Memories, enlivened by a meeting of old friends—that is a reunion and the 1979 gathering of the clan at Ojai on July 4,5,6,7 was one of the most memorable of all those of AVG and CNAC since the first one way back in 1952.

The stories haven't changed. In fact, they're better. Time has a way of softening history and improving it, and things you might not have thought happened now seem surely to have happened because the story telling is so good. Four days of that sharpest memories. And that is what makes reunions what they are and what makes them so good—that and seeing old friends.

There were lots of old friends at Ojai this Fourth, one of the best of all turnouts—48 AVG'ers and 25 CNAC'ers, a total of 73 and with wives and heirs, the total attendance exceeded 195. The bar did an SRO business, especially after the sun had set, the dancing continued until the lights went out and if old age is supposed to be creeping up on us, there were no signs of it. In fact, "Doc Rich" looked more like a three-year-old in the Derby than an old farmer.

As with all reunions, there were so many things going on that writing about it afterwards, the memory is a little blurred as to what did happen, which is a built-in apology for anything omitted here or generally screwed-up. There were tennis tournaments, golf tournaments, bridge tournaments, horseback riding, swimming in and lounging by the pool — also napping — to say nothing of the eating, drinking and dancing.

We welcomed for the first time at Ojai Hugh Vivrette from North Carolina, Leon Schramm from Pennsylvania and John Young from Illinois. Vivrette probably wins the prize for making it the hard way and for showing the kind of stuff AVG'ers are made of—he rode all the way out from the east coast by motorcycle! That's a first such as we've never had before.

Speaking of attendance, the most faraway was this time were Christy and Red Hanke from Maryland, Steve Kustay from Pennsylvania, Walt Belan from New York, Bruce Moss and Bobby Roberts from Georgia, Joe Hardin from Connecticut, Neil Kemp from Alaska, Paul Clouthier, Twitty Bent and Joe Pouchebo from Massachusetts, Jeanne Loane and Carey Bowles from New Jersey and the big Florida contingent of Rocky Rosaglinone, Jim Howard and Jeanne Crookshank.


Also, especially included, were Betty Haywood and Edith Sawyer, who joined Jeanne Loane and Peggy Chennault Lee among our celebrated "gals."

A celebrated guest who stayed through the four days of the reunion was 81-year-old Don Berlin, who looks as rugged as the P-40, which he designed. Now living in Indianapolis, Don was in most of the events and into all of the evenings, where he swapped stories with a memory that belted his years.

Of course, we had the traditional steak fry and square dancing laced with ample supplies from the bar provided by those topflight insurance hosts, Johnson and Higgins. This usually was our opening gambit but since the Fourth was the first day of the reunion instead of the closer, the opening night was a cocktail party hosted by our old friends from Boeing and followed by a buffet.

Meantime, the bridge tournament began and was topped in a flurry of cards by Kitty Older, Mrs. Ray McEwen of Boeing, and Peggy Chennault Lee.
Steve Kustay from Pennsylvania, Walt Dolan from New York, Moose Moss and Robby Roberts from Georgia, Joe Hardin from Connecticut, Mel Kemph from Alaska, Paul Clouthier, Twisty Bent and Joe Poshefko from Massachusetts, Jeanne Loane and Carey Bowles from New Jersey and the big Florida contingent of Rocky Roncaglione, Jim Howard and Jesse Crookshanks.


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We had two outstanding banquets, the first that of CNAC with Milton Caniff as our special guest and Pratt and Whitney doing honors at the bar. Between Milt’s descriptions of how his famous cartoon strip about China and the war evolved and the characters developed from your exploits and the sketches he draw as we all looked on, it turned into one of our most memorable evenings. He graciously autographed every program offered and his letter to Dick Ross, reproduced elsewhere, tells how much he, too, enjoyed a memorable night.

The closing banquet was a tribute to Bob Prescott, for whom the reunions were probably his favorite time of the year. Joe Healy, who succeeded Bob as president of the Flying Tiger Line and his wife, Audrey, were on hand for most of our events and made this night a special one. Joe and Anne-Marie Prescott and Bob’s daughters, French and Kirsten, were with us to accept the Flying Tiger Pilot Award Trophy presented this year posthumously to Bob, honoring his contribution to aviation. So the man who had so much to do with the success of reunions over a span of nearly 30 years joins an historic group of airmen on the trophy’s nameplate. Joe also hosted the bar which was in pure Prescott tradition.

There was dancing and drinking far into that last night as we looked at each other for the last time this year for most of us and said final goodbyes on Sunday. We left again with great memories and that’s what a reunion is all about. When you reflect that this is the 40th year since the great adventure began by drawing most of you into the early days of the war and that you are around, so many of you, still meeting together and telling the stories of those days, it makes one think of the meaning behind Chennault’s message after the first reunion back in 1952 — “You boys, just let me know when and where you meet next and I’ll be there!”

God bless till next time, lah.
OJAI ATTENDANCE LIST
Members-Families-Guests

AVG/CNAC

Bill Bartling
Dr. Carl Brown
Duke and Many Ann Hedman
Cliff Groh
Jean Loane
Robert "Moose" Moss
Peter and French Prescott Reill
Doc Richards
Dick & Lydia Rossi & Tony
Eric & Ilse Shilling & Ricky
Dick & Kirsten Prescott Smith
Anne Marie Prescott

AVG

Twisty & Roz Bent
Tim Burgard
Paul & Dorothy Clouthier
Jesse & Bernadine Crookshanks
Jim & Betty Cross
Otto & Marion Daube
Walt & Phyllis Dolan & Kevin
P.J. Greene
"Red" Petach Hanks
Betty Haywood
Tex & Mazine Hill
Jim Howard
Ed Janski
Al & Corky Kaelin
Bus & Metha Keeton
Mel Kemph
Steve & Ann Kustay
Bob & Marian Layher & Bob
Bob & Peggy Chennault Lee Pat & Terry
Lee & Alexandria, Denise & Teddy
Bob & Gwynn Locke
Bob & Jo Neal
Chuck & Kitty Older
Preston & Lottie Paull
Dick & Jean Peret
P. J. Perry
Don Rodewald & Judy
Edith Sawyer
Bill & Eleanor Schaper
Terry & Sandy Schaper
Leo & Frances Schramm
Jo Stewart Shurette
Bob M. Smith
Robert T. Smith
Irv & Jean Stolet & Jeffery
John & Pam Uebele & Pam Ann
Morgan Vaux
Hugh Viverette
John Williams
Harvey Wirta
John Young
CNAC

Carey & Cynthia Bowles
Glen & Shirley Carroll
Jim & Peggy Dalby
Roy & Margie Farrell
John & Sue Foltz
Ben Gerson
Oliver & Rosemary Glenn
Joe Hall
Fletcher "Christy" Hanks
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Hardin
Mike & Betty Kan
John Kenehan
Art & Classie Kinimmonth
Bill & Mary Lou Maher
Bob & Thelma McCaleb
Joe & Isabel Michiels
Galph & Lisa Mitchell
Bob & Gert Nash
Al Oldenburg
Patty & Mary Margaret Poteeschmidt
Bob & Marcie Rengo, Mr. & Mrs. Butch
Dorn, Andy & Frank, Mr. & Mrs. Al
Fleischer & Todd
"Bobbie" & Lucille Roberts
"Rocky" & Esther Roncaglione
Bob & Audrene Sherwood
Gerry & Angela Shrawder
Dick Stratford & daughter
Dick Stuelke
Charley & Emma Jo Uban
Jules & Peggy Watson
Jeff & Peggy Weiner

AVG/CNAC GUESTS

Don Berlin
Hal Brooks
Milton & Bunnie Caniff
Bob & Martha Conrath
Midge Cook
Mussen & Susan Davis
Frank Elliott
Colleen Ferguson
Gordon Groh
Bonnie Hastings
Joe & Audrey Healy & Shaun
Gayle Hemingway
Hardy Humphrey
Mr. & Mrs. Louis Jordan & 3 Children
Capt. Kim Chang Kyn
Len & Deirdre Kimball
Margaret Knowles
Jack Kruzelock
Gen. Y. T. Loh
Dolly Luce
Ray & Katti Lou McEwen
Sean McGregor
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Minnick
Grace Morris & son
Bob & Pat Nowak
Larry Pistole
Bill & Audrey Raabe
Phillip & Traci Rengo
Dave & Alice Ross
Sue Shrewsbury
Mary Smith
Opal Williams
IN MEMORIAM

When we prepared the reunion program, we were unaware that Thomas Henson had passed away in 1978. Our sympathy to his family.

We are sad to have to report that George L. "Pappy" Paxton died on September 17, 1979. "Pappy" fought a valiant fight these last few years. Our deepest sympathy to his family.

NEW ACTIVITIES

In addition to the usual golf tournament, this year we inaugurated a bridge and tennis tournament. Their success has assured that they will be planned for future reunions. Now if Charlie Mott will come out, we could have a chess tournament.

HONORS

President Joe Healy of the Flying Tiger Line announced at the AVG banquet that the next two Boeing 747 aircraft to be delivered to the company would be named after Bob Prescott and Tom Haywood, in memory of their part in the founding of the company.

THE ELBOW BENDERS LINE UP AT THE STEAK FRY
July 2, 1979

Dear Rossi,

Just received your letter of June 28. Thanks.

Please read the following to our Tigers at their reunion—

I'm with you all the way in spirit if not in body—
all of you to me represent the finest and most valued friends anyone could have——God Bless——

"Pappy" Paxton
AVG/CNAC AIRMANSHIP AWARD

The AVG/CNAC Associations presented a joint AIRMANSHIP AWARD to Capt. Kim Chang Ryu, for his outstanding display of airmanship in April, 1978. Capt. Kim safely crash landed his Boeing 707, in the dead of night, on a frozen lake, after being attacked and damaged by Soviet MiG fighter planes. This was accomplished without passengers or crew sustaining any deaths or injuries beyond those inflicted by the fighter attack.

The following is Captain Kim's speech on accepting the plaque:

Mr. Rossi, Mr. Watson, Mr. Caniff, Members of the American Volunteer Group and the China National Aviation Corporation, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much for this great honor. At the time, I did not think of myself as an airline pilot, but simply as a man who was "skating on thin ice". For many years I wondered what that American expression meant. Now I know... Because I "skated on thin ice" in a Boeing 707!

I must admit to my fears at the time. And I prayed to God. And I thank God that my prayer was answered and my passengers and crew were able to escape disaster.

To be recognized by this group is an even greater honor than you may know. I have admiration for the courage and good deeds of the men of the AVG and CNAC. It is with humility that I accept this award from you. To be honored is good. To be honored by heroes is truly much greater. Thank you very much.

1980 MINI - REUNION

This is a reminder for those who are planning to attend, that next year's mini-reunion will be held at the Ojai Valley Inn on July 7-9. There are no planned programs, and all reservations are made on an individual basis. There are no restrictions on guests. Just make your reservations while there is still space. Ojai Valley Inn, Ojai, Ca. 93023.

MILTON CANIFF

Palm Springs
10 July 79

Dick:

It was really great!
Not only the dinner, the "trophy," and the printed program, but the warmth of our reception by the troops—sent Bunny and me back to Palm Springs in a haze of euphoria.

I hope everyone realizes how much we both were by the dimension of the occasion. It is for certain sure that we shall never forget it—and especially the heavy part you and Lydia played.

Warm regards, Milton
Dick=

It was really great!
— Not only the dinner, the 'trophy' and the printed program, but the warmth of our reception by the troops—sent Bunny and me back to Palm Springs in a haze of euphoria.

I hope everyone realized how moved we both were by the dimension of the occasion. It is for certain sure that we shall never forget it — and especially the heavy part you and Lydia played.

Warm regards, Milton
NEW ADDRESSES

We want to thank Larry Pistole for coming up with addresses for two of our missing members. They are:
Edward J. Harris
P.O. Box 287
Clifton Forge, Va. 24422

Charles V. Misenseheimer
780 Willow Ct.
Marco Island, Fl. 33937

Now, if he can only get his uncle, Herb Pistole, to attend the next reunion, we will award him a gold star.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The AVG and CNAC Associations want to repeat their thanks to those who contributed to the success of our reunion. We appreciate the generous interest of the Boeing Commercial Airplane Co., the Flying Tiger Line, Johnson & Higgins, and Pratt & Whitney Aircraft Co.

We also thank young Joe Rosbert for designing and preparing the program cover, and Milton Caniff for the artwork, inside the program.

We join "Doc" Richards in thanking Don Caster for the use of his cannon these past several reunions, and Steve Kustay for the gun powder. It's a blast.

ELECTIONS - AVG

The AVG Association elected the following corporate officers:
John R. Ross---President
"Red" Petach Hanks---Vice President
David L. Hill------Vice President
Charles H. Older---Vice President
Donald Rodewald----Secretary
Robert M. Smith----Treasurer

ELECTIONS - CNAC

The CNAC Association elected the following officers:
Fletcher Hanks---President
William Maher------Vice President
Robert Sherwood------Vice President & Counselor
Henry J. Hardin——Vice President & East Coast
Walter Roncaglione---Secretary
Robert Rengo--------Treasurer

Full business meeting reports will be sent to the membership from the respective secretaries.

BILL McDONALD & JOE MICHELS

We missed Bill and Peggy McDonald at the reunion this year. They were amongst our most salty regulars in attendance. Mac had a severe stroke shortly before the reunion, and had to cancel his reservation. He is at home in Birmingham recuperating. He is still in serious condition, and would appreciate hearing from his old China friends. We can not make him well, but we can cheer him up.

Joe Michiels is still holding his own in his battle with cancer. He has been making a great stand. He came over to Ojai and joined the gang for a visit. Joe has not lost any of his sense of humor. He can brighten up any gathering he attends.

C. Y. Gee
1307-B Yesler St.
Seattle, Wa. 98122

Gale E. McCallister
143 Lewis, M.H.P.
Marysville Ohio 43040

John M. Williams
4290 4th Ave., Apt. 132
San Diego, Ca. 92103

CNAC ADDRESS CHANGES

Gen Genson
11922 Rialto St.
Sun Valley, Ca. 91352

Guy Harden, Jr.
The Manor House
Old Bosham/Chichester
West Sussex, PO 188 Hs. UK

James Maupin
26 Rockinghorse Road
Rancho Palos Verdes, Ca. 90274

Mrs. Robert Prescott
23024 Saddleback Road
Topanga, Ca. 90290

Jack Reid
10435 Clifton Blvd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44102

Mrs. Helen J. Shapard
1223 Trotwood Ave.
Columbia, Tenn. 38401

Mrs. C. L. Shandy
2401 Vista Oaks Circle
Palm Bay, Florida 32905
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Rosemary & Glenn