



“Cleared Hot”

By Lon Holtz

Well, the last drinks have been drunk, the old stories got better than ever before, the handshakes and hugs were genuine, and after four days of rain, the sun finally showed itself. All in all, it was one of those reunions that will be hard to beat, made that way by the hard-working trio of Judy, Jerry, and Barbara. Additionally, Judy got us a great hotel, the Holiday Inn Resort on the beach, with a totally friendly staff that went out of their way to welcome us.

Monday started with a safety briefing by Bloke Maurer and Rodney Horn for those of us that would be flying with them in either a Tiger or an RV-7 on either Monday or Wednesday. They developed a team that goes under the name of Tiger Flight and goes to events like ours, giving FREE rides to the younger generation, hoping to develop in them an interest in aviation, and some old guys who have “Been There and Done That.” As I looked around the room, I saw the old gleam in the eyes of the old guard that was there many years ago before a mission. Terry and I were the first to brave the weather, and it brought back a cascade of memories of both the good, the bad, and the ugly. I think that gleam remained on our faces for the rest of the reunion. At the reunion banquet I gave my tiger scarf from Korat to Bloke and a picture of an exhausted tiger laying there with the title of “Every Man A Tiger.” And on it were the signatures and thanks from everyone who flew with them. We plan on having them come back very soon.

Tuesday, visited the Pensacola Naval Air Museum learning the history of Naval aviation. It was a long hour and a half trip on a bus in each direction in heavy pre-Memorial Day traffic, but it was livable and rewarding.

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In his column, Lon covered the major events of FWB, including the news that the A-37 has found a home for its legacy at the Robins Museum of Aviation. Still it is worth noting again that attendees went away exclaiming that this was one of the best reunions ever. High praise in light of the fact that only 23 Association members actually came, which, given the travel issues, COVID considerations, and age of our membership, is quite remarkable. Counting our guests, we had 46 at the banquet dinner.

No doubt this reunion offered a couple of attractions unique to this kind of an event. Not too many gatherings of old veterans include an opportunity to fly in fully acrobatic aircraft and even take the controls if one were brave enough. Not sure how many of the 14 folks who did get airborne actually handled the stick, but I enjoyed every second of it, including a dive attack on an unsuspecting boat with a 4-G pullout, just like old times! (See graph depiction on page 5.)

The second attraction was the featured speaker at the closing banquet, Patricia Blassie, who related her family’s experience in getting her brother, Michael, returned to St. Louis after having been buried in the Vietnam Tomb of the Unknown for 14 years. We welcome Patricia as one of our own in the A-37 Association.

On page 5-6 is a collage of photos from FWB, certainly not all of them, but a good sample of the range of activities as supplied by attendees. And the memorabilia insert features the new T-shirt introduced at FWB.

People say love is the best feeling. But I think finding a toilet when you are having diarrhea is better.

Plans for a 2024 reunion are uncertain as to exact time and place, but we intend to gather as long as our aging bodies and our national conscience and circumstances will allow.

.....Jerry Sailors

**NEW 2022 A-37 T-shirt
(See Insert)**

“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.

Member Update

Gone West:

Carl Crews, 3 October 2021, Colorado Springs, CO

Don Moody, 19 April 2022, North Richland Hills, TX

John Tullier, 2 June 2022, Baton Rouge, LA (See email from Nadine Tullier.) [Obituary](#)

Reunions:

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

Emails

(From Richard Jones, 30 May 2022)

You will never know the thrill that I got in our short flight. I wanted to fly from day 1 in the Air Force, but my eyesight did not let me. Every time that I had a chance to fly, I jump at it. I got into an A-37, 0-2, 0-1 and a night ride in a AC-47. My last ride was an F-16, which the ATC

said maintain wings level. Lastly, yours, maybe the last, but the BEST.

.....
(From Bloke Maurer, 30 May 2022)

Hi Jerry. Before I called you about setting up some flying I talked to Rodney to make sure he was OK with the idea. He knows how fond I am of the A-37 and he is very keen on supporting military traditions and events.

We knew there would be obstacles – maintenance and inspections, weather issues and, of course, the cost. I didn't want to commit us until we could be confident we could afford the adventure. I am responsible for maintenance and Rodney is the Finance Officer. He made it clear, we are 'all-in' and he said money will *not* turn us back.

We overcame the maintenance problems, completed the inspections and worked around the weather. The delays and re-routes made the adventure interesting but we never complained or even considered turning back. I'm glad we didn't, this reunion means more to us than any other event we could go to.

The Mission Planning we put together was designed to provide each flier with a fun flight, tailored to their experience and capabilities. The feedback we have received so far has been fantastic, but we would love to know what we can do better in the future. We have a few ideas (I will prepare a detailed After Action Report, to be discussed with a suitable drink.)

I hope you have some idea of how much it means to us that you helped us with the cost. I think you do. We did not expect it and we had no choice but to accept (you made that clear)! Our thanks to all of you. We got more out of the event than we put in, and I promise the money you gave us will go toward supporting future events for military, charity and children's shows. Without your support we would have 'laid low' for a while.

You made us feel welcome from the moment we stepped through the door. I hope we did well and I look forward to supporting anything you ask of us in the future. I would say the honors you bestowed on us mean more than you can imagine but I think you know how much that is.

Again, thank you very much for the money. Standing by for further orders,

Bloke "Tiger Lead"

Rodney "Misty Lead"

Mitchell "Best Ground Support Ever"

(Continued on p. 3)

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(Continued from p. 1)

Wednesday was the big day getting ready for the banquet. At this reunion we had three guest speakers along with the exchange of gifts. First was Kathie Serlet, who introduced Paulena Melvin, a representative of the Quilts of Valor, who presented quilts to Jerry Sailors, Judy Grahn, and myself for valor in keeping the Association alive.

Arthur Sullivan, the curator at the Museum of Aviation at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, joined us and welcomed our Association to have a permanent home at the museum. To cement our relationship, we offered two dioramas, like the ones we auctioned at the Wichita reunion, and a 30-inch round plaque of the Combat Dragon, representing the five squadrons that it gave birth to. The morning after the banquet, Arthur joined Jerry and me to sift through all the containers of memorabilia we had in storage all these years. We offered him several pictures, documents, and other items that would represent us and our accomplishments.

Tom McCallum and his son, TJ, were also honored and received a glass desk piece that thanked both Tom and TJ for their exceptional efforts in maintaining our website and keeping it up-to-date and in exceptional order.

Finally, it was an honor to present our keynote speaker Patricia Blassie. Patricia's presentation was extremely interesting and touching as she told the story of her brother, Mike, and his lifelong passion of flying and the direction he went to get there, his passing, and the family's dedication and efforts to get Mike's remains from The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and placed at home in Missouri. While the government set up roadblock after roadblock, the family was successful and now, after years of struggles, Mike now rests near the family. She is a dedicated sister and accomplished speaker, and a very welcome addition to our Association.

This column is extremely long but necessary to honor and thank our guest speakers: Bloke Mauer and Rodney Horn, Paulena Melvin, Arthur Sullivan and Patricia Blassie for their time and efforts to make this reunion one of the very best yet. Thank You! *Lon*

Emails (Continued from p. 2)

(From Patricia Blassie, 2 June 2022)

Thank you for reaching out to me with the photographs of my ride in the Tiger aircraft with **Bloke**, as well as one of the most special presentations I've ever received honoring the A-37 "Dragonfly" pilots lost in S.E. Asia.

I felt so privileged to have met you, and all the members present from the A-37 Association, along with their dear family members. What a most memorable evening!



I am thankful that you are keeping me on the Association's email list and hope that in the days to come you will call on me if I can be of help in any way.

My best and strongest efforts are going toward writing the historical non-fiction story about how we found Michael and what it took to bring him home.

You will be one of the first to receive a copy of the book once published, for sure and for certain.

Thank you again for including me in a very special moment in time.

.....
(From Nadine Tullier, 8 June 2022)

Just wanted you to know that John passed away on June 2. Am forwarding his obituary. He flew the A-37 in Vietnam in 1971.

.....
(From Henry Gerken, 10 June 2022)

Hello Jerry, Henry Gerken here, if you want to fwd Mark Peterson a note for me, if you need a good weapons tech I'm in. I live in Meridian, ID, and was with the original 604th Combat Dragon start up sq. I worked on the "A" version of the A-37. Take care, keep the faith.

(Henry's email was forwarded to Mark Peterson on 11 June)

(From Mark Peterson, 11 June 2022)

Henry, great to hear there is a local expert in A-37 weapons tech!

We are currently working on the best ordnance set up for our Dragonfly for the coming airshow in Moses Lake next weekend. Our current plan is to load two drops on station 1 and 2. An LAU-3 on station 3 and our SGU Smoke Generators on station 4. We are going to load dummy 2.75" rocket nose cones in the LAU-3 to drop the drag index.

What do you think?

.....
(From Jeff Boston, Rustic 51, 22 June 2022)

I talked to Mark Peterson at the Moses Lake Airshow last Saturday and took some video of his performance in the A-37B. Very enjoyable, and great to see the old bird strut its stuff.

Below is a link to my YouTube post. Feel free to share the link with other association members. *(See article "A-37 Demo at Moses Lake" on page 4 for link to video.)* And, if you have an email address for Mark Peterson, please send it to him as well. It was pretty windy that day, and my video camera has just a small LCD screen for viewing (no optical viewfinder) which makes tracking action difficult when zoomed in.

(Continued on p. 4)



Emails (Continued from p. 3)
(From Judy Grahn, 27 June 2022)

Now that the dust has settled and things are back to normal, whatever that is, I want to take a moment to thank all members who were able to join us in Ft. Walton Beach. This group is amazing to work with, the board of directors who stepped up to help in so many ways and those who were just there when needed. Everyone rolled with the punches-WEATHER, power outages and fire alarms! Thanks to All for your patience. Several of the hotel staff expressed what a great group we were. Until next time take care and stay in touch.

War Story 1

Robins Museum of Aviation - Home of the A-37 Legacy

Following is an email of 8 June from Arthur Sullivan, Curator of the Robins Museum of Aviation, agreeing to house the artifacts and archival information of the A-37 aircraft and operational units. (Visit www.museumofaviation.org.)

First of all, thank you so very much for your hospitality at the recent reunion. It was wonderful to be part of it and I felt warmly welcomed from the very beginning. Please do share my thanks, and that of the entire Museum of Aviation staff, with the group. I also wanted to follow up with you on the items I brought back to the museum with me.

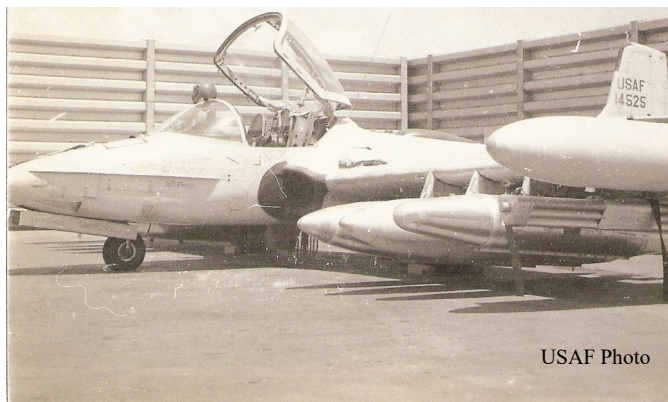
With genuine appreciation, the Collections & Exhibitions Committee has accepted your donation on behalf of the United States Air Force and the Museum of Aviation. These donated items will make an important addition to our artifact and archival collection, and will ensure the A-37 story lives on beyond any of us.



Attached is an Archival Deed of Gift, that includes a full inventory of the items we are receiving from the A-37 Association. Please read the attached form, and if you agree, fill out the top portion with the correct contact information. Sign and date the form at the bottom so that we may formally accession these items into our collection. You may email the form back to me or mail it to the address listed below. Please call or email me with any questions you might have.

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Again, on behalf of the Museum of Aviation, our staff and volunteers, we thank you graciously for your donation. We look forward to continuing to grow our relationship with the A-37 Association and are thankful for the opportunity to serve as a repository for your history.



A-37A #14525, one of the original "Baby Blues," at Bien Hoa, 1967-68



A-37A #14525 on display at Robins Museum of Aviation. Note dioramas now placed in front of the aircraft.

War Story 2

A-37 Demo at Moses Lake

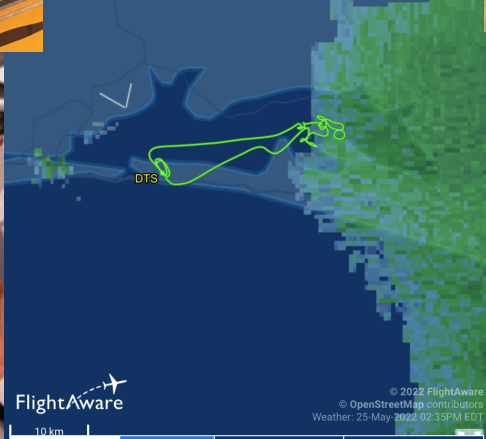
A-37 Association member Mark Peterson flew an A-37 demo at the Moses Lake Airshow in Washington on Saturday, 18 June. One of our Rustic friends, Jeff Boston (Rustic 51), videoed the performance, To view the video, click this link: <https://youtu.be/9vowo80CN0Y>

Mark was flying an aircraft owned by Charles Largay, also an A-37 Association member. Go to the A-37 Association website (www.a-37.org) to see the interview with Mark made a few weeks before the Moses Lake show where he explains his interest in keeping the A-37 story alive.

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FWB Photos





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

Email from Bloke to Lon:

We didn't expect any special recognition but all of you overwhelmed us with your generous presentations. The signed poster is framed and will hang with pride in our Operations.

I still don't have the words for what it means to receive your scarf. When you presented it to me I knew immediately what it means and I will treasure it forever. But it isn't a static symbol. It will accompany us on future missions - it is in Active Service and will continue to gain flight time.

We are very proud to support the Association, we will keep the A-37 and the crews out in the public view with all the traditions and honor that goes with it. We look forward to seeing all of you soon, and anyone who visits the Houston area is welcome for a flight or some casual company. With best regards to you and all the Dragonfly family!!!



A-37 Association Memorabilia Items



(New)
2022 T-shirt
\$21 (includes shipping
(S, M, L, XL, XXL)



Dragon T-shirt
\$21 (includes shipping)
(XL)



Koozie
\$2 (includes shipping)



License Plate Frame \$10 ea
plus \$6 shipping



50th Anniversary Patch \$6
(includes shipping)



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



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

Go to www.a-37.org for order form.

-mailing label

Or if you prefer to receive newsletters by email, send email to dragonfly369@charter.net

b. Take me off the mailing list.

a. Change my mailing address to _____

Circle choice:

Inside is the July 2022 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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