

# The Airlifter Volume XXVIII

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*The Airlifter*

Newsletter of the Troop Carrier/Tactical Airlift Association

*Promoting and preserving the troop carrier/tactical airlift heritage*

[www.troopcarrier.org](http://www.troopcarrier.org)

November 11, 2015

Volume XXVIII

## **Finances**

We currently have \$20,412.02 in our checking account plus \$125.00 in cash and checks to be deposited, for a total of \$20,537.02. Of that amount, \$6,550 is dedicated to the Tac Airlift Memorial we will be placing at the USAF Museum in 2018. At the present time, our expenditures are limited to a monthly payment of \$5.00 per month for our Email account.

## **Chairman's Comments**

View from the CHAIR:

Ditto the comments from the President; recommend all that are able, clear the decks and mark your calendars for May 4-7, 2016 and attend the TCTAA gathering at the Rock.

I firmly believe that our connection point with future troop carrier/tactical airlift operators runs through Little Rock. It is a rare occasion when we gather there and we should embrace the opportunity to rub elbows with current mobility warriors. I am blessed that my (considered) home squadron, the 61st Green Hornets are there and I hope to take time and impose myself on them! Likewise we represent their connection point with past airlift legacy. For the more chronologically gifted among us (read ole farts), our hope in the future resiliency of TCTAA rests with much younger crew dogs and they operate from the Rock.

Bill Kehler and the convention team are working hard to provide us with the foundational structure for the gathering; it is now up to us to provide the vim and vitality to make it a remarkable event. Conventions are only as good as the attendees who are there. Conventions are about people and camaraderie. Bring all your memories (fond and otherwise) and share "the way it was."

See you at the Rock!

George

## **President's Comments**

Prez Moment - Howdy TC/TAA Airlifters from the Left Coast. We are only 7 months away from our gathering in North Little Rock, AR. Bill Kehler tells me the registration packet is in work and you

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should see soon. Start making your plans now as May 4-7, 2016 will be here before you know it. This is a great time to renew your acquaintances from the 2014 Tucson, AZ Reunion, and I guarantee you will see someone in Arkansas you forgot about. As we get older, we tend to want to see some of the folks we had so much fun with while flying all over the world with or during your combat assignment. I know for me, it is imperative I attend every possible reunion in five different organizations to make sure my legacy friends and I stay in touch personally. So, start running your 20 minute checklist and make your reservations at the Wyndham Riverfront Hotel, 2 Riverfront Place, North Little Rock, AR 72114 - Phone [501.371.9000](tel:501.371.9000)

As I write this, my heart is sad and heavy for the 6 Dyess AFB, TX and Hanscom Field, MA airmen who lost their life in the C-130J crash on takeoff in Afghanistan. Those guys are heroes, as they are over there doing their thing while we are comfortable in our own bed here in the States. It is always sad when we lose someone in our Airlift Community. Rest in Peace Brothers, God Speed and prayers for all your families.

Load Clear - Mike

### May 4-7 in Little Rock

WEDNESDAY, 4 May 2016

1200-a/r Registration (lobby of Wyndham Riverfront )

1000 Golf at Southern Oaks Country Club in Jacksonville (approx. 20 "golfers")

1800 Reception at Wyndham Riverfront ( heavy hors d' oeuvres )

THURSDAY, 5 May 2016

LRAFB/Jax Museum Tour

FRIDAY, 6 May 2016

2018 Reunion/ Airlift Memorial Committee Meeting

TC/TAA Board of Directors Meeting

General Membership Meeting

includes memorial service, business meeting, auction, and special presentations

Happy Hour/ Pre-Mission Briefings in the Hospitality Room

Banquet/ Speaker/Presentations – Ben Kraljev, Speaker

SATURDAY, 7 May 2016

Depart

Approximate registration fee - \$120.00

**We will be sending out registration forms as soon as they become available.**

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### TAC Airlifter Memorial

At our Tucson convention, the membership voted to raise funds for a memorial to troop carrier/tactical airlifters who died in America's wars to be placed at the US Air Force Museum during our 2018 reunion. Fund raising is coming along, with \$6,550 in our memorial fund (\$5,000 is from Association funds.) We've come up with a preliminary design and are in the process of setting everything up with the museum. Air Force regulations allow a total cost of \$25,000 without obtaining USAF staff approval. Donations are being accepted: Mail them to our treasurer, Ralph Bemis, 218 Quinlan St. #533, Kerrville, Texas 78028

### TC/TAA Google Group

We recently set up our own discussion group on Google Groups for members to discuss anything and everything (except politics) with each other. (The reason for no politics is because of our IRS certification; we could lose our tax deductible status.) So far, we have 71 participants. If you are not on the group yet and would like to join, this link should take you to the site where all you have to do is request to join - <https://groups.google.com/d/forum/troop-carrier-tactical-airlift-association>. If anyone has problems, drop me an Email at [semcgowanjr@gmail.com](mailto:semcgowanjr@gmail.com) and I'll add you manually. We set the group up as a means through which members can communicate with each other without sending messages to the entire membership.

*(I do not know who the author of this account is. If anyone knows, let me know.)*

This little story will be appreciated by all who served in Vietnam...especially those who served in the Air Force and knew POW's who died in captivity.

### The Hanoi Pick Up You Haven't Heard of

I'm sorry this has taken so long. I would be a great procrastinator if I ever got around to it!! I've been toying for years about writing the full story, but just haven't done it. May still do it some day. I'll give you a down and dirty version so I don't waste too much of your time.

A little background first: I had flown in and out of Hanoi twice before---flying out of U-Tapao AB, Thailand---with the peace negotiating team. Both times, we were ordered to wear civilian clothes and be nice to them. They took our pictures as we sat around a table for a briefing. The infamous "Rabbit" was in charge. At least that's who we thought it was. Big ears. They then took us to a hotel and fed us in a banquet room. The food was delicious and we were ordered to drink their beer when offered. It didn't taste too bad and was only about 2-3% so the brass weren't concerned about us being able to fly afterwards.

Then they took us to museums---their War Museum on the first mission. They had parts of our warplanes that had been shot down and also showed us the gun where Hanoi Jane Fonda sat for that infamous picture. I don't know if it was the real gun or not---didn't matter---I think they just wanted a reaction. They got none from any of us. We were allowed to take photos of certain areas. They wouldn't let us take pix of their rail marshaling yard which was full of bomb craters and wrecked engines---I got some anyway with

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my little Minox spy camera.

On the next trip they took us to the Peace Museum. Absolutely stunning!!! Lots of HUGE White Jade figures. A beautiful museum. Our bombs never got close to it. Strangely enough---they told us that the wrecked train yard was where they were fixing their engines. If you didn't know better, it could have looked true. There was not a single bomb crater outside of the yard. All buildings were intact!! A lot more happened there, but don't want to bore you with all the details. They were very proud of their many manhole covers in the sidewalks which they used to hide from our bombing raids. All three trips were interesting!!

Anyway, that was why I was chosen to lead a two ship formation to retrieve our Heroes. I just happened to be TDY at U-Tapao from Clark AB where I was stationed. That should set the stage. a little too wordy, but it should help you to understand my involvement.

I was one of only a few crew members on either plane to have been there before. Our Mission Commander was Col Novas and we had a One Star on board with an open line to President Nixon. It was a fairly high priority mission. After stopping in Saigon for a final briefing, our two C-130E's (with augmented crews) left Tan Son Nhut AB and went "feet wet" up the coast of Vietnam. We stayed about 30 miles off the coast so as not to bother anyone. We hit the mouth of the Red River and turned upstream toward our destination---Gia Lam Airport just east of Hanoi.

We were encountering broken clouds which were getting worse. After going over Thuan Nghiep, the river straightens out considerably so I requested we drop to about 1500 ft so I could better make out the landmarks---both on radar but mainly visual---when I could see the ground. I wasn't about to trust the radio aids from Gia Lam nor Hanoi. Before we descended, we could easily make out Hai Phong harbor on our radar about 40 miles to the Northeast so we were on track.

We made contact with Hanoi and advised them of our impending approach into their territory. This had all been pre-arranged, so no problem there. It was on up-river that they started screwing around with us and trying to subtly get us confused. They were trying to get us lost and force us to abort the mission so they could say we caused an international incident by not picking up those who died in captivity when everything had been arranged. That's another reason I had been picked to lead. They tried to spoof us on earlier missions by moving the ADF and VORTAC ever so slightly to locations which would cause us to fly into restricted airspace. In fact, a crew a few weeks earlier bought the spoof and was threatened with a "shoot down" if they didn't abort the mission, so that made this mission even more critical. If you were watching closely enough, you could see the needles quiver a little each time they changed location. They were good at it though, so I had the other nav continually watch for that in case we lost visual or radar contact.

I had my head out the front searching for ground fixes. Then, they really tried to get us fouled up. The second plane was following closely, mainly by keeping us on their radar---depending on us to lead them in. Hanoi Approach Control called us and told us to take up a heading to final. The pilot started to turn and I virtually screamed into the mike "Negative, Negative--Maintain Heading". That was the first of three times they tried to get us to turn too soon. After the second time, Col Novis told the pilot to ignore the tower and go by my direction only. I knew we were still about 30-45 miles out and they were doing

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their best to get us off course and lost in that bad weather with low ceilings and get us to an area with which we were not familiar. The weather was really bad---the cloud cover was closer to full than "broken". We would get a break in the undercast every mile or so. We descended to about 1000 ft which helped some.

Now---remember that bridge that they tried so hard to take down during the war?? We lost a lot of Thuds & F-4's there. That bridge and a huge sand bar about 3 miles downstream were my aiming points. I was getting a little concerned when they weren't coming in view as fast as I thought they should. Guess I was just overly anxious. I checked radar and found both about 15 miles ahead. I alerted the pilot to be ready to turn and he relayed to #2 that we would turn in a couple of minutes. Ground Approach had given up trying to get us to turn early after a few scoldings from them that we were ignoring their instructions. We did not answer.

We descended a little farther so I could get a visual on both the sand bar and the bridge. I remembered where we had turned on my earlier approaches. We flew about 30 seconds past the sand bar, and with the bridge in sight, I told the pilot to turn to the appropriate heading---I seem to recall it was 335 degrees---but not sure now. Descent was begun and both planes broke out at about 750 feet. There it was---right in front of us. I strapped myself in. The other aircraft radioed a "Talley Ho" so we knew everything was fine---or so we thought.

After we landed, Ground Control took over and marshaled us to the proper area to pick up the remains of our Guys. There were two green tents and they were having us come in and turn so that our prop wash would flow directly on the tents---probably blowing them away. Our Aircraft Commander called for neutral props and warned the second aircraft to do likewise. Both planes coasted in to a nice easy stop in the right place---I'm sure to the disappointment of the martialling crews.

Col Novas made the decision on the spot to set up an Honor Guard in front of each tent. This time, we were in our Class A's and were not under orders to associate with the enemy. We all felt better about that!! He sent us out two at a time at 15 minute intervals, Each pair did facing movements to relieve the previous pair as time dictated. The first pair at our tent was Col Novas and our pilot. The tent flaps were tied wide open.

What the first set of Honor Guards---and ultimately all of us---saw was several stacks of green boxes with a rock on them with white painted names and dates. The sight was shocking and really ticked us off. Unfortunately, I do not remember any of the names. The boxes---which in reality were coffins---were about 30 inches by 18 inches by 18 inches. It tore us up to think that our guys who had suffered so much were in those tiny green boxes. We all decided individually and as a team that the Vietnamese would never touch our fallen comrades again.

The Honor Guard rotation was maintained for well over two hours while the final release papers were being signed at their government offices in downtown Hanoi. Obviously, the North Vietnamese didn't know what to think of the Honor Guard. We saw the guys who had been our escorts on earlier trips. They smiled and waved at us. We glared back at them. Some civilians tried to get close to watch---they were chased back over the dikes by armed guards.

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We were finally given the OK to load our precious cargo onto the waiting C-130's---their cargo ramps open, sat waiting. As the word came that we could begin returning our Guys to American Soil---in this case---our C-130's, the North Vietnamese moved in to begin loading. We immediately formed a cordon around the tents and, though unarmed, we motioned for them to stop and basically dared the armed Northern troops to try us. They stopped with a puzzled look on their faces---but never tried to cross the line. They had touched our Heroes for the last time.

It was early evening by then and the General was back by then and became part of our new makeshift Honor Guard---set up on both sides of the ramps. I was part of three pairs who tenderly picked up a "coffin" with its "headstone" and proceeded up the ramp. Two more were inside the plane to place an American Flag over each man as he came on board. We exited thru the crew door to go retrieve another Hero. The General led the others on either side of the ramps in a "Hand Salute" as each box of remains passed on board. I don't remember exactly how many bodies we recovered---seems like 36---but each was treated with ultimate respect. We took our time to make sure all were properly honored. It took a considerable amount of time, but we didn't care. We did it right.

We finally all boarded and buttoned up the aircraft. As we were getting all four turning, I noticed the pilot had a wicked smile on his face. I listened on a discreet channel while he suggested to the other pilot to change pitch after they began moving and turn the planes so that the prop wash would now hit the tents and the Vietnam officials and soldiers gathered around them. The turn was smooth, slow and graceful until the Load master gave the word. Suddenly eight turboprops were at full forward pitch for about 3-5 seconds and brakes on. They changed the pitch back to the taxi setting but we got turned around in time to see the tents flying and some of the folks we left were on the ground.

We received departure instructions from the tower and thus began an uneventful trip back to Saigon and on to U-Tapao to the Identification folks stationed there. The General informed President Nixon that extraction had been completed successfully. Further ID would be performed at Hickam AFB as necessary.

Our Heroes were taken to Hickam AFB by C-141's. I have talked to many people about this extraction of our Fallen Comrades---and to a man---they thought that the C-141's did the entire mission. I hope someone will set the story straight someday. In fact, I have never seen anything about C-130's being involved with the extraction of the first of those who died in captivity. Believe me---I know they were!!

I may have missed some story about it because I had to get busy for my PCS stateside the next month. I have never heard anything about that mission since.

Well, Bill, that's about it. As I said a lot more little things happened on all three trips---even some funny things on the first two, but that third mission was the best thing I ever did in my 24 year USAF career. Sorry to be so wordy, and focused on "I" & "me", but I'm not sure how else I could tell it with any conviction.

PS: Somehow, I forgot to turn in my log and charts from the mission, and no one else thought about it. I had them for a long time, but they disappeared---probably on my move to CO from AL. I sure wish I could find them again!! They are really historical documents.

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I did meet a woman at one of our reunions whose husband's remains were onboard that day. I was completely speechless as she thanked me.

*Editor's Note – the above story, which has been circulating on the Internet for some time, is interesting and I have heard it before from a pilot, Glenn Hardwick, who was on the mission. What is not known by many is that there is an even more interesting story about the first POW release. I'm not going to tell it all here; if you want to read it, get a copy of my book about the C-130 mission "Trash Haulers." In it I included the full text of a very moving letter I received from Dan Penny, the navigator on one of the two missions that went to Hanoi that day. (PACAF C-130 crews had been flying in and out of Hanoi for two weeks prior to the release carrying the negotiators.) Suffice it to say that although MAC got all the praise for bringing the POWs out of Hanoi, the C-141s were guided to Gia Lam Airport by portable NDB transmitters operated by a combat control team that had flown in earlier in the day on PACAF C-130Es from the 374<sup>th</sup> Tactical Airlift Wing. Furthermore, it was the crewmembers from those two airplanes that actually greeted the just-released POWs and escorted them across the ramp to the waiting C-141s, whose crewmembers had been ordered not to leave their airplanes. The POWs were so impressed by having been first greeted by combat crewmembers that they told Thirteenth Air Force commander General Bill Moore about it and he instructed the C-130 crews to escort the POWs on all further releases.*



### The 4 Horsemen

In the spring of 1964, as a newly arrived aircraft maintenance technician at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, I was shown the film *The Four Horsemen Story* while attending a Lockheed C-130E familiarization course. Essentially a Lockheed sales tool designed to demonstrate to prospective customers just how maneuverable the Hercules really was, the film made a lasting impression on me—mostly because it focused on a group of real C-130 pilots who had organized what was perhaps the most unusual aerial demonstration team in the history of the U.S. Air Force.

The C-130A Hercules entered service with the Air Force's 463rd Troop Carrier Wing, a Tactical Air Command (TAC) unit, in December 1956. Within a few months the former Fairchild C-119 pilots of the wing's 774th Troop Carrier Squadron, the first such unit to be equipped with the Hercules, had become quite proficient with their new aircraft. Most of the aircraft commanders were veteran pilots, many with careers that dated back to the Korean War, when they had flown Douglas C-47s and Curtiss C-46s and C-119s in combat. All were impressed with the tremendous maneuverability of the new plane, the result of hydraulically boosted flight controls that gave the 125,200-pound transport the handling characteristics of a fighter. Powered by four Allison T-56 turboprop engines, the C-130A was also blessed with tremendous performance. It was only natural that many of its pilots would experiment to see just how good the plane really was—and how good they were at flying it.



In early 1957 four aircrews from the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron, the '**Green Weasels**,' were at Fort Campbell, Ky., for a week of dropping troops of the 101st Airborne Division. One day high winds led to a

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cancellation of the day's drops and a mission stand-down for the crews. With time to kill and their aircraft ready to go, the four pilots—**Captains Gene Chaney, Jim Aiken, David Moore and Bill Hatfield**—decided to practice some formation flying. They took off and headed out over the fields of Kentucky and Tennessee, where they started moving closer and closer together in their formation. Next they returned to the airfield at Campbell and made several low-altitude passes down the runway, still in tight formation. Suddenly, an idea was born: Why not practice until they got really adept with the planes, and then go around to military bases and put on performances for the troops?

At the end of the week the foursome went back to their home base at Ardmore, Okla., and began working on a routine. Some 500 miles to the east, the men of the 314th Troop Carrier Wing at Sewart Air Force Base in Tennessee were anxiously awaiting the arrival of their own brand-new C-130s, all set to become the second Air Force unit to equip with the new transport. The four 774th pilots proposed a plan to the TAC brass: Let the four pilots and crews who had been practicing formation flying take four C-130s and fly to Sewart, to show the men of the 314th just what kind of airplane they were getting. TAC Headquarters approved the plan, and the new aerial demonstration team was off and running. At first they referred to themselves as the 'Thunder Weasels,' a combination of the animal on the 774th's squadron patch and the famous Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team, but they eventually settled on the 'Four Horsemen' after Coach Knute Rockne's legendary backfield on Notre Dame's 1924 football team. They put on a show for the Sewart people, who were suitably impressed.

As the men grew more and more proficient with their maneuvers, they became enthusiastic about becoming an officially recognized aerial demonstration team. The four pilots began researching Air Force technical orders, safety standards and procedures to find out how to obtain official recognition. At length their efforts paid off, with TAC officially sanctioning their status as an aerial demonstration team.



CHANNEY, HATFIELD - I BELIEVE IT IS AIKEN, MOORE

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While the C-130 might look ungainly to the uninitiated, it was really a highly maneuverable airplane, particularly for a transport. The C-130A, for example, was capable of using 2,700-foot landing strips—remarkably short for an airplane that size. When the Horsemen demonstrated the C-130's short-field takeoff performance, they did so in a close diamond formation. Led by Moore and sometimes by Chaney, who served as the team captain, the four planes would taxi onto the runway and form a diamond formation. The maneuver called for the four transports to begin rolling at two-second intervals, although *Aviation Week* magazine pilot-editor Robert Stanfield, who flew with them in 1959, said it seemed like they all started rolling at once. On that occasion the reporter was flying in the 'slot' airplane, the best vantage point from which to observe the Horsemen in action. Thanks to the prop-wash from the three preceding airplanes, the slot airplane, usually flown by Bill Hatfield, would get off the ground first. Hatfield would hold his airspeed down to 100 knots until the other airplanes were airborne. The Horsemen would retract gear and flaps on a signal from the lead plane and begin a sharp climb at 120 knots, achieving better than a 4,000-foot-per-minute rate of climb that would put them over the end of a 10,000-foot runway at 1,500 feet. Normal troop carrier procedures called for 15-second takeoff intervals between airplanes.

Once in the air, the Four Horsemen would perform a series of intricate maneuvers at altitudes ranging from just above the runway to 3,000 feet. They flew their diamond really tight. According to *Aviation Week's* Stanfield, the slot plane's nose was held as close as seven feet from the leader's tail. Because of the downwash from the propellers, each of the following aircraft flew slightly higher than the one in front. Each pilot would try to fly right 'on top of the bubble.' The slot airplane would be the highest in the formation, its windshield level with the top one-third of the lead airplane's tail fin. The noses of the two wingmen were in line with a row of rivets that ran the length of the lead airplane's wings. Dropping down into the wash of the leading airplanes could be dangerous. In one instance slot pilot Hatfield was flying an airplane that had a 'Bulldog' winch in the back, standard on all TAC C-130s at the time. The tie-downs that secured the winch were evidently loose, and when Hatfield accidentally dropped into the prop wash of the airplanes ahead of him, the resulting turbulence caused the winch to rise above the floor of the airplane. As the turbulence went from negative to positive G-forces, the winch came back down with such momentum that it knocked a hole in the cargo compartment floor.

The team alternated between different formations. The arrow was a line-astern formation in which each airplane was tucked in right behind and slightly above the one before it. From the arrow they would go to the arrowhead, as the two trailing airplanes moved to the side of the line and took formation in line with each other, tucked in on the number two airplane. They also flew echelon formations, and ended their show with a bomb burst: The lead and number three aircraft would break high and to the left while numbers two and four broke to the right. They then rejoined in the diamond and returned to the airfield for a formation landing, moving into an echelon over the runway, then doing a tactical pitch-out to come back around for landing. The first plane would still be on the runway when the slot man touched down. Their show was as impressive as any put on by fighter pilots, and perhaps even more so considering the size and weight of the planes.

No particular aircraft were assigned to the Four Horsemen. Each crew drew whatever plane happened to be available on the flight line at Ardmore, or at Sewart after the 463rd moved there to join the 314th shortly after the latter wing converted to the Hercules. The two wings made up the muscle of TAC's 839th

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Air Division, which was also based at Sewart. The demonstration pilots flew the same training and operational missions as the other pilots in the two C-130 wings.

Very early on, the C-130 demonstrated its ability to fly on three and even two engines without a significant loss of performance. In fact, a Lockheed test crew took off from Florida, shut down the aircraft's outboard engines and flew all the way to California at low level on two engines. The airplane was so overpowered that crews routinely shut down the outboard engines on some flights to conserve fuel.

During one Four Horseman performance, Chaney, who normally flew in the number three position but was taking the lead that day, lost an outboard engine. He and his crew went through the engine shutdown procedure without losing their place in formation, then simply went on with the show (let's see the Thunderbirds or Blue Angels try that one!).

The most difficult position to fly in the formation was number three, because the aircraft commander was on the opposite side of the airplane from the rest of the formation and had to constantly be turning his head to the right. As the chief of the Horsemen, Chaney usually occupied that spot, while Moore usually flew the lead. The co-pilot in the right seat helped his boss maintain the tight formation that had become the team's trademark. All the pilots were highly qualified veterans, with an average of 4,000 hours of total flying time and 1,500 hours in C-130s by late 1959, when the *Aviation Week* journalist rode with them. Co-pilots were drawn from the ranks of aircraft commanders in the squadron, and quite often those men were instructor pilots as well.

When the 774th was deployed, the Four Horsemen went right along with their squadron mates, airlifting men and equipment to Lebanon in one instance and to Formosa in another. They practiced their Horsemen routine whenever they could, but that was often less than 10 hours a month. The pilots maintained their proficiency the same way other troop carrier pilots did—flying training missions that included close formation flying, though not as close as the Horsemen generally flew in a performance. The men themselves wore no distinctive uniforms other than a small patch on their flight suits with a horse's head and a Roman numeral IV. They also wore scarves to dress up a bit for the shows.

The C-130 ordinarily called for a five-man crew, but the Horsemen flew with only four—two pilots, a flight engineer and a scanner. The navigator's seat sat empty during the shows. The crews came from within the squadron, and the Horsemen pilots tried to fly with the same flight mechanics when possible. There was great esprit de corps among the flight mechanics, who debated which pilot was best, which position was most difficult to fly and so on. In the air, the mechanics soon learned the torque settings needed at a particular point in a maneuver and the proper time for call-outs of instrument readings. The scanners came from maintenance and were just as proud to be part of the Four Horsemen as the pilots and flight mechanics. Hatfield remembered that the scanners ordinarily did not fly during performances, but were there to help get the airplanes off the ground.

The four veteran aircraft commanders of the Horsemen team had been with the C-130 since it was first assigned to the 463rd at Ardmore in December 1956. Chaney, along with Captain Richard 'Stumpy' Coleman, had picked up the first airplane to be delivered at the factory in Marietta, Ga., and flown it to Ardmore. A year after the first Hercules arrived at Ardmore, the 463rd left Oklahoma when the base closed, moving to Tennessee to join the 314th. The Horsemen continued to stage their performances from

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their new base.

By early 1960 the C-130 had been in service with the Air Force for more than two years. Lockheed had developed a new model of the Hercules, the C-130B, and the 463rd and 314th began converting to the new version as the older A-models transferred to overseas squadrons. As the oldest C-130 pilots in the Air Force (in terms of time in the airplane), the Four Horsemen were ripe for deployment overseas. In a recent interview Hatfield speculated that they could probably have remained at Sewart and continued the team if someone had pushed for it, but it didn't happen that way. Three of the four received overseas orders, while the fourth, Moore, left the service and returned to Texas. Chaney got orders to Wiesbaden, West Germany. Aiken went to Tachikawa, Japan, and Hatfield ended up a few miles away, in Yokota. Except for Moore, they would all remain in close contact with one another over the years. Chaney and Moore died several years ago. Hatfield and Aiken still remain in touch today.

Although the career of the Four Horsemen came to an end in the spring of 1960, they left behind a remarkable legacy. In honor of the team, the official patch of the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron was modified to include a red lightning bolt, reminiscent of the team's effect on the squadron.

During the remainder of their careers, the four pilots remained associated with the C-130, as did many others who had flown with the team as backup aircraft commanders and co-pilots. Hatfield went on to pilot the reconnaissance version of the C-130B, with the super-secret 6091st Reconnaissance Squadron at Yokota, then returned to the United States to join the Lockheed C-141 program at Charleston Air Force Base, in South Carolina. He subsequently was placed in command of a rescue squadron equipped with HC-130Hs in California. Chaney returned to the 463rd after the wing moved from Langley Air Force Base, in Virginia (where it had gone from Sewart in 1963), to Clark Field in the Philippines.

Billie Mills, a veteran 774th pilot who often flew with the Four Horsemen, also served with the 463rd at Clark. On May 12, 1968, Mills was one of a handful of C-130 pilots who braved devastating enemy fire to rescue allied troops surrounded by a larger enemy force at a Special Forces camp at Kham Duc, South Vietnam.

Today the memory of the Four Horsemen lives on in the 16mm film Lockheed produced. To make that 15-minute movie, a motion picture company hired by Lockheed shot thousands of feet of film of the quartet in action. The Horsemen themselves were not especially happy with the finished product once it was edited down. The voices of actors were dubbed into the film, including one with a nasal northern voice who claimed to be the 'chief' of the Horsemen. In reality, all the Horsemen were Southerners—Chaney and Moore from Texas, Aiken from Tennessee and Hatfield from Mississippi.

With the advent of the VCR, *The Four Horsemen Story* has been circulated through the C-130 community, though the VHS version leaves a lot to be desired in comparison to the film that inspired me back in early 1964. Airlift tactics have changed considerably since 1960, as the Tactical Air Command troop carrier squadrons became tactical airlift, and then transferred out of TAC to the Military Airlift Command (MAC) after the end of the Vietnam War. By that time, close formation flying by troop carrier aircraft had already ceased, with TAC adopting the 'in-trail' formation as the standard for C-130s.

The Four Horsemen have been out of business for more than 40 years now. But the men who came up

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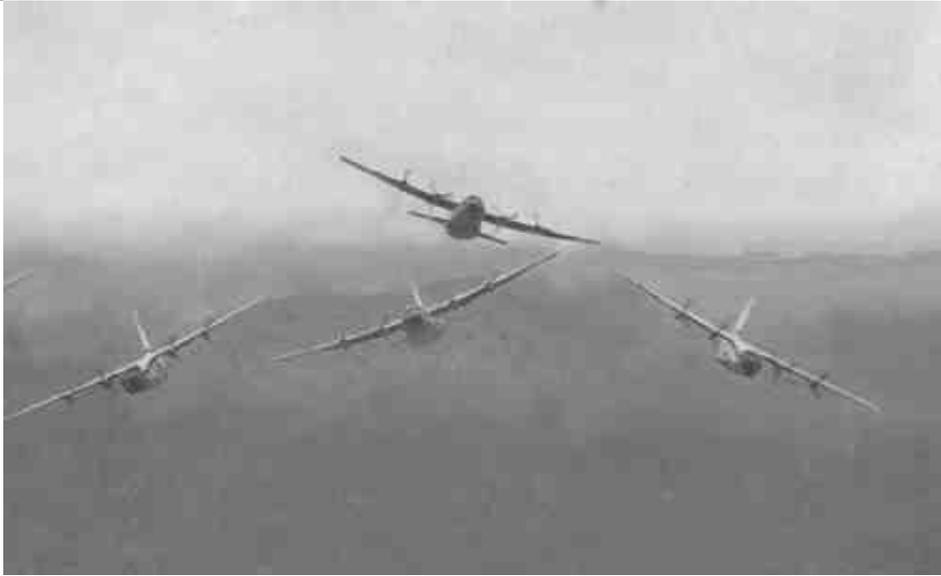
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with a way to showcase the Hercules' excellent performance and their remarkable aerial demonstrations are not forgotten, thanks largely to one short film and the lasting memories they gave everyone who witnessed firsthand their precision maneuvers in transport aircraft.



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*Editors Note - I came across the preceding article awhile back on the Internet. Whoever pirated it didn't give credit to the author but I know him personally – I see him in the mirror every time I shave. I wrote it for Aviation History magazine back around 1999. Most of the information came from Bill Hatfield and from an article in a magazine he sent me. The Four Horsemen video may be viewed on You Tube at this link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjZMWI77b84> . Two of the four Horsemen AC's, Jim Aiken and Bill Hatfield, are TC/TAA members as are John Dale and Billie Mills, who flew as copilots. Those who were with us in Galveston in 2006 will remember Billie's entertaining address in which he told about his experiences with the Horsemen, both flying in the formation with them and flying as an opposing solo in some of their performances. Incidentally, they are THE ORIGINAL C-130 pilots, the most senior pilots in C-130 history. Gene Chaney passed away several years ago after a long career in C-130s and tactical airlift. Chaney and Mills were both with the 463<sup>rd</sup> at Clark in the 1960s – Billie Mills was awarded the Silver Star for heroism at Kham Duc. David Moore has also passed.*

## The Airlifter Volume XXVIII

October 25, 1930

TO - ALL CO-PILOTS:

Every man in an organization has a certain part to play and duty to perform. The first pilot is delegated the responsibility of flying the ship; the service crew has the responsibility of keeping the ship in safe flying condition; the traffic department has the responsibility of supplying the passengers and the operations department has the responsibility of ordering the ships in and out and making certain that everyone in the operations department performs his duty. Even with all this division of authority into the above named competent departments, there are still many SMALL CHORES which have been left undone, and for this reason and none other, there has been created in the aviation industry a demand for THE CO-PILOT.

There are now fourteen co-pilots in the Southern Division of American Airways, Inc., whose flying time ranges from 400 hours to 2500 hours.

Regardless of how much flying time a co-pilot has had, it is necessary that all co-pilots be regarded alike by their superiors, THE FIRST PILOT. Your job is to do many things which other employees do not want to do. Your immediate superior is the first pilot. His wants are your orders - he is king - you are his faithful and alert servant. You are on probation always; your working hours are from now on and your pay is small. Your advancement is uncertain and there are thousands of other first pilot aspirants striving to get your job at even less money and more work. You are not employed because of your flying ability and by your employment you are not assured ever of having a run of your own as first pilot.

The pilot with whom you now have the privilege of flying largely controls your destiny. If you handle these many details assigned you, many of which are unpleasant, and if you prove to be of value to him and to others, you may assume that you will have the privilege of remaining as co-pilot for him until some years to come, at which time you will have learned much from your associations and flying experiences with him; and you will have won for yourself recognition by the company and all, as a gentleman and as an experienced co-pilot worthy of promotion.

You were not employed to do the flying, not only because you are not considered capable but because far better pilots, the finest in the world, have been employed for that work and if you are permitted to

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take the controls at any time you may consider this a special favor on the part of the first pilot. A co-pilot who does his job well, makes very little noise and listens attentively to his superiors and will in time demand and receive recognition for his services.

As co-pilot, there is something which really is worth working for and which can be attained but first IT MUST BE EARNED. As long as you do your work well and conduct yourself strictly as a co-pilot, this company will regard you really as an important department of the organization and you will find many very good friends among those with whom you are working. You are going to be asked to do many personal favors for the older pilots but always keep in mind that these same older pilots are at some time later going to be in a position to do many and greater favors for you.

If you know yourself to have an excess of pride, swallow it; if you have personal faults, overcome them; always make a neat and pleasant impression on your passengers and upon those with whom you work and live.

Trusting that you are successful in your enterprise of becoming A GOOD CO-PILOT,

Sincerely yours,

JERRY MARSHALL  
OPERATIONS MANAGER

JM:G

CC-All Pilots

# The Airlifter Volume XXVIII

Thanks to John Dale for the preceding. (This should be mandatory reading for all copilots.)

This year's inductee into the Airlift/Tanker Hall of Fame is a group of six United States Air Force loadmasters collectively nominated as the "C-17A Pathfinder Loadmasters". These six C-17A Pathfinder Loadmasters were the cornerstone for the successful design, development, production, test, and evaluation of the cargo compartment of one of the greatest air mobility aircraft ever produced, the C-17A Globemaster III. The character, vision, creativity, and accomplishments of the C-17A Pathfinder Loadmasters make this group the right choice for this prestigious award and induction into the Airlift/Tanker Association Hall of Fame.



Airlift/Tanker Association

2015 Hall of Fame Inductee

## C-17 Pathfinder Loadmasters

MSgt Theodore (Ted) R. Venturini (USAF Ret) • CMSgt Michael (Mike) M. Welch (USAF Ret)  
CMSgt James (Jim) Lis (USAF Ret) • CMSgt Marion (Dave) D. Fincher (USAF Ret)  
CMSgt William (Bill) M. Cannon (USAF Ret/Deceased) • CMSgt Mark A. Smith (USAF Ret)

The C-17A is routinely operated by a crew of three (pilot, co-pilot, and aircraft loadmaster) and maintains a mission completion success rate in excess of 95% with an on-time departure reliability rate in excess of 92%. The overall success of the C-17A Globemaster III can be attributed to many individuals with varied skillsets over the past 35 years. However, the success, operational utility, advancement, and growth of the business end of the C-17A will always will be attributed to Ted, Mike, Jim, Dave, Bill, and Mark. Collectively, these six C-17A Pathfinder Loadmasters were the cornerstone for the successful design, development, production, test, and evaluation of the cargo compartment of one of the greatest air mobility aircraft ever produced, the C-17A Globemaster III. Their combined Aircrew Loadmaster experience exceeds 150 years with over 55,000 flying hours on 21 different aircraft. Their unique backgrounds were critical to ensuring the one-loadmaster aircrew concept became a reality on the C-17A aircraft. This "Band of Loadmasters" group effort resulted in revolutionary design improvements and advancement to America's airlift capability and set a benchmark for air mobility aircraft for years to come.

### LEADERSHIP, JOB PERFORMANCE, AND NOTEWORTHY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### MSgt Ted Venturini (USAF Ret)

In 1979, McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Company selected MSgt (USAF Ret) Ted Venturini to become Chief Loadmaster of the C-X D9000 program. MSgt Venturini's knowledge and experience with the C-5A and Advanced Medium Short Take Off and Landing Aircraft (AMST) programs made him the perfect choice for the position. He was instrumental in developing the McDonnell Douglas C-X proposal, authoring the critical Mission Systems volume. These important sections laid out the vision for the most efficient and versatile cargo compartment, supporting the capability for one loadmaster to accomplish all peace time and combat air mobility missions.

When McDonnell Douglas was selected as the C-X winner, MSgt Venturini became the first C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster. Throughout the Full Scale Engineering Development phase of the program, MSgt Venturini's tenacity and drive ensured loadmaster critical systems endured and survived a number of challenges. With MSgt Venturini's expertise, he and five other C-17A Pathfinder Loadmasters guided the company and the US Air Force to design the world's first single loadmaster aircraft.

As an accomplished Aircrew Loadmaster, MSgt Venturini was able to provide seasoned loadmaster technical guidance and expertise throughout the C-17A Preliminary Design Review (PDR) and Critical Design Review (CDR). On 15 September 1991, he flew the C-17A

Globemaster III on its first flight as the aircrew loadmaster. During the next four years, MSgt Venturini led his team of McDonnell Douglas loadmasters through C-17A Developmental and Operational Testing and Evaluation. Both milestones were highly successful. Those who participated during the challenging design efforts and rewarding test missions always looked to MSgt Ted Venturini for leadership, guidance, and expertise.

#### CMSgt Mike Welch (USAF Ret)

In 1979, CMSgt Mike Welch (USAF Ret) was selected as the Cargo Systems Acquisition Program Manager, Military Airlift Command (MAC) Detachment 4, Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio. He was responsible for all MAC cargo systems acquisitions associated with the C-X (C-17A), C-20A, C-21, C-23A and KC-10A aircraft. As a C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster, CMSgt Welch was the lynch pin, defining and implementing MAC operational requirements for Aeronautical Systems Division program managers and directors.

As an experienced Aircrew Loadmaster, he directly supported the C-17A program throughout Full Scale Engineering Development, Preliminary Design Review, and Critical Design Review. CMSgt Welch provided operational direction during the development of the single-loadmaster C-17A cargo compartment and was responsible for C-17A Airdrop Research Test Projects.



**"I found that the men and women who got to the top were those who did the jobs they had in hand, with everything they had of energy and enthusiasm and hard work."**

-HARRY S. TRUMAN

#### CMSgt Jim Lis (USAF Ret)

In 1980, MSgt Jim Lis was assigned to the C-X Systems Program Office (SPO), Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to become the C-X Mission/Environmental Systems Project Manager. His primary role during the early stages of the program included source selection, reviewing, securing, and cataloging over seven tons of proposal material from three primary contractors, and providing technical guidance to over 500 pilot, loadmaster, aeromedical, US Army, and civilian evaluators.

In 1981, McDonnell Douglas was selected as the winner of the C-X source selection. As a C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster, SMSgt Lis was selected as the first C-17A Mission Systems Requirements Manager, Headquarters Military Airlift Command, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois. SMSgt Lis' tasks focused on integrating the Command's unique C-17A Mission Systems operational requirements into the business end of the aircraft.

CMSgt Lis (USAF Ret) also co-authored the massive C-17A Requirements Correlation Matrix (RCM) which identified and quantified every operational requirement derived for the C-17A and was used by the Command, C-17A Special Projects Office (SPO), US Army and the contractor to measure how well the aircraft design would meet each and every requirement within the RCM. The RCM became the Command's principal document to defend C-17A requirements as well as ensure the aircraft program would succeed. Additionally, CMSgt Lis directly supported the C-17A program throughout Full Scale Engineering Development, Preliminary Design Review, and Critical Design Review as an Aircrew Loadmaster expert.

#### CMSgt Dave Fincher (USAF Ret)

In 1981, CMSgt Dave Fincher (USAF Ret) was selected as one of 45 loadmaster evaluators during the seven month C-X source selection process. CMSgt Fincher's expertise with the C-5A was instrumental during the evaluation of the three contractor proposals; McDonnell Douglas, Boeing, and Lockheed-Martin. His knowledge was particularly important when evaluating outsized and oversized cargo requirements to meet the C-X Request for Proposal.

After the US Air Force selected McDonnell Douglas as the C-X winner, CMSgt Fincher became a full-time C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster. He directly supported the C-17 program throughout Full Scale Engineering Development, Preliminary Design Review, Critical Design Review and just prior to first flight in 1991, as an Aircrew Loadmaster subject matter expert. Concurrent with supporting the C-17A program, CMSgt Fincher was assigned to the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center (AFOTEC), Kirtland AFB, New Mexico as the Strategic/Tactical Aircraft Systems Test Manager, supporting the C-17A and numerous other AMC aircraft.



#### CMSgt Bill Cannon (USAF Ret/Deceased)

In 1982, CMSgt Bill Cannon (USAF Ret) was selected for a position with McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Company as a "C-17A Project Loadmaster" for the new United States Air Force C-17A aircraft. As a C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster, he was assigned to the Flight Operations Division of McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Company.



CMSgt Cannon's responsibilities included working with numerous aircraft design engineers, integrating his operational skills with their engineering skills to develop the first single-loadmaster aircraft. CMSgt Cannon fine-tuned the fully integrated and dedicated

loadmaster station which would enable the loadmaster to command ultimate control of the entire aircraft cargo compartment and all associated systems from one dedicated operating station.

CMSgt Cannon directly supported the C-17A program as a seasoned Aircrew Loadmaster throughout Full Scale Engineering Development, Preliminary Design Review, and Critical Design Review of the aircraft. After the first C-17A flight in 1991, CMSgt Cannon became the Chief Loadmaster of the C-17A flight test program at Edwards AFB, CA. During his tenure at McDonnell Douglas, CMSgt Cannon also founded and was the first President of the "See Seventeen Chapter," of the Airlift/Tanker Association. Bill also served as President of the Association.

#### CMSgt Mark Smith (USAF Ret)

In 1985, MSgt Mark Smith was selected as the first C-17A Project Loadmaster, C-17A System Program Office, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. He was directly responsible for design, development, and acquisition of cargo compartment systems and mission equipment for the \$41 billion C-17A weapon system. As a C-17A Pathfinder Loadmaster, his team crafted critical loadmaster capabilities for the world's first-ever single loadmaster aircraft.



SMSgt Smith developed and led the Airlift Mission Systems Panel, consisting of over 50 US Air Force, US Army, and McDonnell Douglas personnel. He directly supported

the C-17A program as a skilled Aircrew Loadmaster throughout Full Scale Engineering Development, Preliminary Design Review, and Critical Design Review of the aircraft.

SMSgt Smith kept the C-17A at the forefront of design operability, ensuring the loadmaster team targeted continuous improvement in combat capability. In 1991, CMSgt Smith returned to Charleston AFB, SC to lead the Command as a C-17A initial cadre loadmaster. During his tenure as the Chief Loadmaster of the 437th Airlift Wing, he implemented initial squadron operations and flight training for over 450 aircrew personnel. During the first two years, he prepared the first C-17A squadron for the highly successful Reliability, Maintainability, and Availability Evaluation.

In 1996, CMSgt Smith (USAF Ret) transferred to Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, serving as the C-17A SPO Chief Loadmaster Manager. He was directly responsible for refining and prioritizing updated C-17A cargo compartment mission systems requirements for the nation's highest-priority mobility forces aircraft.

Mark is the Immediate Past President of the Airlift/Tanker Association.

*Hall of Fame story continues >>>*

*Congratulations to TC/TAA members Mike Welch and Jim Lis for being named to the Airlift/Tanker Association Hall of Fame for their role in the development of the C-17. The late Bill Cannon was also named.*

*Happy  
Veteran's Day!*