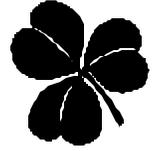




TAC Tanker Tales



Volume 3 Issue 3

March 2003

Latest Mini-Mini Circuit By Nate Hill

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The TAC Tanker Staff has officially started their 2003 travels. You all read in the September 2002 issue about our trip to Sonoma, CA to plan the 2003 reunion which will be 28 September to 4 October, plus the update in the December issue. Those plans are now finalized.

Registration packets will begin mailing about 1 April. (*Hang on to them as a lot of folks tossed theirs out last year and THEN decided they wanted to go to Hampton and had to request a second set. You never know when plans get changed and we want you to come.*)

Our most recent trip was completed last week and included several visits. The BIG NEWS is that we have upgraded to a diesel RV which is larger than the last one and provides more room for visitors, plus we have unlimited power to get around to see more folks.

We left Ohio on 20 February and were on the road for 25 days total. The route was through the southern states on our way to San Diego to visit with family and included a stop in Abilene, TX where we had supper with Don and Nancy Wadsworth. Great barbeque! Sure are lots of long stretches with nothing but tumbleweed out there! Minor mechanical problems in Van Horn, TX, but those were overcome with minimal effort.

Next meal stop was in Tucson, AZ, where we had supper with Chuck and Carol Monka. After visiting with the grand kids in San Diego, we met up with Tom and Joyce

Grey and friends in Ajo, AZ, and proceeded south of the border to Puerto Penasco, Mexico for a week. (*Lots of margaritas, tacos, and shopping for jewelry and pottery*).

Next, we came north and stayed in the Red Rock Country of Sedona, AZ, which is quite breathtaking. Then on to Albuquerque on our way to Colorado Springs, CO, where we met with the Embassy Suites staff to make certain that they still provide free FULL breakfast and cocktails daily. They assured us that nothing had changed at Embassy Suites so we contracted with them for mid-May 2004. (*We also made contact with the Visitors Bureau and stocked up with brochures to help us work up a fun reunion when the time comes*).

The following day we had breakfast at the Peterson AFB Club with Fred and Susie Fullington, who are helping with plans for the 2004 reunion.

As you know this get-together will be a complete reunion with a business meeting and memorial service. Hopefully, we will be able to have our memorial service in the Air Force Academy Chapel, which I suppose most of you, like me, have not visited. I am looking forward to that.

By the way, we suggest that you all drag out the December issue of Tanker Tales and review our plans for California in the fall. Seems that some of you missed the write-up on page 3.



Here are some of the places we will visit during "A Taste of Wine Country": Travis AFB luncheon and Museum; Jelly Belly Tour, plus Sonoma and Napa Valley tours. Above is the Viansa Winery where we will be having a gourmet picnic lunch overlooking the vineyards and valley.

The President's Corner By Dan Weber

For many of us living in the U.S., the month of March means coming out of the doldrums of winter and all the work that it entails shoveling snow. Those of you living in the northeast part of the country have had a hard winter. Some of us have been fortunate enough to enjoy mild winters, as do those of us who have retired to the Sun Belt or are snowbirds. Some of us move on to Hawaii or the Caribbean for a winter holiday. However, the seasons change and soon it will be planting time for those of us who are ranchers and farmers.

As I write this, Nate and Natalie are visiting the Southwest in their motor home which will include a trip into Mexico to have a few Coronas and perhaps taste a little Tequila. On their return they will be traveling through Colorado Springs to check out facilities for our 2004 reunion. We will read more about that elsewhere in future issues. But one reunion at a time —for sure you will be reading in this issue about the Fall 2003 reunion in Sonoma Valley as the details on that are almost complete.

Some time ago it was brought to the attention of the TAC Tankers Association that a memorial was being set up at Altus

AFB to commemorate those refueling operators in the USAF who have lost their lives while on active duty. It apparently started out as a memorial for SAC crews but we in TAC Tankers were invited to join in.

Our Historian, John Bessette, provided the Altus group with a list of 29 names of those who were lost in KB-29s and KB-50s. Because we came on late, the memorial had to be modified to accept our names and it is costing an additional \$685, which we have been asked to contribute. For those of you, especially the refueling operators in our organization, who would like to remember your fellow refuelers, you can send our Treasurer, Bo Ault, a check which will be put towards the \$685 donation. I ask that you pass the word on to others. Information on the memorial site at Altus can be found at the Boomers' web site at www.altusboom.com

The dedication will be held on 26 April and Titus Owen has volunteered to attend the dedication as the representative from TAC Tankers. We are pleased to have him as our rep. I have asked him to take some photos and we will run them in a future issue of the newsletter.

R. O.s Memorial

The staff would like to remind all of you of our request for contributions for the Refueling Operator's Memorial which will be dedicated on 26 April 03 at Altus AFB, OK. Titus Owen **will** attend the ceremony as the representative of TAC Tankers. There are 29 names of KB-50 and KB-29 crewmembers who lost their lives while on duty and we all know folks who are among those names. Please send your checks to me or Bo Ault marked for the Altus Memorial.

In the last issue (Dec 2002), Historian John Bessette penned a long detailed story about this memorial on page 4.

Nate

Planning News!

We have officially opened our Clothing Sales Store. Small as it is, many of you have been asking for squadron patches and other items. We have patches for all squadrons and the TAC Tankers except the 427th. Those can be ordered from Gil Switzer (912) 922-0701.

The patches are all appropriate size for a cap, shirt or jacket. You may order them directly from me and the cost is \$5.00 each which includes shipping. Soon we will have embroidered, long sleeve, denim dress shirts at a very reasonable price (similar to those sold at Hampton).

New Life Members

- Jim Alexander, Seneca SC-427
- Willard Anderson, Point TX-622
- Daniel Banks, Pahrump NV-431
- Bill Bowen, Bessemer AL-427(NewMember)
- Merrill Brunson, Novato CA-622
- Ted Buck, Opdyke IL-429
- Lucious (Cal) Butt, Hurlock MD-429
- Les Clark, New Carlisle OH-427, 429, 4505
- Phillip Collier, Aransas Pass TX-427
- Roy Costley, Albuquerque NM-427
- Bill Dekker, Fairfield CA-421
- James DuPont, Satsuma FL-431
- Don Durant, Livingston TX-431
- Jim Farha, Dixon CA-421
- Fred Fitzsimmons, Niceville FL-431
- Robert Frazier, Pinehurst NC-429
- Fred Fullington, Colorado Springs CO-427
- Jim Gamble, Rancho Palos Verdes CA-420
- George Ganjon, Millers MD-427
- Max Gillaspie, Hampton VA -421,429,420
- Don Hall, Gloucester VA -429
- John Hanna, Universal City TX-429, 431
- Charles Harrell, Albuquerque NM-622,421
- William Hays, Montreal MO-420
- Charles Huffstutler, Moss Point MS-427
- Robert Jones, Boise ID-420
- Herb Jube, Tucson AZ-421
- Donald Kachuck, Fresno CA-429, 421
- Ralph Kelley, Darien CT -421
- Kenneth Kruger, Reno NV-622
- Jack McCall, Newark DE-431, 421
- Edward Moore, Sun City AZ-429, 431
- Richard Peters, Las Vegas NV-431k, 421
- Gary Pflughough, Sherwood AR-421
- Millard Ratcliff, Proctorville OH-429,431 (2/
- A. Doyle Reid, Georgetown TX-421
- Louis Schindler, Canyon Lake TX-421
- Ronald F. Smith, Portsmouth NH-622, 431
- Al Snyder, Largo FL-421
- Earl Spohr, Woodlawn IL-4505
- Ronald Sprunger, Canon City CO-420
- Robert Stendrup, Ware MA-407 (SAC)
- Robert Sturdevant, Cynthiana KY-622, 421
- Jim Underhill, Newport News VA -427
- Woodley Waller, Halifax VA -4505
- Jack Ward, Mechanicsville VA-427
- Wayne Warner, Southern Pines NC-427
- Larry Wood, Las Vegas NV-429
- Gary Wood, San Bruno CA-429
- Patrick Wooley, Pineville LA-421.622
- Frederick Wynn, Bayse VA-429

Welcome New Members

- Gerald Brooks, Woodland Hills CA-427
- Hugh Baynes, Mobile AL-427, 4505
- Gerald Dawson, Palm Desert CA-427
- Henry (Jim) Rooney, Atascadero CA-421



Funeral for Harry Stafford of the 420th

At Arlington National Cemetery, just outside Washington, DC, the weather was cold and the sun shown through a thin gray overcast on Tuesday, 21 January 2003. The earthly remains of Lt Col Harry Stafford, late of the 420th AREFS and the US Air Force, were laid to rest at the place he had long ago designated for them to be.

I witnessed the ceremony and was especially impressed when I heard that, back in 1937, Harry had visited Arlington when he attended the Boy Scout Jamboree in Washington. Harry had been touched by the place, and often thereafter stated his wishes to be buried there, among our nation's heroes and his many friends and comrades. This past 21 January his family carried out that wish.

Harry had been born in Sandy Creek, New York, and joined the Army in 1940. His World War II career was spent in combat with an anti-aircraft battalion in Italy, France, and Germany. After the war he transferred to the new Air Force and served as an electronics officer until he retired in 1965.

He had married Dorothy O'Connell in 1943, and they had four sons, one of whom is a retired AF colonel. After his retirement, they moved to Florida where he taught at the college level. In 1987, they settled in Van Vleck, TX, where they both were very active in local affairs, especially Scouting.

Harry and Dorothy joined the 420th at England AFB, Louisiana, as it was formed in 1954, and he helped the squadron deploy to RAF Sculthorpe, England. He was a tower of strength at that eventful time. TTA member Maggie Iverson remembers the Staffords fondly and feels their mutual friendship strengthened even more in the years since. The daughter of TTA member Warren Poulson also well remembers the Staffords from the Sculthorpe day (when she was in the third grade).

All who have known the Staffords also know what a kind, gracious lady Dorothy is. She expressed to me her deep appreciation for the kindnesses shown to her by the 420th and the TTA associations. She remembers us well, and wished us all the very best.

The ceremony at Arlington concluded, I believe, when a ghostly KB-50 flew silently by, under the gray overcast, and dipped its wings...



Mac Dill Aircraft Report

We have talked to CMSgt Santamaria on maintenance progress on our bird. A contract has been arranged for complete exterior cleaning of the KB-50. After cleaning the airframe, it will be repainted and clear coated to stop the corrosion. The Air Force contract is with a civilian firm in the Tampa area and is for about \$25,000. Photo below from May 2001 reunion.



The Merry Men From Hampton Just Keep On Going

Carel Humme and his Merry Men of the Tidewater Region held a "Practice Meeting on 12 December 02.

This is the late after action report on the latest practice meeting. In attendance were Ruf Mewborn (who sponsored the meeting), George Rose (Official Photographer), Bo Ault (Treasurer—who gave an impromptu report, which indicated a stable financial status/unofficial audit complete), Don Smock, Harve Margulies, Gary Myers, Don Hiemstra, John Morello, Jim Underhill, Maylo MacDonald and Carel Humme (who handled the admin chores).

It was a luncheon meeting held in the Bray Dining Room of The King's Mill Resort here in Williamsburg. The food was superb and the camaraderie outstanding! We discussed some the old accident reports provided by John Bessette and just generally told war stories and updated our current ailments. We have decided to meet again in May 2003.

The Practice Meeting Attendees:

Back Row: Jim Underhill, Gary Myers, George Rose, Bo Ault, and Don Hiemstra.

Front Row: Ruf Mewborn, Carel Humme, John Morello, Harve Margulies, and Maylo MacDonald.



Letters Received From Our Newer Members

Editor's Note: Often when a new TAC Tanker application arrives, it is accompanied by a newsy letter about their busy lives during and after their military careers. So... it seemed like it might be interesting to share them.



Hugh L. Baynes of Mobile AL (December 2002)

Dear Nate: I really enjoyed your letter about the TAC Tanker Reunion. I know most of the people you mentioned...

I was in tankers a lot longer than most people know. I left the 427th and went to TAC as the KB-50 check pilot. That lasted about six months and the Reserve decided to convert 5 Groups from C-119s to C-124s. TAC had a few people that had seen a C-124, but we couldn't find anyone that had flown it. I was sent to Kansas City and took a check ride in a C-124 and became a KB-50/C-124 check pilot. Thank goodness I had eight years flying the C-124 or I would never have passed that check ride. So now I was flying the T-29, C-124 and KB-50s. That went on for about 5 years.

We started getting rumors that the KB-50 was going to phase out so I went to C-130B/E school and really enjoyed it. I made a few trips with the squadron that moved to Langley, but in a couple of weeks I got orders to go to C-123 school and then to Danang as the commander of the 311th Air Commando Squadron. I can't say I like the C-123, but flying it into the Special Forces out in the jungle was sporty and I really liked the Special Forces Troops.

I left Vietnam in June 1967 and went directly to C-141 school at Tinker AFB, OK. I spent the next six months in school, qualifying in the C-141 and finally got to fly it for about six months. June 1968 came around and I got promoted and assigned as commander of the 28th MAS at Hill AFB., but it was back to C-124s. The squadron was supposed to convert to C-141s in about a year, but AFLC raised the maintenance prices. They decided to disband the squadron due to the increased cost. I went to Okinawa for three years, then to Travis as the Wing LG for a year. I had another year to go and requested Scott AFB as my final assignment and was assigned to a job scheduling airplanes for authorized exercises for all the services. We furnished the airplanes and collected for them. A C-141 was \$2500/hr.

I retired from Scott and moved to Mobile. I had a house here that I had been renting for 25 years. I finally tore it down and completely rebuilt it. I am living in it now. My wife, Betty, died in October of 1990, so I didn't even work on the house for almost a year. The only family I have left are my daughter and son. . . .

Robert (Bob) G. Benamati of Moreno Valley, CA (February 2001)

I attended a 421st AREFS reunion in the early 1990's held in Orlando, FL. and found it very enjoyable. However, haven't attended any since.

My USAF career started in 1958 at Andrews AFB

in the 1001st Special Operations Sqd. On Speckled Trout (KC-135) as a Boom Operator. Late in 1959, I was transferred to the 421st AREFS at Yokota AB, Japan and re-trained as a Reel Operator. I spent two years in the unit before rotating back to the states. I spent the next eight years in Special Recon as a Special Equip. Operator on WC-135s/WB-47s/B-52Fs/WC-130Es (McClellan/Eielson/Castle/Clark/Thailand). I returned to Air Refueling as a KC-135A Boom Operator in 1970 to Wright-Patt AFB, OH, 921st AREFS and spent 5 years and also supported the SEA effort. Rotated to Beale AFB, CA in 1975 to the 924th AREFS and performed Boom Operator duties on KC-135Qs for 5 years. In 1980 was selected for the KC-10 tanker program as one of five Boom Operators to perform initial and follow on test and evaluation of this new tanker. This took me to Barksdale AFB, LA where I was a member of the initial cadre of the first KC-10 Sqd (32nd AREFS). I ended my career at Barksdale as a member of the 1st CEVG (KC-10). I retired as CMSgt in 1984.

Upon my retirement, I became employed by the McDonnell Aircraft Co., in Long Beach, CA, in the Test & Evaluation group taking part in aircraft certifications both military and commercial (1984-1996). In 1996, McConnell Douglas Aircraft merged with the Boeing Aircraft Co., of which I'm still very much employed in the Test & Evaluation Military group.

I guess having been an ole Reel Operator and Boom Operator Snuffy couldn't have been all bad.

Jack Boehm of Placida, FL (April 2001)

Retired Delta pilot like Jim Hunt, Gus Rinaldi, Ray Daeke, Jim Bomar, etc. Remember your call "Transmitting for the Tape" on final at Lajes.

Billy D. Bowen of Bessemer, AL (February 2003)

Was with the 427th @ Warner Robbins AFB 1957-1958. At Langley AFB 1958-1959. Previously with KB-29 AREFS at Turner ARB. Upon departing the Air Force, returned to school, after which I was employed as a Railroad Special Agent until retirement. Now living the good life, motorcycling and traveling in my motor home. Still married to Gloria, now 47 years. We have 3 sons, one of which was an addressor fighter pilot, now an airline pilot. The other two sons are in sales and education.

Charles (Chuck) G. Callier of Papillion, NE (February 2001)

I retired from the AF as CMSgt- 32 years 7 mos. Obtained a college degree. Retired from Civil Service and Social Security. I enjoy fishing, traveling, working out at the Fitness Center, football games, auto shows, and dining out with my family. Retirement is great!

F. Kent

Carter of Greensboro, NC (March 2002)

Flew with seven major commands, including Special Operations, Air Traffic Control Management, Inspection and Safety, and Air Operations. Since retirement in 1979 have been involved with aviation, including Airlines, Corporate, Forest Service and Fixed Base (charter, flight training). Hobbies are flying and boating. Married to Beth and two children.

Dick Clinton of Pensacola FL (July 2001)

Hi Nate, I have been remiss in communicating and paying my dues. My life has taken a big change here recently. I retired from Lockheed Martin Aircraft in Marietta, GA, where I have been Chief Pilot, Operations and Training since 1983 and my wife and I sold everything and bought a motor home and are starting to tour the US, Canada and Mexico. We plan on taking a couple of years and then will build on our property in Florida. We were very involved in taking care of a lot of personal items and selling the house and few things slipped through the crack. Sorry. (He enclosed his Life Membership so he wouldn't forget anymore!)

William (Rip) B. Collins of Warner Robins GA (Spring 2001)

Retired Sept '74. Went to school 4 years Electrical/Air Conditioning and opened a business in 1980: AB Bells Appliance, sold in 1990. Have been involved with volunteer and benevolence work. Just enjoying retirement.

Fred B. Ewing of Los Alamitos CA (December 2001)

After USAF joined Long Beach Police Dept. and retired now to enjoy Trout and deep sea fishing.

Thomas S. Fitzgerald of Deale MD (March 2002)

In 427th to 8/1960, Maryland ANG to 8/65: IBM retired after 28 years. Kodak retired after 12 years. Live on Chesapeake Bay, owner/manager of 200 acre forest in Berkeley Springs WV. Have 4 children, 5 grandchildren. Married to Dolores since 1958.

John D. Fox of Fayetteville NC (April 2002)

Retired from active duty in April 1990. After that I took three years to work on an old farm (wife's home) and to travel. I then went back to work for a local company as Safety and Human Resource Director. I retired again in June 2001. I'm now working full time for my lovely wife, Henrienne. It was great to hear from you guys. I'm sorry I won't be able to make it to Langley in May. Best wishes to all of you.

John H. Francis of San Antonio TX (February 2002)

In AF flew C-130A at Tachikawa AB, Japan, taught pilot training T-37 at Reese AFB, TX, Spector Gun ships (C-130A) in Ubon, Thailand. Test Pilot 13 models (C-130, C-141A, C-141B, UH1; Robins AFB, GA. Maintenance supervisor C-141, T-39 at Norton AFB, CA. Retired 1982 from Norton. Since retirement San Antonio, went to Graduate School, UTSA, Biology; Guam Graduate School, Univ. of Guam, Master in Marine Biology; Niceville, FL, worked at Civil Airport; Valparaiso Library as Chief Genealogy Librarian; H&R Block as tax preparer, back to San Antonio as H&R tax advisor; teach line dancing and genealogy research.

Sidney E. Genaux of Scio NY (Spring 2001)

Retired in Feb. 2001 and spent a year traveling in Australia.

Marion (Diz) R. Gillaspie of Colleyville TX (Spring 2002)

Boom operator 1954-1965 on KB-29, KB-50 and KC-97. Left USAF in 1966 and worked in Management for American Airlines for 33 years and retired in 1998. My twin brother Max was also a boom operator.

William (Bill) M. Goodwin of Denver NC (February 2002)

Nate, Sorry it has taken me so long to mail in my

membership application, but things have way of getting put off. I have been visiting the website very frequently searching for old pals or at least guys I knew. I saw that Charlie Monka (my first crew chief when I was A/3c) is working at Pima!

I retired from the AF in Nov. 1978 as MSgt. I had been promoted to Senior, but retired in lieu of the promotion. Following my service with the 427/420th AREFS, I served at Hill AFB (28th ATS (MATS), Elmendorf AFB (21st CMS (AAC), Tuy Hoa RVN Base flight (PACAF, McGuire AFB (438th OMS (MAC), Loring AFB (42nd OMS (SAC).

On retirement, I began working for a Volvo dealership in Portland, ME,. Which eventually led to a position in North Carolina, and my own business "Bill's Volvo Clinic" operated by my wife, eldest son, Bill, and myself for the last 10 years. I'm going to include some nostalgic photos you might want for the newsletter., one is S/Sgt. C. Monka sitting at the nose wheel of #451 making out the forms in Argentina NAS, Newfoundland 1959. I'm also listing names of former members that I haven't seen listed . Thanks for listening.

David B. Gruneisen of Bellville OH (February 2002)

Married to Diana, 3 grown daughters, 2 teenage sons. In the loan business since 1962 (savings & loan, banks, mortgage companies), owner with my wife (24 years loan business) of a 10 office mortgage Broker Company. Both Diana and I are involved with short-term missions work through our church and we travel to Ukraine and Dominican Republic with mission teams (youth camps, home repairs, etc.). We keep horses on our 60+ acre farm. Looking forward to meeting you and all the other 429th folks again.

Fred J Hagan of St. Pete FL (October 2001)

I have been a member of the 622nd AREFS reunion group for quite some time. After leaving the AF in 1960, I served 23 years with the City of St. Petersburg Fire Rescue. I am retired now after 10 years with the St. Pete Beach Fire Dept. as their Fire Marshall. During these years, I have maintained an active interest and kept in touch with 622 friends. .

James (Geech) P. Hamilton of Leesville SC (April 2002)

Jan 1963 to C-130B with Emory Morgan. Ranch Hand RVN Sept 64-65; T-37 IP/Ck Pilot til Jun '69. F-100 D/F RVN Jan 70-71 (Little 7th AF Saigon, F-111E RAF upper Heyford 71-74, Hq 9th AF (T-39 same time) Retired AF Oct. 81. Jan 82-present, Chief Pilot/ Director of Flight Ops, University of South Carolina. Will really retire soon. One son, James Jr. is a special agent with FBI—so proud of him! Only with "the Last of the Real Heavies" for six months, but the KB-50 and TAC Tankers had a tremendous influence on my life.

John C. Hoyle of Potomac MD (January 2002)

I served in the Federal Govt. since leaving the 431st in 1960, first with the Atomic Energy Commission, then with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I retired in 1999 as the Secretary of the Nuclear Reg. Comm. (Continued on Pg. 8)



Boeing KB-50J refuels two F-104C
©USAF Museum Photo Archives

‘I’ll Take 6000’

By “Walt” Larimer, USAF Retired, Navigator,
420th AREFS, 1957-59

This is a true story: however, the real names, Air Force serial numbers, and Tactical Fighter Wing designations have been replaced by factitious information. Follow-on stories may involve the same personnel. If this is the case, the factitious names applied herein will be carried over to the new story.

From the 420th Air Refueling Squadron crew member’s perspective, there’s an interesting difference between refueling fighters over the European continent and refueling similar type fighters over the oceans and en route to USAFE bases. The fighters assigned to wings stationed within England or the European continent usually arrived at the planned refueling location on time (or very nearly on time), whereas fighter wing deployments from bases in the USA to bases in the USAFE area were usually late — late by much as three or more hours. The new result was that in the winter, our KB-50J crews might have to wake up several hours before the cock crows, drive in complete darkness along very narrow winding British country roads to RAF Sculthorpe (our home plate), get briefed, do their preflight planning, preflight the aircraft, crank up the engines, taxi out to take off, and then be told our take-off time has been delayed by several hours because the en route fighters were delayed for some unknown reason. Worse yet, there were cases where we took off, flew to the rendezvous position (4-5 hours away) and were then told that the fighters would be late. This often led to situations where fatigue overtakes your enthusiasm, patience wears thin, and tempers begin to flare up. From the USA-based fighter pilot’s perspective, he is also very tired, been compelled to fly thus far (crammed into his F-100 cockpit) as many as 8 hours, and has probably completed two previous air refuelings before arriving at our KB-50J over the Azores Islands. These two fatigue conditions can create some interesting and sometime amusing events — events that at least one Tactical Fighter Wing Commander probably wished he could replay differently.

Such was the scenario for one of my more memorable refueling tales. I was flying with a mixed crew or a composite crew made up of qualified personnel from other crews. This was not an uncomfortable situation for me because I had flown with the Aircraft commander, the co-pilot, and the flight engineer before on other missions. We worked together as efficiently as if we were a regular crew. After I talked the lead fighter through about 20 minutes of rendezvous instructions, the first F-100 flight made visual contact with and three of them came into position to refuel. Captain Roger Switlick, our KB-50J aircraft commander, stated calmly: “You may commence refueling and take on 5000 pounds.” Roger was an easy going type — a big fellow with a marvelous humor. He was frequently the brunt of friendly jokes and he even laughed at the mischievous pranks pulled on him by other officers in the 420th AREFS. I don’t remember Roger ever “blowing his cool” with any other person — an admirable quality.

Immediately after authorizing the first F-100 to commence refueling, the F-100 pilot said sternly and gruffly, “I’ll take 6000 pounds.” We could tell by the sound of his voice and tone that this guy was really tired. Roger replied: “Sorry sir, we’ve been briefed to give each fighter 5000 pounds so each fighter gets enough.” Then the discussion got nasty:

F-100 pilot: “I’ll take 6000 pounds — enough to get to

my alternate.”

Roger: “Sorry, sir. You can only have 5000.”

F-100 pilot: “Do YOU know WHO this is?”

Roger: “No sir.”

F-100 pilot: “Well” (Then a long pause. We could feel the anger factor in this guy beginning to build) “I’m Colonel O’Malley, Wing Commander of the 323rd Fighter Wing, and I want 6000 pounds!”

At this moment, I felt sure that at least one of our equally fatigued KB-50J crewmembers in one of the three KB-50Js engaged in this refueling mission would say something smart aleck like: “Now how about THAT!” However, silence reigned heavily all around us.

Roger, very patiently, calmly, and with determination then said: “Sir, you can only have 5000 pounds.”

By this time, O’Malley’s probe had engaged the drogue and he was receiving instructions from our refueling operator.

Col. O’Malley: “Aircraft Commander, what’s your name, rank, and serial number? I’m going to report this!”

Roger, still very calm, patient, but with a determined voice replied: “Captain Roger Switlick, AO30875609, sir.”

Again, I expected someone else in our refueling orbit to say something like “So THERE too!” but, again to my surprise, there was silence. The only words spoken were that of our refueling operator, who informed Col. O’Malley he had now received 5000 pounds, was shutting off the flow of JP-4, and to disengage from the drogue.

O’Malley disengaged without a word being said, flew off, and several more F-100s soon came into position for refueling. You can be sure every F-100 pilot in that fighter wing deployment heard the words of their Wing Commander. Even our KB-50J ground spare aircraft crew at Lajes Air Base heard this conversation. From here on, there was far less UHF communications than normal and an unusual absence of drogue engagement problems (normally encountered by less experienced, USA-based, F-100 pilots). I can only reconcile the behavior of these equally fatigued F-100 pilots as being totally embarrassed by the conduct of their Wing Commander and wanted to compensate by executing their air refueling operations with great style and unanticipated expertise. You can imagine the talk around the O’Club bar at their destination that same evening. The remainder of the refueling mission went extremely well for all three of our KB-50Js. We flew back to Sculthorpe tired but very proud of our conduct.

O’Malley’s report (if ever written and filed) was never received at RAF Sculthorpe. I know all of our 420th AREFS crewmembers participating in that mission would be willing to defend Roger in front of our 47th Bomb Wing Commander had this report ever been received. Every 420th crewmember on that mission as well as those back at Sculthorpe were extremely proud of Roger, the easy going but competent aircraft commander, who **never** blew his cool. Wonder where Roger and O’Malley are today? Roger probably continued to fly as a very dependable and safe “line pilot” for the rest of his Air Force career, avoiding “desk” jobs in every way possible, and eventually retired as a Major. One wonders if O’Malley was ever promoted to Brigadier General? Sometimes this kind of officer continually gets ahead in a military career without getting caught along the way.

Bits and Obits

George F. Gebhardt, sent a note that his beloved wife, Beverly Jean, passed away on 27 November 02 after battling cancer for ten years. "A real Trooper," Bev was at home with family under Hospice care. George is at 4901 Daffodil #264, McAllen TX 78501.

Gil Switzer has passed the word that Harry H. Rhyner, MSGT, USAF RET passed away on 21 December 02. He was a member of the 420 and 429th and served 20 years. He and Gill served together at Langley as RO's and at Sheppard AFB as IFR instructors. He is survived by his wife Audrey of 217 W. 11th Ave, Oshkosh WI 54901.

Jake Jacobson, one of our dedicated members lost his wife Frances of 44 years to lung cancer on 16 January 03. Jake was a RO in the 427th. There was a memorial on the 19th with family and friends in attendance. Jake is at N4409 Kettle View Rd, Plymouth WI 53073. Their family included two sons, Gordon and Craig and a daughter, Andrea and a granddaughter, Ann Marie .

Another sad note to relay is from Warren Polson, who reported the passing of Lt. Col Harry Stafford, 420th. While not a member of TTAL, many may have known him. He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery on 21 January 03. He was survived by his wife, Dorothy, PO Box 714, Van Vleck TX 77482.

Two memos from Marguerite "Maggi" Iverson regarding the passing of friends in the organization. First mentioned was the passing of Tom Lendrum of the 420th. He was on the Non-active TAC Tanker Roster. Next was the news that Lorraine Polson, wife of Warren Polson died on 24 February 03, in Navarre, FL. Lorraine had been in an Alzheimer's Care Facility for over a year. Husband Warren was recuperating from Chemo and just out of the hospital. Their address is 8013 Newport Street, Navarre, FL 32566.

Paulette Andrews, the daughter of James P. Foley, a WWII Flight Engineer wrote us that he had received his final POCS on 7 January 03. We last saw him in Tampa and learned he was enjoying volunteer work. His widow

One of Our Own Heros

Last year we received a clipping from the Sculthorpe (England) Weekly News Summary dated May 3, 1957. It seems that due to Harry Rhyner's passing recently (see obit column) this would be an appropriate time to share the story.

UNTANGLES JET: Eleven crew members' lives and two aircraft were saved on 22 April by a cool headed, quick thinking sergeant of the 420th Air Refueling Squadron, during a routine refueling mission over France.

While the 420th's KB-50 tanker was in the process of dry run refueling practice, its drogue became hooked on the extrusions of the F-100 piloted by 1st Lt William E. Enyart, 492nd FBS, 48th FBW, which the tanker was connecting with, causing the receiver plane to become entangled with the hose. The young student operator, A/3c Earl R. Bouchillon instinctively called for his instructor, T/Sgt Harry H. Rhyner to take over the delicate and dangerous situation.

Refueling by the probe and drogue method being a new technique, there were no written instructions available. Sgt. Rhyner had only his imagination to guide him to success or disaster during those moments.

With steady calmness, Sgt Rhyner carefully directed the jet pilot, Lt Enyart, over the radio relay system to "move forward . . . Back . . . To the left a little. . . Easy to the right. . . Now climb slowly" —until, at last the jet was free from the hose and finally from the drogue. By Lt Enyart's being cool and level headed, maintaining his speed and position, he was relieved of a predicament that most probably would have plunged both planes and both crews to destruction. The jet and the tanker, piloted by Capt. Bayard W. Hyde, returned safely to their bases.

Shortly after this incident, T/Sgt Rhyner was awarded a Commendation Ribbon for heroic action during this flight by General Ernest Moore, commander of the Third Air Force.



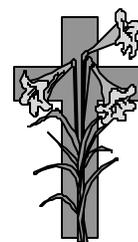
T/Sgt Harry H. Rhyner, 420th Air Refueling Sqd. Shows how he operated the hose reel control in the KB-50 tanker.

is Katherine Foley, 7887 134th St. No., Seminole FL 33776 for those of you who would like to send condolences.

Roy Marler sent a note to report the passing of one of our "Old Time" Boom/Reel Operators, Thomas D. Mack (line 665 in 2002 Directory) on 12 March 03 in Newport News, VA. Tom and Roy served together as gunners aboard the SB29s at Okinawa beginning the latter part of 1951. "We were both reassigned to the 345th Bomb Group (B-26) at Langley in 1953 then to the 429th as Boom Operators in 1955. Tom then was assigned as an instructor in Inflight Refueling Systems with the Mobile Training Detachments. In that position, he remained in close contact with his old friends in the Tanker squadrons.

Tom suffered a stroke in 1993 and was confined to a bed or wheel chair after that time. After retiring from the Air Force about 1970, he and his wife Theo made their home in Hampton with their two sons living nearby. Theo will continue to live at their home."

The Marlers visited with Tom during the Hampton Reunion and he enjoyed hearing about the Tanker guys and their days together in the gas haulers.



TAC Tanker Tales

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Jack B. Hilliard of Roseland VA (June 2001)

Assigned to 421st as a co-pilot in 1955 and flew KB-29s and KB-50s. Left active duty in 1958 and went to college until 1962 getting BS & MS degrees. Went to Washington DC in 1962 as historian/museum curator and was Chief Curator of the Marine Corps for 15 years before going to Wright Patt in 1981 as Chief Curator of the USAF Museum. I also stayed in the USAF Reserve at Andrews AFB and flew C-119s, C-124s, and C-130Bs and Es. (Bob Archer showed up as our TAC advisor during the early C-130 days). Then to the Pentagon for 3 years in the War Plans shop. In 1983, I retired from the Reserve and in 1993, I retired from the Civil Service.

I took a two year contract as Senior Curator with the Museum of Flight in Seattle while building our present home in Wintergreen, VA. We retired here in August 1995 and I now do a bit of consulting, hike a lot and ski as often as possible. I am still married to Marian who was with me in Japan. Our oldest daughter who was born at the Johnson AB hospital in 1956 lives in nearby Charlottesville. We have two other children, both daughters, one in Charlottesville as well and our youngest lives and works in Tucson, AZ.

Lawrence (Larry) R. Lathrop of Cumberland ME (April 2001)

My wife Donna and I have been married for 39 years (40 in Sept 01); we went to KB-50s at Biggs directly from pilot training. We were transferred to KB-50s at Yokota AB, Japan until the squadron disbanded in 1963. We then went to C-130s at Tachikawa AB, Japan until I left the service in August 1967. We returned to our home state of Maine where I became a high school principal until I retired in 1991. I now drive a school bus full time in the same school system. We have one son and a seven month old grandson.

Gary T. Long of Maryville TN (March 2001)

Lived in Maryville, TN for the past 36 years. Married, 3 children, 4 grandchildren. Employed at Alcoa, Inc. since 1965. Active in Masonic organizations.

Roland (Ron) J. Morin of Oldsmar FL (January 2001)

Retired as CMSgt in June 1982 with 30 years of service. I was assigned to the 429th at Langley 1958-60 as Crew Chief on aircraft 117. Family Info: Married a Greek in 1966 with whom I have two sons. Divorced in 1986 and married a German in 1989 with whom I have happily settled with in the Tampa Bay area of Florida.

Malcolm L. O'Neale of Casselberry FL (Winter 2000)

After Yokota, I spent four years at Vandenberg in 1st Strategic Aerospace Div. As Missile Operations Director for the Titan I and Titan II. Retired to Florida in December '64. Had engineering position in the Apollo, Skylab and Space Shuttle until July '82. Am now fully retired and play tennis regularly 3 times a week and occasional golf. Spend summers at my condo in Blowing Rock, NC. My wife Carole died 8/29/94. We were married 53 years and I will always miss her.

James C. Potter of Bowdoinham ME (October 2001)

I retired from USAF on 6-30-68. I worked 25 years for the Maine Dept. of Labor and retired as an Administrative Law Judge. My wife and I subsequently spent 9 months in Japan and visited Yokota several times.

Henry J. (Jim) Rooney of Atascadero CA (December 2002)

Flew Crop Dusters for many years. Also, was shop foreman for one of the biggest aerial applicators in the US. Flew pipeline, bought aircraft salvage. Was in antique furniture business (bought, sold and restored.) In addition, worked for the Air Force AFLC for several years as a provisioner.

Have traveled 3 times to Europe, Have a 26' Fifth Wheel trailer and have RVed into Mexico. One trip to Mexico was the Baja from Tijuana to Cabo San Lucas and back. Our last Mexican trip was to the Copper Canyon. Also we have traveled to Alaska in the RV.. My wife and I share a passion for traveling. *(Editor's Note: Nate and I can relate to that!)*

