

RED EAGLES NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 25, 2015

VOLUME 27

FELLOW RED EAGLES:

MERRY CHRISTMAS

"The ordinary air fighter is an extraordinary man and the extraordinary air fighter stands as one in a million among his fellows." – Theodore Roosevelt

"Knock it off!"

Rob "Z-Man" Zettel

Bandit 39

September '83 - December '86

Not everything goes quite as planned all the time and when flying our MiGs that was both expected and anticipated. While flying a 2v2 mission one afternoon in April of '86 the unexpected happened and made for a rather interesting recovery and eventually, the saving of a valuable asset. To say the pucker factor wasn't present would be a total lie. There were moments when you absolutely were taken by surprise by events or circumstances which no one else had experienced up till then and all you could do is rely on your pilot skills to do the best you could and manage to recover the aircraft and by extension, yourself. And without it being said, no one wanted to be the guy to punch out of one of our aircraft if it wasn't absolutely the only remaining option to saving your own life.

On this afternoon our two MiGs were racing south at 400 knots to engage a pair of F-15's committed toward us at 28 miles and reported by our Ground Control Intercept (GCI) controller to be at 26,000 feet. We were slightly lower at 22,000 feet, and deployed in a loose "pair patrol" formation. One favored by the Soviets for years when committing their fighters to battle. Today I was the tactical lead with my wingman, Gary "Goldie" Craig, Captain, USAF, in a 200'-300' right-echelon formation, stacked slightly high and to the west of me.

With our two MiGs fairly close together, we'd appear as one target to the F-15 pilots despite the power of their sophisticated APG-63 pulse-Doppler radars.

All the better to mask our intentions. For all the opposing F-15 pilots knew, our formation would appear as one radar contact. In essence, we could be a single MiG, or many. There was no way for the opposing pilots to tell as their radars could not break-out single contacts at this range. When we got the call from our controller that the F-15's were at 22 miles we began our ruse.

"Bandit Three-One, execute!"

At my radio call Goldie and I split our formation. I delayed my maneuver a brief second and with a slight glance right noted Goldie's MiG-21 begin a climbing turn to the southwest, its afterburner plume now in full view in the late afternoon sky as the nimble fighter quickly began its climb to his pre-briefed altitude of 31,000 feet. A split-second later I began my turn left and to the southeast. In an instant our two MiGs were headed in separate directions, both aircraft now in full afterburner and quickly changing the dynamics of the attack. In my hard slicing turn I immediately felt the



Editor's Christmas Column:

These are my guidelines for Christmas:

- Peace on earth starts with your family. Put aside hard feeling and disagreements on this one special day.
- Spend this day with family and friends and let them know how much they mean to you. Say "I love you" to those special people in your life. Make that phone call on Christmas day.
- Treat each gift you receive as if it cost the giver a fortune. It doesn't matter so much about the gift as the thought behind it.
- Think of your past Christmases and try to make this one the best. This is a time for giving, not just gifts but of yourself.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: 4477redeagles@gmail.com
- Or, mail to:
Ben Galloway
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force of the 4G maneuver snugly wedge my body further back into the ejection seat, the sensation intimately familiar and welcome.

Beginning my roll-out on the assigned heading I momentarily dropped my left hand off the throttle and reached for the wing sweep control lever, comfortably located just outboard of my left thigh. Within seconds I'd quickly selected the full-aft detent position, commanding the variable-sweep wings of the MiG-23MS model, or "Flogger E", I was flying this afternoon, to the full-aft or 72 degree "high-speed" position from their current 45 degree "cruise" setting. The combination of the steep descent and reduced aerodynamic drag along with 27,000 pounds of thrust from the big Russian Tumansky engine quickly accelerated the airplane through 550 knots. All this happened within seconds of the "execute" command. I was now "hauling ass" to the southeast, still accelerating, and attempting to out-flank the F-15's to my south.

Already 5 miles to my west, Goldie presently had leveled off and was himself accelerating his "Fishbed" to 1.2 Mach and putting additional distance between ourselves as we completed the initial move of our high/low "pincer" attack on the F-15's, now approaching 15 miles to our south, still together.

"Targets 15 miles", came the call from our controller.

Quickly looking back inside I noted the airspeed indicator needle hovering near the 630 knot mark as I eased the stick back to begin my level-off at 13,000 feet. Time for both of us to begin our hard turns back toward the F-15's and finish the attack. If all had gone as planned Goldie and I would easily have out-bracketed the Eagles and with a further bit of luck, one or both of us would soon be able to engage the targets undetected and unseen. Myself coming from low and to the east, Goldie high from the west.

I had just started the turn with my head twisted around fully to my right, looking in the direction of the targets through the upper right-side of the fighter's canopy, when its sudden appearance grabbed my attention. There, out of corner of my left eye, the unmistakable red glow of the MASTER WARNING light was brightly illuminated just below the canopy bow and inches from my helmet. In a second my eyes had swept the instrument panel looking for a tell-tale sign of the warning light's offending source. There it was. On the lower right corner of the instrument panel just above my right knee, on a group of indicator lights that are normally blank, I find it. Bright yellow in color and high-lighting the words, MAIN HYDRAULIC.

"Bandit Three-One, knock it off, knock it off!" I quickly transmit on the discreet Ultra High Frequency (UHF) radio frequency allowing both Goldie and our GCI controller know that something was amiss with me and/or my airplane.

In the disciplined manner they're accustomed to, both Goldie and GCI promptly acknowledge the call which is also passed to the F-

15 pilots and their GCI controller on their assigned frequency as well. Within seconds everyone has the word that the engagement is off and what had been looking like a promising intercept for us is now over, the F-15's told to loiter till the nature of the "knock it off" is ascertained. With all parties alerted and the calls acknowledged, our GCI controller is the first to speak up.

"Bandit Three-One, say reason for the "Knock it Off"."

"Bandit Three-One, declaring an emergency and RTB (Returning To Base). Three-Two, I'm gonna need you to join up on me", came my simultaneous reply and directive signaling to Goldie and our controller that something serious was happening with my aircraft and I needed to have Bandit Three-Two to join up on me ASAP.

"Three-Two, snap left, Zero-Seven-Zero, 10 miles for Bandit lead." GCI on it in a flash, Goldie is given my bearing and range from him to help facilitate his rendezvous with me.

As all this is being done I've already shifted from the attack mode to one of getting the stricken fighter back on the ground. In a flash your mind takes it all in and assesses the situation, hands and feet subconsciously moving the control stick, rudder pedals, throttle and wing control. My eyes dart from the instrument panel to outside and back again, the brain crunching the criticality of the situation with regard to altitude, airspeed, attitude, systems status and ultimately... survivability.

In the seconds since I'd first seen the warning light I'd reversed direction and begun a steep left-climbing turn, converting 630 knots of airspeed into precious altitude and hopefully time. I'm now rocketing skyward at over 10,000 feet per minute, a rate un-measurable by

conventional instruments. My steed may be wounded but it doesn't know it and responds to my command, the control stick my reins. CLIMB!

Okay, before I go any further let me explain to you why this is a big deal. You see, the MiG-23 has only one major hydraulic system that powers a lot of stuff. The most important of which is the variable-geometry wing sweep system not to mention a few other nice to have things such as the leading and trailing edge wing flaps, landing gear, etc. The gear and certainly the flaps I can probably work around and would later do just that. But without the wings coming forward there is no recovery. Just a bailout. Or the "nylon let-down" as we jokingly referred to it. And my takeoffs and landings in airplanes up to this point being equal, I was in no mood to alter the balance and go one down in the landings column!



Cockpit of a MiG-23 Flogger.

I needed to get the wings forward to the 16 degree setting, or full-forward detent on the wing sweep control mechanism, which is necessary for landing or I'd eventually be punching out of the airplane as even the MiG's designers advised against attempting to land in my current configuration with the wings full aft at 72 degrees of wing sweep. So needless to say I was real busy, quickly making the best possible use of what little residual hydraulic fluid I had remaining.

And here's where it gets even more interesting. The Soviet designers of the MiG-23 realized that due to the design and location of the fuselage bulkhead immediately behind the ejection seat the pilot wouldn't be afforded much opportunity to see anything behind him or even the tops of his wings. Not exactly an ideal design concept for any fighter or very endearing to its pilot. So, to enable the pilot to see behind him the designers incorporated a rather unconventional, albeit very functional, low-profile, "rear-view mirror" of sorts located atop the clamshell cockpit canopy, just above the pilot's head.

And that's exactly where I looked next while in my climb and getting my airspeed down to one where the wings would begin to come forward. What I saw next was both eye-opening and telling. Whatever the cause, the left wing-root of the airplane where the movable wing was hinged, had erupted into an angry grayish-looking cloud of hydraulic fluid quickly being vaporized as it escaped into the slipstream that had by this time diminished but was still over 500 knots. Whatever

amount of hydraulic fluid I had remaining had better get the wings moved forward or you could say goodbye to this MiG. With the engine driven hydraulic pump pressurizing the system at over 3,000 Pounds per Square Inch (PSI) and venting as it was, I didn't have any margin for error.

By this time I've steadied-out, headed northbound and am quickly approaching 20,000 feet. During the climb I've managed to trade 330 knots of airspeed for 7,000 of altitude, all with the throttle pulled back to idle. Level now and at 300 knots, the wings have been slowly easing their way forward during the climb and are inching forward of the 45 degree indication. There's hope that there'll be enough fluid remaining in the hydraulic reservoir to power them the remaining few degrees. A quick glance up into the mirror atop

the canopy visibly confirms the fluid is almost depleted as there's very little seen escaping now at the wing-root area.

"Bandit Three-One, say the nature of your emergency?," asks GCI.

"Main hydraulics...I'm losing it fast" I add.

"Three-One, say altitude."

Goldie, having knocked off his portion of the intercept while level at 31,000 feet had been in a full-afterburner tail-chase for the past minute and was approaching me at still over 1.2 Mach, and needed to know where I'm at to effect the rendezvous without wasting any time.

"Bandit Three-One, level at 20,000 feet."

"Bandit Three-Two, lead is Three-Six-Zero for 5 miles." GCI adds my bearing and range to the intercept equation.

This, coupled with my altitude call allows Goldie now to get the visual on me at his low One o'clock. He snaps his throttle to idle to help dissipate the 350 knots of over-take he has on my now slowed fighter.

"Two's visual. Your Seven o'clock for 3."

I sneak a slightly longer glance into the canopy mirror and see a dot that's growing larger, eventually discernable as Goldie's mottled-grey camouflaged MiG-21 closing rapidly in a descent at exactly where he says....conveniently in line with the ever diminishing hydraulic cloud atop the fighter's left wing-root.

"Three-Two, cleared to join on my left wing. I'm slowing to 250. Starting a slight descent. Bandit 31 flight, switch Tower. Go."



Rob Zettel, Bandit 39, with a MiG-23 Flogger "E" model in the Spring the of 1986.

"Two!"

Seconds later Goldie and I have switched radio frequencies and I have checked in with the Supervisor of Flying (SOF) manning the tower and begin explaining my situation. About this time we're still 10 miles south of the airfield at Tonopah Test Range (TTR) and we continue north. As we do and without prompting, I see Goldie's fighter duck from view off my left wing to begin a visual inspection of my airplane. First by flying low and below me to eyeball any irregularities that may be obvious to him on my fighter's belly and then to my right wing to do the same before once again returning to take up his formation just off my left wing. All the while looking for any tell-tale sign of something perhaps more ominous that would preclude a safe landing.

“Lead, your left wing, inside the flap hinge point is covered in hydraulic fluid. I don’t see any fluid still leaking though.”

“ Three-One copies.”

By this time the MiG’s movable wings had traveled to the full-forward position so any immediate thought to having to bail-out at some point are at least further down the list of important stuff on my mind. Over the next several minutes, in conjunction with the SOF, I go over the checklist covering the procedures to follow for such a failure, what our options would be, what order Goldie and I would land, emergency response vehicles’ positions on the airfield, etc.

Of immediate concern of course was how much fuel I had remaining which would dictate how long we’d be able to dicker with this thing and how the airplane would handle in the landing configuration absent the leading and trailing edge wing flaps. It’s a certainty that I’ll be adding a bunch of knots to my airspeed during my final approach in order to compensate for the lack of these lift devices and keep the aircraft controllable but still be able to land it.

Typically, pilots everywhere practice certain emergency procedures. Those of us flying our MiGs did as well but they were normally associated with engine problems/failures mainly due to the fact that you only had one. So any cough or sneeze of your “one-and-only” motor quickly got one’s attention. Hence the emphasis on the procedures for recovering an airplane with degraded engine performance. But, no one had ever had an emergency of this nature before so all we had to go on was what the Soviets had put in their manual. This of course had been translated from Russian into English and then transcribed into our manual which we ourselves had put together in the fashion and format most of us U.S. fighter jocks were accustomed to. Isn’t this going to be fun I was thinking. I hope they got the translation right!

Now, as I mentioned earlier, this was no ordinary hydraulic failure. Basically everything that relied on hydraulics was “kaput”. Thankfully the wings had moved full forward and that allowed me to at least attempt the approach. But without the leading and trailing edge flaps my required airspeed on final would be around 210 knots with touchdown of the main gear planned for 190 knots. To put all this in perspective, our normal approach speed in the MiG-23 was around 150 knots and we’d touchdown on the runway around 140 knots. As another comparison, your typical airliner will land around 120-130 knots. But hey, I’m a fighter pilot, what the heck!

Before I can do all this I need to get the gear down and locked. No problem. I “blow down” the landing gear using the emergency pneumatic system and everything is indicating down and locked. Great. Now, I do a “controllability check”. With the gear down and the airplane “dirtied up”, I slow to the planned approach speed of 210 knots from my present speed of 250 knots. Again, all is fine and dandy. No problems. No airframe buffet at 210 knots which would indicate something very wrong with the configuration and/or the improper airspeed. With everything set, checklists complete, the only thing left to do is to

land the airplane and get it stopped and hand it back to Maintenance.

The decision has been made to have Goldie land first, just in case I tube my landing and close the runway. Better to have him on the ground rather than risk him being airborne with nowhere to land except for the taxi-way. So, not really needing him any further for chase duties I clear him off and he lands while still allowing me plenty of time to set up for my approach which today is to the South-Southeast on the airfield’s Runway 16. I plan my approach to land with still enough fuel to allow me to execute a “go-around” should the initial attempt be questionable or whatever. So with everything in position on the airfield I’m cleared to land and begin my turn to final, setting up on about a 5-6 mile straight-in approach.

Now there’s one more piece of the story that’s unique, at least at TTR when compared to any other USAF installation to my knowledge. Throughout the squadron operations building, the maintenance hangers and workshops there’s a Public Address (PA) system that allowed whoever selected it to transmit messages or information deemed necessary to the entire complex. Good to have if you suddenly need to get the word out on an unbriefed Russian or Chinese satellite over-flight, the arrival of a high-ranking official, or an emergency. Today it was used for the latter.

So as I’m on final the word goes out by some unseen voice, “Bandit Three-One, hydraulic emergency, on final approach.” I imagine it sounding like an announcement of some impending doom!

Hey, it’s not everyday someone gets to watch something like this and let’s face it, without it being said, everyone knows there’s a good chance that this airplane and its pilot could end up in a big fireball at the end of the runway if things don’t go quite as planned. So with the PA announcement made, a good number of the troops who hear it drop what they’re doing and quickly run out to the west side of the hanger complex to witness what could be “Z-Man’s” last hurrah. How touching. Now no one, I like to think, had their finger’s crossed hoping to witness a fireball.

Landing the MiG-23 under normal conditions isn’t necessarily a “no-brainer” and today I’d be landing one with a ton of extra airspeed on it. For the un-familiar, these extra “knots” would require some deft stick and rudder work once on the ground as at the planned landing speed the airplane still wants to fly. It wants to fly, I want to land. A bit of a dilemma if not handled well and all your wheels are on the ground. As I’d mentioned, the MiG-23 is squirrely even on a good day. The high wings, narrow landing gear, and lack of ailerons make for some “interesting” approaches and landings even when everything is normal. Today I’ve got all that plus lack of the use of the spoilers atop each wing, due to lack of my hydraulics. The only roll control surfaces remaining for my use are the differential rear horizontal stabilators at the tail and a bit of rudder authority. And the latter isn’t of much use when landing the Flogger except for helping to control the nose when dealing with a cross-wind, which luckily today is nil.

The last few miles take but a minute. On short final to the runway I can clearly see the flashing lights of the emergency vehicles set up and in position at the mid and far end of the runway should I need assistance (read flaming fireball!). But right now my focus is on the point of the runway 1,000 feet down from the approach end where I want to make my touchdown. The alignment will have to be near perfect, the airspeed spot on, and the blending of throttle reduction and pitch control orchestrated precisely to keep the fast moving jet from coming down too hard and bouncing. In its stricken state there simply aren't the flight controls available to arrest a possible botched landing and a handful of airplane at this airspeed. If the airplane becomes uncontrollable and heads off the runway there's no "punching out". At this altitude the ejection seat is worthless except to keep me strapped in. Attempting to eject should I lose control is a death sentence commutable only by the grace of God. It's all me.

The last few seconds prior to touching down I'm gently easing the control stick back and slowly moving the throttle back a bit, bleeding off my airspeed to harmonize touching down with as little descent rate as possible so as to have my main wheels touchdown as I reach 190 knots. At this speed I can sense the end of the runway going past in a flash out of my periphery, the surrounding desert a blur. I'm focused on my touchdown point and in a moment I'm there. The main gear touch down and I hold the nose off just a few seconds as I snap the throttle to idle. The airplane is tracking perfectly, no yaw to compound the problem. I've about made it. With the throttle now back in idle I quickly reach to deploy the drag chute, its release button conveniently located just above the throttle. A few seconds later I feel the familiar tug of the drag chute as it deploys from its housing at the base of the rudder and a quick peek through the periscope confirms a full chute, rapidly aiding to slow the airplane. In fact it works so well I'm actually able to make an early turn off of the runway rather than having to exit at the end.

Exiting the runway I'm quickly met and surrounded by a phalanx of emergency vehicles as well as our maintenance troops who are there to quickly chock the tires and secure the airplane and tow it back to the hanger. After I've been signaled that the chocks are in place I'm given the signal to shut down the engine and quickly do just that and followed by popping the canopy. With my oxygen mask dropped the rush of fresh air across my sweat covered face is brisk and welcome. For the first time since the warning light had illuminated 20 minutes earlier I'm able to relax. I don't move for a few seconds. In short order the crew chief has put the ladder in place and is quickly up the side of the airplane to congratulate me on bringing the bird back and reaches out to shake my hand. I take it firmly in mine and looking at him give him a wink and say, "Other than the hydraulics, good airplane."

Back at Nellis later that evening, myself and several other Red Eagles pilots made off to the Officer's Club where I can distinctly remember not buying a single round. I tried to but was told my money wasn't any good that night. The celebration was on and it lasted a while. We couldn't talk about it there, amongst the other patrons, but each of us knew how close we'd come to losing an airplane and perhaps a fellow pilot that afternoon. Especially those of us who knew and flew the MiG-23.

The night over we all went our ways knowing fully well that we'd be back at the squadron the next morning to do it all again. We were Red Eagles. It's what we did.

I'm sure at this point you're wondering what it was that caused the hydraulic leak that started all this fuss. As it turns out, about a day after the incident our maintenance officer walks into the squadron and enters the flight room where I'm sitting and approaches me, carrying a peculiar looking piece of hardware. On the desk I'm at he tosses about a 1 foot long section of what appears to be 4 high-pressure aluminum hydraulic lines affixed together, each about the diameter of your index finger, with a rather large crimp at their center point with a number of the lines obviously ruptured, showing gaping holes of jagged metal.

This section, he goes on to explain, is what his maintenance troops discovered upon removing the access panels at the top of the left wing-root where I had seen the hydraulic fluid venting. With that he produces another piece of hardware, it appearing a bit more familiar. This looks like a huge electrical plug, about the size of your fist. This, he explained, was a part of the wiring harness that extended into the wing pylons and normally used to connect the circuitry to missiles, ejection racks, etc. Never having been used by we American's, they had years before been "tucked away" within the recesses of the wings and forgotten. Well, apparently over that period, whenever the wings had been moved, somehow this plug and its associated cable had gotten caught in the wing-sweep mechanism and little by little worked its way up to the hydraulic lines where yesterday they conveniently caused the damage that had led to the failure. My selection of the wings to the 72 degree position when I did during the intercept was the final act causing the plug to be forcibly pulled through the lines causing the failure.

It's often been said that in aviation, and flying fighters especially, timing is everything. Had the failure happened immediately after I had landed and brought the wings to their full-aft post-flight position it would've been almost a non-event. On the other hand, upon the first indication of my problem, had I delayed perhaps a few seconds longer in selecting the wings to full forward they most likely would not have had enough fluid to move and I would've had to eject from the airplane. Ruining my takeoff to landing ratio. As I said, timing is everything. Oh, when I looked up the sortie in my log book it was my twelfth fight in the MiG-23 and the date....April 1st. Luck isn't a bad thing either!



MiG-23 Flogger.

Scotty's REAA Board Update

Merry Christmas, Red Eagles! Bonnie and I send our best for the season and the upcoming 2016. To keep you 'in the know' on the various happenings within our Red Eagle Alumni Association, the following information is yours to do with as you wish!

Annual Meeting. Our organization is an officially incorporated, non-profit with a requirement to conduct an annual meeting. Because we are located throughout the country, we satisfy this requirement by either holding a Membership meeting at our occasional reunions or, in the years when we do not have a reunion, conducting a Board meeting via email. This has been an email year. Some outcomes of the meeting:

1. Our 2015 year-end treasury will approximate \$16,000, which reflects an increase of \$4,000 over 2014. Net income was mostly derived from dues receipts with our store sales being sufficient to accommodate our recurring costs (business license, tax filing, postage, etc). 2016 will be characterized by smaller dues income (fewer lifetime Membership purchases); and some up-front costs associated with the reunion this coming September. Bottomline – we are in good shape; but, out-year income will be a function of yearly dues (an important factor) and whatever store sales can be generated. As long as they can accommodate most, if not all, of our yearly obligations we should remain in good shape for the foreseeable future. HINT: Pay your dues!
2. Our By-Laws specifically delineate the composition of the REAA Board of Directors. It includes nine voting members, six elected and three named, permanent. Bob Breault, a permanent Member, tendered his resignation which necessitates a change to the By-Laws. We voted to accommodate his duties within the remaining eight Members and address the requirement for a By-Law amendment at the next general Membership Meeting (reunion 2016).
3. The Board and the reunion Leader, Ted Drake, have received several inquiries concerning the ability to bring non-Red Eagles as guests to the 2016 Reunion. We unanimously agreed that guests are absolutely welcome. Note: A perk of REAA Membership has been a slightly reduced cost of attendance at the reunions. While the exact number has not yet been determined, Members should expect the Member cost to be slightly lower than that of the guest – nothing exorbitant, just a heads-up'.
4. At the last reunion, Membership voted to provide a contribution to Wounded Warriors as a standard memorial

to recognize the passing of a Red Eagle. Since that time, some concerns have been expressed as to the efficiency of the Wounded Warriors in utilizing their funds. Consequently, we will provide some research and readdress this issue at the 2016 Membership meeting.

5. An update on the status of a Red Eagle display at the Air Force Museum revealed that a display is in their plan; but, completion by our reunion is not feasible due to logistical requirements. BUT, it will not happen without something to display – see the website for the procedure to submit your items – the sooner, the better!

Melody Galloway. Recently, the Red Eagle Alumni Association lost an invaluable member, Melody Galloway. She passed away shortly before Thanksgiving following a short illness. Melody was retired Army and GS for USAF. She and Ben were married for 37 years – their children are Sabrina and Aaron, and their grandchildren are Raina and Zander. Melody personified Red Eagle energy and 'can-doism' – The Red Eagle Website, our Newsletter, our By-Laws, our Charter, our store – all contain Melody's imprint. Evil Peck provides some perfect anecdotes about Melody's personality in his remembrance. Our Association will miss Melody – so will those of us who knew her personally. She and Ben were a great team.

Until next time,
Scotty

Gail Peck's Memories of Melody Galloway

We have lost a true RED EAGLE treasure with the passing of Melody Galloway.

Many may not know that Melody and Ben were married for 37 years, had a daughter and son and two grandchildren or that she was a retired Army E5 and then a GS civil servant at Schriever AFB, CO. What a team!

I met Melody many times but one special meeting stands out in my memory. I was in Colorado Springs for some long forgotten reason and Ben and Melody joined me for breakfast at the airport. I don't really remember what we talked about but I clearly remember the charm and grace that was Melody.

She followed up that encounter with frequent and firm but gentle encouragement to make the RED EAGLE Alumni Association come true. As we assembled the team that put together the boilerplate Melody was always the team member with the good ideas. We went through many iterations over a full summer as we prepared the charter one paragraph at a time so as to have a polished and well thought out product to present to the membership at the first Boulder Station reunion. This was not a quick write and we went back and forth on

almost every paragraph of the boilerplate. Without exception Melody was the one that tactfully moved us in the correct direction and then presented us with a proposed draft for the next paragraph.

I was very proud that it all came together but I can assure the membership that Melody was a key architect of the Alumni Association Charter and we will always be grateful for her contribution. You RED EAGLES embraced the Charter and you have Melody to thank for our successful Association.

At the same time the Charter was in development, Melody was working full-time for the Air Force as a GS employee. She also found the time to work with Ben and Bro on the Newsletter concept and layout and then later on the many editions that followed.

I was just on the edges of Melody's many other contributions including the web site and her total involvement in supporting and enhancing the RED EAGLE existence and legacy.

Melody Galloway truly amazed me with her tireless energy and endless inventory of good ideas! We will all miss her.

Gail Peck

Reunion 2016

Reunion planning continues to move forward. The dates are 8-11 September 2016. Currently, you all have reserved about 20 rooms. Our initial room reservation total is for 35 rooms. When we get to 25-30, I will go back to the hotel to ask them for more. The sooner that happens, the better. Early reservations also allow us to determine hospitality room and banquet room requirements and reserve those before other groups do. So give yourself a nice Christmas present this year. Go to this link:

<http://www.holidayinn.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=hi&localeCode=en®ionCode=1&hotelCode=FBNPD&PMID=99801505&GPC=FFS>

and make your room reservation today. (If you run into problems, contact me at teddrake@aol.com.)

I will send out another e-mail update in January with more specifics including payment information. This promises to be a truly unique reunion experience that everyone will enjoy. I hope to see you all there.

Merry Christmas,

Ted Drake

2016 Reunion Planner

