



TAC TANKER TALES

Tactical Tankers Assn. Ltd.
2091 Sussex Rd.
Winter Park FL 32792

Officers 2014-2016

President:

Vic Ventura 707-455-8506
vicveevee@gmail.com

Vice President-Membership:

Lou Chapman 209-339-1175
lchapman@softcom.net

Vice-President-Activities & Info

Natalie Hill 407-951-7195
natnoles38@gmail.com

Secretary:

Jim Boyington 509-922-4377
pappyone@aol.com

Treasurer:

Gary Myers 757-868-7164
glmyers37@verizon.net

Historian:

John Bessette 703-569-1875
jcbessette@aol.com

Legal Counsel:

Joe Furukawa 310-217-0606
2furukawas@att.net

Chaplain:

Dick Hermans 903-852-5002
trikkidik@aol.com

Quartermaster:

Gordon Jacobson 920-782-0300

Board of Directors

Ch: Bill Wolford 802-660-9934
Frank Boggs 402-420-1126
Al Desin 916-359-0427
Dick Hermans 903-852-5002
Pug Hoover 541-479-9864
Walt Larimer 937-873-8672

Volume 16 Issue 3

March 2015

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Children of All ages!!!"

The stage is set and the registrations are coming in along with the checks. Yeah! Reminder: please be sure to circle your meal choices for the three times listed Circus Train, Columbia and Banquet. I get embarrassed calling you.

Naturally, there are always little glitches in the prep dept. after the December NL goes out. One was the hotel's decision to limit us to ten rooms before and after the reunion with the special rate. The Saturday rooms are filled now and when Lou and I get calls about this we have suggested some hotels we found on Orbitz. The closest to the Hyatt being La Quinta at the rate of \$109 (same rate as Hyatt). Phone nos. are 941-366-5128 or 800-230-4134. There are also some near airport. I suggest you go on line to see current rates and availability. The block at the Hyatt is still open with 50 rooms from May 17-20 Last weekend I journeyed back to Sarasota and had lunch with the owner of Big Top Tours and discussed our visit in May. When I mentioned we might need two buses, he said there could only be one bus since he and the clown go together for the tour. REGROUP TIME: Obviously, this is not ideal, so this tour will be first come, first ride. We have a 55 passenger bus and only 38 have signed on so far, SOOO if you really want a seat, get your forms in. There will be a wait list and if possible, for those who don't get onboard, we might still be able to transport you to the Circus train to eat with us. If possible and there are enough on the wait list, I will try to arrange another tour during the reunion. If you recall from Lou's last two issues, he was fostering a side trip to those interested in having a post reunion visit to Disney World. I am pleased to say that he has followed through and there are 13 takers: the Desins, Hoovers, Hansens, Veinos, Kocaks, Matsudaira, Selfridge, and Lou. (I hope he has a clipboard to keep track of his little band).

Well, this it until we meet again and the thaw is over in the north. Love to all, Natalie.

Views From Vic- The President's Corner

I truly hope all of you in the nasty weather zone are making it without serious incident. Out west we could use about 4 feet of your snow, ice and rain.

I'm anxiously awaiting the end of the 2nd fiscal quarter (31Mar) when the Chief of Staff/Commander AMC will make announcements concerning the disposition of display aircraft like 389 that rusts away at MacDill.

Meanwhile, besides playing golf, I've been doing a little reading that I might recommend to you. Roy Thompson put me on to the biographer Robert Coram and his biography Boyd whose persistence led to aircraft and strategies maximizing the military effectiveness in the 1st Gulf War. Another of Coram's biographies American Patriot defines duty, honor, country. Both books are great reading. My other recent reading is by Laura Hillenbrand, Unbroken, a great story of dedication and camaraderie. This one was the hardest of put down. These three books are wonderful examples of the imaginations of warriors trapped by war.

It looks like Chris and I will see a lot of you in a couple of months. It also looks like a favorable break in the weather is coming for many of you. Let's hope for an early spring. Adios for now, Vic.

Board Chairman's Corner

To all the TAC Tanker brothers and sisters; We are looking forward to seeing you in Sarasota, Florida for our annual reunion in May. I know Natalie has some great things lined up for us. I'm especially interested in the Circus since I worked on it when I was a 'young lad'.

We have had a very busy few months with my brother-in-law having a heart attack. He's been in the hospital since 2 February. Actually he's presently in a rehab nursing home. He's been my brother-in-law for 60 years and I have full legal responsibilities for all of his affairs. I have been like a brother to him for most of these years because he has many other medical problems.

Shirley and I remain in good health and stay quite busy with family, church and community programs that we are involved with. We had our town meeting which is a big deal up here in the Northeast. We helped one of our neighbors get elected to the City Council.

Shirley's Mom continues to live with us and is doing great at 96. A little slow, but so would we be at that stage of the game. Every day it seems like we hear more and more problems coming out of Washington. We were hoping things might change with the new congress, but so far I'm disappointed. Shirley and I are being ordained as ministers in April in Des Moines, Iowa through the Shalom Ministries Organization.

The annual TAC reunions are our favorite get-aways for the year. Seeing all of you and renewing friendships really charges us up and renews our energy.

Looks like this year we have an added pleasure as our oldest grandson is getting married in Jacksonville, FL on 15 May and we will be able to attend that on our way to Sarasota. Good health and God bless each of you. See you soon, Bill

Words from Queensland, New Zealand

One of our Board Members, Walt Larimer, has been vacationing in the Down Under for the past month and writes about a news clip from the Mar. 2, 2015 Otago Daily News "Today in History." It was about an established major world aviation record on that date and is probably not known by our TAC Tanker members. The quote goes: "1949-Captain James Gallagher (USAF) completes the first nonstop round the world flight. He completed the 37,742km flight in 94 hr 1 min in a B50 Superfort plane." Walt goes on to say that he wonders what kind of endurance record (ie total distance & total time in flight) could be set in a fully loaded KB-50 where you are also using aviation gas in the bomb bay to help set the record. "I know we used an augmented crew to try to set an endurance record for the KB-29 at RAF Sculthorpe by using aviation gas in the bomb bay tank, but I don't recall the actual distance covered or the hours in flight." FYI: I had the opportunity to fly as an observing passenger on a B-50 round trip flight between Boeing Seattle and Boeing Wichita also in 1949. I was a midshipman in the US Naval Academy at the time and was determining what it would be like to fly in the USAF.

Our Membership Vice President's Column

by Lou Chapman

One of advantages of being the V-P of Membership is having access to the names of current and former members, along with the Squadron(s) they were assigned to. After Nate passed away, Natalie sent me all the renewal slips going back to 1999 that Nate had notations on, showing when people joined, when they renewed and when they were dropped. A number of them have passed away over the years and I try to add their names to our websites Deceased page as time allows. Among the names I found was John J. Suggs, who as a Captain was a pilot with the 429th. But soon I found something very interesting about him. He was a veteran of WWII, Korea, Viet Nam and was a KB-50 Flight Commander at Langley. But, taking his story back even further, I also discovered that he was one of the original Tuskegee Airman. The following is what I found about him from his obituary and from the Tuskegee history.

John Jacob Suggs was born in Kentucky in October 1915 and attended Garfield High School and Indiana State Univ. in Terre Haute Indiana, earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in 1939. After graduation, he worked briefly at Terre Haute Malleable, pouring iron while taking Graduate School courses, and he also completed his Primary and Secondary Civilian Pilot Training. He then became a Junior Aviation instructor at the U.S. Navy Teacher Training Center in Chicago, IL.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he volunteered for the Army Air Corps. Despite having his private pilot's license, his application was not accepted because of his African-American heritage. This heritage did not prevent him, however, from being drafted. He utilized his knowledge of military regulations and declined to be sworn into the regular army, since he had already volunteered for the Air Corps. Subsequently, after the War Department organized a segregated Air Corps branch, he volunteered again, and this time was accepted for pilot training at Tuskegee, Alabama in 1943, and began an Air Force career of over 25 years.

He was assigned to Europe as a fighter pilot with the 302nd Fighter Squadron where he flew missions in the P-40 Warhawk, the P-47 Thunderbolt and the P-51 Mustang, completing 391 combat hours in 70 missions in the European Theatre. The squadrons under the 332nd Fighter Group comprised the largest fighter unit in the 15th Air Force. From Italian bases, they destroyed enemy rail traffic, hundreds of vehicles on air-to-ground strafing missions, and coast watching surveillance stations. Sixty-four pilots were killed in aerial combat while another 32 were either forced down or shot down and captured. He participated in major 12th and 15th USAAF campaigns, escorting Allied bombers deep into Europe and saw action over the Anzio beachhead and Monte Cassino Abbey. On D-Day 1944, he flew bomber cover near Toulon, France. During his 52nd mission over Zagreb, Yugoslavia, anti-aircraft fire extensively damaged the tail of his plane, nevertheless, he successfully completed his mission.

His WWII wartime service was followed by assignments to Lockbourne AFB OH and Johnson AB Japan. During the Korean War he flew numerous logistical support flights to Korea while stationed in Japan. From 1952-1957, he was a Professor of Air Science at Howard University. In this position, he directed the training and education activities of the Reserve Officers Training Program. His next assignment (1957-58) returned him to flight operations as a KB-50J Flight Commander with the 429th AREFS at Langley. While at Langley, he flew in "Operation Mobile Zebra" a major exercise testing the tactical ability to deploy fighter aircraft non-stop across the Pacific using aerial refueling from KB-50J tankers. For the next three years (1958-1961), he was at RAF Sculthorpe as Squadron Commander for the 47th Air Base Squadron. Upon his return, he became the Director of Personnel and Deputy Commander for Services at Glasgow AFB MT (1961-1966). He then spent a year (1966-1967) as a Commander of the 377th Service Squadron at Tan Son Nhut AB, Viet Nam and before retiring in 1968, he served his final year as Chief of Alert Management for the 99th Bomb Wing (SAC) at Westover AFB Mass.

Lt. Col. Suggs was a Command Pilot and served in three wars. It was noted that a great source of pride was never having lost a man under his command. He was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Korean Service Medal, Occupation Medal (Japan) WWII Victory Medal, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Force Commendation Medal and various unit and campaign ribbons. (continued on page 4)

Col. Suggs was a founder of Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. He was the first President of the original chapter (The East Coast Chapter) and the first President of the national organization. organization is dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of these pioneering Black military airmen. There are now more than 50 chapters nationwide. Col. Suggs was among the the Tuskegee Airman collectively awarded the Congressional Gold Medal presented by President George W. Bush in March of 2007.



I have spoken with one of his sons, a retired AF Lt. Col who told me his Dad was 98 year's old when he passed away in 2013 at the Knollwood military retirement residence in Washington DC. He had a long and varied career, and I hope you enjoy reading and knowing about one of our past members as much as I do.

I will be doing other stories on current and past members in upcoming issues.

New Life Members

Albert Conaway Montesano WA (431st)
 Frederick Cook Norwood Young Amer. MN (421st)

New 2 year Members

Jerry Tomas Punta Gorda FL (622nd)
 Lon W. Vaughn Dickson TN (622nd)

Renewed as Life Members

C. "Ron" Apel Boulder City NV (431-427)
 Billy Burwell Meridan MS (421st)
 John Carlisle, Savannah GA (427th)
 Fred Duck, Palacios TX (431427-429)
 Joseph Futral, Powder Springs GA (431st)
 Patrick Hagen Hot Springs AR (431st)
 Leo Mahoney Mattawan MI (421st)
 Harry McKenna, Indianapolis IN (Det 3 Lajes)
 H. Frank McMurtray Gaithersburg MD (421st)
 Joseph Reppond Bossier City LA (431st)
 Robert Wantland, Kensington CA (427-420)
 Kenneth Young, Claymont DE (622nd)

Renewing 2 year Members

Ronald Carford Apollo Bch, FL (427-420)
 F. Kent Carter Greensboro NC (427th)
 Roland Clark Derry NH (421st)
 Houston Coleman Madill OK (421-622-431)
 Malcolm Gale, Odessa FL (421st)
 Bernard Garrah, LaGrange OH (427th)
 Alvin Gray Redlands CA (427th)
 Larry Hinz Fairmont MN (431st)
 Jim Hunt Cumming, GA (421st)
 Gene Martin Bradenton, FL (622-427)
 James McNeil Lakeside CA (421st)
 Carl Nandras Mt. Pleasant SC (427th)
 Edward Pitkus Shalimar FL (421st)
 Charles Powell San Angelo TX (622-421)
 William Speight Hope Mills NC (427-429-4505)
 Joseph Talley, Hollywood MD (4505 CAMS)
 Bryce Terrell Melbourne, FL (427-4505)
 Gilberto Torres Austin TX (431st)
 Tom Wedel Crystal Lake, IL (429-421)
 William Wilks Clarkston WA (431-427)

Albert F. Conaway

Joined USAF in 1961 and attended Aerospace Ground Equipment School at Chanute AFB. Assigned to the 431st at Biggs from 1962-65. Active duty in the USAF until 1969 with assignments to Lockbourne AFB , Naha AB Okinawa and Grand Forks AFB with TDY's to Thailand. Joined the US Army and served from 1969-1981, first as a Photographer, then as a Power Generator specialist. Then as a Photo Instructor at Lowry AFB from 1976-1981. Several civilian jobs before working for the USDA Forest Service as a Field Interpreter, and Forest Protection Officer at Mt. St. Helens from 1998-2006. Now Retired and have been married for 32 years to Frances.

Lon W. Vaughn

Joined the AF in 1958, went through Aircraft Mechanic school at Sheppard AFB. Assigned to the 622nd AREFS 1959-1962 as an Asst./Crew Chief. Discharged and worked with my brother in family business. Went to work for South Central Bell (SCTN)/BellSouth/ATT. Worked for 20 years, then retired. Married for 35 years to wife Joyce.

Frederick S. Cook

Enlisted in 1958, went to Recip. Engine School and my first assignment was to Otis AFB. Next was assigned to the 421st AREFS in 1960, then moved to the 67th FMS/3rd FMS. Discharged in 1962 and went to work for General Motors for 7 years. Went to college for 4 years, then to Seminary School for 4 years. Became a Pastor in Norwood Young America for 12 years. Retired due to illness. I have been married to my wife Grace since 1958 with eight children, numerous "Grandkids and Great Grandkids".

Jerry E. Tomas

Enlisted in 1958 and went through Tech School at Sheppard AFB. Assigned to the 622nd at England AFB from 1958-1960 as a Refueling Operator. After being discharged, I worked in construction building petro-chem plants and oil pipelines in USA, South America and the Middle East. Certified Welding Inspector, NACE Nation. Assn. of Corrosion Control, Member of the American Welding Society and America Petroleum Institute. Fishing Guide and Past Asst. Tournament Director for FLW Outdoors (Saltwater). Married to Scottie since 1999. We travel, garden and fish. Life is good.

KB-50s & the Cuban Missile Crisis: More Detailed Stuff

After my item in the last "Tanker Tales" about us in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, I received some inputs from veterans of that affair and did a little more digging in the unit histories and my own memory and records. So below is a "retell" with a bit more detail.

The 4505th Wing History doesn't begin its discussion of the Crisis until its receipt of the initial directive, on 21 October 1962. But a lot had transpired before that date. The weeks before then had been full of news about Soviet aid to Cuba, and tensions were increasing. Unknown to us, the United States had been tracking Soviet involvement there ever since Fidel Castro had gained power in Cuba in early 1959 and aligned more and more with the Soviet Union. The Bay of Pigs failure in April 1961, and many other events, had impelled us to increase intelligence collection on Cuba, including occasional CIA U-2 reconnaissance missions over the island. Tensions dramatically increased in September and early October 1962, and it was decided that the U-2 missions would now be run by the Air Force's Strategic Air Command (SAC). Just two days later a SAC U-2 brought back positive confirmation that the Soviets were installing Medium Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs) on the island, directly threatening the US. The "fit hit the shan," as the colloquial statement goes, and President Kennedy decided to activate existing plans for a possible military response.

Military headquarters up and down the chain of command had been making and revising such plans at the "secret" level and above for some time. TAC, a major player, was actively coordinating details regarding AF tactical airpower's place in the scheme of things. We of course knew nothing about such planning, but we at the squadron level saw unusual activity. I know I did. Looking at my logbook, I see that on 8 October the 429th had sent some KB-50s (including Capt. Don Bill's crew, me included) to England AFB, Louisiana, refueling F-100s in the Hush Puppy refueling area en-route. On the 10th we returned to Langley, again refueling F-100s in Hush Puppy en-route. Most of these F-100s were not from the 401st TFW at England. Perhaps, now looking back, were these aircraft quietly going down to south/central Florida?

Eight days later Major Joe Hildebrand's crew (me included) led four KB-50s to England AFB, via a refueling of F-100s from the 474th TFW, Cannon AFB, New Mexico. Where were they headed? Florida, we now know. We returned to Langley on 20 October, refueling F-104s from the 479th TFW, George AFB, California. We rendezvoused over northwest Florida and topped them off abeam Tampa, overwater, and they headed south while we returned to Langley. We now know that the 479th sent an F-104 squadron down to Key West, Florida, where they later provided top cover for various USAF and USN air reconnaissance missions against Cuba. We thought at the time this was related. We were right.

four stateside KB-50 squadrons were alerted The tactical "fit hit the shan" the next day, 21 October. The four stateside KB-50 squadrons were alerted to deploy, the first increment being 15 aircraft from the 427th and 429th to McCoy AFB, Florida, and 15 more from the 431st and the 622nd to MacDill AFB, Florida. The KBs flew down, VFR and radio-silent, in small increments to prevent warning our adversaries. Later additions increased the number of tankers at each location to 20. Hildebrand's crew, including me again, was one of those now at McCoy. We all were in place in time to watch President Kennedy give his worldwide television address the night of the 22nd. We now knew the story.

We were immediately put on alert, beginning early the next day, as part of a possible air strike package against targets in Cuba, should Washington give the word. We were on alert at the aircraft, on the apron, from well before sunrise until well into the afternoon. Because we were to man air refueling rendezvous orbits (for the McCoy birds, over the Bahamas), in order to top off strike aircraft en-route to and from their targets, we had to launch well before the fighters; thus the timing. For the first few days we folks from Langley had to be housed at Orlando AFB, across town from McCoy, so we had to get up and get going even earlier than those on McCoy itself. Eventually we got housing on McCoy, lessening the burden slightly. Those first few days no one at McCoy went flying. We had to be ready to go to war at a moment's notice, and we were.

Kennedy and Khrushchev began an intense period of both confrontation and negotiation, as both realized the stakes were very high. Meanwhile the entire strike package remained grounded but ready to attack the island on a moment's notice. About 26 October an agreement was imminent, and tensions were reduced enough to allow TAC to direct that its crews could begin flying for training purposes, beginning each day after that day's alert posture was reduced. Thus began a series of training missions, among which were air refueling rendezvous and off-loadings. This allowed both tanker and receiver crews to maintain proficiency. This also allowed the MacDill KB-50s to begin flying "operational missions," providing pre-strike refueling and post-strike emergency caps for USAF RF-101 Voodoo low-level tactical reconnaissance photo sorties over the Soviet missile sites and other vital targets. These supplemented the U-2 high-altitude photography. Joe Boyer, one of our TTA members and then a 622nd copilot TDY at MacDill, contacted me and gave me his story. He had arrived MacDill late on the 21st, one of the first KB-50 crews to arrive. From his logbook he mentions three such operational missions. On 26 October his receiver was an RF-101; on 7 November a mission, receivers not stated; on the 11th an RF-101; and on the 15th an RF-101 and an F-104 (on a top cover mission). Joe specifically stated that his mission on the 26th took his KB over the Cuban mainland, in order to get fuel to an RF-101 needing it to get home. (continued on page 8)

Innovation lives at the intersection of art and science. In 1500's Leonardo da Vinci could envision the helicopter, but it wasn't possible to build a practical one until Igor Sikorsky had accumulated the ideas of many interim contributors and added a few of his own in 1940. Likewise, a practical computer had to wait for Twentieth Century materials and engineering to become a reality. The quest started in 1640 when a French mathematician Pascal created a mechanical calculator. In 1841, a woman, Ada Lovelace suggested Charles Babbage use punch cards (an idea she had lifted from Jacquard's loom) to program the analog computer Babbage had designed and had been working to perfect since 1821. Ada had published her contribution in *Scientific Memoirs* as part of the translation (Italian to French) she had done of a paper on Babbage's computer by the Italian Luigi Menabrea (later Italy's prime minister). This established Lady Lovelace as the first person to program a computer.

Intermediate progress with electro-mechanical switching functioned (Harvard's Mark 1), but was too slow to meet the number crunching demands of producing tables for firing artillery or calculating the inner workings of the atomic bomb. Too many variables that required thousands of repetitions, plugging in the variables one at a time. Faster electronic switches (vacuum tubes and later transistors) were the answer. On board programming that would switch routines and contained repetitive subroutines was developed by Grace Hopper (PhD math Yale 1934). She also contributed to the compiler that could translate code into machine language. One size fits all. Early electronic computers (1940- 45) could only be built by combining the huge efforts of academia, the military and industry, the pressures of WWII and nearly unlimited funds. Methods to link computers (networking) had to wait until 1968.

Things moved at a snail's pace after WWII, until Russia launched the Sputnik in October, 1957. That jolt energized President Eisenhower. By January, 1958 MIT President James Killian had been appointed the President's full-time science advisor. He and the Secretary of Defense had established the Advanced Research Project Agency and located it in the Pentagon. The title sometimes led off with a D for Defense (source of funds), sometimes not. Washington's strange way with words continues to this day.

Regardless of it's name, it's charter was to fund basic research at universities and corporate institutes. Like today's congress, many entities were more interested in protecting their "turf" than in promoting the national interest. Fortunately, an office within ARPA designated Command and Control Research was truly dedicated. It was to study how interactive (interconnected) computers could improve information flow. A separate group was to study psychological factors in military decision making.

Since 1951, J.C.R. Licklider who had been studying human/machine interaction had become the head of a psychology section based in the Electrical Engineering Department of MIT. He helped build MIT's Lincoln Laboratory which developed computer systems for Air Defense. Semi-Automatic Ground Environment (SAGE) which was to provide early warning, coordinate a response and direct Air Defense Command's fighters. In 1960 Licklider published a technical paper "Man-Computer Symbiosis. This led him to thinking about vast libraries of knowledge displayed on interconnected computers. He had envisioned the modern word wide web.

In 1962, Licklider took charge of both ARPA sections previously mentioned, combing both and renaming them ARPA's IPTO (Information Processing Techniques Office). By 1966 the torch had been passed to Bob Taylor. Bob shanghaied Larry Roberts to head the project. Additionally, Taylor put the squeeze on universities that were reluctant to have *their* computer hooked up to a time sharing internet, Taylor reminded them that the funds for *their* computers came from ARPA and could dry up. Problem solved.

These Chicago-style tactics were nothing compared to the jockeying for position that went on in the arena that brought the computer and the net to the home user. An incredible cast of characters, geeks, flower children, peaceniks, war-niks, druggies, hackers, pie-eyed optimist whose desire was to serve all mankind, entrepreneurs and venture capitalists, all with geniuses among them. It's the story of the search for a device that could satisfy the diverse needs of this large chunk of humanity and describes the human side of those who made it happen. Plenty of humor. plenty of pictures plus an intimate peek at the lives of the players. Superbly researched , well written, this veteran author delivers an enjoyable read of a subject that otherwise only true geeks could enjoy. A delightful yarn mostly factual well told.

Critical reviewers point out that this is not a *history*. *Historians* seek the absolute truth (some actually do). Others have an agenda, for example the history of the Enola Gay. *Writers* on the other hand, are granted artistic license and often do not let the truth interfere with a good story. Some like Walter Cronkite change the course of a war by failing to report the truth.

Alan Turing a principal in the development of Britain's ultra secret code breaking computer described the need for storing the program inside the computer and is widely considered to be the father of theoretical computer science. His activities at Bletchley Park are the subject of the movie "The Imitation Game" recently released.

The INNOVATORS by Walter Isaacson (Simon and Schuster) available at Amazon.

Bits and Obits

James Richardson

April 21, 1942 - January 9, 2015

James A Richardson (4505th CAMS), 72, passed away Friday, January 9, 2015 at the Heart of Georgia Hospice Inpatient Unit. He proudly served our country in the United States Air Force for 20 years, retiring as a SMSgt. He served in many stations across the nation throughout his career and was a Viet Nam veteran. He worked as a Program Manager in civil service at Robins Air Force Base for 22 years. Mr. Richardson enjoyed building Hot Rods in his spare time. Left to cherish the memories of Mr. Richardson are his loving and devoted wife of nearly 50 years, Dorothy Sharon Richardson of Kathleen; his children, ten grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Donald Neil Hiemstra (421st) passed peacefully on Thursday, January 22, 2015.



He was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and had resided in the Newport News area since 1971. He proudly retired from the US Air Force after 30 years of service at Langley Air Force Base as a Chief Master Sergeant in 1988. After losing his first wife of 46 years, Melva Pierce Hiemstra, he met and married his loving second wife of 9 years, Sarah Duke Hiemstra. During his years of military service, Don served as an aircraft mechanic, a flight engineer, and a training manager. During his maintenance and flying years, he traveled the world with his family, living in Texas, Maine, Japan, Hawaii, North Carolina, Philippines, Virginia, and Spain. During the four years his family was in the Philippines, he spent most of his time flying C-130s in Vietnam. Don earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal, Distinguished Presidential Unit Citation, and Vietnam Service Medal with 8 Bronze Service Stars, and countless others. Since his retirement, he has remained an active member of the TAC Tankers Association.



We were notified by Lewis "Curly" Wright of the loss of **Jose Martinez** (431st), his friend and a Life Member of TacTankers. Jose passed away March 29th, 2013 in San Antonio TX. He is survived by Norma, his wife of 50 years along with two sons. He was a Retired Master Sergeant who had been a Refueling Operator at Biggs AFB. Jose was also a member of AFA, DAV, Knights of Columbus and an Alumni of St. Mary's College San Antonio.



Louis DeMarco (421st), 81, died Wednesday, January 8, 2015.

Louis was born and raised in Hammonton, NJ and also served as the Mayor of Hammonton. He was a retired USAF officer who truly loved his country and his hometown. Louis had a love for life, politics and history. His motto was

“It’s not the amount of mistakes or the size of the mistake that counts. What counts is how well you recover. Press on.” Louis is survived by his wife Belva, children and grandchildren.

Conrad Richard Niemann (622nd), age 75, beloved husband of 41 years to the late Isabelle Mary Niemann, died on Friday, Aug. 9, 2013, at his Sumter, South Carolina residence. Mr. Niemann was a retired Captain and decorated veteran with the United States Air Force who served in the Vietnam War. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, and many other commendations throughout his 20 years of service.

TAC Tanker Tales
Volume 16, Issue 3
March 2015

Tactical Tankers Association, Ltd.
2091 Sussex Rd.
Winter Park FL 32792

Email: natnoles38@gmail.com
Phone: 407-951-7195

FIRST CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
WESTERVILLE OH
PERMIT #475

Historian: from page 5 Other such operational missions often took the KBs to within sight of the Cuban coast. Harry Scott, a 429th copilot whose crew deployed to MacDill on 4 November, says that they also refueled an RF-101 on an operational mission. It appears that the McCoy-based KBs had no part in refueling these operational recon or top cover missions, but I welcome any evidence otherwise. Also, I still have no evidence that any KBs refueled Navy or Marine RF-8s on operational missions.

These recollections fit the pattern, that Navy and/or Marine aircraft were refueled by KB-50s operating from MacDill. But there is no evidence yet that KBs refueled Navy RF-8s on operational missions. The RF-8s and the RF-101s were very active, providing low-altitude photos to add vital detailed imagery and supplement the U-2's high-level product. All three of these "spyplane" types were needed to provide the best interpreted photography for decision-makers all the way back to the White House.

As for other Navy and Marine receivers, Joe Boyer does mention a Navy A-4 Skyhawk as a receiver on 23 November. Don Spalt, another 622nd copilot, recalls refueling two A-4s on one sortie. Harry Scott also recalls refueling A-4s and F-8 Crusaders (unaware whether the F-8s were recon birds or fighter aircraft). Margulies, a 429th navigator, recalls refueling Navy A-4s on at least one occasion. All these sorties were intermingled with many KB refuelings of TAC F-100s, F-105s, and B-66s, for maintaining refueling all expertise.

Both operational missions and training sorties took place regularly through November. Then at the end of the month came word that the bulk of the tactical air forces could return home. The KBs began returning on 30 November, helping to refuel TAC fighters returning to their home stations en-route. So by 15 December all "players" in this vital crisis had rejoined their families at their home stations. The crisis appeared over.

But there were occasional alerts otherwise. On three known occasions small numbers of KB-50s were sent back to Florida, possibly to refuel RF-101s again on low-level missions over Cuba to check out other intelligence that the Soviet withdrawal was incomplete. These times were once in December to MacDill, once in February 1963 to Homestead, and once in June to MacDill. I have so far no evidence that the recon over-flights ever took place; in all three cases the KBs returned home without flying any "operational missions."

Thus ends the KB-50 involvement in the Cuban Missile Crisis, the one time in the entire Cold War period when the danger of nuclear war was the closest to becoming reality. Our role in the Crisis was vital, lending great credibility to America's ability invade Cuba, thus denying the Soviet move to threaten us at a very dangerous time.