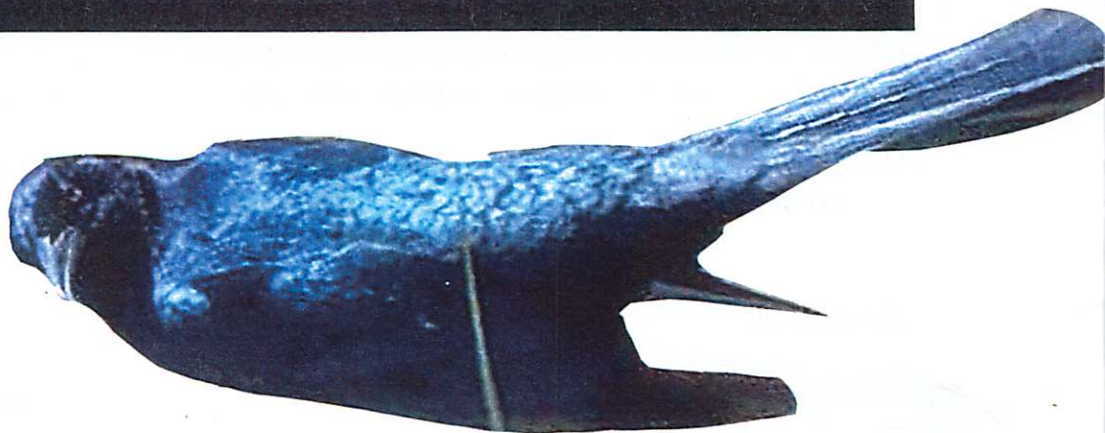




GOLDEN CONTRAILS

... and oft' the setting sun is pleased to trim the clouds with molten sails,
and lace the way of passing jets with golden condensation trails.

April, 2008



BYE... BYE... BLACKBIRD

CAPTAIN'S CORNER



Despite the rising price of jet fuel Continental keeps marching on. The spot price for jet fuel has reached \$3.44/gal. Versus the \$.53/gal. the airlines were paying when I retired. For the first time in the history of aviation, fuel cost has exceeded labor cost. For those of you that might be considering buying a ticket to get to LAS in September you might want to buy now. Larry Kellner CEO says that "Continental is in better shape than many competitors because it has a younger, more fuel-efficient fleet."

Even though our 2008 convention is still months away, please plan to join us this year in LAS VEGAS. The BUSINESS MEETING and CONVENTION will be September 18th at the newly renovated SAHARA Hotel and Casino. The Golf tournament is scheduled for the 16th and 17th. Once again Paul and Gail Grover will be hosting the golf outing. See the details in Paul's golf outing enclosure. REMEMBER this is a fun golf outing. You DO NOT; I repeat DO NOT have to be a real golfer to sign up. Room has been blocked at the SAHARA for the nights of the 15th thru 18th at the rate of \$57/night. Call the toll free # 1-888-696-2121, mention The Golden Eagles to get the rate. THE CUT-OFF DATE IS EARLY 8/18/08 so mark the dates on your calendar. Better yet, call now and make reservations.

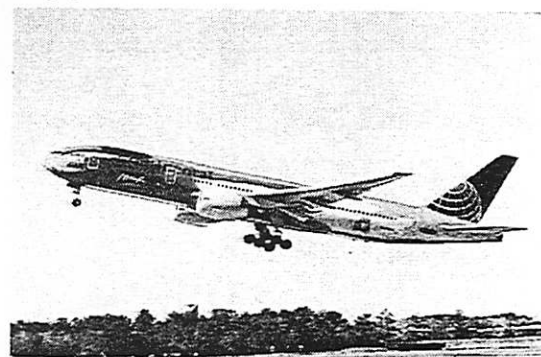
More convention news. Jim Gamble and his puppets have agreed to perform for us once again. Jim has been through quite an ordeal this last year. He had an accident on his 15-speed, that left questions as to his survivability. I talked to Jim recently and he is recovered and is looking forward to doing this performance. For those that don't know Jim is one of our own pilots and a member of The Golden Eagles. He has performed all around the world.

Thanks to Birdie Bertrand, The Golden Eagles web site is up to date. He will have details of the convention and golf on the web. Log in to www.thegoldeneagles.org for more information about our organization.

You will remember I sent out a survey with the last Golden Contrails. We have approximately 600+ members and I received 132 surveys back. The results are as follows. 67 wanted to keep the convention in the fall, 54 wanted the spring and the remainder had no preference. Something to talk about at the business meeting.

Have a pleasant Spring and Summer. As you make your *BUCKET LIST* plans for the rest of the year, plan on being in LAS this fall. You will enjoy it.

Bob Shelton



RESERVE CAPTAINS CORNER

Hello all,

I hope this finds you well and making preparations for our Golden Eagles Convention in Las Vegas this September! Preparations are under way for some great entertainment and of course another great day of golf. Be sure to check this issue of the Golden Contrails for all the details and get your reservations in early.

We had a great turnout in Houston last September and were very happy to see some new faces. As I have traveled through the system recently, I have run across many eligible or soon to be eligible members that were not aware of our organization. We all need to be sure we are getting the word out to those that have not yet joined us, the success of our group is dependent on our great membership.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in September, and I am not cheap but could be bought to play on your golf team!!

Sincerely,

Gary Humphries



Dear Dick,

I hope all is well with you and Susan. I just wanted to let you know that after several years of study, I finally graduated from college - at 71 years old and only 49 years later than most of my cohorts! On 15 December 2007, I graduated from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Aviation Leadership. St. Ed's was founded in 1878 by the same priest who founded Notre Dame. With that project successfully behind me, Judy and I look forward to seeing everyone at the next Golden Eagles Convention in Las Vegas.

Roland Brown

EDITOR'S CORNER

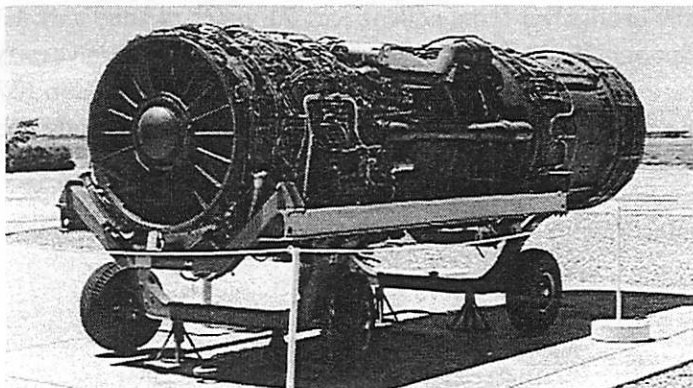
FRONT COVER... Once again SR-71 pilots, reconnaissance officers, and crew chiefs gathered at Boeing Field to discuss their experiences with the airplane, answer questions, and sadly chorus, "Bye... Bye... Blackbird."

Favorite saying, "You haven't been lost until you've been lost at 3.2mach!" No enemy was ever able to touch it!

THE FIRST PILOT RESCUED UP NORTH... This account of Frank Tullo's adventure ejecting from his Thunderchief into the elephant grass and rice paddies of North Vietnam is a good read. We are grateful to have had Frank's company on Continental for many years. Hats off to his buddies and the Jolly Green Giant guys!

"STARDUST FALLING"... Wow! Talk about a story! We've installed Annette Coss' depiction of the story's beginning event on the back cover and Wes Coss tells us how his narrative came to be written.

ABOUT THE BLACKBIRD'S ENGINE... How much thrust does it develop? It all depends. At mach 3.2, 75% of the thrust comes from the inlet. (The nose spike moves aft 26 inches.) Air pressure in front of the compressor increases from 0.5 psi to 14.5 psi over a distance of 5 feet, while internal airflow slows from Mach 3.2 to mach .8 so the compressor blades can handle it without stalling. Bypass tubes divert extra air around the engine directly to the afterburner and cause it to perform like a ram jet.



Dear Ladies,

Well here we are again, time to start thinking about making plans to attend our annual convention in Las Vegas!! Have you been shopping yet?!!

B.J., Cynthia, and I will be working again to make it a special time for all and of course since I know where Ina Domengeaux lives, she has volunteered once again to help with the decorations. Sometimes it is dangerous to be my friend! We need all of the input we can get to pull this together, so if you have suggestions, or can help in anyway, please contact me.

This year is a nomination year as the President and Vice President only serve two years. Our nominating committee is made up of B.J. Bellerue, Chris McKenzie, and Penny Shucott. You can also send the information to me and I will forward it. If you are willing to serve, or would like to nominate someone, please contact one of these ladies. Our election will be held at our Ladies Welcome Hour at the convention. Please consider volunteering, it is a great way to get to know some new friends as well as have a great time with some old ones, and everyone is always willing to help.

I will be filling you in on more details in the next issue of The Contrails, in the meantime, get in touch with a few old friends that have not joined us yet and invite them to get in on the fun. Also, as you will see in this issue, I am submitting a few stories for the Ladies Corner, but I sure could use some input from all of you!! I know there are some great stories to be told!!

Looking forward to seeing you all soon!!!

Sincerely,

Ranelle

Ranelle4@hotmail.com

713-628-8596

LADIES CORNER

I was hoping to have a few stories submitted to include here, but haven't received any so I guess you will have to listen to me ramble again!! Come on girls, I know you have some interesting stories about keeping the home fires burning all these years!!!

I am sure everyone can relate to being home alone for days with a sick baby, broken pipes, and other emergencies with nobody to call. (I am sure the guys are glad we didn't have cell phones in those days) I had a rotating system in the neighborhood for just such occasions.

The first in memory was having a very sick 11 month old. Having been to the doctor and up all night, I was able to doze a little while holding her on top of me. Her fever came up very high and very fast , putting her into convulsions. Being pre 911 days, I called the neighbors and just shouted, "get over here!" By the time they came running next door in their pajamas and guns drawn, the convulsion had stopped and they were pretty dumbfounded when I just opened the door. We did however have to make a trip to the emergency room and you know you have a true friend when they remind you to put on pants before you get in the car. After a long night and another long afternoon with no sleep, Gary popped in the front door from a trip and after one look could only say "What happened to you?" When you see him, remind him how lucky he is to be alive.

As the years progressed of course there were more emergencies when the neighbors were called ranging from smoke alarms to break ins at the front door, but the running joke on the block was who got the next "no pants" emergency.

BETTER CHECK THOSE RADIOS!

Of course things were not always perfect out there on the line either! I received a phone call one day from our friend Butch Meir. He talked for a while and inquired several times how we were doing. It wasn't like Butch to call just to make small talk, but I thought maybe he was just checking in. Finally he asked point blank if everything was okay with Gary. Well , yes , he is fine I answered, why? "Well, he just called in to be replaced on his trip due to a mental problem" After I picked myself

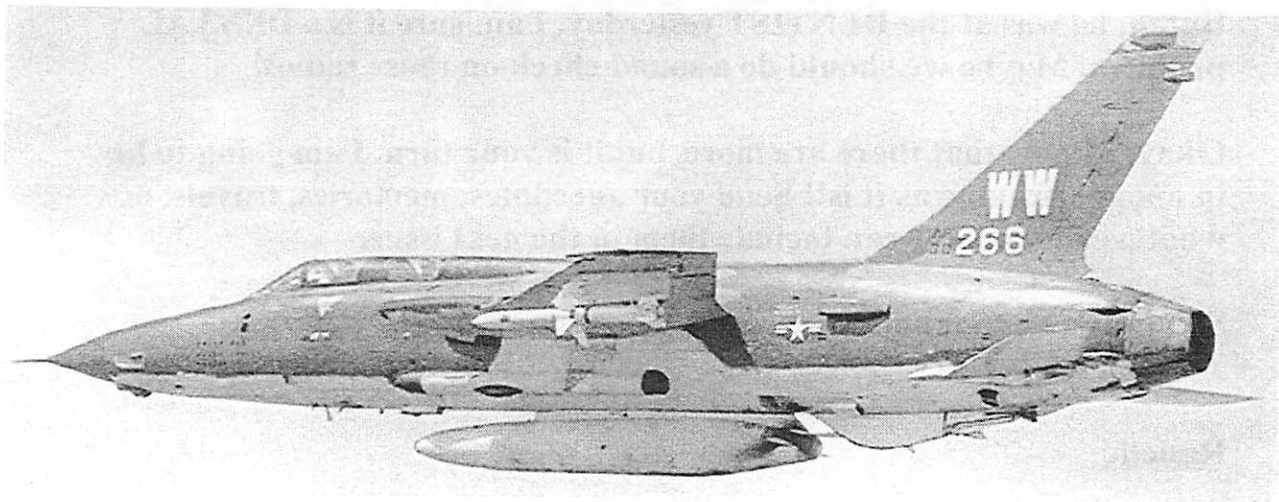
up off the floor from laughing, I was able to tell him...well not this time Butch, he was at the DENTIST yesterday, I am sure it is a DENTAL problem. Maybe we should do a sound check on those radios!

Okay, I know that there are more, but it is your turn. I am going to be in enough trouble as it is!! Send your anecdotes, memories, travels, or whatever to me so I can include them in the next issue.

See you in September!!

Ranelle

Subject: The First Pilot Rescued Up North



Frank Tullo got out of the Air Force and got hired on by Continental sometime in 1966.

This is a good read about a Thud Pilot who was shot down near Hanoi and was "The first pilot rescued up North!"

Here I Am .. Down Here In The Elephant Grass On Thud Ridge

Enclosed is a report on the first Jolly Green helicopter rescue mission in Vietnam. A good read. For pilots shot down over North Vietnam, then rescued .. their return home was 'jolly and green'. Frank Tullo has never forgotten his first day as a newly promoted USAF captain. He was 25 years old and he was flying fighter bomber missions into Viet Nam from Korat, one of two F-105 bases in Thailand. Most fighter crews were not optimistic about their chances for rescue. There was a standing joke among the often chain-smoking Thud crews that an optimistic Thud driver was one who thought he'd die of lung cancer. The fact of the matter, a study showed, was that during a typical 100-mission tour, a F-105 pilot could easily get shot down twice and picked up once.

At about the time Tullo received his captain's bars, air rescue planners had decided to make an effort to improve downed pilots' chances.

In the middle of 1965, Tullo was flying as Dogwood Two in a flight led by Major Bill Hosmer, a former Thunderbird and the best pilot Tullo had ever flown with. Dogwood was to be the cleanup flight: the last of several flights to strike surface-to-air missile (SAM) sites in North Vietnam. Their job was to take out any SAM sites not already destroyed. To destroy the missile sites and take out their control centers, each Thud was loaded with two pods of rockets and an internal

20-millimeter Gatling cannon. Along with the rockets, Tullo was part of a maximum effort involving at least 48 F-105s, and another 50 or so supporting aircraft.

At this early stage of the war dealing with SAMs had not been developed. The projected learning curve for the months ahead was nearly vertical. It was mid-afternoon when Tullo's flight came over the hills from the south of Hanoi to clean up leftover targets. He had been listening to the action on the attack frequency. From the sound of things, some friendly aircraft were down. Tullo's flight cleared the last ridge at treetop level before arriving at the target area.

Working to hold his position on Lead's wing, Tullo managed to steal a look ahead. "I damn near fainted," he told me years later. "To a good Catholic boy, this was the description of hell." The whole valley was a cauldron of flame and smoke .. and AAA flak .. filled the sky.

Hosmer had the flight on course for the first SAM site they were to check out. Tracers were flying past the canopies and the smell of cordite was strong [most pilots depressurized their

cockpits when nearing the target area so that, if hit, smoke from an onboard engine fire would not be sucked inside the cockpit. Just days before, Tullo had seen a column of smoke stream pour from inside another Thud's still-pressurized cockpit after the pilot's canopy was jettisoned.] The flight pressed lower. The Thud would do nearly 700 mph on the deck. Tullo was sure they were under 200 feet and was working hard to stay in position on Lead. Without warning, his lead broke hard left, exclaiming "Damn, they just salvoed!" [Sometimes SAM batteries would fire all their missiles at once in an effort to protect their valuable control vans]. Tullo could see only the huge wall of smoke and flame coming at the flight from the AAA guns protecting the SAM sites. Their tremendous speed caused the flight to turn wide enough to be carried directly over the site of the guns. As they passed over, Tullo looked right into the flaming muzzles of a battery of quad guns. They were at 100 feet or lower .. still near 700 mph. Tullo glanced over at Lead to check his position, then glanced back and noticed a fire warning light. "Lead, I have a fire light," he radioed. Then element lead called: "Two, you're on fire. Get out!" Hosmer kept the flight in the turn, saying, "Two, loosen it up. I'm going to look you over." The flight leader said, "Better clean off your wing, Frank." Tullo jettisoned the external fuel tanks and rocket pods on his wings; his Thud lightened up. Three was calling again, his voice tight with urgency. "Two, the flames are trailing a good 150 feet behind you. You better get out!" In spite of the fire and the calls from Three, Tullo felt a sense of well-being. He was still flying, he had control, and he was with Hosmer. Nothing bad would ever happen with old Hoz leading. It would work out. The fire would go out, the aircraft would keep flying, he would make it back.

They were still over Hanoi. Houses were below them. Mountains to the west [which would come to be known as Thud Ridge, offered refuge]. A good bailout area, just in case. "You better get out, Frank, it's really burning," Hosmer said in a calm voice. "Negative," Tullo replied. "It's still flying. I've lost the auxiliary electrical power, but I've got the standby instruments. I'm heading straight ahead for that ridge." [Earlier in the war, several pilots whose aircraft were on fire, ejected over the target, and they were either killed or taken prisoner.]

There had been incidents in the Thud's checkered past when a burning aircraft had exploded before the pilot could eject, but many others had flown for a considerable time without blowing up. Many pilots, like Tullo, had decided to take their chances staying with their aircraft as long as they could, rather than eject in the target area. The ridge was still well ahead of the aircraft. The flight had climbed some but was still very low and being shot at from all quarters.

Tullo's aircraft dropped its nose slightly. He pulled back on the stick. No response. He pulled harder. Still nothing. When he heard muffled explosions in the rear of his aircraft, Tullo hit the mike button: "I've gotta go, Lead. I'm losing controls. They're not responding." At 200 feet, there was no time to wait. If the aircraft nosed down, physics would be against him. Even if he managed to eject, he would likely bounce just behind the aircraft, still in the seat. He pulled up the arm rests, which jettisoned the canopy, locked his elbows in the proper position, and revealed the trigger that fired the seat.

The results were the most horrific Tullo had ever experienced. At the speed he was moving, the noise, the roar, the buffet-ing – it was unbelievable. Everything not bolted down in the cockpit went flying past his face. He froze for a matter of seconds before he squeezed the trigger to fire the seat. The ejection process that followed was so violent that today Tullo's memory is blank of everything that happened immediately after he squeezed the trigger. He doesn't remember leaving the cockpit, the seat separating, or the chute opening. He had the low-level lanyard hooked, which attached the parachute directly to the seat and caused it to deploy almost immediately. After tumbling violently, whomp! he was swinging in the chute. A little battered by the violent ejection, Tullo prepared for the landing. Floating down in the chute was serene and the soft rush of air soothed him. He did not see his aircraft crash. During his descent, he eyed the city of Hanoi about 25 miles away. A small U-shaped farmhouse sat near a clearing, just to the west. He passed below the 100-foot treetops and landed in an area of 10-foot elephant grass. At that moment, listening to the sound of his flight disappearing to the southwest, the only thing in his mind was that he was on the ground in North Vietnam, armed only with a .38 Special.

His first concern was to hide the billowing white parachute. Working hard to control his breathing, he stuffed the parachute under the matted grass and covered it up with dirt. After shedding his harness and survival kit, he removed the emergency radio from his vest, extended the antenna, and prepared to contact Dogwood flight. He could hear them returning, and he had to let them know he was all right. As the flight drew closer, Tullo turned on the survival radio. Cupping his hand around the mouthpiece, he whispered: "Dogwood Lead, this is Dogwood Two." Hoz responded immediately: "Roger Two, Lead is reading you. We're going to get a fix on your position." The flight turned toward Tullo, who had landed on a hillside west of Hanoi.

He could hear heavy anti-aircraft fire to the east and see puffs of flak dancing around the flight. Within seconds, hot shrapnel began to fall around him. "Frank, we gotta go. Fuel is getting low, and we've been ordered out of the area. We're gonna get you a chopper." Hosmer's voice dropped: "And, Frank," he said, "this may be an all-nighter." Tullo rogered Hosmer's message and told him he was going to try to work his way higher up the slope to make the pickup easier. He had no doubt that he would be rescued. As the sound of Dogwood flight faded to the southwest, Tullo prepared to move up the hill to a better vantage point. He decided to open the survival kit and remove useful equipment.

In a normal ejection, once stabilized in the chute and prior to landing, a pilot would reach down and pull a handle on the kit box to deploy it. It was advisable to deploy the kit prior to landing to avoid possible leg injuries, since the case was hard and fairly heavy. Tullo hadn't had this option because he had ejected at such a low level. He rotated the kit's red handle, and with a great whooshing roar, a dinghy began to inflate. The dinghy! He had forgotten all about that! And it was bright yellow! He had to stop the noise. Tullo drew a large survival knife he wore strapped to the leg of his G-suit, threw himself on the dinghy, and began stabbing it. The first two blows merely rebounded. With a final mighty effort, he plunged the knife into the rubber and cut a large hole so the air could escape.

With that emergency solved, Tullo lay back to catch his breath and get a drink of water. Then he started up the hill. The elephant grass was so dense that at times he couldn't separate it with his hands and had to climb over the tough, wide blades. After climbing about 50 to 75 feet, he realized he wasn't going to make it to the top. His flightsuit was soaked, and his hands were cut by the sharp edges of the grass. Rather than waste more energy, he flattened out a small space in the grass and faced southeast to have a good view of any threat coming up the slope. Time to set up housekeeping. Tullo's survival vest and kit included a spare battery for the radio, emergency beeper, day and night flares, pen flares, six rounds of tracer ammo, a "blood chit" printed in several languages that promised rewards for assisting downed American airmen, gold bars for buying freedom, maps, a first aid kit, water purification tablets, two tins of water, two packets of high-energy food, tape, string, 250 feet of rappelling line, a saw, knife, compass, shark repellent, fishing kit, whistle, signaling mirror, sewing kit, and two prophylactics for keeping ammunition or other equipment clean and dry. He extracted the ball ammo from his .38, loaded the tracers, and stuffed everything not immediately useful into the knapsack-type pouch. Then he sat back, tried to relax, and waited for the rescuers he knew would come.

Tullo heard the sound of prop-driven aircraft approaching from the north. He correctly assumed they were Douglas A-1s, or "Spads," as they were called. He stood up and keyed his radio. "This is Dogwood Two, do you read me?" "Dogwood Two, this is Canasta, and we read you. Transmit for bearing." Tullo warned Canasta of the flak to the east, and as advertised, the guns opened up on the Spads as they approached Tullo's position. As soon as Tullo could see the aircraft, he began giving vectors. On the second circle, Tullo was looking right up the wing of a Spad. He called, "Canasta, I'm off your right wingtip now." Canasta Lead said, "Gotcha! Don't worry, we're going for a chopper." As the Spads droned out of the area, Tullo felt sure he would be picked up. Within a few minutes, he heard the unmistakable sound of Thuds. He spoke on the survival radio calling: "Any F-105 over Vietnam .. this is Dogwood Two." An answer came from a flight of Thuds approaching in a wide sweeping turn from the north. A voice that Tullo recognized, asked him to 'pop' a smoke flare for location. "Smoke?" Tullo replied. "Are you out of your mind? There's no way I'm going to pop smoke here!" The pilot told Tullo to calm down. On the other hand, he'd just spotted trucks unloading troops to the south of Tullo's position. But he reassured Tullo that they were working on getting a rescue helicopter over to him.

Tullo heard shots. The shots built to a crescendo, then stopped. The shooting had started at some distance, but now it grew closer. Soon he was able to hear voices as the troops worked their way up the hillside. He burrowed into the dense grass and waited, his heart pounding. He raised his head and saw an older man about 150 to 175 feet away wearing a cone-shaped straw hat. It was all Tullo could do not to make a run for it, but that was exactly what the searchers wanted him to do. He forced himself to sit quietly. The troops made a lot of noise but they kept moving, down the hill to the East. Silence returned and Tullo continued to wait.

George Martin was flying his CH-3 Sikorsky helicopter to a remote staging area in Laos about 120 miles from Hanoi. Only a few weeks before he had been flying cargo support at Eglin in Florida. Today, he was boss of a small detachment of men and helicopters on a 120-day assignment in Vietnam.

He and his crew had been tasked to learn a new mission for which they had little preparation. In 1965, as the number of U.S. air strikes and reconnaissance missions in Vietnam multiplied,

pilots faced the increasing possibility of being downed deep inside Laos or North Vietnam. Crews were flying the small and slow HH-43 Huskie, originally designed as an air-base firefighting and rescue helicopter, and were already pushing the helicopter to its limits. There was clearly a need for a faster rescue helicopter with longer legs.

The cargo-carrying CH-3C helicopter fit the bill, and the Air Force began training crews to match. The training was projected to last several months, but the escalating conflict wouldn't wait. Martin, who was too close to retirement to be selected for the additional training, was ordered to fill in the gap with 21 men and two CH-3s until the fully trained crews arrived.

"I found out Friday afternoon and was gone Sunday," Martin says. "It was just like in the movies. I: 'When do I leave?' They: 'How fast can you pack?'" Martin was about to land when he was asked to divert and try to rescue a downed F-105 pilot. But he still needed to drop off cargo and extra crew, lighten up, take on as much fuel as possible and still be able to pick up the pilot. "The big consideration in helicopter pickup is gross weight," Martin said. "If you're too heavy to hover, all you can do is fly around and wave at him." Upon landing, Martin's number two engine overtemp warning light went on .. possibly foreign object damage or a compressor stall from air starvation. Under normal circumstances the light would have grounded the helicopter. The crew became pretty apprehensive about continuing to fly the helicopter. I told them, "We're this pilot's only hope. If the engine will start again .. we will go." His crew reluctantly agreed. The engine restarted without incident and Martin's "Jolly Green One," took off for Hanoi. Martin had no idea where to locate the downed pilot. And he was unescorted until he was about 50 miles away from Hanoi, where he was joined by Canasta flight [from the carrier USS Midway].

The oppressive afternoon heat wore on. Finally, Tullo heard the sound of prop-driven aircraft again. Darkness was about 40 minutes away as he turned on his radio. The aircraft responded immediately. "Dogwood Two, this is Canasta. I have a chopper for you." Seconds later, Canasta flight flew directly over Tullo's position, and there, not far behind, came a rescue helicopter.

Tullo was expecting a small chopper. But this one was a big green monster, Martin's Jolly Green .. headed for its first combat recovery. "Dogwood Two, this is Jolly Green. How'm I doing?" Tullo said, "You're doing great!" and popped his smoke flares. The chopper's blades made the smoke swirl as Tullo then pointed his .38 straight up and fired all six tracers. Martin's crew chief pinpointed the downed pilot in the thick elephant grass as soon as his smoke made its way above the trees. Then, as Martin hovered, the crew chief lowered a "horse collar" sling from their jury-rigged cargo winch.

On the ground, the downblast was tremendous. Debris flew everywhere, and the trees and grass were whipping and bending wildly. Tullo holstered his pistol, slung the survival kit over his shoulder, and slipped the horse collar over his head. He gave the crew chief in the door a thumbs-up. The cable became taut and Tullo began to rise off the ground. After being lifted about 10 feet, the hoist jammed and the cable stopped. The crew chief was giving hand signals Tullo did not understand. Tullo looked up. Two crewmen were in the helicopter door lowering a rope to him. The horse collar was cutting off the circulation in Tullo's arms and he was tiring, but he grabbed the rope and tied it around the top of the horse collar.

Finally the chopper began to move and dragged Tullo through some bushes, brambles and trees. Everybody's trying to kill me, he thought. The Jolly climbed and circled as the crew chief struggled with the hoist. The helicopter's overworked number two engine had begun to overheat. A fire light came on in the Jolly's cockpit. As they circled, Martin hoped that the air flowing through the engine would cool it down and the light might go off. The two crew members were joined by the copilot, and the three men strained to pull the dangling man aboard.

The pain was becoming so great that Tullo was thinking about dropping from the sling. Just then, Martin spotted a rice paddy next to a hootch and lowered Tullo to the ground. The exhausted pilot rolled out of the sling as the chopper swung away and landed 50 or 60 feet away. The crew frantically shouted to Tullo, who sprinted and dove through the door. He could hear an automatic weapon firing and saw both helicopter pilots ducking their heads.

The Jolly had problems: low fuel, a sick engine, darkness, and clouds at altitude. Martin and his crew had been in the war zone slightly more than two weeks and did not even have maps of the area. He crew relied on flares lit inside 55-gallon drums at his remote base and his landing lights to find a place to land. "Our troops only held about a quarter of the area around our site," Martin said. "That was the only corridor you could fly through without getting shot at". Martin finally landed with a shaken pilot and just 750 pounds of fuel aboard.

Tullo learned his aircraft was one of six Thuds and one EB-66 electronic counter-measures aircraft shot down that day. Of three surviving pilots, Tullo was the only one rescued—the others were to spend more than seven years as POWs. Tullo returned to a Thunderchief cockpit and completed his combat tour.

Tullo's rescue was the farthest north that a successful pickup had been made, thanks to the determination of Martin and his crew and the long range of their helicopter. It was the first of 1,490 recoveries that Jolly Green Giants would make in Southeast Asia.

Soon a dedicated air rescue version would be built, with in-flight refueling capability, armor plating, a powerful hoist, and shatterproof canopies. But, the Jolly Green Giant would find its ultimate form in the HH-53 Super Jolly, an even larger and more powerful helicopter still flown today.

Technology improved, but future helicopter rescue crews still had to meet the same basic requirements .. willingness to fly and hover inside a big target over hostile territory .. and find a pilot .. whose only hope would appear above him carrying a cable and a sling.

Forwarded by Phil Prince, USAF Brig. Gen. (Ret.)





“The Stardust Falling Story” by Wes Coss

All people who have had the experience of combat in time of war have a story to tell. Many let the story die with them. I decided to put my story in print. In the many years that I flew for Continental (37), I have told my companions in the cockpit parts of the narrative. I often exaggerated the details I'm sure. In the past few years many friends have urged me to put the story in book form. Fortunately help has come from unexpected sources, The War Museum in Salon-de Provence, France, (where fallen pieces of Stardust and our crew picture are on display). There was a lady from NY, who researched the French “Burgundy (escape) Line.” She sent me the intelligence reports of three of my fellow evaders, as well as my own.

Here is my story.

I was born in 1923 in a small northern Illinois farming community named Paw Paw. I became employed as the “hangar boy” at an airport in nearby Waterman, Illinois. In lieu of pay I was given flying lessons and soloed in November 1939. I was 16 and was on my way to a lifetime flying profession.

I graduated from high school in the summer of 1941 and headed for Canada and the RCAF. I had over 400 hours and was given a 5 week course in the AT-6 “Harvard” (34 hrs) and (6 hrs) in the British Fairey “Battle”. I graduated as an 18 year old Sgt/Pilot. I began my military career towing gunnery targets in Western Canada with the heavy, powerful (1300 HP), British Fairey “Battle”.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, I transferred to the USAAC as a 2nd Lt. I had just begun my 19th year and was a very “green shave-tail”. I was sent to Roswell NM. to fly bombardier cadets in the twin-engine Beach AT-11. I became friends with Lts. Gene Hersche, John Fannin and Harold Spores as we were in the same squadron at Roswell. We were reunited after the war when we joined Continental.

Being promoted to 1st Lt. in Feb. 1943, I volunteered for combat and was sent to B-17 school. After graduating I led my 10 man crew into combat in North Africa, joining the 99th BG of the 15th AF in Nov. 1943. We moved to an airfield near Foggia, Italy in early Dec. 1943. Our crew was given B-17F 25746, a “used” airplane. It had been named “Stardust” by its original crew.

On Jan 27th, our group was given the mission of destroying the airfield at Salon-de-Provence, France. “Stardust” and its crew were shot down on my 21st mission by enemy fighter planes (ME-109s & FW-190s). With two engines badly damaged, one of which was on fire, the turbo failed on the third engine. It was now time to

order the "bail out". I made a 16,000 foot free-fall before opening my parachute, landing near high-tensions wires. After walking and hiding in a haystack overnight, I was befriended by French civilians. I was soon reunited with three of my crew who were still evading capture by the Germans.

The four of us were hidden in a shepherd's cabin in the mountains for two weeks. This kept us out of sight of patrols searching for us. Eventually we would be hidden within the city of Aix-en-Provence. After nearly a month French patriots guided us to the city of Perpignon near the Spanish border. Two of my crewmembers were captured in Perpignon by the Gestapo. The young man and his wife who were guiding them were executed that day. Sgt. Joe Kinnane, my right waist gunner, and I made our escape over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain guided by nefarious professional smugglers.

Our crossing of the Pyrenees Mountains, which divide France and Spain, was very difficult in the winter weather. Joe and I were attached to a large group of haggard evaders and were guided by two smugglers. Quickly running short of food and water, it was a struggle in the snow to keep up the pace that they set for us. Of the 19 who were still with us after the first night's walk, only 11 made it into the cane field near Figueuros, Spain. Famished and weak we were grateful to be given cold, greasy, *delicious* fish & chips and wine by the smugglers.

We were hidden until the Spanish border patrol gave up the search. Finally we made it to a safe house in Spain. Three days later we hopped a freight train to Gerona Spain, where our Spanish guide bought us tickets to Barcelona, Spain.

Arriving in Barcelona Joe and I made our way to the British Consulate building. We were provided with fake British birth certificates, proper British papers and passports, making it legal to be admitted into Spain.

We spent a week in Barcelona where two more of our evaders were taken to the hospital for treatment of frostbite. What was left of our group went by rail to Madrid and finally the haven of Gibraltar. We were flown to England in a converted B-24. The navigator made a critical miscalculation and for a short while we were again flying over occupied France. We eventually arrived safely in London. After I was identified and restored to rank I was assigned to lecture 8th AF crewmembers on evasion and escape methods. I was returned to my parent's home in time to celebrate my 21st birthday. I was happy and lucky to be home.

- Wes Cass

A FEW NOTES FROM YOUR "BEAN COUNTER" - A.K.A. YOUR TREASURER - *Charlie Starr*

My thanks to the 85% of our members who read the December Golden Contrails report and remembered that 2008 dues were payable in January. For the 200 plus members who had somehow overlooked this annual reminder - it was necessary to print, fold, staple, address, and mail a special request reminder. The cost to your Association - - about \$150 (not to mention a day's worth of work to do all of this). And, unfortunately, even with this special mailing - there are a number who are still delinquent. As I always remind our members - the address label on each Golden Contrails will show the year that your dues are paid through. 2008, after your name, means that you are paid through the end of this year; 2009 means that you are paid through the end of next year; but if you see a 2007 (or earlier) - - well you get the idea. If I've made an error in your dues, just let me know. Please, also look at the long list of members who deserve special thanks for their generous donations to our postage fund. Too bad we had to waste about \$150 dollars of that money on the delinquent dues mailing.

Your Officers and committee members are hard at work planning for the 2008 Convention in Las Vegas, in September. I know it's a bit early in the year, but please note the banquet reservation and meal selection form that's included with this issue. It's never too early to start making your plans. This year's event promises to be even bigger and better than in the past. Speaking of your Officers - we are always looking at ways to more efficiently serve the membership and ways to make your dues dollar go further. Among items that have been discussed are better use of our website and the idea of electronic publications for those who wish to receive them. Stay tuned. Your Board has opened a bank CD to make better use of our funds during a time of the year when there is less drain on our balance sheet - see the Treasurer's report.

Last year, The Eagles - through our separate CARE Fund - were, again, able to make a sizable donation to the charitable Continental CARES fund. This donation helped many fellow Continental families throughout the world who have suffered some grievous losses due to storms or other disasters. If you can help, please consider making a tax deductible contribution to THE GOLDEN EAGLES CARE FUND.

Finally, let me make my usual request that you update any changes in your data - address, phone number, e-mail, etc. Every year we lose track of a number of members who fail to advise us of a move. And remember, please PRINT; my tired old eyes just can't decipher some of the handwriting that I receive. An update/correction membership listing is included with this issue.

Dues Renewal and Information Update Form

Member Dues are \$30 per year

Associate Members - \$20.00 per year

PLEASE PRINT

Last Name _____ First Name _____ M.I. _____

Spouse Name _____ Phone No. (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

City _____ St. _____ ZIP+ _____ - _____

E-Mail _____ Other Info _____

When making a dues payment or postage fund donation, please make checks payable to **GOLDEN EAGLES**, mail form to:

GOLDEN EAGLES
C/O CHARLIE STARR, TREASURER
4328 SUNSET BEACH CIRCLE
NICEVILLE, FL 32578-4820

phone: 805 897-0898

E-mail cws1932@cox.net

GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER'S REPORT**11/02/2007 – 3/01/2008**

Golden Eagles Checking Account

Golden Eagles CARE Fund

Balance from 11/02/2007 (checking)	\$ 17,771.38
Inflows (checking) 11/02/2007 – 3/01/2008	
Dues Received	\$ 6,590.00
Postage Fund Contributions	1,280.00
Total Inflows this period	\$ 7,870.00
Disbursements (checking) 11/02/2007 – 3/01/2008	
Golden Contrails Printing/Postage	\$ 3,663.49
Remembrance Donations	50.00
Postage Expenses	82.00
Printing Expenses	42.40
Transfer to Certificate of Deposit	10,000.00
Total Disbursements this period	\$ 13,837.89
Balance (checking) 3/01/2008	\$ 11,803.49

Balance from 11/02/2007 (CARE Fund)	\$ 204.50
Inflows 11/02/2007 – 3/01/2008	
Donations Received	\$ 650.50
Total Inflows this period	\$ 650.50
Disbursements 11/02/2007 – 3/01/2008	
None	\$ 000.00
Total Disbursements this period	\$ 000.00
Balance CARE Fund 3/01/2008	\$ 855.00

Golden Eagles Certificate of Deposit

Opening Balance	\$ 00.00
Transfer from Checking	\$ 10,000.00
Balance 3/01.2008	\$ 10,000.00

A Special Recognition of those who have contributed to the Golden Eagles Postage Fund

Cynthia Aldendifer
 Jack Alley
 Ted Amerman
 Bob Appleton
 Newt Ball
 Ronald Bennett
 Bill Berkley
 Dick Boudreau
 Jim Bryant
 Tom Buckley
 Mike Burke
 Rueben Cage
 Gerry Carley
 Guy Casey
 Bill Childress
 Wes Chowen
 James Coleman
 Wesley Coss
 Donald "Jim" Crabtree
 Ovada Cuthbertson
 Joseph Dentz
 Dave Devine

M.V. "Bud" Dixon
 Don Duffer
 Spike Duncan
 Ray Durden
 Jim Farrow
 George Flavell
 Tom Folwell
 Thomas Frazier
 Gene Freeman
 John Gaylord
 John L. Grigsby
 Paul Grover
 Dick Hague
 Bernie Hallee
 Larry Hartman
 Dick Hillman
 James Hlavacek
 Walt Honan
 Jim James
 Doug Kricken
 Kenneth Lakes
 Keneth Lawrence

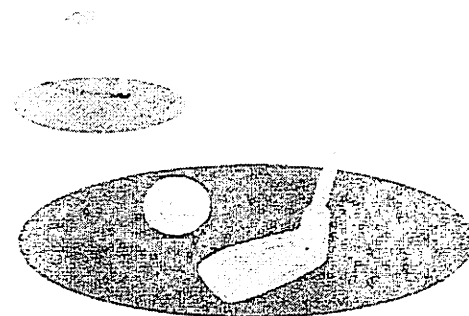
Jan Leo
 Don Leseberg
 Bill Lewis
 Jack Little
 Tom Long
 Monroe Mathias
 Norman McGowan
 Niel Miller
 Jim Minor
 David Moran
 Phil Nash
 Larry Nelson
 L.E. (Doc) O'Brien
 Dave Randolph
 Randy Rawls
 Frank Rhodes
 Lou Rich
 Rene' Robert
 Shaun Ryan
 Jane Schuring
 George Seifert
 Bill Sellmeyer

Bob Shelton
 Mary Esther Simmons
 Kathleen
 Smagacz-Harvey
 H.W. (Bill) Smith, Jr
 John Solomon
 Charlie Starr
 Delbert (Kelly) Steele
 Jim Stephens
 Art Swanson
 Bob Sykes
 Cal Templeton
 La Verne Thornberry
 George Vierno
 James "Mike" Wade
 John Wall, Jr,
 Ed Wallace
 I. Jay Welch
 R.B. Wilson
 Joel "J" Worley

GOLDEN EAGLES GOLF 2008

Where: Angel Park Golf Club
100 South Rampart Blvd
Las Vegas, Nevada
888 - 4GOLFLV OR
702-254-4653
WEB SITE: angelpark.com

Angel Park Club House
serves a great breakfast
for \$7.50



When: Day one - Tuesday September 16, 2008
Shotgun Start Time: 1200

Day two - Wednesday September 17, 2008
Shotgun Start Time: 0900

Cost: \$125 per player for 2 days of golf with carts

NOTE: If you have a twosome or a foursome lined up or someone you would like to play with please let us know so we can arrange it.

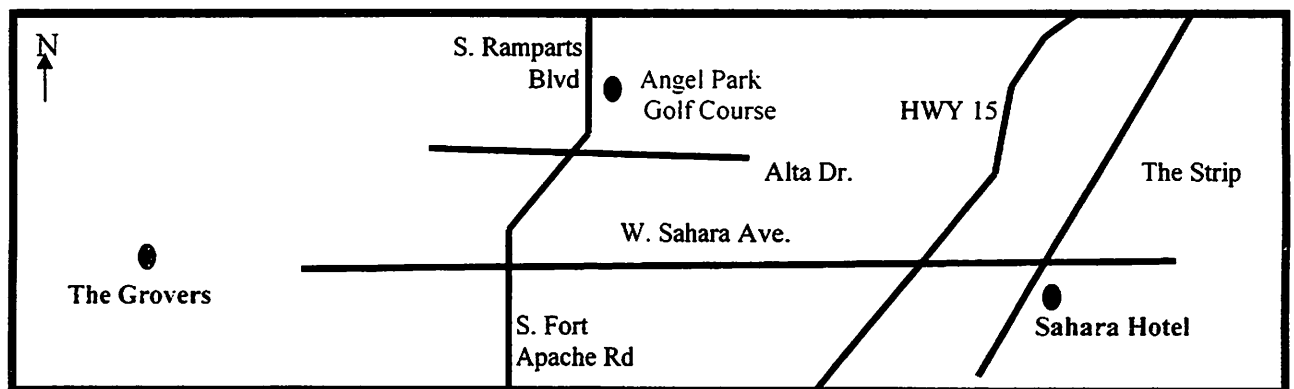
RSVP Deadline: September 4, 2008

Make Checks Payable to:

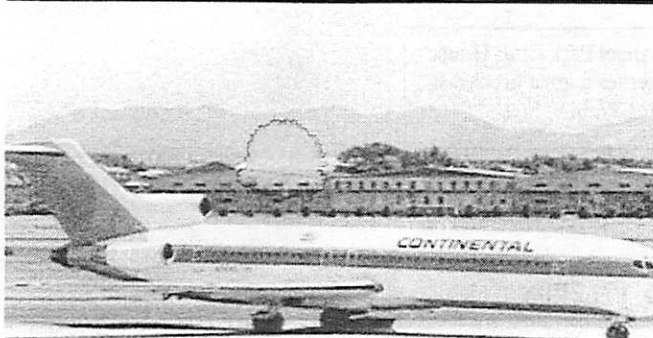
Paul Grover -- and mail to:
2585 Grassy Spring Place
Las Vegas NV, 89135
Tel. 702-253-5236

E-mail: ggskyhag68@aol.com

Directions: From the Sahara Hotel to Angel Park Golf Course -- The street just to the north of the Sahara Hotel is W. Sahara Avenue. Drive west on W. Sahara Avenue (8 miles) to S. Fort Apache Rd. - turn right. After 1 mile, (at Alta Dr) S. Fort Apache Rd. turns into S. Ramparts Blvd. Drive another 3/4 mile - the golf course is on the right.



Following the play of golf on Tuesday September 16, 2008, Paul and Gayle Grover will host the golfers and guests at their home. Directions from the Golf course to the Grovers. From the golf course drive south to W. Sahara Ave. - turn right (drive approx. 3 miles) Turn left on Red Rock Ranch Road - turn right on Red Springs Dr - turn left Sandstone Ridge Dr - turn left on Grassy Spring Pl. The Grovers are at 2585 Grassy Spring Place. Tel. 702-253-5236.



AirMike Island Fiesta "Inetnon Familia 2008"

Host: **Carl Stewart**

Location: **Alexander Deussen Park**
12303 Sonnier Street, Houston, TX 77044 US

When: **Sunday, April 13, 9:00AM**

Phone: **281-852-9400**

IT'S PARTY TIME

Hafa Adai! Get ready to party island style. Plans are now confirmed to celebrate Air Mike's 40th anniversary here in Houston, TX. Festivities start on Saturday afternoon with a Golf Tournament at Tour 18 (Lunch 12:30, Shot Gun 2p, dinner/awards following) April 12 with the main event on Sunday, April 13.

You must purchase your tickets for the Fiesta by April 4 as no tickets will be sold after this date. If you would like to bring a covered dish or a special dessert, you're welcome to do so. No outside alcoholic beverages will be allowed. Beer, soft drinks and water will be provided.

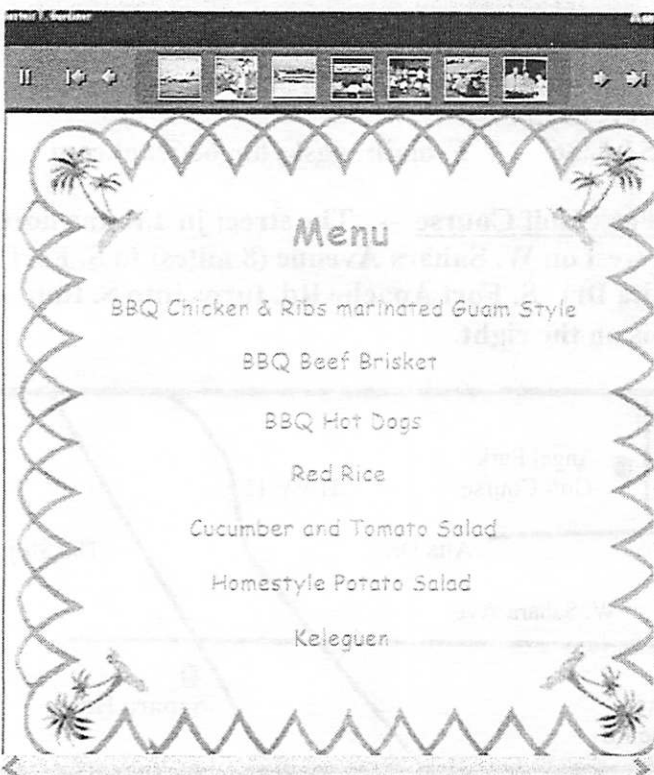
Tickets for the main event will be \$20.00 for adults and \$10.00 for children (2-12 years, under 2 years is free) and can be paid preferably by check or money order or by Paypal.

Looking forward to seeing y'all.

AirMike Island Fiesta Committee

Click to view a few words from
Madeleine Z. Bordallo

Click to view a few words from
Jon & Judy Breeding



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GONE WEST

Ken,

Please forward this sad information - - -

I received the following from Golden Eagle member Don Morris:

Retired Continental pilot Ted Hergenrader, Argyle TX, passed away on December 27th. He is survived by his wife, Melba. Funeral services are at 2:00 PM December 30th at Denton Funeral Home, Carol Blvd. Denton TX.

Ted and Melba address:
7641 Thomas Ln.
Argyle TX 76226

Note from Shaun:

Ted was not a member of the Golden Eagles but he was a good friend. He was the F/O on my first MAC trip as a S/O and he took me under his wing and made life easier for me. He was a good pilot and a true gentleman. Thank you Ted – we will miss you.

CAPTAIN MELLENGER MAX JACOBY, 91, retired airline pilot, died on January 18, 2008 at Hilltop Lakes, TX

Funeral services will be held at the Hilltop Lakes Chapel on Tuesday, January 22, at 1:00PM. Burial will be

in the Wealthy Cemetary near Normangee.

He was born on May 2, 1916 in Leon Creek, Texas to Max George and May Reeves Jacoby. As a youth of fourteen during the early 1930's he worked for a barnstormer and received his first airplane ride in a Ford Tri-motor. At that moment, his future career was decided, fixed and sealed---FLYING!

Mellenger was in the Class of 1936 at Ranger High School, Ranger, TX. He lettered four years, co captain for one year on the Ranger Bulldogs football, basketball and track teams in the Oilbelt District. He was a member of the 1934 Champion Bulldog team which played in the first Sun Bowl in El Paso, TX.

He served for four years in the Texas National Guard, and in the late thirties instructed flying and pioneered government sponsored CPT (Civilian Pilot Training) attached to the Ranger Junior and John Tarleton Colleges. During WWII, he spent four years as Flight Commander and Asst. Supervisor of Advanced Flight training in the RAF and Air Force Training Command.

After WWII , he served as charter member, in birthing of Essair Airlines – later renamed Pioneer Airlines headquartered in Houston and Dallas which was the first local service scheduled airline approved by the Civil Aeronautics Board after the war. For ten years during 1945-1955 of their development, he served as Director of Flight Operations and Chief Pilot and later for the merged Continental –Pioneer Airlines.

During the Vietnam War, in addition to international operations in the Pacific, he spent 2 years in MAC (Military Airlift Command with USAF rank of Lt. Col) as a service pilot hauling troops and cargo into Saigon, Okinawa, Korea, Bangkok, Japan and other bases in Vietnam. He completed 40 flights from bases in the USA into Saigon during that time. He retired after 34 years of service for Continental Airlines. He was also a past president of the Ranger Exes Association.

He married Imogene Stafford, also of the RHS Class of 1936, in Granbury on July 23, 1936 and they had two sons.

Later he married Mary Pearl Moffett and they had two sons and two daughters. They were married 43 and lived in Ranger for a time. After she died of cancer, he married Mildred Houston in 1989.

He was preceded in death by his parents, a son, Eddie Jacoby(RHS-1957); sisters, Maxine Asher (RHS – 1942); Clara Mae Watson (RHS-1952); Claudine Dyer(RHS -1937) and a brother, Douglas Jacoby (RHS – 1949).

Mellanger is survived by his wife, Mildred Houston Jacoby (RHS – 1960) of Sachse, TX; sons Mac Jacoby of Torrance, CA; Robert Jacoby of Cameron Park, CA and two daughters, Susan Coker of Fort Worth, TX and Debby Price of Sugar Land, TX; nine grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; one sister, LaVerne Jacoby (RHS -1940) of Hurst, TX and numerous nephews, nieces and friends.

Another note from Shaun:

Since I have inherited this part of the Golden Contrails please try to send all news items of interest to me at: f100plt@gmail.com. This issue is a little sparse as I am sure some things

were lost in the transition . I want to thank Gene Newman for his many years of managing this column as the Associate Editor – I hope I can live up to the standards he set. Thanks Gene.

Again, if you have any stories or news items that would be of interest to our membership, just send them along and I will make sure they make it into the Golden Contrails.



Mellenger Max Jacoby

Dear Charlie: and Golden Eagles> this letter is one I wrote to another friend who sent many cards, and made many telephone calls while I was in critical condition. Now, I've recovered quite nicely, but still have a ways to go. I'm enclosing it here just in case some interested friends want to know what happened to Jim Gamble?

How can I tell you how much I appreciate all the cards, letters, gifts everyone sent to cheer me up? You have been a wonderful friends during my rehabilitation and I want to tell you how much it has meant. Your caring notes too have encouraged me to stick to my regimen that has hastened my recovery. I'm not sure you realized the seriousness of my accident. It was simply a fall from a bicycle, but I took the full brunt of the fall over the front handlebars on my left temple, and although wearing a helmet broke some orbital bones near my left eye, resulting in double vision, and was in a coma for several days, and in and out of consciousness for a week. I don't remember anything about the accident nor the early part of my two-week hospital stay nor of visitors early on, nor much during the first 2-3 weeks. Indeed, I've been told my answers to questions were basically my name, rank and serial number (from early military training.) Not surprising, because I was tied to the bed, and my brain thought I had been captured. It's funny how the brain operates...In short, the first few weeks are a complete mystery to me, but probably a good thing, because I must have been in terrible pain, with scrapes and bruises all over and my head was a complete bloody mess!

I had a full time 24/7 care-giver for two months since I was not allowed to drive, and so I felt isolated. Now, after 5 months of rehab, hospitals and much therapy, I'm happy to report that I am almost back to normal and expect to be performing shortly after Easter. We were blessed with wonderful puppeteers who covered almost all the Halloween and Christmas puppet shows, my daughter Wendy, armed with a masters' degree in financial management took over those aspects of the company. Our office manager, Carol, continued to book shows and Marty, my wife, bless her heart, took on the responsibility of looking after my stock transactions, running the company and providing support without which I could not have survived. The doctors initially gave me a rating on the Glasgow- Coma scale of 8, which bordered on survival, But here I am, and it's funny, Now hearing about what transpired during and after my periods of semi consciousness. (When Marty came to San Pedro Hospital, I was told that i motioned for her to come over, and I conspiratorily asked if she had a car....then I told her I needed help to "Get outta here!" the next day, the nurse called her with the message that " Mr. Gamble decided to remain another day! " It was three weeks later when i was released.

Your kind notes, and gifts and the rallying of friends made me gradually realize that I simply HAD to get better so as not to disappoint so many people. I heard from old Continental pilot friends, I had not flown with for 45years, from puppeteers around the world, and from many local friends. There have been some set-backs, especially mental anguish at not being well sooner and depression, but I'm told I will get better, unlike some Rotary friends battling cancer who despite their dire prognoses have little hope left. Now, I have my driving license and am able to function pretty much normally. I've not spent much time in the workshop, but I have been able to gradually increase time spent on repairing puppets, and surprisingly, actually manipulate some characters!! It's also funny how, with a marionette in my hand, I didn't need so much physical support to stand upright!

Again, please know that your support, your notes and your friendship was most helpful in my recovery.

Sincerely,



Jim Gamble

On Dec 21 a nonmember of Golden Eagles Bruce Bealnear passed away. He had heart problems for years. Bruce flew out of Den then went to US Air in the 80s. A Longmont, CO resident, he loved fishing and hunting. Dick Dahse

Michael Donald Ripley was born Jan. 16, 1937, in Detroit, Mich. He passed away on Nov. 6, 2007, in Ketchum.

He is survived by his mother, Nancy Ripley; his sister Shelley Ripley; his brother William Ripley and sister-in-law Marie; his sister Kathryn Nancy Narlock and brother-in-law Dennis; his brother Mark Ripley and his sister-in-law Doreen; his sister Claudia Ripley; and many nieces and nephews.

Upon graduating high school, Michael served in the U.S. Navy from 1955 to 1959. Upon his honorable discharge, Michael attended Wayne State University and flight school in Wayne, Mich. He earned his wings, becoming an airline captain with Continental Airlines and Korean Air.

During the 1980s, Michael pioneered a system to clean polluted streams, making them once again habitable for native fish. His work was rewarded with a citation from the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Michael was a world-class fly fisherman and an avid outdoorsman. In his retirement, Michael took great pleasure in teaching others to fly fish.

Michael was much loved by his family and friends and will be missed. We love you, Mikey!

Arrangements are under the care of Wood River Chaei

I have some pertinent information concerning the Amous Cann Memorial
The address of the Canyon Lake Country Club is as follows:
32001 Railroad Canyon Road
Canyon Lake, CA 92587

This should enable you to get specific directions to the club.

Also:

Cann's new mailing address:
30623 Golden Gate Drive
Canyon Lake, CA 92587

I assume that all received Ken's sad posting of A. J. Cann's passing this morning. I have asked Ken to post any information he may have on arrangements and the family's wishes for any remembrance. When I get the information, I will send a remembrance donation in the Eagle's name. Amos was a fine gentleman, a staunch supporter of The Eagles, and will be greatly missed.

Regards to all
Ken Alrick

Charlie Starr - Treasurer

Cap't. Amous J. Cann passed away on March 10, 2008 at his home in Canyon Lake, Calif. He was born in Chattanooga, Okla. in 1922. He attended Cameron Junior college in Lawton, Okla. where he started his flying career in a CPT program. He transferred to Blackwell Junior College to continue his flight training. He was a flight instructor for a private school in Lawton, Okla. and later instructed army cadets in the PT-19. He went to work for Continental Airlines in 1944. With Continental he flew the Lockheed Lodestar, DC-3, Convair 880, Viscount, DC4, 6, 7 and 10, Boeing 320, 320c and the 747. He accumulated over 30,000 flying hours.

He married Laverne Pride in Jan. of 1942. They had 66 years together. Amous is survived by his wife, three children, 6 grand children, 9 great grand children and 1 great-great grandchild. He will surely be missed.



Mr. Alrick:

I received your email from Walt Loflin. My father was Wesley Westcott. He flew for Continental Airlines from 1954 to 1982. He passed away on Friday, March 7th 2008, at his home in Branson, MO. Attached is a short eulogy. Walt said you would let all the retired Continental folks know of his passing. Please email me with any questions or if you need any further information.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael Westcott



STARDUST ★ FALLING

Ret. Capt. WES COSS