



NEWS

A publication of the Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum Foundation Vol. XX, No. 2, 2002
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Special Foundation 20th Anniversary Issue

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE RAIDERS ARE COMING
PAGE 1, 5-7

CURATOR'S CORNER
PAGE 3

GOLF TOURNAMENT
PAGE 4

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY!
PAGE 8 - 9

AVIATION IN SOLANO COUNTY
PAGE 10 - 12

THANK YOU, "HOPPY!"
PAGE 12

VIETNAM EXHIBIT: THE NURSES
PAGE 13-15

MEMBERSHIP
PAGE 16



B-25



16 B-25 Mitchells on the deck of the U.S.S. Hornet in route to Tokyo to retaliate for the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor.



The Raiders Are Coming! The Raiders Are Coming!

"California here we come . . . again!"



By Maj Diana Newlin
Deputy Curator

It's true folks, the Jimmy Doolittle Raiders are coming to Travis AFB. The Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Foundation is proud to announce it has been selected to co-host the 61st Annual Doolittle Raiders Reunion the week of 14th April 2003. Travis AFB and the surrounding community will also be involved in this spectacular event. The

continued on page 5

By Cathleen Handlin, Project Manager
Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum
Foundation

Every 4 years, cities vie for their selection by the Olympic Committee to host the



Winter or Summer Olympic games. Similarly, on an annual basis, Air Force Bases joined by the communities that surround them, vie to be selected by the Jimmy

continued on page 6

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Comments and questions about the NEWS may be addressed to Editor, Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum Foundation NEWS, PO Box 1565, Travis AFB, CA 94535

JIMMY DOOLITTLE AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM Mission Statement

The purpose of the Museum is to portray the history of Travis Air Force Base's contribution to the development of airlift in the Pacific.

It's primary objectives are:

- To provide and maintain an aviation and aerospace, educational, scientific, cultural, historical and inspirational facility for the general public.
- To provide to youth, students and scholars historical research facilities and inspirational exhibits.
- To serve as a meeting place and forum for aerospace oriented organizations and individuals for the benefit of all Northern California.

* In accordance with AFD 64-1,
Air Force History and Museum Program.

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Richard E. Cole with Diana Newlin at the April 2002 Doolittle Raider's Reunion.

NEXT ISSUE:

A VISIT WITH RICHARD E. COLE
2nd Lieutenant Richard E. Cole (Crew #1): Entered Army Air Corps in 1940 and received pilot's wings in 1941. Copilot on Plane #1. Remained in CBI Theater until July 1943 and again from October 1943 to June 1944. Remained in service until 1947 and returned to active duty in late 1947. Stationed in Venezuela and United States.

CURATOR'S CORNER



By Gary Leiser

The Raiders are coming!! In August the Doolittle Raiders officially picked Travis as the site for their reunion in April 2003.

Officially hosted by the Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum Foundation in partnership with the 60 AMW and the City of Fairfield, this three-day affair will, among other things, be used to promote and raise funds for the new museum. Indeed, this promises to be an important milestone in our plans for a new facility. The Foundation has hired **Cathleen Handlin** to coordinate this affair with the wing and city. We are delighted to have her. Additional details on the reunion can be found in her article. She is currently recruiting an army of volunteers to help with this event. Please contact her if you are willing to lend a hand.

MUSEUM STAFF

The summer has been relatively quiet at the museum, especially with the cancellation of the air show. All members of the staff took several weeks leave. **Major Diana Newlin**, our dynamic reservist who played a key role in bringing the Raiders to Travis, received a new assignment to LA Air Base. We expect her to return after the coming fiscal year and to work closely with Cathleen Handlin on the reunion.

MUSEUM OPERATIONS

Joe Tattersall, **Bob Jenkins** and **Arnold Wiese** worked on the C-123, installing sun shields in the cockpit and adding weight to the aircraft in order to give it more stability in high winds. Joe also added sun shields to the SA-16 and **Ben Reed** did the same for the C-7. Ben made new plastic cases for several exhibits and has completed the titanic job of reorganizing the library and archives. We can now actually find what

we are looking for!! In fact, Ben has been able to find quickly key documents for several researchers, including a lawyer for a federal trial. **Bob Jenkins** has taken on the difficult task of restoring our F-100 simulator. **Gary Vostry** has reworked the seats in the theater, sealed the cab (which we acquired from the former control tower) for storage, and cleaned several display cases. **Jim Martin** continues to raise birds in various aircraft. And **Eric Schmidt** played with the B-52.

During the August meeting of the Foundation, we had expected to hear the results of the feasibility study that Campbell & Co. has done for the new museum. This report had to be postponed, however, until the September meeting.

RECENT DONATIONS

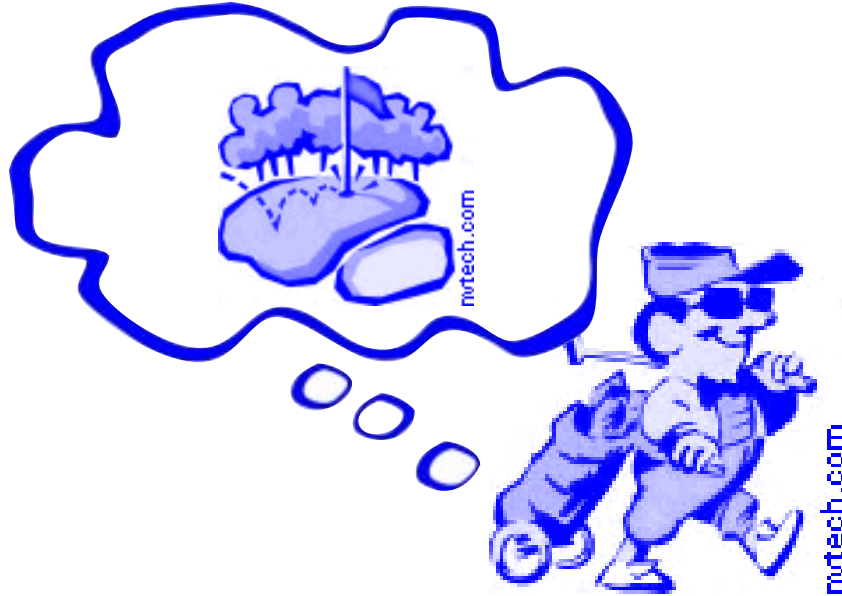
Meanwhile, the museum has received a number of donations during the past few months. **Vera Godwin** donated a silk Japanese battle flag from WW II. **Michael White** donated copies of the *Stars & Stripes* from WWII. **Lamont Welch** donated a large number of aviations magazines. **Christopher Freeze** donated a piece of the NF-104A that Chuck Yeager crashed and pieces of a C-133 that crashed beyond the runway of Travis. The **ROTC unit at Novato** has donated a target drone, ca. 1960, with a wing span of 14 feet. We plan to suspend it from the ceiling. Finally, **Warren Bailey** has become a life patron and, most generously, **Eugene and Karen Melvin and their children Kathrine, David and Michael** have all become life patrons.

The Museum website is great!

Check it out!

www.travisafb.af.mil

PHOTOS; INFO; .PDF OF THE NEWS!



Golf Tournament
October 19, 2002 • Cypress Lakes
benefitting the
Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum
located at Travis AFB, CA

For: Jimmy Doolittle Air and
Space Museum Foundation
Cost: Per Player \$100
Tee Prizes: TBA
Tee Times: 10:30 AM – 13:30PM
Lunch: Provide by Nut Tree Airport
Sponsor Holes: \$250.00
Prizes: Closest to Pin, Long Drive, etc.
Address: Cypress Lakes Golf Course
5601 Meridian Road
Vacaville, CA
Participants: 70 people expected
Contact: Bill Mee – (916) 631– 0130
Mike Peters – (916) 381– 3600
Dave Florek – (916) 355 – 5023

THE RAIDERS ARE COMING CONTINUED



Photo # NH 64472 LtCol. Doolittle & Capt. Mitscher with USAAF crews aboard USS Hornet, April 1942

*Photo #: NH 64472
Doolittle Raid on Japan, 18
April 1942*

Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle (left front), leader of the attacking force, and Captain Marc A. Mitscher, Commanding Officer of USS Hornet (CV-8), pose with a 500-pound bomb and USAAF aircrew members during ceremonies on Hornet's flight deck, while the raid task force was en route to the launching point.

*U.S. Naval Historical Center
Photograph.*

By Diana Newlin continued:

Raiders will participate in many activities on and off the base including a parade in Fairfield.

In a way the Raiders are coming back to California, returning to the area where it all began over 60 years ago. On April —, 19—, the Raiders congregated in Alameda California, sailing out of San Francisco Bay on the U.S.S. Hornet, waving good-bye to the Golden Gate Bridge and addressing their historical mission. For some Raiders, it was the last image of America they would ever see. Their mission was so dangerous that all the men had to be volunteers. They were going to do something that had never been done before — flying a B-25 off an aircraft carrier. Under normal circumstances this was a physically impossible task. The B-25 required a longer runway than the carrier had. But Jimmy Doolittle and Yankee ingenuity crafted a scheme that had to work. It was top secret as the training began in Florida to

train these pilots to fly in a stripped down B-25 model and lift off from a very short runway. It was quite a skill to accomplish this, which is why only the top pilots and crews could be considered. And, as the incredibly dangerous and difficult mission later proved, the high standards were essential.

After eluding their enemies and surviving the struggles of the mission, they were not sent back to California for rest and recuperation, they still had a war to fight. The Raiders were then sent to other combat areas, Germany, the Pacific Area and the China-Burma-India theatre.

So now come back to California where R&R awaits you and the JDASM will be the new home for your legacy. With the selection now official, the JDASM committee will be seeking an army of volunteers. More details will be forthcoming and updates will be announced on the internet at: www.travisafb.af.mil under the museum heading.

THE RAIDERS ARE COMING! CONTINUED

By Kathleen Handlin continued:

Doolittle Raiders as the host location for annual Raider reunions. For the past 60 years, the Jimmy Doolittle Tokyo Raiders (*80 Army-Air Corps aviators who volunteered for a high-risk mission as America's response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor*) have cast ballots to select their reunion location. Reunions provide a venue through which Americans can honor the Raiders' profound impact on our country's history. Because our museum foundation promotes public awareness of decisive moments in the military defense of our nation, we're happy to announce that the Raiders have selected Travis AFB and the City of Fairfield, California as the site for their 61st annual reunion! So, pull out your calendars and circle 15 through 18 April, 2003 – *the Raiders are coming!*

Schedule of Events for a Premier Celebration

The 2003 Raider Reunion will enable us to accomplish worthy goals: First and foremost, we will honor the men responsible for a decisive operation in WWII that cost some Raiders their lives, and most of them pain and suffering, but had a positive effect in preserving American democracy. Additionally, the 2003 Reunion launches the funds-generation phase in the development of a multi-million dollar air and space museum that memorializes the Raider legacy. Money to support reunion events will be provided by corporate sponsorships, military organization fund-raisers, and individuals. Some activities will be “walk-up” events with no reservations or entry fee required. Others will require reservations through purchase of advance tickets. ***The following events will be open to the public:***

- “Meet a Raider” dinner / luncheon programs on base and in the local community, attended



Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle, USAAF, (center) with members of his flight crew and Chinese officials in China after the 18 April 1942 attack on Japan. Those present are (from left to right): Staff Sergeant Fred A. Braemer, Bombardier; Staff Sergeant Paul J. Leonard, Flight Engineer/Gunner; General Ho, director of the Branch Government of Western Chekiang Province; Lieutenant Richard E. Cole, Copilot; Lt.Col. Doolittle, Pilot and mission commander; Henry H. Shen, bank manager; Lieutenant Henry A. Potter, Navigator; Chao Foo Ki, secretary of the Western Chekiang Province Branch Government.

by Raiders, Raider widows, and two of the Chinese rescuers who risked their lives saving injured Raiders in occupied territory. (*Dinners include a coat-and-tie event, as well as a formal gala evening*).

- A joint military & civilian parade sponsored by the City of Fairfield during its Centennial Year, featuring a B-25 fly-over and vintage WWII military vehicles equipped with full armament, driven by uniform-clad WWII veteran / owners.
- An outdoor grounds dedication luncheon & festivities under GP-Large tents on the site of the new Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum.
- A spectacular USO show provided by the Air Force Band of the Golden West, featuring music and authentic radio broadcasts, accentuated by vintage clothing, hairstyles, and dances of the WWII era.
- Several “Military History On Tour” exhibits

featuring authentic high-impact memorabilia that honor veterans from all campaigns, POWs/ MIAs, and specifically highlighting the Raiders' WWII era

- A Doolittle Memorabilia store, with satellite locations at each event, providing multiple chances for the public to obtain personalized Raider autographs on meaningful memorabilia, and available in all price ranges. Anyone attending can:
- Purchase a signed/numbered lithograph of a painting commissioned for this event, and signed by each Raider
- Have the Raiders sign an official 61st Reunion baseball cap adorned with the Raider insignia
- Obtain a superbly-crafted metal model of the B-25, produced in authentic colors and Doolittle's tail number, then obtain Raider autographs on its 11" wingspan
- Purchase affordable lithographs from 3 artists commissioned to produce works that focus on the jointness of the Doolittle Raiders Army-Air Corps / Navy operations, and available for the first time at this Reunion
- Extend a collection of military commemorative coins with coins that honor the Raiders and their air & space museum
- Acquire a custom-cast pewter sculpture of a 3-dimensional B-25 taxiing on the Hornet, mounted on a jet black plaque (1st time production for this Reunion)
- Purchase one or more books available on site, by multiple publishing companies, then inscribed by the Raiders, 2 of the Chinese rescuers, and author
- Buy a WWII leather jacket from a supplier who attends Raider reunions
- Have a professionally-produced photo taken under the engine of a vintage B-25 aircraft flown in for the Reunion

- *Proceeds from the above sales go to the non-profit Raider Association, and Museum Foundation, towards the development of the new museum.*
- Plans are also being made to enable members of the public to purchase flights on a vintage B-25. Public opportunities to meet VIPs from the political arena, Department of Defense, news networks, and Hollywood.
- A Foundation link to the Raider website is also planned, to assist attendees in making reservations for tickets to events requiring advance reservations, and to local hotels for attendees traveling from outside the local area

A Message to the Doolittle Raiders

The Museum Foundation, Travis AFB, and City of Fairfield are glad you selected our location as your 2003 reunion site!. On the 61st anniversary (to-the-day), of your perilous flight into history, we appreciate the chance to thank you in person, for your decisive role in a war that impacted the world. To document our interchange with you, plans are being made through representatives of major television networks, cable channels, radio stations, newspapers, and nationwide magazines.

A Message to Our Museum Supporters and Public at Large

Come join us for some living history. Shake hands with a hero. Get your photo taken with the Raiders, or in front of a B-25. We offer you a rare chance to support our nation's history, and becoming a part of it.

YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY

Happy 20th Anniversary Travis Museum Membership

By Dave Florek, Secretary
Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum Foundation

In an obscure setting in 1982, a small core of dignitaries from the local chapter of the Air Force Association and community leaders suggested that Travis should develop a History of Travis for display in the Travis terminal. Little did they know at that time their dream of a small display would evolve to what is now the Jimmy Doolittle Air and Space Museum.

Some of the founders of the Travis Air Force Base Historical Society, created in response to the AFA request, have regrettably passed on. **Retired Air Force Colonel Curt Burgan, Ruth Samolis, and John Dolman, Sr.** are dearly missed.

Other founders and early volunteers have moved on to other stages in their lives. **George Tucker, CMS (Ret)** can be seen participating in various Vacaville community affairs while **George Anderson, Maj. (Ret)** is working for Litton in Baltimore Maryland. **John Verhoek** is working as a volunteer for the *SS Jeremiah O'Brien*, while **Bob Gonzales** and **Chet Robbins** continue to work in their businesses. Still others such as **Ernie Wheeler, John and Rose Anthony, Rose Ewert, George Korade Sr, George Korade Jr, Garry Bremm, Carol Ball, and Larry Rengstorf** have faded from sight, but they're certainly not forgotten.

Few, other than some of the initial members, recall the first "museum" was actually a three-room office across the street from its present location. Two desks and several chairs made up the "museum" while a friendly atmosphere lured many "old-timers" wanting to share their part of history to anyone that would listen.

Major George Anderson was the first Liaison Officer for the museum. Not only tasked to set up the initial museum program he also was responsible for obtaining the C-124, B-52, C-118, F-102, A-26, Cessna 195, F-4 and other aircraft.

C-124 RECOVERY

It is believed by some that the C-124 recovery was the most difficult of all the recoveries performed by the society. This effort cost over \$150,000 that was obtained through private and individual donations, memberships, and sales of coffee cups and hats. It took nearly two years to make the aircraft flyable for the trip to Travis. Support for this project came from across the country with the main assistance coming from the folks at Dobbins AFB, GA and Aberdeen Proving Grounds, MD. That recovery is still talked about and one can now find pictures of the final flight on the internet.



B-29 FROM CHINA LAKE

Another notable recovery was the B-29 from China Lake. This monumental task culminated after a seven plus year restoration effort, which has made the aircraft one of the most prized displays in the museum collection.



Some tidbits few people know are that the museum's C-118 came from Aberdeen Proving

Ground in Maryland and was obtained from the Army through an interagency trade with the Air Force DRMO agency for two aircraft ground power units; or, the A-26 and Cessna 195 were obtained from the DEA. The F-102 was recovered from Hawaii, the better of two derelicts, while the F4 was saved from the Air Force's drone program at Tracor in southern California.

Enough cannot be said for volunteers such as **Don Austin, Warren Bailey, Wally Mitchell, Bob Skinner, Walt Scott** and **Dave Fleming** who have stayed with the museum through thick and thin. Current volunteers such as **Bill Lancaster, Jim Martin, Bob Jenkins, Ben Reed, Joe Tatersall, Arnold Wiese** and **Gary Vostroy** dedicate their valuable time and keep the dream moving forward. Of course, these folks could not succeed in their tasks without the superb support of the museum staff under the direction of the curator, **Dr. Gary Leiser**.

So what does the future hold? We are well on the way to create the most prominent aviation education facility on the west coast. The foundation has turned the corner and hired **Cathy Handlin** as a Project Manager to ramrod a myriad of assignments including working with the museum staff, which has recently finalized the details for sponsorship of the 61st Reunion of the Doolittle Raiders to be held in Fairfield and Travis from April 15-18, 2003.

Your museum is alive and well. Exhilarating times are quickly closing in and major activities are planned. Call the museum at (707) 424-5605 and volunteer to be a part of this exciting future.

Jimmy Doolittle Air & Space Museum

Gift Shop

*Bldg. 80, Burgan Blvd.
Travis AFB, CA 945635
(707) 424-4450/5598
Fax (707) 424-4451*



Just like the above computer mouse pad, many new Doolittle Raider items are being acquired at our gift shop. When you're in the market for a unique aviation gift, this is the place to fill that need.

**Volunteers needed
at the Gift Shop.**

Whether you can spare a few hours or a day, you can make a real difference in preserving our aviation history here.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AVIATION IN SOLANO COUNTY



The Riehl children, l to r: Everett, Raymond, Marvin, Edgar, Bernard, Thelma and Kenneth.

By Marvin H. Riehl

I was born in 1917 two miles east of Vacaville, which would be within the city limits today. When I was two years old, my parents bought the Mortenson Ranch, a half section, or 320 acres, immediately south of the present Travis AFB. I started school when I was five and used to walk to the Scandia Grade School, which was located on land now occupied by the base. We had one teacher for all eight grades and I don't think there were ever more than 15 students. Later, when the base was built, the school was torn down. I lived on the ranch for 13 years. We did a bit of everything on the ranch. We had a small herd of cattle, sheep, and hogs. We had a neighbor, Loui, who would rustle sheep, or anything he could get away with. He eventually did seven years in Solano County Jail. Anyway, we farmed with horses and mules. I fed the chickens, geese, and ducks. We also tried to raise winter wheat.

The first aircraft that I remember was a German military Fokker tri-plane. Our ranch was close to the flight path between San Francisco and Sacramento. In the early 20s this plane, which had been brought over from Europe after WW I, flew over the ranch. Struck dumb with amazement, I glued my eyes to it until it disappeared over the horizon. From that mo-

ment, airplanes fascinated me. My ears quickly became attuned to the sound of their engines. I could hear one before I could see it. On those rare occasions when one flew over our land, I would drop whatever I was doing to watch it. If I heard an airplane during dinner, I would run outside to see it. In the late 20s, Lockheed Orions carrying passengers would fly over, and then Boeing twin-engine passenger aircraft did the same. They were a sight to behold. A north-south line of beacons was built in the Sacramento Valley to guide them. Lindbergh cut the ribbon to formally complete that project. Mt. Diablo was a major danger and claimed a number of victims.

I entered Armijo High School in 1929. One day on the way home from school, my brother and I came across a barnstormer who had landed on the other side of the railroad tracks from the school. He promised us a ride if we would take him into town. We did so eagerly, but he later "forgot" his promise. One morning at the breakfast table, my father asked if I had watered the setting hens. I said no. He then sent me out to take care of them. No sooner had I gone outside than I heard an airplane. As it flew by its engine quit. It glided down and then disappeared near Walter's hill in a cloud of dust. I told my father that a plane had crashed, but he didn't believe me. But later on his way to work my father passed the pilot and his passenger, who was injured, on the road and took them to town. The aircraft had flipped over on landing. Shortly thereafter, the owner of the plane came by. He stayed with us a few days while he dismantled the plane and shipped it to San Francisco. He gave us its broken prop for a souvenir. Not long after that another barnstormer landed near Dixon and he gave me my first ride.

One day while I was bringing the cows in from the fields, I looked to the southwest and saw, above the hills, a huge circular shape in the sky coming silently straight toward me. I didn't know it then, but it was the airship Akron. As it approached our land, I

hopped on my pony and rode home to tell my folks, leaving the cows behind. The airship had departed its hanger at Sunneyvale (Moffet Field) and was on its way east via Sacramento. I had never seen anything like it. Later the airship Macon flew over at about 1000 feet. I waved to it with a white flag on a stick. Also in the late 20s I once heard a large number of aircraft in the distance. Soon several waves of military aircraft swooped over on maneuvers. It was all very exciting.

We left the ranch in December 1932, the coldest winter on record in California. My father had put in a large crop of winter wheat. But then the price collapsed and we went bankrupt. The owner of the note foreclosed. Using horses and wagons, we moved to the area now near I-80 and Leisure Town Road where we rented 15 acres.

After high school, I worked on several local farms. In the late 30s I saw an Army aircraft make an emergency landing. It was probably carrying the mail. It was after dark. I was living near Elmira at the time. When I heard it, I jumped in my Model A and drove in its direction. I saw it drop a flare at the emergency field where Travis now stands and then the pilot put it down. He had sprung an oil leak and couldn't see. At that time there were a number of emergency airfields between San Francisco and points east. There was just a dirt strip with a beacon on a tower.

Every year a carnival would come to town. I liked to ride the "loop-a-plane" and used it to gain "proficiency" for flight. By then I was completely hooked on flying and decided to take lessons. One afternoon in 1938 my cousin and I rode

his motorcycle to Sacramento Airport. I met the owner of a 40 hp Taylor-Cub who offered lessons for \$6/hour with instructor. It took 8 hours to solo. For the whole package the cost was \$40, which was then exactly my monthly wage. On Sundays, my only day off, I started taking lessons. Initially, until a certain number of hours, I was restricted to flying a short distance from the airport. Nevertheless, I flew a bit out of area to show off to friends. Finally, after making three landings for the CAA man in Sacramento, I received my certificate. I did a lot of reading about the dynamics of flight. Consequently, one day, I decided to try doing some loops. I went up to 3000 ft, where the winds were stable, and did three of them by the book. I used a newer Cub with 50 hp. I did a few spins too and had a ball. From time to time I would land in a field near Vacaville, such as the area near the extension of Vanden and Leisure Town Road. I did my best not to frighten the horses mowing hay. I even picked up a friend working on a farm and took him for a ride. We then tried to race a train but

couldn't gain on it. One afternoon I almost stalled over a chicken ranch on the edge of Vacaville. When I finally pulled out it seemed like I was only about 100 feet above the ground. I drove the leg-horns crazy and the farmer was ready to take a shot at me. He later told me the chickens couldn't lay a proper egg for three months!

In 1939 my cousin and I decided to join the Army Air Corps. We were transferred to Angel Island where we took our screening test and physical exam. Afterwards we were assigned to the 7th Bomb Group at Hamilton Field in Marin County. I left a farm job paying \$60 per month for Army wages of \$21 per month. At first I worked as a mechanic on trucks, sometimes breaking



Scandia Grade School: Location — approximately 1/2 mile east of south gate of Travis AFB. (North side of old Rio Vista Highway — Hwy 12) The east side was adjacent to roadway to the north where it intersected what is now Branscome Rd.

continued on page 12

RECOLLECTIONS CONTINUED

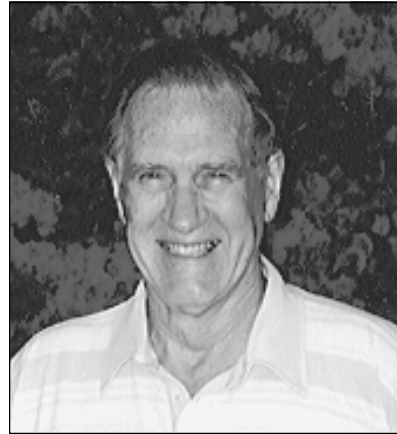
them in with long drives around the Bay Area. World War II would change that, taking me half way around the world.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, I was seven days west of that location on a troop transport on the way to an assignment in the Philippines. We immediately detoured to Australia. Then two and a half months later I was sent to India where I requested combat duty. Subsequently our crew from the 493rd Bomb Squadron was the first to rotate back to the US in August 1943. On the way to California on leave, I looked up my sweetheart in Salt Lake City. We were married in Elko, Nevada and continued to Vacaville to visit family and friends. When my leave was up, we took up life in Orland, Florida. After the war, we began civilian life in Salt Lake City. When the Berlin Airlift began, I reenlisted. After 21 years of service I retired in 1962. Our family of five then moved back to my hometown of Vacaville.

Travis AFB became a reality while I was in the service. It was built at this location to get away from the fog belt and because the land was mostly sheep pasture. Several ranches were obliterated to build the facility. The Scandia country school that our family attended was also demolished. There was a large Scandinavian meeting hall across the large creek to the west side of the school. During the rainy season many of us students would slip through the board wall fence to do some rafting. We received numerous scoldings and sometimes detention. The emergency landing field with the rotating beacon light that was established on the Marcus Petersen Ranch a mile or so east of the Scandia School was also discontinued.

I remember exploring a couple of abandoned deep well sites and their decaying wood structures. I believe one was near the bottom of the hill on which the first David Grant Hospital was constructed. These wells were sealed on the surface and rumors circulated that the prospectors hit oil or gas and one day they would be opened for use.

THANK YOU, "HOPPY"!



William J. "Hoppy" Hopkins

By Dave Fleming

On June 2nd, William J. "Hoppy" Hopkins died in Vacaville. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, having served in World War II, Korea and Viet Nam. He piloted many aircraft including the P-40, P-51, C-54, C-118, C-124 and finally, the C-141. He spent 40 years in the military, 26 as an officer and civilian in the 349th Air Mobility Wing and its predecessors. "Hoppy" received the Air Medal and many decorations including the Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters. An original member of the 349th MAW, he served as Squadron Commander of the 301st and 312th MAS Reserve at Travis AFB. He completed a history of the 349th for the museum. For years he served as volunteer coordinator, frame maker and time accountant at the museum. He organized the photo archives for the first time. A quiet, modest man, "Hoppy", with Betty, his wife of 57 years, would drop by the museum even after his health failed in order to gather his figures on volunteers. He was a valued member of the Board of Directors. "Hoppy" loved volunteering his time for the museum, passing on his historical experiences and his love of the Air Force. He was truly a member of "the greatest generation".

VIETNAM EXHIBIT: PART II, THE NURSES

Pacific Stars & Stripes
Saturday, August 9, 1969

VC Blast Hospital At 'Safe' Cam Rahn

By S.SGT. Jim White
S&S Staff Correspondent

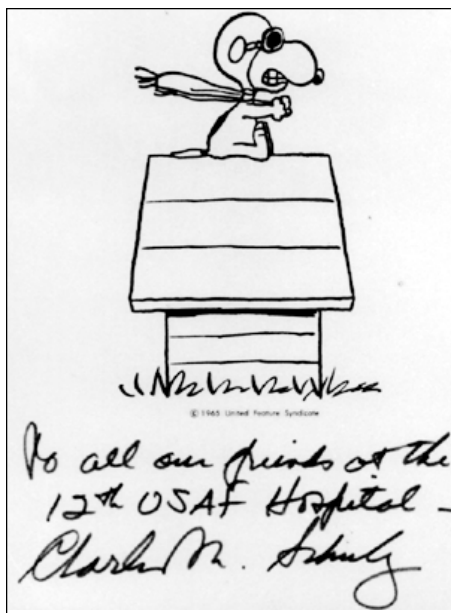
By "Big Dot" Dorothy G. Fullick (Maj ret) 12th
USAF Hospital under 12th TAC Fighter Wing Cam
Rahn Bay, South Viet Nam

One night 27 years ago, I was working the 1900-0700 shift on 6/7 Aug 69. On this particular night, things were busy. Now, I don't remember any patients' names from the entire time except the few that are mentioned in this story. And that's because if you remember you get emotional and lose your objectivity. There was Papasan George, an old Vietnamese gent we'd bring in from Medcap to ease his aches and pains; he was Catholic and had serious joint disease, meaning he really was a cripple. And there was Jimmy, an Army troop who ironically had the physique of Jimmy Brown, the pro football player. Jimmy had meliodosis, an extremely serious disease to have and which must be treated with heavy IV antibiotics. The trouble is that the antibiotics take a toll on the veins and you start running out. About midnight thirty or so, I had just finished restarting Jimmy's IV, a difficult chore

in this case but then again, I have been known to be able to bleed a turnip. All of a sudden, this cacophony starts and it's getting closer and closer with no let up. My adrenaline goes off the page, getting all the patients underneath the bed. As I made a quick sweep between the two wards, I spot Papasan George still in the bed with hands clasped and praying. I literally picked up Papasan and threw him under the bed, and threatened poor Jimmy that if he blows that IV, I'll have him before the Cong (enemy). A side note here: we weren't allowed to have weapons on the wards. They were locked up in a freaking connex! I'll do my diatribe on the Geneva Conventions as it applies to medics some other time. So knowing we had no weapons, my thoughts are racing and thinking. Hell, the only thing I've got here to defend ourselves with is a scalpel and an IV pole. Can ya just see the headlines: Nam Nurse plays Spearchucker!

All the commotion in the world is going on when oddly, the telephone rings. It's a pilot checking to see if I'm ok. He was on the alert pad and the door to the shack was blown off. Our fearless fighter pilots were out on the line with their flashlights checking for shrapnel on the runway — to protect tires during take-off. And they say, by the way, can I get tomato juice for Bloody Marys in the AM?

In a matter of minutes, here comes the choppers, skids sparking, the crew frantically yelling "Get the patients off! We have a lot more." Meanwhile, the enemy is still lob-



continued on page 14

VIETNAM EXHIBIT, PART II: THE NURSES CONTINUED

bing in mortars and 107 rockets to keep life interesting during this time. The Army's 6th CC Hospital was about a mile or so from us and sappers ran through the wards with satchel charges and fired AK-47s at the patients as they were trying to crawl out of there! The toll went something like 98 wounded, 2 killed from the Army and on the Air Force side, 2 wounded and 10 aircraft with battle damage. So, this is life. Now, as to them Bloody Marys, yup, the next morning we all gathered in the Goat Bar and were motor-mouthing about the night when in walks an intelligence officer who had gotten smashed the night before and slept through the whole thing! Well, as far as rockets, the year never got much better. Let's just say it refurbished my understanding of the principles of kinetic energy with a vengeance!

AT LEAST SNOOPY REMEMBERED US ON CHRISTMAS

From Oct to Dec 69 we were losing crews at a very steady rate. Our frag mission was resulting in heavy casualties. By Xmas Eve, we had no real reason to celebrate the holiday. All of us were unhappy with 7th Air Force's strategy of using air crews as human targets.

The 24th of Dec. was my day-off, and I was sitting over in the Goat Hootch Bar with Crash, a fighter pilot. We were drinking beer and discussing this sacrilege. Then it occurred to me to say...To hell with it! Let's do something for us! "Crash, get the six pack. I'm collecting ration cards and meet me back here."

So I got in the truck and said, "let's go to the Class VI store." Darn...no Irish whiskey so I subbed brandy. Loaded up and went off to the milk plant! That

awful "barium" ice cream would have to be the whipped cream! We took a quick stop to the hospital mess to beg the use of a big coffee urn and coffee and we were set!

Back at the Goat, I started to brew the coffee and then made Big Dot's combat Irish coffee.

Well, the word got around and soon everyone started to gather in the bar. We wound up being smashed as we all "serenaded" the place with "**Jingle Bells a la Vietnam**":

*Wheels on dirt roads bounce, making asses sore
Lord, I'd sooner go to hell than finish out this tour
Chorus*

*Jungle bells, mortar shells, VC in the grass
We'll get no Merry Christmas cheer until this year has passed...*

*Jungle bells, mortar shells, VC in the grass
Take your Merry Christmas cheer and shove it up your ass
Christmas time is here, as everybody knows*

*People think it dear; GIs think it blows
All at home are gay, children are at play*

*While we are stuck out here, so God damned far away.
Chorus*


*The moral of our song is plain as it can be
Please no more midnight carols sing and screw your Christmas tree*

*There's nothing left to say, before we have to leave
Vietnam is not the place to be on Christmas Eve.*

Not to be outdone by sister squadron 'Sharkbaits', who in the Christmas display painted Rudolph all red (their squadron color).

Donny, Creighton, and I wired a goat cut-out to a flagpole and at great risk to personal safety, (armed guard on water tower), planted the goat to lead the display.

A Merry Christmas was had by all!


Big Dot



Just a Small Town Girl — Not Exactly

By Charlotte Roberts, USAF, Major 20 years (Ret)
Vietnam Era

"I hate to tell you this, but I was a coward that's why I joined the Air Force...It was safer than Brooklyn!"

In 1961, I went to active duty and eventually applied for flying status and got orders to go to Hickam HI and then Japan. Two weeks out of the month we flew various locations in PACOM theatre and back to Travis. We carried about 75 patients with us. Many were from combat areas in Vietnam. I was really touched by the attitude of the patients. They would always say, "take care of my buddy first, he needs help more than I do."

They would talk and tell me their frustrations. "We don't know who the enemy is. There was no line. They all looked alike. We would be ambushed by the enemy, and the ones we were training would run and leave us. Then the helicopters would swoop down and pick us up." Many of these patients were on striker frames (they were paralyzed).

We had 2 nurses and 3 technicians on each flight. Most times there were no doctors aboard and the senior flight nurse had to make all the decisions. Quite a responsibility! Our objective was to get the patients to their destination as comfortably and safely as possible. We were a flying hospital at 35,000 feet going 550 mph on a C-135.



We would sit on the floor by the litter enroute and talk to them. A lot of the sailors were frightened because they were afraid to fly — that's why they became sailors! We carried a

lot of patients with psychiatric problems. We had their records and knew their diagnoses. We could refuse to take them if we felt they wouldn't be able to manage the trip. Sometimes, we'd request a doctor; sometimes we'd hold their hands and talk to them. We were aware of signs and symptoms and try to address these before they got out of line. One-time three men stood up in the aircraft. There was such fear in their

eyes, they could have created chaos on the aircraft. What are they going home to? What's going to happen to them? Fortunately, they decided to sit back down. Some patients were paralyzed due to spinal injuries — in order to

improve the circulation, we'd have to keep turning over the striker frames they were fastened into. Then, there were the burn cases — really terrible. Disfigured.

After Seeing all that, I came home and I walked through an anti-picket line at the University of Maryland. I went to a career day as a recruiter. A little hippie girl said to me, "I don't want my child to go to war and get killed." "Me either," I said, "keep talking, I'm getting a crowd." I said I'm a

nurse and I understand. Then, I was reprimanded for antagonizing the hippie! I did feel like the enemy.

Charlotte Roberts

-Charlotte Robert, RN

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