

# ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONALE



**1 March 2011 Newsletter**  
**52d Edition**

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## FINAL FLIGHT



The Roadrunners received devastating news this month that Suzi Amundson Rogers, age 53, suffered a fatal aneurism. Suzi was the daughter of Col. Maynard "AM" Amundson, founder of Roadrunners Internationale and Deputy Commander of the 1129th Special Activities Squadron at Groom Lake during CIA Project OXCART and Kadena during the operational phase codenamed Operation BLACKSHIELD. The demise of Suzi hits the Roadrunner family especially hard as she and her husband, Lt. Col. Jack Rogers, also worked at Groom Lake and remained close to Roadrunners Slip Slater - 1129th commander, Roger Anderson with the 1129th, and RI President TD Barnes with Special Projects at Groom Lake whose daughter worked with Suzi. Barnes reports recently contacting Suzi, residing in San Antonio, Texas, concerning the Roadrunner reunion this October where honoring her father and 1129th commanders BGen Robert Holbury and Col. Hugh Slater is the theme. Suzi is survived by two sons, four brothers, and a sister. Services will most likely be conducted at the Boulder City, Nevada Veterans Cemetery at a date to be announced on the Roadrunner website along with other details as they become available.

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### Final Flight of Hervey Stockman, First Pilot to Fly a Spy Plane over Leningrad



Hervey Stockman passed away today, leaving behind a legacy as the first man to pilot a dedicated spy plane in Soviet airspace over Leningrad. On 10 Jul 1956 Harvey Stockman flew an operational U-2 mission in Art #347 (#6680). Taking the Lockheed U-2 into Communist territory in the middle of the Cold War, Stockman was able to collect data on the USSR while evading MiGs trying to intercept him. Stockman also happened to be the uncle of Giz reader Willy Pell, who has graciously shared some personal anecdotes told to him by Stockman.

According to the CIA, Stockman began his career flying combat missions as an Air Force pilot in World War II. After the war he went to school for industrial design and became an automotive designer for GM. But after the Cold War ramped up in the 50s, Stockman was recalled back to the Air Force just as Lockheed was finishing up work on the first purpose-built spy plane, the U-2.

The U-2, of course, is an aircraft capable of flying at an altitude of up to 70,000 feet while maintaining subsonic speeds. It can embark on missions lasting over eight hours. However, because of its lightweight and glider-esque design, the U-2 is extremely difficult to pilot. Because of his experience flying fighter planes (more than 65 missions), the Air Force considered Stockman a suitable candidate to carry out the first U-2 mission in Soviet territory. When Stockman embarked from West Germany on July 4, 1956, he took the U-2 over the Belarus border, passing through Poland and East Germany in the process. Once in Belarus, Stockman piloted the plane over bomber bases and naval shipyards in Minsk and Leningrad before turning the plane around and

heading back to safe skies. In the process, the Soviets were able to track Stockman, but the MiG fighters were not able to locate and intercept the U-2.

The first U2 flight took place on the 4th of July. The plane bore no U.S. markings or identification, and Hervey had orders to eat a cyanide pill if he had to eject. The Russians had him on radar the whole length of the Soviet Union but the U-2 was too high to hit. When he landed, his fuel tank leaked fuel all over the runway. The runway crew tried to drag him out of the plane before it caught fire and he would not move until he filled out his flight log. "I just flew the length of the Soviet Union," he said, "I'm not concerned about a leaky fuel tank."

After carrying out multiple U-2 missions between 1956 and 1958, Stockman went back to combat missions for the Air Force. In 1967, Stockman ejected from his F-4 Phantom fighter jet while flying over North Vietnam. Subsequently, he remained a prisoner for nearly 6 years. According to Pell, he was held in solitary confinement for 18 months and made friends with John McCain:

He was tortured every day by a guy they named, "Big Ug". Since he was the commanding officer, he was tortured the most. For 18 months, he lived in solitary confinement and as he says, "lost his humanity". Eventually they placed him back in a normal cell and some young private nursed him back to life. To remember how to read and write they made books out of t-shirts and underwear. To entertain the men he had contests to see which pilot had the highest ejection, the lowest ejection, the fastest ejection, and the slowest ejection. They communicated these stats through Morse code on the plumbing. When he got back to the states, he held no grudge against the Vietnamese. He said something like, "It was a war, what do you expect?" I think the only person he despised was Jane Fonda. After release from the prison camp, he finished out his military career working for NATO and the Air Force before retiring in 1978 with the distinction of Colonel. Meanwhile, the CIA used the Lockheed U-2 in missions until the mid-70s and is still in use by the Air Force today.

Last month Hervey's memories of Groom Lake were posted at: [http://area51specialprojects.com/area51sp\\_blog/?p=195#](http://area51specialprojects.com/area51sp_blog/?p=195#)  
Rest in peace, Hervey Stockman.



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### **FEEDBACK The TAC Recce News reports:**

We were saddened to hear that Hervey Stockman passed away today, one day short of his 89th birthday. He was born Feb 23, 1922. His wife, Sally, preceded him in death. Hervey Studdiford Stockman was the pilot of a F4C, 64-0786, from the 390 TFS, 366 TFW, Da Nang SVN when downed over NVN on 6/11/67. His back seater was Ron Webb. He and Ron were released 3/4/73 from Hanoi during Operation Homecoming.

Hervey was the CO of the 366th TFW when he and another F4C piloted by Maj. Donald Martin Klemm and 1LT. Robert Harvey Pearson collided at 14,000 feet about 10 miles northeast of Kep during a MigCAP mission. Klemm and Pearson were KIA. Hervey was flying his 310th combat mission.

During the Second World War Lt Col Stockman had flown P-51 Mustangs from England with the Eighth Air Force while Capt Webb had been a navigator in KB-50 tankers in the early 1960s. Hervey was a P-51 pilot in WW II, 504 FS. WW II missions 68.

Hervey was one of the first six pilots trained to fly the high-altitude reconnaissance craft, the U-2 for the CIA.

Carmine Vito is the only U-2 pilot to fly directly over Moscow. His flight was the third operational flight over potentially hostile territory, or what the pilots called "hot" flights. Carl Overstreet flew the first such flight of the U-2 on 20 June 1956. The mission covered Poland and East Germany. Then Hervey Stockman flew over Soviet territory on 4 July, going as far north as Leningrad to photograph naval shipyards and then west to the Baltic States to cover jet bomber bases. Marty Knutson, Glen Dunaway, and Jake Kratt flew the fourth, fifth, and sixth missions. All were successful. Vito died 8-27-03.

—Thanks to Buffy Scheaffer [kopreh@gmail.com](mailto:kopreh@gmail.com)

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## FEEDBACK

I got to know Hervey Stockman and his wife following his release from the Hanoi Hilton. In August 1973, we had the Real reunion of the Red River Valley Fighter Pilot's Association (River Rats) in Las Vegas. It was attended by most of the just released POWs and hosted by President Nixon's Chief of Staff, General Alexander Haig who rang the River Rat's bell...a sign that the POWs were now home and war was officially over for



fighter pilots. Over 3,000 attended.

I met Hervey and his wife standing in the buffet line with my wife on the first night of the reunion, during the "flight suit party" at the convention center.

Hervey was dressed in a vertical brown and white striped shirt which looked odd and out of place. I soon learned that this was his POW shirt that he had left with from the Hanoi Hilton just five months earlier. It was clear that Hervey was still recovering from the years of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of his captors, and his wife was lovingly taking care of him all night. After a fascinating dinner together talking about his POW experience in North Vietnam, and the Christmas bombing campaign I took part in and which led to his release, we left at a very early hour for the Sands hotel where we were both staying. We arrived at the casino coffee shop at 2 AM with few

other people there at that hour seated under an opulent crystal chandelier.

I asked Hervey what he wanted for a nightcap and he didn't hesitate: a big Banana Split he said. So I pulled the manager aside and told him who Hervey was and why we were in town and asked him to make a BIG Banana Split, which he soon delivered...in a huge punchbowl with 4 spoons. When it arrived the whole coffee shop staff showed up to sing a belated happy birthday. Hervey just sat there quietly in his tattered POW shirt, under the crystal chandelier, spoon poised, smiling through the tears streaming down his face. All Hervey could say was that he had thought of that moment for six long years in captivity. The contrasts between the over-the-top abundance of Las Vegas and the austerity of Hanoi Hilton were overwhelming for Hervey and it was clear that his transition back to what we considered normal American life was not yet complete. It was a moving moment that I have not forgotten these many years.

As the famous line goes from one of my all-time favorite movies, "The Bridges at Toko-Ri", "Where do we get such men?"

May God take him gently in his arms...

CDR Allan Palmer, USN (Ret)

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## FEEDBACK KLAS TV Chief Investigative Reporter George Knapp - Famed Cold War Pilot Dies

**LAS VEGAS** -- One of the most celebrated pilots to ever train in secrecy at Nevada's Area 51 military base has flown his last mission. Harvey Stockman died Thursday. Stockman was the very first American to pilot a spy plane across the USSR. It happened in July 1956 when he zipped across Russia aboard a U-2, the so-called Dragon Lady, which was tested and developed out at Groom Lake. In fact, the establishment of facilities within Area 51 created a place to house the top secret U-2 project. His friend and fellow Groom Lake veteran T.D. Barnes wrote a more comprehensive bio, [which can be read here](#).



Webmaster note: George also posted a blog on the Las Vegas City Life publication where our readers can post comments about Hervey. <http://blogs.lasvegascitylife.com/uncategorized/2011/02/24/knappster-area-51-trained-spy-plane-pilot-dies/>  
Comments can also be posted on our Roadrunner Blog under February 2011 News - [http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/roadrunner\\_blog/?p=216](http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/roadrunner_blog/?p=216)

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**FEEDBACK** Thank you Mike Sonders and everyone at the Indy transponder for your excellent coverage of our loss of Hervey Stockman, an icon of aviation. We also thank you and Jeff Lee at LiveAirShowTV for your radio coverage.

<http://indytransponder.blogspot.com/2011/02/final-flight-of-hervey-stockman-first.html>  
Mike Souders <http://indyaeroclub.org> <http://indytransponder.com>

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**FEEDBACK**

Carl and I extend our condolences to the Stockman family for the loss of this icon of Cold War history. Hervey was the oldest of the six original U-2 pilots. Hervey, Marty Knutson, Glenn Dunaway, Jake Kratt, Carl Overstreet, and Carmine Vito. As a POW, Hervey paid a heavy price for his service to his country. We will miss him. Liz Overstreet

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LEGACIES AND HISTORY by: T.D. Barnes

This past month was Black History Month, an annual celebration of achievements by black Americans, and a time for recognizing the central role of African Americans in U.S. history. The event grew out of “Negro History Week”, the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially



designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history. While preparing for a speech in Washington, my friend and fellow Roadrunner member Mark Wiggins asked me about African-Americans in Project Oxcart. As my fellow



Roadrunners know, few persons of color participated in the project. I do not know why we had so few and will not venture into any speculation about that. However, Mark’s request for information on our African-American brothers in the program and at Groom Lake in general was to credit the

African-American historical contribution to the project. I thought about this a bit and realized that the one name that came to mind not only made history for African-Americans, he made history for Project OXCART, and many other projects that followed that we may never know about. Think for a moment that you are in a filled room containing all the participants of secret projects at Area 51 and ask them to name someone they remember from their time at the Area. After tallying all the names, you find one name that comes up from each of these projects. That name will not be the Skunkworks icon Kelly Johnson, any of the base commanders, pilots, and engineers such as Dr. Bob Abernethy who invented the J-58 engine, Werner Weiss or any other CIA boss. The most historically known



person at Area 51 is Murphy Green, who ran the mess hall. Mention his name to your room of Area 51 veterans and the stories will flow, many of them mimicking the voice of Murphy as he scolds some colonel or engineer for violating one of his rules. In his mess hall, rank or position carried no weight. Most of you have probably seen the Seinfeld TV series about the Soup Nazi. That is how Murphy commanded his mess hall. We all loved Murphy and I wish everyone would share with us his or her experiences with Murphy. I would love to publish a bio of Murphy to record his contribution to Cold War legacies. This lack of knowledge about such an icon of history sets the tone for what is to follow in this newsletter.

Since declassification, we have covered stories about the A-12 and YF-12, and very recently Charlie Trapp's helicopters, but one vital aerial asset we have neglected. I am referring to the Cessna 210 (Call sign: 908Yankee) used for medical evacuation (medivac) and early morning security check of the perimeter of the Ranch. During Project

Tagboard, the launching of the D-21 drone off a Mach-3 mothership, CIA A-12 pilot Frank Murray, who was also IP for the Cessna 210 flew the plane to its upper altitude limits of 24,000 feet to video record the C-130 MARS-equipped (Mid-Air Retrieval System) recovery of the film ejected by the drone. In



spite of all these great accomplishments of 210, its legacy focuses on one little flight – a flight where it touched down and spent an evening at the cathouse at Pahrump, Nevada. Typical of any CIA Groom Lake mission, this one has a cover story. According to Frank Murray, a sheep dipped CIA pilot, Roger Andersen, an operations officer for the 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS at Groom Lake, and one of the flight surgeons, they were seeking a lost Republic F-105 Thunderchief from Nellis AFB. According to them they located the crash site, confirmed the pilot perished in the crash, and returned to the cathouse for a steak. That is their story and they are sticking to it. Curious whatever happened to our 210, Pete Merlin recently traced the Cessna 210D (N3908Y) to its final owner. While being flown by

the Boeing Employees Flying Association in Seattle, Washington a gear-up landing in 1997 damaged the plane beyond repair. It ended up sold as scrap. *During the interviews of my schmoozing friends, Andersen and Murray, for this article, they tried to sidetrack the issue with*



*some cock and bull story about another of the A-12 pilots performing a wheels-up landing with the 210 at Groom Lake. After hearing the “we just sampled the steak” cathouse story of these former aficionados of the world’s oldest profession, one can’t put much credence in anything these gormandizing habitués of the Louvre of Libido said to change the subject. Neither of them would comment on U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s efforts last week to either abolish the legal hooker activity or impose a tax on the working*



*ladies, but off the record they fearfully speculated taxing and unionizing such an activity might spread into American households to pay for Obamacare. Andersen suggested a name for such a tax and union but we won’t go there. Next month we will put Slip Slater back in the barrel to pick on.*

## THE F-101 VOODOOS OF GROOM LAKE AND KADENA



We have covered the A-12s, Cessna 210, helicopters, and continuing with our efforts to tell the untold stories of Project OXCART and Operation BLACKSHIELD, we are desperately seeking information regarding the Air Force support F-101 planes and their crews. We also need to hear from you enlisted men about your participation and experiences. We need the names of the crew chiefs of each plane, where they flew, the A-12 flights they supported as chase planes, stories about the two that crashed and pilots Simon and King who perished. We need to know which F-101s deployed to Kadena. As we recall, we always had two on hand to support the Blackshield A-12 sorties, so what was the tail number of the replacement for the one lost in the Walt King crash? Who were the F-101 pilots in Kadena?

These are examples of information we need to know so we can cover that part of the project. Many enlisted men in the photo do not have bios telling of their contribution to the program. Nor do we have any information on Lt. Col. Weldon King killed in the F-101 crash at Kadena. Come on guys and/or family, let get the stories told. To refresh some memories, we are listing these tail numbers identifying the planes to the best we can. Please correct us of any errors and provide what you can to fill in the gaps about the planes as well as the support personnel.

1. F-101B 56- 252
2. F-101B 56- 266
3. F-101B 56- 272 (lost at Kadena, June 1, 1967)
4. F-101B 56- 281
5. F-101B 56- 286 (lost at Groom Lake, September 27, 1967)
6. F-101B 56- 291
7. F-101B 58-0340 (tail number 80340 until sometime in 1968 and then changed to 0-80340).
8. F-101F \_\_ - 454

NOTE 1: We believe that this Voodoo may have been operated at Kadena in late August 1967, and again (or still) in late January 1968, possibly flown both months by Ray Schrecengost. However, we do not have either arrival or departure dates at Kadena either for Ray or for the 1129th SAS F-101B Voodoo 58-0340) & F-101F 59-0454

\*NOTE 2: There are three Voodoos (F-101Bs 56-0252, 56-0291, and 58-0340), which we suspect operated at Kadena circa 1967-1968, but we have found neither documentation nor photos to verify this suspicion. We would also appreciate any detail information, such as both meaning and context on the Mission Symbol Codes used on AF Form-5 records about the 1129th SAS Voodoo flights (e., "O-5", "O-6", etc).

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*After the F-101 Voodoo research we plan to tackle the people stories and undocumented details of CIA Project Palladium and EG&G stealth phases of Project OXCART before and during the flight test and operational phases. Dr. Bud Wheelon, Dr. Gene Poteat, Dr. Robarge, Jim Freedman, Jules Kabat, Dave Haen, Denise Haen, Wayne Pendleton, T.D. Barnes – sharpen your pencils and start writing. All the rest of you support people might as well follow suit. We want people stories about the design, construction, ECM, fuels, mission planning (Pizzo has published some on this), mess hall, lodging, security, communications, control tower, and all the other support that we don't know about including the Seven Sisters radar coverage that few of you probably ever heard of. We have a lot of history to cover in a short time so let us get it done. Do not worry about format, editing, or spelling. We will take care of that as we incorporate your input into the overall finished product that will go down in history. One last thing – when the project closed shop all documents,*

*photos, etc. were gathered up and reportedly placed in the Air Force archives at Norton A.F.B. We need help locating and retrieving all of this historic material as well.*

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**FEEDBACK:** Last month we displayed a bit of Vegas flesh to entice our members to attend the reunion in October and are happy to report a very favorable response. We thank all of you who checked in to enable the reunion chairman and committee organize the event, HOWEVER – we don't see how we can oblige the four of you who asked that we call it a business trip rather than a reunion so you could leave the better half at home. And for Pete's sake, fellows, the two of you wanting us to cut TDY orders to Nellis AFB for you that week must be out of your minds. Moreover, the three of you in these groups submitting your name for consideration for being the next RI honcho we have one word. No! You must think you are in a union. With your obvious lack of ethics, you should consider running for public office rather than in RI.



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**FEEDBACK:** I noticed there had been an article about ham radio operators. My father (W0BBV) and myself (KN6CQ) both got the bug in our youth. As a teen, my dad made money by putting up towers for hams. He once spoke about having QSOs while flying the U-2! We had a weekly schedule for many years, which attracted other folks to the conversation. He too operated a KWM-2A. Eric Knutson

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**FEEDBACK:** Pride in America, It is with great pride that I share with all of you this email I just received. An engineer and friend of mine who was also my next-door neighbor in Florida worked on the engines for the SR-71 (Blackbird) and other super spy aircraft. The SR-71 still holds the air speed records today. I wrote a story about this when all of the "Roadrunners" were released from their silenced lips about what they did back in those days. This whole event along with some very intimate stories about their individual missions was finally told to the world here in Las Vegas a few years ago. It is significant to know that this was all done well before any CNC machines came into being and slide rules were the computer at hand. Their silence was a sworn contractual agreement with severe penalties for anyone that broke it and that includes telling their own wives about what they were doing. I have included that story for you here for some background material. But this email tonight (down below) is the cherry on top of the pie that finally, gives much credit to some on the project, but really, it is meant for all that took part in it. Enjoy. Richard Williams



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**FEEDBACK:** I just wanted to let you know that I enjoyed the Archangel video released by the CIA. They did a great job with a short clip. I also wanted to let you know that Marti & I have put the October 2011 reunion on our "to do" list as high priority this year. I hope we will not be prevented from attending as we were in '09. So, we hope to see you in October! Finally, shouldn't have been surprised to learn (in the January newsletter) that so many full members of RRI were ham radio operators. It has been my experience that wherever there are airplanes, there are also hams! I wonder if the same holds true with Associate Members. I can name one RRI Associate Member who is a ham: Me. I've been a ham since 1956. My call sign is K8DMZ and I hold an Extra Class license. I'm HF and VHF/UHF capable, but am usually found on the 2-meter or 440 repeater bands. I hope to become more active on the HF bands this spring. I have three HF rigs, but I normally use an Omni VI on 40, 20, 15, or 10 meters. I prefer SSB, but can clip along fairly well on CW when the mood strikes. Marti has been a ham since 1979, and holds a General Class license. She is usually found on 2-meters. Two of our three daughters and their husbands are also hams. It is still cold and snowy here in Southwestern Ohio, but we're hoping for the February thaw to begin this weekend. That will make the Sugar Maples "run" and make for a good maple syrup season. Cheers and 73 for now,  
Joe Ventolo



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**FEEDBACK:** Just a note to let you know that the Turkey Trotter Mugs he refers to were purchased by almost all of the Lockheed maintenance people. I am not sure but I think it was one of those maintenance folks was the one that ordered them for all who wanted them in the Det. I still have



mine proudly displayed in my den. Thanks for all the work you do for us. Frank "Jr" Dewar

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## YO ROADRUNNERS – PLEASE SEND US SOME FEEDBACK ON THIS FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

To: The Road Runners Internationale and members thereof

Comment 1: I used to work for the Navy at Point Mugu CA. We helped test out the so-called stealth ship (Sea Shadow) back in the early 80s. I enjoyed your web site a lot. Good stuff! Nice to see all of you patriotic Americans finally get the recognition you richly deserve. You guys are among my greatest heroes, along with the astronauts in the Gemini and Apollo programs NASA ran back in the 1960s.

Comment 2: I think Lockheed's Kelly Johnson really had a cruel sense of humor when he named Groom Lake the "Paradise Ranch" and someone else named it "Water Town".

Comment 3: Regarding the comments in the "Skunk Works" book that Groom Lake was "an ideal test site", the guy who said that must have been totally brain dead!! Finding a place next to the nuclear testing site (down wind no less) was IDIOTIC in the extreme!!! That, in my mind, is the WORST location in the USA to test anything, including the U2 and F117. Totally insane!!!

Question 1: How high was the radiation level at Groom Lake, back in the 1950 to 1965 time frame?

Question 2: You guys worked right next door to the most radioactive spot on earth, outside of the USSR; the AEC/DOE National Test Site for the nuclear bomb testing. Did you guys have to carry Geiger counters everywhere you went??? What about radiation badges (dosimeters)???

Question 3: How many at Groom Lake have died from radiation exposure???

God bless you all and thanks a bunch for what you did for our nation.

JOHN JAY, Vietnam Vet. (Navy), Former federal employee (retired 1999), Oxnard, CA

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### Response by RI President

*Hi, John. Thank you for a most interesting inquiry. I am including it in our monthly newsletter to obtain feedback from our Roadrunner membership that I will pass on to you. You have touched on things in which we have had concerns and today marvel at the consequences. As you know we spent Monday thru Friday at the Groom Lake facility and that there were atomic tests within 9 miles of our facilities. I am going to provide you with answers, which at this point are my own observations and opinions. I will also post this response on the newsletter to fuel other comments. It will be interesting to see if the rest of the Roadrunners have the same or similar opinions.*

*We were always amused at the name Kelly Johnson chose for the facility. Actually, we did not talk about the place, so the name never was an issue. None of our families or friends had a clue where we worked or what we did until 2007 when the CIA declassified our identities. The Watertown name used earlier by the U-2 guys was one chosen by the CIA Director who was from a town named Watertown. Everything back then was code or pseudo names, acronyms, and everything had a cover story, so we never gave names a second thought. Pilots were drivers, the planes were articles, when referring to a pilot or plane in flight, it was the pilot's Dutch number (Dutch 11, Dutch 20, Dutch 23, etc.).*

*Responding to Comment 3, the criteria back in the 1950s was the need for a test facility that provided security and deniability. The AEC Atomic Proving Grounds provided both. At the time, Atomic testing was new and the downwind dangers not fully realized. Radiation monitors existed throughout the range and we wore dosimeters the same as the workers on the atomic side. The AEC would coordinate with CIA and DOD to evacuate the personnel until the fallout cloud had passed, at which time the workers would return, dust off the fallout, evaluate structure damage, and go back to work. Our group has stayed together all these years, both by reunions, mail and now e-mail, Facebook and all the other social means, so we could well be an example or the best collection of down winders ever. In spite of everything, many of the Roadrunner participants are in their 80's and have never experienced any known effects from the years they worked at Groom Lake. Lockheed test pilot Lou Schalk died of leukemia, but considering he probably spent less time at the Area than just about*



anyone, we have never contributed his death to his work at Groom Lake. I do not expect we will learn that anyone attributes a death to our time at Groom Lake. I have never heard any of our people say other than their time at Groom Lake being the best experience of their life. As I said, it is going to be interesting to hear other opinions from those who were there or are a descendent of someone who was.

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The following is an example of what we do on a daily basis. Isn't the Internet and e-mail great?? This is also a great example of why we stay on your six to publish your bio and stories.

I am the daughter in law of Emil "Moe" Kuchera who also worked on the J 58. Unfortunately, Moe passed away in 2004. I've been trying to get some research on the development team for his grandchildren. I was wondering if you have any info, books, sites, etc that might contain info on the team that worked on this amazing engine. Thank you, Claire Kuchera

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### Response by RI President

Claire, for starters go to this link and do a search using the keyword J-58.

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/search.html> You should see a number of links we have on the website of personnel and information. I am going to copy your message to one of our Pratt & Whitney engineers and he can provide you with names and addresses of others on the project that are still with us. If he is unable to do so, I will compile a list of contacts for you, but I imagine Bob can do a better job than I. Get back to me on how you make out and if you need more I'll research a list of books that talk about the J-58. A lot of the PW guys are still in constant contact and will be glad to relate their personal experiences with Moe. TD

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### Response by Roadrunner Bob Davenport

Claire,

I just got this note from TD Barnes about the research that you are doing for Moe's grandchildren, I think that is a great thing for you to do for them.

First, I hired into PWA in East Hartford in the summer of 1957 and was assigned to the J-75 Engine program. Moe was also in the same office that I was assigned, X-Test 4, working on the J-75. Although I wasn't working for Moe in his senior position, I got to know him and have many good memories of him in my early days. He had a great sense of humor and was a good and hard working engineer and mentor for me at that time. I transferred down to FRDC in early 1958 on the J-58 program and although I don't remember when Moe went down to Florida, it wasn't much later or earlier, so I got to know him better there for the next 9 years. I never worked directly for Moe, but since the Test Engineering group wasn't that large at that time we all got to know each other very well. We had a very close relationship with all of the others in that Engineering group and most of us were in pretty large car-pools together too. Whenever raises or promotions came around we almost always scheduled a beer party to celebrate and the ones that were promoted or given raises had to buy.



At least once a week about 15 or 20 of us PWA guys that lived in the North Palm Beach area got together over by the water tower off of Lighthouse Dr. to play volleyball at nite. Moe was a regular on that group so I used to be with him for several hours on those evenings. Of course, that made us thirsty so we often ended up at the 19th Hole Bar over on US1 in Lake Park for refreshment. Moe was a very good athlete and if you ever had to play across from him on the net, you better watch out for his "spikes" because he could disable you as he was so tall and strong. Moe used to talk about the college that he went to and he laughingly called it the "Tower of Ignorance" and I can't remember which school it was but it was in Pennsylvania as I recall and the whole campus was in a big building.

I left PWA in late 1967 so lost contact with Moe but always thought about him often and sorry now that I didn't try harder to keep in touch with him because he was a great person to have known.

The information that TD sent you has a lot of information about the programs that the J-58 was used on that were all developed by the same Engineering Team of which a lot of us participated and are to this day extremely proud to have been a part of aviation history! If there is anything that I can do to help out with your research endeavor please let me know. I don't know where you live now but there are many in the Florida area still that I know could help you fill in any blanks that you might have. Some people on the J-58 Engine Team that knew Moe much longer than I did that I would recommend you contact would be Paul Wilson, Jim Moore, Jim Gill, Joe Daley, Jack McDermott, Buck Martin, as well as those that they might recommend that you talk to. I am copying those that I have e-mail addresses for so they know of your project and they can respond or you could contact them directly and I'm sure they would all welcome the chance to help since we all have many good memories of Moe.

Good Luck on your project and if you don't mind, I would appreciate a copy of your research when you finish it.

Thanks,  
Bob Davenport

\* \* \*

When it comes to socializing, it does not get better than this gathering of the Pratt & Whitney Roadrunners at our last RI reunion. Pictured here: L - R are: John Dorotik, Ralph Jacobs, Tom Weigel, Bob Davenport, and John Evans




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Claire,

As you know, Mo was my best friend and I still miss him. He loved to have lunch with our Pratt & Whitney "boys" as he referred to them. Whenever he asked me, I would arrange a luncheon, usually at what was Duffy's and is now the Paradise Well in Lake Park on A1A next to the railroad tracks. The luncheons go on to this day.



I could write a book about Mo. He was with Patton across Europe in WWII but would never talk about it. He was a sergeant over an anti-aircraft battery. Somewhere I saw a picture of him with the battery but I don't remember where.

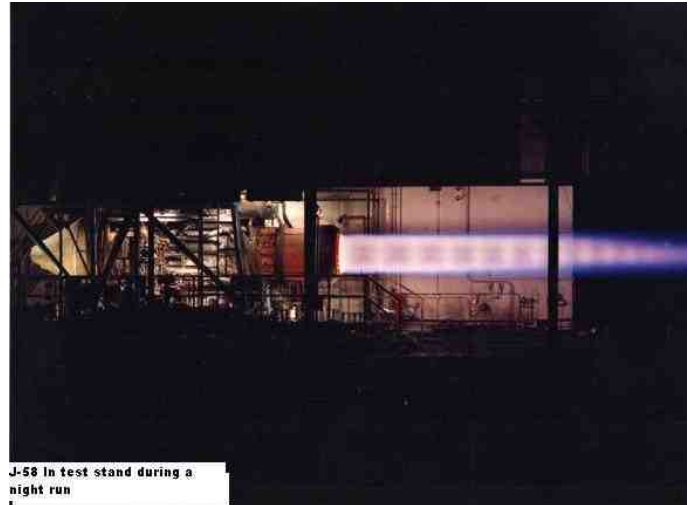
When Mo was a young man just back from WWII, he lived in a small town north of Pittsburgh. One night in a bar with friends, he said he thought he would run for mayor. A few minutes later two big thugs arrived to change his mind. The political machine did not approve. So Mo said, "if I can't run for mayor, what can I run for?" The thugs came back and said, you can run for county school superintendent. Mo ran and won...

In 1955-57, I was in the Pratt & Whitney J75 Performance Group in East Hartford, Connecticut. One day a senior project engineer arrived at my bosses' desk demanding a TSFC [thrust specific fuel consumption curve] for the new redesigned J75 engine. Norm Cotter, my boss, called me over as I was following the engine test. I told him that the engine had not run yet so we had no curve. The project engineer said there were three Admirals in the president's office and they wanted a curve. So Norm said to me, draw a TSFC curve. I did, he looked at it and said it was too high. I should lower it to show better performance. I said, how much and he said about a quarter of an inch. I made the new fictitious plot and he made the project engineer promise to make a copy before he showed it to the Admirals. He didn't make a copy and the Admirals took the plot.



Meanwhile Mo called me that he was about to run the engine in the test cell. I told the project engineer and he said he would bring the Admirals to the test cell. The test cells were U shaped, about sixty feet high. Air came down one side, went through the engine in the bottom of the U and exhausted up the other side. There were two little windows in the concrete blockhouse looking down on the engine. I joined Mo at one the windows with the Admirals looking down on the engine from the other window. Mo whispered to me, Design says there may be a natural frequency problem with compressor blades around 7,000 RPM so he was to accelerate through that region. So, Mo told the test conductor to jam the throttle up to 9000 RPM. The engine blew up, turbine disks racing around the walls, big fire in the cell. The admirals left and requested six more copies the next day. They had the original and only copy! Cotter and I had fun trying to recreate the lost plot.

In October 1958, Mo and I had been transferred to the new Florida test center, [FRDC]. I conceived the J58 engine and submitted a patent disclosure. It took me 7 months to convince my boss, Norm Cotter, that it would work. He took me to Bill Brown, our engineering manager to explain the concept. Bill called Kelly Johnson, the genius at Lockheed, and work began on designing and testing the new engine. Meanwhile Kelly was designing the Blackbird aircraft for the engine. Mo was one of the senior test engineers. To make the engine reliable, we had to run endurance testing on it at Mach 3+ conditions. To simulate the high inlet temperatures Mo and Paul Wilson conceived a test stand with a J75 engine exhausting into the J58 with some sea level air to cool to the correct temperatures. It ran for months that way.



The picture of Duffy's lunch was taken at Duffy's in Jupiter. Mo was in the Jupiter Hospital near the end, so I arranged a luncheon for him with the PW boys. It may be the last picture taken of Mo. The other picture is on my patio eating oysters which Mo loved....so do I.

In 1956 in East Hartford, I had an engineering aide, Joe. It was illegal in those days to sneak to the cafeteria for coffee. So mid-morning every day, Joe would say to me, "we better go see Mo Kuchera". I thought this was code for "let's go get coffee". It went on this way for months. Then one day in the cafeteria, here comes this big guy. Joe says to me, "you know Mo Kuchera, Bob, right?" I about fell off my chair.

Years later Mo was employed by PW GG4 stationary powerplants to visit facilities that used them around the world. When he was going to Israel, we asked him if he would get us two leather hassocks. He did and they are in our living room. When he was in Israel on the Pratt & Whitney GG4 powerplants, he took on a drive up the mountain near Syria, which is where the next war will start. Golan?? Off course this is a highly secured area guarded by Syria on the other side...Mo was met near the top by Israel security....what are you doing here?? I think he said he just wanted to see the view!!!

When Sally and I went off to Australia, a neighbor asked me to buy him an Australian Hat. I did, but he didn't like the hat. Mo liked the hat so I gave it to him. Somehow, he spilled oil on it and spent months having it cleaned. I still have the hat. You are welcome to it if you would like it.

I played volleyball with Mo in North Palm Beach for one game. First, he slammed the ball on my head and knocked me out. When I came too, he came down on my foot. That was enough for me.

When he wound up in the Jupiter Hospital, I visited him every day. There was a woman in Jupiter that somehow knew Mo and she visited him daily. I don't know her name. I don't think she was a girlfriend. I arranged his last

luncheon with the boys at the Jupiter Duffy's. See picture.

Mo was a great guy, a real gentleman. He never used a foul language. He was a joy to be with. If you write a book about Mo, I would love a copy. Best regards, Bob

Dr. Robert B. Abernethy

[www.bobabernethy.com](http://www.bobabernethy.com)

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### BIOS By RI Webmaster

We have 136 Roadrunner member bios posted on the Roadrunner website and 20 associate Roadrunner member bios posted on the area51specialprojects.com website. Some of our Roadrunner members have never published their bio because they think it is an ego thing or because they fail to recognize the importance of their contribution to Projects AQUATONE, OXCART, IDEALISTS, and the YF-12 and SR-71 projects.

These members fail to realize that due to the compartmentalization of our contributions, few outside his or her immediate group know the value of their contributions. They fail to realize that the posted bios are in many cases the sole source of information for authors, historians, students, scholastic institutions, and media articles and documentaries. Most importantly, these bios are the only information families, descendants, and friends have concerning your contributions to our nation's security and independence.

To insure our legacy continues the Webmaster is converting all Roadrunner bios to PDF files for submission to the CIA historians, NVAHOF Oral History Project, various DOD historians, and the Library of Congress. Some of the posted bios are limited to merely the time spent at Groom Lake. This is not enough. Your bio should start with your birth, and perhaps background of your ancestry, and continue to the present time as many of you continue to be active contributors to society. If we do not have your bio posted, or if it needs updating, please take time now to take care of it today. It really helps reduce labor if you submit your bio or changes in Microsoft Word format and regular font (not all capital letters). Name all photos submitted in all lowercase and no spaces between words. To separate the words, insert a period or dash. Do not worry about spelling or grammar, as we edit what you submit in this respect. Check your posted bios regularly and let the Webmaster know if something needs fixing. A lot of code or script is necessary to present a webpage and it can become corrupted without the Webmaster's knowledge and he'll never know unless you inform him of same. Remember, each story and every photo is a link, so our website contains thousands of links, so your reporting a corrupted a link is important.

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### Harold "Burgie" Burgeson

Some of you are aware that the Webmaster relentlessly pestered Burgie for his bio because of his being a high profile member of the Roadrunners. He kept promising to provide one, but never did. We reached out to Sam Pizzo, Ray Haupt, Frank Murray, and Roger Andersen who really came through on covering some of what Burgie contributed to the OXCART program. The family has some photos we can use, but we desperately need tidbits of information from those who knew and worked with Burgie so we can build his legacy. We have a draft page posted at:

<http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/burgeson.html>



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**Comments by Sam Pizzo:** To All: Good to hear that efforts are under way to give credit to Burgie. He and Amelia shared some great times with us while stationed at USAFE at Wiesbaden. True friends.



There is another side of this story that rarely surfaces, that being the interface between the AF pilots, the A-12 Pilots and the Mission Planners. Burgie was in the middle of this at start up time. Simply put, there is but one word that simply says it all, regarding the 1129th's role, ie. outstanding. As I recall our mission planning updating techniques started with data obtained from Burgie and Gen Haupt. When our group started planning Stateside Training

sorties, we had to fallback on our NAV experiences (600 mph/40,000 ft) and we had only the Lockheed aircraft performance data charts on an aircraft that was well beyond the flight parameters of aircraft we were most familiar. Of course, this did nothing as to determining what the "Drivers" could visibly view to maintain course other than to say here is a viewfinder, compass etc., etc. you figure out how to use it effectively. Those on one briefing and after mission debriefings were worth their weight in gold.

We were not provided with handbooks on what we (Pilots/ Mission Planners) were supposed to do or how to do it. It took awhile, but we (all involved) soon had a system that did the job. Also consider as Navs, we had Radar, and more importantly none of us, including the Drivers, who only had their eye balls, had ever been up to 90,000 ft or flown at Mach 3, i.e. we really had no idea of just what the Drivers could see to effectively maintain course. Those after mission debriefings were most important.



We (the Drivers and Planners) went through a rather lengthy redo of the data we placed on those early versions of the mission maps. As they were the first ones out of the chute, input from Gen Haupt and Burgie helped jump-start our learning process as to what info was needed to be annotated on the maps and how should we depict it. Not too long ago I was provided with a copy of one of the maps, which had been used on a mission and was amazed as to how little it resembled our original efforts.

First met him in the Ops Building in Nov 61 (I think) at Area 51. I am sure like most of us; he had absolutely no idea what he was going to do at Area 51. I assume that he like the rest of the Ops types were introduced to Col Nelson who briefed us on our jobs at the Area. I assume (dangerous word) the he was told that he would be checked out in an aircraft the likes he had ever seen, i.e. the A-12, in which he would then, along with Ray Haupt, would then check out a group of pilots who would fly operational missions in certain areas of the world. He would also be told that he was working for the CIA, a fact that I do not believe that any of us, except Holbury, Nelson, and perhaps Kelly knew until we were at the Ranch. I for one thought I was going to be residing in Vegas while working for God knows who or doing what at Nellis AFB. I did not know that we would be going up on Monday mornings and returning to Vegas on Friday nights. My wife was a bit perturbed to hear that, as I'm sure other wives felt the same way. I'm sure Burgie had the same reaction that many of us had in learning of this fact.

At the Ranch there were two Lockheed Pilots whose job, I think, was to checkout the A-12 Trainer aircraft to see if they would even fly, then if they worked they would check out Ray Haupt and Burgie as standardization officers who would then check out the Project pilots who would eventually fly Operational missions. In their role, I think Ray and Burgie played a big part in also pointing out problems that may have occurred in this new aircraft.

The detachment lost a few aircraft and Pilots, but none of these accidents was Pilot error to my knowledge, a tribute to Ray and Burgie. When I had the bar built on the other side of our House 6 Quarters, Burgie just stepped up and became the Barkeep. Each weekend he would visit a liquor store in Vegas and replenish the liquor supply. His side of our quarters was the noisy side that interfered with our nightly poker games.

To state that living conditions at the Ranch were sub par would be a giant understatement. No O Club (other than House 6), no Gym, no golf course (except the one holer Burgie put together) no Base Exchange, no Commissary, no Hospital, no Library, no cleaners, no TV, no radio reception until late at night due to the surrounding mountains, no movie theatre, in other words notta EXCEPT for the best food I ever ate once they built the new mess hall. Barkeep Burgie sure made it possible for lotsa guys to survive that desolate area.

The Unit deployed to Okinawa and Burgie went along as an Operations Officer. I am not aware of his duties but can guess that he was in on mission planning, briefings, and debriefings for Nam overflights. One day while taking a shower, Burgie noticed a lump on his inner thigh, and when he was checked over by the Flight Surgeon, he was immediately flown to Washington as it was determined to be cancerous. It was taken care of and Burgie eventually returned to the Ranch where he ended up being the Base Commander until the 1129th closed its' doors.

After the Ranch, Burgie was stationed at Lindsey Air Station USAFE in Wiesbaden where he was assigned to the Plans Division during which time he said he hated the job AND his Boss. Mary and I were also assigned to USAFE where Harold, Amelia. Mary and I had a great tour together. After his tour at USAFE, Burgie left for a tour in Nam and upon his return to the States he retired.

Looking back, I am still amazed and most pleased with the working togetherness (made that word up) that existed between the Drivers, 1129th pilots (Gen Haupt and Burgie) and our Mission Planners. And when writing up Burgie's Bio let's not forget his very important role at House Six wherein he was the Barkeep! Imagine that, Pilots and Navs getting along like long lost Brothers! Who'd athink it way back in 1961? Dem were the good old days. Sam Pizzo

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**Searching the Roadrunner website we located this article authored by Burgie regarding the fatal crash of Jim Simon.**

THE ACCIDENT By: Harold Burgeson. On 27 September 1967, Jack Layton and I were flying # 124 on a night navigational mission. Jack was in the front cockpit and I was in the rear. I was the instructor pilot and we used my call sign (Dutch 12).



Jim Simon was the chase pilot in F-101B (56-0286). After we were safely airborne and all systems checked normal he flew in the local area to await our return, as was customary. After we completed our mission, we returned to base and Jack started an instrument letdown for a full stop landing. During the letdown, I called the chase and told him that we were back in the area, had no problems, and would be landing shortly.

Jim asked for our position and I gave it to him again stating that all systems were normal and that we did not need assistance. He responded that he would at least like to find us. We turned on final approach and received clearance for a full stop landing. You can't see the wings or engines from the cockpit of an A-12. On short final, there was a sudden explosion off our right wing. We saw the flash and felt the concussion. Jack instinctively stop cocked the right engine, lit the left AB, and said "Burgie be ready to bail out. I replied "that wasn't us Jack, it had to be the chase, if you will keep this thing flying straight (there was quite a yaw with the left AB going) I will restart the right engine.

I got the engine started and we circled for landing. We avoided looking at the fire as we approached the runway and Jack made a nice smooth landing. Up until we called for landing clearance, the tower operators thought it was our aircraft that crashed. What caused the crash is something we will never know for sure. What we do know is that joining up with a dark, unlit airplane on a dark night at final approach airspeed is not a "piece of cake. The aircraft contacted the ground in a flat attitude near the South Trim Pad of the Groom Lake landing strip, which could indicate that Jim got a little low and flew into the ground. We can speculate that he might have overshot a little and dropped down for clearance or that he was distracted by something in the cockpit such as a warning light, but speculation really serves no useful purpose. In any case, that night we lost a fine officer, an excellent pilot, and a good friend. Harold Burgeson

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Maj. Burgeson was a member of the accident board of Mele Vojvodich's crash on takeoff at Groom Lake where the Lockheed team determined that the SAS connections had been reversed so that Pitch and Yaw signals were misinterpreted. A few days later Col. Slater, the project pilots, Major Burgeson and Bill Park were sent to Beale to check the cable reversal out in their new simulator. Accompanying them were Mele and a Col from Wright Pat. Bill Park took the first flight in the simulator with the cables reversed while the rest waited in an adjacent room. Bill Park had a tremendous sense of humor and when he returned he winked at Burgeson then remarked that it was a rough ride but flyable. Burgeson then took his flight and when he returned he continued the charade with a similar remark. According to Burgeson, Mele looked so crestfallen that they burst into laughter and confessed that they had both crashed in the simulator.





### Education and History by T.D. Barnes

From day one, the Roadrunner website was intended to be for educational purposes to tell our legacy for the sake of history, family, and friends. A couple newsletters ago, we made Roadrunner ham radio operators a topic and as you have seen in the feedback in this and last month's newsletter, where we have a number of ham radio operators



who did not know of the others. This month we wish to do the same with Roadrunners currently involved in education. I, as Webmaster, work with various Roadrunners, mostly those formerly with the Air Force, CIA, universities, and individuals who are directly involved in educational activities, both for historians and for students. That is the primary activity of the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame formed by members of Roadrunners Internationale. If you are involved in civic and/or educational activities, please provide us with feedback on your activities so we can share this with the other members and perhaps merge our activities. The recent OXCART legacy tour ([http://nvahof.org/?page\\_id=5&paged=2](http://nvahof.org/?page_id=5&paged=2)) was an educational event as has been all our panel discussions

and organized interviews at our reunions. Many of our Roadrunners have authored books for educational purposes even if it was an account of that individual's life. Our entire website is for educational purposes. Those of you attending our last reunion most likely met the NVAHOF Director of Communications and Development for southern Nevada, Dawn Curtis, the Director of Education Angie Ameling depicted in the photo on the left above, and



RI member Connie May-Pardew, Director of Communications and Development for northern Nevada shown on the right. These ladies have volunteered countless hours to promoting the legacy of the Roadrunners. Another is Dr. Mary Palevsky who has for the past decade conducted numerous interviews of our members for the Oral History



Project at UNLV. Dr. Palevsky is on the NVAHOF Board of Directors. These ladies have voluntarily provided a lot of time and effort in behalf of carrying forth our proud legacy and we owe them our thanks come October during our reunion.

To set an example on individual activities, I will briefly discuss one of Mrs. Ameling and Barnes' personal activities. Last year and again this year, they will be judges in the U.S. Department of Education, Center for Civic Education National History Day competition. This is a series of competitions in which students are judged by panels of lawyers, judges, educators, and journalists on their knowledge, understanding, and ability to current events and issues. This year's theme is Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, and Consequences. The judges will select the winner in each category and then tutor the winner for the national competition. I know several of our CIA members are involved in educational activities, but we have not heard much from our other members. Let us hear some horn tooting from all you educators as we did the ham radio operators. **Otherwise, there may be some stories posted on others than Andersen and Murray above.**

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#### Sheep Dipping

In farming, sheep dipping is a chemical bath given to sheep to rid them of bugs or disease or to clean their wool before shearing. This has been a practice in the ranching areas east of Area 51 since the days Nevada was still a territory. With the arrival of the CIA in 1955, the sheep dipping moved to Groom Lake, except it was now the CIA disguising of the identity of Air



Force personnel to test and fly the CIA's U-2 and A-12 spy planes. Similar to the real sheep, the agent is cleaned up so that nobody knows where he has been, kind of like money laundering. As evidenced by the sheep dipped U-2 and A-12 pilots and personnel of Projects AQUATONE and OXCART, there were instances when the CIA personnel sheep dipped from the U.S. Air Force were for convenience treated as though they remained in the service. At the termination of Project OXCART, the Air Force rescinded their resignations as though they never occurred. A copy of the standard CIA pilot contract for OXCART is posted at:

[http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/cia\\_contract.html](http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/cia_contract.html)

An example of the sheep dipping process of A-12 pilot Bill Skliar is posted at:

[http://area51specialprojects.com/af\\_to\\_cia.html](http://area51specialprojects.com/af_to_cia.html)

Recognition for the years our people were sheep dipped into the CIA has not been easy. The CIA Intelligence Star for Valor awarded by the CIA to MGen Mele Vojvodich, BGen Dennis Sullivan, Colonel Ken Collins, Colonel Jack Layton, Lt. Col. Frank Murray, and Captain Jack Weeks (posthumously) were withheld for years due to secrecy. Similarly, awards for individuals held as POWs while sheep dipped into the CIA were in most cases awarded posthumously.

An excellent example is our Captain Francis Gary Powers.

[http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/powers\\_gary.html](http://roadrunnersinternationale.com/powers_gary.html)

Powers resigned his rank of First Lieutenant when he was



sheep dipped in 1956 to train in the U-2 at Area 51. He deployed to Turkey as

civilian members of a weather reconnaissance Squadron under orders issued by the USAF.

On 1 May 1960 (May Day, a day of political demonstrations and celebrations organized by the unions, communists, anarchists, and socialist groups. May Day is also a traditional holiday in many cultures.), Powers was shot down over Russia and imprisoned in the Lubyanka Prison for 3 months until trial. The Russian court sentenced Powers to Valdimir Prison where he served

18 months before being exchanged for Soviet spy Colonel Rudolf L. Abel.

The Air Force awarded Powers the DFC, Distinguished Flying Cross for extraordinary achievement during the 1 May 1960 flight and discharged him from active duty on 2 March 1963. The CIA also awarded him the CIA's Intelligence Star in 1963 after his return from the Soviet Union.

Francis Gary Powers died in 1977 in an accident at age 47 years while covering bush fires in Santa Barbara County. His Bell Jet Ranger helicopter, registered N4TV, ran out of fuel, and crashed in the Sepulveda Dam Recreation Area several miles short of Burbank Airport. At the last moment, he must have noticed children playing in the area, and directed the helicopter elsewhere to prevent their deaths. His perfectly set-up autorotative descent was compromised, and he was killed.

After the death of his father, Power's son, Francis Gary Powers, Jr. founder of the Cold War Museum, went to bat to obtain the military rank and awards denied his father by the USAF. In 1998, he succeeded in convincing the Air Force of his father's mission being a joint USAF/CIA operation.

On 15 February 2000, the Air Force Board of Correction of Military Records granted correction of Power's military records to reflect that he was never discharged from active duty on 13 May 1956 when he sheep dipped from the Air Force to CIA, and that he continued to serve the Air Force. The board ruled he be promoted to Captain effective immediately with date of rank 19 June 1957, and that he be awarded the Prison of War medal for the period he was imprisoned in the Soviet Union 1 May 1960 – 10 February 1962 in the grade of Captain. Thus, in 2000, on the 40th anniversary of the U-2 Incident, Powers

was posthumously awarded Prisoner of War Medal and National Defense Service Medal. In addition, CIA Director George Tenet authorized Powers to posthumously receive the CIA's coveted Director's Medal for extreme fidelity and extraordinary courage in the line of duty. The Air Force ruled that since Powers had been awarded the DFC he would have had to be on active duty with the Air Force.





Precedence was established when the “civilians” captured and held for over a year in the USS Pueblo incident in North Korea in 1968, and the 2 pilots, Colonels John McKone and Bruce Olmstead shot down in their RB-47 over the Barents Sea on 1 July 1960 and imprisoned for 208 days in the Lubyanka Prison. In Solomia, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant was captured and held. In all of these incidents, the captured were awarded the Prisoner of War award. **We commend Francis Gary Powers, Jr. for ensuring his dad’s legacy being correct and MGen Pat Halloran for his relentless attention and assistance to Gary and the Powers family in this regard.**



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## **ROADRUNNER MEMBERSHIP BUSINESS**

To guide the Roadrunners Internationale association into getting its affairs in order for eventual retirement, President T.D. Barnes has appointed former presidents Roger Andersen, Frank Murray, Bill Fox, and RI advisors Russ Buyse and Slip Slater to evaluate and provide recommendations to the RI officer staff and the members of Roadrunners Internationale during the voting member’s meeting at the reunion in October. Past RI presidents Roger Andersen and Frank Murray met with our current president T.D. Barnes and to discuss the following background information to guide Frank Murray’s committee identified above.



**MEMBERSHIP AFFAIRS:** Winding up of the affairs of Roadrunners Internationale. At the general membership meetings at our last three reunions, the membership voted to let the association die with the demise of the participants in CIA projects Aquatone and OXCART. The elected staff has implemented the wishes of the membership body by eliminating the 2-year membership option in 2007 and requiring encouraging existing 2-year membership to convert to life membership.

We ceased recruiting new members and in 2010 ceased accepting new associate members entirely and allowed anyone who participated in the projects and wanting membership with the association to be added to the rolls without membership fees. Only three new members joined the RI association.

**LEGACY MISSION ACCOMPLISHED:** At our last reunion, our panel discussions at the Atomic Testing Museum were video recorded by the museum and by C-Span. The videos remain in public domain today. Additionally, the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame headed by Roadrunner president T.D. Barnes and Roadrunner member Robert Friedrichs edited sixty-four separate videos out of previous video recorded events and have them posted for public viewing on the NVAHOF YouTube account. During the OXCART Legacy Tour, panel discussions were video recorded at CIA, DIA, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, and the International Spy Museum. These videos will become public in conjunction with the release this May of a National Geographic documentary titled “Area 51 Declassified”. Also, in May, author Annie Jacobsen’s book covering OXCART personnel will hit the book stores in the United States and the UK. These releases will undoubtedly encourage further media event with individual members of the Roadrunners. The Roadrunner officer staff feels they have accomplished the mission of recording the legacy of the projects and of the individual participants to the extent possible. You will note



below our recommendations to the Murray committee a provision for future handling and/or support of legacy activities of our members.

**LEGACY PRESERVATION:** To ensure the legacy of the Roadrunners remains alive and part of our nation's Cold War history, the Roadrunner webmaster is converting the contents of the website to a format for publishing into a bound book to be provided university libraries, historians, and Roadrunner members. The Roadrunner website will remain on the Internet with consent given to other webmasters to publish its contents on their websites as well. *THE BOUND MATERIAL FROM THE WEBSITE WILL EXPRESSIVELY BE PROVIDED TO THE HISTORIANS AT CIA, AIR FORCE, AND AT THE RANCH. The staff recommends placing on the agenda and approving at the next general membership meeting in October the use of surplus funds in the RI treasury for incidental costs of publishing and distributing of such a publication to the members.*

**DISPOSITION OF ROADRUNNER MEMORABILIA:** For the past few years the Roadrunner staff has sought a venue where our members can donate their Roadrunner memorabilia. We have not been successful in locating a venue where we feel assured a permanent display.

We have donated flight manuals and such to the UNLV library and had hoped this might be such a venue, however seeing major budget cuts recently imposed on the library due to the economy, we fear that even that venue would be at risk. Having visited the CIA museum directed by Toni H., we feel this would be a most appropriate venue for the physical items collected by our membership. Housed in the New Headquarters Building, the CIA Museum was established in 1988 to give employees a sense of the unique history of their profession. While intelligence gathering has been going on since time immemorial, this collection focuses on the CIA's World War II predecessor, the Office



of Strategic Services, to the present-day CIA. Personal effects reflecting the career of Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, head of OSS, as well as numerous examples of OSS tradecraft (much of which was used by CIA after it was established by President Truman in 1947), to items from the Persian Gulf War and the end of the Cold War are featured here. Some of the Roadrunners have already donated items, Col. Ken Collins to name one, which are on display. Roadrunner member Mike Schmitz has personally provided several of his photo creations to the museum as shown in the photo to the right where is presented the depicted picture to museum director Toni H. Probably the most secretive museum in the world, the CIA Museum, due to its location on the CIA compound, isn't open to the public for tours, however, one may view the museum in a virtual sense at the link below. During the past few years, many of you have worked and socialized with the agency workforce as we did half a century ago. Depicted below is a number of Roadrunner members and agency personnel enjoying such an occasion. Obviously, we cannot go into names, but you can read about some of them at the link below. Anyone wishing to donate something to the CIA museum may obtain procedural information and documentation for submission by contacting T.D. Barnes. Links to the CIA Museum:



<https://www.cia.gov/about-cia/cia-museum/cia-museum-tour/index.html>  
<https://www.cia.gov/news-information/featured-story-archive/cia-museum-the-people.html>

## **FUTURE REUNIONS AND SOCIAL NETWORKING:**

It will depend upon the majority vote of the membership at our general membership meeting in October as to scheduling future reunions. Realizing a day will come when any reunion might be the last, we want to offer alternatives. As you have noted in our newsletter, spontaneous mini reunions occur quite regularly when a Roadrunner comes to Las Vegas. On such an occasion, the local members meet for a dinner. Depicted right are Stella Murray, Dot Roussell, Frank Murray, Doris, and TD Barnes enjoying such an occasion. We encourage other clusters of RI members do the same **and “please share the occasion with us”**. You will note on our website we now have a link to the Roadrunner Facebook



account where members and friends socialize at will. Many of our members also have personal Facebook accounts where they share experiences, photos, etc. While we hope to have additional reunions in the future, for many the Facebook social network will become their link to the Roadrunners. Many of our members are also members of the U-2 DLA and SR-71 associations and will have the option of attending their reunions. The Roadrunner newsletter will continue for sharing the RI news and entertainment.



account where members and friends socialize at will. Many of our members also have personal Facebook accounts where they share experiences, photos, etc. While we hope to have additional reunions in the future, for many the Facebook social network will become their link to the Roadrunners. Many of our members are also members of the U-2 DLA and SR-71 associations and will have the option of attending their reunions. The Roadrunner newsletter will continue for sharing the RI news and entertainment.

## **REORGANIZATION OF THE ROADRUNNERS INTERNATIONALE ASSOCIATION:**

The current slate of officers suggests the Murray committee consider dissolving the current slate of officers at the next general membership meeting in October and recommend the membership vote the selection of a committee to manage the winding down of association affairs. Above all, those selected must accept that they are representing all the members in this regard and accept this obligation. We emphasize to the committee the need that those selected be prepared and willing to devote a considerable amount of their time. With the appointment comes the answering of e-mail inquires and information transmittal. In addition, they address the demand on the leadership for interface with the media, CIA, Air Force, authors, historians, and the general public in addition to the daily and sometimes hourly needs of our members. At this point the leadership can expect as high as 200 response-required e-mail messages per day following the release of news that require immediate disposition.



Encouraging feedback is essential to the success of the newsletter and meeting

the goals in establishing the legacy of the program and all participants. In addition, there are always pending several requests for CDs containing material for use by the public as well as our 300 plus members. The information has to be located, the CD burned and mailed. That is the price we pay for our efforts and success in establishing our legacy. Maintaining this momentum is one of the reasons some of the Roadrunner members formed the non-profit Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame which is staffed to pick up some of this administrative load as the association dies and to carry our legacy after we are all gone. We realize that there are members who want our hard-earned and proud legacy to cease with the RI association. The management staff represents the entire membership to include the U-2, A-12, YF-12, Associate, and Honorary members. The staff must support the vast majority participating in the legacy mission, so we ask anyone who unwilling to support this to politely step aside and not impede the progress of the majority who wish otherwise. That is our polite way as saying to any dissenting member to either lead, follow, or get the hell out of the way. We recommend to the Murray committee that it consider and likewise recommend to the general membership the selection of a management team consisting of the following:

- An administrator to manage future social events and the association funds.
- Barnes to continue as Webmaster, newsletter editor, and liaison contact as needed.

- Frank Murray to remain as the Roadrunner historian.

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On Feb 18, 2011, at 9:06 PM, Terry Tsementzis wrote:

Dear Sir, I am intrigued by your site's mention of Greek U-2 pilots in the 50's. My father has told me that he was one of those Greek U-2 pilots for the CIA. He does have pictures from Watertown and Groom Lake. On one such picture, he is on horseback. On that day, he says that he was intercepted by MP's and decontaminated after having ridden in areas that were radioactive from atomic testing. He has told me of flight training in T-33s, F-84s, and the U-2, fitting his pressure suit helmet at David Clark in Massachusetts. He has told me of a pressure suit malfunction while flying which left a scar around his neck. He told me of pre-breathing oxygen and eating steak and egg breakfasts before hours-long missions. He told me of flying into England, Germany and Turkey and over-flying the USSR, all in the U-2. His stories seem to contradict what your site says about the Greek pilots all washing-out.

Your site has made me wonder if my father was entirely truthful. Yet, his stories seem to say that he made it beyond washing-out of the U-2 training. I would like to hear from someone who remembers the Greek pilots from the early Roadrunner days. Perhaps Bob Murphy remembers my father, Sotirios "Steve" Tsementzis who also went by the CIA name of Papas.

Sincerely, Sotirios "Terry" Tsementzis

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**Response by Barnes:** According to my sources all but four of the Greek pilots did flunk out of the training program before being sent to Watertown. Four of the Greek pilots did train at Groom Lake, but the SAC IPs did not feel they were proficient enough to fly operational and instead went with SAC F-84-trained pilots.

**Louis Setter, Instructor Pilot for the CIA U-2 pilots adds:** The second class arrived at Watertown. It included Francis G. "Frank" Powers, who would later win dubious fame after being shot down and captured while flying a U-2 over the Soviet Union. While Powers' class underwent training, a group of four Greek pilots also came to Groom for familiarization in the U-2. The Greek pilots all washed out during training and were never allowed to fly the U-2. A Greek student pilot at Groom Lake completed the standard transition training in the T-33 (consisting mostly of dozens of drag-in approaches to simulate the U-2 approach) but, is known to have flown the U-2 only once; his first solo ride. This was not with a pressure suit. He had a lot of trouble communicating in English, making radio calls to him were quite difficult. His first U-2 landing on the lakebed: he leveled off about 30 feet in the air, near stall speed (the tail was down), and the airplane stalled and hit hard, kicking up a cloud of dust. Lou Setter, his IP, was a short distance behind him in the chase car, talking to him on the radio, so saw it all. He did not seem able to follow Haupt's instructions. Kelly Johnson personally saw this and decided "no more U-2 flying for this pilot". An interesting note: When Setter gave a cockpit checkout to his Greek student, the student sat in the seat and took the wheel and attempted to move it right and left, instead of rotating it as you would driving a car. Setter asked him if he knew how to drive a car and he said he did not. He knew how to ride a bicycle and fly a Spitfire. A Spitfire has a round doughnut on top of the stick so the pilot can get both hands on it to roll faster. Apparently, the Spitfire has high aileron forces. Setter taught him how to drive the chase Ford station wagon out on the lakebed and he quickly learned how to steer, just like a U-2. Then Setter took him up in the L-20 (Beaver bush plane), which also has a wheel, and he flew it long enough to get used to the wheel.



Continuing the socializing bit above, Roadrunner member Pete Merlin dropped by to present Barnes with Pete's latest book which covers the NASA X-plane Crashes, some programs in which Barnes was involved in on the NASA High Range prior to going to the Ranch. Pete is an archivist and historian at NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, and founder of the X-Hunters. Pete is also a strong supporter of the Nevada Aerospace Hall of Fame as he is the Roadrunners.



Reunion Chairman Harry Martin repeats last month's plea for an indication from each member on aye or nay intentions to attend the RI reunion this October. Just because you have always attended our reunions, please do not assume we know you will attend the upcoming reunion. It is just as important for us to know if you are not going to attend as it is knowing you plan to attend. We have to know where we stand in order to better serve those attending.

Listed below are REUNION RSVP's received of those planning to attend our 2011 Reunion 3-6

October at Gold Coast Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas:

|                 |                 |               |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Ray Haupt       | Wayne Nelson    | Peter DeForth |
| Roger Andersen  | Wayne Pendleton | Debbie Dye    |
| T.D. Barnes     | Jim Prucnal     | Don Stein     |
| Tony Bevacqua   | Fred Trost      | Joe Ventolo   |
| Russ Buyse      | Robert Westlund | Jane Welsh    |
| Bob Davenport   | Fred White      | Barfield      |
| Joe Donoghue    | Bob Murphy      | Dick Clark    |
| Harry Martin    | Angus Batey     | Mike Schmitz  |
| Stanley Moeschl | Stacy Bernhardt | Connie Pardew |
| Frank Murray    | Joerg Arnu      | Alan Johnson  |
| Mark Wiggins    | Pete Merlin     | Cheryl Moore  |

Ed and Cynthia Miller forwarded this image from Colonel Beset of the TAC Tanker Memorial at the Air Force Museum. Ed forwarded it as a background reference. Colonel Bessette was a TAC Tanker master navigator, and is also the historian for their TAC Tanker organization. The interesting point on which Colonel

Bessete focused is how he and Cynthia had noted their memorial there, and identified how it reflected a common history shared between their KB-50 TAC Tankers and the TAC Recce "receiver" community supported by the Millers. In that same context, the Miller's suggested the Roadrunners consider placing a similar type of memorial stone for the 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS in the Memorial Garden at the AF Museum and offered to contribute to a fund for such a monument.



Cynthia, daughter of our renown Col. Ray Schrecengost, Chief of Operations and Training of the 1129<sup>th</sup> Special Activities Squadron suggested that such a monument would be a fitting tribute to the officers and personnel of the USAF 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS. She and Ed suggested and I agree that we might want it to display four stars: one star for each of the four pilots lost on OXCART / Black Shield missions (two flying the A-12s, and also for the two flying the F-101s). Flying each type aircraft was an equally dangerous endeavor. It be fitting to include the CIA Intelligence Star for Valor awarded the six Blackshield A-12 pilots, the awards to Colonels Amundson and Slater, and the 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS Best Unit Award for it's support of Operation Blackshield, the operational of Project OXCART during the period April 15, 1966 to April 15, 1968. Note: This is the period that the CIA prolonged the breakup of the 1129<sup>th</sup> in order to fly missions over North Vietnam (and North Korea) until the SR-71 became operational. Any comments on this proposal are welcome. A monument for the 1129<sup>th</sup> SAS brings to mind the fact that many of the OXCART team supported other projects at Groom Lake such as the U-2, YF-12, and D-21 drone. Our membership includes participants in each of these factions so we could perhaps think of a second monument to recognize all who served at Groom Lake.

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*Ron Girard went in this joke and since Barnes is wearing the Boomer Sooner garb in the photo with Merlin, we will make the rednecks out to be Okies.*

Two Oklahoma rednecks were out hunting, and as they were walking along, they came upon a huge hole in the ground. They approached it and were amazed by its size. The first hunter said, "Wow, that's some hole; I can't even see the bottom. I wonder how deep it is." The second hunter says, "I don't know, let's throw something down and listen and see how long it takes to hit bottom." The first hunter says, "There's this old automobile transmission here, give me a hand and we'll throw it in and see". So they pick it up, carry it to the hole, count one, two, and three, and throw it in the hole. They are standing there listening and looking over the edge when they hear a rustling in the brush behind them. As they turn around, they see a goat come crashing through the brush, run up to the hole and with no hesitation, jumped in headfirst. While they stand there looking at each other in amazement, looking in the hole, trying to figure out what that was all about, an old farmer walks up. "Say there", says the farmer, "you fellers didn't happen to see my goat around here anywhere, did you?" The first hunter says, "Funny you should ask, we were just standing here and a minute ago and a goat came running out of the bushes doin' about a hunert miles an hour and jumped headfirst into this hole here!" The old farmer said, "That's impossible. I had him chained to a transmission.

J.D. Barnes  
President/Webmaster