

Red Eagles 4th of July, 2010 Newsletter

July 4, 2010
Issue 6

Fellow Red Eagles: Commanders Call

This quarters article was written by Phil White, Colonel, USAF (Retired) "Hound Dawg" the sixth commander, 4477th TEF/TES.



Red Eagles! Just to be in the unit was beyond my wildest dreams; and, trust this, my dreams could get plenty wild (operative word here is "could", not can!). But to be the Commander was an all time high? Likely, each and every 4477 TES Commander had similar feelings.

Though our respective obstacles and tasks may have been different, we all shared a common goal set. Find the best people and take care of them. Build an all-star team, train, equip, and inspire them to catch the vision—then, get out of their way. In short, lead this all-star team to realistically replicate our adversaries' strengths and weaknesses enabling our tactical fighter services to become the most deadly MIG killers in the free world. All the previous com-



manders faced innumerable challenges as the unit grew from a fledgling austere operation to one that approached a small Wing in size, complexity, and mission import. My time at the helm of this unique unit was certainly no different.

Beginning with my first interviews with BGen Mike Kirby, MGen Gene Fisher, and Gen Creech, my orders were crystal clear. Gen Fisher had been sent to Nellis to "clean it up". Prior to my arrival, an unfortunate accident resulting in the death of a maintenance NCO doing fuel cell repairs caused Gen Fisher to have serious concerns about the unit. He was convinced, as was Gen Creech that our Maintenance Chief, Maj George Tittle, was at fault. He insisted that the cancer within maintenance be isolated and "cut out" before it spread. Gen Creech shared his personal vision for the Red Eagles with me—continue transformation to the "real Air force", increase sorties, and last but certainly not least, a major clean-up of maintenance. Welcome aboard, LtCol White, and off I go to a condensed Maintenance Officers course to jazz up my maintenance savvy. On returning to Nellis, to begin my overlap with G2, one could say I faced my first challenge--BGen Joe Ashy was the new 57FWW /CC and his reputation preceded him.

My second day on the job, Senators John Glenn and Ted Kennedy visited TNP. After visiting the then highly classified F117's, I hosted them for a briefing on the Red Eagles. Generals Fisher and Ashy also attended. This was a prelude to the level of interest in happenings at TNP. The 4450 TFG with the F117 Stealth fighter was ap-



Editor's Column:

The 4th of July is upon us and time to celebrate!

- Make plans to celebrate the 4th. Make sure to clean and check the grill. Refill the propane tank or buy enough charcoal.
- When going camping, make a list of all the things you'll need. Don't forget the first aid kit and jumper cables. Let someone know where you are going and when you'll be back.
- Don't forget to fly the flag.
- Enjoy this time with family and friends. Please don't drink and drive or forget to take rest stops while on long road trips.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
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proaching operational status and had become the major unit at TNP, which was fast becoming a full-up base, complete with a base commander. We experienced a continuous flow of high-level dignitaries and military leaders visiting the site to include the likes of Sec of State Schultz and National Security Advisor McFarland, to name a few. Although we maintained our secrecy and funding channels, other normalizing changes were happening. The chain of command for the F117's changed from reporting directly to HQ TAC to now passing through the TFWC/CC. This put Gen Fisher directly in charge of all activities at the base. He established an office complex and began flying up two days a week to hold staff meetings which I was required to attend. Our activities were getting a lot more visibility and I was soon briefing Gen Ashy almost daily to keep him one step ahead of Gen Fisher. Gen Ashy had become my primary supporter during this period of change, but more importantly, a strong supporter of the Red Eagles! However, he had also started to get more involved in our "stuff" and had started to put "his touches" on us!



A big concern Gen Ashy had from day one was the multiple aircraft currency of the pilots. One of his first changes was to stop pilots from flying with the Weapons Schools, a decision that was unpopular with us, as well as the schools, because of the Intel cross-talk and recruiting. The second currency issue resolved itself shortly after when Air Force elected to not renew the MU-2 lease and put a C12 detachment in place to support TNP. His next move created a whole host of issues—too numerous to cover in this article—when he changed our reporting chain to go through 57 FWW/AT (Adversary Threat); thus, aligning us with the Aggressor Mission and blowing our test cover. These changes and those previously mentioned clearly put the Red Eagles in a much more visible position with considerably more levels of supervision and accountability, not always constructive—not exactly what we wanted or needed at the time!

However, the good ole days of less oversight were a thing of the past. It was time to control collateral damage, protect the mission, and the people. We had a job to do! With Gen Creech's marching orders in mind, I needed to focus on the maintenance issues. My job was made easier by the core of pilots who were in the unit. Upon reporting for duty it was like a reunion. Almost all, except the Navy and Marine pilots, had worked with or for me previously and ALL were outstanding pilots and officers. With top notch pilots, I was able to lay out the ops directions on where we needed to go and loosen the reigns so they could do what they do best. With a little tweaking now and then, they did not disappoint me!

One of my earliest opportunities to feel the hot seat related to—you guessed it—maintenance. In my first meeting with CMSgt Mickey Masserati, First Sergeant, and Maj Tittle, I learned of a small faction of senior maintenance personnel who wanted to test the mettle of the new "boss" by reverting back to the old way of doing things. Mickey was a big barrel chested 6'7" no nonsense, but fair, previous NCO Academy instructor. He was a man I quickly learned to trust and rely on, and often my sounding board on many issues. Given Gen. Creech's orders to eliminate the cancer, and with the help of Mickey, George, and a number of "on board" NCOs, it did not take long to identify and extricate (reassign) the wannabe rabble rousers. The others quickly got the message and fortunately I had no other problems with maintenance personnel. It was following that incident that I also began to recognize the true value of Maj Tittle to the organization and appreciate him as an outstanding Maintenance Officer and team member, a view I held throughout my tour--- and still do!

With backing from Gen Ashy we briefed several Nellis senior NCO's into the program and brought them to TNP for several weeks to help us from an "outsiders" perspective, to determine what might need improvement. With their input and support from Generals Fisher and Ashy, we went to Langley to present our recommendations to Gen Creech on what was needed (personnel, facilities, equipment, and organizational changes) to achieve the maintenance program that he had envisioned. He approved all that we asked and the changes were set in motion. However, as we were implementing our plan for changes, Gen Creech retired and shortly after, we were given a change to the changes.

As I mentioned earlier, the F117's were about to go operational. After Creech's retirement, HQ TAC decided it was time for an MEI for the 4450th and--why not include the 4477th. Wow--talk about change! A month later, HQ TAC/IG, BGen John Jacquish and a small cadre of senior officers and NCOs visited us for three weeks for the first inspection of any kind. After a thorough look and a few helpful suggestions, we received an outstanding rating in all areas, attesting to the caliber and dedication of the men and women in all sections of the squadron. I could not have been prouder of any group of people than these hard working professionals who sacrificed long hours away from home and family for the good of the Air Force. The outstanding rating from the MEI seemed to put a new spark in the Squadron. I saw a change in their focus where the mission became even more central and the "I" became more of a "we". The transformation started by the previous commanders continued to sweep through the unit to all levels.

But just as all mountains give way to valleys, we experienced a number of set backs related to the equipment we were using. At the time we had the MIG-23 new engine turbine blades. We thought we were on a roll. But not so fast! The INS units were failing, hence, the Air Data Computers would not work--aircraft grounded again! "Admiral" Nelson to the rescue! Through our trusted defense industry, they figured out how the INS's were supposed to work, took a couple of weeks to repair them, and once again we were flying.

As our fleet of newer MiG-21s increased we encountered problems with the ejection seat. The new ejection seats required several inputs on pilot weight, height, etc to set the proper setting on the seat for them to work correctly. However, test information was not available and we had no data. This forced us to ground these newer aircraft for several weeks. Ultimately, we sent a seat to Holloman AFB for sled testing and to determine pilot seat input settings. After several weeks, we had new data and each pilot had his personal settings. Problem solved and we're flying again.

Shortly after, we began to look into our older MIG21 fleet seats. Now that we had carts to initiate the ejection, we began to wonder and question the harnesses and canopies? Once again we turned to Holloman. Good news—bad news! The parachute canopies were in good condition; but, most of the harnesses were rotten. We grounded the MIG21s until new harnesses could be engineered by AFSC—fully operational three weeks later. And then there was the time we were at a full stop for two months for a total rebuild of the TNP runway, affecting our sortie production for the year. There were a number of other minor setbacks but always with a similar result. With the resourcefulness, ingenuity, and make it happen attitude of the entire unit--maintenance, operations, supply, GCI, Intel, life-support, admin, and others--the unit continued to prosper and sorties increased.

An incident relating to our Kenworth presented a little humor and boosted Squadron morale. The blue KW was due for a major overhaul to include painting at the Depot in Ogden. Prior to delivering it to Ogden, I asked what color it would be painted. The answer--what color do YOU want it? The new TNP base vehicles were all painted a non-descript white, but, since we were still operating under an independent budget, our vehicles were not base resources. We were starting to look more and more like that 'other' unit at TNP and though things were progressing nicely, I thought a little unit distinction would be good for our troops. I mentioned that seein' how we were the "Red Eagles", red might be

an appropriate color for our truck. Imagine the reaction when, upon return from Ogden, the Kenworth drove through the TNP gate sporting a bright thunderbird red with large airbrushed bald eagles on both sides of the sleeper box (paid for, complements of the NCOs). It was classic--the base commander was furious though I can't imagine why! Our answer to Gen Fisher was that "Ogden made the call on the color"--issue closed! Big Red, as it became known, was a site to behold and a source of pride for the Red Eagles.

My tour as the 4477th TES" Boss" was the absolute highlight of my military career. The people were the **best** in their fields and I can never sing their praises enough to do them justice. While most felt as I did--fortunate to have been a part of such a great unit--there was one notable exception. I believed in and continued to strongly support Maj George Tittle; but the system was not so kind to him--a real injustice to an outstanding individual. Nonetheless, those of us who had the privilege of flying on and under "Red Eagle wings" owe a debt of gratitude to the founding fathers: Moody, Boots, Pappy Frick, Gail Peck, D.L. Smith and so many others—too many to mention lest I leave someone out. I feel truly blessed and honored to have been a Red Eagle--brothers and sisters all!



Bio

Phil retired from the Air Force in 1992 as a Colonel to begin a career as a Captain with Southwest Airlines, from which he retired in 2003. Phil and his wife Dorene live in Niceville, Florida with their two teenagers, Jeremy and Kelsey. His daughter Trich is a school teacher in Redondo Beach, CA and is married to Bob, a software engineer. Son Nick is a Pediatric Dentist in Lake Mary, FL, is married to Jennifer, business manager for their Dentist Practice and father of two beautiful girls Natalie and Samantha. When not busy at home, Phil can be found at Dorene's family farm in Bainbridge, GA, which they now own, pattering around on his new tractor, playing with their black angus cattle, or just watching their peanuts and cotton grow. Life is good and we are so blessed!

Happy 4th of July to all Red Eagles

By Philip R Young (ret MSGT) 4477th TES.

Last year my wife Denise and I took a trip to Washington D.C. While there, my son who now lives there took us to the New Air and Space Museum. This museum is connected to Dulles International Airport (for location).

The museum has one of the largest displays of aircraft we have seen. There to my surprise they even have a couple of different MiGs on display along with a couple hundred more aircraft.

They have a real Space Shuttle on display. Another aircraft on display is the SR-71 that the movie industry used in the Transformers Movie that came out.

If any of the Red Eagles are planning to take a trip to Washington D.C. I would really recommend taking time to stop in and see all they have at the museum to look at. It will take about 3 to 5 hours to check out everything, depending on how fast you walk.



Denise Young, wife of Philip Young walking by the Space Ship Enterprise.



This strange looking Transformer is one of the newest. In the new Transformer movie, a SR-71 transforms in to what you are looking at now.



Philip R Young, (Ret MSGT) 4477th TES. Air and Space Museum, Washington D.C. with Mig-21.

BIO

Upon leaving the Red Eagles, I spent a year at Nellis AFB then off to Eglin AFB in Florida for a couple of years. In late 1994 we moved back to Las Vegas and have lived here since. Our son Ross and his wife Lisa just presented us with our first grandson, Tristin Ross Young. We are both really proud Grandparents.



Picture of a SR-71 Blackbird. This SR-71 is the REAL SR-71 used in the New Transformer Movie. These pictures may not mean a lot to any of the Red Eagles, However maybe some of there grandkids will like them. I hope that these pictures make the Red Eagle Newsletter.

July, my busy month

By Ben Galloway

I have to stay vigilant this month with zero defects in memory lapses. By my busy month I mean I have three birthdays (wife, mother and daughter), my anniversary and a holiday to deal with. The three women in my life that I would not like to have piffed at me. LOL.

I've been busy around the ranch, trying to catch up with all the things I've been putting off for a while. Now that I'm retired, I have no excuses to let those things languish any longer. Just last week, my son, Aaron, helped me finish combining two small back porches into one larger one for both back doors.

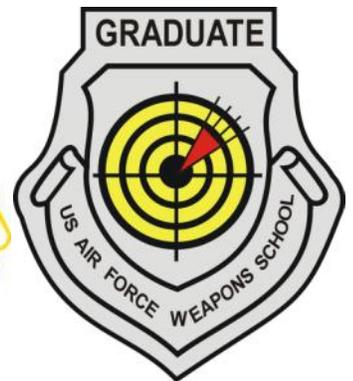
A whole lot of painting, measuring with a micrometer and cutting it with an axe. It came out just fine in spite of my less than perfect carpentry skills. My wife likes it so that's all that really matters. After we completed the porch, Aaron and I grilled steaks and had some cold long necks.



A couple of weeks ago, the grandkids were over for a visit. Zander was crawling around on the floor looking for stuff to get into while Raina sat on the sofa with me. She was snuggled up to my right side and I had my arm around her. After awhile, she looked up at me with her little angelic face. I had seen this look before which was usually followed by "Papa, I love you". To which I

would reply "I love you too baby". However, as she looked at me, her eyebrows crinkled a little, and she said "Papa, why does you have fur up your nose"? I didn't see that one coming and I cracked up. I thought about a scientific explanation for a second but I knew that was not what she was looking for. So the only thing I could think of that would satisfy her curiosity was to say "to keep my nose from getting cold". She said "oh" and was perfectly satisfied with that explanation. Why can't I get the good questions like "why is the sky blue" or "where does the sun go"? I'm telling you, sometimes I think I just don't live right and karma is catching up with me.

Have a happy and safe 4th of July! My best regards to all the Red Eagles.



TOO CLOSE FOR MISSILES...
GOING TO GUNS...