

**"Cleared Hot"**

by Lon Holtz

"Merry Christmas and Happy New Year"

It is that time of year when I get to sit back and review all the things our Association has done over the past few years. So many highlights, but I want to share thoughts on our recent Vegas reunion. Initial planning centered on it being our last reunion, but other possibilities have surfaced that may just take us into the future and are already being looked at in earnest. (See article on p. 3.)

My thanks to Jerry, Barbara, and all the others that had a hand in making the reunion one of the best get-togethers on record. Everybody pitched in to make the entire schedule work, including moving the hospitality room from one floor to another and cleaning up at the end. Kathie Serlet put together an enjoyable shopping tour of Boulder City for the ladies. The air show at St. George flashed memories from over 50 years ago and generated anecdotes from our experiences in Vietnam. Kudos to the Western Sky Aviation Warbird Museum for its strong support of our visit. At the banquet, Kathie Serlet presented Quilts of Valor to Louie Gonzalez and Tom McCallum in recognition of their work on behalf of the Association and Veterans. While I could not present the closing dinner address and thus unable to comment on how everyone seemed to be enjoying "Lost Wages," I was gratified by the first-class support for the occasion.

In closing, I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year, spending time with family and friends and the best holiday ever, especially with all the money you brought home from Las Vegas. Thank all of you for being a part of the A-37 success story. You are the very best Association ever.

Vegas - I'm glad we went!!

Our final (not final) reunion was an unqualified success. The Tuscany Suites and Casino did a great job. The weather was beautiful. The town was jumping. And those who attended jumped right into doing those things expected at a reunion of old Veterans - war stories, memories, bragging (no doubt embellished, but who cares?), and some old-fashioned camaraderie. Feedback from attendees made it all worthwhile. (See emails on page 2.) Some photos are on page 4.

A highlight was the visit to St. George, Utah, to see and touch the aircraft that brought us together. Two operational A-37s, owned by Charles Largay and Mark Peterson, were on full display on the ground and in the air. The staff at the Western Sky Aviation Warbird Museum went to great lengths to accommodate our group. Museum owner Col. Jack Hunter and his on-the-ground coordinator Keith Charlot deserve special mention as they allowed us full access to the aircraft, provided lunch, ferried us to the runway for a close-up look at the air operations, and generally kept us in line. In return, we donated \$500 to the Museum for their hospitality.

The closing banquet featured a review of the A-37's history, including comments from John Sullivan who participated in testing the YAT-37 at Edwards AFB in 1964. Eric Jackson talked about how he became one of the planners for Project Combat Dragon, a program designed to test the aircraft under combat conditions, a first for the US Air Force.

I join Lon in wishing you a joyous holiday season with hope for some improvement in 2026...Jerry Sailors



"In all fairness, I was lead to believe that what happens in Vegas, for all intents and purposes, would stay in Vegas."

"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 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

Joe Acri, 3 November 2025, Enola, PA [Obituary](#)

Emails

(From Dave Craig, 29 October 2025)

I am glad I finally got my act together and came to an Association gathering, especially this one. You put on a great show. Hard to fully understand how much work you put into the reunion. Thank you.

I gave my thumb drive of slides and video to Tom McCallum to put on the website. If you, or any of the Association, want any of them personally, let me know.

I live just outside Knoxville, TN. If you are ever down this way, please schedule a couple days here. I could

provide a good boat ride on our part of the Tennessee river and a flight around the area, namely the Smokey Mtns. I fly out of Monroe County Airport KMNV.

I plan to keep in touch.

(Reply to Dave Craig, 30 October 2025)

Dave, thanks for the kind words. Glad you could join us. As you heard in our discussions, there will probably be a gathering in the future, possibly in conjunction with the Bien Hoa AB Veterans Association in Charleston, SC, in September 2027. That's contingent, of course, on all of us being fit enough to attend! By that time, we'll all be testing Father Time.

I'll follow up with Tom McCallum to make sure your photos and video are posted. And thanks for the invite to the Smokies.

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(From Bloke Maurer, 30 October 2025)

Jerry, thank you very much for a wonderful time in Las Vegas. Your organizing and creativity made everyone happy and very satisfied. Rodney and I had a great time.

Just as important, we are excited to think that there may be more occasions to get together. When that happens we plan to show up and, if possible, we will have our 'mini' Dragonflies to give rides to Veterans, their families and A-37 enthusiasts. That way everyone can experience the world's greatest fighter!

When I arrived home I already had three requests by Veterans organizations for fly-overs. Seems they have heard of Tiger Flight! It's an honor we are very proud of.

Thank you for including us in the A-37 Association. It's a wonderful group that humbles us with their experience. We are deeply honored to be a part of this.

Thank You!

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(Ed. Note: Hank Hoffman spent a couple of days at St. George meeting with the owners of two operational A-37s on display during the Fly-in at the Western Sky Aviation Warbird Museum. He made a presentation to a group of attendees on how he came to fly the A-37. Click the link below to see the summary.)

(From Hank Hoffman, 11 November 2025)

This is what the AOG did with our presentation in St. George. A lovely job, I'm thinking. <https://www.usafa.org/content/reunited-and-it-feels-so-good-63-grad-takes-to-the-skies-with-his-first-love>.

Kudos to Brian Grossman who put it together at USAFA. And wild Kudos to Mark, Charlie, and Jon who supplied the A-37 I flew in. I just loved it!

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

Membership Meeting

The A-37 Association membership met on Sunday, 26 October, in the hospitality room at the Tuscany Suites and Casino. The agenda and minutes from the last membership meeting in Galveston, TX, were approved. Jerry Sailors presented the financial report, which was accepted.

The major topic of discussion was the future of the A-37 Association, which came from a point raised at Galveston that the majority of our members now ranged in age from the mid- to late 70s to the 90s and just how much longer those who put together reunions will be able to do it as well as who may be able to carry on the Association. As a result, Vegas was billed as perhaps the final reunion.

A majority of members present wanted to keep the Association active and continue to meet even if it's on a lesser scale than the three- or four-day event. Two options were presented: a. Reduce size of the event to one or two days, which would still require Association members to do all the planning, or b. Pair with the Bien Hoa AB Veterans Association (BHAB), which would allow us to convene but with a much smaller footprint in the planning, i.e., let BHAB set it up and we attend and break into side sessions as desired. After discussion, members voted to pair with BHAB.

BHAB meets every two years and had just met in September in Omaha, NE, and had made plans to meet again in September 2027 in Charleston, SC.

Other discussion revolved around how to sustain the Association membership. Most members have joined because they had hands-on experience with the aircraft in Vietnam and in other assignments. The Vietnam numbers are dwindling. Others have joined because they appreciate the aircraft's history. Association by-laws state "The main criterion for membership is an interest in the A-37 aircraft and its role in the history of aviation." To further clarify, members voted to approve a motion establishing a legacy membership category, primarily for family of Veterans.

As we act on both votes, we'll keep you informed of the progress on each.



War Story

The Christmas Tree

by Mark Williams

(Excerpted from "Dragonfly: A-37s over Vietnam," p. 243)

During the holiday season of December 1971, the 8th SOS at Bien Hoa had a 500-pound high drag GP bomb that we used as our Christmas tree. The bomb stood upright (nose up) and used the high drag devices in the open position as its tree stand.

We decorated it with lights and other assorted miscellaneous items. It was always "assumed" that it was inert and safe, but no one knew for sure.

One gloomy evening, our Christmas tree disappeared from the Raproom. It mysteriously appeared in the Nail/Sundog FACs lounge, in another area of the base.

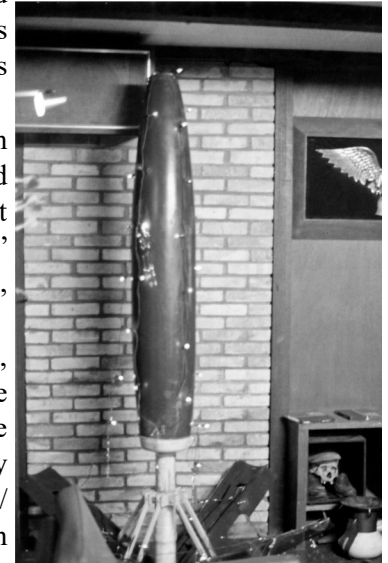
A few days later, sometime after midnight

and after several liquid encouragements, we decided to reclaim our prized Christmas tree. The exact party of Raps eludes my memory, but nicknames like Ramjet, Sweet Stu, A.D., Pueppke, Little Al, Agnes, Tombstone, Painless, and Beerman seem to be echoing around.

After "sneaking" over to the FACs hootch, (or as quietly as a group of 15 or so men could), we took back what was rightly ours—the 500-pound Christmas tree. After a struggle among ourselves, we reached the Raproom with our bomb tree.

Upon trying to erect it on its high drag folding fins, it fell over with a resounding thud against the hard concrete floor. Everyone became ghostly silent.

Now, for the second time, we had to "assume again" that our most-prized Christmas bomb tree was not live. Thus, within a few minutes, the bomb tree was again standing tall as our symbol of the holiday spirit in a war zone.



A 500-pound high drag bomb, decorated with lights, served as a Christmas tree in December 1971. Stuart Frazer collection.





Vegas 2025

Photos: Barbara Jacobs
and Mark Peterson

