



“Cleared Hot”

by Lon Holtz

Before Covid intervened, we would have been gathering this month in Florida for a few days of fun in the sun. But fate dealt us a rough hand and we have had to delay our gathering a bit. Looking back, it was the right thing to do as the current situation hasn't changed too much to justify taking a chance that could cost us dearly. So, we have had to find things to do in our own personal environment to fill the time and space before we go absolutely NUTS!!!!

Around here, all of the “Honey Do’s” were completed about three weeks into the pandemic, followed by the “Want to Do” list about a month later. Then we started culling all the unnecessary records we had accumulated over the past 46 years. I filled 32 bags of shredded records and had to replace a burned-out shredder.

Once that was done, it was time to relax a bit so we started to go through our video library of over 600 DVDs. But even that became boring, and in several cases, we could turn the volume off and provide a near perfect narrative of our own. By now we started scaling the walls searching for something of interest to do.

So I headed for the shop and worked on some projects for the reunion next year, washed and waxed the cars weekly, and built another couple of models. As the weather improved, I went outside and became engrossed

(Continued on p. 3)

The A-37 Association reunion is now set for

22 - 26 May 2022 at the Holiday Inn Resort in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. So quickly check your calendar and I'll wait.... Yes, it'll be a good time to lie on white beaches and dip your toes in the beautiful waters of the Gulf of Mexico. We'll provide details later.

We continue to get requests for copies of the Association's book, “Dragonfly: A-37s over Vietnam.” So if you have one you are willing to part with, let me know.

Mike Gabrick, son of A-37 jock John Gabrick, penned an article about a keepsake item near and dear to his dad's heart on page 3.

John Sullivan, who flight tested the A-37 at Edwards AFB back in the day, wrote about the time President Lyndon Johnson visited Edwards to review USAF and NASA projects being put through the paces. You'll find that story on page 4.

An event in which the A-37 Association has a keen interest will be taking place on May 11th. See the article on page 4 about the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum.

The memorabilia page still shows items for sale (not as many as before), but still several items for sale.

Inside:	Page
Member Update/Emails	2
War Stories/Articles	3-4
Memorabilia Page/Order Form	Insert



"I get a real sharp pain when I do this."

...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.”



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

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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.

Visit our website: www.a37.org

Rustics: 20-24 Oct 2021, Tucson, AZ, www.rustic.org

Emails

(From Mark Peterson, 1/22/2021)

Restoration on A-37 (#68-10807 - see April 2020 newsletter) is going VERY slowly. Lots of reasons, but we continue to find little nagging problems that need to be fixed in order to be up to my standards.

Most recent is flap synchronizer. The teleflex cables were binding in the tubes over the engine exhaust because the grease had been baked and then hardened. We broke one of the cables getting it out and had to find new ones. None could be found until we realized we had the wrong part number. An "8" had been confused with a "B" on the parts list and we were looking for the wrong part number. Once corrected, we found two without issue and are installing them now.

Gear rigging and sequencing is complete.

We are still having very small static leaks with the slot lip spoiler actuators and the shop we selected to overhaul shut down before Christmas due to a COVID infection. Haven't heard from them since. I may have to fly to Texas to get our parts and find a new shop.

Since we replaced all the wing fuel cells, we are chasing a couple of minor leaks and will continue to do so until we get every little drip stopped. I like dry wings!

All other hydraulics are done. Avionics and electrical are done. Oxygen is done.

We have a little work to do on rudder and elevators. Hinge bushings and balancing.

Pylons need some work for all the tanks and smoke generators. Seats, canopy and interior installation shouldn't take much work. Then we are ready for engine runs. Hopefully, not too long.

I have airshows booked for this summer that are expecting to see a Dragonfly!

.....
(From Mike Gabrick, 3/25/2021)

Thought I'd let you know that my Dad, John Gabrick, passed away on Jan 16. He flew the A-37 at Bien Hoa in 1970-71.

You may recall our email exchange and phone conversation in Nov 2020 about the A-37 picture I found hanging in the men's room at Sedona Airport which I procured to replace his lost squadron photos. I sent you a story about it for possible use in the newsletter.

(Continued on p. 3)

Member Update

Gone West:

John Gabrick - 16 January 2021, Mesa, AZ (See email and story from Mike Gabrick.) Obituary:

[John Gabrick | Mountain View Funeral Home and Cemetery](#)

Cort Durocher - 5 February 2021, West Palm Beach, FL

New Members:

Mike Gabrick - Mesa, AZ (See Mike's email and article.)

Reunions:

Bien Hoa Air Base Veterans Association: 29 Sep-2 Oct 2021 - Branson, MO, www.bienhoaabreunion.com



Cleared Hot

(Continued from p. 1)

in something more scientific, like counting the number of blades of grass that grow in one square foot, which I divided into one-inch squares so I could get an accurate count after breaks. It took the better part of three weeks, sometimes well into the night, but the end result was 118,642 blades.

Now that the temperatures are getting up where I can turn on the spa, crank the temperature up into the high eighties, get a glass of my favorite, a good cigar, watch airplanes up at altitude go from L.A to wherever, and enjoy the sun.

I wrote this column, void of any real news to probably reflect events that all of us are facing. It isn't easy having all this time with limited travel or social events before we go absolutely round the bend. But we are a strong bunch, and will weather this as another bump in the road and come out on top. In the meantime, let's modify and improve some of those old war stories as they are presently old and need more amplification and flavor.

Until we can meet again, keep the faith, be safe out there, and I'll see you all in a year.

War Story

Obscurity: On a Wall Over a Urinal

by Mike Gabrick

(Ed note: Mike's article was submitted before his dad died in January, which makes his story all the more poignant.)

My Dad, Maj. John Gabrick, USAF (Ret.) flew the A-37B with the 8th Attack Squadron at Bien Hoa in 1970-1971. Later, when I was a teenager, I remember staring at those beautifully framed action photos of the A37-B surrounded by signatures (and their cool call signs!) of his squadron mates. Sadly, in 1997 during the massive Red River flood in Grand Forks, the basement where those pictures hung on the wall in our rec room filled with water and all of his USAF memorabilia were lost.

But here's the silver lining. In 2007, I was flying with my friend, Phil, and stopped at the Sedona Airport (AZ) for breakfast. When using the men's room before leaving, I saw something that only fate herself could have arranged. Right there, hanging above the only urinal in that tiny dark bathroom, was a dingy old framed photo of a beautiful A-37B. I offered to purchase the picture right then, but the restaurant owner said no and was too busy to discuss it.



The photo rescued from a toilet at the Sedona, AZ airport.

Flying home to Mesa, AZ that day, I explained the situation to Phil, who kindly offered to trade for any of his art quality framed aviation photographs. After several attempts to reach the restaurant owner again, she listened to my story and agreed to make the deal. Phil and I flew

Right there, hanging above the only urinal in that tiny dark bathroom, was a dingy old framed photo of a beautiful A-37B.

back to Sedona and were able to trade for the A-37 photo and brought it home.

For me, it was *mission accomplished* for sparing the dignity of the A-37. The discovery, planning, and execution were something to behold. However, my wife would not let me bring the picture into the house knowing its previous location.

(Continued on p. 4)

Emails (continued from p. 2):

In his memory, I asked people to donate to a legitimate Veteran's organization of their choosing. Some folks gave me a little money at his service and asked me to pick one for them.

Can I please send you a check to help the A-37 Association?

(Reply from Jerry Sailors - 3/26/2021)

Mike, please accept condolences from the A-37 Association on the passing of your dad. I will include a link to his obituary as well as your article and the photo in the Association's April newsletter. Your donation will be appreciated and acknowledged. *(Mike donated \$300 to the A-37 Association in memory of his dad.)*

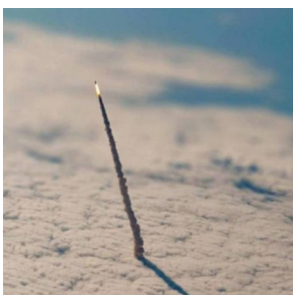


Photo of a Space Shuttle launch.



(Continued from p. 3)

We took it straight to the frame shop, had it mounted beautifully, and gave it to my Dad. She now hangs above his desk where he spends much of his time these days.

When you think about it, that A-37B picture was exactly where you might expect it to be: hanging in an obscure place in a dark room, to be appreciated only by a few folks who might understand its amazing story and the few brave men who flew it.

(In a subsequent email, Mike acknowledged the aircraft in the photo was not an A-37B, but a test aircraft flown at Edwards AFB, CA. "Dad had mentioned that it was probably a test aircraft and that it was close enough to the real thing and provided him with memories of what he flew in combat.")

War Story 2

A Modified YAT-37D at Edwards AFB

by John Sullivan

The A-37 project started to come together in 1963 with Cessna building two prototypes, identified as the YAT-37D.

I was assigned as the project engineer for the flight test program at Edwards AFB. It was not a very big test force, consisting of a project pilot, project engineer, crew chief and Cessna technical representative. It was a part-time job for both me and the project pilot. My full-time job was the F4C test program and the project pilot was an X-15 pilot.

We received the test aircraft at Edwards in January 1964 and flew 80 test flights that resulted in about 100 recommendations. The aircraft went to Eglin AFB for a

...President Johnson stated that we did not need jet aircraft in Vietnam.

while to be flown by some TAC pilots in competition with the Navy A-4 and A-1 Skyraider. The airplane was returned to Edwards for disposition.

In June 1964 President Johnson visited Edwards AFB to review the many USAF and NASA projects. I was given a last minute notice to prepare a briefing for the President who would review the aircraft on the flight line along with other COIN aircraft. This included a turbo-prop T-28 and a modified B-26. However, the night before his visit, President Johnson stated that we did not need jet aircraft in Vietnam. This forced a change in plans and the COIN aircraft were moved to a hangar so that the President could view the aircraft out of sight of the press and public.

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

The President never visited the hangar, remaining instead within view of the press and public. The Secretary of the Air Force and others did stop by the YAT-37D.

This action prompted us to modify the YAT-37D as seen in the accompanying photo. That apparently did not work either. The test aircraft (951) was subsequently moved to the USAF Museum. The aircraft was then moved out of the museum and returned to Cessna as a test bed for the A-37 program and the subsequent Combat Dragon project. After completion of the Cessna test program, the aircraft was returned to the USAF Museum where it can be seen today.



YAT-37D at Edwards AFB - 1964

War Story 3

“Michael Blassie Memorial Room” to be Dedicated 11 May

The Michael Blassie Memorial Room will be dedicated on Tuesday, 11 May 2021, at the Jefferson Barracks POW-MIA Museum in St. Louis, MO. The event is tentatively scheduled for 1900L and will be live-streamed on Facebook and the Museum’s website: www.jbpow-mia.org.

May 11 will mark the 49th anniversary of Michael’s shootdown near An Loc, SVN while flying with the 8th Special Operations Squadron out of Bien Hoa. His remains were recovered five months later, but officially classified as “unknown” and subsequently interred in Arlington National Cemetery in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier from Vietnam on Memorial Day 1984.

Subsequent investigations and a campaign by Michael’s family persuaded the Department of Defense to re-open his files in 1998. DNA obtained from his family revealed his identification. On 11 July 1998, he was reburied in his hometown of St. Louis in the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

Anybody from the 8th
know the story behind
this patch?



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 enclosed.

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		= \$ _____
\$6 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.

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Inside is the April 2021 newsletter of the A-37 Association. You have indicated a preference to receive this publication by postal mail. If you wish to continue receiving the newsletter by post, you don't have to do anything. If you wish to change your preference, please circle option a or b below and send this page to the return address above.

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Memorabilia

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For ordering information, see Memorabilia Order Page inside.

