



“Cleared Hot”

by Lon Holtz

This virus thing is crazy. I don’t think any of us would have predicted what is happening to this world and our country. At times it seems to be under control or dying, and then flares up across the whole country. So, the prescribed precautions of masking and social distancing have to be imposed again. Our medicos are working hard to find a lasting cure, but, until then, we will have to just put up with these inconveniences to keep us all safe. With all this in mind, your event planning committee is taking a long, hard look at what our planned April 2021 reunion looks like to ensure a safe event. We want full access to the features and attractions without jeopardizing the welfare and health of our members. It just doesn’t make sense to get together if travel either by car or air is still restricted. Hotels have restricted access to facilities, social distancing is still with us, and featured events or attractions in the local area are closed.

All of this is the major concern of our reunion planning committee. Therefore, Judy is already working with the hotel looking at alternative dates for the reunion in either the fall of 2021 or the spring of 2022. And, if the virus continues through these time periods, we probably will have to cancel this reunion altogether. The decision to change, or delete, the present reunion date should happen

(Continued on p. 3)

Mark your calendar for April 2021

for now at least. As Lon says in “Cleared Hot” column, things are “crazy” with this virus thing, but I was taught early on in my career that it was better to have a plan than to have no plan at all. So onward we plan until we know something better. I must admit, however, sometimes things fall out of the sky right at your feet. Let’s hope Providence will bless us with a vaccine or miracle cure for Covid-19 to ease our way back soon to some semblance of normalcy.

So for now, let’s talk about other things. In addition to emails received and replied to, I call your attention to two articles in professional journals (see p. 3) that serve to inform readers about the A-37, one written under the byline of our very own Lon Holtz.

“From the Archives” continues a review of A-37 operations during the closing of the three numbered squadrons in 1970 and activation of the 8th Special Operations Squadron. An article about the future dedication of the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum and its special relationship to the A-37 community is on page 5.

If you are in the market for an A-37-related memorabilia



item, the insert shows those items available along with access to an order form. Thanks to those who have ordered the new license plate holders. We still have a number that we would like to bless you with. In other words, we want to sell our inventory.

...Jerry Sailors

“The A-37 Association is for those who flew, worked on/with, were saved by, or have high admiration for the great little fighter.”

Inside:	Page
Member Update/Emails	2
War Story	3
From the Archives	4
JB POW-MIA Museum	5
Memorabilia	Insert



...the smallest fighter... the fastest gun

A-37 Association, Inc. Board of Directors

President Lon Holtz
 Vice President Eric Jackson
 Secretary/Treasurer Jerry Sailors
 Lou Gonzalez
 Vic Grahn
 Hank Hill
 John Lamb
 Tom McCallum
 John Serlet

Membership: Jerry Sailors 334-328-7575
 dragonfly369@charter.net

Newsletter: Jerry Sailors 334-328-7575
 dragonfly369@charter.net
 Barbara Holtz 702-804-4232
 amscom@embarqmail.com

Website: Tom McCallum
 a37dragonfly@comcast.net

The Dragonfly is a publication of the A-37 Association published quarterly (except when within two months of a reunion, then monthly), as a service to the membership, new contacts, and other interested parties.

The views expressed herein are those of the editors/authors and do not necessarily reflect any official position of the A-37 Association. The editors reserve the right to print any article/letter/email/photo deemed to be of interest to members.

We also reserve the right to edit any article to fit space available and to reject any material considered inappropriate. We invite and encourage members/contacts to submit articles/letters/emails/photos.

Member Update

New member:

Jerry Enochs - Greenville, SC, a crew chief on the A-37 in Vietnam, 1968-69. (See emails.)

Emails:

(From Frank Leuck, 4/19/2020)

Jerry, I did my fighter quals in the A-37 prior to my FAC training at Hurlburt in 1970 and was in Vietnam all of 1971. I wish I could have logged all my FAC sorties dealing with the A-37 squadron pilots. I did over 200 missions in Cambodia working as a Tilley FAC for three months and then as a Pretzel FAC working the rest of the year with the Studies and Observation Group (MACVSOG).

Your commander (Gordon Weed) at the time was a close friend of mine and I was at his funeral in Utah. I am a member of the FAC Association and would like to join your Association if you'll allow it. If so, reply to this email with your lifetime membership enrollment form and cost. I'd also like to attend the Association Reunion in April 2021. Our FAC Association reunion this year is in Colorado Springs in September 2020. I can't think of anything fonder to my heart than being at these two reunions. Frank Leuck ~ Pretzel-01

(From Mark Whitaker to Lon Holtz, 4/24/2020)

I have a newspaper article from that last A-37A mission showing my dad (Darryl) inspecting his ordnance in a large notebook full of photos/details of his Air Force career. We lived in Vegas from 66-69 on Renada Circle while dad was at Nellis with F4 and F111 squadrons as well as in Vietnam with Combat Dragon. He loved the A-37 almost as much as the F-86 which was his favorite. What a great little airplane-thanks so much for all of your efforts over the years to keep the A-37 and its history in our minds. Please stay safe with all of this viral madness. *(See photo, p. 3)*

(From Jerry Enochs, 6/26/2020)

My name is Jerry Enochs and I was a Crew Chief who worked on the A-37s. I am delighted to find your website. Brought back fond memories. I served from July 1968 to July 1969. Please send me information on membership, the newsletter and upcoming reunions. I look forward to hearing from you.

(Reply from Jerry Sailors, 6/26/2020)

Thank you for contacting us, Jerry. The membership is open to anyone who has interest in the A-37's history and the A-37 Association's effort to preserve the aircraft's legacy. Newsletters for the last five years are on the website, but we send them out via email distribution when they are published. I will add you to the email list. The next reunion is planned for April 18-22, 2021, in Fort Walton Beach, Florida (depending, of course, on the state of our nation's battle with the coronavirus). More information regarding the schedule and registration will be disseminated later this year.

Attached is a membership form.

(From Peggy Weber to Lon Holtz, 6/30/2020 on behalf of Jerry Enochs)

(Jerry) is planning to attend the upcoming reunion in Fort Walton Beach. Please send me all the information related to this event. I sincerely appreciate your help. Kindest regards.

(Continued on p. 5)

...the smallest fighter... the fastest gun

“Cleared Hot”

(Continued from p. 1)

in late fall of this year, or early next year, and passed onto the membership as quickly as possible.

With this in mind, we recommend you not make any binding legal or financial arrangements with airlines, car rental, hotels, etc.

I may sound like an old grandma making sure her young’uns are absolutely safe in venturing out in this big wide world, but your health and welfare are more important. It may also sound like I’m teaching you to suck eggs when in fact I want to see you at more than just this one reunion.

In closing, please be extra safe out there and take care of your loved ones...Lon

Laff Corner

Ad on the Senior Citizen Home bulletin board;

I can usually remember Monday through Thursday. If you can remember Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, let’s put our two heads together.



War Story

Below are links to two articles that have been published in professional journals about the A-37.

In the *Friends Journal*, a publication of the Air Force Museum Foundation, dated Fall 2014, is an article by Steve Brandt about one of his memorable missions in Cambodia in June 1970. To read the article, go to the A-37 Association’s website at www.a-37.org and click on “Contributed Stories.”

(Thanks to John Serlet for calling our attention to the article ... and a callout to Steve Brandt for not making this known to us before now.)

In the *Air Commando Journal* (Vol 9, Issue 1, June 2020)(www.aircommando.org), Lon Holtz writes about the A-37 Association’s April 2019 reunion in Wichita, KS. Focus of the article is on the motivation behind selecting Wichita as the reunion site (home of Cessna) and the A-37 Association’s desire to thank the dedicated folks at Cessna who worked so hard to bring the Dragonfly into being.

The newspaper clipping below provided by Darrell Whitaker’s son, Mark, documented the final combat mission of the A-37A in Vietnam.

Bien Hoa Closes Book on Small Piece of History

BIEN HOA — Another era in aviation history drew to a close recently when two of the last remaining A-37 “A” model aircraft returned to the 604th Special Operations Squadron following their final combat sorties from this base.

Final mission of the two aircraft was a successful strike against suspected enemy bunkers and fortifications in the Parrot’s Beak area of Cambodia, about 33 miles west of Saigon. The two A models were flown by Maj. Darrell D. Whitaker and Capt. John M. Cremin Jr.

The A models will be shipped back to the United States, where they will be inspected and repaired as necessary, and re-assigned to Air National Guard units. They are to be replaced with the newer, faster and slightly more maneuverable A-37 B models.

The A model A-37 was primarily a jet trainer used in the Air Force’s 53-week pilot training program before being converted to a fighter-bomber. The B model was built as an attack fighter aircraft.

Arriving in the Republic of Vietnam under the code name Combat Dragon in July 1967, the A model and its pilots were tested under combat conditions — a trial by fire.

Affectionately called Lizards and Bluebirds by their pilots, the first 26 A-37s sported two different paint jobs. Both had the standard grayish-white underbellies, but the Lizard had a mottled green upper section while the Bluebirds were, of course, blue.

The idea was to see which color provided the best camouflage for the small aircraft. But at the end of the testing period in December of 1967, only 12 enemy hits had been scored on the planes, and all were singles — one hit to one aircraft. The paint jobs were made the standard

Southeast Asia camouflage green. Of course, the hits or, lack of them, could very well be due to the tremendous flight characteristics of the bird.

“I’ve never talked to an A-37 pilot who didn’t love the aircraft,” recalled Major Whitaker. “I flew F-4 Phantoms before I came over here with Combat Dragon. After I rotated, I flew F-111s out of Nellis AFB, Nev. I volunteered to come back here and fly the A-37.” Major Whitaker is the only original Combat Dragon A-37 pilot still in SEA.

Built by Cessna, the T-37 trainer was selected for conversion to a fighter-bomber because of its inherent flight characteristics. The ease with which it can be flown, its maneuverability and ability to fly at relatively low speeds are all features retained in both fighter models.

“The A model was a one-of-a-kind sort of thing,” explained Major Whitaker. “When they decided to convert it to a fighter-bomber, they pulled these 26 T-37s out of mothballs, befed the wings up so they could carry ordnance and put in more powerful engines.”

The A-37 engine is basically a T-38 Talon engine without the afterburner. Total thrust was in-

creased to 2,750 pounds from the trainer’s 2,050 pounds. Modifications in the B model raised the thrust again to 5,700 pounds.

“Flying the A-37 is like driving a small and responsive sports car,” Major Whitaker said. “The A model is really fat on power. It has a very short takeoff distance, tight turning radius and can fly very tight patterns to stay close to troops on the ground. The B model is just more so,” stated Major Whitaker, who has flown both models.

While the A model was a converted trainer, the B model is specifically a fighter and designed to have the pilot in the left seat. All controls are accessible to him there. In the A model some were in the right-hand position. “The B model also has a greatly improved armament control panel,” continued Major Whitaker.

“The A model was a remarkable aircraft,” Major Whitaker said proudly. “It did more than anyone had suspected, and now it’s outlived its usefulness. It proved that a small, rather un-complicated and inexpensive aircraft could provide excellent close air support for troops engaged in guerilla warfare,” Major Whitaker concluded.



U.S. Air Force Photo by SSgt. Bert Elliott

Major Whitaker

Pilot Inspects Ordnance Closely Before Takeoff



...the smallest fighter... the fastest gun

From the Archives

(Adapted from the 3rd TFW History, Jul - Sep 1970, covering the 8th AS, 90th AS, and 604th SOS.)

(During the organizational realignment described in the Jul - Sep 1970 history, the Cambodian operations continued. Following is a letter dated 25 August 1970 from the 8th AS commander, Lt Col Whitney N. Tomlin, to the 3rd TFW/DO, summarizing the squadron's assessment of the Cambodian operation... Jerry Sailors)

1. Ref DO letter, 12 Aug 70 and CV letter, 12 Aug 70.
2. The Cambodian operation, as it has affected the 8th Attack Squadron, was not in itself a problem. The increased activity was a high morale factor for the aircrews, maintenance and ordnance personnel in two ways: the war was finally being carried to the enemy and the A-37B was being employed in a situation that best employed its capabilities under varying conditions, such as employing 170-190 nautical mile combat range, effectively acquiring targets and delivering under adverse weather conditions, and most importantly - fast turn around and sustained high sortie rates. The problems, small as they were and as they applied to the squadron, will be addressed below:



a. Intelligence:

(1) The general situation briefing prior to each combat mission often appeared vague and inaccurate. The radio and newspapers presented a much more consolidated picture, inflated as it may have been. Aircrews supporting the ground forces have a definite interest in the ground situation so as to be aware of the importance of accurate ordnance delivery and possible bailout areas leading to escape and evasion if necessary.

(2) Still existing is a problem of keeping the alert aircrews current on classified rendezvous and frequency information. The KY-28 used in some aircraft was not available to the A-37B. Each unit is improvising and using a highly compromising system of distributing this information.

b. Operations:

(1) Turnaround times after the first days of operation were drastically reduced. At the height of activity we were only approaching the A-37B's turnaround capability. Records show an occasional 20-minute turn and several instances where the same crews were on the same target within a total elapsed time of one hour. This type of

operation begins to challenge not only the aircrews, but all the ground support personnel and fulfills the design characteristics of the aircraft.

(2) The four-ship flights flown pointed out the lack of experience in four-ship tactics. Some flight commanders used the tactic of elements delivering ordnance individually, thus negating any advantage of a four-ship flight.

(3) Cruise Control:

(a) Holding: The old adage of single-engine holding at high altitudes with ordnance soon disproved itself. Fuel consumption for single-engine holding with ordnance is nearly identical at 20M as at 5M. The greatest fuel saving maneuver - a long-range descent - could not be utilized due to general weather conditions and the problem of locating the FAC, thereby using excessive fuel at low conditions. The greatest fuel saving technique was calling the FAC early and controlling your TOIP by reducing airspeed enroute.

(b) Cruise: Cruising to and from target areas was greatly improved during this time. Lt Col King (with the Cat II test data) computed and proved that tech order climbs and cruise would not only save fuel, but reduce flying time. Climb speeds were raised to 230 knots closely approximating the tech order climb schedule. Cruising with ordnance was raised in some cases as high as 30 knots, actually saving fuel with the increased airspeed. Combat radius was proved to be about 200 NM with 10 minutes of combat time for an LI load.

(c) Command and Control: Positive control of fragg missions was on a precarious edge of near chaos until a somewhat centralized controller (Head Beagle) was set up as an airborne command post. Head Beagle sorted out the loose ends and kept a semblance of organization, greatly easing communication and control problems that were encountered.

3. In summary, the operation, with all its hidden complexities at higher echelons, did not present serious problems at the squadron level. Flexibility was increased by efficient turnaround techniques and improved cruise control procedures. Flexibility in delivery parameters was not perfected and employed. Handling of secure target information was not improved.

Whitney N. Tomlin, Lt Col
Commander

...the smallest fighter... the fastest gun



Emails (continued):

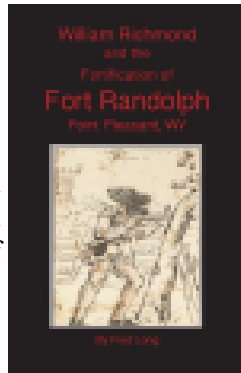
(From Fred Long, 7/11/2020)

Don't know if this is something for the newsletter, but thought since I'm a member it might be worthy of mention. I've just finished a Revolutionary War period history (a paperback) concerning the construction of Fort Randolph in 1776. Fort Randolph was an important frontier fort on the Ohio River to protect Virginia from Indian insurgencies. It will be \$11.99 (plus postage and handling if anyone should want a copy). I'm sending it to the printer Sunday so they will have it first thing Monday morning, getting 500 printed. It should be available on August 1.

The last newsletter I received was April's issue so you are probably getting the next one ready now. If you think the membership would be interested in what another member has done, a brief mention in the newsletter would be appreciated.

I'm attaching a copy of the cover

(You can contact Fred at hinton1946@aol.com.)



His remains were recovered in late 1972 and in 1984 were interred in the Vietnam Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington. There they lay for 14 years until his family persuaded the US Department of Defense to use DNA testing to confirm his identity. In 1998, he was brought home to Missouri.

A dedicated group of Museum volunteers had worked hard to reopen the facility in June of this year, but, as everywhere else in the county, those plans were waylaid by COVID-19. Even yet, a tentative plan to open this September has now been delayed until 11 May 2021, the 49th anniversary of Mike's shutdown.

According to Russ McKnight, a 1970 classmate of Mike's at the USAF Academy and point person for the class's role in the dedication, work has resumed to get the building ready for the reopening. The Class of 1970 is ginning up support for the project as well as attendance at the dedication. Plans also include an address by Mike's sister Patricia.

Missouri lays claim to being the first "POW-MIA State," and St. Louis County is justifiably proud of its efforts to keep the motto of "Never Forget" front and center.

"No One Left Behind, No One Forgotten"

Strong words military veterans recognize immediately.

These words are also the motto of the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum in St. Louis, Missouri, derived from the Museum's mission statement: "to reverently honor all who served our country in any branch of the United States military who were captured by enemies of the United States or who are missing in action from any year and from any conflict."

Located in the Jefferson Barracks Historic District, the Museum is housed in the Old 1898 Officers Quarters on Hancock Road, but is currently closed undergoing restoration to facilitate "the gathering and preserving of POW and MIA artifacts, information and history."

All Americans should be aware of the plight of our POW's and MIA's, but we in the A-37 Association should be particularly attuned as one of the highlights of the facility upon reopening will be a dedication of the main exhibit room as the "Lt Michael Blassie Memorial Room." Featured will be the story of Mike and his family's quest to "bring their son home," an A-37 model, and a bust of Mike.

For those who may not know Mike's story, he was shot down on 11 May 1972 near An Loc, Vietnam, while flying with the 8th Special Operations Squadron out of Bien Hoa.

Bronze plaque to commemorate "The Lt Michael Blassie Room" at the JB POW-MIA Museum



(Information for this article came from the JB Museum's website at www.jbpow-mia.org and email exchanges with Russ McKnight.)



The National League of Families' POW/MIA flag symbolizes the United States' resolve to never forget POWs or those who served their country in conflicts and are still missing.

The United States president each year proclaims the third Friday of September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

A-37 Association Memorabilia Items



T-shirt (M, L, XL, XXL) \$20
(includes shipping)



License Plate Frames
\$10 ea plus \$8 shipping



Koozie
\$2 (includes shipping)



A-37 Lapel Pin 1" sq \$8
(includes shipping)



50th Anniversary Patch \$6
(includes shipping)



2.25-inch SEA Decal
\$5 (includes shipping)

The memorabilia order form is on the next page.

Memorabilia Order Form

(Please fill out completely)

(Except for plate holders, all prices include shipping.)

50 th Anniversary Patch	How many? ____ @ \$6
SEA Decal	How many? ____ @ \$5
Koozie	How many? ____ @ \$2
Lapel Pin	How many? ____ @ \$8
T-shirt	How many? M ____ L ____ XL ____ XXL ____ @ \$20 ea
Total	= \$ _____

License Plate Holder	
"Combat Pilot"	How many? ____ @ \$10
"Combat Veteran"	How many? ____ @ \$10
Total for License Plate Holders	=\$ _____
Shipping (regardless of number ordered)	=\$ _____

Total Amount Due: = \$ _____

Clear Form

Shipping Address:

Name: _____
Street or PO Box: _____
City: _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone: _____ Email _____

Method of Payment:

Check:

1. Make payable to "The A-37 Association."
2. Write "Memorabilia" in the Memo space.
3. Mail check and completed form to: The A-37 Association
142 Arrowhead Drive
Montgomery, AL 36117

Paypal:

1. Complete form and "Save As" to hard drive, renaming file: "(your name)_Memorabilia_Order."
2. Send saved form by email to dragonfly369@charter.net.
3. Go to www.paypal.com and send payment to dragonfly369@charter.net.

Once payment is received, order will be processed.

Questions? Email dragonfly369@charter.net or call (334) 328-7575.

All proceeds go to the A-37 Association.