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AVG/CNAC BULLETIN

Mid-Winter (or Early Spring) Bulletin

Lots of news for and about us.

There was the enshrinement of General Chennault in the Aviation Hall of Fame, where AVG'ers did themselves proud. (More about that later.)

There's the 1973 reunion fast approaching Ojai, July 5-7. (More to come.)

Big article in February 1 issue of Forbes on Gerhard Neumann, popularly known in China days as Herman the German. Forbes says he's some big operator.

Bob Prescott making a fine recovery after an argument with his ticker just before Christmas. Promises to be in shape for the Ojai course, and all other events.

Dick Rossi, after all these years, getting down to a one-house man; he thinks he has the place in Majorca sold after the first prospect got out of the country just ahead of the sheriff; and the Palm Springs place is going; the West Los Angeles place has gone. But at Fallbrook, Dick has a place which will take at least 10 years to shape up; maybe that's how he got to be a one-house man; finally bought a place that needed so much attention he had to get rid of the others. Lydia is happy; said she could never be a Spaniard. Besides, it's a lot easier to get to Ojai from Fallbrook than Majorca.

Tex Hill is the new president of the Fighter Aces Association. He will tell all about it at Ojai.

Anna Chennault addressed a standing-room-only World Affairs Council meeting in Los Angeles in February on Asia and steps she feels the United States should take in dealing with Asia. Rode Rodewald, Bob Smith, Moon Chin and Len Kimball attended, and Anna said she hoped to see all of us at Ojai in July.

Remember Duke Hedman's champagne party at San Diego? How much he was enjoying it until Bob Prescott told everybody it was Duke's treat. Well, Duke hasn't been questioned about a repeat performance at Ojai but a little urging might help, for instance -- a few letters pointing out what a great host he was, how much all of us enjoyed the Hedman gigglewater and how much we'll look forward to making "Duke's Party" an event at future reunions, with attendant publicity and a feature spot in the program. It's possible Duke might want to go for the whole bundle again. At the moment, he's our best party prospect.

Jack Cornelius is back from the Pacific; i.e., Wake Island, Hong Kong and Hawaii. I know you all feel sorry for Jack and some of the places he's been.

Mr. Smith of the Trenton newspaper contacted me the other night. He had just found out that Trenton had a native son in the Flying Tigers and he would like to learn more about John Croft--where he is or what happened to him. He said his newspaper never gave credit to having a native son in that great organization and he'd like to do a feature article. I informed him that in my records, the only information I have is, "deceased about 1968". I would appreciate it if anyone knows any more about John--what happened to him, if for sure he has passed away and how--please let me know. I talked to Ken Jernstedt and found out that after AVG, John flew for Republic Aviation on Long Island, but we don't have anything after that trek. It's a good chance for additional AVG publicity so let me know any more information on John's life.

AVIATION HALL OF FAME

Big event of 1972 in our group was the enshrinement of the "Old Man" in the Aviation Hall of Fame at Dayton, Ohio, also the home of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

The General was inducted along with three other aviation pioneers -- General Curtis E. LeMay, Leroy R. Grumman and James H. (Dutch) Kindelberger. They join an illustrious group of such men as the Wright Brothers, Eddie Rickenbacker, Billy Mitchell, Glenn Martin, Henry Arnold, Charles Lindbergh, Jimmy Doolittle, Donald Douglas, Ira Eaker, Carl Spatz, and Juan Trippe

The Enshrinement Banquet Ceremonies were held on December 15, at the Sheraton-Dayton Hotel and 22 of the AVG group including wives were in attendance. We outnumbered the 14th three-to-one. Except for some weather and other misfortunes that afflicted our group, we'd have been even stronger. And the weather was something!

Those who got there got in between snowstorms and in some cases, the storms prevailed and others didn't make it.

But finally on hand were:

Bill and Mary Lee Maher; Bob and Marge Rengo; Ed Janski; Mr. and Gerhard Neumann; Eloise Whitwer; Gail and Ruth McAllister; Ed and Edith Stiles; Walt Dolan; Joe and Mary Poshefko; Paul and Dorothy Clouthier; Al and Corky Kaelin; Charlie Bond; Dick Rossi and Don Rodewald.

The snowstorm blocked out Red and Christy Hanks, George and Helen Burgard and Ed Rector. Merlin Kemp said he would be there but didn't make it; surely a man from Kotzebue, Alaska, can't use a snowstorm as an excuse.

Bill Maher and Bob Rengo hosted a party in their suite after the formal ceremonies were finished. It was great and we all thank them again.

The mercury dropped and I mean dropped (says Rode) on Saturday morning. As a result, there were not graveside ceremonies. Rode says you'd have had to have snowplow, icebreaker, snowshoes and parkas to find the Wright Brothers grave, let alone survive. It was much nicer in the hotel having toddies and telling war stories. Some of the more brave went to the Aviation Museum at Wright Field -- the inside part, that is.

Rossi, the Mahers, Rengos, Bond and Neumanns departed Saturday morning, while the rest of us took up Jack Gadberry on his invitation to the WPAFB Officers Club for a 14th party. We outnumbered them at their own affair by three to one but it was an outstanding dinner and dancing to Les Elgart made a complete evening for us.

We all departed in various directions Sunday after very leisurely breakfasts.

Jimmy Stewart was master of ceremonies for the Enshrinement program. Gerhard Neuman made the presentation address for the Claire Lee Chennault award and narrated a film of the General's life. We're going to try to get a copy to show at Ojai.

Tommy Corcoran and General John Alison jointly acknowledged the award for Anna, who was in Asia on business and was unable to attend.

The back cover of the program contained sketches of each new honoree, drawn by Milton Caniff, the creator of "Steve Canyon." He now lives in Palm Springs, Calif.

AND SO ON TO OJAI

The big event of 1973 is coming up fast, folks, so start planning and marking your calendar.

The dates are July 5-7 but.....

The Fourth comes in mid-week this year, so if you want to be at Ojai for the full week, get your reservations in pronto. The Inn is beginning to fill up for the first part of the week and reservations will be hard to come by for the early part of the week. If you want to get there in advance and warm up for the rest-of-the-week's festivities, you'll need to let the Inn know soon.

We're going to be able to make some travel arrangements for you and as in the past, it will be first come first served, so start thinking of dates and places. As in the past, we'll be able to provide limited service out of Boston, New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Seattle and San Francisco. As you'll recall, the accommodations are small but as for service, you fly with the fastest. Since this will come at vacation time for airline staffers, Ed Pinke says it will help a lot if you get your travel choices in early.

As with all aspects of our economy, prices at Ojai have gone up. The rates will be \$50 a day for a two-people room. If children are brought along, the following rates will be in effect:

- Through 3 years of age - \$4.00 a day for food and crib
- 4 through 7 - \$8.50 a day
- 8 years old and over - \$15.00 a day

These rates will apply only if child is in same room as parents. Reservation forms are included; please send them back direct to Ojai Valley Inn.

Any and all questions on the event, Rode will try to field and get answered for you. His numbers are on the letterhead.

Ye Editor's Note:

Corky and Al Kaelin had one of the strangest stories about getting to the Enshrinement Ceremonies. When Rode heard it, he asked Corky to put it all down, since it was too much for one sitting. So here's Corky's story of how a well-planned trip can go all to hell--well, almost.

I'LL MEET YOU FOR LUNCH
By Corky Kaelin

The day had not yet dawned as I eagerly awakened under snow laden skies in Palatine, Illinois. My bag was packed with glad rags--formal and tuxedo--for a long anticipated event in the lives of Al and Corky Kaelin. Little did we know what anguish that bag would cause.

I had purposely made an early start as snow traffic can be very slow and I sure didn't want to miss this flight. Al and I were to meet in Dayton, Ohio for lunch. These careful plans were made far in advance of the fifteenth of December. Al was working in Louisville, Kentucky and would fly from there to Dayton on Delta Air Lines, arriving approximately five minutes after my TWA flight from Chicago.

For the next few hours everything was clicking like a computer. I arrived at O'Hare with time to spare.

Snow was beginning to flutter down as I checked the gate number from whence we would depart. Casually I began the mile and a half walk through the terminal to the posted gate. I glanced at the schedule screen. That's when my unbelievable day started to happen. TWA Flight 162 was flashed upon that screen as "Cancelled".

I checked with the gate agent. He had no reasons or answers. He suggested that I sit tight for a while and perhaps we would find out. One knows one does not sit tight in this situation. I gathered together coat, hat, gloves and carry-on case and ran back the mile and a half to the ticket counter.

Connections from Chicago to Dayton I soon found out were difficult to come by. Frantically I stood in this sea of humanity trying to find an agent who would exchange my ticket. TWA was swamped so I went to Delta. Now these kind gentlemen heard my plight. The first answer was another thru flight at 3:55 pm, placing my arrival in Dayton at 5:55 pm. That was cutting things a little close for a formal banquet at 6:00 pm. (Not to mention lunch was out.) However, I could fly with them in a half hour to Detroit, on Flight 690, and transfer to their Flight 753, leaving Detroit for Dayton at 1:25 pm. (Aha! I've hit the jackpot.) At least I would arrive in time for both Al and myself to dress in our finery.