

Bits and Obits

Noted in the Alumni Magazine for the Kappa Sigma Fraternity sent by "brother" Dan Weber, was an article for the North Texas chapter Epsilon-Upsilon. "Puppeteer and TAC Tanker,(420th) Jim Gamble ('57a Gamma-Kappa affiliate, was recently invited to perform for the Obraztsov Puppet Festival in Moscow, Russia. As the only American to perform in this landmark event, honoring rhw 100th birthday of Russian puppeteer Sergei Obraztsov, Gamble received wide television coverage and print interview requests. To accommodate the crowds, Gamble performed seven times and along with his wife, Marty, were luncheon guests of the U.S. Embassy's cultural attache'.

A letter from Charlie Powell (622nd) with an attachment was received from his past Commander, Col. Tom Tiernan's daughter and son-in-law last Christmas: *"My father wanted to write something personal in all your Christmas cards but he was just not able to so I am sending this enclosed note to each of you to let you know how he is. He was much saddened by the passing of his friend Norm Patterson and will miss his faithful correspondence for nearly 40 years. Dad is living in an assisted living facility about 7 miles down the road from my family. He has a very nice two room suite. Unfortunately due to his Parkinson's he does not get around very well any more and tends to stay in his room a lot....."* The note continues with family news. Charlie says that Col. T's address is 255 Elm St. #117, Cumming GA 30040-2466 and urges any of you out there to drop a cheery note.

While at the reunion, JoAnn and Peter Zuras informed us that John David Tresse (429,420 early 60's) had passed away in October 2001. His widow, Barbara, lives in La Plata, MD.



Who Says a Six Hour Mission Has to be Boring? (This is the continuation of the last issue's email story from a Navy pilot in an F-18 Squadron).

Following the Rescue.....

And of course the Toga Party on Saturday. Can't forget that. Yeah, it's kinda like the boat. Except for the booze and the Toda Parties. Other than that it's just like the boat. Other random observation: air Force got all the good building. Marines are on the outskirts, again. The boys from the 101st are spoiling for a fight. Hate coming in behind the Marines all the time. Dust over everything. Lots of people there that don't look like they are in the normal military. I don't care what any psychology major would say about it, it's just cool carrying a gun everywhere. MREs are not too bad. Could see how people would get sick of them though.

Tent city was a little slice of American suburbia right in rural Pakistan. Only Air Force base I've ever been on that didn't have any hot chicks. Of course, I was only there for 24 hours. The place is a FOD nightmare. The maintainers showed up about four hours after I did. After the appropriate amount of gawking they got to work and fixed it (the plane) well enough for the RTB in under four hours. Nice job all around.

By the end the basket and hose were removed, the canopy had been replaced and the LEX repaired with 300 mile an hour tape. ("American.. Can Do Easy.") Three of the guys showed up and then disappeared with two big boxes of geedunk. They were on a booze hunt. They succeeded. The Air Force settled all the maintainers into two spare tents and they had a grand 'ole time. The next morning I took off low and fast at sunrise. Low and fast was due to the locals and the guns, of course. Not because it was fun. I checked in and the E2 said. "It's good to hear your voice again." The RTB was uneventful right up until the end. A PTS shaft died and subsequently one of my Hydraulic systems gave up the ghost when I dropped the gear. I got a couple of spurious flight control cautions but didn't really give it much thought as I was working the landing.

As I started the approach turn, the nose started to wander and I got another caution tone. I lost one aileron, one rudder and half a horizontal stab. I hit the reset button and I think everything cleared. Then I saw the Hydraulic Cautions come up. Hitting the reset button suddenly went from normal re-

sponse on short final to a big mistake. When the aileron failed again I realized I sorta needed to get aboard the first time. "Man, first I miss Shania and now this. This is just not my week."

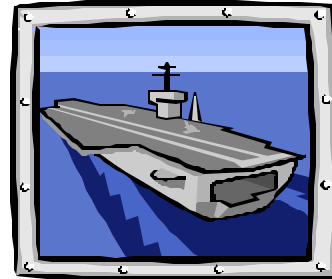
I got it aboard because the Hornet is a fantastic jet. I got a Fair grade for the pass because I'm not very smooth when I'm rattled. I pretty much assumed I was in trouble throughout all this. A canopy has got to cost 70 or 80 grand. Depending on how much repairing the windscreen and the airframe were...it could cost over 200 grand. Which would mean a Class B mishap. Which would mean I was screwed. Again.

Thinking all this and then seeing the CO waiting for me when I landed made my heart sink. But that was not the reason he was there. The decision was made somewhere to make a big deal about this in a good way. Just like the...dirtbag to hero. Funny.

Turned over bodily fluids to VFA-147 Safety Officer. This isn't the first thing that's happened to me out her you know. We're flying the shit out of these jets and it's starting to show. I had to come back from the box with an engine shut down a week or two before. I'm starting to feel like that Lt. That keeps getting hose in "The Bridges of Toko Ri." I got my letter in after all. I'm getting too short for this shit. Oh well, statistically speaking the rest of cruise should be smooth sailing. What are the odds something like this will happen again? (I love planting the seeds of irony.) Good enough?

LCDR A. Wright (VFA-

147)



Down Under: (cont. from P. 6) dancing to 1940's style music provided by the U.S. Navy Band from the Seventh Fleet. Shortly after dinner, I was approached by a gentleman. whom I guessed to be about my age. He asked if he could have a word with me so we stepped outside away from the loud music. Earlier in the evening during dinner, the master of ceremonies called me to the microphone and introduced me to the entire gathering. He had mentioned that I was just five years old when my father was killed at Coral Sea. The gentleman who I was now talking with said when he heard that, he had to talk to me. He introduced himself and said that he was just four years old when his father, an Australian soldier, was killed at Tobruk in North Africa in 1942. He wanted to know how the loss of my father had impacted my life and how I had learned to cope with it. This was the first time I had ever had a conversation with someone who experienced as a child many of the things I had under similar circumstances. We shared feelings and expressed emotions as though we had known each other for a long time. An instant bond of friendship was formed between us because we understood each other so well and had such significant experiences in common. As we rejoined the activities of the evening, we both felt that our meeting was more than coincidental. (To be continued in the next issue: On To Townville)