



Shotgun Blasts

The 221st Aviation Company – Then and Now



Volume 4, Issue 2

February 2012

A-1E Sky Raider Stories

...just a few short memories after 40+ years.

By Jim McGraw, Shotgun 23, 36, 6

1 – My first experience with the Skyraider pilots was when I called them for an ordnance drop on an operation. Three of these guys showed up--Vietnamese pilots with a USAF pilot in the back seat of one. He was the one I communicated with. I fired rockets to mark the target and banked to the left to get out of their way, while explaining to them that they should bank right after dropping their load. Well, much to my dismay the first guy banked left not too far from my position, then the second guy did the same thing! I was upset because they turned so close to me and I expressed my feelings on my radio! The USAF pilot said to me, "Shotgun, can you join us at the airport when you're done here?" I told him sure, I'd like that, and I did indeed join him later that day. While we enjoyed a cool one, he took me to one of the A-1 Skyraider aircraft and said, "See those two blocks taped to the rudder?" I looked in and sure enough, there were two 2x4 blocks duct-taped to the rudders. "You see these guys' legs aren't long enough to reach the rudders

so that's why the blocks are taped on, and because of that, they don't have enough strength in their legs to make the aircraft bank to the right. They have to go with the natural motion of the aircraft on their pull-out and that's to the left." I thanked him for the explanation, and I also told him I sure wish I'd known that in the first place!



2 – One day while flying reconnaissance in the Delta when nothing seemed to be happening, a Skyraider came whizzing by me. It really startled me because you can't hear them coming until they're right on you and there's danger in getting caught in their wake.

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This newsletter is dedicated to the men of the 221st RAC who served from 23 March 1965 thru 10 October 1971, to the ladies that stood beside them and to that magnificent flying machine, the Cessna Birddog.

Brothers in Arms – Always

But, I was pretty sure he saw me and was just having fun with me. I thought then, *uh-oh, they come in pairs, now where's the other one? I sure hope he sees me!* I looked to my left and saw nothing, then turned to my right and there he was right along side in formation with me! He had his gear down and full flaps so he could go slowly enough to fly along at 80 knots. Scared the you-know-what out of me! I couldn't see his eyes because his visor was down, but he grinned at me and waved, then raised his gear and flaps and moved on out to join the other one. Seemed to me he was having a lot of fun!

3 – Over an operation one day, we knew where the enemy was and I was told to call for an ordnance drop. I called the A-1E guys in the area and told them I'd fire my rockets to mark the target. Three Skyraiders showed up, told me they'd be dropping napalm, and began their runs at the target. The first two dropped their loads right on target and went on up and out while the third one came in so low that when he dropped his load, the tail of his aircraft caught on fire! It was quite a sight and nothing he could do would get the fire out. I was sure happy to see that he bailed out successfully over an area where the friendly troops were.

Man, those guys were good, and they sure seemed to enjoy what they were doing.

Jim



The Lighter Side

Just a few of the Adult Truths that we have to admit are a part of our lives now that we are finally maturing.

- Sometimes I'll look at my watch three consecutive times and still not know what time it is.
- Nothing sucks more than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong.
- I totally take back all those times I didn't want to nap when I was younger.
- There is a great need for a sarcasm font.
- Was learning cursive really necessary?
- Bad decisions make good stories.
- You never know when it will strike, but there comes a moment at work when you know that you just aren't going to do anything productive the rest of the day.
- I totally disagree with Kay Jewelers, and would bet that more kisses begin with Absolut Vodka than Kay.
- I love the sense of camaraderie when an entire line of cars team up to prevent a jerk from cutting in at the front. Stay strong, brothers and sisters.
- Even under ideal conditions people have trouble locating their car keys in a pocket, finding their cell phone, and Pinning the Tail on the Donkey – but I'd bet everyone can find and push the snooze button from three feet away, in about 1.7 seconds, eyes closed, first time, every time





OK, Shotguns, thought I would use a little space to let you know who within our group have been confirmed as members of the IBDA, the organization that supports our reunion efforts with their aircraft and pilots. If you are a member but not indicated below it is because you have not provided your name to me.

- Hank Collins
- Skip Dent
- Ron Easley
- John Francis
- Fritz Guenther
- Don Loftis
- Jim McGraw
- Jim Merritt
- Don Modica
- Bob Preble
- Tom Regnier
- Don Smith
- Al Spain
- Knight (Mike) Tuttle
- Billy Wallum
- Bruce Werner

I have space for more names so at least think about joining.



Letters

Please, send us your feedback so that we know if we are headed in the right direction with *Shotgun Blasts*, we cannot be offended, we've been around far too long.

3 Jan 2012

From 221.org

I need some help in providing captions to the 2011 Reunion Slides. If you can help, send me the captions in MS Word format. Please reference the slide collection and the picture number. If you are good at identifying faces this is for you.

Monte Caylor, Web Master
mecalo@mchsi.com

8 Jan 2012

Don:

What an excellent newsletter. I read all three and am really impressed with your composition, content, readability, and best of all interesting comments. Thank you so much for sending them. You obviously put in a lot of time and effort on this project, and it shows.

Harry Harper, Delta 6/Phantom 6

25 Jan 2012

Good morning, Don

Many thanks for getting the Shotgun patch and decal to me. You are very thoughtful. They'll find good home 'round here.

Hope you're having a great Texas day.

Again, thanks.

Cheers,

Neil Smart, Shotgun 6

Chaplain's Corner

Into the Gap

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command." (John 15:12-13 NIV) For the full context, read all of John 15.

Don Smith emailed and said he was trying to begin a new column for the "Shotgun Blasts". He said the suggestion had been made to call it "In the Gap" and sited Ezekiel 22:30. "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none." (Ezekiel 22:30 NIV)

I went to read it and got to thinking along the lines, as Don suggested, about our kids and their kids who have literally taken our places in the mission of stopping the bad guys before they can cause harm here, in the USA, and replied:

"I thought - and may I offer an amendment of, "Into the Gap" with the reference - Ezekiel said God could find no one then - but we have them now, in our progeny. (To which Don answered) **"I like the modification and I do believe that we have just found the title."**



I pictured Nehemiah rebuilding the wall of

Jerusalem - he was standing in the Gap for the wounded city, and he took a lot of heat for it (Nehemiah 4:1). Then I remembered a teaching by one of my professors, the late Alberta Lunger, teaching on intercessory prayer and saying she considered a person engaged in intercessory prayer to be a person that is "... standing in the gap between the problem and the person in need and the Source and Supply of all the stuff to solve the problem...".

She also mentioned that one of the reasons she liked to pray for people was that it was like being a straw between the person drinking milk and the milk. With a big smile she added, "... and you know, a little milk always gets left in the straw."

We, in our time, went to be the ones standing between our people and the ones intending to do us harm. Our families, other loved ones and friends interceded on our behalf then, as many of us do now, who have different levels of progeny and friends in the Active, Reserve and Guard units.

February is often called the "Love Month". Jesus, in the beginning scripture here, said "Greater love (agape)' has no one ... ". We and all members of the armed forces, and the other service activities which put people in jeopardy of losing their lives in that service; are those who "signed on the dotted line", and did, for all intents and purposes, lay down our lives for our friends - even for our whole Country. All those whose names are on the various Memorials ultimately experienced the fulfillment of that action. We may not have thought about it in the terms of John 15:13, but that is what we did, however we euphemized and/or justified it to ourselves and our families.

Those who had gone before us, from the Revolutionary War to Korea, and those who came after us, to the present day, were and are the standing-in-the-gap people. They and we laid it on the line, as one email statement I read said, "... signed a blank check for our lives ...", and again, since The New Testament sees "*αγαπε*" as a doing word (not a feeling word) our forbearers, we ourselves

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and those who have followed after us, have done and are doing as Jesus described.

Now, having said that, I wish to share with you a link to the seven commentaries which followed the Ezekiel passage I have offered above. Just scroll down until you find "Parallel Commentaries". [Ezekiel 22:30](#)

And in reading them, which I hope you do - you will see, that in God's eyes, as indicated by Ezekiel, that soldiering is not all there was to it.

Please. Check them out - each one - and let The LORD speak to your hearts about your todays and tomorrows, your here and now, your future there and then. I think you will see a progression. (I could add here some about the "Hedge" thing, but that is for another time.)

May the Grace of God hold you; and the Strength of God arm you to Stand in the Gap where you are; and give you His Peace.

Ned



Editor's Note: To clarify a few things, the idea for a feature about our kids and grandkids was submitted by our Sister, Fran McGraw and after asking for suggestions for a title the idea of using "In the Gap" came to us from our Comrade, Hank Collins, the credit is theirs, the content is yours.



Mardi Gras

Just when is it and what is it...

The actual date for Mardi Gras in 2012 is Tuesday, February 21. I am sure that all of my friends and associates know that the term **Mardi Gras** is French for Fat Tuesday, referring to the practice of the last night of eating richer, fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday; in English the day is sometimes referred to as Shrove Tuesday, from the word shrive, meaning "confess."

There are other popular practices associated with celebrations before the fasting and religious obligations associated with the penitential season of Lent. Popular practices include wearing masks and costumes, overturning social conventions, dancing, sports competitions, parades, etc.

While not observed nationally throughout the United States, a number of traditionally ethnic French cities and regions in the country have notable celebrations.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the rise in producing commercial videotapes catering to voyeurs helped encourage a tradition of women baring breasts in exchange for beads and trinkets. This practiced only in very small fragments of where Mardi Gras is celebrated, mostly by visitors rather than locals.

Let's Party



Help Wanted

There are still several openings for Shotguns that are willing to give of themselves by participating as members of the 2013 Reunion Planning and Organization Committee. Initial planning must start in April 2012.

This Month in Military History

- FEBRUARY 1* *SPACE SHUTTLE COLUMBIA BROKE APART IN FLIGHT OVER WEST TEXAS JUST 16 MINUTES PRIOR TO SCHEDULED LANDING. 2003*
- FEBRUARY 2* *WAR BETWEEN UNITED STATES AND MEXICO ENDED. 1848*
- FEBRUARY 3* *SINKING OF THE U.S. ARMY TRANSPORT DORCHESTER NEAR GREENLAND. KNOWN FOR THE CHAPLAINS THAT DIED AFTER GIVING THEIR LIFE VESTS TO OTHERS. 1943*



- FEBRUARY 15* *U.S. BATTLESHIP MAINE BLOWN UP WHILE AT ANCHOR IN HAVANA RESULTING IN A DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST SPAIN. 1898*
- SOVIET RUSSIA COMPLETED A MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN AFTER NINE YEARS. 1989*
- FEBRUARY 23* *FIRST ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES MAINLAND WHEN A JAPANESE SUBMARINE SHELLED AN OIL REFINERY NEAR SANTA BARBARA, CA. 1942*

Dates to Remember

- FEBRUARY 1* *FREEDOM DAY*
- FEBRUARY 2* *GROUNDHOG DAY*
- FEBRUARY 3* *FOUR CHAPLAIN'S MEMORIAL DAY*
- THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED, WE LOST BUDDY HOLLY, RITCHIE VALENS AND THE BIG BOPPER IN 1959.*
- FEBRUARY 4* *USO DAY*
- WORLD CANCER DAY*
- FEBRUARY 5* *SUPER BOWL XLVI*
- FEBRUARY 8* *BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA WAS FOUNDED IN 1910.*
- FEBRUARY 14* *VALENTINE'S DAY*
- FEBRUARY 20* *PRESIDENTS DAY*

AND

LEST WE FORGET, THE ENTIRE MONTH OF

FEBRUARY HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS:

AMERICAN HEART MONTH



For Our Very Special Ladies

Just a little something for those Ladies that have meant so much to us for these many years and to whom we gave little credit for our successes in the Army and in life. The following tales are mindful of how we, the men in your lives, think of you.

The Power of Love

Soldier saved by a dream – A Valentine Story Mystery

By Juanita Violini

In the heat and chaos of World War I, a young Polish soldier known as Stanislaus Omensky kissed his fiancée, Merna, before marching off to war. "I'll dream of you," she said. Little did either of them know that Merna's dream would end up saving Stanislaus' life.

In October of 1918, in the dying days of the Great War, Merna had a terrible nightmare. She dreamed that Stanislaus was groping his way through a dark tunnel, ending in a jumbled mass of rocks and timbers. She saw him setting a candle down to throw his strength against the blockage, and collapsing back, weeping.

Merna had the same dream several times, and pestered the authorities in her native Czernak to try and help her find Stanislaus. With many thousands of soldiers missing or dead, they had no time for her. In the summer of 1919 her dreams changed. Now she saw a castle on the brow of a hill, with one tower crumbled into a mass of stone and timbers. As she got closer, she could hear a voice crying for help. Again, this dream returned to her night after night. She told whoever she could, and was greeted with skepticism and ridicule.

Merna took to traveling the countryside where Stanislaus' regiment had last been seen. She was penniless, living only on the kindness of strangers, but refused to give up on her betrothed and her dream. The area was replete with many ruined castles, but none matched the tower in her nightmare.

Then, on April 25, 1920, she crested a hill

near Zlota and leaped for joy. The castle overlooking the town was exactly the one of her dream. She ran into the town, dusty and screaming, and collapsed by the fountain, excited and exhausted. When she was roused she told the townspeople her story, and ran off to scabble at the castle rocks barehanded. Everyone in Zlota knew that the castle had been damaged in the war, but they didn't know what to make of Merna's tale. Still, many townsmen soon helped her, moving debris and rocks away from the base of the tower.



For two days they dug, and then came upon an open area under the rubble. From the entrance came the weak cries of a pale, ragged Stanislaus. He and Merna were reunited. The Polish soldier had been saved by the power of love, and the strength of Merna's conviction in her dream.

Stanislaus' side of the story was just as amazing. He had taken refuge in the castle during a fight, and been buried when artillery struck the tower. He had found candles, water, cheese, wine, and hundreds of rats, and lived in almost complete darkness for two years.

The Polish Army investigated, and found every aspect of the couple's story to be true. Stanislaus was dismissed with honors and the two married and lived, we can presume, happily ever after.



A Valentine's Day Story

Author Unknown

John Blanchard stood up from the bench, straightened his Army uniform, and studied the crowd of people making their way through Grand Central Station. He looked for the girl whose heart he knew, but whose face he didn't, the girl with the rose.

His interest in her had begun thirteen months before in a Florida library. Taking a book off the shelf he found himself intrigued, not with the words of the book, but with the notes penciled in the margin. The soft handwriting reflected a thoughtful soul and insightful mind. In the front of the book, he discovered the previous owner's name, Miss Hollis Maynell. With time and effort he located her address. She now lived in New York City. He wrote her a letter introducing himself and inviting her to correspond. The next day he was shipped overseas for service in World War II.

During the next year and one month the two grew to know each other through the mail. Each letter was a seed falling on a fertile heart. A romance was budding. Blanchard requested a photograph, but she refused. She felt that if he really cared, it wouldn't matter what she looked like.

When the day finally came for him to return from Europe, they scheduled their first meeting – 7:00 PM at the Grand Central Station in New York. "You'll recognize me," she wrote, "by the red rose I'll be wearing on my lapel." So at 7:00 he was in the station looking for a girl whose heart he loved, but whose face he'd never seen.

I'll let Mr. Blanchard tell you what happened: A young woman was coming toward me, her figure long and slim. Her blonde hair lay back in curls from her delicate ears; her eyes were blue as flowers. Her lips and chin had a gentle firmness, and in her pale green suit she was like springtime come alive. I started toward her, entirely forgetting to notice that she was not wearing a rose. As I moved, a small provocative smile curved her lips. "Going my way, sailor?" she murmured.

Almost uncontrollably I made one step closer to her, and then I saw Hollis Maynell. She was standing almost directly behind the girl. A woman well past 40, she had graying hair tucked under a worn hat. She was more than plump, her thick-ankled feet thrust into low-heeled shoes. The girl in the green suit was walking quickly away.

I felt as though I was split in two, so keen was my desire to follow her, and yet so deep was my longing for the woman whose spirit had truly companioned me and upheld my own. And there she stood. Her pale, plump face was gentle and sensible, her gray eyes had a warm and kindly twinkle. I did not hesitate. My fingers gripped the small worn blue leather copy of the book that was to identify me to her. This would not be love, but it would be something precious, something perhaps even better than love, a friendship for which I had been and must ever be grateful.

I squared my shoulders and saluted and held out the book to the woman, even though while I spoke I felt choked by the bitterness of my disappointment. "I'm Lieutenant John Blanchard, and you must be Miss Maynell. I am so glad you could meet me. May I take you to dinner?"

The woman's face broadened into a tolerant smile. "I don't know what this is about son," she answered, "but the young lady in the green suit who just went by, she begged me to wear this rose on my coat. And she said if you were to ask me out to dinner, I should go and tell you that she is waiting for you in the big restaurant across the street. "She said it was some kind of test!" It's not difficult to understand and admire Miss Maynell's wisdom.



Into the Gap

We are actually behind schedule for sending out our salute to the children and grandchildren of our Shotgun family.



Major Daryl Beltz, youngest son of Robert Beltz, Shotgun Maintenance, '65 – '66, is currently serving in Afghanistan with an Ohio National Guard unit. Daryl is due to return in September 2012.



SGT Kyle Schultz-Moore, the grandson of our Chaplain, Ned Moore, Shotgun 15, '67 – '68, served in Kuwait from April 2010 – April 2011 and is currently in the states undergoing further training. Grandpa is very proud and states, "I believe he has the makings of an outstanding CSM." The smaller of these two fine gentlemen is Ned's first great-grandson, Jonathan.



Michael Scott Misek (20), grandson of Jim (Shotgun 6) and Fran McGraw, is a fuel systems mechanic for the F-16 Fighter. His unit recently deployed to "somewhere in Southwest Asia."



LTC Noel C. Smart a third generation career Army officer is currently commanding the 94th Military Police Bn. in Yong San, Korea. A 1992 graduate of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, he has served nine years overseas in Kuwait, Europe, Iraq and Korea. Noel is the son of Neil Smart (Shotgun 6) of Mollusk, VA and is married to the former Catherine Burke of Cape Cod, MA who served with him as an MP Officer.

Final Flight

Take just a moment to reflect and to remember those who have gone before us

Jackson “Jack” E. Waldrup

Shotgun Platoon Sergeant, 1966

Passed away from a massive heart attack in July 2005. Jack is survived by his wife, Gerlinde of Daleville, Alabama.



Shawn M. Dunkin

SGT, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division

Shawn, 25, son of Michael Dunkin, Shotgun 4, 1971, died in Baghdad, February 19, 2007 of wounds suffered when the vehicle he was in was struck by an improvised explosive device. Shawn was buried at the Chattanooga National Cemetery. In addition to his father and a sister, Tracie Dunkin of Louisville, KY, he is survived by his wife, Ashley Dunkin of Watertown, NY.

Shawn was on his second tour in Iraq having served there in an Armor unit in 2003.

He was “Standing in the Gap.”

“Let me not mourn for the men who have died fighting, but rather let me be glad that such heroes have lived.”

General George S. Patton

Standing Tall and Proud

By Marion Hinton

You may see me in the grocery store or at the cleaners, getting gas or mowing the lawn. I may be at work typing or sweeping, nursing or doctoring, waiting on customers or constructing a building. But you can tell it's me, I will be the one standing tall and proud.

You see while other children were going to work, college or loafing around; goofing off or just being kids; playing tennis or football; my child joined the world's finest military.

My child has been serving this country all over the world. Keeping peace, making peace and making me proud.

And now when our country, our way of life, our very democracy is threatened; my child is ready and eager to answer the call to conquer this evil plague that has been set upon us and the rest of the world.

Recently many parents have suffered the greatest loss any parent can face, and my heart shares their loss.

I am also filled with the deepest fear for the health and future of my child. Yet the desire to serve is what has charted my child's life, and molded the personal strength that simply amazes and humbles me.

And that is why I am proud. That is why our country is the greatest. I could be any mother or father anywhere. But you can tell it's me, I will be the one standing tall and proud.



*You didn't forget Valentine's Day, did you?
Better contact Corky in a hurry!*



Until Every One Comes Home[®]

Get an e-mail off to Corky quickly and he will give you some ideas.

www.corkysstudiographics.com

Birthdays

Our Shotgun Brothers and Sisters that will be turning another leaf in their personal calendars and, rapidly approaching that always magical number 29.

February 1	Linda Sundberg	Lincoln, NE
February 3	George Cook	Concho, AZ
February 3	Bobbi Kramlick	Billings, MT
February 4	Judy Preble	Litchfield Park, AZ
February 11	Samuel Woolf	Petersburg, VA
February 16	Jimmy McGraw	Whitney, TX
February 20	Sunni Allen	Keysville, GA

I am sure that there are more of you out there that celebrate your birthdays during the month of February but if you don't complete your data form and return it there is no record for us to use.

Links

A few sites that you may want to check out.

- 74th RAC www.aloft74th.org
183rd RAC www.183seahorse.org
184th RAC www.184rac.com
185th RAC www.angelfire.com
199th RAC www.swampfox199thrac.com
219th RAC www.219headhunters.com
220th RAC www.catkillers.org
221st RAC www.221st.org

And

1st Aviation Brigade
www.1stavnbd.com

OV-1 Mohawk Association
www.ov-1mohawkassociation.org

Army Otter-Caribou Association
www.otter-caribou.org

International Bird Dog Association
www.ibdaweb.com

Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association
www.vhpa.org

Army Aviation Association of America
www.quad-a.org

Take a few minutes to check out the **new IBDA** web site, a real improvement. While there you can join the organization that has helped us with our reunions in the past and will no doubt continue to do so.



The Last Shot

Oh well, I am now down to my last round and am hoping that there will be some input from you, the reader, for the next issue of your newsletter. There are tales out there that really should be told and take my word for it, we will not chide you for telling those tales now. Just put them on paper, Word format if available to you and e-mail to the Shotgun Blasts at:

Shotgun-8A@hotmail.com

or send them by Snail Mail to:

Don Smith
17815 Yellow Birch Trail
Humble, TX 77346

Reunion

Time once again to mention that there is another reunion that we all must consider, the Mekong Delta Veterans Reunion that will take place 18 – 20 May, 2012 at Fort Rucker, Alabama. I have heard from several of our comrades at the 199th RAC that they will be attending but not a word from any of the Shotguns. If you do plan to attend please let me know so that we can organize some sort of united front at the activities. For more information check out the site www.mekongdeltavets.com.



OK, I got another newsletter finished and off to the Shotguns. It's time for some shuteye.