
SHOTGUN BLASTS

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Chaplain's Corner

And then . . . Nothing.

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

The build up to the peak(s) of the holiday season starts, for us, on 31 October – yes, Halloween, but more importantly, to us – Barb's birthday, with All Saints Day, 1 November, immediately following, being the day most congregations remember those they have lost since last year.

The holiday frenzy intensifies, day by day, through Thanksgiving and on to Christmas – ending in what amounts for many, big blow-out parties followed by New Year's Day parades, football and another whopping meal.

And then . . . Nothing.

The holiday season is over, especially if you don't care who wins the Superbowl. There are other days coming, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and April Fool's Day – but "The Holidays" are over. Holy Week and Easter are "a long way off."

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Ramblings

We flew together . . .

By Hank Collins, Shotgun 46

In our war most units, once they were deployed, stayed for the duration of the war, rotating the personnel in and out – but no unit rotations until the end. Add to this the geography of the deployment and it becomes readily apparent how even troops serving in the same unit at the same time may never meet; that is until a reunion was held some forty years later. It was at these reunions that some of us found that we weren't quite as unique as maybe we thought we were – at least among our Birddoger brothers – and in fact we found that we shared many of the same experiences. Jim McGraw, Sam Givhan, (SF), Woody Barnes (SF), and I had flight experiences (none of us were mechanically talented enough to make it as a crew chief), all at different times and different places, that were almost identical. What would it have been like for all of us to have been there at the same time and place – to have flown together? Well, the 2007 and the 2009 reunions made that partially possible. From the excellent comments shared by our banquet speakers, to the shared experiences we recalled with friends, and some experiences were shared with total strangers on the day at Sky Ranch, these memories served as a common denominator for our service. And it was with these shared experiences, that we found there was a bond between all of us and through this bond that we did fly together.

We flew together . . .

When on that bright and early morning, we were told to call "clear" before cranking the machine that would lift us up from the earth, and change our lives forever,

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Whether we like it or not, we feel somewhat lost, even depressed. The “Family Thing” has been done. Visitors are gone. Decorations are down and stored. The big build-up, the anticipation has left us. Dangling? Exhausted? Some even hung over . . . Well, OK, they probably earned it.

I submit – it doesn’t have to be that way. We don’t have to feel let down, lost or depressed because the holidays are gone. Or, because there are no more holidays until . . . Or, good grief 3 (or more) months of winter.

Rejoice!

Our Lord is a 24/7/365/Lifetime Lord. Stay connected to family and friends, whichever method best suits you. Encourage one another as the Apostle Paul writes: “. . . Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph 5: 18b – 20) On the job, as Paul says in Eph 6:7 – “Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men.”

“Yes”, you say, “easy for you. You are retired.” Well I didn’t get here without help. Practicing my little “Give Thanks” litany went a long way in allowing The Lord to replace all manner of negative thoughts and feelings with His Joy, and a spirit of rebellion with a servant spirit.

Looking back, and as now – I can say with enthusiasm, “Every day in the Lord is a Holiday” – Hol-i-day – Holy Day – get it?

And so it may always be, because a holiday is not “freedom from . . .” it is Freedom In . . .!

Holiday Blessings,

Ned

Editor’s Note: All of you Shotgunners (Swampfoxes are part of the family) should contact our Chaplain, Ned Moore if you have some spiritual needs, he is acting as our “central clearing house” for Prayer requests.

Nedmoore1@att.net

Where Were You?

A Coast Guard patrol boat . . .

By Bob Gee, Shotgun 22 (1966)

It would be interesting to hear how everyone spent Christmas 1966 (or later, or ’65) in the Delta. I worked. I spent most of the day flying around IV Corps (in violation of the truce) checking to see if there were any violations of the truce. After landing at Ca Mau for Christmas dinner and some gas, I continued with what started as an uneventful and boring flight. Just after taking off from Ca Mau, I headed for the coast and spotted a man moving along a paddy dike. His uniform and pith helmet was unusual and when I called in a report to the 13th Battalion Headquarters, I was told that it was the uniform of the NVA. I had just spotted the first reported NVA in the IV Corps area. He must have felt secure because of the truce. A little later, on the shoreline planted securely in the mud among the mangroves I spotted something which caused me to go lower for a better look. It was an American Flag fluttering in the breeze in an area where there were few people and certainly no Americans. Off shore, about 200 meters just drifting as if on a break was a Coast Guard patrol boat. I called over VHF and asked if anyone knew about the flag. They replied that they thought it would be fitting for and American Flag to fly from the shore of South Viet Nam on Christmas day and so two of their crew had swum ashore to plant it. I told them they were nuts, but wished them Merry Christmas anyway. By that time I had logged about 5 hours, so I decided that except for one lone NVA soldier hurrying down a rice paddy dike, two crazy Coasties and one Shotgun flying patrol there were no truce violations in the IV Corps area and I called it a day and headed for Can Tho and Christmas dinner leftovers. Less than 30 days on my DEROS calendar.

Bob

If the wings are traveling faster than the fuselage, its probably a helicopter - - and therefore unsafe.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

DATES IMPORTANT TO ARMY AVIATION

JANUARY 03, 1951 – FIRST ARMY MEDICAL EVACUATION MISSION FLOWN IN KOREA

JANUARY 18, 1905 – WRIGHT BROTHERS CONTACT THEIR CONGRESSMAN TO INQUIRE IF THE GOVERNMENT IS INTERESTED IN THEIR EXPERIMENTS AND MACHINE. THEY RECEIVED A FORM LETTER REPLY IN THE NEGATIVE.

JANUARY 28, 1963 – FIRST FLIGHT OF HILLER OH-5A HELICOPTER

JANUARY 30, 1968 – BEGINNING OF THE TET OFFENSIVE IN VIETNAM

JANUARY 30, 1968 – NASA SELECTED MAJ ROBERT L. STEWART AS THE FIRST ARMY ASTRONAUT

When that cockpit was filled with an eerie silence caused by the absence of the instructor pilot as we soloed, a silence that was shortly overcome by the total exhilaration that can only be known on that first flight,

When we swooped down on a water tower in a small town to confirm that indeed we did know exactly where we were all along,

When in the back seat a crew chief sits as we take-off, validating his maintenance work with his life, as he lets you pilot *his* plane,

When in that moment of stark terror, and we had done all we knew to do, but weren't sure it was enough to divert disaster, and later find ourselves thinking back how it could have only been the hand of God that brought us through,

When we share the deep ache that won't ever totally go away for those who took to the skies with us, but didn't make it back,

When we answered our country's call, "to give all we had, up to and including our lives," to protect it and its freedoms.

We flew together . . . and I'm proud and honored to say that I have had the good fortune to have served with men such as you

Hank

Folks, I want you to all be aware that I did chastise Fran for her choice of a Mohawk and not a Bird Dog for the cover photo. I did receive a solid and pleasant apology to all of us. As part of the apology Fran will autograph copies for any and all members that desire a copy of "Safe Landings" just contact her and she will make sure that Jimmy gets them mailed.

The Editor
(I got mine already!)

Definition of a complex airplane:

Landing a tail dragger on pavement with a twenty knot quartering crosswind.

Your Attention Please

We were just notified by Fran McGraw, one of our "Six Plus" ladies that the book she has been working on for some time has been published. The title of this amazing tome is "Safe Landings"

For information you can check the link below.

<http://www.tatepublishing.com/bookstore/book.php?w=978-1-61566-563-1>



My Turn

By Don Smith, Shotgun 8A ('65-'66)
I now have the opportunity to thank those folks that have taken the time to scratch out their contributions to our, yes, our newsletter. Hank Collins is always ready to step to the head of the line when it comes to helping folks, Bob Gee just wants to know what you other guys were doing while he was out doing lazy eights and other exercises and our Chaplain, Ned Moore is there for us with some spiritual guidance to keep us on the "straight and narrow" path. Now, the rest of you have the same opportunities. We all have stories to tell, some of them are

even true, and it is time for you to share them with your comrades in arms from that time so long ago. There are tales about flying, about the conditions on the ground, about family and the list goes on . . . let me hear from you. I really want to hear a little more from our mechanics and the rest of the Company staff that did all of the background work to keep those Bird Dogs and Beavers in the air. If you review the data we had an amazing availability rate and it wasn't because the pilots were babying the planes. Tell us some of your stories, we want to know how you did it. Please guys, if your wives feel that they have something to tell us let them send it in, I have

always found the distaff side to be quite interesting (read Fran's book and you will understand). Finally, it is time to begin the preparations for Reunion 2011 and there is a lot of work to do. We cannot afford to wait if we want to have another great one. In that light I will be sending out a brief questionnaire next month regarding timing, location and what we want to do. Please take the time to complete the form and send it back so that we have some of the basic information that we need to put things in order.

Don

We all know how important the IBDA has been in the planning and the implementation of our last two reunions. It might be the time to join or renew your membership in this organization that has supported us and that is working to keep the memory of the Bird Dog alive.



The International Birddog Association is the only Association dedicated to preserving the heritage of a great American aircraft, The L-19/O-1 Birddog. This aircraft deserves recognition and accolades for its service in Korea, Vietnam and its on-going peace time deployment in many foreign countries. As an Association we not only support this concept, but also ensure that there are resources available for those that continue to operate these aircraft in private or commercial activity.

As a member you can choose what level of activity that best fits your lifestyle. We have website information, a monthly electronic newsletter, a quarterly magazine and periodic membership meetings. Additionally we feature an annual regional fly-in and a big International fly-in every five years. Should you require assistance with mechanical matters on your Birddog the Association has experts on every subject, plus a knowledge base dedicated to these issues for members only on the website. If it is historical information that you need, our historian has the largest collection of Birddog information in the world. We also have an official aircraft insurance company and a merchandise shop. Website ads are free to members and there is an active forum on Birddog related matters.

Cost of membership is a modest \$30.00 per year. Go to the IBDA Web Site at www.ibdaweb.com and join today.

Regards,

Sam Dawson