

Red Eagles

4th July Newsletter



4 July 2009
Issue 2

Fellow Red Eagles: Commander's Call

Thirty years ago (July 1979) the Red Eagles started flight operations at the Tonopah Test Range when 8 jets showed up on initial to land. The 4477th Test and Evaluation Flight was equipped with 2 MiG-17s and 6 MiG-21s. We also had 3 Cessna 404s and a Kenworth tractor.

The initial cadre of people, the jets, the facilities and the equipment were assembled by 29 men under the leadership of Glenn Frick, the first commander. Glenn got the ball rolling, got promoted and then was reassigned to the US Mission in Egypt to help the Egyptians crank up an F-4 program which replaced their MiG-23s.

I have often wondered what happened to those Egyptian MiG-23s and about the role Glenn might have had in their disposition. It is easy to let your imagination run wild with that one!

The team of people that Glenn assembled was not only without equal in terms of mechanical talent; the team was also without equal in the ability to work together and to select others to join the Red Eagles. Men were carefully selected that possessed the same qualities.

In my 26 years of active commissioned service nowhere else did I see the equal of the team of men in the 4477th. Every minute spent working with the Red Eagles was truly a joy.

In April 2009 I asked Tommy Karnes to his face, "How do you take a wrecked MiG-21 and build it into a safe flying machine." Tommy replied, "It's easy Boss, you just take it apart, figure out what don't work right, fix what's broken and put it

back together again."

It's hard to believe I had missed something that simple!

By the time Phil White relinquished command to Jack Manclark, by Phil's count, he had over 400 assigned personnel including a Chief who was the First Shirt. At the peak in 1987 Jack had 27 MiGs, although not all were flyable at the same time.

This unit played a role in the United States of America's victory over the USSR in the Cold War. Further, the unit provided the training to our United States Air Force, Navy and Marine combat fighter forces that led to the air war successes during the Gulf of Sidra shoot downs in 1981 and 1989, Desert Storm in 1991 and the follow-on Iraqi operations. The Red Eagles also had measurable influence indirectly during the war over Kosovo.

It is my hope that the veterans of the 4477th TES will band back together and participate in a Red Eagle Alumni Association that publishes a newsletter of important info to us all, keeps a personnel roster up to date, and also sponsors periodic reunions and smaller but more frequent local social gatherings. Perhaps we need "Line Chiefs" around this great country to volunteer to take charge in their own backyards, figure out who lives close by and lead the way locally.

Paul Cox has worked long and hard here in Vegas, largely by himself, to collect and organize squadron roster information. I think we have now folded all of the



Editor Column:

As you all know by now, the Constant Peg Project has been declassified as of 2007.

- This newsletter will be sent out once a quarter and will be an open form for all to use.
- Please share your stories or just plain comments so others members can enjoy. If you wish to submit a picture, ensure that you send it in a jpeg format.
- You are being asked, if you know of other Red Eagles members that are not aware of the declassification of our project to please inform them. So they may join us, in this telling of old times and fun stories.
- You can submit your stories by emailing them to bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or use of snail mail:
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Cont: Commander's Call

known data into a single roster and have pretty much purged the obsolete emails and addresses. Ben Galloway and Bob Breault have picked up the responsibility for the Squadron roster and are off to a great start. But, there is still a long way to go to make the Red Eagle roster complete. And, in addition to new input info on people we need updates when things change.

I suggest that every Red Eagle put Galloway and Breault in their cellular equivalent of the "T Mobile" Fav Five, even if it is necessary to erase the mother-in-law. Then, when things change or you find someone that has been "lost" you can easily send Ben or Bob updated information.

Just prior to Memorial Day we received the first squadron newsletter. It was designed and published by Ben Galloway. WAY TO GO BEN.

The newsletter was forwarded to those with valid email addresses in the Red Eagle roster.

This July 2009 edition is the next newsletter and I challenge the other commanders to follow in sequence with a quarterly commander's column for the newsletter.

Obie Henderson, "batter up" for the next Commander's Column and Tom Gibbs, you're on deck. Ben, hold their feet to the fire.

We need to keep track of each other. That's all for now Gang.

Bandit Leader on Initial with a flight of 8, New Day, New Town - It'll be a full stop landing! Hello Tonopah!

Gail Peck



Gail Peck, AKA "Evil", with number 85 (old 14) at USAF Armament Museum outside Eglin AFB, FL in Mar 09. She looks good on static display but she looked better with the wheels up and locked while climbing out at Mach 1.

Happy 4th of July guys! I know you miss the old military holiday safety briefs. So here goes; if you're driving and get tired, take a break. Don't get too much sun. Don't drink and drive. Be careful with fireworks and for some of you, this includes using the grill.

I remember the 4th of July when I was a kid. The picnic at the beach, swimming and getting sunburned. Heading home in the late afternoon and getting things ready to cook up dinner. Climbing trees in the yard and running around the yard with sparklers blazing. And my dear mother yelling at me to be careful and get out of the tree before you break your neck. And quit running with that sparkler before you put your eye out. Later, at dusk, drive down to watch the city fireworks display.

Times have changed. Now my wife is telling me to be careful not to fall and break a hip. And, your glasses are on top of your head, dummy. Maybe things aren't all that different after all. I think I'll skip the sunburn.

So, as you plan for the festivities on this day, make a list and make one trip to the store. Then go back three more times for the stuff you forgot. Oh, wait, that's only me that does that. For you city folk, you can get to where you are going in under 15 minutes. As for me, it's 26 miles one way to the nearest store so I have to make a list.

The 4th of July is a little more critical for me than most. This just happens to be my wedding anniversary, 31 years today. My wife told me when we were married that if I ever did forget our anniversary, there truly would be some fireworks. I think she was joking. However, I'm not willing to put her to the test.

Anyway, I just wanted to wish you guys a happy 4th. Stay safe out there. Enjoy your time with your family and spend a little time with the grandkids. Load them up with sugary stuff and turn them back over to mom and dad to deal with. LOL. Like I tell my granddaughter Raina, I can't miss you if you don't go away. It's all good.

The one thing I would like for you to take with you is this; we are brothers that have shared a unique experience of great historical importance in the service of our country. I would like to point out that this was not just an Air Force thing but a joint military operation. We also had naval and marine corps personnel assigned to the 4477th. Our USN and USMC aviators were every bit a part of our family and we appreciated their contributions. And who could forget Mark (Popeye) Mills. Please add one more thing to your list this 4th. Check the Red Eagles roster and locate an old buddy or two. Then, email, call or write a letter to those guys. There's an old friend waiting to hear from you.

Ben Galloway



Contacts and Information- Click On Links

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Steve Davies "Red Eagles, America's Secret MiGs" web site:

<http://fjphotography.com/constantpeg/>

Café Press: Red Eagles Items:

<http://www.cafepress.com/stealthfighter/137414>

The Air Force Times article:

http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/01/airforce_redeagles_intro_010409/