

GOMER QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Howdy and welcome to our Summer 2021 Aggressor Association Newsletter. Our big news is the venue and dates have been established for our 50th Anniversary Reunion. Please review the section on our reunion and reserve your room early.

We have Aggressor “Stories” from Wheels Wieland, Reina Pennington, and “Pinoche” Welch, detailing parts of our Aggressor heritage. As a side note, we are always looking for stories to add into our Newsletters. Any humorous events, tales of heroism, deployments that were “special” or just “good bull” are always welcome.

We have had some good Maple Flag stories, I’m sure there are some tales from “Deci” that could be shared, and perhaps even a tale or two from the PACAF Gomers. Its not hard, just start banging away on the computer and before you know it, you’ll be smiling and laughing remembering all the good times!

We also have included two articles from magazines that highlight the Aggressor Program. Be sure to “click” on the links and hope you enjoy the articles.

The 64th AS conducted a Change of Command on July 1st, when LtCol. Eric “Miso” Gorney turned the squadron over to LtCol. Chris “Von” Finkenstadt. Miso’s term was shortened a bit as he was selected for School starting this summer. We wish Miso all the best and hope to see him at our 50th Anniversary Reunion. We welcome Von, and his wife Liz, to the Aggressor family. Good luck and Have Fun!!

Next year at our 50th Anniversary Reunion will be the end of the term for your current Board of Directors. As such we are putting the word out early for those who would like to stand up and take the reins for the next term. If you have the desire to serve your fellow Aggressors and the Aggressor Association, please let one of your Board Members know.

Sadly, we have added four names on our “In Memoriam” Section. Take a moment, raise a toast and remember our friends that have “Flown West”.

All for now, enjoy this month’s edition. And as always, Check 6 and Be Humble,

Mark “Dula” DuLaney
Dula737@aol.com



Your Aggressor Association has officially kicked off the planning for the 50th Anniversary Reunion.

Dates: 3-6 November 2022. Please note the reunion is next year not this November. The dates coincide with the Aviation Nation Airshow to be held at Nellis AFB. The Air Force will be celebrating its 75th Anniversary and the Aggressors will be celebrating our 50th! SHIT HOT!!

We are in the process of forming our planning committees and our goal is to have sign ups and pricing available starting in January 2022.

Venue: It will be in the same location as the 45th Anniversary reunion, the **Sahara Hotel and Casino**. It has changed back to the Sahara from the SLS. It is remodeled and very nice. You can sign up for rooms at this time at the following website:

<https://book.passkey.com/e/50211879>

Special rates have been reserved for our event, so you can make your reservations now. The rates are available for Thursday night 3 Nov – Sat 5 Nov. checkout is planned for Sunday 6 Nov. If you desire to stay longer, I’m sure it is not a problem, we just don’t have guaranteed rates for those days. Be the first to the merge and get your room **early!**

OVERVIEW

We have secured the Penthouse Suite as our Hospitality Room and we plan to have it manned most all the time starting Thursday 3 Nov at 1600 for early arrivals until Sunday morning.

We are planning to attend the **Aviation Nation Airshow** on Friday, as that is typically Military and Family Appreciation Day, and it is a lot less crowded. Hoping to have our own Chalet as last time. In the past, the Aggressors have flown as part of the Demonstration and of course the Thunderbirds will perform.

The Aggressor “**Roll Call**” will be held Friday night at the Sahara at the Alexandria Pool Area. Should be a great time with lots of stories of heroism and buffoonery!

Saturday will be our **50th Anniversary Banquet**. Derek “Tazz” Routt will MC the event and our guest speaker will be The Honorable Matt “Gorilla” Donovan, a former F-5 65th Aggressor and previous acting Secretary of the Air Force (SecAF) and currently the Director of the Mitchell Institute’s Spacepower Advantage Research Center (MI-SPARC)

For Planning purposes, and this is a very unofficial schedule of events:

Thursday, 3 Nov	Early arrivals	Hospitality Suite open at 1600	Sahara Hotel
Friday, 4 Nov	1000-1500	Aviation Nation Airshow	Nellis AFB
Friday, 4 Nov	1900-2100	Roll Call @ the Sahara	Alexandria Pool
Friday, 4 Nov	2100-????	Hospitality Suite open	
Saturday, 5 Nov	1800-2200	50 th Anniversary Banquet	Sahara Hotel
Other Activities for Friday and/ or Saturday TBD			
Sunday, 5 Nov	Check out and see everyone in 2027!		

We will be sending out a survey soon asking for your inputs to activities you’d like to see at the reunion

Please know that your membership in the Association has allowed us to make these early arrangements possible. If you have not updated your membership, please do so, it sure does help! Also, for those that are Lifetime Aggressor Association Members we will have a special “thank you” offer in the near future. If you want to join, go to www.gomersrule.com and follow the prompts.

We all look forward to gathering and seeing old friends and sharing the history of the past 50 years. We will then pave the way to excellence for the next 50 years of the US Air Force Aggressor Program!

Steve “Wheels” Wieland TV Debut

Wheels forwarded a clip that one of his buddies sent to him. Talk about a “blast from the past”, this has it all; the suit, the hair and the blast from the 70’s.

As Wheels tells it:

To all of you, a former Marine Gunny Sergeant I met at Church found this on the web (who knew!) and sent it to me. My friend and Op's officer, both in my first tour in the Philippines and then here at this filming at the 65th at Nellis, Frances B "Tree" Storey grabbed me for this mission. I was off the flying schedule and going out the door to get my oil changed and pleaded with him to get somebody else for this unknown task. Nope, you stay here and do it. Ok, Tree. Was I surprised and at times antsy that I'd somehow screw up something? Even to the point of denying to drink champagne at the celebration all the while the TV guy doing the story was pushing me in there to grab that bottle! Didn't bother anyone else, to include Squadron CO Steve Dwelle. This story is a true "blast from the past", and I thought you'd enjoy this short clip.

Cheers,
Wheels

Click on the blue bar below for video.

[Operation Red Flag: Think Like A Russian | Real People | George Schlatter](#)

A BIT OF HISTORY

Reina Penninton

Reina sent a historical tidbit to add to our Newsletter. In perhaps the first use of the Aggressor concept to help define the enemy combat capabilities. From Reina:

In WWII the RAF had a “Flying Circus” of enemy aircraft that they took around to bases in the UK. One American remembers when they flew an Me-110 and a Ju-88 to Steeple Morden in January 1944:

“A single Me-109 gave an outstanding demonstration of a grass-clipping buzz job, to the cheers of the watching pilots, before landing. They were with us for five days, giving us all kinds of performance data and flight characteristics of the aircraft as well as demonstrations of German weapons and uniforms. When they left, they once again gave the base a thorough going-over at an altitude of about eighteen inches.”

--Norman Fortier, *An Ace of the Eighth: An American Fighter Pilot's Air War in Europe* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 103.

This leads us right into our next story of the 18th AS in Alaska and their 2008 deployment to Mt Home AFB. Their task was to support the

18th AGGRESSORS SU-30 Deployment

Pinoche

One of the best Aggressor Road Shows to date was in 2008 when we (the new 18th Aggressor Squadron from Eielson AFB) were asked if we could support the Indian Air Force in a Red Flag spin-up to get them ready for their first Red Flag. So, you are asking if we can fly with and against aircraft that we are often asked to replicate? Hell yeh we could support. The Nellis Aggressors were busy flying Red Flag or Weapons School support (I can't remember but having just come from the 64th AGRS, that was PAR for the course) and we were between Red Flag Alaska's. So, we deployed most of our Aggressor jets to Mt Home AFB to fly with and against the Indian AF SU-30 MKI Flankers. Really there was nothing better than improving our knowledge of an advanced Flanker aircraft than flying with and against it in training, looking at it up close and personal, while even getting some backseat rides. It was a dream road show for any Aggressor squadron, especially a new one getting our SME's and their expertise up to speed.

So, no shit there we were flying everything from BFM to Large Force training to prepare the Indian AF for their Red Flag with standard training rules they'd see in the Red Flag along with our standard Aggressor run shot-val, all so they could practice. Walking around the jet up close, flying BFM against it and flying against it in intercepts through large force training allowed us to get a much better feel for its' capabilities than just reading about it. Our threat expert pilots got to fly against and with these platforms and ask all sorts of questions. I even got one hour of backseat time in the Su-30 and their pilot let me fly the entire sortie, takeoff through landing. The only time he took the stick was to demo the cobra maneuver, which I had seen in airshow footage and asked him about. Then I flew that maneuver as well. It felt almost surreal as a seasoned Aggressor pilot to actually be flying this Su-30 aircraft instead of just replicating it. I'll admit I thought just for a moment of the Constant Peg program and the pilots who got to fly those airplanes. Anyway, the flying was memorable to say the least.

Our Ops was co-located with the Indians, so we were able to do that standard fighter pilot thing and drink beers with them after flying in our makeshift bar. Neither of the host squadrons from Mt Home asked us or the Indians to attend their Roll Call or bar games the first Friday in town so we hosted the Indians and taught them about our standards. Those standards being Jeremiah Weed as an Air Force standard and Russian Vodka as the Aggressor standard. Then, they had some drink they brought along that tasted like pure alcohol which they would light on fire before we could down the shot. Good thing the flight suits are fire retardant or more than one of us would have lit ourselves on fire. We got to talk to them in a very relaxed setting and ask questions and dispel any rumors about their training or their aircraft. Following that Road Show we took our jets around PACAF the next year to Kadena, Guam and Hawaii and were able to provide many first-hand lessons learned of the Su-30 and all it had to offer. It was truly a turning point in the 18th Aggressor Squadron to not only know, teach and replicate the threat but

to hold first-hand credibility and get out on Road Shows to impart our Red expertise to all, just as the Aggressors were chartered to do.

Have at You!
Pinoche



And the latest news from the "WarZone"!

DRAKEN IS THE NEXT RED AIR TO ACQUIRE F-16's

As you know Draken has the Adversary contract at Nellis to support and augment the Aggressors. See the article here:

Draken becomes the next red air to acquire F-16s

A GOMER REQUEST

I'm Perry Mize, former 64 AS Gomer (1985-1989). I live in Chandler, AZ.

I was working out at my local gym with a 64th Aggressor Squadron shirt on and a gentleman approached me and asked about a former Gomer. His name is Jerry Becker (Col, Ret). He was a member of the 26 TFTS. The only address I had listed for him is 14 Bennett Farm Road, Poquoson, VA. It appears Col Becker no longer lives at this address. This gentleman at the gym is a retired Master Sergeant and used to be Col Becker's crew chief from Vietnam and wondered how Col Becker might be doing. Because the only address listed was taken from the August 1997 Silver Anniversary roster, I'm afraid Col Becker may have pass on.

I was wondering if any of the Aggressors in the organization have any information about Col Becker. For security purposes, if anyone knows about Col Becker whereabouts, I will gladly pass along to the person with knowledge of Col Becker the name and contact info of the Master Sergeant so they can let Col Becker know that his old Vietnam crew chief is asking about him.

Perry Mize

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AGGRESSOR F-35'S AT RED FLAG



This just released at Nellis AFB about Aggressor F-35's in Red Flag. Still no word on the activation of the 65th AS, seems there is still serious discussion at the HQ level on how the Aggressor structure will go forward. Enjoy the article.

Here is the link:

Nellis AFB Aggressors, F-35 pilots 'punish' blue air to develop unstoppable force.

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IN MEMORIAM

We just learned that Col (ret) Patrick "Rage" Ragan has passed away after a valiant fight against cancer. Rage was in the 64th from 2008-2014. He Flew West on Aug 6, 2021. Our condolences to his family, especially

his wife, Rachael, and two daughters, Rowan and Lilliana. Donations can be made on behalf of Rage at the National Pediatric Cancer Center Foundation, www.nationalpcf.org. It appears that Rage will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. We will pass along the details when we have the date and time of his Arlington Service. A Nickel on the Grass for Rage!



We have learned that BG (ret) Scott "Junkie" Van Cleef passed away 18 Jul 2021. Junkie was a member of the 65th AS from 1978-1981. RIP Junkie! Nickle on the Grass with a shot of Jeremiah Weed as a toast!

We also sent out a Gomer Newsflash that former 64th Aggressor, Nick "Scooter" Hamilton died in a Draken F-1 Mirage, flying mission support with the Aggressors at Nellis AFB on 24 May 2021. RIP Scooter you will be missed!

"JC" Charles reported in Facebook that Dan "Lucky" Wise passed away on July 5, 2021. We have no other details at this time. "Nickel on the Grass" for Lucky, and RIP, sir!

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