

Red Eagles 4th of July, 2012 Newsletter

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Issue 14

Fellow Red Eagles: GCI Bandit Control Continued

This quarter's article is written by Billy Bayer. He was assigned to the Red Eagles from Oct '81 to July '85. He retired in 1999 as a LtCol. Billy was the GCI flight commander at the 4477th. He is presently the Vice President at SDS International and owns a working coffee farm in Costa Rica. His wife Linda and their sons, Wil and his wife Sarah, Wes and his wife Summer live in Atlanta with the grandkids Britain and Westin. He splits his time between Merritt Island Florida and Jonesboro Georgia & of course Costa Rica.

So much to say about my almost 4 years with the Red Eagles so the obvious place to start is the beginning. It was the summer of 1981 when Capt Dan "Truck" Futryk asked me if I was interested in assisting the Bandit controllers. I immediately said yes. I had known Truck, Bluto and Chops for a while and had seen them work at the Ground Control Intercept (GCI) facility in the Range Group Building at Nellis AFB but didn't have a clue as to what they did. Truck had a reputation as one of the top GCI controllers, skilled at all aspects of adversary weapons and tactics execution. If he wanted to talk, I was always ready to listen.

The radar at Angels Peak was going down for an extended period and Bandit Control was working from the FAA Air Route Traffic Control Center (ARTCC) at Oakland Center. Truck and Bluto were traveling to Oakland Center weekly to provide airspace security. Truck was also working a special project with the 422nd TES and Bluto asked me to go in his place. A handshake was made between the



4477th and the 65th Aggressors so that I could travel on Red Eagle orders. Major John "Admiral" Nelson seemed to be able to walk into any squadron at Nellis and get all administrative financial concerns worked out in a matter of minutes. Now it was time to sell the Ops Officer, Major Chuck "Chuckles" Corder and his Assistant, Major Burt "Buffalo" Meyers (both the size of NFL linemen) that I needed to get checked out at Oakland Center. As a young Captain I had no idea what was in store for me when Bluto told me to come to the trailers late on a Friday afternoon so we could discuss this with the DO and the ADO. I showed up, Bluto brought me to their office to get permission for me to go to Oakland Center. Buffalo stood up, looked at me and said, "4 raw eggs in 30 seconds" and Bluto must do the same. I was on a plane the following Monday for Oakland Center.

In addition to travelling to Oakland Center, our USN pilots had worked out a deal with a USN E-2C squadron at NAS Miramar. We were to get checked out to control missions from the E-2C so we could continue to run intercepts with a platform that was built to do just that. This squadron had just gotten its radar upgraded to track aircraft over land so Truck and I went to Miramar to get qualified in the E-2C. The plan was to launch from NAS Miramar for the morning go, recover at Tonopah and then launch from Tonopah for the afternoon schedule and recover at Miramar. We did this for a couple of weeks with the E-2C flights supporting the flying schedule. Needless to say it was interesting and we gained



Editor's Column:

The 4th of July is upon us and time to celebrate!

- Make plans to celebrate the 4th. Make sure to clean and check the grill. Refill the propane tank or buy enough charcoal.
- When going camping, make a list of all the things you'll need. Don't forget the first aid kit and jumper cables. Let someone know where you are going and when you'll be back.
- Don't forget to fly the flag.
- Enjoy this time with family and friends. Please don't drink and drive or forget to take rest stops while on long road trips.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
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some valuable experience working with the Navy controllers.

I officially became a Red Eagle on 1 October 1981. Joining the squadron the same day were Capt Mark "Toast" Postai (65th Aggressor) and Capt Monroe Whatley (414th FWS). They began their MIG check out and I officially started as the 4th Bandit Controller. Toast and I knew each other from the 65th Aggressor Squadron and were good friends. LtCol Tom Gibbs was the squadron commander and Chuckles the Ops Officer. Truck had the mission of expanding the number of controllers as we got more MIGs. He had been on the road and had identified controllers from both the USAFE and PACAF based Aggressors as well as one 1Lt from CONUS. Chops and now Bluto had PCS'd and the GCI flight was Truck as flight commander, me and two technicians (Steve "Mountain" Emfinger and Dan "Pitch" Pitcher) with Capt Todd "Lunar" Leduc inbound from USAFE, Capt Jim "Jaime" Day from PACAF, and 1Lt Jon "Jaws" Waldrop from CONUS. The squadron had two T-38s and a Cessna and it was a big event for me to fly in the backseat of a T-38 with my name on it. Truck and I flew as often as we could. The aspect of the aggressor program carried over to the Red Eagles as our situation awareness got keener the more often we were in the air and were able to visualize the tactics while listening to GCI. This was the best GCI training program in DoD and would prove invaluable as the evolution of the Red Eagle mission became more complex.

This complexity was the execution of tactics. We began flying MIG tactics first as 2v2 and then 4v2 and finally integrating all of our assets into a specific MIG Red Flag exercise. This was where all of our training really kicked in. The Bandit Controllers were all qualified at running many versus many adversary tactics during Red Flag exercises and now we had the entire MIG squadron involved. I remember with clarity the first time I directed the MIGs to marshal, taxi and take off. This was based on the proximity of the Blue Force and to maximize our time in the air. Four MIG-23s took off first and got on the deck going as fast as they could looking up, Six MIG-21s, two T-38s and several Aggressor F-5s took off and were vectored toward specific locations and then the MIG-17s took off and flew over the runway. Just the exposure to the MIGs had proven successful but now flying them in highly complex scenarios while executing Soviet tactics took the program to an entirely new level. Our pilots were the elite of the elite from USAF, USN and USMC & we grew the program from a show and tell to the execu-

tion of multi-bogey tactics.

Truck was scheduled to PCS and I was selected as the next Flight Commander. Lt Col George "G2" Gennin was now the squadron commander. I remember his first Officer call to this day. He spoke of being officers, professionalism and the direction the squadron was going. He defined the ROE for the squadron for the next 2 years and he ended it with, "Gentlemen the train is leaving the station, you are welcome on board, if not I will find you an assignment". After this meeting LCDR John "Black" Nathman came to me and said I am wearing the same flight suit and boots I've had for 10 years, how do I get new ones? And, he wasn't the only one.

I hired Capt Jim "Smack" MacDonald from the 65th Aggressors and the GCI Flight now had the personalities to parallel Animal House. I sure hope the doofer book stays



hidden forever because there were stories in there that Steven Spielberg would have loved to get his hands on. Our GCI mission was clear, we gave the blue force fighters (F-4, F-16, F-15, F-5, F-111, A-4, F-14, F-18 and also A10) an initial vector into 70 series range and then using ground reference points, close control, and regimental

control techniques to ensure the MIGs were able to intercept them. The MIGs would launch based on Bandit Control direction when the blue force fighters entered the southern part of Range 76. This was our standard intercept except when Buffalo was flying against the F-15 FWS – I think it's best to leave that as a story for another day. Bandit Controllers also attended the mass morning in briefing to get the daily flying schedule and meet the Blue Force fighter pilots. I remember one particular mass briefing, we were hosting a squadron of USMC F-4s and the entire squadron came for the daily in-brief. One Red Eagle pilot normally remained back at Nellis to give the morning in brief and then either fly to Tonopah in the T-38 if he was on the flying schedule or stayed in the trailers to take care of administrative responsibilities. Monroe was the lucky pilot that day to give the in-brief and noticing the amount of notes the Marine Fighter pilots were taking said, "boys, holster your pencils. Contact Bandit control on this frequency as soon as possible and they will run you in".

We executed the daily flying schedule, which usually consisted of Performance Profile ("PP") 1v1 intercept ending in a "join up" where the MIG pilot demonstrated slow speed handling and performance characteristics for the MIG-21 and acceleration capabilities of the MIG-23. Additional sorties included 2v1 and 2v2 intercepts. At the end of each day, the pilots would return to Nellis where we would have a mass debrief. In order to be a Red Eagle



Controller, you had to be a qualified Aggressor. We all stayed proficient in controlling 6v4 scenarios, adversary tactics, and Blue Force weapons and tactics by augmenting the Aggressor Squadrons and FWS Divisions on Nellis AFB. We were in high demand within the 57th Wing and typically controlled 3-4 missions each day. The days started early and ended late and it was amazingly rewarding. Additionally, range space security was our responsibility where we continually coordinated with Oakland Center in the case of an intruder.

Many small commercial aircraft like would try to take a shortcut through the restricted range airspace while en route to Las Vegas or Tonapah Municipal Airport and we would have to intercept them. Two particular instances are memorable to me, first we had a light aircraft fly into the airspace and I broke off a 1v2 intercept with F-15s and moved the MIG away from the light aircraft. The lead F-15 pilot was having difficulty getting the tail number of the aircraft so I ran the wingman to assist. The private pilot did an amazing job of avoiding the F-15s and the quote was, "If he isn't one of ours already, we need to sign this guy up". Noteworthy was that these were FWS F-15s. The other was a Cessna that overflew the runway at Tonapah and we launched both a T-38 and the Mitsubishi MU-2 ("MITS") to intercept him. The T-38 got on the wing of the Cessna and kept him in check as we ran an intercept with the MITS to escort the small aircraft out of the airspace. 1Lt Bobby Reist was our security officer and it was obvious that this Cessna pilot did not want to be identified and took evasive maneuvers at every opportunity. The Cessna landed in the desert and the MITS was directed to do the same, Bobby was told to contain him and the quote was, "what am I going to do, hit him with my scarf?".

I was the additional duty awards and decorations officer, Jaime was the personnel officer. During this time Jaime spent most of his day working personnel issues for the boss and I had the challenge of creating the process for classified decorations. Marshall McCloud was now on the Air Staff and the process became very streamlined. The Joint Meritorious Unit Award (JMUA) and the Air Force Achievement Medal (AFAM) were new and G2 challenged me to get the JMUA for the unit and to work to get an AFAM awarded to as many of the NCOs as possible. We were awarded 2 JMUA's and I don't know how many medals during this time Toast belly landed a MIG- 17, and he and Capt Jim "Thug" Matheny experienced a canopy implosion in a MIG-21, I was directed to pursue a Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for both. Safe to say that all Red Eagles received their well deserved and fair share of awards when they left the squadron. We lost Toast in a MIG-23 on 22 October 1983, I think of him often and "Toast" to him on the 22nd. of October each year

One day, Lt Col Gennin decided to monitor the Bandit Control missions at the Range Group facility on Nellis.

He watched what we did and his comment was, "Billy we live in the age of the F-16 with digital radar and you are operating with 1950s era raw radar display, I need a plan to have a control facility at Tonopah". Long story short, the plan was approved and the construction of the facility began. I never got to control out of the facility but I heard it was an awesome control facility. Also worth noting that the GCI Flight scored two back-to-back "Outstanding" ratings from TAC Stan/Eval IG visits and really set the standard within Tactical Air Command.

Lt Col Gennin PCS'd and Lt Col Phil "Hounddog" White was selected as the next CC. Jaws left the Red Eagles to be part of the initial cadre in standing up the Controller Division at the Weapons School and Lunar became the Wing Stan/Eval controller. Mike Jones and Steve Fussle replaced Mountain and Pitch. All in all, the role of Bandit Control was critical in the progression of the Red Eagle mission and training U.S. fighter pilots how to defeat the red air-to-air threat. In the late 70s and early 80s, TAC was very reluctant to allow multi-bogey engagements using the Red Eagles but eventually authorized it once we proved we could execute safely. Bandit Controllers also consistently received numerous positive feedback in the mass debriefs from all the units who participated in Constant Peg missions.

I left the Red Eagles in July 1985. I had been in the squadron for 3 distinctly different commanders and operations officers and honored to have worked with so many consummate professionals. Attending the reunion last October, I found that years have passed by rapidly but the friendships made have held firm. Would have been nice if we had had a keg of beer inside a refrigerator – another story left for another place and time. Hopefully when the next reunion happens even more Red Eagles will show. Until



From left to right: Wes (son born into the Red Eagles) and wife Summer Bayer Daughter Britain in front, new daughter in law Sarah & Wil Bayer, wife Linda, me and grandson Westin in front.



Another Red Eagle Touches WW II

This story was sent to me by Jim "Bluto" Keys. I am publishing it as it was sent to me.

Ben,

I read your story about meeting the WWII veteran in the commissary with great interest. I too have a great deal of respect for our hero's from the Greatest Generation Ever. I have experienced what you went through a few times as well. Let me share one experience I had that was similar to yours. We were in line to be seated in a Cracker Barrel restaurant and I noticed up ahead of us there was a white haired gentleman with a cane. He was having some difficulty standing in line and as he was moving around he turned toward me and I noticed he had a baseball cap on that read USS INDIANAPOLIS. Now we all know the story of the INDY, but the younger generation sure does not. I got out of line and walked up to the sailor and asked if he had been on the INDY, he said yes he had. Now several people were watching us and were wondering what was going on. I was going to take this hero and his wife out of the line and move them to the front, so I thought I had better explain my actions. I told the people that this WWII hero was on a top secret mission aboard the USS INDIANAPOLIS. This was the battleship that delivered the bomb to Tinian Island which later was dropped by Paul Tibbets over Japan and led to the ending of WWII in Japan. What most don't know is that the INDY was sunk by a Japanese submarine after she dropped off the bomb at Tinian. Since the mission was top secret there could be no radio calls and no one suspected anything when the INDY did not call in. Because of this no one was aware she had been sunk and no rescue attempt was made at the time. During the sinking of the INDY over 900 sailors went into the water, only a little over 300 were rescued 9 days later. The rest had died from injuries, or gave up after so many days of treading water and drowned, but the majority was eaten by sharks. This gentleman in line was one of the 300. I then grabbed his and his wife's hand and took them to the front of the line. I then shook his hand again and thanked him for his heroic service, where upon the hostess took them immediately to a table. What a privilege it was to meet this gentleman and his wife and to be of a small service to them. Amazing what a ball cap and what's written on it can lead to. Hope I didn't get too carried away and bored you, thanks Ben.

Best regards,

Jim



BANDIT 9 is up on this frequency

Happy 4th of July to all.

2012! WOW!! Time flies!

This time in 1979 we were trying to get the fuel farm certified and were either already engaged in some tactical deception or were about ready to start. For you guys that weren't a part of the original "occupying" force at the TTR let me explain.

We figured the Soviets were watching the progress at TTR with interest. After all, airfields don't just blossom in the middle of the desert like wildflowers. And, we knew they were peeking at us with their space platforms. So, we decided to give them something to think about. And, if that deception threw the Ruskies off the mark on what we were up to at TTR, so much the better.

I don't remember the sequence or the schedule but I sure do remember the unchecked flow of jets of just about every variety that the Navy, Marines and Air Force could muster showing up at TTR just in time to have their pictures taken by Ivan and his high flying cameras. We laughed a lot about that caper. Someone even took a picture of a bunch of the guys standing by a Navy QF-86 drone in front of our shiny new silver hangars (before the Creech brown paint jobs).

And, so the fun began and has continued ever since. In those days the 431's and their non-crew chief associates were producing MiG sorties for us to train the good guys. And, you guys did that very well.

A year ago we were planning a reunion of the gang and a reunion we HAD thanks to Jack Manclark's push and Obi Henderson's leadership and resources, ably assisted by a great team of reunion planners.

A year ago I was getting guidance on a daily basis from Melody Galloway, Ben and Bro and others on how we should structure an alumni association. That came together and you guys voted to make it happen and then selected an outstanding crowd of RED EAGLES to man the Board, with Scotty at the helm. What a great job everyone has done. Admiral got us legally squared away, the Newsletters and updates to the Rosters have kept coming and Phil has a handle on the "store" where we can shop for memories.

I think Obi is about ready to release CDs with the super slide show his son Neil put together for the reunion and I hear membership cards are in the works as well. And, Bluto and Admiral have led us to accept at least two Associate members, our good friend, author Steve Davies and our lawyer, who is intentionally unnamed in this report to prevent him from getting a deluge of requests for freebies.

Admiral, Obi and I signed up at the very beginning to be REAA members and I want to bump my membership up to LIFE. So, remind me. I owe you money! I don't know



about Obi.

The book I put together about us is titled, **America's SECRET MiG Squadron, The RED EAGLES of Project CONSTANT PEG**. It is advertised for presale on Amazon at a major discount and will be released on Kindle on 24 Jul and in hard copy on 7 Aug.

If you heard about the slip in the release date (2 weeks), that is true. It was due to a typo error on the dust cover. Somehow they didn't get Gen Moseley's name right and that is important since he wrote the **FORWARD** and praised all you guys with carefully chosen and well deserved words.

The book is officially dedicated to the men that made CONSTANT PEG happen. I hope I got all the stories right. And, if I made errors or missed something important I am truly sorry. In the end I had more material than would fit, so the editors whacked away. I just hope you are all happy with it. That was my goal; to explain our task and the results and then to tell some of your stories! If you are happy with it tell everybody. If you are unhappy with anything, tell me. If there is a second printing I will fix it!

I wish I could afford to send each of you a copy, but I can't. There are too many of you and from what I hear, you all know how to read. That said, if you are interested, Amazon has the best deal. Type "Peck MiG" in the search window at www.amazon.com. Amazon is selling it for less than \$16 and the color pictures seem to me worth that. List price at Osprey or Random House is about \$10 more than Amazon. Kindle is just over \$11 on Amazon. I don't know whether the prices will go up after the release, or not. Thanks to all of you that shared stuff from your "rat hole" file of photos and memories. I wasn't very good at footnoting conversations or sourcing pictures. Sorry.

Along the journey toward getting the book done I was able to arrange to have some lithos made of each type MiG jet we had at TTR. I won't argue about MiG-23s vs -27s or the different editions we acquired of Fishbeds. Let's just go with MiG-17 Bort 002, MiG-21 Bort 85 and MiG-23 Bort 49.

They came out pretty good. I ordered 10 of each and will figure out a price and shipping arrangement with Phil Young. I have many more that have my signature block in both English and Cyrillic: **Lt Col Gail Peck, Bandit 9, Commander.**

I figured these signed versions would be of greater interest to the public; collectors and other people at air shows that had shown an interest in the book. But RED EAGLE's can get either version, signed or unsigned; your call. Ben may be able to publish the litho prototypes in this Newsletter. The "words and music" on the lithos changed some in the final versions but the aircraft illustrations didn't.

I've rambled enough for now. The point of this message is that I want to acknowledge and thank everyone for a GREAT year. No, make that an INCREDIBLE year!

Plus, doing a little book and litho promo was more tempta-

tion than I could resist.

Be safe and stay in touch with each other and with the REAA.

Gail "Evil" Peck

BANDIT 9





REAA News Update

For those of you that joined the Red Eagles Alumni Association, REAA, your membership cards and DVD containing the Oct 2011 Reunion speech by Paco Geisler and the Red Eagle slide show will be mailed to you in July. The price for non alumni members to receive the DVD containing the reunion speech and the Red Eagle slide show is \$5.00. That will cover the cost of the DVD, packing and mailing. Those interested should send a check to John "Admiral." Nelson at the address below:

John Nelson
4016 Spring Crest Lane
Las Vegas, NV 89129

