

GOMER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS!

Let me introduce myself. I am Steve "Wheels" Wieland, Aggressor 65th and 26th 1977 - 1981, T-38, and F5E. Yep, I'm one of those old guys. But not one of the initial Cadre. It is my honor to be permitted to write a newsletter for such a distinguished group.

That being said, I wish to elicit any and all of you who have stories and thoughts that you would like to share with the group to please contact me at Wheelstoo@gmail.com.

In this initial newsletter I will use some of the letters and thoughts and articles that have been solicited by me that are from some of the "Real Old Heads", the initial and best Cadre of the Aggressors.

I thought it appropriate to have the initial Newsletter begin with some view points of the history, the beginning, of our Organization. Here I will attempt to whet your appetite for more stories from any Jock, Radar scope diver, wrench bender, support via the written word or family member personnel. We have a big family. We have a Grand and Proud Heritage that will forever live on thanks to all of you.....

**As always, Be Humble and Check 6,
*Wheels***



Yours truly with a Squid in the trunk

**A Fellow University of Tennessee
Athlete and A-7 Driver
26 TFTAS**

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome to our first Aggressor Association Newsletter. We plan to make this a Quarterly event and will be accessible on the Aggressor Association Website: www.gomersrule.com.

This first newsletter is going to every Aggressor that we have record of in hopes of attracting more "Gomers" to join the Association. Our Goal is 100% participation as we prepare for



our 50th Anniversary in the Fall of 2022.

Steve "Wheels" Wieland has offered to be our Newsletter Guru, so if you have stories, photos or articles to share, please contact Wheels at: wheelstoo@gmail.com.

That said, we are in need of a Webmaster. If you have expertise in this area and would like to lend your talents to the Aggressor Association we could sure use your help. Dida Clifton has been performing triple duty and just does not have the time required to maintain and update the site as we would like. So, if you can help we would appreciate hearing from

you.

We are always open to ideas to make your Aggressor Association better. Please contact myself or any Board Member if you have any questions,

As Always, Check 6 and Be Humble,
Mark "Dula" Dulaney
Dula737@aol.com



HOW TO JOIN THE ASSOCIATION

Visit us a the new website www.gomersrule.com and complete your application.

There are several levels of dues:

Gomer Annual
\$ 25.00 a year

Gomer Lifetime
\$ 250.00 one time

Gomer & Family
\$ 45.00 a year

Gomer & Family Lifetime
\$450.00 one time

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REMEMBERING THE INITIAL CADRE

"If you find yourself in a fair fight, your tactics suck.

America is not at war. The U.S. Military is at war. America is at the Mall.

In ten years nobody will remember the details of caliber, stance, or tactics. They will only remember who lived.

Always cheat; always win. The only unfair fight is the one you lose.

Decide to be aggressive ENOUGH, quickly ENOUGH.

The faster you finish the fight, the less shot you will get. (sic - makes the

most sense this way!)

Colonel Joe Lee Barnes, USAF, Retired {Initial Cadre Aggressor}

**Mike Brazelton
Aggressor
Vietnam War
1966-1973 (POW)**

He was interned as a Prisoner of War in North Vietnam after he was shot down on August 7, 1966,, and was held until his release on March 4, 1973.



Captain Brazelton was shot down by flak on 7 August 1966 at Thai Nguyen on his 120th combat mission. He holds the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross and eight Air medals. He has 330 hours combat flying time.

STORIES FROM THE BEGINNING

GORK WRITES:

My first clue that there was going to be something called an Aggressor Squadron was around October of 1972. I was flying F-4s at Spangdahlem in Germany and was coming up for reassignment. About that time I got a message from MPC informing me that my next assignment was going to be a T-38 to Nellis. My first thought was Base Flight and that I was screwed, so I picked up the phone and called MPC. The guy on the other end of the line said not to worry, this would be the best assignment I would likely ever get. He was right. Duke McCuskey was stationed across the gully at Bitburg and he got the same assignment I did - to this day we still don't know how or why we got picked.

In January of 1973 my three years in Germany were up and I rotated stateside, showing up a couple of weeks later at a Nellis. Once on base I drove up and down flight line road looking for the 64FWS, expecting to see a squadron building somewhere. No tally no clue. After an unsuccessful search, I slowed down, leaned out the window of my '64 Vette and flagged down a couple of passersby hoping they knew where this hard to find squadron was located. One of them thought they were working out of the old Thunderbird hanger so I drove down there and started poking around. One of the Thunderbird maintainers pointed me to the far side of the hanger and said I should take those wooden stairs over there to the top and look in there. Sure enough, this was the original home of the 64FWS - a broom closet in the Thunderbird hanger. About a month later we moved across the road and down a bit into a regular squadron building.

At the time, all of our T-38's were still ATC white and were destined to stay that way for a while (I'm still amazed though at the number of people we snuck up on in those shiny white airplanes). I seem to recall that Moody Sooter was instrumental in getting our first aircraft painted. The early paint jobs were done in house with water based paint in order to try out several different color schemes. Water based paint is not exactly rigged for high speed and they soon began to peel badly. Once the final paint schemes were decided upon, a contract was let to get our birds properly painted. The company that did the work was located at the airport in Hayward California up near Oakland. Gene Jackson and I went up to pick up the first one - it was a two tone brown "Lizard" and looked mighty good. I forget the reason but the survival seat kits on this bird were missing so we flew back home on a couple of cut down orange crates with a cushion glued to the top. There was no LOX servicing available at Hayward so we flew below 10k over to Travis to get the bottles serviced before flying home to Nellis. (Gene Jackson was later killed in 1986 taking off out of Holloman in an F15 with three bags full - the stabilator controls had been hooked up backwards and nobody had caught it.)

It is important to remember that back in the early 70's, DACT was a totally foreign concept, at least in the Air Force. Yeah, in the F-4 we did intercept training to missile parameters, but beyond that we didn't have much of a plan "B", and our poor showing in aerial combat in Vietnam underscored that mightily. In the 60s, I went to war twice with zero air-to-air training other than a 1 hour academic briefing and a copy of Boots Blesses "No Guts No Glory". Air-to-air training back then was roundly considered too dangerous, primarily by Wing Commanders whose main goal in life was to get a star and join the club. Once the 64FWS became operational this mindset was apparent in the lack of requests for training we received from the fighter Wings. The first deployment went to Homestead and I believe was extended from two to three weeks because there were no other requests on the books. I didn't make the first trip but I did the second one which, believe it or not, was to the RF-4 unit at Shaw. Right after that, the TAC Commander got on the horn to his Wing Commanders and directed them to get with the program. This appeared to have worked and we were never short on training requests after that.

The T-38 wasn't the best choice for an adversary aircraft but it did have one thing going for it. It was a two holer and we were able fly GCI controllers and host base pilots in the trunk giving them a good idea what the air battle looked like from our side of the fence. It's shortfalls were we couldn't carry a training missile and she didn't have a gun site or a gun camera. Missile and gun parameters were educated guesses. Missile (atoll) parameters were zero to ten degrees off the tail at 6-9,000 feet. Our "gun site" was the base of the pitot boom. The T-38 was however never built for the stress and punishment we put her through and I believe the powers that be were aware of this. Consequently four of our birds were equipped with VGH (g) recorders in the backseat. This installation required the removal of the backseat instrument panel so about all that worked back there were the throttles and stick. It was in one of these birds that Nick Hobbie saved Dutch VanGuilder's life when Dutch's man-seat separator in the front seat fired and wedged him up between the glare shield and windscreen with his weight against the stick. In spite of this Nick flew back to Nellis and landed with no instruments fighting Dutch's weight on the stick all the way back. Damn good bit of flying by

anyone's standards. Nick was run over and killed by an F-4 at Luke some two weeks later. Fate is ever the hunter.

The T-38's stress problems finally began to emerge in the form of stress cracks in the panels in the wheel wells. The interim fix was to stop drill the end of the crack - this did nothing other than give you a new starting point to measure from when the crack started to grow again. Our first mishap related to all of this occurred out over the Atlantic on a deployment to Langley. Vance Phillips was the pilot with Neal Kucina riding in the trunk. It occurred on a 500+ knot extension when all of a sudden the bird violently pitched down into negative g territory pinning both guys against the top of the canopy. Neal was a short stocky guy who, with one hand against top of the canopy, was able to push himself far enough down to grab one of the handles, squeeze the trigger and get out of the bird. Vance wasn't so lucky and he rode it in. I was the pilot member on the accident board and it hurt to even look at Neal - the whites of both eyes were completely blood red in color. The negative g's he sustained had to have been totally off the charts.

After another similar loss or two and a close call it was finally determined that the gear doors and perhaps some panels on the belly were separating from the jet at high speed and rotating backwards and up into the aft fuselage cutting control cables and causing the pitch-down. Although the T-38 was good for the mission in that we could always throw somebody in the trunk as observers, she simply was not built to handle what she was being called upon to do. Enter the F-5. Again my luck held and I was reassigned to the 65 FWS and went down to Willy for a quick 2 week check out in the F-5E. (Some of the first F5's that showed up at Nellis were still wearing jungle camouflage - these were some of the jets that the South Vietnamese had flown out of the country when it fell, landing sometimes on roads in Thailand). After getting the 65FWS up and running, ACEVAL-AIMVAL was getting ready to crank up so about seven of us were reassigned to Red Force to make up the Air Force half of the Joint Test Force which also included Navy pilots and one token Marine.

In closing, let me say this. My career in the Air Force lasted over 27 years, the first 23 of which were spent in the cockpit. During that time I racked up a total of 4,400 hours in the F-4, the F-5 and the F-15 with almost 700 hours of combat time. In terms of the sheer enjoyment of flying a fighter I'd have to say that the F-5E was my favorite. Once the engines were running she was pretty much ready to go. You just felt good in that little lady.

Colonel Joseph D. Gorecki, USAF , Retired

MORE GOMER TALES

"None of the warriors I know really want to kill a person. I didn't. But when you cross the line into enemy territory, you had better know they are trying to kill you. So, to stay alive, you have to kill them first.

You don't fight a war to an equitable finish. You fight a war in the fastest, most violent fashion, so the enemy begs you to accept their unconditional surrender.

We, America, will help them rebuild every time. But they will remember. "

**Colonel Joe Lee Barnes, USAF, Retired
{Initial Cadre Aggressor}**

JOE LEE WRITES:

Many can take credit for crystallizing the need for an Aggressor program and eventually the Red Flag and Constant Peg programs. Those who I saw in action were Boots Boothby (Red Baron Reports on USAF MiG engagements); Randy O'Neill, Moody Suter; Roger G. Wells, Gail Peck, Glenn Frick + ???.

When I got to Nellis in October 1972, we newly assigned Aggressors were still mostly an idea, but a HHQ "approved" one. I was the 6th or 7th guy to report in. My first assignment was to gather Intel and produce a one-hour slide show platform instructional lesson with accompanying text about "The Man" – the Soviet Fighter Pilot and how he was trained. Others did lessons on Soviet Aircraft, Soviet Weapons Systems (avionics, missiles and guns), and Soviet Tactics and Employment. We had no jets to fly, yet. Eventually, T-38A's started to arrive early January 1973. (From overages or training wing downsizing or from Foreign Military Sales (FMS) or ??). Sq/CC was LtCol Boots Boothby; Sq OpsO was Maj Dawson Randall (Randy O'Neill.

There was plenty to do with a building to refurbish and local check out programs/syllabi to develop. Researching and drafting of academic lessons on The Soviet Man & Training, Soviet Air Tactics, Soviet Aircraft, and Soviet Air Weapons were begun. We made multiple trips to the Defense Intelligence Agency (military) (DIA); the Central Intelligence Agency (civilian) (CIA); and the Foreign Technology Division (FTD) W-P AFB, OH (exploits captured/otherwise obtained foreign weapons/airplane/tanks/etc -a division of Systems Command back then) for intelligence research.

The first Aggressor instructors (Randy O'Neill, Ralph Schneider, Boots Boothby) went to Vance AFB, OK (Air Training Command) for quickie checkouts in preparation for the first arrival of maintenance personnel and the T-38s. Three to four pilots would go TDY to Vance at first and then to Columbus for T-38 check out. My T-38 check out (and a few others) was delayed until we had finished the first draft of our Aggressor Academics lessons. Back at Nellis, a pyramid air-combat-training approach (1 teach 2; 3 teach 6; then approximately 6 teach 12; 6 train 12 more = ~24 checked out pilots), as pilots returned from check out, got us up to speed quickly.

What a group of aviators!!!!!!

Capt Earl Henderson, Ron Iverson, Jose Oberle, Tim Mikita, Mike Press, Carmen Luisi, Ed Clements, DL Smith, Kobe Mayo, Tom Browning, Chuck Johnson, Lt Skip Rosso, plus others. (Note: Tom Browning was USAFA '64 (Bill Sakahara's roomie one semester). Had been in Hanoi Hilton for several years. He is a good guy - got his (flying) hands back very quickly.)

We even had our very own Aggressor GCI controllers (Big Smitty and his troops). Working this closely together, we became a smoothly lethal team training F-4 crews.

The Aggressors also interfaced closely with the Air-to Air flight of the 414th Fighter Weapons School squadron. On every Aggressor road trip, we took at least one FWS

Instructor to help interface with the operational fighter squadron or Replacement Training Unit (RTU). Names that come to mind; Maj Moody Suter, Capt Gail Peck, Joe Hurd, Roger G. Wells, Dick Myers (Yes, the CJCS!!), Willie Sakahara.

As you know, the T-38A did not have a gun sight of any type. Much of our training was to visually memorize the heart (center) of the heat missile employment envelope and the heart of the tracking and snapshot ranges against T-38s and against the Big Ugly/Rhino/F-4. Since no gun camera film or HUD VCR could be used to confirm the validity of any Aggressor shot taken, we had to be ultra-conservative when calling our "ATOLL" or "Tracking Tracking Tracking" . We had to become masters of the soft sell (never "in-your-face", "I killed you FIRST," rhetoric.) Our motto (from Randy O'Neill, I believe) became "Be Humble." Only when in our own squadron, with no people we were training around, would we modify the motto: "Be Humble, You Cool F *er." It was the most talented, dedicated and 'fun' squadron I had ever been in.**

Brand new squadron and mission – great people, great leadership, great GCI, and great support. FWS school guys worked hand-in-hand with us to get the best training for our F-4 crews.

Great TDYs to all the F-4 bases. At the time, the Aggressors were the ONLY single-mission Air-To-Air squadron in the Air Force.

April 1973 - The first Aggressor T-38 Checkout at Columbus AFB, Mississippi, an Air Training Command base (Pilot Training.) Ron Iverson, DL Smith, Joe Oberle, and I (Joe Lee Burns) went to Columbus for our checkout. All previous checkouts had been at Vance AFB, OK.

(OUR POWs ARE COMING HOME!!!!!!!!!!!!!! To watch TV as our 'brothers' get off the airplane at Clark brings hot, salty tears to my eyes. God Bless them!!)

We had a good time in Mississippi. We bought and installed a bell for the stag bar, so the young pilots/student pilots could better learn the rule about being 'covered' in the bar. ("If you wear your hat in here, you will buy the house some cheer", "If you enter 'covered' here, you must buy the house a beer" - or something similar. Usually enforced by the ringing of the bell in a bar. Every one looks to see who has on their hat. That person is forced by peer-pressure (or worse) to buy a drink for everyone in the bar. That's a lot of money for a Lieutenant.) We TDY Aggressors rang the bell (and bought rounds) a few times at Friday Happy Hour to "break in" the bell and demonstrate its proper usage.

Sometime in 1973, the 64th Aggressor squadron moves into a brand new building. Right next door is another building being completed to house the new 65th FWS Aggressor squadron. Late one Friday afternoon after all Nellis jets are down, about 15 of us settle in the pilots lounge to have a cold one while discussing adversary tactics (and other things). Someone says, "Ya' know, what we need is a big red star on the roof of our squadron, so we know which one it is when we pitch out and land in the overhead pattern." A chorus of "Good Idea!", "Why didn't I think of that!", and a few "Yeah – Buts" ensued. We soon locked up the squadron and moved to the O'Club. On Monday morning a ruckus erupted as the first two flights return from playing Aggressor for a new F-4 414th Fighter Weapons School class. Everyone is shouting, "Did you see it??" That's GREAT!," and "Wonder who did it?" No one was fessing up. We later were able to credit this act of ingenuity and outstanding accomplishment to our favorite bachelor Lieutenant, Skip Rosso (picture Dean Martin at age 25, but better looking – that was Skip's image).

Colonel Joe Lee Burns,USAF,Retired {Initial Cadre Aggressor}

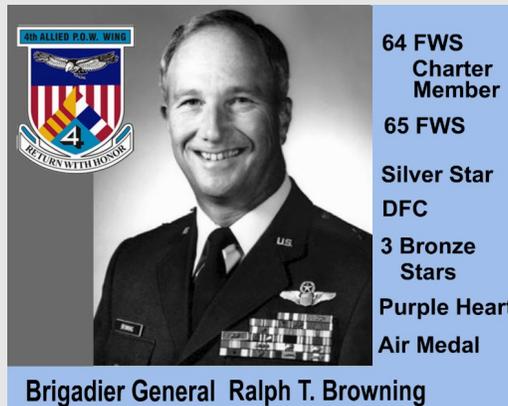
Yes, the military profession is the height of competition. It is a contest, often to the death of one opponent. It is quite frequently very much like the gladiator arena.The warrior has to be prepared to win . . . and to live with the memories . . it's not all glory and roses . . . they (we) have to be tough enough to survive our own victory, rest the body and mind, and then get ready for the next fight.

And, there is no courage in the absence of fear. The “fight or flight” adrenaline surge is present every time. You must choose to overcome fear and commit totally to the fight.

Our POWs had to commit to ‘fight’ every day to stay alive and to resist as best as they could, every day. What great courage these choices take: to fight, to stay alive, to resist.

Colonel Joe Lee Burns, USAF, Retired {Initial Cadre Aggressor}
{ Lest We Forget the Ultimate Price some paid }

IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO HAVE FLOWN WEST



64 FWS
Charter
Member
65 FWS
Silver Star
DFC
3 Bronze
Stars
Purple Heart
Air Medal

Brigadier General Ralph T. Browning

Brigadier General Ralph T. Browning **October 25, 1941 - July 7, 2018**

8 July 1966, in the late afternoon, his F-105 took a direct hit from 85 mm anti-aircraft fire, burst into flames, went out of control, and he ejected while on a combat mission in F105D, tail number 0158, over North Vietnam and was taken Prisoner of War.

12 February 1973, he was released during Operation Homecoming. He was a Prisoner of War in captivity for 2,412 days, over 6 1/2 years.

January 1974, he returned to Nellis AFB flying the T-38 to serve as Flight Commander and Assistant Operations Officer with the 64th Fighter Weapons Squadron. In December 1975, he became T-38 flight commander and Assistant Operations Officer with the 65th Tactical Fighter Training

THANK YOU



Thank you for reading and your time. The following Newsletters will be filled with your inputs.

If you believe in your association with this,all of us,humble group of warriors,please keep your membership current and please continue to do as you always have.

**Be Humble and Check 6!
Steve/Wheels**

Gomers | USAF Aggressor Association | gomersrule@gmail.com

STAY CONNECTED

