



“Cleared Hot”
by Lon Holtz

To all, Howdy!! Trying to write a readable offering for our newsletter between reunions can really be difficult, but I will try.

Jerry has always asked for my contribution weeks, if not months, in advance, so I always tried to write on issues for an upcoming reunion. But this time it’s going to be a little different. So here goes.

Prior to each reunion, I have tried to construct the articles to increase the attendance with either great locations or events. Those who have attended our past reunions have liked both place and events. But the planning for 2027 is different as we are evaluating the possibility of meeting in conjunction with another Vietnam Veterans group: Bien Hoa Air Base Veterans Association. I was the negative vote as to why we should stay as a standalone organization. Well, times have changed from the information initially offered. Let me explain.

The most an event has to offer is a place where our Veterans can reminisce about the times and events shared so many years ago. Who can tell me in all honesty that you don’t bring back home great memories of the previous reunions. Time and place seem an afterthought as there is always a question of when and where will be the next one.

Those memories are from events experienced many years ago at a place faraway. Stories of sorties of being shot at, or visits to our Rapskeller where we learned to drink some really weird stuff, comradeship, new aircraft events, powerful visitors, war stories that get better all the time, or getting hosed down after last flight before you go home.

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April is my favorite month of the year.

At least it is where I live in good old Alabama. The azaleas are blooming, the grass is greener, and the pollen has covered my pickup. What more could I ask for?

Well, there’s golf. I’m an average golfer and belong to that group who suffer the ignominy of beating the ground with a stick and saying it’s fun. We love chilly dipping a chip shot or duck hooking a drive into the woods of a wide fairway and saying “I’m really enjoying this.” The drive hits a tree with a “Thock,” and you know there’s no telling where the ball ended up. After a few choice words and looking at the stick as though it was at fault, I join the others in my group to beat the bushes and trod through leaves and tall grass looking for the errant sphere. Sometimes we find it. Sometimes we don’t. What a relief when one of my partners yells from another time zone, “Here it is!”

Speaking of finding things, the A-37 Association Board has decided we will pair our next reunion with the Bien Hoa Air Base Reunion, which is planning to meet in Charleston, SC, in September 2027. The A-37 Association held a reunion there in 2013. Charleston is a beautiful city with lots of history and attractions.



“Does that hurt?”

As these plans develop, we will keep you up-to-date so those who would like to visit the Holy City in a nice time of the year can make plans. (Let’s pray the hurricanes stay out to sea.) More specific information will be forthcoming as the BHAB Reunion folk develop their plans.....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

(From Hank Hoffman, 22 Dec 2025)

Nice work, Jerry.

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(From Rick Toms, 23 Dec 2025)

Excellent issue! I'm glad the Association is thinking about keeping reunions alive. Everyone involved are great Patriots.

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(From Dave Craig, 23 Dec 2025)

Thank you for all your dedication to the Association. I am glad to know so many of the group. I just felt remiss that I did not join and attend the A-37 gatherings before. Better late than never.

I will keep in touch. If ever in the East Tennessee area my door is open to any of the A-37 people.

Merry Christmas to all.

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(From Erik Goldstein, 23 Dec 2025)

Thanks so much for the latest issue of The Dragonfly. I'm thrilled to hear that Vegas went swimmingly, and y'all decided to keep things going.

Please feel free to throw my hat in the ring as a family member of a 604th ACS Vet who wishes to help – in any way I can – to perpetuate the Association.

Best wishes for a very Merry Christmas, and a wonderful '26!

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(From A-1H pilot Terrance Popravek, Jr., forwarded through John Serlet, 29 Sep 2025.)

I took this photo on 5 July 1972 while flying the A-1H Skyraider out of Bien Hoa AB, SVN. The A-37s were "clean" having expended their ordnance earlier on a CAS mission west of Bien Hoa. The 8th SOS pilot flying A-37 339 was Capt Nick Nicolai. His wingman in A-37 782 was Capt Jules Shockley.



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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

Olan Brooks, 21 Nov 2023, Centerville, GA [Obituary](#)

Emails

(From Roger "Ramjet" Moseley, 22 Dec 2025, referring to article in December newsletter on the Christmas tree bomb.)

What Sailor left out of the story was that one evening a 7th Cav guy accidentally stepped on one of the fins and the bomb toppled over. He reached to catch it, not realizing that it would have crushed him. I recall a couple pilots jerking him away just in time. That's just what the bar needed, a dead Army guy.

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

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Out-flying and replacing the F-100s that were replaced with two more squadrons of Super Tweets that set new combat records for close air support of friendly forces. This list is endless, but we know about it and smile when we hear or remember all of it. And finally, just seeing and being with your wingman again.

Now to cap it all, we have civilians buying the aircraft and joining us. One, Maurice Hayes, all the way from New Zealand has joined us for the past two reunions and is a great supporter of our organization. Chris Stokes has just completed his three-year Dragonfly restoration and received his Airworthiness Certificate from the FAA. Congratulations, Chris! All these positives and many more should tell us to keep the Association going for as long as we can.

And even though I'm getting closer to 90 and fighting a bunch of medical issues and problems, I intend to be there.

Emails (continued)

The name on the nose of 339 says Lt S. H. Gravrock. Tragically, Lt Gravrock was KIA on 23 July 1972 when he was providing Close Air Support in support of friendly troops near An Loc. Lt Gravrock was a 1970 graduate of the US Air Force Academy.

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Below is an email sent last August from Johnny Drury, president of the Rustic FAC Association. I failed to include it in the October newsletter - Jerry)

I hope this email finds you well.

As you might know, I work as a docent at the National Museum of WWII Aviation in Colorado Springs. Among our many educational programs is our newly developed video podcasts to not only discuss different aspects of WWII aviation, but also related topics of hopefully general public interest.

Anyway, I have attached a link to one of our most recent podcasts in which a docent colleague and I talk about our air combat experiences. I send it to you because both of us talk about the A-37 and our experiences with the 8th SOS.

Not trying to beat my chest here, just wanted the A-37 guys to know how much we appreciated your assistance so many years ago.

(Click [here](#) to view podcast of *Winged Victory, Ep 4.*)



(Kickback from December newsletter email. If you have an update on him, please let us know.)

David Heffernan (heffpilot@usaircombat.com)

Last known address: Windermere, FL

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Chris Stokes Update: The latest news about 71-826

Chris Stokes continues to work on restoring his A-37 (71-826) and provides progress updates on his Facebook page. On Easter Sunday, he posted a video to bring us up to speed on his latest news.

Click on this link ([Facebook Update](#)) for that update.

War Story

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

Dusting Off

by Dick Gruber

The best of times... Squadron Commander of the 604th SOS. In early 1970 I relieved my good friend "Ole" Harold E. Hanson, a most capable officer. We had flown F-106s at Kincheloe AFB, Michigan, pre-Vietnam and were now flying the A-37: esprit de corps, friendships, war, immediacy of squadron turmoils, strategies, and headquarters.

So my tale—with untroubled bias—evolves from a minor skirmish with HQ—only one of many.



The Accused One

The Wing ADO called me with: "One of your pilots *dusted off* the Wing Commander as he was leaving the arming area and he, the Wing Commander, *is pissed.*"

"I'll take care of it," I said.

"Not so..." said Lieutenant John Lamb, the accused one.

"Just watch it," I said.

Several days later, another mildly irritated ADO call. Same subject, except this time both Majors James Keating and Jay Weenig *blasted* the leader's aircraft with jet wash.

Both categorically denied any guilt. Seemed damned funny to me.

"God damn it you guys. You're making it tough for me to enjoy happy hour," I said.

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Not many days later, the DO telephoned, very, very angry. This being the third time, all hell to pay, no control, etc., etc., etc.

Lt. Col. Ed Ellis (Ops Officer) happened to be the tagged one. “NO WAY!”

Then came a most welcome “tip” from a friendly VCO. Some might recall—basic history Civil War I—Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant marching his troops southward (he was riding) to attack Confederate camps, he was accompanied by a surgeon, who was riding a large powerful horse that insisted on surging to the lead.

Grant was, in most ways, unassuming. However, there was one thing: he did not like anyone riding *in front of him!*

Hence, “Doctor, I believe I command this army, and I think I’ll go first.” Could it be my wing commander thought he was Ulysses S. Grant? Would you believe, you Dragon fliers, that the SOB thought it demeaning for “Number One” in his F-100 to taxi behind a Tweet?

The fix was obvious, easy, and priceless. Once our guys waited to be last, no more calls.

War Story 2

(Pat McAdoo’s story below is an excerpt from a longer article printed in “Dragonfly: A-37s Over Vietnam.” The actions leading to the exchange with the FAC took place over the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos in February 1968 at a location known as 4107. Mac had just dropped CBU on trucks in the open.)

Here There Be Dragons

by Pat McAdoo

Blindbat hesitated for a few seconds, and then called out, “Okay Dragon. Coordinates were XT 2356 4095 on target at 2250, off at 2345. Five trucks destroyed, five KBA. Pleasure to do business with you. Contact Alleycat on 253.2.”

As I acknowledged the BDA, the Yellowbird that had just checked in wanted to know where to drop. Blindbat coughed, then gave him the bad news.

“Standby, Yellowbird. Think we’ve got something a few miles to the east at a suspected truck park. Can you hold for a few more minutes?”

The Yellowbird was astounded, “You mean he got ’em all?”

“That’s about the size of it,” Blindbat answered.

The Yellowbird then proceeded to make my day, “By the way, Blindbat, just what the hell kinda airplane was that Dragon?”

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

I was passing through ten thousand feet, climbing to the south when Blindbat told him that he’d just witnessed one of the new A-37s in action. I couldn’t help thinking about an old radio show that always ended with one of the townsfolk asking the sheriff, “By the way, what was the name of that masked man, anyway?” Ha!

Back at Pleiku, everybody was absolutely ecstatic. The Boy Wonder had really done well. The crew chief was already painting the outlines of five tiny trucks on the side of the jet when Billy Turner gestured toward the plaque I had been working on before the flight.

“Well hotshot, think it’s time to go put that thing where it deserves to be?”

“Bet your ass, Maj. T.,” I yelled, and we all piled into the jeeps, raced up to the MACV compound and charged into the bar.

As usual, the place smelled of spilled beer, whiskey and stale smoke. A corny Filipino band was in one corner doing its best to imitate the Rolling Stones while a topless Korean dancer jiggled on a small stage.

Firm hands grasped my legs, lifting me up. The hoots of pilots from other units grew in intensity as I climbed up onto the bar, holding our freshly painted emblem in one hand, a hammer in the other and some nails between my teeth. As I drove the last nail into place to secure our logo alongside the others, the boisterous crowd cheered. I looked around the bar from my precarious perch, just taking the whole scene in for a moment.



“Movers at 4107”

The Dragons were officially on station and everybody seemed to like it! As I climbed down, somebody was shoving a beer in my face. It was my wife.

“Thought you might like to take a break from all the unpacking. What were you doing up on the bookcase, anyway?” she asked, holding out a cold one.

“Well, actually... I mean... uh... I was just looking at this old lighter.”

“What? You gonna put it up there with your other ‘I love me’ stuff?”

“Oh no, I just had it in my hand when I, well, when I climbed up here.”

“I don’t think anybody would notice it up there anyway,” she quipped, heading back down the stairs.

“And hurry up, I need your help getting the washing machine hooked up.”

I gazed at the lighter’s silver and black logo for a few seconds, then put it away. The demon retreated for the time being. But I knew he’d be back, because the quote on the other side of the lighter was beginning to haunt me – “Movers at 4107.”