

AC-130A Spectre Gunships

The First Lady
53-3129

Ghost Rider
54-1628

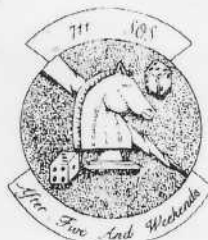
The Exterminator
54-1628

Azrael, Angel Of Death
54-1630

Night Stalker
55-0011



99th
SOG



711th
SOS

Jaws Of Death
55-0014

Midnight Express
55-0029

Proud Warrior
55-0046

Grim Reaper
56-0469

The Ultimate End
56-0509

Illustration

THE HISTORY OF THE 711th SPECIAL OPERATIONS SQUADRON

The 711th Special Operations Squadron traces its lineage back to World War II. The squadron's distinguished heritage records numerous combat missions flown by its personnel over Europe, Panama and the Persian Gulf Region. Throughout its 52 year history, the squadron has flown eleven types of aircraft and has been stationed at eight different locations.

Constituted on April 6, 1943 and activated on May 1, 1943, the 711th Bombardment Squadron (Heavy) was assigned to the 447th Bombardment Group along with its sister squadrons the 708th, 709th and 710th. After training in the B-17, the squadron deployed to Rattlesden, England in November 1943 and began flying bombing missions as a part of the VIII Bomber Command which later became the Eighth Air Force. The squadron played a key role in attacks on German submarine pens, naval installations, cities, V-1 and V-2 missile sites and other objectives. In June 1944 the squadron participated in the Normandy invasion by bombing airfields and other targets near the beachhead. After the initial invasion targets shifted to marshalling yards, railroad bridges and communication centers. In December 1944 and January 1945 the squadron supported the Battle of the Bulge. 2nd Lieutenant Robert E. Femoyer, a navigator in the 711th, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on a mission over Germany on November 2, 1944. The 711th operations building is named in his honor.

Following the end of World War II the 711th Bombardment Squadron was inactivated on November 7, 1945 along with its sister squadrons and the 447th Bombardment Group. For its accomplishments the squadron received seven campaign streamers in the European-African-Middle Eastern Theater.

The 711th was next activated on June 27, 1949 as the 711th Bombardment Squadron (Light) at Long Beach Municipal Airport, California. Organized under Headquarters AFRES and Fourth Air Force, the squadron flew the B-26, T-11, T-7 and T-6 aircraft. The 711th continued to operate as an AFRES squadron until March 21, 1951 when it was inactivated.

On April 12, 1955 the 711th Bombardment Squadron was redesignated as the 711th Fighter Bomber Squadron and was activated on May 18, 1955. The squadron was assigned to the 448th Fighter Bomber Group and 448th Fighter Bomber Wing under Fourteenth Air Force, AFRES. The squadron trained at NAS Dallas, Texas flying the F-86, F-80, T-33 and T-38 until it was once again deactivated on November 16, 1957.

The current chapter in the history of the 711th began in 1971. Redesignated as the 711th

Tactical Airlift Squadron on June 17, 1971, the squadron was activated on July 30, 1971 and was assigned to the 919th Tactical Airlift Group with the Tactical Air Command as its gaining command. Congressman Bob Sikes cut the ribbon to formally activate the squadron. At the time of its activation the squadron had one member, Lieutenant Colonel Don Haugen who was the 919th TAG commander. The squadron initially trained in one U-3A and four RC-130A aircraft for the first two years pending the availability of C-130A cargo aircraft. During this period the 711th received its first squadron commander, Major Roy Ayres, who also acted as 919th TAG Deputy Commander for Operations.

The first two years were difficult ones for the squadron. The RC-130A's were not cargo capable and thus training was primarily limited to pilot training. On October 25, 1972 the squadron did perform its first paratroop drop with 103 rangers. In March 1973 the unit performed its first deployment when Captain Ken Gates and Captain Ted Murray deployed to Camp LeJeune, North Carolina for two weeks. On July 2, 1973 the unit started another conversion, this time to the C-130B. With these aircraft the unit began true airlift support. In September 1973 Captain Jack Brown deployed in support of DEEP FURROW 73 to Mildenhall AB, England which was the unit's first overseas deployment. Training and deployments continued through 1973 and 1974 and the unit passed its first ORI in February 1974. Shortly after this ORI the unit once again began planning for another conversion. It was announced on March 28, 1974 that the squadron would convert to the AC-130A Spectre gunships effective July 1, 1975 and be redesignated as the 711th Special Operations Squadron.

With the announced mission change work began immediately on the conversion. Many obstacles had to be overcome. The new mission was the most demanding ever attempted by a reserve unit. Additional crewmembers had to be recruited and a complete new training program established. The first formal school was begun in July 1974 at Lowery AFB, Colorado for weapons mechanics. Finally on June 16, 1975, the first of twelve AC-130A gunships arrived at Duke Field from Thailand.

During 1975 and 1976 the unit experienced major problems with the conversion due to aircraft maintenance problems. Mission aborts were common as maintenance worked long hours bringing the aircraft up to acceptable standards. Two aircraft were in such bad condition that they were sent to the Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center at Davis-Monthan AFB in June 1976. As work continued aircraft reliability improved and aircrew training proceeded. In 1975 the squadron saw a change in command as Lieutenant Colonel Bill Day assumed command of the squadron. As a result of the efforts of all, passed its first ORI in the gunships in September 1976. The squadron had the distinction of being the first gunship squadron to pass an ORI and signs reading "The reserves did it first, even with "A" models" adorned Duke Field. After the ORI the unit continued training and completed its first overseas deployment in 1978 with a successful trip to Howard AFB, Panama.

On April 8, 1979 the squadron responded to its first actual contingency. Early that

morning a 116 car train derailed in Crestview. The 711th responded flying observation missions over the site for two days providing critical data to rescue crews. Technical Sergeant Ed Livingston, an infrared sensor operator, received the Meritorious Service Medal for saving the lives of three fireman when he observed them approaching a derailed car which was burning. Overall members of the squadron received three Meritorious Service Medals and 55 Air Force Commendation Medals for work supporting this operation.

During 1979 the squadron saw increased tasking requirements as crews began supporting missile launches at Cape Canaveral, Florida and Vandenberg AFB, California. This mission continued until January 28, 1986 when the space shuttle Challenger exploded. During this period Lieutenant Colonel Neils Poulsen assumed command of the squadron and the unit achieved C-1 status for the first time on December 21, 1979. Over the next several years additional changes in commanders occurred as Lieutenant Colonel Gary Patterson assumed command in 1980 and Lieutenant Colonel Jerry Rankin in 1982. During this time the unit also changed its gaining command as on March 1, 1983 it came under the Military Airlift Command as a part of consolidation of special operations.

The 1980's saw additional tasking for the squadron as increased requirements for user training developed both in and out of the United States. Crews from the 711th were constantly deploying to locations around the United States, Central and South America, Canada, Morocco and Egypt working with both US and foreign forces. During these deployments and exercises strong bonds developed between the crews of the 711th and the users. This was particularly true in Central and South America where the crews not only helped train foreign military personnel but assisted with numerous humanitarian projects as well. In 1986 another change of command took place as Lieutenant Colonel Bill Tyre assumed command of the 711th.

The next real world test for the squadron occurred in December 1989. While deployed to Howard AFB, Panama on normal rotation, Operation JUST CAUSE was launched. The two crews from the 711th involved at the onset were the crews of Major Clay McCutchan and Captain Mike Wilson. These crews provided close air support for ground forces the night the operation started and Major McCutchan's crew was the first gunship airborne when the invasion started. For their efforts Major McCutchan and Captain Wilson were awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses and Major McCutchan's crew was selected for the Presidents Award as the top crew in the Air Force Reserve for 1990. As a result of Operation JUST CAUSE additional emphasis was placed on special operations. In May 1990 the squadron once again changed gaining commands as the Air Force created the Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field. For the first time special operations had its own command.

With the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on August 2, 1990 the squadron again became involved in another real world operation. In the fall of 1990 the squadron was asked to help support airlift operations supplying the buildup of coalition forces in the Persian Gulf. 711th crews responded flying critical supplies between east coast bases for overseas shipment. During

this time the unit again changed commanders as Lieutenant Colonel Ron Edinger assumed command of the squadron. With the start of operation DESERT STORM in January 1991, the squadron was mobilized and sent five aircraft and eight crews to Saudi Arabia. After arriving in Saudi Arabia the crews began flying missions in minimum time. On February 26th three crews lead by Major Mike Wilson, Captain Richard Haddad and Lieutenant Colonel Larry Muench attacked targets on the Al Jahra highway going from Kuwait City to Basrah, Iraq. These crews destroyed multiple targets in an extremely hostile environment. For their efforts the crews of Major Wilson and Lieutenant Colonel Muench were awarded Distinguished Flying Crosses and Captain Haadad's crew was awarded Air Medals.

Upon return from DESERT STORM the unit returned to its primary role of training users in the operation of gunships. In 1992 Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Curry assumed command of the squadron and was faced with the task of preparing the unit for a mission change. After many months of debate the unit was notified that it would be going out of the gunship business. The original plans to retire the "A" models and replace them with "H" models from active duty had changed. The "H" model and new "U" model gunships would remain at Hurlburt Field and the 711th would split into two squadrons; the 5th flying HC-130's and the 711th flying MC-130's. However one final mission awaited the gunships of the 711th.

In September 1994 the squadron deployed five crews to Guantanamo Naval Air Station, Cuba to support Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY. During September and October 711th crews provided support for ground forces in Haiti along with the 16th SOS. From October until December all gunship support for the operation was provided for by the crews from the 711th as the 16th SOS returned to prior operational commitments. During this time all unit personnel who supported Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY did so in volunteer status. Upon return from Cuba the squadron concentrated its efforts on the upcoming conversion to its new mission. These efforts were led by a new squadron commander as Lieutenant Colonel Greg Hansen assumed command in early 1995.

September 1995 saw the end of the gunship era at Duke Field. During the UTA a formal retirement ceremony was held for the AC-130A gunships with special recognition given to the "First Lady", aircraft 53-3129. The ceremony was attended by many dignitaries including the Air Force Reserve Commander, Major General Robert McIntosh. The final flights for the gunships took place on September 28, 1995. On that date the last five gunships departed Duke Field after twenty years of service. Although gone their memory will be preserved as five of the units gunships went to museums; aircraft 56-0509 at Hurlburt Field, aircraft 53-3129 at Eglin AFB, aircraft 55-0014 at Robbins AFB, aircraft 54-1623 at Dobbins AFB and aircraft 54-1630 at the United States Air Force Museum. Although the gunship era has ended for the squadron, there is no question that the proud traditions established by hundreds of present and prior members of the 711th will continue long into the future.

SQUADRON HONORS

War Service Streamers

World War II

1. *Air Combat, European-African-Middle Eastern Theater*
2. *Air Offensive, Europe*
3. *Ardennes-Alsace*
4. *Central Europe*
5. *Normandy*
6. *Northern France*
7. *Rhineland*

Southwest Asia

1. *Liberation of Kuwait*

Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards

1. *July 30, 1971 to March 31, 1973*
2. *July 1, 1975 to January 31, 1977*
3. *October 1, 1983 to June 1, 1985*
4. *June 1, 1987 to May 31, 1989*
5. *December 8, 1989 to January 7, 1990*
6. *June 1, 1990 to May 31, 1992*
7. *June 1, 1992 to May 31, 1994*

Armed Forces Expeditionary Service

1. *Panama*
2. *Haiti*

AFRES Grover Loening Awards

1. *April 1, 1985 to March 31, 1986*
2. *April 1, 1986 to March 31, 1987*
3. *April 1, 1987 to March 31, 1988*
4. *April 1, 1992 to March 31, 1993*

PILOTS



CPT RANDY BRIGHT



LTC "BUCK" ALLEN



CPT RICHARD APPEN



LTC JACK BROWN

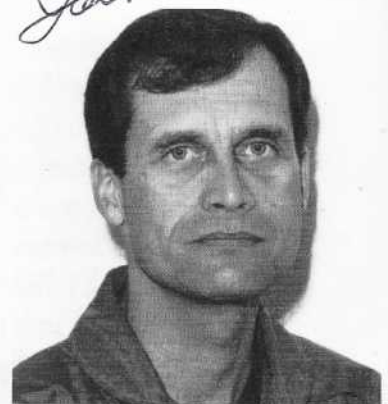
Jack H Brown



MAJ JOSEPH ARTHUR



MAJ DAVID BEIDEL



MAJ JERRY BROWN



LTC STEVE BURROUGH



LTC RICHARD CHAMPION

Dick Champion



CPT JEFFREY COLLIER



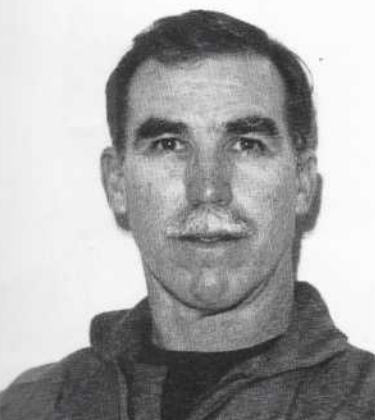
COL CHARLES CURRY



1LT MICHAEL FISTER



CPT "TREY" FROST



LTC AL GREENUP

Al Greenup



LTC ROBERT GUALTIERI

Robert A Gualtieri



MAJ RICHARD HADDAD

Richard "Beef" Haddad



LTC MICHAEL HAYES

Michael Hayes



CPT HAYWARD HORNSBY



LTC DAVID JOWERS



1LT JOHN LAMAR



MAJ LYNN LEWIS



MAJ WILLIAM McCOY



LTC STEVE McHAN



LTC CLAY McCUTCHAN

Clay McCutchan



MAJ MICHAEL MILTON

NAVIGATORS



LTC LARRY MUENCH

Larry Muench



MAJ JOSEPH NORRIS



MAJ VICTOR PRAWDZIK



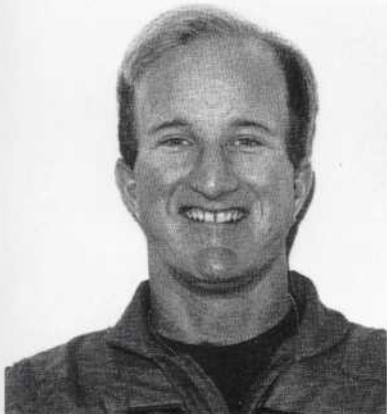
1LT CAM SANDERS



CPT TIM SOKOLOWSKI



MAJ DALE SPIETH



MAJ SCOTT TAYLOR



MAJ WES WEATHERS

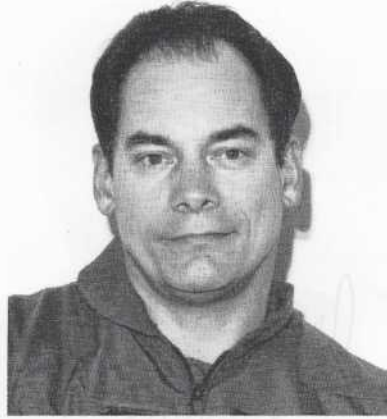


CPT JON WEEKS



MAJ MICHAEL WILSON

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "M Wilson".



MAJ RICK WINTERS



LTC ROBERT WINTERS



NAVIGATORS



CPT JOSE DAVISON



LTC GUY GORDON



MAJ BRUCE FERNALD
Bruce A. Fernald



CPT MICHAEL AMMONS

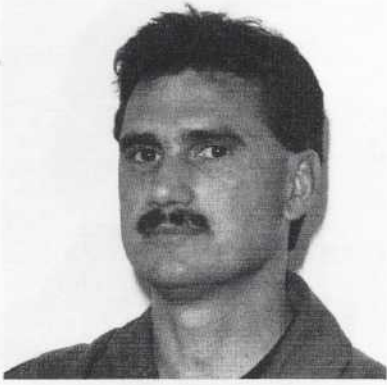


CPT RICKY CREWS

Ricky L. Crews



CPT DAN HENRY



MAJ NORM HOYT



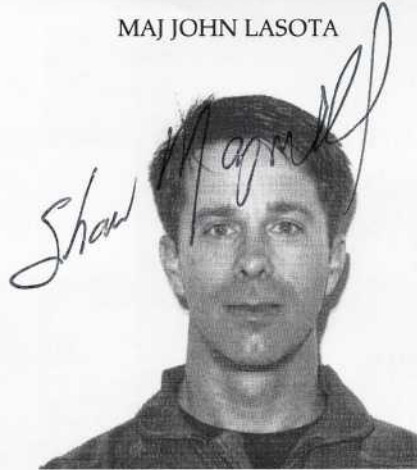
MAJ JOHN LASOTA



LTC BOB LITTLEFIELD



LTC JOHN MacINTYRE



CPT SHAUN MAYNARD



LTC RONNY OWEN



LTC ED PATTERSON



MAJ DALE PIERCE



LTC JERRY PORTER



CPT KEN ROSE

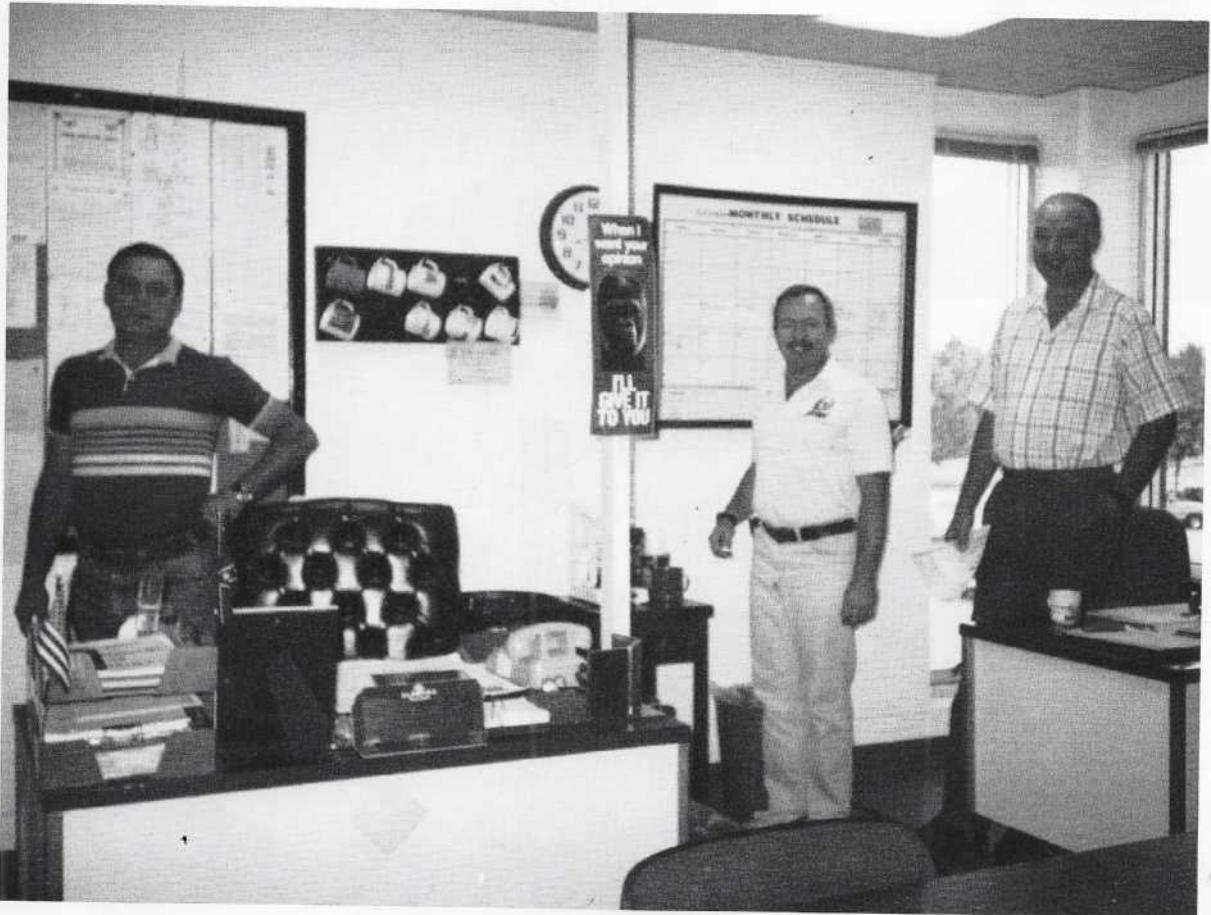


MAJ JD SMITH



MAJ JERRY THURMAN

FLIGHT ENGINEERS



MSG LAMAR CUTCHINS



TSG KEVIN DAVIS



TSGT PAUL DOMAN



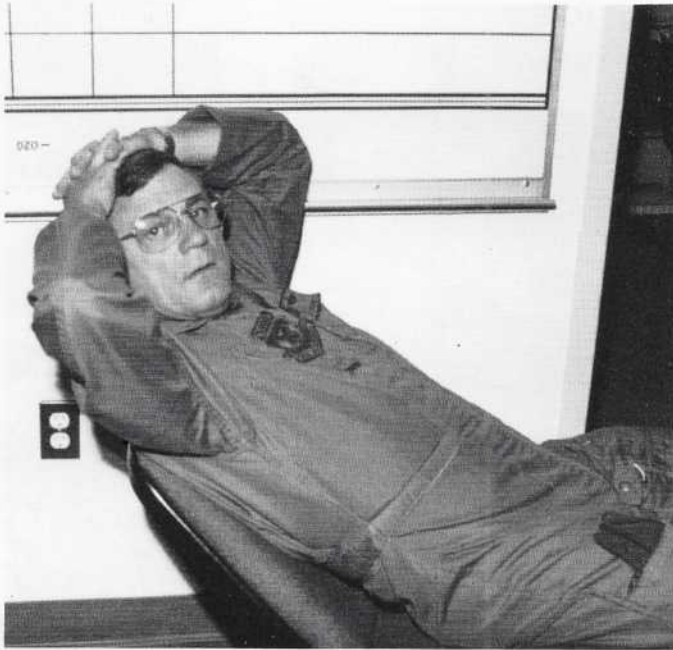
MSG TOM GRIMES



MSG DARRELL KLEIN



SSG TYLER OUTTEN



TSG GENE POPE



MSG JIM RENFROW



MSG LARRY RIDGE

Larry Howard Ridge



MSG MATT SCHMITT



TSG MICHAEL SMITH

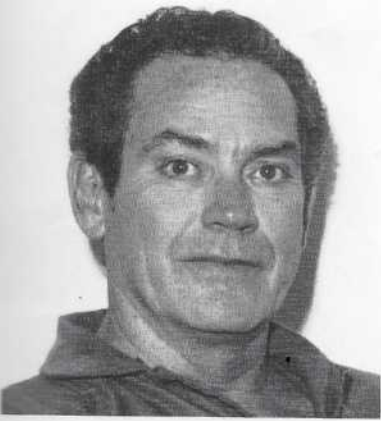


SSG TERRY STUDSTILL



MSG JAMES TART

Jimmy



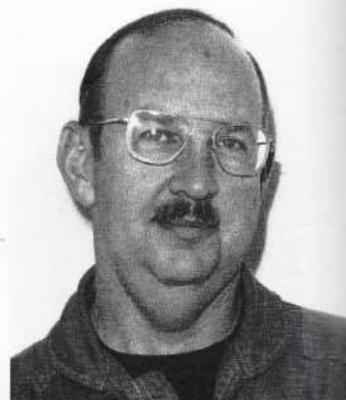
SSG WILLIAM TINDALL



LOADMASTERS



MSG JERRY ALLEN



MSG DON DEW

Don Dew



MSG PAUL DUBOSE



SSG CHRIS DUNN



TSG JAMES FLAHERTY



SSG THOMAS HADDOCK



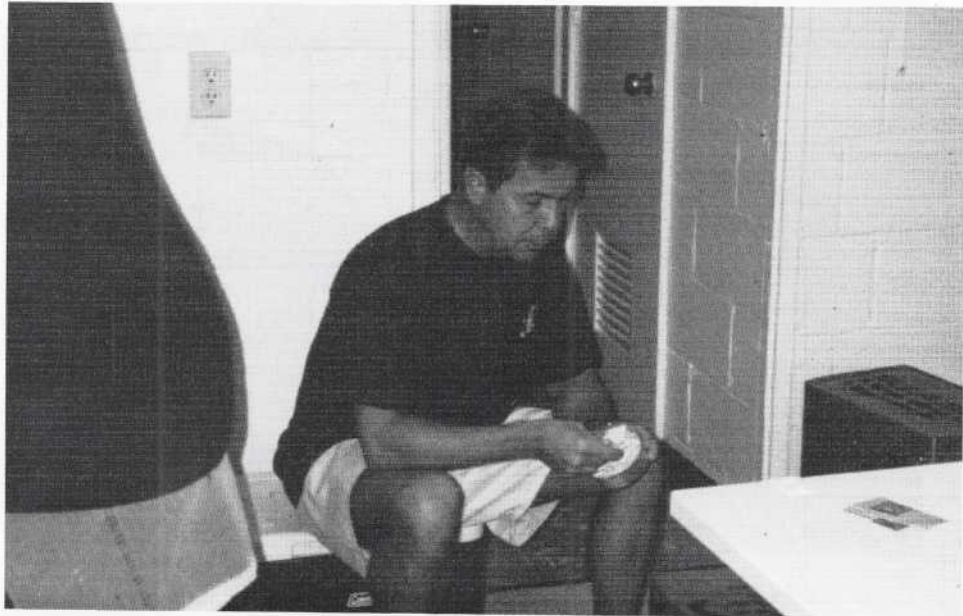
TSG JOSEPH HOLCOMBE



TSG TJ LITER



MSG DON LOWELL



TSG KEN McDOWELL

Ken McDowell



TSG KEITH POOLE

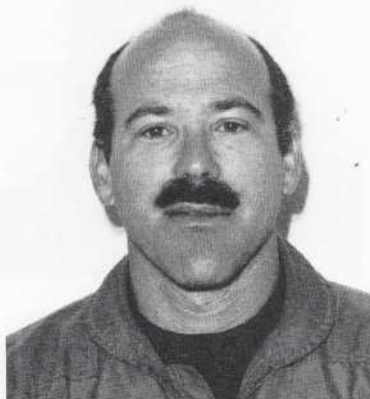


SSG KIM WOLFERSPERGER

FIRE CONTROL OFFICERS



CPT ED ANDERSON



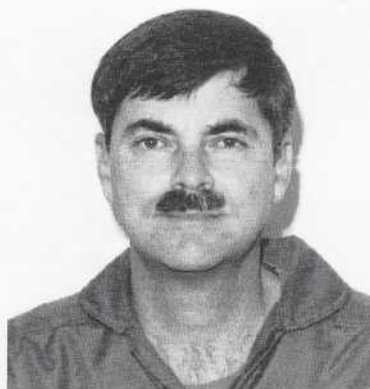
CPT BUD BARTH



CPT JAMES CLAUSON



CPT RENE GUIDRY



LTC GREGORY HANSON



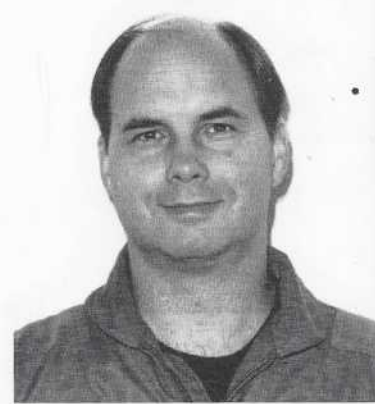
MAJ JIM JAY



COL JIMMY JONES



LTC CHARLES LOFQUEST



MAJ PAUL MUNYON

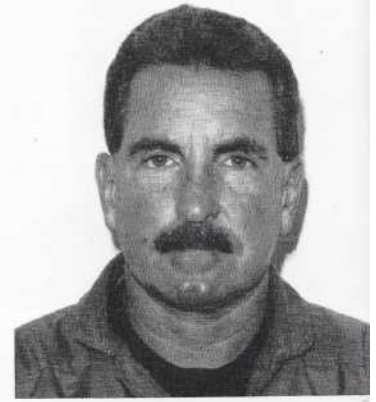
ELECTRONIC WARFARE OFFICERS



MAJ GREGORY ANSLEY



CPT LARRY EASTERLING



LTC HENRY FITZGERALD



CPT RON HUTCHENS



CPT THEODORE KOLLAR



CPT WILLIAM LOSQUADRO

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Losquadro".

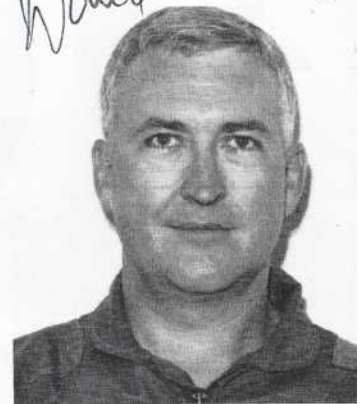


MAJ LESLIE MATHESON

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leslie Matheson".



CPT JOE MESSER



LTC DAVID PEEL



MAJ RAY PIJMA



CPT RICHARD RISNER



CPT BRIAN STRANG



LTC ELMER THOMAS



ADRIAN WELLS



CPT MICHAEL WRIGHT



LTC DAVID WORRALL



SENSOR OPERATORS



TSG GARY ANDERSON



TSG ED BERNARD



MSG BILLIE BLACKMON



TSG LUTHEL BOZEMAN



SSG ROGER CAMPBELL



MSG LARRY CHAVERS

Larry Chavers



MSG JAMES DOMBROSKY

James Dombrosky



MSG WILLIAM ELLISON



MSG BUD HELMS



MSG BRUCE JORGENSEN



MSG JAMES LEWICK



MSG ED LIVINGSTON
Ed Livingston



TSG CARL LODRINI



MSG WILLIAM LOOSEN



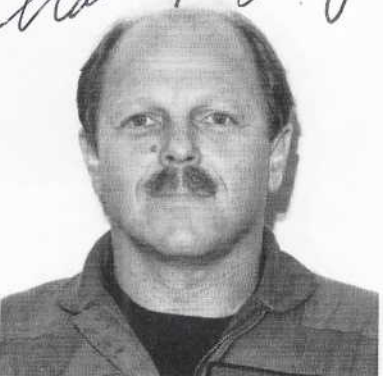
SMS STANLEY LONG
Stanley Long



TSG DOUGLAS MEREDITH
Douglas Meredith



TSG DAVID OWENS



TSG EUGENE PELLETIER



SMS TONY RENBARGER
Tony Renbarger



MSG DENNIS ROWELL
Dennis Rowell



MSG JOSEPH SIMMONS



MSG CARL SPAIN



TSG KEN STACEY



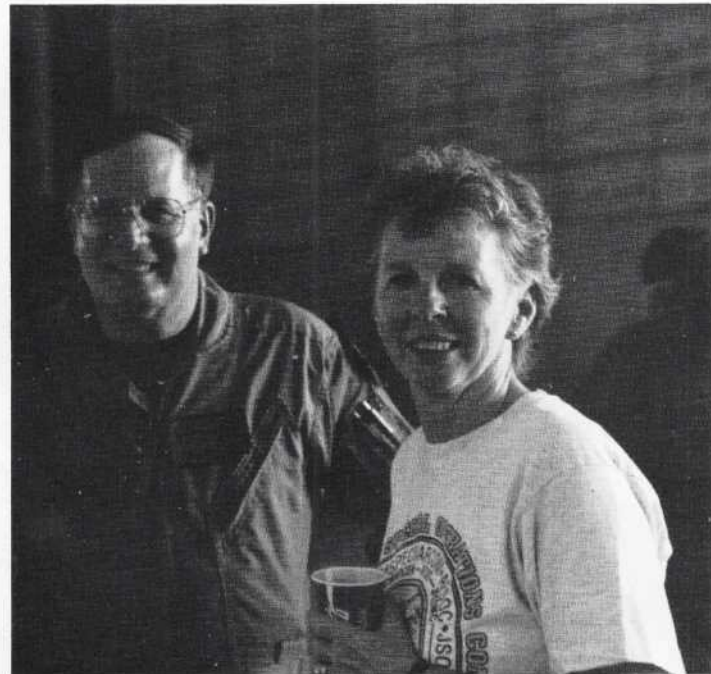
MSG LEONARD STEPHENS



TSG RINDA TEMME



MSG RICHARD WINGATE



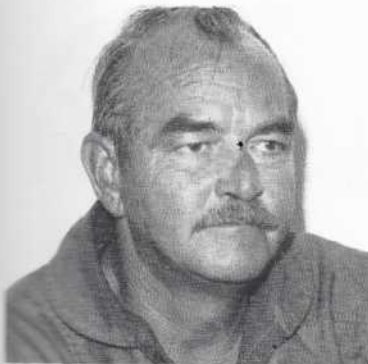
AERIAL GUNNERS



TSG TOM ALTMAN



MSG RICK ANDREOZZI



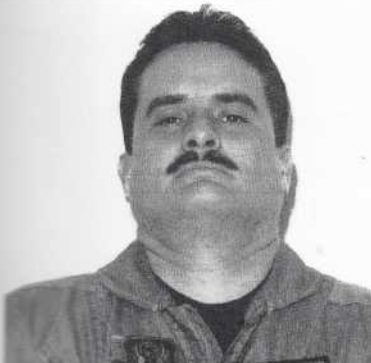
TSG TERRY BAKER



MSG DARRELTON BELL



MSG MIKE BROCKSMITH



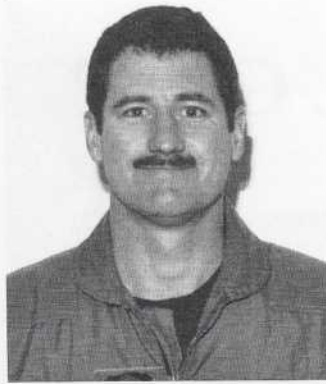
SSG LARRY BRUNER



SSG TERRY DAWKINS



SSG RALPH ELLIS



SSG DIXON FRANKLIN



TSG FRANK GALLAGHER



SMS STEVE GARDINIER



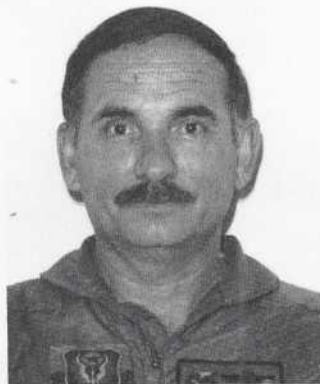
SSG HAROLD GILLIAM



MSG CHIP HALL



TSG GARY HARD



TSG BILLY HARCUS



SSG GLYNDON HAR

Bills
#



TSG ROBERT HARRELL



SRA KENNETH HOLMES



TSG LARRY JOHNSON



MSG RICHARD KELLEY



TSG PATRICK KENDALL



SGT JEFFREY KIBE



SSG MICHAEL KLAUSUTIS

Michael Klausutis



MSG DONALD LOCKE



TSG JOHN LOVETT



MSG RAYMOND MANSFIELD

Ray Mansfield



SSG JAMES MARTIN



TSG JOHN MAY



TSG DANIEL MOSLEY



SSG MARC MOWERY



SMS DON NAFTEL



TSG MICHAEL OGERSHOK



TSG PATRICK NICHOLS



SSG JOHN PORTER



SSG "DOC" PROCTOR



MSG CHARLES SCUDDER



SRA STEVE SESSIONS



SMS LYLE SPANGLER



TSG JAMES VANTASSELL



TSG DENNIS WALKER



SSG ROBERT WALTMAN



MSG JW WOOTEN



MSG LARRY WINDSOR

LIFE SUPPORT



TSG KAREN ILLAR



SRA ALVIN KUPER



MSG KIM McCLAIN

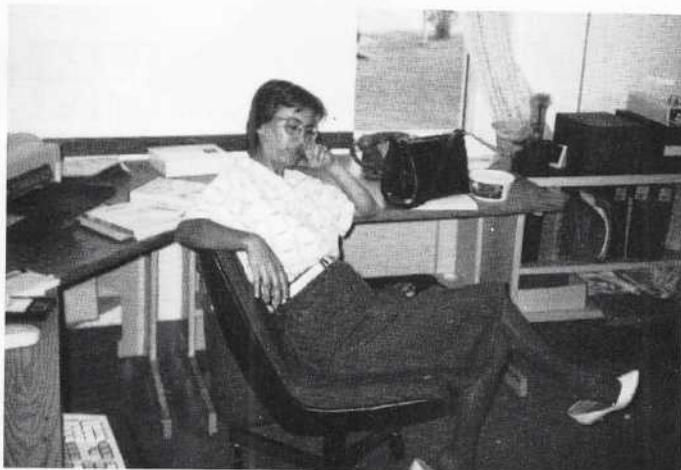


TSG TOMMY REAVES

AIR RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



MSG TAMRA DEES



TSG KAREN PATENAUDE



MSG DARLENE PETERSON



SSG DEAN POROSTOVSKY

ADMINISTRATION



MSG RODNEY BANKSTON



TSG DENISE DOMAN



MSG ROBERT CLARKE



SSG KATRINA LAMBERT



SSG PAUL PICKERELL



MR JERRY RAMSEY

MED TECHS



SRA BRIAN MEYERS

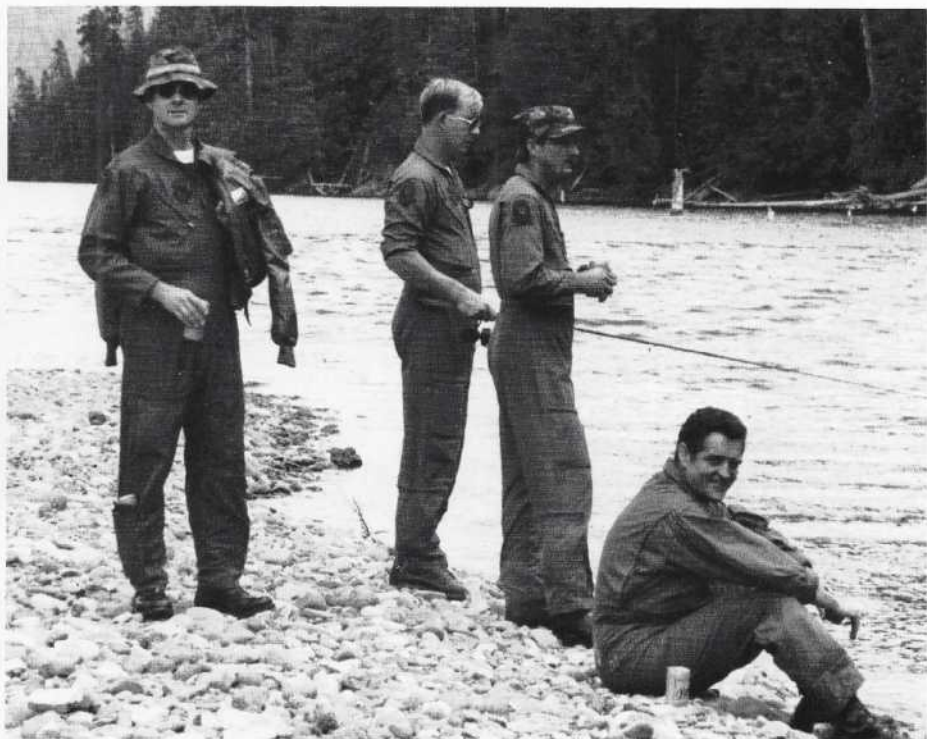


MSG GERALD SMITH

"BRIGHT STAR" 1993



“COMOX” CANADA





“DESERT STORM” 1991



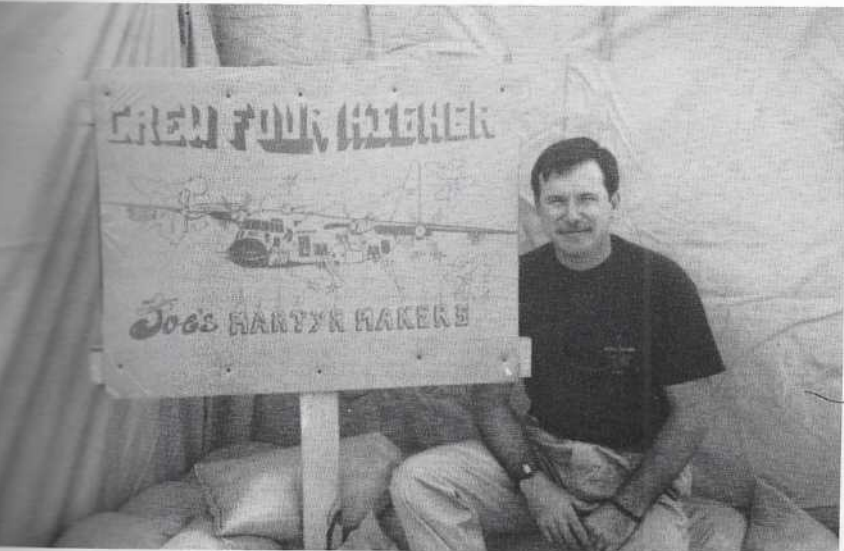
John H GARRETT

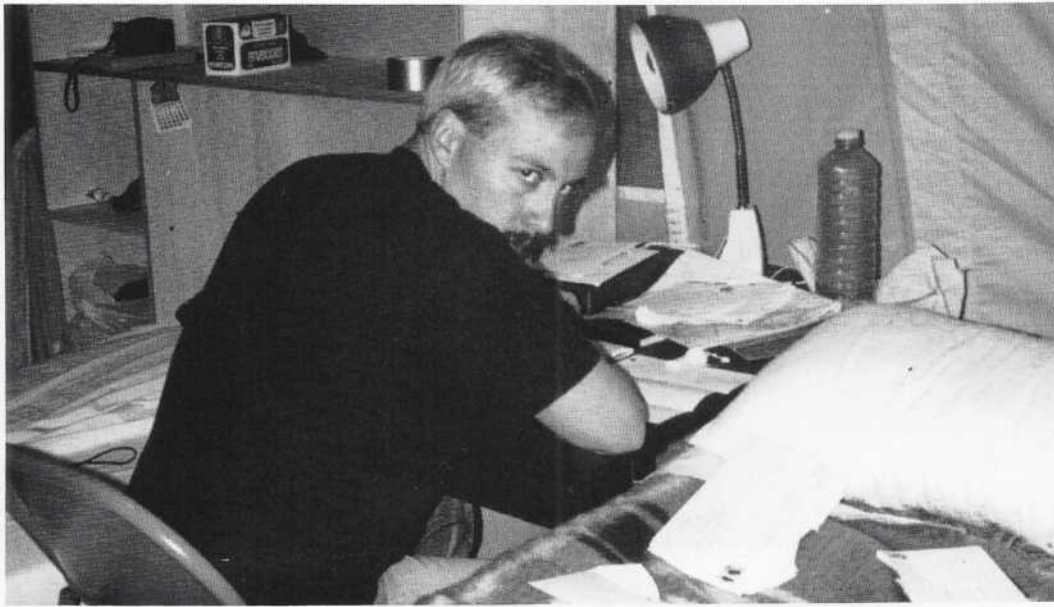




*Charlie
Ward*







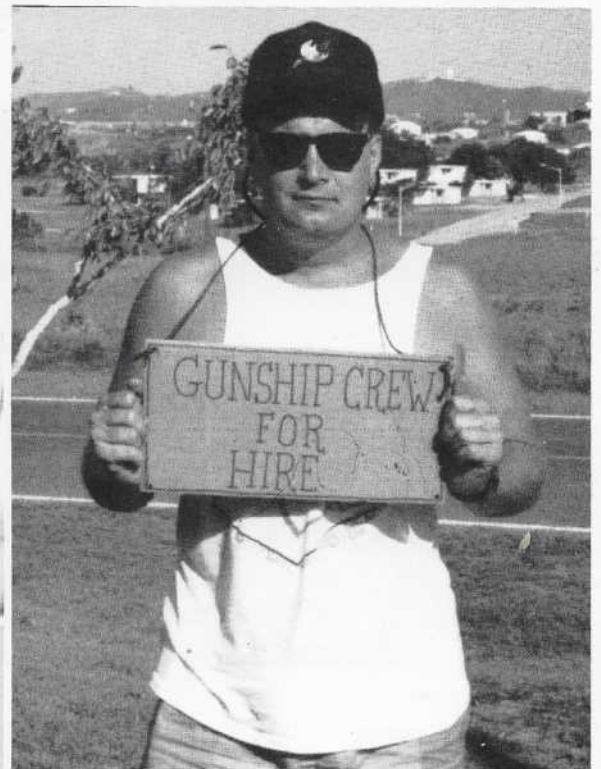
“INTERNATIONAL TATTOO” 1994

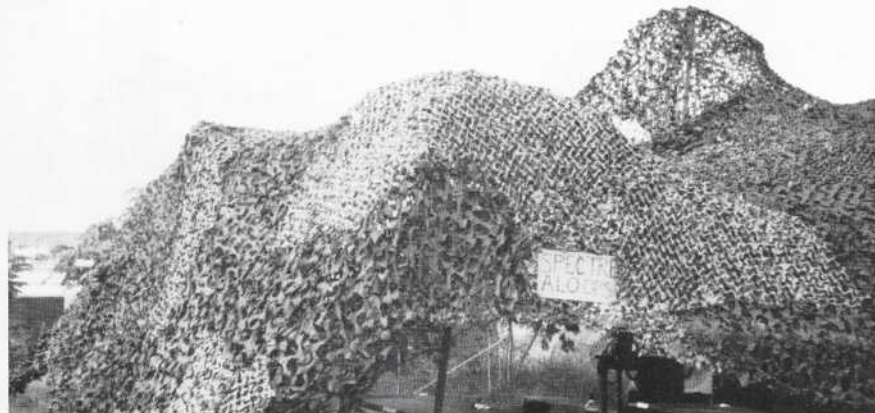


“JUST CAUSE” 1989

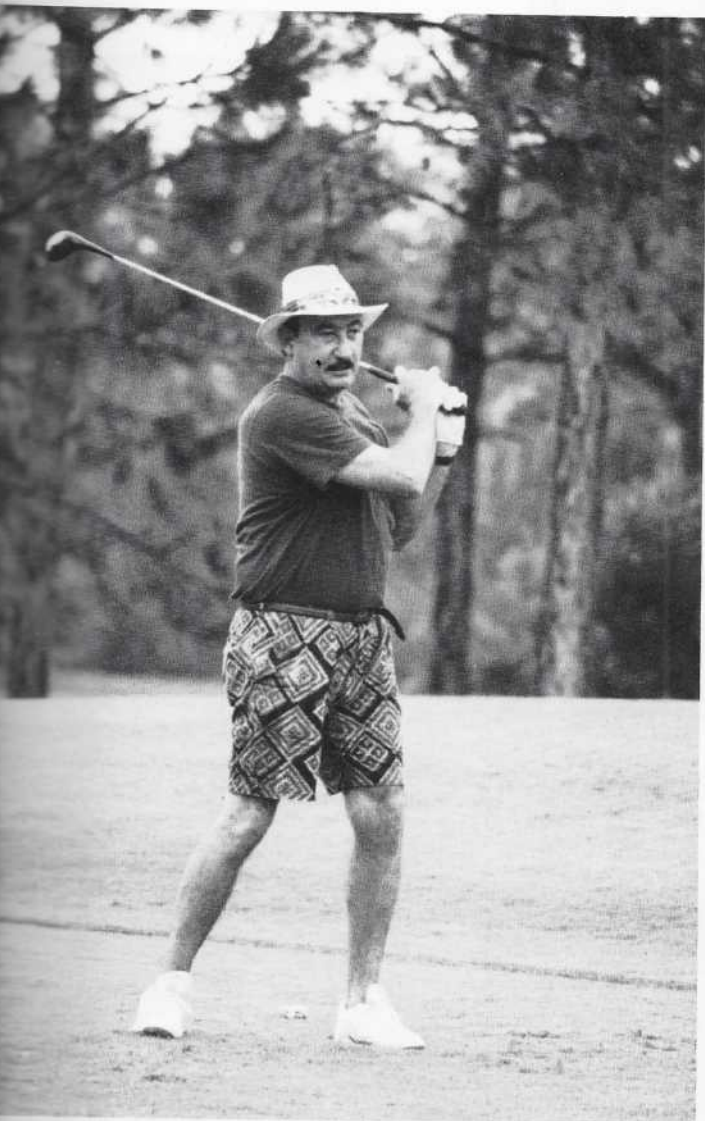


"UPHOLD DEMOCRACY" 1994

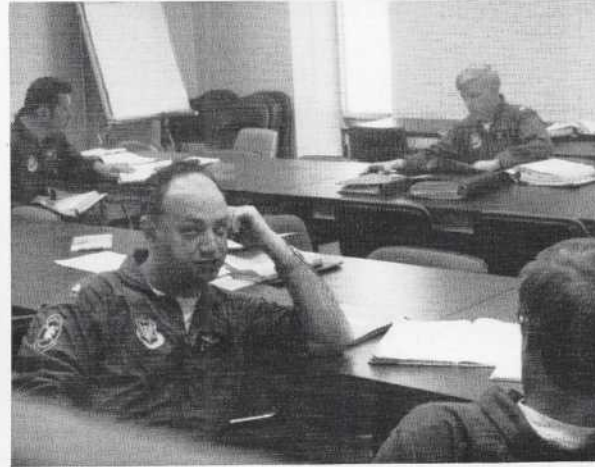
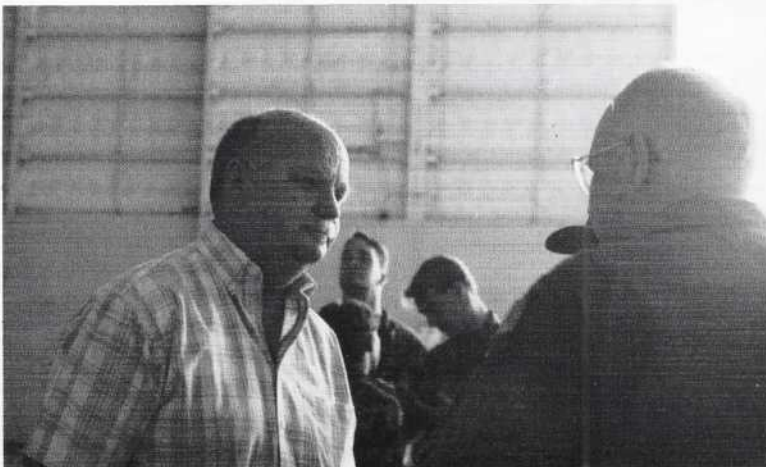
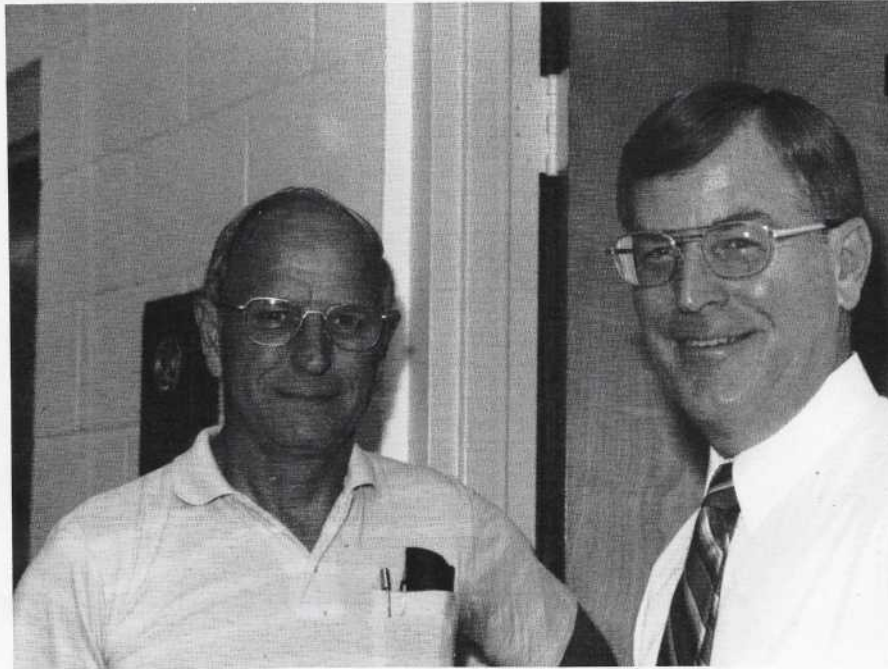
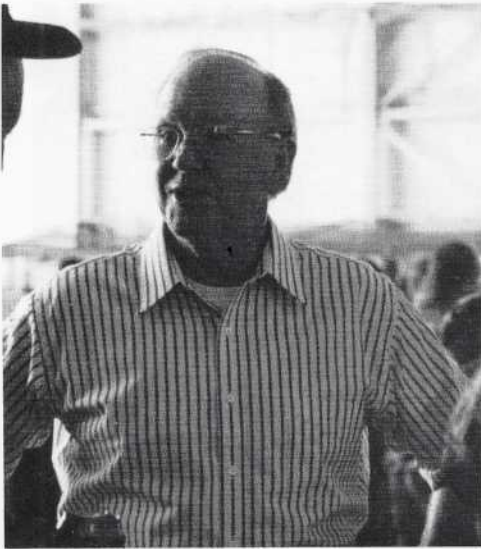




711 SOS 1995 GOLF INVITATIONAL



"OLDTIMERS"



END OF AN ERA





END OF AN ERA



RETIREMENT OF GUNSHIPS, 1995

