



“Cleared Hot”

By Lon Holtz

Well, here it is. In less than a hundred days we’ll all be packing our bags and heading home after another successful reunion in the sun. Some of us will come early or stay a few days more to enjoy the Gulf breezes. But first we need to start making arrangements to get there.

On a personal note, Barb and I have elected to fly instead of spending ten days on the road going to and returning from Fort Walton Beach. Going through some areas with unfavorable COVID rates, with bag drags from hotel to hotel along the way, did not seem a desirable task. However, making airline reservations wasn’t that easy either.

Some of the flights were unavailable, or arrived at less than favorable times, or had two or three hours in terminals waiting for the joining flight to Florida with higher costs than yesteryear. For those of you coming from the West Coast, American Airlines seems to be the best for pricing. Additionally, try to plan changing flights in Dallas for short wait times for flights into Destin/Fort Walton Beach (Airport Code is VPS). So, if you haven’t started planning as yet, please use these words as an example of what you may experience. And that ends the sermon for today.

To update you on the 3rd printing of the A-37 book, we are facing some problems but are pressing on. The company that produced our super second edition was sold to another printing firm that offered us two proofs that did not meet our standards, nor answer requests for help. So, we have turned our efforts to finding a new vendor. John McAlister, our resident expert on producing a quality finished product, found a new printing service that is now producing a proof that should be in our hands shortly for

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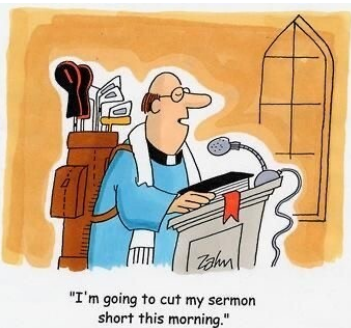
We have a clearance for approach to FWB,

turning downwind and slowing to gear down speed. Prep for landing includes a schedule of events and dissemination of a registration form for all attendees to complete and return in accordance with instructions provided, something we’ve done all our life. Shouldn’t be difficult, but, if you do have a problem, follow the instructions at the bottom of the form.

The 2022 reunion schedule includes three events that should percolate the interest of everybody. (See article on page 4.) One whole day is devoted to journeying to Pensacola, about an hour and a half away, to tour the National Naval Aviation Museum, or as most of us call it, the Navy Museum. I’ve been there and, if you like airplanes, it’s well worth the trip.

A second twist we owe to one of Association members, Chris “Bloke” Maurer. Bloke is bringing his T-18 Tiger two-seater aerobatic aircraft to provide (as time permits) flights for all who would like to fly with him. But that’s not all. His flying buddy, Rodney Horn, is also bringing his RV-6A aerobatic two-seater to do the same thing. So guess what? Formation flying!!! (See Bloke’s article on page 3.)

A third benefit of being at this reunion is the speaker at the closing banquet on Wednesday, 25 May. Patricia Blassie, sister of Michael Blassie, graciously accepted our invitation to tell her family’s story. Michael, as most of you know, was interred in the Vietnam Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington National Cemetery for 14 years, As Vietnam vets, this story should hit close to home. As A-37 vets, we acknowledge Michael as one of our own.Jerry Sailors



“I’m going to cut my sermon short this morning.”

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



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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.

Member Update

Gone West: Coy Austin (see email from John Lamb)

New members:

Arley Fisher - nanar155q@gmail.com

TJ McCallum (Tom's son and the A-37 Association's website manager) - tjandkristen@comcast.net

Maurice "Oke" O'Connell - maury_oconnell@yahoo.com

Dave Strohm - dave.strohm@united.com

Change of address:

Steve Bliss: blister1949@gmail.com

Earle Combs: lzbthcombs@gmail.com

Reunions:

A-37 Association - Fort Walton Beach, FL. 22-26 May 2022

All FACS Reunion - Colorado Springs, CO, Sep 2022.

Emails

(From TJ McCallum, 11 Feb 2022)

I grew up looking at photos of my dad in Vietnam and listening to his experiences. I appreciate the opportunity to join the Association.

Thank you.

(From John Lamb, 22 Feb 2022)

Coy Austin was commander of the 90th for a while and the 8th maybe before PCSing to PACAF. While there, he took a leave of absence and flew in the filming of "Tora, Tora".

He had two Mig kills in Korea flying the F-86. After the AF, he was a test pilot for Gulfstream in Savannah. He flew his own twin Cessna back and forth from Florida to the Bahamas regularly after fully retiring. About ten years ago, after sending him a Christmas card, I received an e-mail from his son saying he had gone missed approach at the Nassau airport and the tower lost comm with him. About four hours later his body, still strapped in the seat, washed up on the beach. He was a great guy.

Miss Mai, nobody seems to know where she is. Rumor was she married a GI and was at one time, working in the O'club at George before it closed.

Stay warm. It's -3 with a chill factor of -18 here right now, 8 a.m.

(From Ron Savarese, 28 Jan 2022)

Just read the email from Roger Moseley. I understand this newsletter and organization is mostly about you pilots. But we crew chiefs, maintenance personnel etc. were also on the flight line at Bien Hoa performing our duties, on the ground. I have filed for disability knowing the 50 gallon drums of agent orange were stored, dumped, leaked on the flight line and grounds. Just wanted to say it was more than the pilots that might have been exposed. I was Capt. Moore's crew chief and flew with him a few times after performing maintenance. A great guy.

(Reply by Jerry Sailors, 28 Jan 2022)

Ron, thanks for the note. My wording in the message wasn't clear, but it was meant for anyone who was stationed at Bien Hoa in proximity to the toxins. Certainly hope your disability claim is successful.

(From Maurice Hayes, 25 Jan 2022)

Dear Sir, I was pleased to receive your email. I still own the A37b (ZK-JTL) which is presently in the engineers work getting an annual clearance. I don't fly anymore having just turned 79.

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review and comment. If that is favorable, we will get them to you as quickly as possible.

The reunion Registration Form and Program of Events are attached to this newsletter for your review, planning, and submittal. But one event, the visit to the National Naval Aviation Museum at NAS Pensacola, is a very large rendering of naval events and aviation and will require a lot of walking, so be prepared and wear comfortable walking shoes. And FYI, masks will be required inside the facility. If we are lucky enough, we just might catch a practice session of the United States Navy Blue Angels. And, if you have any medical issues that may cause problems, please plan accordingly. I'm told that there is a medical infirmary at the Pensacola NAS, but not sure of the services offered.

With all that said, I'm going to sign off saying that I look forward to seeing all your smiling faces in Florida. It's been way too long!

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A photo of the aircraft flown by me is attached.



(Photo: Maurice Hayes)

The aircraft will be flown for airshows if allowed (Covid19).

The email address for me is still current. I live at 174 Opaheke Road, Papakura, New Zealand.

War Story

Tiger Flight

By Bloke Maurer



The mission of Tiger Flight is to familiarize the public with military heritage and encourage young people to consider careers in aviation. We support flying events and museums. In addition to displaying the aircraft, we give briefings and participate in introductory flights for Young Eagles.



The Pilots

Col Rodney Horn (USAF, Ret.). Originally from Louisiana, Rodney started as an Aircraft Commander on the B-52. He also completed Test and Evaluation on the UC-26 and was an Instructor/Evaluator for the production aircraft. He flew for Pan Am on the 747 then joined United Airlines and spent many years as an Instructor in the 737, 747 and 767. He is now a 737 Captain at United Airlines. As Deputy Commander in Afghanistan, he operated drones, A-10, C-130, HH-60 and BACON. In Iraq he was Commander of Sather airbase, Baghdad. He is a certified Aircraft Mechanic and Inspector. He lives near Houston with his wife and children who often fly with him.

Lt Col Chris “Bloke” Maurer (USAF, Ret). Bloke left England and started his career as a T-37 Instructor Pilot, then spent four years flying the OA-37 at Edwards AFB as an Instructor/Examiner. That assignment involved a variety of aircraft as well as duties at the Hospital. Next was Pan Am in Berlin, Germany followed by development work on the UC-26 at Ellington AFB. He flew a variety of aircraft at United Airlines and retired as a Captain on the Airbus A-320. He is an Aircraft Mechanic/Inspector and lives near Galveston with a couple of cats and far too many model aircraft.

The Aircraft

RV-6A “Misty’s Miracle.” The RV series is the most popular home-built aircraft produced. This version, fully aerobatic, is an excellent aircraft for formation flying with a variety of smoke systems for show work. Equipped for night/instrument operations with an autopilot and dual radios, the RV-6A’s cruise speed of about 140 knots and a range of 700 NM make it an efficient cross-country aircraft.

T-18 Tiger. John Thorp worked on the Lockheed Electra and the Piper Cherokee. In 1953 he designed the FD-25 Defender as a low cost, close-support aircraft. Although the US Army liked the aircraft they were not allowed fixed-wing aircraft and the Air Force was only interested in jets. The aircraft did have some foreign sales and



T-18 Tigers

in the meantime. Thorp re-designed the aircraft as an amateur built sport aircraft, the first kit-built aircraft available. A few years later, the Air Force developed a follow-on to the FD-25: the A-37 Dragonfly.

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Events at FWB

The Tiger is fully aerobatic, cruises at 140 knots with a 1000 NM range, and is night/instrument equipped including an autopilot coupled to fly approaches. With a top speed of 175 Kts. it is ideal for formation flying and includes a variety of smoke systems. It is configured to look and feel much like her big sister, the A-37. In addition, we wear parachutes (required for aerobatics).

War Story 2

Miss Mai

(Excerpt from "Dragonfly: A-37s over Vietnam")

Lovely Mai-Thuyen tended the Rap Bar where beer was ten cents a can and a mixed drink, when available, only 25 cents. Rules required anyone entering the bar with their hat



Miss Mai tending the Rap Bar

on to buy everyone a beer; likewise, if someone should speak the "secret" word of the day. This in the course of a month could easily run up a tab of \$100 or more. But all was not lost. The person with the highest tab won the "Top Glass" award entitling them to a free drink. Miss Mai would keep score with a pencil of who bought what and her monthly count of each person's tab was final.

(Ed. note: John Lamb contributed the following via email):

Miss Mai I believe, ran the Dice Bar before coming to the Raps. She truly was a gift. Very smart and gorgeous, she didn't mess around with any of the guys. She spoke excellent English, made everyone pay their bar bills, and helped us make the Rap bar the most popular hangout on the base. Wish we could locate her.

(Ed. note: Sometime in the past, I saw a written comment somewhere (like in Lambo's email on page 2) that Miss Mai may have married (perhaps a GI?) and moved to the States. Can anybody verify that rumor or provide more information on her? If so, please drop me a line at dragonfly67.72@gmail.com.)

One of the major events at our upcoming reunion in Fort Walton Beach, FL is a scheduled tour of the National Naval Aviation Museum at Pensacola NAS. We've scheduled the tour for Tuesday, 24 May on the chance of viewing a practice session of the Blue Angels before we have lunch and then a guided tour of the Museum. Here's an excerpt from the Navy Museum website www.navalaviationmuseum.org, designed to whet your appetite for all the displays:

"Enjoy the thrill of flight in the Flight Simulators, catch all the drama and power of the amazing Giant Digital Screen Theater and refuel for lunch in the authentic Cubi Bar Café. Then gear up and take home the spirit of Naval Aviation with a unique memento from the Flight Deck Store."

We will be traveling by bus, so choose your seatmate wisely as it is about an hour and a half trip. Also, wear comfortable shoes for the tour.

Would you like to fly some formation and maybe experience an aileron roll or loop? Bloke Maurer and Rodney Horn are bringing their aerobatic aircraft to take you for a ride. We don't yet have all the details about this adventure, but it will no doubt be a unique experience as we try to remember what it was like in the "old days."

Bloke and Rodney are currently planning to arrive a couple of days early to get the lay of the land and check out the available air space, etc., so we'll get to know them well.

The only other scheduled event is the closing banquet on Wednesday, 25 May, which will feature our special guest speaker, Patricia Blassie. Patricia's brother, Michael, flew A-37s as a member of the 8th Special Operations Squadron and was downed by enemy fire on 11 May 1972 during the battle of An Loc. In the now well-known case, his remains were recovered, but not officially identified and were interred in the Vietnam Tomb of the Unknown in 1984 until his family lobbied to have those remains analyzed for DNA match. DNA from the remains was matched with those of his mother and oldest sister.

Patricia said, "We had the opportunity to rebury Michael in Arlington Cemetery, but we wanted to bring him home to St. Louis. Someone had given us a handful of dirt from Arlington and, when my mother unveiled Michael's headstone, she sprinkled it around the base of the stone."

Schedule of Events

The A-37 Association Reunion Fort Walton Beach, FL 22 – 26 May 2022

22 May (Sunday)	1500 - ?	Arrival and Hospitality Room open
23 May (Monday)	0900 - ? 0930 -1800 1700 -1800	Hospitality Room open Bloke Air Rides Board of Directors Meeting Dinner on your own
24 May (Tuesday)	0800 - ? 0830 - 1700	Hospitality Room open National Naval Aviation Museum Dinner on your own
25 May (Wednesday)	0800 - 1800 0900 - 1000 1100 - 1600 1830 - 2100 2100 - ?	Hospitality Room open Membership Meeting Bloke Air Rides Reception and Dinner (Dress: Smart Casual, i.e., no shorts or jeans) Banquet Speaker: Patricia Blassie Hospitality Room open
26 May (Thursday)	0800 – 1100	Pack up and leave

A-37 Association Memorabilia Items



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



License Plate Frames
\$10 ea plus \$6 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.