

FAC Association News

472 Parish Blvd, Mary Esther, FL 32569

MISSION DEBRIEF. FAC "Homecoming" Reunion - 2000 was a great success! Over 700 FACs, and their family members and friends gathered in Ft Walton Beach, FL for the 'Mother of All FAC Reunions' on 21-24 Sep 2000. Despite a minor hurricane blowing through on Thursday night that caused us to cancel the Friday morning golf tournament, a great time was had by all. The festivities started with a pre-party on Wednesday that had over 200 attendees. On Thursday, things really started hopping as over 600 guests registered and attended the evening's Welcome Buffet Dinner and Ceremonies while it poured down rain outside from Hurricane Helene. Despite the weather, we had a great hurricane party and spirits weren't dampened one bit as many FACs spent the wee hours getting reacquainted with old friends they hadn't seen in 30 years! The rain on Friday subsided by 9 AM and left time for many to take walks on the sugar white beaches of the Emerald Coast (no golf widows that day). An additional 100 guests registered on Friday morning. By Friday afternoon everyone was sunset sailing on the beautiful Choctawhatchee Bay, as planned, and a scrumptious optional seafood dinner was enjoyed by most at the Lucky Snapper Restaurant overlooking the scenic Destin Harbor.

Saturday was the 'Big Event'. Early morning rain showers dissipated and, behold, a warm, sunny day was in store for our 'Homecoming' visit to Hurlburt Field. Magnificent! The base tour was followed by an awesome FAC Memorial dedication ceremony in the Hurlburt Air Park which had over 1000 attendees. This was a very emotional ceremony for many as the name of each Southeast Asia KIA FAC was read and full military honors were accorded the event. **Dr. Charlie Jones's** moving dedication words of solace and **Will Platt's** heartfelt eulogy paid fitting tributes to our fallen comrades and brothers-in-arms. An F-16 Missing Man flyby concluded the memorial service. Immediately following the FAC Memorial Ceremony, a brief ceremony was conducted by **Darrel Whitcomb** to dedicate OV-10 aircraft, tail number 626, as the newest FAC aircraft addition to the Hurlburt Air Park. An O-1 FAC flyby paid graceful tribute to 626 as she was honored for her wartime service to her nation and to the air crew members she served so well.

Saturday afternoon, a FAC business meeting was held to begin the initial efforts to form a FAC Association (more on that later). Saturday night was the spectacular evening banquet that encompassed three entire banquet rooms full of FACs and their guests. Thanks to simulcast capability, the evening program was successfully projected to each banquet room. Our thanks also go to **BGen John Flanagan** who was the guest speaker and provided a very entertaining talk, filled with many memorable references to our 'tours' in 'Nam. The partying went on to the late hours as The **Roger Dodd** band provided dancing in the ballroom and many FACs took advantage of their last few hours together to 'share one more story'. Sunday we all reluctantly parted company, but with the knowledge that this was a very special weekend - one which will long be remembered for its memories of renewed friendships, new friends made, and our taking the time to remember the 220 KIA FACs who 'GAVE ALL'.

FAC ASSOCIATION BEING FORMED: Forward Air Controllers - **This is what you've been waiting for. Become a Charter Member now!** For years, many of us have been wondering if a FAC Association would ever be formalized. As a result of the highly successful FAC 'Homecoming' Reunion -2000 that was held in Sep 2000 in Ft Walton Beach, FL, serious efforts are now under way to form a FAC Association. With the aid of the computer, we now have over 1900 American, Aussie, and New Zealand FACs in a FAC database and ongoing efforts are being made to locate the 'long lost FAC buddies' you've lost touch with over the years. To become a charter member of the new FAC Association, please fill out the enclosed Membership Form and mail it to the Association's Treasurer, George Ferkes (see enclosed Membership Form.) Don't delay! Do this today while it's fresh on your mind! Membership is open to any one who wants to support the Association's Objectives which are listed below.

Cost for initial membership is only \$20.00. As a charter member, you'll also receive a copy of the 80 page *FAC Trivia book - A Compendium of FAC Aerial Exploits, Comments and Claims to Fame*. This was a big hit at the reunion! A book you'll want to have in your library. (You'll also receive a form that will allow you to input your exploits to this growing list of

FAC lore.)

The question of Lifetime Membership will be addressed in the future by the new Association's officers, but for now, they're just trying to get this outfit airborne, so we hope you'll join and become an active supporter.

ASSOCIATION OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the FAC Association are threefold:

1. Promote FAC camaraderie through periodic FAC reunions. ([Next reunion is a Hawaii R & R - 10-14 Apr 2002](#).)
2. Promote and preserve FAC history. ([A FAC book project is in the works](#). More on this later.)
3. Locate 'missing' FACs, maintainers, crew members, and help them keep in touch with one another.

ASSOCIATION LEADERSHIP: Interim Officers and Committee Chairmen for the FAC Association are:

President: **Randy Hetherington** baiglobal@aol.com 305-852-8709 Tavernier, FL

Vice Pres: **Jon Wroblewski** wrobonet@netscape.net 719-481-9307 Monument, CO

Secretary: Ned Helm ned@wingset.com 802-477-9922 Woodstock, VT

Treasurer: **George Ferkes** beachflyr@aol.com 850-581-4953 Mary Esther, FL

FAC Search: Jon Alexaitis calexaitis@dellepro.com 817-581-8381 Bedford, TX

Website: Zot Barazzotto zot@erinet.com 937-429-2119 Xenia, OH

Mission: Jay Barnes barnesjay@juno.com 973-325-6208 West Orange, NJ

Publicity: Bob Boswell aerix@email.msn.com 321-639-7335 Rockledge, FL

Database: Jimmy Carter jimmywho@aol.com 912-922-0073 Warner Robins, GA

FAC Memorial: Don Echelberger echelberg@aol.com 850-664-5444 Mary Esther, FL

FACNET: Gibber Gibbs jegibbs@onr.com 512-253-6868

Reunion: Hen Min Hiu henhouse@innercite.com 530-677-9242 Cameron Park, CA

Charter/By-Laws: Charlie Jones btrflyfac@aol.com 850-936-9688 Navarre, FL

Newsletter: Claude Newland cnewland@gnt.net 850-654-2955 Destin, FL

Book Project: Charlie Pocock charmarpock@aol.com 719-488-9056 Monument, CO

Corporate Sponsors: Byron Sutton wcor@gdi.net Windermere, FL

FAC Historian: Darrel Whitcomb nail25@aol.com 703-359-7824 Fairfax, VA

If you'd like to help in any of these areas or have a particular skill that might be helpful, please contact the appropriate officer or Committee Chairman. Volunteers are specifically needed to assist with the FAC Database and the Newsletter.

FAC ASSOC. NEWSLETTER: This is the *inaugural issue* of a new FAC Association newsletter that will be mailed out to association members every six months. This newsletter is being mailed to 1900+ FACs who are currently in the FAC Database. Your association membership will enable us to continue to communicate effectively with the FAC community through this newsletter and a new FAC Website at: www.fac-assoc.org. The FAC website is just now being developed and should be on-the-air sometime in March 2001. It'll include information on up-coming reunions, a locator service, FAC news, up-dates on a FAC book project (more on this later in the newsletter), hotlinks to other FAC organizations, and FAC Trivia.

WEBSITE: If you have any suggestions for the new web site, please pass them along to the committee chairman, **Zot Barrazotto** (zot@erinet.com) or **Mike Whaley** (merlin@ov-10bronco.net) who has been doing the behind-the-scenes work.

FAC SEARCH: To help us locate lost FACs, send their names, or old copies of your orders, unit rosters, etc. to **Jon Alexaitis** at: calexaitis@dellepro.com or mail them to him at: 704 Sandlin Dr., Bedford, TX 76021. (817-581-8381)

FAC ASSOCIATION INCORPORATION: **Charlie Jones** (btrflyfac@aol.com) is heading a committee to develop a FAC Association charter and set of by-laws. Tentative plans are to incorporate in the State of Florida as a not-for-profit "Veterans Organization." (Section 501(c)(19) under IRS rules and law). More to come on this as plans progress.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Submitted by **George Ferkes** (beachflyr@aol.com). As a result of the proceeds from the FAC 'Homecoming' Reunion - 2000, the FAC Association's account balance is approximately \$4,500.00. Estimated printing and mailing costs for this newsletter will be approximately \$1,400.00. Anticipated immediate future expenses include web site and incorporation charges.

FACNET: If you'd like to be on the FACNET (which allows FACs to communicate electronically with all those on the FAC net) contact the FACNET gatekeeper, **Skip Smothermon** at: skipsmo@okplus.com There is no charge to join. You'll receive only one message per day which will be in a 'Digested' mode. That means all messages, if any, will be indexed into one message with a Table of Contents at the top of each daily message. In the interest of professional courtesy, we ask that you limit your FACNET messages to items of interest to FACs.

NEXT FAC REUNION ANNOUNCED: The next FAC reunion will be in Hawaii on [10-14 Apr 2002 - a Hawaiian R & R!](#) Start making plans now to come join in all the fun! Initial reunion planning is already underway. A group of Hawaii FACs, under the leadership of **Hen Min Hiu** have been busy setting up a tentative schedule which will include golf, sight-seeing, a visit to the Pearl Harbor Memorial, Hawaiian Luau, a FAC business meeting, individual FAC Call Sign Group meetings and, of course, a magnificent FAC banquet to conclude the weekend (Plus much, much more.).

The **RENAISSANCE ILIKAI HOTEL**, 1777 Ala Moana Blvd, Honolulu, HI 96815 will be reunion headquarters. Special contracted room rates are available through EEM Custom Tours and Special Events, 4703 West Lovers Lane, Dallas TX 75209. Contact Carolyn Petty at 1-(888) TOURS21 or (214) 366-9777 or email carolynp@eemtours.com. Reservation and registration information will be provided in the July 2001 FAC newsletter and on the FAC web site once it's online. The **Waikiki Terrace Hotel** will be the overflow hotel.

The nearby military **HALE KOA HOTEL**, 2055 Kalia Road, Honolulu, HI 96815-1998 (Fort DeRussy) can be used by active duty, retired military, Reserve and National Guard, DoD civilians, and all foreign military with orders assigned to a U. S. military installation. For information & reservations on-line, go to web site: www.halekoa.com. Tel. 1-800-367-6027. Reservations may be made beginning 10 April 2001.

If you'd like to help with the FAC reunion, or have any suggestions, please get in touch with **Hen Min Hiu** at: henhouse@innercite.com or phone (530) 677-9242. Volunteers are needed for: Hootch Committee, Registration, Tours, Publicity, Golf, Protocol, Entertainment Committee and Special Events. etc.

FAC MEMORIAL COMMITTEE REPORT: Submitted by **Don Echelberger** (echelberg@aol.com). Thanks to all who were able to attend the reunion and dedication of the FAC Memorial in September. The verbal and Email feedback has been extremely gratifying. A meeting was held in October and the following volunteered to be permanent members of the FAC Memorial Committee:

Don Echelberger - Chairman / Hurlburt Air Park Council Rep **George Ferkes** - Treasurer

Will Platt - Assist. & Tech Rep **Charlie Jones** - Advisor

Memorial Dedication Ceremony programs are now "collectors items". The original color print run of 800 were snapped up at the dedication. Several hundred more (B&W) had to be printed up so a copy could be sent, along with a letter of appreciation, to each of the 300+ contributors who donated to the Memorial Fund. Surplus funds and any additional donations will be held in a separate account to be used for continuing maintenance and future enhancements to the site. A final note: as a result of information received at the reunion, an additional FAC KIA name was researched, verified, and will be added to the Memorial. He is **Capt Harold R. ('Bud') Vogel** who died in 1968 in an O-1E. Total KIA FACs is now 220.



ONE LINERS:

- 1) Web page about FACs on the USAF Museum site: <http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/history/vietnam/fac.htm>
- 2) "Songs of the O-1E 'Bird Dog,'" CD can be ordered from Jonathan Myer at: j-bmyer-alexva@erols.com
- 3) FAC Medal of Honor Recipient Harold Wilbanks is to be inducted into the Georgia Aviation Hall of Fame.

FAC 'HOMECOMING' REUNION - 2000 VIDEOS AVAILABLE: If you'd like to order a copy of the FAC Reunion Videos, contact Emerald Coast Videos, **Judy Beaudreau**, at: jboudr2222@aol.com , or call 850-678-3010 (if you have any questions.) Three videos are offered. Cost is \$15/each and \$5 shipping and handling for the first video ordered, and \$1 extra for each additional video ordered. Send order, along with your check, payable to '*Emerald Coast Video*' to: Emerald Coast Video P.O. Box 3 Niceville, FL 32588

Videos offered are:

1) FAC 'Homecoming' Reunion - 2000:

Ramada Hotel, Registration, Casual Shots, Beaches
Official Welcome and introductions.
Sunset Cruise, Destin Harbor, and Interviews Flight Line
Lucky Snapper Restaurant
Golf Awards
FAC Banquet and Guest Speaker

2) FAC Memorial Dedication Ceremony: (Awesome!)

Hurlburt Field Air Park
FAC Aircraft, Group pictures
FAC Memorial Dedication
OV-10 Dedication
FAC Fly-by
Memorial Luncheon and interviews

3) Hurlburt Field 'Homecoming' Tour:

Hurlburt Field Front Gate
Base guided bus tour
Interviews Flight Line
USAF Special Ops School Update briefing on SEA
16 Special Ops Command Mission Video

FAC CALL SIGN PROJECT: A little over a year and a half ago **Larry Hughes**, a USAF weapons troop, began keeping a list of Call Signs from a discussion on the Thailand, Laos, Cambodia Brotherhood Net. That simple list has grown to 500+ Call Signs, 250+ Programs/Projects/Operations, TACAN's, LIMA and Victor Site lists and a whole bunch of other stuff. The short version can be seen at www.members.tripod.com/chancefac. His FAC call sign list is now up to about 250 and can be seen at: http://chancefac.tripod.com/FAC_CS/FAC_CS_Rough_FP.htm (ya have to give it time to load). If you can help Larry expand the FAC call sign list, please submit inputs to him in the following format:

Call Sign: A/C type:

Unit: Controlling TASS Location: Base(s)/FOL(s) operated from

Mission: FAC Comments: Units/Operation/Missions Supported

Time Frame: This is critical since some units moved around.

Send inputs to: larryh@w-link.net or: **Larry Hughes** 11712 Admiralty Way #G Everett, WA 98204

(425) 423-9203

FAC HISTORY BOOK PROJECT:

By: **CHARLIE POCOCK**, charmarpock@aol.com and **JACK WEBB**, spider@compufort.com

YOUR STORIES AND PICTURES WANTED: One of the many subjects discussed at the 'Mother of all FAC Reunions' was the concept of putting together a history of Forward Air Controllers in Southeast Asia. Perhaps the beautiful history book published by the Rustic FACs provided the seed of the idea, but as the idea grew so did the purpose of the book. Not only would a comprehensive history be nice to share with our families and friends, but it would also be an invaluable source of information for future generations. Also, should this type of war emerge again in the future, perhaps others can benefit from our mistakes and improve on our tactics and techniques of forward air controlling as we improved on the concepts developed in previous wars.

A working session was held at the reunion to consider publishing a history book, approximately 25 people attended. The outcome of the working session was formation of a representative committee of people willing to tackle the project. We only had time to agree on a couple of ground rules, basically that the committee members would stay in touch by E-mail and that we would use MS Word as our basic computer program. **Darrel Whitcomb** was to be the committee chairman, but work commitments required him to turn the chairmanship over to **Charlie Pockock** and **Jack Webb**.

Since the reunion, the FAC history book committee has taken shape with various assignments. The committee agrees that the book should be a compendium of previously unpublished stories and photographs with only enough textbook-type history to bind the stories together. Predominantly, FACs will write the stories, but stories written by other people about FACs, such as fighter, transport or helicopter crews and ground troops will also be included. Our reason for this approach is that most of us viewed the war from a fairly low level, no pun intended, and many others have well documented the political and strategic aspects of the war.

None of the committee members have the time, facilities or inclination to do all of the research required for an eleven-year history, involving thousands of people and many thousands of stories. Therefore, the size and shape of the finished book will depend on you and the number of inputs we receive from all of you. Stories may vary from a couple of paragraphs to several pages in length and be on any subject you choose. **Here are some suggested topics to help start your mental engines:**

- First Impressions of Vietnam/Laos/Cambodia/Thailand - My FAC Claim to Fame
- Most Memorable/Dangerous/Unusual Mission - My Best/Worst Mission
- Most Humorous Experience/Mission/Event - Getting Combat Ready
- The Smartest/Dumbest Thing I Ever Saw (or Did) - Lessons Learned
- Most Unforgettable Person - Remember When?
- Special Assignments/Duties - The Highlight of My FAC Tour

- Pet Peeves/Favorite Pastime/Leisure Time Activities - What I Loved/Hated about my Aircraft/Job

- Significant Social, Political, Economic, Sport, Entertainment Events.

The book will contain your stories, but only if you take the time to write them and send them in to us. It will be your book, with the committee's help, not the committee's book. Every story received will be considered for inclusion.

Submissions: If able, please submit your stories using E-mail in MS Word format; however, typewritten or even hand written stories are acceptable and encouraged. Even verbal or oral history stories are acceptable, let us know and we'll make the arrangements. Pictures will be a vital part of the book and a picture can make a fair story good and a good story great. Words of caution though, don't part with your priceless photos; take them to a good photo shop and have copies made for us. We'll return your photos and non-computerized manuscripts after we digitize them and have them in our computers. You'll receive full credit for your stories and photos, but please identify the photos with approximate dates, places, people or things. Photos can be 35 mm slides or color or B&W prints up to 8 x 10 inches.

How you can help: The ball is rolling, but keeping it rolling is up to you. Please send us your stories and pictures by the first of July 2001. That gives you five months to get your story down on paper and find your old pictures. Sooner will be fine, but later might be too late. **DECIDE WHICH SECTION OF THE BOOK YOUR STORY FITS IN AND THEN SEND YOUR STORIES AND PICTURES, OR QUESTIONS, TO THE POINT OF CONTACT FOR THAT SECTION/ CHAPTER):**

Objective: Our objective is to have a 'draft' of the book available at the Spring of 2002 FAC reunion in Hawaii- which will be here before you know it!! Also, please pass the word on to any of your FAC acquaintances that might not receive this newsletter. The committee members are very excited about this project and we hope you are too.

FAC BOOK OUTLINE

(Each TASS section will be broken into chapters by year):

SECTION 1: The Ancestry of FACing, **Charles Pocock**, 910 Forest View Rd. Monument CO 80132, (719) 488-9056, charmarpock@aol.com

SECTION 2: The Early FACs, 1961-1963 (prior to the 19th TASS), including early Air Commandos and Butterflies, **Scott Freeman**, 7812 Hilo Court, Diamondhead MS 39525, freeman.james1@worldnet.att.net And Early Ravens, **Craig Duehring**, cwdueh@kreative.net

SECTION 3: 19TH TASS: **Mike Morea**, 3858 Timber Ridge Court, Palm Harbor, FL 34685, moreas@ij.net and **Noel Wilson**, 1119 Oriole Dr., Starrville MS 39759, sewilson@futuresouth.com

SECTION 4: 20TH TASS: **Bud Jones**, 65 E. River Rd. #20, Rumson NJ 07760, covey583@yahoo.com and **Tim Eby**, Rt. 22 Box 8BB, Hico TX 76457, teby@htcomp.net

SECTION 5: 21ST TASS: **Byron K. Sutton**, 505 W. 2nd, Windermere, FL 34786, Bsutton310@aol.com

SECTION 6: 22ND TASS: WE NEED A VOLUNTEER FOR THIS SECTION, but in the meantime send submittals to **Jack Webb**, 420 Jones Ave, Ft. Atkinson WI 53538, spider@compufort.com

SECTION 7: 23RD TASS: **Ron Russell**, 9811, Summerday Dr., Burke, VA 22015, ronrus@gateway.net

SECTION 8: Our Gone But Not Forgotten Brothers: **Jim Roper**, 4646 Kashmire Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920, jroper3531@aol.com

SECTION 9: Our Legacy to Others: Bobby Mack, 637 Emerald Lane, Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547, bobby.mack@baesystems.com

SECTION 10: Prop Wash—Appendices; Glossary; slang and jargon; call signs; trivia; songs; poems; jokes; sayings; index; etc. Chuck Johnson, 225 Brian Circle, Mary Esther FL 32569, chuck.johnson@baesystems.com and **Larry Hughes**, 11712 Admiralty Way #G, Everett, WA 98204, larryh@w-link.net

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS:

1) AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND FACs: Peter Condon, 46 Eastbourne Avenue, Culburra Beach, NSW 5240, Australia, pdcondon@ozemail.com.au

2) FANs: Dr. William (Bill) Scannell, 37146 Turnberry Isle Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92211, CoveyBil@gte.net

3) ORAL HISTORIES: Steve Maxner, The Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University, Special Collections Library Room 10B, Lubbock, TX 79409-1041, lisfm@lib.ttu.edu

4) THOSE IN SUPPORT: James ‘Jim’ Meade, 21 Hill Road, Birrong, New South Wales, Australia 2143, Jim@rfcomponents.com.au and **Larry Hughes**, 11712 Admiralty Way #G Everett, WA 98204, larryh@w-link.net

5) EDITING AND LAYOUT: Jack Webb, 420 Jones Ave. Ft. Atkinson, WI 53538, spider@compufort.com

Other committee members include: Harmon Dungan, harmona@earthlink.net; Tom Eigel, eigelkeenan@webtv.net; Lee Cuny, Lee.cuny@ssc.nasa.gov; Pat Kennedy, pkennedy@ju.net; Tommy O. King, toking@flash.net; De Vere Henderson, edhconsult@aol.com; Tom Bohan, 5710 N. Camino Del Sol, Tucson AZ 85719; Gary Lee Beard, beardjt@aol.com; Felix Moran, fmoran@dig.sys.net; Les Hobgood, hobgoodl@flash.net; A. L. Matheson, citabriaih@yahoo.com; Chuck Lipe, cglipe@juno.com; J. D. Caven, jcaven@ffic.com; Grant Lannon, Glannon@texas.net

If your story is E-mailed, type the below information at the top of the first page. For snail mail, fill out and attach this form to your story. In either case, send your story to the appropriate section leader. If you have questions or are unsure of who to send it to contact **Charlie Pocock** or **Jack Webb** co-chairmen.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ M.I.: ____ Nickname: _____

FAC Call Sign: _____ Aircraft Type: _____ Dates Flown: _____

TASS: _____ FAC Location: _____

Home Address: _____ City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E mail: _____ I have supporting photos: Yes ___No ___

I plan to submit additional stories for the following areas: _____

I give my permission for the attached story(s) and photo(s) to be used in the FAC Book:

(Signature of Author) _____

Story Title and approximate date: _____

(Each story should be given a title by its author)

REUNION REFLECTIONS: By Bobby Mack, FWB., FL bomack@fwb.gulf.net

There was a gathering at the Ramada Inn on Okaloosa Island, Thursday night, September 23. It was not a great night for a gathering; Tropical Storm Helene was closing in on the island. A wind-driven rain beat against the Ramada as heavy surf marched toward the sand dunes. Planes into Fort Walton Beach were canceled, and roads were becoming dangerous. However, the weather did not stop the travelers who came from as close as the next town and as far away as Australia to assemble that night at the Ramada. They came because they shared a common legacy, they were Forward Air Controllers, FACs, and they were gathering to honor those comrades who gave their all in Southeast Asia. They trooped by the registration table and signed in, over 510 of them, scanning the names already on the list for remembered comrades. Later, they strolled through the lush lobby of the Ramada. Their waists had expanded over the years, and their hair, gray and thinning. Some wore their old beloved "party suits" which were covered in bright colored patches showing their travels, units, and accomplishments; party suits that now were high water and too snug for most. Others wore the slightly yuppie attire of successful civilians. Some came alone, others brought their wives, a few brought their children and relatives, all brought their memories. They closed into small groups and soon their hands once more became familiar aircraft and demonstrated intricate maneuvers just as they had once demonstrated a mission to fellow FACs and crew chiefs beside a jungle air field.

This reunion, this gathering of graying raptors, brought them together to dedicate three pieces of Georgia granite to the everlasting memory of those who lost their lives in a war many people would just as soon forget. But the men and women at this reunion would never forget the payment made by those whose names graced the memorial. The memorial was recently placed in Hurlburt's Airplane Park, and the FACs and their families and guests would come together there under a hot Saturday sun to pay their respects, speak the names once more, and warm the cool stone with their memories. There also would be social activities centered around the memorial ceremony, and over food and drinks, rekindled acquaintances would grow stronger, but on Thursday night, the reunion was more about when they were young and adventurous and daring. When they were FACs.

FACs flew the unfriendly skies of Southeast Asia in small planes that were slow and barely armed but great observation platforms, propeller-driven planes that looked more at home on a small town's air field, planes that were loved and cursed, sometimes on the same mission. FACs flew under call signs that became legendary: Rustic, Nail, Raven, Rash, Covey, Cookie, Ragged Scooper, Tonto, Tamale. They became not so much call signs as tribal names; names that told who they were, where they were, and what they did. Ravens and Nails scanned the jungles of Laos and I Corps; Covey FACs flew out of Thailand and worked the borders. Rash and Cookie scouted the Central Highlands. Wherever they were, who ever they were, they became the "dealers of death from above" placing their slow airplanes in perilous situations while directing fighter-delivered ordinance to ground targets. Whether it was to support troops-in-contact, destroy trucks on the Ho Chi Minh trail, or cover downed airmen, the friendlies loved them, the enemy hated them.

The memorial to the fallen FACs shows how strong the brotherhood of FACs is. Initially the Raven FACs had placed a small memorial in the Airplane Park, and a year ago, as the reunion was taking shape, it was decided to replace it with a memorial for all FACs. A memorial committee was formed, and the word went out. The donations poured in. From FACs, from people acquainted with the FACs, from veterans who were helped by the FACs, the money rolled in and within a few months, the money was raised, about \$25,000, to pay for the memorial. The names of the honored were gathered and confirmed, a design by former Raven FAC **Will Platt** was worked and approved, and the memorial became a reality. The memorial and the mission and men it represented drew over 510 FACs and their families and guests that brought the total attendees to over 750 from all over the United States and from around the world to say thanks and we will never forget your sacrifice.

If you're ever at Hurlburt, stroll through the Air Park and admire the great machines that are a large part of the Air Force legacy. At the northern edge of the park, just below the chapel, stands the three granite blocks of the FAC memorial surrounded, maybe guarded, by the small and slow aircraft flown by the men and the mission remembered in granite. It is

hallowed ground for all who have embraced that unique mission in the U.S. Air Force, FAC.



OV-10 FAC group photo taken after Aircraft Dedication Ceremony

FAC Association Charter Membership Form

Yes, I would like to support the goals of the newly formed FAC Association, and promote FAC Camaraderie and future FAC reunions.

 Enclosed is my check for \$20.00 to make me a Charter member of the FAC Association.

Please **make check payable to "FAC Association" & mail to: George Ferkes, 472 Parish Blvd, Mary Esther, FL 32569**

Last Name: _____ First _____ M.I. _____ Spouse's name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ E Mail Address: _____

FAC Call Sign(s): _____ FAC Aircraft: _____ TASS: _____

FAC Tour Dates: _____ Locations: _____

I tentatively plan to attend the FAC reunion in Hawaii 10-14 April 2002 Yes _____ No _____

I'm willing to work on the following FAC committee: _____

I would like for the next reunion to be in the Continental US _____, Australia _____ New Zealand _____