



GOLDEN CONTRAILS

December 2016

..... 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



Offloading troops and equipment in Kuwait

June 2003



From the "Charlie files"

Look for a new "History Feature" in April



A letter to the membership of the Golden Eagles from Shaun Ryan

As some of you might know, I experienced a rapid and dangerous change in my health in September. Simply described, it amounted to kidney failure and I was fortunate that it was diagnosed in time and the proper procedures were put in place to save my life.

I spent 8 days in the Intensive Care Unit which gave me a lot of free time to lie there and think about a lot of things and one of the main thoughts that kept coming back was that I had let my life become too organized and too structured and I spent entirely too much time sitting in my den with my computer and not enough time with my family and friends.

I am not blaming my time as the editor of Golden Contrails for this void in my life but rather my allowing my interests to be directed in a direction that ignored the more important aspects of family life – especially as we get older. I couldn't remember the last time Linda and I did something like go to a movie or a picnic on the spur of the moment – I was always too busy.

When Capt. Dick Grigsby, the original editor of Golden Contrails finally retired, he personally asked me to take over as the editor. I was extremely flattered and accepted immediately, not knowing what to expect. What I got was a newsletter that was assembled by hand, pasting and cutting and then shipping the master copy to the printer to copy and finally print. Once the printing was completed, (in Los Angeles by a friend of Dicks,) a group of the old retired pilots would assemble at Dick's house and stuff envelopes and then take the whole mess to the Post Office for mailing. In short, everything was done manually.

After too many issues of pasting and cutting, my son gave me an old copy of Microsoft Publisher along with a current copy of Microsoft Word.



Between the two, somehow I managed, along with a lot of help from Charlie Starr, to turn the Golden Contrails in to a computer generated publication. Charlie found a printer in Florida near his home that worked with us and eventually all I had to do was gather all the information for each issue, edit it, fit it in with whatever pictures came with it and then email the finished product to Charlie who would take it to the printer who would print it, address it (by means of a membership list from Charlie) and mail it.

The process remains essentially the same today but with Gary Small filling in for the retired Charlie Starr. However, my old Publisher program has a lot of shortcomings and I have had to figure out ways to make it work. All of those "work arounds" were in my head and I am having a really hard time recalling them.

When Bill Chambers called me to see if I thought I would be able to continue with my Golden Contrails duties after I felt better, I had to honestly tell him that I did not think I would be able to do so. It hurt to admit it but I also felt a sense of relief that I could now get on with my life with my family. I thank all of you for the support you have given me during the years and it was an honor being in the job for so long. Please accept my resignation as of today.

Shaun

I have agreed to keep the "seat warm" for Shaun while he recuperates and takes some time off from his recent illness. The plan is for me produce this and the April 2017 edition (with his assistance) while the permanent position is held for Shaun as its spiritual owner. He seems to be "on the mend" now, so we'll hope for a full recovery and a return to the helm of the Golden Contrails.

Gary

The President's Report

Dear members of The Golden Eagles,

I would like to add my thanks to Oscar for the opportunity to share our input with the other attendees at the United Retiree Summit in Chicago. As President of The Golden Eagles, I enjoyed meeting all the leaders of the various retiree groups and the UAL representatives. I felt the meeting was very cordial, productive and honest and laid a positive foundation for future meetings. Tom will be taking over as President in October 2017. Because of my current health issues, President-elect Tom Doherty has agreed to take the lead on the pass policy issue communications on behalf of our group, until I feel that I can serve you effectively.

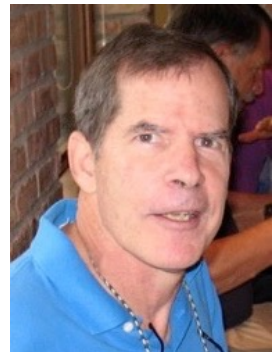
After discussing the summit with the Executive Committee of The Golden Eagles, we are currently taking no position on any proposed changes to the current pass policy. Any position that we may take in the future will be in accordance with our commitment to the best interests of our members.

Yes, we do see mild threats to our best interests regarding our current pass travel benefits, in light of RUPA's open efforts to redistribute our excellent pass travel benefits through a change to date of hire basis for pass travel boarding determination. No, we do not view this as a real threat now or in the future. We believe that UAL leaders would need a very compelling reason to make a change that would bring on a huge adverse impact upon coworker and retiree morale, given Oscar's obvious awareness of the importance of happy people.

We look forward to further communication with all of you in the future as we work together on behalf of all the retiree groups.

Sincerely,

Bill Chambers



LADIES' AUXILIARY

Jamie Doherty

Thanks to all the ladies who helped make our convention in Las Vegas such a success. Everyone pitched in to provide food and drink for the Hospitality Suite, and helped with the decorating (and un-decorating) of the ballroom for the banquet and ladies' luncheon.

At this year's meeting, it was determined that the Ladies' Auxiliary would establish a treasury for the purpose of funding a charitable cause. With donations from the ladies in attendance, \$220.00 was collected. At each future meeting, a cause to support will be voted on and a donation given to that cause.

I look forward to seeing everyone next year in Houston. Details will follow on the "when and where"!



Jamie

THE PRESIDENT ELECT

Tom Doherty



Greetings from New Hampshire. Hope everyone is having a healthy, happy Fall.

For those of you who could not make it to Las Vegas for the convention in October, we missed you. Everyone enjoyed the lively atmosphere of the Hospitality Suite with complementary food and drink and lots of conversation and camaraderie. The golfers had a great game and lunch at Angel Park Golf Course. I kept up my tradition of having the highest score - too bad that is not the mark of a winner in this game. The business meeting was lively and many suggestions were brought up by the members and will be worked on over the course of the next year. After the Gone West presentation, everyone enjoyed the delicious buffet banquet and dancing. Raffle ticket monies were divided into all cash prizes for winners of the drawings and a donation to United We Care. Bob Warner made the highest bid for the B-777 model which was auctioned off. One of our members also hit the jackpot at the Tropicana Casino to the tune of \$10,000. All in all, we had a great convention and hope that everyone will be able to attend next year's in Houston.

Oscar Munoz, CEO of United Airlines, held a United Retiree Summit in Chicago on October 27. President Bill Chambers and I, along with representatives for all the other retiree groups, were invited to attend. We had a very productive meeting in which we discussed pass policy issues. There was no indication by Mr. Munoz that any changes to the current policy are imminent. In fact,

we agreed to meet in the first quarter of next year to continue our discussions. Everyone had an opportunity to express their points of view on the topic. After the meeting we had a tour of the Network Operations Center and it was very impressive to see how technology has advanced in airline operations. Finally, we had lunch at the Willis Tower restaurant. Bill and I look forward to further meetings and discussions with all parties regarding pass policy.



I'd like to thank all of my fellow officers who work tirelessly on behalf of The Golden Eagles. I wish all of our members a safe, happy and joyful Christmas season.

Tom

How to check your dues status:

There is a "year" printed in the address block of all mailed (hard copy) versions of the Golden Contrails. In addition, you can ALWAYS check by looking up your name in the Full Data Roster on the website www.thegoldeneagles.org / Membership / Roster DOWNLOAD / Full Data Roster. You WILL be prompted for the (new) password "yoke".

Ed. This is a different type of article than typically found in the Golden Contrails. While most of us experienced Vietnam primarily from the air (if at all), some of our comrades had a very different “war”. This is a deeply personal account of the life experience of one of “our own”.

HEALING A RUPTURED SOUL IN A COUNTRY OF BETRAYAL

By Mike Bronner, former Combat Medic, 173rd Airborne Brigade, Vietnam 1968/1969

I got involved with the Warrior Resource Center of Montrose back in October of 2014. I started going to the Thursday morning coffee get together with other Veterans, of all wars. I was then introduced to a counseling class that meets once per week for veterans who have PTSD or wonder if they might. Through this class I have made a lot of good friends, guys who have worn the jungle boots of Vietnam and others from different wars. We all share common traits due to our military service. Those of us who served in Vietnam have some unique traits not shared by other veterans. Those unique traits being the type of reception we received upon and since our return to the world, and the fact we mostly all came home alone, as individuals, not as a unit. Most of us went over alone, came home alone, and to this day, feel alone with our experience. The intensity and adverse nature of these traits varies from person to person depending upon their individual experience in the war. In the past several months with the help of the Warrior Center Classes, and meeting a very special man, by the name of Lee Burkins, I have learned a lot about myself and my own personal issues that have affected many people I have come into contact with since 1968, where I served as an 18 year old Combat Medic, (platoon doc) with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, United States Army, in the Central Highlands of Vietnam.

I have been taking Tai Chi lessons from Lee Burkins for over a year now and his patience and understanding have had a major impact on my life. Lee is one of the world's top Martial Arts instructors. A former Black Ops Team Leader with MACV/SOG, 5th Special Forces Group, Vietnam. (Green Beret) Lee graciously devotes a lot of time helping veterans such as myself, who find themselves retired and suffering from PTSD which includes symptoms such as "abnormal startle responses", "irritability", "hyper vigilance", "nightmares and insomnia", "intrusive memories", "survivor guilt", "being withdrawn from others", "a fragmented sense of self identity", "panic attacks", "shame", "despair", "fear and avoidance", "anger, rage and control issues". Most of all, due to these factors, **"A RUPTURED SOUL"**

All of these things I have personally lived with for the past 48 years. It has worsened since retirement, they call it late onset PTSD. The affects have been very adverse not only to myself but to everyone I come into contact with. My words and actions have hurt people. Not only my own family but my friends, and those who might have been friends. My own mother told me that HER son did not return from Vietnam. My wife has told me I live on an Island and only allow a chosen few to live there with me or even to visit. I am a loner, I hate crowds, I enjoy solitude. I spent a career as a professional pilot, an airline pilot for a major airline, all the while I was holding inside me all these issues to the point I thought I would explode at times. When I ended my flying career things started to surface, I began to fall apart, because I felt there was



no longer any reason to hold things in, why pretend any longer. I had thoughts of suicide and still do at times. This has had adverse affects on a whole lot of people. I only knew one way to handle adverse situations and that was with anger, and rage. I still have anger and rage at times but I have learned some control.

I felt like a volcano that has gradually gotten hotter and hotter, it was nearing the explosive level, but the Warrior Resource Center with all the great people that staff it, has cooled me down and the lava is slowly cooling off now. Being around other combat veterans has helped me a lot. They understand the frustrations of nightmares and not being able to forget or worse yet, not being able to remember blank spots.

I owe apologies to many people I have come into contact with, people who I have hurt with my words and my actions. I especially owe apologies to my immediate family and my wife, who is an angel to have put up with me for 39 years now. My three daughters who had to grow up wondering why their dad wasn't like other dads. My anger has caused problems over the years and has fallen right back into the lap of my family, and they don't deserve the repercussions that I have created or caused. I just want to say, I am sorry to everyone for perhaps not handling certain situations differently than I could have. In return I ask for compassion for all Veterans, male and female, who have served in war to the point it has literally taken their lives from them forever, both physically and mentally. I forgive most people for not understanding those of us with ruptured souls, because unless you have worn the jungle boots into hostile territory for the sole purpose of killing people, have walked around trying to find all the pieces of a fellow soldier to put into a poncho so he can be shipped home to his family, have told a fellow soldier you will tell his mother he loves her as his eyes cloud over and his heart stops beating, have held another soldier upside down by what is left of his legs in an attempt to save his life, that you know already is a futile attempt, and until you are soaked in the blood and wearing pieces of a buddy who just saved your own life minutes ago by killing an enemy

soldier you didn't see, who surely would have killed you, **YOU JUST WOULD NEVER UNDERSTAND, YOU REALLY WOULDN'T.** People who say things like, "I understand what you went through", well, **NO** you don't. Only another Combat Veteran understands the true horrors of war. If you haven't lived it you don't have the slightest clue.

When Vietnam Veterans returned from Vietnam, we were powerless to help ourselves or to even understand ourselves. We had no help, no understanding, no reintroduction into a civilized society. Instead, we were shown disdain and disrespect. We survived a very hostile environment, at times with no communications to loved ones at home for the entire time we were in the Nam, other than the occasional letter that took weeks. Then all the sudden we are back here in the world and are supposed to be as normal as we were when we left.

We were treated badly upon our return. For those of you who treated us badly and some to this very day treat us badly, still, I say "shame on you", but I'll forgive you and I will apologize to you for being angry at you, because **you people just don't understand** and never will. Some of you still to this very day say things like, "get over it", "that was a long time ago." None of us will "get over it" but we will continue to learn to live with it the best we can.

Many of us will never forget the day we boarded that jet in Cam Rahn Bay to come back to the world. We felt like the war, for us, was over. Speaking only for myself, I felt that I had survived, my war was over. As I walked through the terminal in San Francisco a few days later on my way home to Central California, it was then I realized my war had just begun and would never end until the day I die. I had just entered the hostile territory of an entirely different enemy. One that showed no respect, cowards, maggots, living off our sacrifices. At least the NVA in Vietnam had a respect for us as soldiers, we had a mutual respect. In some ways I feel my former enemy is the only one that understands me, we have a mutual bond, we both survived each other. I have far more respect for my former enemy in Vietnam than I do most people who populate the United States. The NVA put their lives on the line just as we did. Yes,

Healing a Ruptured Soul...contd

my enemy living right here in the United States, now lives under the blanket of freedom and safety that us Veterans provided them and they have no appreciation for that fact, they show no respect.

I will continue my own healing with volunteer counselor's at the Warrior Center in Montrose, and the teachings of Lee Burkins, who knows and has experienced firsthand, everything I have mentioned, who is the author of a fantastic book of his own healing process called "Soldier's Heart", An Inquiry of War, (available at Amazon.Com) and the talks with my fellow combat veterans. We will heal each other from one of the greatest tragedies this country has ever produced. We will forgive our country for betraying us. For the people who betrayed us by protesting, by calling us names, by making movies that are lies and insults to our character, who continue to betray and disrespect us, NO, I won't forgive you. You can rot in hell.

Mike Bronner, (Doc)
173rd Airborne Brigade, United States
Army
Platoon Medic, May 1968 to May 1969
Retired Airline Captain, Continental
Airlines

Grandpa B and Papa,

Note:

PTSD can lay rather dormant during a person's early life while they are busy with a career but show up with a vengeance after retirement. I highly recommend those who feel they may have the symptoms I mentioned, take it seriously. There is help out there now that the VA has finally recognized the problem. It is a stress disorder, not a mental disorder, you are not mentally ill. It is particularly nasty among Vietnam Veterans. You do not have had to be a ground pounder to have PTSD. Killing people, whether you see them close up



or do it from a jet/helicopter, is something you cannot get away with. It will haunt you whether you admit it or not. PTSD affects the entire family and all people you come into contact with.

The Golden Contrails are published 3 times per year, in April, August and December. Given the 4 month interval limitation, please be sure to keep us informed of any changes to your EMAIL address in order to take advantage of Dave Newell's monthly (or more frequent) email updates. In addition, Bruce Sprague works overtime to keep the website www.thegoldeneagles.org as current as possible. If you or someone you know is simply unable to use these forms of technology, please let us know and we will try to partner you or the other member up with someone who can help.

















Reminder... Dues are DUE on January 01...
(yep EVERY year).

A Fairy Tale Reunion within a Reunion

After 43 years, Barbara Cady (McCann) walked into the Hospitality Suite at the Tropicana in Las Vegas and met Kathy Kruchten (Holdeman) for an unexpected reunion of classmates from the Flight Attendant Class of March 1970.



These ladies worked closely as “new hires” to get through training but were eventually domiciled in different bases (Kathy to Chicago and Barbara to Denver). The Golden Contrails is not privy to any of the “stories” discussed, but they were observed throughout the convention enjoying the opportunity to “catch up” on each other’s experiences.

PLEASE do NOT send checks to Tom Doherty or Charlie Starr, as they are no longer Treasurer and must re-mail them to Bruce Sprague. In fact, please do not send ANY checks. This creates extra WORK for us. Please use the website for all remittances. Thanks!



Most likely not too many airline pilots today could do this.

HHEY, I'VE GOT IT...LET'S FOLLOW THIS ROAD!"

Flying: Long periods of uninterrupted boredom, occasionally punctuated by stomach churning, diarrhea inducing, adrenalin dumps to The rhythm of a pounding heart and blood pressure higher than a thermometer reading in Presidio in August...truly romantic.

"I ought to make you buy a passenger ticket to just sit here on the airliner!"

My new chief pilot's words to me were scalding! I'd just transferred from San Francisco to Denver. Frank Crismon, my new boss, was giving me a route check out between Denver and Salt Lake City.

"Any man who flies for me is going to know this route," he continued. "That fourteen thousand feet will allow you to clear King's Peak is WRONG! You had better know that King's Peak is exactly 14,256 feet high, and Bitter Creek is NOT about 7,000 feet." You're going to drill into that too. It is exactly 7,185 feet! And its identifying code is DASH DOT DASH DASH "

"Now hear this, I'm putting you on probation for one month., and then I'll ride with you again. If you want to work for me, you had better start studying immediately! "

He wasn't kidding! So every day for the next 30 days, I poured over sectional charts, road maps, Jeppesen approach charts and topographic maps. I learned the elevation and code for every airway's beacon between the Pacific Coast and Chicago. I learned the frequencies, runway lengths, and approach procedures for each and every airport along the way. Then from city maps, I plotted the location of all streets that in poor visibility would funnel me to each runway for each of the landing airports.

A month later, the boss was back and 'belted in' next to me.' How long is the north-south runway at Milford? ' " Fifty one fifty." ' How high is Antelope Island? ' " Sixty-seven hundred feet." ' If your radios fail on the Ogden-Salt Lake approach, what should you do? ' " Make a climbing right turn to 290 degrees, then level off at 13,000." ' What is the elevation of the Upper Red Butte beacon? ' " Seventy-three hundred." And how high is the airport at Laramie? ' " Seventy-two fifty."

And this line of questioning went on all the way from Denver to Salt Lake City. "I'm going to turn you loose on your own. But remember what you have learned. I don't ever want to be around when they are scraping you off some mountainside with a casual newsstand magazine pasted with your blood to your shredded lap. "

Twenty years later, I was the Captain on a Boeing 720 from San Francisco to Chicago. We were cruising in the clear cold air at 37,000 feet. South of Grand Junction, Colorado, a deep low-pressure area was feeding moist air upslope into Denver, causing snow low ceilings and restricted visibility. The forecast for Chicago was 200 feet and one-half mile right at O'Hare's instrument weather (IFR) landing minimums. Over the Utah-Colorado border, high mountains showed their backbones of white in a noonday sun. I switched on the intercom and shared:

"We are over the juncture of the Gunnison and Colorado Rivers. On your right is America's Switzerland, the San Juan Mountains. In 14 minutes we will pass over Denver. And later, we will arrive O'Hare at 3:30 Chicago time."

As I finished those words, an electric generator overheat warning light became FLASHING RED. The flight engineer said "Number 2 engine's generator doesn't want to stay connected to the electrical bus." So he switched his generator power selector to the number 3 engine. And the power

failure red light clicked off...For 3 or 4 seconds. Then it came back on STEADY RED! Quickly followed by a COMPLETE ELECTRICAL FAILURE! The flight engineer yelled " Heavy smoke is coming out of the main power grid!"

"Hand us the smoke goggles." The engineer reached behind his seat, unzipped a small container and handed the copilot and me each a pair of effective ski goggles. The smoke was getting thick. I slipped the emergency oxygen mask over my nose and mouth. By clicking a switch on the control wheel, I could talk to the copilot and the engineer through a now ' battery-powered ' intercom.

So just before I closed all four engines thrust levers to idle to drop down to some breathable lower altitude, I told the passengers:" We are making an Emergency descent! "

The four engines that'd been purring quietly like a giant vacuum cleaners spooled down to a quiet rumble. I set up a left turn and extended the flight spoilers. Then after slowing down to gear speed, I put down the wheels down to increase descent rate while telling passengers and crew to fasten their seat belts.

I pointed the nose exactly toward Denver as the Rockies came up rapidly as I ordered the flight engineer to change the cabin altitude to 14,000 feet. " As we leveled over Fraser, at that level feet I retracted the gear and speed brakes.

Now at breathable lower altitude, the engineer manually opened a small door and ram air ' cleared out ' the electrical wiring's smoke. Fuel of course, is vital, but the generators electricity can be, too. And our artificial horizon and other electronics were useless copper wire scrap. All I had left was the altimeter, airspeed and the fluid compass.

"Diagonally below, the last Denver weather report had been 300 feet ceiling, visibility one-half mile and snowing heavily. Wind was northeast 15 knots, gusts to 20," the co-pilot volunteered. The clouds merged against Denver's mountains. And to the

northeast, the solid stratus was as thick as sheeps' wool at shearing time.

I steepened the glide as we flew over the red sandstone buildings of the University of Colorado. Then turned southeast before and we picked up the Denver-Boulder turnpike. I told the copilot:" We are going to scud run under those snow clouds along the Boulder turnpike, then Colorado Boulevard before turning this thing south to 26th Avenue; then ' scud run ' up to the threshold of Runway 8. "

The West Coast reserve co-pilot gave me a doubtful look. Like ' Hey, you don't scud-run a passenger jet load around these unseen TV and Radio towers, flying less than 200 feet to the approach end of a major airport runway."

Coming south on Colorado Boulevard, we were now scud-running at 100 feet above people's roof tops. I intensely focused on not losing eye-ball contact, if lost, be forced I'd have to yank the Boeing up into the goop and fly the gauges.

But remember, I didn't have electronic gauges. So I needed to mentally hang onto previous studied pilotage detail to get us safely down at Denver. I picked up the golf course, then made a ' crop duster style ' move to the left.

I shouted: "Get that landing gear down. And give me 30 degrees of flaps " while cramming all engine thrust levers forward.

"Now, [my mind is] I AM GOING OUTSIDE of this airplane. DO NOT let me get less than 150 knots! " I counted the avenues that were sliding underneath; 30th, 29th, and 28th; then 26th. The snow was slanting down...stratus ' goop' close above our heads. Blurred trees and power lines somehow starkly defined beneath the snow storm's belly. Windshield heaters were electrically dead. But luckily, the blizzard snow was not sticking to the wind shields. " Hey, let me know when you see a school on your side. Then ' time hack ' me "

every five-seconds beyond that school yard." A handful of seconds skipped by.

"There it is...its yard's full of little kids; start your time hack...NOW!" Just East of the school yard, I counted five streets zipping by. Then Monaco Parkway Boulevard. I figured I had eight more seconds while keeping 26th Avenue just to the right of the nose. Whoopee! Now there no more television towers left to ' grab us down. ' " Gimmie full flaps."

Ahead, dimly glowing within swirling snow ahead...three green lights marking the approach end of Denver's Runway 8. We crossed 20 feet above the runway's center light, after aligning the runway center stripe using ailerons cross-controlled with judicious right rudder to make one of the best landings I've ever had.

The tires must have already been moving as we eased on the asphalt without ' squeaks ', then rolled out. In a swirling snow ' white-out,' it took us extra time find Stapleton's air terminal. In no hurry to ' smack anything ', we noticed a bright flashing-red light indicating the Tower had closed the airport. A mechanic materialized in that significant white-out, waved me into a gate with his wands.

" Cut! " The bagpipe ' skirl ' of engine sound spiraled down to silence. "Skipper, I have no idea how you where able to ' pull this off with complete electrical failure in all of this ' goop '! I'm still a little stunned as we sit here. "

I shrugged, hung up my headset, scratched the top of my head where it had been itching...grateful to a fierce old chief pilot.

G. C. Kehmeier Airline Pilot, Retired.

The Secretary's Report and Other Rants

"Before I speak, I have something important to say." — Groucho Marx

I'm keeping my "rant" short this edition due to space considerations. Minutes of the business meeting of the 2016 Annual Convention are posted on the website, www.thegoldeneagles.org.

Target date for publication is early December, so by the time you are reading this, it would be a GREAT idea to head over to the website and complete your dues renewal for 2017. Bruce and I literally spend hours manually typing your dues payments into the accounting records (Bruce) and the membership database (me), and hope to get an early start. The grace period for "good standing" ends on April 30. We are enormously appreciative to the vast percentage of you who have made our job easier by using the website for payments and contact info updates.

Producing the newsletter has been a new and interesting experience, but we wish a continued recovery to Shaun and hope to hear him say "I've got the aircraft" by taking back the controls of the [Golden Contrails](#).

In order of occurrence (this year).....Happy Hanakkah Happy Christmas and Happy New Year!

(Let's all be happy!)

Gary



San Diego, CA — October 25, 2016

Aviation Legend Bob Hoover, described by Gen. Jimmy Doolittle as the "greatest stick-and-rudder man who ever lived" passed away earlier today. He was 94.

"Bob Hoover truly personified the 'pilot's pilot' and was deeply beloved in aviation circles," said Jim Kidrick, President and CEO of the San Diego Air & Space Museum. "He will always hold a special place in our hearts at the San Diego Air & Space Museum, and he will be sorely missed."

Robert A. "Bob" Hoover was born in Nashville, Tennessee on January 22, 1922. From an early age, he loved aviation and soloed (first flight alone) on his 16th birthday. Bob and some friends rebuilt a Taylor E-2 which Hoover barnstormed all over Tennessee, his early interest in flight demonstration. He later enlisted in the Tennessee National Guard and, after the outbreak of World War II, reported for pilot training with the Army Air Corps. Deployed to Casablanca, his first assignment was as a test pilot at a repair depot, flying almost every combat airplane in the Allied arsenal. His flight test acumen assured every airplane was ready to meet the enemy in the air. His turn flying combat would come soon.

Hoover eventually flew combat in Spitfires with the 52nd Fighter group. Inadvertently shot down off the coast of Southern France, Bob spent 16 months as a German prisoner of war. In April 1945, he planned and initiated a daring escape from the prison camp. It was just like in the movies, and only Bob could pull it off. He commandeered a FockeWulf-190 German Fighter, taking off behind enemy lines, flying to safety in Holland. His evasion of allied forces flying a German fighter was miraculous.

After World War II, Bob was assigned to the Flight Evaluation Group at Wright Field in Ohio flying and evaluating captured German and Japanese combat aircraft. Transitioning to America's new jet fighters as a test pilot, he experienced his first bailout from an F-84

Thunderjet, shattering both legs, dashing his hopes of flying the Bell X-1's first flight. But later, when Chuck Yeager was asked who he wanted airborne with him for the supersonic Bell X-1 mission, he named Bob, who also became Yeager's backup pilot. On October 14, 1947, Bob flew the chase safety plane in a Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star during Chuck's historic Mach 1 flight. Known as "Pard" to Bob, Chuck and Bob remained lifelong friends and set the standard for the modern day test pilot.

Bob later joined North American testing the FJ-2, the F-8 Crusader, and the F-100 Super Sabre. Though no longer in the Air Force, he even managed to fly combat missions with Air Force squadrons in Korea, demonstrating the capabilities of the F-86 Sabre to the deployed pilots in actual combat. He was the first man to fly the Navy's XFJ-2 Fury jet and the Navy's T-28 trainer.

In the 1950s, Hoover began flying an acrobatic routine in his famous P-51 Mustang "Old Yeller," then the T-39 Sabreliner followed by the Aero Commander fleet, and the Shrike Commander 500S. (Bob's Shrike Commander is now displayed in the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum's Udvar-Hazy Center in Dulles, Virginia). He set altitude and speed records and was routinely sent abroad to demonstrate aircraft. During one of his most popular stunts, Hoover poured iced tea from a pitcher into a glass placed on the instrument panel of his Shrike Commander while performing a perfect barrel roll. In 1966, he served as captain for the U.S. Acrobatic Team.

During his lifetime, Hoover flew more than 300 types of aircraft and performed at more than 2,500 civilian and military air shows. Considered one of the founding fathers of modern aerobatics, Hoover was described by Jimmy Doolittle as, "...the greatest stick-and-rudder man who ever lived."

Bob Hoover...cont.

In the Centennial of Flight edition of the Air & Space Smithsonian, he was named the third greatest aviator in history.

During his lifetime, Hoover met many of the biggest names in the history of aviation, including Orville Wright, Charles Lindbergh, Eddie Rickenbacker, Jimmy Doolittle, Neil Armstrong, Yuri Gagarin and more. In 2007, Bob was inducted next to all of those aviation and space luminaries into the International Air & Space Hall of Fame at the San Diego Air & Space Museum.

He also is a member of the National Aviation Hall of Fame and a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. For his service during World War II, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Soldier's Medal of Valor and the French Croix to Guerre.

Collen, Bob's wife of 68 years, passed away earlier this year.

Email Notification Program Report Fall 2016

Dave Newell - Email Liaison
davebnewell@gmail.com



The Email Liaison report for this issue of the Golden Contrails will simply consist of reminding our members that there is a statement of policy regarding our email notification program on the Golden Eagles website. This statement of policy is found under the Membership section and the Email Notification Policy subsection. Our regularly published monthly updates and reminders normally keep our members fairly well informed of current items of importance and any changes to our email notification policy will normally be posted there.

Since it is such an important issue, our members are reminded to keep their contact information updated by using the Roster Update form in the Membership section of our website. This allows all of the officers concerned with maintaining the membership records to be informed of any changes. Your cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated. We would like for you to be able to continue to receive all communications from the Golden Eagles and keeping your contact information current will enable us to keep you “in the loop”.

THE GOLDEN EAGLES TREASURER / WEBMASTER UPDATE *Bruce Sprague*

HOME MEMBERSHIP LAC CARE CONVENTION TRAVEL CONTRAILS INPUT STORE CART(0)

Everyone had a great time in October at our annual convention, this year in Las Vegas! I managed to meet many of you in person for the first time. For those of you that missed it, you can see photos in our CONVENTION website menu and "Photo Archives". I know Tom is already working hard on the next convention, slated for Houston next year.

We are now coming into the holiday season....everyone have a wonderful season with family and friends!

This time of the year also brings us to that time when your Golden Eagles yearly dues are due!

Simply logon to our website (see URL below), and either go to the MEMBERSHIP menu, then PAY DUES, **or** on the HOME page click the button below the 757 ("CLICK HERE TO PAY DUES")and you will be on the page that gives you all the simple instructions on how to pay. **PLEASE pay via our STORE online....sending in a check takes us a lot of additional time to process with more chances of errors.** If you have any problems, I will be glad to phone you and walk you thru the process....it will only take a few minutes!

Be sure to also check the latest ROSTER....and if needed, submit an UPDATE ROSTER form, so we have your current information. *If we do not have your current email address, we will not be able to contact you with important information thru out the year!*

Your **Webmaster** has been updating many pages on our website with new information, and fixing many formatting and other errors. If you see anything amiss, please email me.



On the **Treasurer** front, your Golden Eagles books are all balanced to the penny, and we have a full accounting of what is going in and going out. Our Bank of America accounts have over \$37,000 on hand and our CARE account has about \$2000. Speaking of the CARE fund....*please donate to this*

tax deductible worthy cause. Likewise, all postage donations are appreciated as well. In the next April Golden Contrails, will be the 2016 Financial Report.

POSTAGE DONATIONS: (thru 11/4/16) "Thank You!"
Don Gentry, John Solomon, Roy Mike, Dana Bilstad, Edward LaMar, Penny Schuchat, Bob Warner, Jerry Irwin and Paul Shelton

CARE DONATIONS: (thru 11/4/16) "Thank You!"
John Solomon, Dana Bilstad, Dave Gildart, Penny Schuchat, Bob Warner and Paul Shelton

NEW MEMBERS: (thru 11/4/16) "Welcome Aboard!"
Mike Perry, Michael Bronner, Rick Bullion, Paul Sciera, Rick Hicks, Dave Earnest, Glen Cernik, David Rossetter, Robert Roney, Fred Abbott, Rick Kolker, Gene Miller, Tom Dusin, Steve Hansel, Gary Peterson and Robert Whatley



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Bruce



www.thegoldeneagles.org

brucesprague@mac.com

1310 Buckingham Way, Kingwood, TX 77339

NEW PASSWORD

yoke (all lower case)

You **DO NOT** need this password to **login** to our website! It is **only** for the "Roster", "Golden Contrails" and the "Officer Documents".



Golden Eagles Gone West October 2015-November 2016

GE Members

Gene "Newt" Freeman Oct 11, 2015

John Blackis Oct 1, 2015

Bill Lively Oct 15, 2015

Joseph Kunz Oct 31, 2015

Gary Gavagan Feb 25, 2016

Ray Combest Mar 15, 2016

Doug Bodkin April 19, 2016

Doug Kricken May 17, 2016

Jerry Donevant May 29, 2016

Michael (Mike) K. Hill July, 2016

James (Jim) Gamble Aug 20, 2016

Non GE Members

Leo Brooks June 6, 2016

Robert (Bob) Greenleaf June 20, 2016

Walter Timberlake July 26, 2016

Robert McKinney August 4, 2016

Bill Borrelli Oct 23, 2016

Sam Sexton Nov 01, 2016

Golden Contrails

***c/o Gary Small
5504 Luna Del Oro Ct. NE
Albuquerque NM 87111-1646***

www.thegoldeneagles.org



Ferry crossing the Magellan Straights to Tierra del Fuego...September 2014