross packages-and a hospital where I could work as a doctor. They took me to a darkened hut with an oriental prisoner who was not American. I didn't know whether he was Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian or Chinese. He spoke no English and was dying of TB. He was emaciated, weak, sick and coughed all day and night. I spent two days there and an English speaking Vietnamese officer came with a portable tape recorder and asked me to make a statement against the war. I told him that I would rather die than speak against my country. His words which were unforgettable and if I ever write a book, will be the title. He said, "You will find that dying is very easy; living is the difficult thing."

A few days later, in a driving rain, we started the final trek to camp. I was tied again, without boots, and we ascended higher and higher in the mountains. I was weak and asked to stop often and rest. We ate a little rice which the guards cooked. We actually needed ropes to traverse some of the steep rocks. Finally, we got to POW camp one. There were four American servicemen there, two from the US and two from Puerto Rico. Three were Marines and one in the Army. These guys looked horrible. They wore black PJs, were scrawny with bad skin and teeth and beards and matted hair.

The camp also had about 15 ARVNs who were held separately, across a bamboo fence. The camp was just a row of hootches made of bamboo with elephant grass roofs around a creek, with a hole in the ground for a latrine. This was the first of five camps that we lived in in the South-all depressingly similar, although sometimes we had a separate building for a kitchen and sometimes we were able to pipe in water thru bamboo pipes from a nearby stream.

I asked one of the Marines, the man captured longest and the leader, if escape was possible. He told me that he and a special forces CPT had tried to escape the year before and the CPT had been beaten to death, while he had been put in stocks for 90 days, having to defecate in his hands and throw it away from him or lie in it. The next day I was called before the camp commander and chastised and yelled at for suggesting escape. My fellow POW then told me never to say anything to him that I didn't want revealed, because the Vietnamese controlled his mind. I threatened to kill him for informing on me. He just smiled and said I would learn.

Our captors promised us that if we made progress and understood the evils of the war they would release us. And the next day, they released the two Puerto Ricans and 14 ARVNs POWs. The people released wore red sashes and gave anti-war speeches.

Just before the release, they brought in another 7 American POWs from the 196th Light Bde who were captured in the TET offensive of '68. I managed to write our names, ranks and serial numbers on a piece of paper and slip it to one of the PRs who was released. They transported the information home and in Mar. 1968 our families learned we had been captured alive. We were held in a series of jungle camps from Jan., 1968 to Feb., 1971.

At this time, conditions were so bad and we were doing so poorly, that they decided to move us to North Vietnam. They moved 12 of us. In all, 27 Americans had come through the camp. Five had been released and ten had died.

They died of their wounds, disease, malnutrition and starvation. One was shot while trying to escape. All but one died in my arms after a lingering, terrible illness. Five West German nurses in a neutral nursing organization, called the Knights of Malta, similar to our own Red Cross, had been picked up (I always thought by mistake) by the VC in the spring of '69. Three of them died and the other two were taken to North Vietnam in 1969 and held until the end of the war.

The twelve who made it were moved to North Vietnam on foot. The fastest group, of which I was one, made it in 57 days. The slowest group took about 180 days. It was about 900km. We walked thru Laos and Cambodia to the Ho Chi Minh trail and then up the trail across the DMZ until Vinh. At Vinh, we took a train 180 miles to Hanoi in about 18 hours. We traveled with thousands of ARVN POWs who had been captured in Lam Song 719, an ARVN incursion into Laos in 1971. Once in Hanoi, we stayed in an old French prison called "The Citadel" or as we said, "The Plantation", until Christmas '72 when the X-mas bombing destroyed Hanoi. Then we were moved to the Hoa Lo or Hanoi Hilton for about three months. The peace was signed in Jan., '73 and I came home on Mar. 16 with the fourth group.

In the North we were in a rough jail. There was a bucket in the windowless, cement room used as a latrine. An electric bulb was on 24 hours. We got a piece of bread and a cup of pumpkin soup each day and three cups of hot water. We slept on pallets of wood and wore PJs and sandals and got three tailor made cigarettes per day. We dry shaved and bathed with a bucket from a well twice per week, got out of the cell to carry our latrine bucket daily.

Towards the end, they let us exercise. There were no letters or packages for us from the south, but I understood some of the pilots who had been there awhile got some things. In the summer, it was 120 in the cell and they gave us little bamboo fans. But there were officers and a rank structure and communicate done through a tap code on the walls. No one died. It was hard duty, but not the grim struggle for survival which characterized daily life in the camps in the south. In the north, I knew I would survive. In the south, we often wanted to die. I knew that when they ordered us north, I would make it.

In the south, each day was a struggle for survival. There were between three and twenty-four POWs at all times. We ate three coffee cups of rice per day. In the rainy season, the ration was cut to two cups. I'm not talking about nice white rice, Uncle Ben's. I'm talking about rice that was red, rotten, and eaten out by bugs and rats, cached for years, shot through with rat feces and weevils. We arose at 4, cooked rice on wood ovens made of mud. We couldn't burn a fire in the daytime or at night unless the flames and smoke were hidden, so we had these ovens constructed of mud which covered the fire and tunnels which carried the smoke away. We did slave labor during the day, gathering wood, carrying rice, building hootches, or going for manioc, a starchy tuberous plant like a potato. The Vietnamese had chickens and canned food. We never got supplements unless we were close to dying then maybe some canned sardines or milk. We died from lack of protein and calories. We swelled up with what is called hungry edema and beriberi. We had terrible skin disease, dysentery, and malaria. Our compound was littered with piles of human excrement because people were just too sick or weak to make it to the latrine. We slept on one large pallet of bamboo. So the sick vomited and defecated and urinated on the bed and his neighbor. For the first two years, we had no shoes, clothes, mosquito nets or blankets. Later, in late '69, we got sandals, rice sacks for blankets, and a set of clothes. We nursed each other and helped each other, but we also fought and bickered. In a POW situation the best and the worst come out. Any little flaw transforms itself into a glaring lack. The strong can rule the weak. There is no law and no threat of retribution. I can report to you that the majority of the time, the Americans stuck together, helped each other and the strong helped the weak. But there were exceptions and sometimes the stronger took advantage of the weaker ones. There was no organization, no rank structure. The VC forbid the men from calling me Doc, and made me the latrine orderly to break down rank structure. I was officially forbidden from practicing medicine.

But I hoarded medicine, had the men fake malaria attacks and dysentery so we could acquire medicine and keep it until we needed it. Otherwise, it might not come. I tried to advise the men about sanitary conditions, about nutrition and to keep clean, active, and eat everything we could; rats, bugs, leaves, etc. We had some old rusty razor blades, and I did minor surgery, lancing boils, removing foreign bodies, etc. with them, but nothing major.

At one time, in the summer of '68, I was offered the chance to work in a VC hospital and receive a higher ration. The NVA Political officer, who made the offer and was there to indoctrinate us, said it had been done in WW II. I

didn't believe him and didn't want to do it anyway, so I refused and took my chances. Later, upon return, I learned that American Army doctors in Europe in WW II had indeed worked in hospitals treating German soldiers. But I'm glad now I did what I did.

We had a 1st Sergeant who had been in Korea and in WW II. He died in the fall of '68 and we were forbidden from calling him "Top". The VC broke him fast. I was not allowed to practice medicine unless a man was 30 minutes away from dying, then they came down with their little bottles of medicine and said "Cure him!" At one point we were all dying of dysentery and I agreed to sign a propaganda statement in return for chloromycetin, a strong antibiotic, to treat our sick. Most of us were seriously ill, although a few never got sick, maintained their health and their weight. I never figured it out.

When a man died, we buried him in a bamboo coffin and said some words over his grave and marked it with a pile of rocks. I was forced to sign a death certificate in Vietnamese. I did this 13 times. The worst period was the fall of '68. We lost five men between Sept. and Christmas. Shortly before the end of Nov., I thought I was going to lose my mind. All of these fine young strong men were dying. It would have been so easy to live, just nutrition, fluids, and antibiotics. I knew what to do, but had no means to help them. I was depressed and didn't care whether I lived or died myself.

At this time, we were simply starving to death. As an example of how crazy we were, we decided to kill the camp commander's cat. Several of us killed it, and skinned it. We cut off its head and paws and it dressed out to about three pounds. We were preparing to boil it when one of the guards came down and asked us what was going on. We told him we had killed a weasel by throwing a rock. The guards raised chickens and the chickens were always being attacked by weasels. Well, the guard, who was a Montagnard, an aborigine, found the feet, and knew it was the cat. The situation became very serious. The guards and cadre were mustered..it was about 3 am. The prisoners were lined up and a Marine and I were singled out to be beaten. He was almost beaten to death. I was beaten badly, tied up with commo wire very tightly (I thought my hands would fall off and knew I would never do surgery again) for over a day. I had to bury the cat. And I was disappointed I didn't get to eat it. That's how crazy I was.

Shortly thereafter, the Marine who had been beaten so badly died. He didn't have to. He simply gave up, like so many. Marty Seligman, a professor of psychology at University of Pennsylvania has written a book about these feelings called Learned Helplessness and Death. The Marine simply lay on his bamboo bed, refused to eat, wash or get up and died. So many did this. We tried to force them to eat, and to be active, but nothing worked. It was just too hard. This Marine wavered in and out of coma for about two weeks. It was around Thanksgiving, the end of November. The rains had been monstrous and our compound was a muddy morass littered with piles of feces.

David Harker of Lynchburg, VA and I sat up with him all night. He hadn't spoken coherently for over a week. Suddenly, he opened his eyes and looked right at me. He said, "Mom, dad..I love you very much. Box 10, Dubberly, Louisiana." That was Nov., '68. We all escaped the camp in the south. Five were released as propaganda gestures. Ten Americans and three Germans died and twelve Americans and two Germans made it back. I am the only POW who was captured before the end of '67 to survive that camp.

I came back Mar. 16, 1973 and stayed in the hospital in Valley Forge, PA for a month getting fixed up with several operations and then went on convalescent leave. The first thing I did was go to Dubberly, LA and see the Marine's father. His parents had divorced while he was captured. I went to see five of the families of those that died and called the others on the phone.

It was a terrible experience, but there is some good to come from it. I learned a lot. I learned about the human spirit. I learned about confidence in yourself. I learned about loyalty to your country and its ideals and to your friends and comrades. No task would ever be too hard again. I had renewed respect for what we have and swore to learn my country's history in depth (I have done it) and to try to contribute to my community and set an example for my children and employees.

I stayed on active duty until '77 when I was honorably discharged and entered the Reserve from which I retired as an O-6 in '86. I have a busy medical practice down in Florida and been remarkably successful. I am active in my

community in a number of ways and despite being drenched with Agent Orange a number of times and having some organs removed, have enjoyed great health. Except for some arthritis and prostate trouble, I'm doing great. So I was lucky..very lucky and I'm so thankful for that. I'm thankful for my life and I have no bitterness. I feel so fortunate to have survived and flourished when so many braver, stronger and better trained men did not."

**"We sleep safely in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would harm us." *George Orwell***

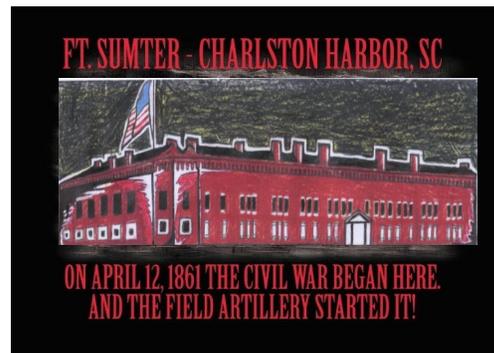
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Reunion commemorative shirt (front)



ARA shirt (front)



Back of both shirts

# Ladies of the Association

## The Last Page

### **Green Eggs and Salmonella?**

Beware the hidden hazards lurking within popular children's books.

By Abigail Green

"These stories are infused with the same purity that makes children appear so marvelous and blessed," wrote Wilhelm Grimm in the preface to his volume of fairy tales. If true, then life the 19<sup>th</sup> century was worse than I'd ever imagined. Reading these stories today is like sitting through a Quentin Tarantino movie. Have you ever added up the body count? One poor girl is transformed into a block of wood and thrown in a fire. A father risks his daughter's life by boasting that she can weave straw into gold. An evil queen tries to off her stepdaughter with a poisoned apple.

I used to think we lived in more enlightened times. But as the mother of two young boys – and a nightly reader of bedtime stories – I've come to realize that many popular children's books are rife with malice and mayhem. Do you have any idea of the dangers that may lurk on your little one's bookshelves?

Let's start with *Goodnight Moon*. Margaret Wise Brown's beloved bedtime tale is a veritable hotbed of child safety hazards. First of all, the child's – excuse me bunny's – great green bedroom contains an open fireplace filled with dangerous tools like tongs and pokers. The bed has no side rails. And what about the grandmother – a careless caretaker if I ever saw one. Why she leaves knitting needles unattended in a child's bedroom.

It's bad enough that in Robert McCloskey's award-winning *Blueberries for Sal*, the child eats unwashed produce. I shudder to think of her pesticide intake. But far more alarming is the mother's negligence in leaving the girl unattended on a hillside populated by bears. Little Sal and Little Bear get distracted and inadvertently follow each other's mothers. The mix-up is discovered, no harm is done and each party goes on its merry way. But the tale could have easily had a much different ending.

In McCloskey's *Make Way for Ducklings*, it's the father who neglects his family. Mr. Mallard leaves his poor wife to fend for herself with eight baby ducklings – in traffic-ridden downtown Boston, no less – while he takes off to explore the Charles River. Who knew that ducks could be deadbeat dads?

Speaking of inattentive parents, the *Good Dog, Carl* series by Alexandra Day depicts a Rottweiler caring for a baby while his mother runs errands. On Carl's watch, the baby rides on his back, swims in a fish tank and slides down a laundry chute. A Rottweiler

as a baby sitter? I won't ever hire a human sitter unless she knows CPR and passes a background check.

Canines also romp through P.D. Eastman's *Go, Dog, Go!* At first glance, the book is a whimsical tale featuring dogs on roller skates and bicycles and skis. But when the dogs get into cars, there's not a seat belt in sight. Then the dogs all drive in separate vehicles to a big dog party in a tree. Have they never heard of carpooling? Even dogs need to consider their carbon pawprint.

In Dr. Suess' *Green Eggs and Ham*, health concerns abound. Sam-I-am pushes discolored pork products on the protagonist, encouraging him to eat them with a mouse and a goat. There's no hand sanitizer in sight; I guess salmonella and swine flu are on the menu as well.

Even a picture book about cute bugs reveals insidious undertones. Eric Carle's *Very Hungry Caterpillar* binges on junk food, and then starves himself to turn into a beautiful butterfly. As if our kids don't already have enough problems with body image.

Safety hazards, parental neglect, eating disorders... It almost makes me nostalgic for the attempted cannibalism in *Hansel and Gretel*.

**I decided to inject some humor into this quarter's newsletter. The title of this article "The Last Page" was derived from the fact that it was the last page of a Smithsonian Magazine (June 2010) that I read while sitting in a Doctor's office waiting to be seen. Abigail Green, the author, is a freelance writer and blogger in Baltimore, Maryland.**

**Once again – if anyone has an item of interest for the Ladies of the Association, please forward to me ([gloriahobby@yahoo.com](mailto:gloriahobby@yahoo.com)) for inclusion in the newsletter.**

**Hope to see you all in Charleston. And guys, share your newsletter with your spouse.**

**Gloria Hobby**

**Falconess 6**

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## **Final Notes From The President/Data Base Keeper**

As result of the annual mail-out I have received a number of calls and e-mails from members correcting personal data. If you physical address, phone number, or e-mail address has changed please contact me. If you are not sure that your information is up to date please contact me. My contact information can be found in the Board of Directors information section of the Newsletter or on the web site (<http://www.araassociation.com>). About three (3) percent of the mail-out was returned as undeliverable. Unless I can contact those members by phone or e-mail they are now lost to the Association."

## Chaplain's Corner



### “The Final Preflight”

The young aviator walked around his helicopter as he completed another preflight. He had done this many times before and would have to do it again and again. The fact of life with its uncertainties would never reveal how many preflights he would be able to complete.

Some aviators complete a few; many will have years of preflights; others will finish their final preflight with retirement from either the military or post military civilian aviation position. Knowing the number of preflights is an unknown, until it's over.

Life is much the same, we never know how long we have until it's over. Our friend and fellow aviator, Frederick S. Beck, A Btry, 2/20<sup>th</sup> ARA, 1965-66, completed his final preflight of life on February 21, 2011, when he died in Lawton, OK.

Fred Beck always paid attention to details and was very methodical and thorough in his helicopter preflights, as he was in his preflight of life. He was a caring and compassionate man. He was everyone's friend. He reached out to assist others and took care of his men. He made people laugh because he enjoyed life. Fred always had a story and he entertained us with his humor. He was our friend and we miss him dearly. Let us not waste time asking that age old question of God, “Why?” Why did such fine people, Fred and Adele, have to leave us so suddenly? Let us thank God for the time we had them as companions on our journey. Please remember them as they journeyed with us and touched our lives in a special way. I'll remember forever the night Fred flew the first successful searchlight mission and I was in the lower ARA helicopter that caught the enemy in the open north west of An Khe. I'll remember his story of “Jason P. Bean,” who ran for political office in Vicksburg, Mississippi. I have told that story for forty-six years. I remember sharing the reunions with Fred and Adele, her compassionate caring for Fred and ensuring he took his meds and was with someone. I remember the last reunion in Bozeman, MN, without Adele, when his son Barry accompanied him on the bus trips, especially the one to The Little Bighorn.

We are left to continue our journey of preflights. Let us not forget those with whom we walk in the Valley of Life, as we pay attention to our relationships. May it be a profitable and complete preflight.

Our prayer is that God is holding Fred and Adele in his loving arms in eternal rest. And now, may we continue in God's grace as we complete our own preflight.

Peace,

Bruce Wilder  
Chaplain

**Contact information for Board of  
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list.**

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**Jesse Hobby**

**ARA 6**

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**The day Major Delaney, C Batt. Cmdr, boxed with  
some of the enlisted guys. (late 67-68)**



# ARA CHARLESTON RENDEZVOUS

**14<sup>TH</sup> ARA REUNION, CHARLESTON, SC \*\*\*MAY 18 - 22, 2011\*\*\***

## Reunion Registration Form

<b>Information</b>	<b>Arriving</b>	<b>Departing</b>	<b>Driving Yes/No</b>	<b>Flying Yes/No</b>
Name/Membership #				
Wife/Guest name(s)				
Additional Guest(s)				
Street Address				
City, State, Zip Code				
Telephone/e-mail				
Any special assistance/needs required				

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

<b>REGISTRATION/EVENT FEES</b>	<b>Details</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b># In Party</b>	<b>Total</b>
Registration prior to April 15	per adult in party (over 15)	\$25.00		
Registration after April 15	per adult in party (over 15)	\$35.00		
<b>Thursday 5/19/- Patriot's Point</b>	per adult in party (over 12)	\$14.00		
	per child in party (6-11)	\$10.00		
Fort Sumter	per adult in party (over 12)	\$14.00		
	per child in party (11 and under)	\$9.50		
Low Country Boil and BBQ **	per adult in party	\$22.30		
<b>Friday 5/20 - Hunley Museum</b>	per adult in party	\$15.00		
<b>Sat 5/21 – Farewell Banquet</b>	per adult in party	\$34.80		
<b>Membership Renewal (2011)</b>		\$20.00		
<b>Total for Reunion</b>				

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

**Please fill out and return by April 18 to finalize plans and secure set prices for events. Please send a confirmation of attendance to reunion host for head counts. Thanks and hope to see you all in May in “Charleston—Where History Lives.” Other events and tours can be arranged through the reunion hosts.**

**E-mail address for Jesse Hobby is [jesse\\_hobby@hotmail.com](mailto:jesse_hobby@hotmail.com) phone # 229-378-2281**

**Please make checks payable to **ARA ASSOCIATION** and mail to:**

**ARA ASSOCIATION  
c/o Larry Mobley  
779 County Road 106  
Ozark, AL 36360**

# AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

## Membership Application

This form may be used for New membership or for Renewing existing membership. Please circle that which is appropriate.

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Rank (at time of service in ARA) \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

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

Btry & Bn in which you served \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Service - From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_ Call Sign in ARA \_\_\_\_\_

mo/yr mo/yr

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

Street or PO Box \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

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

Home \_\_\_\_\_

Work (if OK) \_\_\_\_\_

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.**

If joining or renewing during the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter (Jan - Mar) dues are \$20.00.

If joining or renewing during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter (Apr - Jun) dues are \$15.00.

If joining or renewing during the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (Jul - Sep) dues are \$10.00.

If joining or renewing during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter (Oct - Dec) dues are \$5.00.

Life membership (if paid in full) is \$250.00.

Life membership may 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 Larry Mobley

779 County Road 106

Ozark, AL 36360

**For Office Use Only**

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

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

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

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

