

ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONALE



1 November 2010 Newsletter 49th Edition

FINAL FLIGHT



It is with great sadness that I inform you of the final flight of Harold Burgeson, who passed away Saturday morning, October 23, 2010 of heart failure. Known as Burgie by his contemporaries in the Roadrunners, Burgie never got around to posting his bio on the website. However, he is remembered as being an Air Force officer serving at Groom Lake as a member of the operations staff in the 1129th SAS during the CIA A-12 Project OXCART. Burgie, OXCART call sign "Dutch 12" was an excellent pilot and one of the IP's who trained the CIA A-12 project pilots in the A-12 trainer. Col. Sam Pizzo says it best to describe Burgie when he reported on their time together on duty in Europe, "I have met many many good people during my 30 years while wearing the Blue however he was the ONLY one that I met whom I NEVER EVER saw lose his temper or cool. His near death experience on Okinawa while serving on the A 12 deployment is a story in itself."

Memorial service will be at 12:00 noon, Thursday, October 28th at Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX. He will then be buried at the National Cemetery at Ft. Sam Houston in San Antonio at 2:00 pm.

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It is my sad duty to inform my fellow Roadrunners and the Pratt & Whitney family of the final flight of Bill Gent who passed away yesterday after battling breast cancer for five and a half years. His wife, Ruth reports that he was a hero til the end. Bill is remembered for being one of the J-58 engineers who did a 6 month duty stint at Groom Lake when Pres. Johnson outed the Blackbird program. He covered both the Ranch and Edwards AFB flawlessly and was an asset for the program. His P&W friends remember him as having a liking to Corvettes and good Scotch. A memorial service was conducted on Sunday, October 31, at 2:00 in Pompano Beach. Ruth can be reached by email at rmg819@comcast.net. Our condolences to Ruth and family.

TD - Thank you for the sad update on Burgie. He and Amelia called us a couple of weeks back and we really enjoyed our chat with them. We served together in Wiesbaden; I in Intell Collections for USAF while Burgie worked in Plans. He really didn't go too much for paper work. We had some great times traveling around Germany with those two. Burgie and I plus our wives played golf practically every Sunday while he and I hit the links together on Saturday. While in Germany, his forte was in making all different types of Martinis known to mankind, and when he purchased a new Blender at the PX, I think we hit every one of them. I have met many many good people during my 30 years while



wearing the Blue however he was the ONLY one that I met whom I NEVER EVER saw lose his temper or cool. His near death experience on Okinawa while serving on the A 12 deployment is a story in itself. He was without a doubt the best barkeep House Six ever had. I am truly sorry that he never thought enough about it to give you a BIO. Good friends don't come around that often. St Pete is getting a good one, while Amelia, Nancy, Linda and their clans, plus the rest of us, have lost a good one. Looking forward, with sadness, for burial info. Sam



Hi TD, I am so saddened to hear about Burgie. I know he had health problems for quite a while, but I always hoped he could overcome them. Bill and I had many wonderful times with him and Amelia. We had a small house up at Lake Isabella, and they and their girls joined our family for many water skiing days - such good times. I will write Amelia a note. Jane (Skliar) Welsh.

NEW MEMBERS

- ✚ Dr. Jack Norman, project doctor at Groom Lake (Watertown) during CIA U-2 Project Aquatone.
- ✚ Adam Huntsinger, Associate Member, Lockheed employee
- ✚ Stormy Boudreaux, former U-2 Pilot

Thank you Tim Zarrells for notifying us of the affiliation error on the Roster. We encourage all our members to insure accuracy on the roster and the website in general. While you're at it, please send us some news of what you're are up to so we can share with the others.



This November 11th, Veterans Day I ask you to join our nation in remembering and honoring the past service of America's veterans, and I urge my fellow Americans to renew our commitment to meet the challenges of America's future for which our nation's veterans gave so much.

Note that I used the word renew rather than continue. This is for good reason. The last week of September a group of Groom Lake veterans had the honor of participating in a legacy tour in our nation's capitol where they conducted panel presentations at various agencies of our government. I returned home with the realization that our audiences consisted of veterans of our time, but were sadly void of the younger generation I expected to be filling the shoes of the 1.2 million or more men and women who perished in or as a result of military conflicts that enabled us to live in a free society today.

Today, while my "can do" generation pays solemn remembrance and homage to America's finest heroes who gave everything in defense of our freedom, I fear we have somehow created an iPod generation that sees this merely as a day for celebrating a day off from work. One must take stock of our somehow failing to educate this generation to understand the sacrifices made in order to win and preserve the freedom they enjoy today. Today many of our leaders, media, politicians, judges, and even our educators have removed God, our Pledge of Allegiance, and even the wearing of the American Flag from our schools and public events for fear they might offend someone. Our veterans fought for these rights. We have to ask, "Were the sacrifices of our veterans made in vain?" Has political correctness replaced the pride, the protocol, the honor code, code of conduct, and even our nation's constitution espoused by generations past?

While we are renewing commitment to the past service to our great country, we must also renew love of country, belief in freedom, opportunity, responsibility, and faith in America's future. As we commemorate this day of reverence and respect, let us also remember this unity of spirit that has guided our nation forward from its beginnings. No words can repay the debt of gratitude we owe to the men and women who have stood up for our freedom. We can, however, honor the memory of our veterans best by remaining the best kind of Americans we can be and by keeping our nation strong and secure, one nation under God, to fulfill the vision of a better world that so many of our veterans gave so much to create. To accomplish this we must somehow reestablish our generation and its standards as icons and models to the generations to follow.

THORNTON D. "TD" BARNES

Director Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame
President Roadrunners Internationale

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nev.—Air Combat Command has announced the cancellation of Red Flag-Nellis 11-1, scheduled for Oct. 17-30. Red Flag 11-1 was canceled due to emerging Air Force deployment requirements. The last Red Flag-Nellis exercise cancelled by the U.S. Air Force was in 2003. The next Nellis Red Flag exercise will take place Jan. 16-29 when the base hosts Red Flag 11-2.

ABOUT RED FLAG-NELLIS

Red Flag-Nellis is an Air Combat Command-hosted exercise involving the air forces of the United States and its allies. The exercise is hosted north of Las Vegas on the Nevada Test and Training Range—the U.S. Air Force's premier military training area with more than 12,000 square miles of airspace and 2.9 million acres of land. With 1,900 possible

targets, realistic threat systems and an opposing enemy force that cannot be replicated anywhere else in the world, Nellis and the NTTR are the home of a "peacetime battlefield," providing combat air forces with the ability to train together in a realistic combat environment. Some of our Roadrunners participated in the Soviet MiG exploitations projects HAVE DOUGHNUT, HAVE DRILL, and HAVE FERRY at Groom Lake towards the end of Project OXCART, which are the genesis of both the Air Force's Red Flag and our Navy's Top Gun exercises continued today.

Some of you Roadrunners probably recall Gil Sanders, our C-130 driver at Groom Lake. Most of you probably never knew of Gil's past when he was one of the Four Horsemen. The Four Horsemen were the world's only four engine per aircraft demonstration team. Flying four C-130As in close formation, the team would perform a number of maneuvers over a twenty-three minute air show. By late 1959, sales of the C-130, both in the US and internationally, were starting to pick up. Lockheed capitalized on the popularity of the Horsemen by producing promotional items as sales tools. The idea of a C-130 demonstration team started when four Captains, Akin, Gil Sanders, Jim Fairbanks, and Gene Chaney with the 774th Troop Carrier Squadron were flying a mass flyover of Ardmore, Oklahoma. The four of them, who first tried this at Fort Campbell one day when it was too windy to drop paratroopers, broke out of formation and came back in a diamond formation where they scorched over the field at about 300 knots at low altitude, and closed with a bomb-burst maneuver. The sight of 4 Hercules flying like fighter planes impressed SAC so much they allowed the Four Horsemen (their adopted name) to fly fifteen official air shows and additional demos.

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Gil Sanders was at the Ranch. I believe he was from Texas. I flew quite a few hours with him as navigator. The most memorable flight with him was one time when we were on our way from the Area to West Palm Beach, FL. We had a late start from the Area and instead of pressing on all the way to West Palm, we decided to land at Brownsville and continue on the next morning. We cancelled our IFR clearance to West Palm and proceeded to let down VFR to a point about 30 miles north of Port Isabel along South Padre Island. Much of the next 20 miles or so, we were on the deck looking up at the top of the sand dunes. There is something exhilarating about seeing fishermen drop their poles and dive for the sand as a silver C-130 darts over them at a high rate of speed! If I remember correctly, Don Corzine was Gil's co-pilot. And, I think our call sign was "Boxer-30". Commonly, we told curious people we were from Edwards.
Ron Girard

* * *

Very interesting re the fishermen jumping overboard. My ulcers originated with Gil by reason of flying over the flat lands of Utah at an altitude of two feet or so while looking up at the rear ends of the hordes of wild horses we were stampeding. Gil also was a regular at our House Six poker game whereby he chewed on his cigar and called me the Greek Pleek, for what reason I know not why. We stayed in touch for a while after he left the service while he ran a cleanup service, I believe in Dallas, of big parking areas such as that in front of Walmart etc. That C 130 he flew made many many flights to Westover AFB hauling broken A 12 engines there for GE to pickup, and hauling seafood back to the area.
Sam Pizzo



To the Panelists on the 2010 OXCART Legacy Tour:

Gentlemen, each and every one of you rose to all the various occasions we set up for you in late September splendidly, and you have every right to be as proud of yourselves for making this tour such a success, as you do for designing, developing, and building the A-12 and J-58; testing and flying it; taking it on important missions; adapting its capabilities to meet real intelligence needs; and developing new technologies and ways of doing business that still impact what we do in this country to protect ourselves today.



You came out here for better than a week (in most cases) with no firm promise of reimbursement. You did so cheerfully and happily, because you knew what you were doing was important; and you left a good number of our area's influential men, women, and children completely inspired in your wake. Thank you all so much for doing those things!. If you don't mind me saying so, I also believe you even deepened your respect for and friendships with each other!

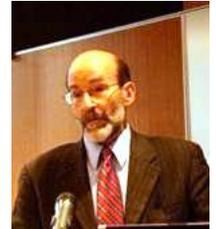
In the process (and based on your individual comments to TD and myself), most of you learned new (to you) information about the larger program, things that you found to be interesting and absorbing; and many of you clearly developed an appreciation for the broader context of why OXCART meant so much to our National Security, even

though its program life was short.

I have been highly honored and privileged to be able to make it possible for you to tell your many wonderful stories in so many important venues out here, and my full reward was being able to be there and hear them from you. For example, I got to hear Bob Murphy explain to Bill Weaver why Bill's canopy came off without the ejection seat being activated first—better than 40 years after that happened! Sorry, you will have to get that story VFR from one of those two.

My hat is off to all of you for what you have done, for all those things that will have lasting impacts. And yes, it is a retired Navy Captain's hat, and we don't doff those things easily! We should tip all our hats to David Robarge for making the entire story come alive so well, and for so effectively tailoring it to each audience.

May God bless you all, keep you and your families safe, and smile on you even more for the wonderful work you have done. I hope to see each of you at the next RR reunion in Vegas. With highest regards, Peter DeForth



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Peter, we all thank you for making the legacy tour into a win-win effort for all. I've heard nothing but praise from Washington and from those making the trip. I've also hear from other associations such as ours holding our legacy mission up as a standard to be modeled. What we've accomplished towards recording our legacy is the envy of many. We owe our success in this regard to members such as you who wake up each morning asking yourself what you can do for the Roadrunners today. Your leadership, motivating, and coordinating skills all came into play on this one as you and Dr. Robarge organized not only the events, but the team as well. More than once I heard the effort being compared to herding cats or chickens. In behalf of the Roadrunners, I thank you. T.D. Barnes, President

CIA A-12 PILOT COL. WILLIAM L. SKLIAR

Bill, a native of New York, was born on February 22, 1926. He enlisted in the Air Corp in 1944 along with many others hoping to go through cadets. His group of hopefuls didn't make it as the war was coming to an end and he was out of the service in 1945. He went to UCLA for two years and then back into the Air Force in 1948 to go through the cadet program. Graduated at Las Vegas Air Force Base (now Nellis) July 1, 1949. He went to Korea in January of 1951 and was

stationed at K-2 where he flew 100 missions in an F-84 with one probable kill on a MIG. While in Korea, he spent two months as a Forward Air Controller with the Army. He graduated in the first class to receive diplomas at the Institute of Technology United States Air Force (Wright-Patterson) with a BA of Science in



Aeronautical Engineering August 1956. In April 1970 he went to Vietnam where he served at Tuy Hoa for five months and then transferred to Saigon

for the next seven months. He flew 98 missions in F-100s.

Flying was Bill's life. He was a member of the Air Force Association, the Quiet Birdmen, the professional Race Pilots Association, and the Nevada Air Museum. He was one of the original CIA/Lockheed selectees taken out of the Air Force and employed by the CIA for the A-12 OXCART Program at Groom Lake, Nevada. Bill was the first non-Lockheed pilot to fly the A-12. He flew the A-12 trainer early on with the J-75 engines. While at Groom Lake, Bill switched from A-12 testing to the YF-12 when Washington terminated the CIA's

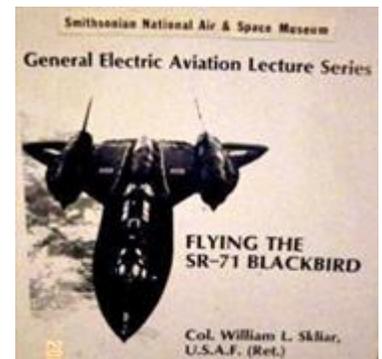


Photo on left is William L. Skliar's Explorer PG-1 Aqua Glider, or Bayou Bird as it was nicknamed

Project OXCART before it ever became operational when Washington decided to go with the Air Force SR-71 instead. Project OXCART was reinstated and went operational when it was realized the SR-71 would not be ready to replace the A-12 as scheduled. Skliar had by then returned to the Air Force with the rank of Lt. Col. On 11 April 1969, Bill and his RSO Major Noel Warner had to eject from a Blackbird that had blown out its wheels on takeoff. After retirement, Bill continued to fly Formula One racing craft. On 18 August 1988, Bill was killed when his racing plane lost a wing and crashed nose-first into the desert about eight miles north of Stead Airport near Reno, Nevada. Bill is survived by his spouse, Jane, who still lives at Reno, and three daughters, Janis, Kathy, and Patti. Hopefully we'll soon see the name CIA Pilot Bill Skliar displayed beneath the canopy of Article 122 on the Intrepid in New York to give it a personal touch and honor both the plane and New York native Bill Skliar.



We hadn't heard from our Roadrunner members at Mobile's Battleship Memorial Museum in a couple of weeks so I called and Owen Miller answered the phone. I asked him what he did today and his reply was that he sat in one of the museum's aircraft and made engine noises....

On a serious note, when I talked to Mike Thompson I learned that while they were moving A-12 Article 132 out of the hangar the nose landing gear scrambled its

bearings and now they are unable to move the plane back indoors. If any of you museums have a nose landing gear for an A-12 that you can spare, please let Mobile know.



We are proud to share with you the dedication deeds of another of our associate members, A-12 author Jeannette Remak whose painting, titled "Cygnus Rising," of Article 122, retired on the USS



Intrepid, became an exhibit at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force on the 60th anniversary of the USAF Art Program. Accompanying Jeannette was another of our Roadrunner members, Joe Ventolo, former curator at the NMUSAF who co-authored "The Archangel and the Oxcart" with Jeannette and I'm sure supported her painting being put on exhibit. Attending to honor the



occasion was the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force, and Chief of Staff for the U.S. Air Force. Jeannette Remak, a member of the USAF Art Program, holds the distinction of being the first to do a painting of the A-12 Blackbird, which she dedicated to Jack Weeks and the OXCART Program long before it was accepted into the program and now included in the exhibition where it will hang until the end of the year at the Museum. Dating back to 1923, The National Museum of the United States Air Force (formerly the United States Air Force Museum) is the official National Museum of the United States Air Force and is located at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, near Dayton, Ohio. The NMUSAF is the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum with more than 400 aircraft and missiles on display, most of them indoors. The museum draws over 1.3 million visitors per year and is one of the single most visited tourist attractions in Ohio. We are very proud of you Jeannette and you, Joe, for your untiring dedication to the legacy of the planes and the Roadrunners participating in the A-12 OXCART program at Groom Lake and Kadena. We salute the USAF Art Program and everyone connected with the NMUSAF to honor Jeannette and the Roadrunners by exhibiting this painting of one of our proud planes.

I had hoped to post the photos taken at CIA during the OXCART Legacy Tour, but unfortunately the "padded" envelope arrived, complete with tire tracks and gouges and the entire end ripped open. Sadly, it contained no photos. I was notified this morning that replacement photos will be shipped by FedEx as soon as they can be prepared for shipment. On this same note, Mike Schmitz advised me last evening that he has completed culling duplicate photos and those revealing name badges and is sending them to me for posting for download. Mike ended up with over 1,750 photos of the OXCART Legacy Tour. This represents over 40 gigs of photos, so obviously we will be disseminating them

by download rather than burning 10 DVDs per person.

A BIT OF HUMOR TO TAKE OUR MINDS OFF OF TODAY'S ELECTION COVERAGE



Roadrunner debunks stories that Apollo lunar missions were faked. Even before Neil Armstrong first sat foot on the lunar surface in Apollo 11, many were already claiming the mission was faked. These misinformed claims continued throughout the remaining Apollo missions. Roadrunner U-2 pilot Tony Bevacqua



depicted on the right has released photos taken by NASA astronaut Alan Bartlett Shepard, Jr. (below) during Apollo 14 in 1971. Hearing that Shepard had set a tee time for the first



ever lunar golf game, Tony took off from Groom Lake and arrived at the site of the Apollo landing in time to join Alan in this record setting sports event where Alan, using a modified Wilson six iron drove his golf ball over 2,400 feet. Next month we hope to reveal that Elvis really isn't dead. This confirms the Dragon Lady Association motto, which we like to use as well: "IN GOD WE TRUST - ALL OTHERS WE MONITOR." Thanks Tony for a job well done. General Sullivan and many of the



rest of golfers in the Roadrunners may never speak to you again knowing now that you scooped them all on this lunar boondoggle.

*T.D. Barnes
President/Webmaster*