

Red Eagles End of the 3rd Quarter Newsletter, 2010



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Fellow Red Eagles: Commanders Call

This quarters article was written by Jack Manclark, Colonel, USAF (Retired) "Mad Jack" the seventh commander, 4477th TEF/TES.

I consider myself blessed to have been a member of the Red Eagles. I have served or worked for the Air Force for over forty years and I can say the absolute best tour in my career was the time served in the 4477 TES. The personnel of the 4477 TES were truly outstanding and professional. The pilots were some of the finest operators in the military with the experience unmatched in any unit. But, the true heroes of the 4477 TES were the maintainers. There were many days I would walk by the MiG-23 hangar and see six or seven of the jets broken in half awaiting engines and think how many times can the maintainers put these jets back together without making a mistake? The answer turned out to be 100% of the time, maintenance never let us down! I look back on the tour and remember my most trusted advisors were Chief Hardy and Chief Thurman. If they said the jet was flyable, we flew it. This trust existed throughout the organization, when you went to your jet and your crew chief said it was ready, you didn't need to do a pre-flight-it was ready.

It was a great time but there were some turbulent times. Scotty Rogers lost an engine and had to dead stick a MiG-21 back to the airfield. That was a great aviator accomplishment. I drove out to the runway and picked him up and for the first several minutes he was unable to talk. I had a half gallon of Jack Daniels waiting for him when we got back to Nellis that afternoon. His wife said he spent the night on the bathroom floor drunk and sick. It was not long after that Ric Cazesus lost an engine in a MiG-21 and had to punch out at the end of the runway. About a month later we lost a Mig-23 to a flat spin. I went out and picked up the

pilot, Captain Hawk Carlisle. The first thing he said to me was "Boss we have to turn the barometer in the seat up, I was below the mountain before I was kicked out of the seat." The second thing he said was "when I saw the aircraft hit the ground and explode, I thought I am glad the airlines are hiring." Well Hawk is now a three star general with a good shot of becoming a four star general. Our egress personnel had kept the ejection seats working and saved two pilots!

The leadership was not happy with our accidents but we always had good support from Brig General Ashy and Brig General Hall. When we went to brief the accidents to the four star general at TAC HQ, General Kempf had me compute our accident rate the way the rest of the Air Force reports. The metric was major accidents per hundred thousand flying hours. In the Air Force if it gets to over four accidents per hundred thousand the Air Force and safety personnel get excited-ours was a hundred per hundred thousand. The four star general was not happy, but everyone knew it was a high risk program.

I am currently serving as the Director of Test and Evaluation, with responsibility for our test ranges. I visit Tonopah Test Range (TTR) frequently, and I can report the airfield is busy and looks pretty good. Most of the buildings are occupied and the chow hall is open. The F-117s have



9-11, Never Forget!

Editor's Column:

Fall is upon us and time to prepare for Winter.

- It's time to start putting things in order for winter. Fertilize the lawn, put the storm windows up and drain and put away the garden hose.
- Get the car ready by checking the temperature rating of your antifreeze, put the snow tires on and if your battery is over 5 years old, you might want to think about replacing it.
- Check your winter clothing. If it smells like your last trip to "Red Lobster", dry cleaning or washing is in order.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
Ben Galloway
3732 Bar 10 Road
Calhan, CO 80808

come home and are in flyable storage in their old hangars. The man camp has suffered thru the years. We keep about 300 rooms open, but the chow hall is closed and at best, the bar has about fifteen patrons a night but they do have free popcorn. We are also responsible for the Foreign Material Acquisition (FMA) program and I can assure we are very busy.

The Air Force budget is being reduced, but we have great leadership and will continue to provide the country the premier Air Force in the world. I recently read Red Eagles by Steve Davies and feel it is a good story of the Constant Peg program. I am told Gail Peck, a former commander, will be publishing a book soon and I am looking forward to reading the story. Maj Gen Charlie Metcalf, USAF Ret, is Director of the National Museum of the United States Air force at Wright Patterson AFB. He wants to do a permanent display in the museum on the Red Eagles, however there is not a lot of pictures available. If you have any pictures rat holed, we would appreciate copies. You can send them thru Ben Galloway. I thank all of you who were involved in the Constant Peg program you truly have a right to be proud!

Cheers,

Bandit 51-Jack Manclark



Jack and Laureen Manclark in Tuscany, Italy.

My Summer Trip

I had the good fortune of being invited to spend several days with Bob and Charlotte Breault in Grand Junction, CO. So the last part of June I packed my AWOL bag, kitchen pass in hand and made the five hour trip there in seven hours. Thanks to detours, one warning ticket (the State Trooper was really nice) and routing because of wild fires. To hear Bob tell it, you'd have thought I came by stagecoach.

We had a great time together. Charlotte cooked some wonderful meals and Bob and I spent a lot of time playing catch up and chewing the fat. A walk down memory lane for sure. Bob was kind enough to drive me around to several points of interest. One great stop was to the Gateway Auto Museum located in Gateway, CO. So many cars, so little time. Then there was the drive through Monument National Park. Bob took great pleasure out of scaring the hell out of me by seeing how close he could drive to the edge of the 1,000 foot drop offs. Not really but it sure seemed that way to me. The harder he laughed at me the worse his driving became. I still wonder if he's going to have to have the passenger seat cleaned or reupholstered. LOL.

We took trips to Cabela's Outfitters and looked at guns and ammo. On to Best Buy to buy Bob a bigger hard drive to upgrade his computer and a trip to Hooter's for cheesy tots and beer. Later a rodeo and to the open air market. I had a great visit. Thanks Bob and Charlotte, we'll do 'er again next year.



Ben Galloway and Bob Breault.

Web Sites of Interest

Here are some web sites that you may find of interest. Just click on the link to take you to that site.

Red Eagles Facebook page. This site is maintained by Bob Breault and myself. We currently have 22 members. Please feel free to request to join the group:

<http://www.fbjs.facebook.com/group.php?gid=75655098950&ref=nf>

Military.com, this is listed as the 4477th Test Squadron. We currently have 27 members listed.

<http://unitpages.military.com/unitpages/unit.do?id=600794>

The way I see it

In the high plains desert, somewhere in the middle of Nevada, lays Area 51. This is the stuff of myths and legends to be sure. I walked among giants in the 4477th. The names of some of the most skilled and gifted maintenance men I have ever known and worked with are all but forgotten except to those of us remaining Red Eagles. The names like Bobby Ellis, Don Lyons, Steve Hovermale, Jerry Baker, Tommy Karnes, Chico Noriega, Dave Hollingsworth, Mike Beverlin, Ike Crawley, Jim Richardson, Doug Robinson and Billy Lightfoot. These men and others, too many to mention, were the heart and soul of the Red Eagles. They made it happen, they made it work. We did the impossible every day. We had the best maintenance men and pilots of any MiG squadron in the world. Our pilots never worried about climbing into an unsafe aircraft. One man had the vision and drive to orchestrate the maintenance side of the house, Bobby Ellis.

In the early years, 1979 and a couple of years after that, we were what the upper command wanted us to be; civilians in appearance so as to not attract attention to us or our mission. We wore civilian clothes, haircuts every two months or so and some really great mustaches. But deep inside, we were still military men adapting to the mission requirements. Did we enjoy this disguise? Hell yes we did. We were on first name basis with the pilots and coworkers. The commander was called "Boss" and Bobby Ellis was referred to as "Daddy" but not to his face. It was a term of respect when referring to Bobby. He was the head of the maintenance family and capable of more than sending you to your room. Some may think we became lax and sloppy because of this but that is far from the truth. It brought us closer together in a way like no other military organization. The closest comparison would be to the famed Flying Tigers, American Volunteer Group or AVG, in China at the start of WW II. Later, we too would have to transition from civilian to military standards when the F-117's appeared on the ramp. An unpopular move to be sure and we were told to adapt or move on. "You will be assimilated, resistance is futile".

When I arrived in December of 1979, we flew to the site every morning and returned to Nellis late in the afternoon four days a week. Later on, Reco set up the trailers for Indian Village and we spent the four days and three nights at the site. The pilots flew home every night while we stayed there and put in ten or more hour days. We worked hard and played hard. The up side was that we had a three day weekend every week. Meanwhile, our wives had to be on their own taking care of the kids and running the house while we were away. Once in a while a pilot might spend the night at the site with us. I guess it was like camping out for them. To us, it was a way of life. There were no dining facilities so we had to bring our own food and drinks to the site. There was the option of getting in the van with some of the guys and driving to Tonopah for dinner and a few drinks.

However, you best be to work on time the next day or Daddy would find something special for you to do.

Bobby Ellis was the man we all aspired to be. He was the Chief, a mentor and a friend. He expected perfection in everything we did. If it wasn't safe, then it wasn't flying. Just that simple. The most important thing Bob taught me was "I can only fail if I fail to try". Sometimes I wondered where he got all his unfounded faith in my abilities. Somehow, somehow, he found skills in me that I never knew existed. He was simply brilliant. I spoke with his daughter Patti some time ago and she confirmed what I had always suspected about Bob Ellis, he had a photographic memory. You can ask any of the older Red Eagles about Bob Ellis and they would tell you that he was the best damn line chief there ever was. Bob was in the trenches with us. Working beside us and directing the job at hand. No words could ever express the amount of respect I had for this man. He was a true leader.

The MiG's we flew came from another land. They were junk, scrap, wrecks and derelicts, maybe sitting in the swamp or desert, left to rot. We brought them back and without any tech manuals they were fully restored after many months of hard work by the crew chiefs with the guidance of Bobby Ellis. The crew chiefs were married to their MiGs and would not leave her side until the last bolt had been tighten before they put her to bed for the night. No one will ever know the untold hours they would spend getting their aircraft ready for the next day's missions even if it meant working through the night. It was that important and they would never let our pilots strap on a jet if it wasn't 100% air worthy. The support techs, such as avionics, hydraulics, electricians, Fab Branch and jet engines mechanics worked hand in hand with the crew chiefs to keep our aircraft flying. These men gave everything without expecting praise or medals. It was that important to them and the rest of us. Sometimes I walked through the hangers only to find myself helping them push a jet engine into place or the tail section back on. Or, be on the ramp and I might be asked to climb in the cockpit to ride the brakes while they towed the aircraft into the hanger. It was just that way. We all helped out when and where we were needed. You men are to be commended for your dedication and skill. Well done.

Everyone made their contribution to the mission. Men like Jack Slusher, our telephone/comm. guy. Without him crawling under the trailers, with the scorpions, rattlers and spiders, to run the telephone lines, we would never have been able to call home at night. He was one hell of a nice guy. And Jack, if you're out there, I'm really sorry about that snake in the toolbox thing. I know it was wrong. Sorry. An operation like ours couldn't exist without a dedicated fire department. They were the best and they kept us safe. My hats off to you guys. Some of the best friends I had were in the fire department. Ralph, Lou, Kermit and R2, I miss you guys. Our supply guys were the greatest. Lord knows how they managed to come up with everything we needed but they did. Second thought, I don't want to know. No squadron can expect to function without a

great supply section. Terry, Mike, Gibo and Bill you were masters of your craft. We could never have done it without you. I can still see Mike's face when I told him what I wanted. He scrunched his eyebrows up, shook his head and rolled his eyes. He then said "and when would you like that". These guys had tricks that would marvel David Copperfield. Our Admin and Ops guys took care of the home front so we didn't have to deal with CBPO and wear a uniform. Thanks for all the hard work Gary, BJ and the others. There were some egos to deal with but this was minor for the most part. If the guys weren't ragging on you about something then you wondered if they were puffed at you about something.

As an Aerospace Ground Equipment (AGE) man, Doug Robinson and I worked as much on vehicles as we did on AGE equipment. Working with Billy Lightfoot and Larry Gruse was always a learning experience. We spent many hours turning junk we had brought back from the DRMO yards into sound, running vehicles and equipment. The four of us also spent a lot of time on the road. I never knew what to expect when I showed up for the early morning flight from Nellis.

1. I might actually get on the plane.
2. Ellis might tell me to drive one of the trucks to the site.
3. Drive a truck to Edwards to deliver/pick up a jet engine.

If I did make it to the site by plane or truck, Ellis might tell me to:

1. Drive a truck anywhere in the southwest.
2. Take a truck and head back to Nellis.
3. Actually stay at the site to work on equipment.
4. Get ready for yard work.

And if you don't know what "yard work" is (and I'm using the politically correct phrase, those of us that were there know what the real phrase was), then you haven't lived. If you've never moved an avionic connex, 10'X40', with four forklifts, one on each corner, well my friend, you've missed an exciting moment. The Russian Ballet had nothing on us. When all was done, if you weren't dirty, greasy, and tired then you must have been a spectator.

In closing, let me say to each Red Eagle, you were the best! Don't let anybody tell you different. You did the hard part and made it easier for those that came after us. I am proud to have been one of you and thank you for allowing me to serve with you. As I get older, some memories fade but others stay sharp and clear in my mind as the day they happened. We worked together, played together and at times we cried together. You maintainers were part of my life and I will never forget you. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers.

In the land southeast of Tonopah, in the barren desert where the silence is broken only by the jets flying overhead, I walked among giants; I walked among the Red Eagles.

Ben Galloway

A message from Melody Galloway

To all Red Eagles,

I am a wife of one of your Red Eagle brothers and the first military active duty wife in the unit.

I want each and every one of you to know, enlisted and officers, that making junk equipment into safe flying machines is beyond belief. I am proud not only of my husband but each and every one of you.

Remember the first 20 proud and dedicated enlisted men, who came and conquered the desert and junk equipment that allowed all that came after to enjoy a better work place and equipment. Without these men and their dedication to not only serve the unit, as well as all U.S. military branches, there would not have been safe and dependable equipment to train the military that we have now today.

I sometimes wondered what it would have been like to be in a unit like this. I had a chance once, to be assigned to your sister unit, until the 1st shirt informed me that I was to be used as a bandage between the two units. At which time, I informed this gentleman, my husband and I do not interfere with each others' careers. Needless, to say I didn't get the job.

As a member of the Armed Forces, I have seen my share of both bad and good Officers, Enlisted, and Policy changes. But when it comes to the final results of the completed mission, everyone forgets how that mission was accomplished. It's the enlisted sweat and tears that got everyone and everything to work like it should. Each of you should think how your careers were built, not only with your talent but that of others.

The past is the past, now is the time for all of the Red Eagles to band together and stand up in the world to say "I did that" and be damn proud of it.

Melody Galloway

Editor' Note:

It's a little known fact that the 4450th wanted to use my wife, then SSgt Galloway, as a bandage between them and the 4477th. I told my wife to make her own choices. She did and turned the job down. Neither she nor I could understand how this was ever going to work. The decision my wife and I made was not well received by either squadron.



Preflight Check List

1. Gail Peck is optimistic about his book contract. If it works out as expected late 2011 is a likely publish date. We look forward to Gail's book with anticipation. I had the privilege of reading the draft copy of Gail's book and I can tell you that he is a gifted writer and story teller. His book was easy on the eyes and consistently interesting. Thanks to Gail for the front page picture of the F-117.
2. Next quarter we are looking forward to hearing from Mike Scott, the 8th commander of the 4477th.
3. I'm still looking for stories and pictures from you Red Eagles. Feel free to send them to me.
4. For those of you that didn't know, AutoZone and Lowe's Home Improvement Centers offer a retired military discount. Just ask at check out.

Ben Galloway



The above picture was taken by then Lt Cdr Charles (Heater) Heatley, USN, around '81 or '82. At the risk of being redundant, this is an optical illusion planned by Heater. No, a C-141 can't fit on a 40 foot flatbed trailer but this is a great picture. Thanks to Larry Mason for sending it to me.