



THE 49TH FIGHTER SQUADRON ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Sept 2020



Doing What We Do!

Why do we do 'this'?

We do this to preserve the integrity of our 49th Fighter Squadron heritage, launched in World War II and continuing to today. We do this to honor our members who flew or supported combat missions in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War, and for our wives who kept the home fires burning while their husbands supported the Air Force mission.



We do this to preserve the memories of Association members who have passed, and our participation in memorial services held in France by French citizens who pay tribute to our pilots killed in action. And finally, we do this for ourselves. The shared stories of our successes, the memories of our tragedies, and the inspiring examples of our heroes are the threads that connect us. So we point with pride to us, having been active duty members or closely associated with the 49th - a unique military Association. and one of the very few with a long heritage still intact, and continuing.

A Very Special 100th Birthday

On August 5th, Colonel William James 'Greg' Gregory celebrated his 100th birthday. Greg is our most senior member whose long and illustrious military career started with the 49th Fighter Squadron in which he flew combat missions in North Africa with the P-38. Greg's flight experience extended to Korea and Vietnam, and reached a high point in 1962 as commander of the U-2 squadron that delivered photo intelligence supporting President Kennedy's decisions during the Cuban Missile Crisis. As a result he was awarded the CIA's Medal of Merit and his second USAF Legion of Merit (he has 4 total). He also received a letter of commendation from President Kennedy. Greg's 100th birthday celebration in his home town, Austin Texas was an event to remember. His daughters, Gretchen Davis and Cookie Ruiz arranged for a full day of activities including a public-involved drive-by, an avalanche of birthday cards, and a mega-Zoom happy birthday conference call in which Association members participated. The 49th Fighter Training Squadron also participated. A biography of Greg has been recently published. The book, "Spying from the Sky" by Robert Richardson is available through Amazon. Colonel Greg, you make us look good.



A Query about her Grandad

One of the lesser known things we do is to help provide information to families of deceased members who served in World War II and later. In June we received an email from April Schetler. Her grandfather, Jackson L. Schetler fought in World War II with the 49th as a P-38 pilot and flew 50 missions. He died in 2013. According to April; *"My grandfather was very proud of the 49th Fighter Squadron, in fact he used to go to reunions each year. It was just in his final year or two that he stopped going. I just wish I had taken more interest when he was alive. He was a quiet man, but one of the best"*. April sent a group photo of her granddad with other P-38 pilots in front of a squadron aircraft. She went on to ask how she may get



14 Fighter Group, 49 Fighter Squadron on May 22, 1944,
Rear row, 4th from left: Jackson R. Schetler

information on her granddad's service. Jazz gave her advice on how to tap into official records kept at Maxwell AFB. Does anyone recall Jackson Schetler? It would be good to share what we may know about him with April.

A Memory from Niel Perron

In the early 60's whenever an engine change was finished on an F-101, Capt. Russ Grant would test fly the aircraft. As soon as he lifted off he would pull the plane almost straight up. The afterburners would be lit all the way. The two dots would become one dot and would gradually fade away as he continued through 50,000 ft. What a sight at that time. Except for the B-58, for me the 101 was the best looking aircraft flying. Sometimes on our day off a few of us would drive around perimeter road to the other side of the field just to watch the 101's and B52's take off and land. As an

18 year old kid I couldn't explain the feeling of pride in my occupation, maintaining the fire control system for my Air Force and for my country. It's still there whenever I see the Thunderbirds or the Blue Angels fly.



Gladys Kishbaugh says hello

Gladys is one of our dearest senior members and has recently moved. Her daughter Kay wanted to be sure that we are keeping track of her dear Mom and it is our pleasure to do so. Gladys now lives in an independent living center. Her new address is Brookdale at Grandon Farms, 1100 Grandon Way, Room 203, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 and her phone number is 717-761-1376. She is adjusting well, and entertains everyone daily on the piano and mandolin. Gladys, please know that you are always 'connected' and we hold you close in our hearts.

An F-106 Gathering

This great event will take place in Melbourne, Florida on 17 to 21 March 2021 for all former F-106 squadron members. Please pass this along to others in your mailing list who may be interested. Point of contact is Bob Kwiecinski. Phone is (772) 571-6056. Email address is bobski9933@aol.com. Complete details and sign up forms are at <https://www.f-106deltadart.com/>. Thanks to John Ashley for passing the word.



Taps for two of our members

This past June we lost our dear friend Staff McDougall. Staff's exuberant personality, quick wit, and congeniality livened many reunions. We shall miss him. Vodka and tonic was his drink and we can visualize him doing just that with his 'elevated' welcoming committee. Also, last week we received an email from Steve Jeffrey. Many of us knew his dad,

David Jeffrey, a lifetime Association member. David passed away in February 2019. Steve is now an Association member. Thank you Steve for keeping us informed about your dad's passing and welcome aboard.

We broke the code

Many of us have wondered about the subtle differences with hand signals used by aviators of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Hopefully, this provides some insight (???) Submitted by someone who wishes to remain anonymous (for safety reasons).

Army

You will note that the pilot gives the ground crew a thumbs up before he is given hover and takeoff signals. There are two theories about the origin of this gesture. One is that it is to show that the pilot has identified which of his fingers is the thumb so that he will be able to properly operate his controls. The most compelling theory says that this is to show the ground crewman that the pilot indeed knows which direction is up.



Navy

On an aircraft carrier, the Naval Aviator looks over at the Catapult Officer ("Shooter") who gives the run up engines signal by rotating his finger above his head. The pilot pushes the throttle forward, verifies all flight controls are operational, checks all gauges, and gives the Cat officer a brisk salute. The salute continues the Navy / Marine tradition of asking permission to leave the ship. The Cat officer drops to one knee while swooping his arm forward and pointing forward, both granting that permission & making sure the pilot knows which way to go.



Air Force



Air Force pilots on the flight line look up just before taxiing for takeoff as the ground crew waits until the pilot's thumb is sticking straight up. The crew chief then confirms

that he sees the thumb, salutes, and the pilot then moves off. This tradition is the last link in the Air Force safety net to confirm that the pilot does not have his thumb up where the sun doesn't shine.

Wrapping up

As you know, we have been winding down our Association. We've had our 'Last hurrah' last year and there are no further reunions on the horizon. We no longer collect membership dues and our finances are down. Meanwhile we will continue with these mini-newsletters, website, Facebook, and the annual memorial services in France. We still have expenses and you can help with a one-time donation of any amount. We have members that have recently contributed voluntarily. Should you wish to help and join with them, thank you in advance. Send a check made out to the 49th FSA and mail it to our treasurer, Jazz. Address is John Jannazo, 237 Lily Bell Lane, Freeport, FL 32439.

Don't forget the standing request for members to provide inputs for the next newsletters. Perhaps you have a short story about past members, or personal experiences with the 49th. With our collective memories, surely there are ample entertaining and informative stories. Please put on your thinking caps and tell us about the 'old' days when we flew the P-38, F-86, F-101, and F-106. Family members could also contribute as they have a lot to remember about their husbands, dads, and granddads.

Some scientists theorize that civilizations historically pass through cycles in climate, finance, and human conflict. If there is any credibility to this theory, one could opine that all three are peaking in 2020. But rather than the problems they raise, consider the opportunities we have to control our destiny and rise to new heights - a shared responsibility for all Americans.

We'll close off with best wishes for health and fulfillment. With your help and continued interest, we will continue to do 'this'. Our focus is not only for our members, but for our great country because our heritage is a part of the national treasure.

God Bless America.

