

Red Eagles End of the 3rd Quarter Newsletter, 2012

September 30, 2012
Issue 15

Fellow Red Eagles: X0 Neena Wright

This quarter's article was written by Neena Wright, Major, USAF, Ret.



Neena Wright served as the Executive Officer from May 1986 to June 1988.

When Ben emailed me and asked me to do the article for the September newsletter from the perspective of the non-pilot aspect I wasn't quite sure but said I would do it. As I worked down at Nellis the majority of the time, I am not sure I actually ever met all the Red Eagles unless they came through the orderly room. So I thought I would start this article with a little introduction as to how I got to the Red Eagles, some of my experiences while working at Nellis, and how it affected the rest of my AF career.

I am the daughter of an USAF navigator. On my birth certificate it lists my dad's occupation as 1st Lt. thus making me an AF brat. My dad was on a

remote tour in Newfoundland at the time of my birth and I was born in Florence, Alabama, where my mom was staying with my grandparents. At the ripe old age of 6 weeks old, I had my first move to Michigan and have been moving ever since.

After moving around the country, my dad did a tour of duty in Vietnam at Tan San Nhut, and when he returned we moved to Orlando Florida, McCoy AFB. After this assignment my dad retired with his 20 and we moved to Virginia. I had always wanted to go in the USAF so waited until after college graduation and then went to OTS in May 1979.

My first assignment was as an admin officer assigned to Chanute AFB, IL. Chanute was a technical training center and our center was commanded by Major General Norma Brown. In my 3 years stationed there I held positions as admin officer (ran the orderly room for school squadrons), Exec Officer for the Group, and School Squadron commander. While commander of the school squadron with students and instructors going through technical training for welding, NDI, life support and parachute stuffers there was an instructor by the name of Walter "Mac" McCarver, who later would be a Red Eagle. During this assignment I saw airmen come in from basic training, go through tech school,



9-11, Eleven Years Later.
Never Forget!

Editor's Column:

Fall is upon us and time to prepare for Winter.

- It's time to start putting things in order for winter. Fertilize the lawn, put the storm windows up and drain and put away the garden hose.
- Get the car ready by checking the temperature rating of your anti-freeze, put the snow tires on and if your battery is over 5 years old, you might want to think about replacing it.
- Check your winter clothing. If it smells like your last trip to "Red Lobster", dry cleaning or washing is in order.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
Ben Galloway
3732 Bar 10 Road
Calhan, CO 80808

graduate, and move on to the careers. My job as commander was basically to weed out the ones that just couldn't hack it once they got through basic training and I did a lot of letters of reprimand, Articles 15, and discharges.

My next assignment was with the Human Resources Laboratory at Brooks AFB, TX. I had been there almost 3 years and really, really liked San Antonio. I was at home in Virginia on Christmas leave in Dec 85 and got a call from my vice commander (a Hanoi Hilton survivor, Colonel Michael Lane) and my first thought was I have to go back to Texas off leave. He said no he was calling to let me know I got an assignment. I said I hadn't put in for an assignment, hadn't even done a dream sheet lately. He said well you have one and it is to Nellis AFB and that I would need to start working on a top secret clearance when I returned off leave. In March I flew out to Vegas to find a place to live and ended up in a new apartment complex (Nellis Oasis) right out the I Street Gate near Nellis Blvd. While I was there I went over to the squadron building to see where I would be working. Now at AFHRL I was working with a bunch of civilian PhD's; lieutenants who were behavioral scientists; airmen with computer science degrees, etc. I was there for 3 years and never saw anything completed. I would ask what do you guys do all day? And their response was always "research". Of course they had really nice modular furniture; cleaning staff; conference rooms where they were actually designing teleconferencing (woo hoo). I walked into the Red Eagle building and saw where I would be working (the God awful brown and black carpet) and met with the admin staff and thought this is going to be a great job! They were asking me all these questions and wanted to know when I had come for my interview as they must have missed me. I said I never had an interview; just got an assignment RIP with instructions to begin a TS clearance and apparently they thought that odd.

I arrived at Nellis in May 1986. Briefed into Constant Peg, signed my life away on paperwork and sat back and thought what have I gotten into? I had never worked with pilots up to this point in my career; let alone fighter pilots, who are a different breed; had not handled classified materials; I would be working at the squadron building at Nellis; not be flying back and forth to Tonopah but would be working with the admin staff up there. In order to handle the paperwork from up range we would get a briefcase of stuff late in the day when the Ops guys would bring in the big brown satchel from the C-12. Then de-

pending what was in there, we would start another day late in the day in order to get stuff back up range in the satchel to go onto the C-12 the next morning.

The first couple of weeks working in the orderly room and answering the phones for people asking for Streak, Flash, Hawk, etc was a little nerve wracking since I didn't know who was who to begin with and then had to start making notes as to who was who by names other than their given name or surname.

I came from a job where we had nice big high speed Xerox machines and Wang word processors. The copier at the 4477th was a Minolta that had this sort of conveyer belt to sort the papers and we had Compucorp machines to do all correspondence. After talking with MSgt Griffin (Griff) we decided we needed a better copier machine and some better word processing equipment and printer. We had one Compucorp that came from the maintenance admin down to Nellis to get fixed and they found a French fry in the floppy disk slot way in the back of the drive so you can see what kind of machines we were working with.

The two of us, Griff and I, went downtown Vegas and bought a Xerox copier outright (no renting of a machine) and then we went over to the Wang word processing store and bought these as well. The base admin also used Wang's so we would be compatible to other offices. Of course just the name Wang caused quite a few jokes and I will not go there. The printer we had was this huge machine and we would have to print items trial and error and mark with a pencil where to set the paper for each type of document. Thinking back to what we use nowadays I don't know how we did what we did. No internet, no email, no fax, no laser printers, no Word, but we got the job done.

One of my duties was to attend the TFWC staff meetings and at the time Peter T. Kempf was in charge of TFWC. His meetings were not a piece of cake; you had to sit in an assigned seat for the squadron you represented so at a glance they could tell who had not shown up. People seemed to be on edge during these meetings because you never knew who he was going to set his sights on to harass. They would post weekly stats for suspenses, percentages for participation for whatever programs were going on such as CFC, etc. Kempf was impressed that we had a 100% for CFC and used the Red Eagles as an example to follow at one meeting; I remember Lt. Col Manclark telling me he had gotten a compliment from Peter T. as to our meeting our suspense dates on all our performance reports and decorations with a 100%. Said he

didn't know how I was doing it but to keep it up since Peter T. seemed to be letting the Red Eagles in his good graces. I explained that I noticed early on that it was just taking too long to get decorations from up range to us; over to AT and June the secretary; back from her with a ton of corrections (I learned very quickly how to get items through her) then back up to admin up north and then back to us and over to CBPO. So what I started doing: send the RIP sheet up north; tell them to get the citation back to me (it was a pretty much canned citation and all they had to do was change the name, rank, duty title and dates) and all I had to do was send the citation and RIP sheet over to CBPO to clear the suspense. I then told admin get the actual write up to me as soon as they could and this could be 2 or 3 months sometimes but the write up didn't go to CBPO because it was classified and went to Major Shervanick, at the Pentagon if I remember correctly, directly. The items we had trouble getting thru AT were the performance reports but by then we started getting them done very quickly mainly due to new word processors. Those word processors would come in handy during the drawdown as we then had to buy an OCR machine and run the Phase Manuals thru this and into the word processors so we could convert them; print them out and store on a floppy disk as well. I also learned to sign "signatures" of commanders if we were up against a deadline.

One of my duties was to collect \$5 monthly from each pilot to go into the squadron checking account. From this account I had to pay for the kegs of beer that were delivered on Wednesdays for the Friday afternoon debriefings of the detachments who flew that week. This would definitely not be politically correct nowadays.

Each month, it seemed like, we had a going away function or a social function. There were pool parties. My first pool party (and since it was a "first" I got thrown in the pool) was an experience in itself! Now I know what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas. The new outfit I wore that night got the color bleached out it from sitting in the Jacuzzi. Let's put it this way: there were 12 people in that Jacuzzi; I was the only female and

the only one who kept my clothes on! The second pool party I got tossed into the pool but dropped on the concrete and had bruised elbows and shoes on the roof. I came into the orderly room on Monday morning and my shoes were on my desk. Admin troops had a field day with that one. We had chili cook offs and I remember Lt Col Manclark got the lemon award for his venison chili. After the golf tournament on base, the squadron was banned from the base golf course. Rules: for every 2 beers you drank you took a point off your score. So my job was to ride around in the golf cart and keep track of the empties and resupply. Was there any wonder that a golf cart got damaged or that a flag was run over? Had a great scavenger hunt down in the Fremont Street section of Las Vegas. It was the 80s. It was a fun time to be in the Air Force.

Then we had the two aircraft mishaps; we had to put together an investigative board for Ric Cazessus and the Colonel in charge had us work up range during the week and let us go home on the weekends. Then about 2 months later, I was out at Randolph with John Bermingham on a personnel trip to AFMPC, when we got a call that Hawk Carlisle had ejected and we had another mishap to investigate so we cut our trip short and again I was on this board to be the recorder. The colonel in charge of this wouldn't let us go back to Vegas on the weekends and kept us up there the entire month. It was one of these weekends up north that a group of us went into town to eat dinner and on the way back stopped at Bobbie's Buckeye. Half of the four of us were female and when we went inside and they offered us a "group rate" we females went back to the van. The men came out to the van right after us. I never did check and see if Bobbie's Buckeye was on the map in the briefing room.

When it was announced that the squadron would go into a drawdown we had more work to do. I had to get all the phase manuals converted into another format and saved on floppy disks; I had a stack of RIP sheets for decorations that was about a foot thick; people were making decisions to retire or take another assignment; etc. I ended up over in a field maintenance squadron as a section commander. I actually had a nice office and furniture but missed the Red Eagle building with the dust all over your desk that came through the windows; the very bad carpet; walking in on a Monday morning and finding a dozen fire extinguishers (empty) that apparently had been used in the hallway as a slip and slide; file cabinets that were safes (and would have the stick it note with the

combo laying on top of it); etc. After I had been over at the maintenance squadron a couple of months I got notice that I would be going to Yokota AB, Japan, in Jan 89. That fall I got a call from Dollar Silvers wanting to know if I would like to go to Tailhook. Now I had been asked to go to Tailhook on previous occasions and Griff would always look at me and shake his head and mouth "don't go". Well I didn't have Griff sitting there telling me this so I said yes. When Dollar came by my new office he had his Navy whites on and one of my admin airmen called back and said there was an Admiral there to see me! Well I attended Tailhook and lived to tell the tale. I think it was a couple of years later when the big Tailhook scandal occurred.

I consider the Red Eagle tour of duty an experience and a great opportunity. I learned a lot during those two years and got to see the other side of the Air Force. After Nellis I went onto Yokota AB, Japan, where I started out as a section commander for a field maintenance squadron but then after being there for about 6 months it was decided to move the 374th TAW to Yokota from Clark AB and I was the contact to move them: furniture, personnel, etc. When the wing arrived I was then designated as the HQ Squadron Commander so I was working with more pilots, more paperwork and after working with the Red Eagles I became an expert on editing and getting reports and decorations through without a hitch. While at Yokota I was watching CNN and there was Lt Col Mike Scott doing a briefing; was watching a show with I think Dan Rather doing a piece on a Navy ship and there was Bob Davis from the Red Eagles; Denny Phelan was already at Yokota when I arrived. After the Yokota tour I was assigned to Barksdale AFB as the Base Commander's Executive Officer. Up to this point I had really enjoyed my career in the Air Force; I had really liked my first assignment at Chanute. Although I hated the winters there we had a really good group of young officers and there was a lot of camaraderie. At Brooks I had a good time and even was crowned first runner up for Miss Brooks AFB and active in the Fiesta activities. Then I was assigned to the Red Eagles and thought it can't get any better than this. Japan was a good tour and really did enjoy that one. But when I got to Barksdale I really wasn't a very happy camper. They started changing our AFSC's,

they renamed the commands, had a commander who was a Bible thumper and would spend his Saturdays down on street corners in Shreveport with a Bible trying to convert people and nobody has a sense of humor. It was while at Barksdale, in 1992, I actually made it to my one and only Red Eagle reunion. Well, I couldn't leave Barksdale fast enough. I checked with personnel and they said after 2 years I could leave but it would have to be overseas. So coming up on 2 years I started hunting and I volunteered for Andersen AFB, Guam, and the job was something I said I would never do...Chief of Protocol for 13th AF. Prior to leaving Barksdale, then- President Clinton had come out with a 15-year retirement option but I wasn't eligible. My port call was June 30 and I found out once I got to Guam that my year group was eligible effective July 1. So I completed my tour at Guam and took the 15-year retirement.

The Air Force just wasn't any fun anymore. I think I had been spoiled by my previous assignments and the Barksdale assignment made my decision pretty easy. I had experienced the "real" AF with the Red Eagles and no other assignments after that could compare.

After the Air Force I settled in San Antonio and taught World Geography and US History at a high school for 3 years. Then I worked as a librarian in a middle school for 5 years. At that point I moved back to Virginia and worked as a librarian at a high school for 8 years and then moved back to San Antonio in 2010 and am currently working as a librarian at a high school. Through the years I have been asked to "proofread" many items and it all goes back to my experience with the Red Eagles where I had to learn quickly how to get correspondence through June over at AT! I tell people I used to proofread for a living. People also assume if you were in the Air Force you flew a plane; when they ask me what I flew I say I flew a desk.

Neena Wright



Respect

By Ben Galloway

Respect is a funny thing. It means different things to different people. My life experiences have taught me a thing or two when dealing with people. For the most part, respect has to be earned. However, in other instances respect can be given in return for others showing respect for you. We have all been taught respect in different forms. The teachings of our parents, friends, relationships and the military have shaped our image of respect.

For the most part I am respectful of others as long as they give me the same consideration. It doesn't matter whether the person you are talking about is a four-star general or a janitor. Those two people and everyone in between deserves respect on some level or another. Some people because of their station in life feel too lofty to show any kind of consideration or respect for those people doing menial jobs.

Let me give you an example of this; when I worked at Schriever Air Force Base as one of the LAN (local area network) hardware guys, I dealt with everyone on base. One day I was going to take a break and I left my work area with a young lady I'll call Sue. Sue was very intelligent and one of the lead network administrators with several degrees. She and I were almost to the side door leading outside when I passed one of the janitors in the hall that I had known for several years. I greeted him by name and asked how his wife and kids were. We had a short exchange and he said all was fine. After Sue and I had exited the building, she turned to me with a strange look on her face. She then asked me why I would talk to someone like a janitor. I had worked with this young lady for over a year and at that point I had just realized she had no compassion in her soul. I was bewildered to say the least of her lack of empathy. Knowing that whatever I had to say to her would probably fall on deaf ears, I attempted to explain it to her. I told her that the janitor was like anybody else in this world. He is just a guy working a job to take care of himself and his family. Life may not have dealt him the best hand but he is making the best of it as he can. I didn't see the point of trying to explain it further to her. So I simply ended the conversation on this subject by saying "There but for the grace of God go I". I could tell by the blank look on her face that she didn't get it and she never would.

My attitude in life is certainly changed over the years. It is my belief and experience that people are basically decent and if you're courteous and show some small measure of respect they will usually respond in kind. Having said that, the way I conduct my day-to-day life in dealing with people who provide a service to me and one fashion or another I have found a simple and effective approach. No matter who is providing a service to me I use the same technique to convey my appreciation. Anyone who provides exceptional service to me, whether it be my doctor or waitress, I look them in the eye and say with honesty "Thanks for taking care of me".

Now that I'm retired, and have been for the past couple years, I spend most of my time at the house. Even in this setting there are people who provide a service to me. The two people that come to mind are the post lady and the trash man. Whenever the post lady comes to the door to deliver a package I chat with her and thank her for taking care of me. Once in a while I get a chance to see the trash man if I happen to be working outside or in the garage. I always go to his truck, and if I'm wearing gloves, I remove the one on my right hand and shake his hand and ask how he is doing. There is a limit on how much trash I can put out at one time. Anything over the limit constitutes an extra charge on my bill. However, Phil told me over two years ago when I first met him that I could put pretty much anything out there and he would take it. So, he takes care of me and I take care of him. Every Christmas I tape a Christmas card with \$25 in it to the top of my trashcan.

This past month we have done some heavy remodeling which produced a considerable amount of trash. I had informed Phil of our remodeling job and that we would probably generate some excess trash. He said that wasn't a problem just put it out there and he would take it. When the last of it was piled by the trashcan on the third week I met Phil at his truck when he came for the pickup. I shook his hand as usual and told him I needed to talk to him. Immediately he was concerned that he had done something wrong. I put him at ease and told him that he had been doing everything exactly right. And to show my appreciation I slipped him \$25 and told him to buy himself a nice lunch. After that I looked him dead in the eye and smiled and thanked him for taking care of us. Again he reassured me whatever I need to have hauled away just put it out there by the trashcan.

All of this made me feel really good. To know that I had brightened somebody's day by letting them know that I appreciated what they do for me and to give them some small reward. Charity and kindness are good for the soul. And if you believe in karma, maybe some of that kindness will come back around to you. And besides, I now know with certainty in my heart, that I can put a dead elephant out by my trashcan and Phil will haul it away.

