

RANCH HAND NEWSLETTER
1 Feb 1975

COWBOYS,

Plenty to write about in this newsletter. Please note I have found a way to get an 11 page roster reduced down to a page and a half. Our retirees will have to use glasses to read it, but it sure saves on the postage bill.

First, we will have our reunion at Langley AFB 2-4 May 1975. Pete Spivey, Russ Mohney, Pooch Pochurek and the rest of the Langley Flight have come up with an offer I couldn't refuse. My questionnaire on several subjects revealed an overwhelming vote to hold the reunion in Fort Walton Beach. So sorry, no Fort Walton hosts this year, but Pete and I and a couple of others are scheduled to be reassigned back there this summer and we will see that the 10th reunion will be held there next year.

This year only 12 folks requested the reunion be held at Dayton. Harlingen had 5 requests and one each for Southern California, Sacramento and Kitty Hawk. Along that line, why don't the large group of California and nearby western states Cowboys have a west coast reunion?

Other questionnaire replies showed we must have done everything right at the incorporation meeting since all Officers were reelected as they were originally selected. Just so you know though, the following were nominated for various Ranch officer positions: Gentry, Scott, Boone, Womack, Topolosky, Quinn, Willoughby, Avery, Wildman, Rayment, Stihl, Weston, Zepf, Mucho, Mikolasy, Barich, Moore, Marshall, Pochurek and Wolf. As it stands, you have all made it clear that we should continue as incorporated and we shall until further notice.

There were several letters either criticizing or questioning the Ranchero awards. Some just wanted to know how it works. In the past whoever was hosting the reunion awarded it to folks like Jack Spey or Pete Spivey for establishing the Ranch Hand organization and particularly for keeping it rolling since 1966. However, because so many folks were nominated this year, we are putting a moratorium on the award and will save it for really special occasions. Just so you will know, the following were nominated for the award this year: Fisher, Gentry, Scott, Boone, Duff, Zepf, Womack, Quinn, Winstead, Lemaire, Stoner, Clanton, Bailey, Avery, Topolosky and Willoughby. Everyone nominated is highly deserving and can be proud his fellow Cowboys submitted his name.

Denny Eagleson requested I have a memorial "Honor Roll" parchment made of our KIA Ranch Hands suitable for framing. Please advise me on this as I need a general idea of the numbers of copies as this will be pretty expensive if I have the job done right. Also I need to know if you would pay for any you order or should the Ranch pay for them? There is a place to answer this on the return sheet.

Tom Quinn says he is holding a copy (on recycled paper) of "DAF Final Environmental Statement - Disposition of Orange Herbicide by incineration" for Ranch archives. Art McConnell has forwarded a considerable history of Ranch Operations that he had compiled. Harry Lemly also forwarded some info on a report on the effects of herbicides in Vietnam. This report is very favorable to us and in essence they found no medically valid evidence for ill effects on people and that many Vietnamese were alive today who would have been killed if military objectives had been pursued

by standard means such as bombing, napalm, CBU etc. We have temporarily lost our war to continue to wear our Vietnamese wings as an official decoration. As I've told you in previous newsletters I formally petitioned AFMPC in writing to waiver us from the new regulation which bans the wear of foreign wings. They denied this request and we then went forward to the Air Force Uniform Board at the Pentagon. Although sympathetic, they too turned us down. I will continue to pursue this further.

On the plus side I now have the names of 609 Ranch Hands. I suspect there may be as many as 400 more I do not have. If each of you would search out some old orders with Ranch names and Service numbers on them I could get a better handle on this problem. I would think you ex commanders, ops officers, execs, flight leaders and maintenance folks could do me a lot of good on this, but I'll take any orders any of you can turn up. Along this line I have a list of 125 names I have submitted to AFMPC for their locator to research for me. With just a little hustle we could shortly outnumber the Air Commando Association (whom I heartily endorse). Once again I suggest we support the ACA fully.

I have done my best to get your ranks corrected, but know I am woefully behind the power curve in that department. Each reply received to this newsletter will be carefully scrutinized to insure your rank, social security number and permanent address are correct. These will be recorded in the card file. It is very important I have a social security number, but most important is a permanent home address. Each year 10% of my mailings are returned and I lose about 40 addressees each year. The post office will not repeat will not forward your mail after 6 months when you move. This costs us money, but most important I lose our most valuable asset - you. Remember, about 10 years from now you'll really want to make that 20th reunion and I won't be able to find you to tell you where the action is. Please keep an eye on the AF Times locator and the reunion columns as well as the AF Magazine. I run ads in each publication about three times a year.

Dues was another subject I was queried heavily about. Unlike the Air Commandos I see no reason to assess a yearly dues amount, and I don't think we should drop a name from the list for non-contribution. Therefore, the policy has been and will continue to be we will operate solely from donations. The last newsletter resulted in donations from \$1.00 to \$25.00 with 50% of the returns containing donations. So if you can donate, do it. If you can't, don't sweat it, the Ranch always gets the job done. We care more about hearing from you than how many donations we get. Once a Ranch Hand always a Ranch Hand, you won't be dropped from the rolls.

On a similar subject I plan to write the presidents of those chemical companies whose products we used in SEA advising them of our now official status (i.e. incorporated). I will advise them of our plans to establish some modest philanthropic programs (scholarships for example). I hope to interest them in supporting us in these endeavors. Any ideas you may have on this program would be most appreciated.

Two changes of address arrived too late for inclusion in the printed roster so if you want to find Bruce Colvin he is in Law School at Wake Forest (180 Glendale Dr, Apt 16, Winston Salem NC 27104). He writes he'll be able to spring all the guys picked up for disorderly conduct etc at the 1977 reunion. The other address is our ex-MPC first rate Cowboy Brad Eliot. Brad's an L/C and can be reached at SHAPE Ops Div, APO NY 09055.

There were just too many promotions and address changes to pass them all along to you. Our Cowboys have done right well in the promotion circuit. Also, unfortunately, there was a deluge of retirements as we have all seen around us lately. I keep reminding you we'll all want to make that 20th reunion, so keep in touch.

Here's some of the news from our more prolific writers. Dick Peshkin now a Colonel and heading for Air Attaché duty in Cambodia. L/C John Boddy is in California. L/C Stan Phillips at Bedford, MA. Captain Larry Hanfland at Pease AFB and aiding me in getting addresses on missing Cowboys. Captain Jim Long moving to Scott AFB in April. L/C Jim Tanner in charm school at Maxwell. Jim Perialas, retired in Ohio, writes he ferried PATCHES to K-modification in '68. He added that if old Patches didn't smell bad enough already, his co-pilot collected a bunch of coral shells etc along the way and most of them decomposed enroute adding a new smell to the old birds already lusty interior. L/C Les Easton says he'll rotate from Weisbaden Aug 76 (look out '77 reunion). TSgt Pete Cholometes now residing on (would you believe) Red Onion Circle in Colorado Springs. Colonel Joe Boyer retired 15 Jan to Alexandria, LA. Len Bochicchio still current in the Thunder Turkey C-123 (reserves) at Grissom. He has offered to fly PATCHES to the AF Museum anytime from any place. Do we have any other Cowboys still current in the 123? Diane Almeter still writes me Altus AFB where Frank is hopefully taking reading and writing lessons so he can write me a letter himself. She has always offered to help out on Ranch matters and I strongly suspect she could write this newsletter better than me. She's a more avid Ranchette than the average bear. Major GT Adams basking on the world's greatest beach (from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea) and wishes you were there - instead of him! Lee Inman wrote asking when PATCHES would go to the AF Museum. I checked with the museum folks and they say no plans in near future. Maybe the boneyarding of multis now in progress will speed that up. Lee recommended having the reunion during the summer so the Fraus and anklebiting rug rats could see Dad get SEaced. A good idea and I'd like to hear how you all feel about it. We solved Lee's problem this year by having the party at his house (Langley AFB). We are really having the reunion there because Lee's midnight requisition exploits are legendary. He should come up with some real gems for us. Major Gene Dowling, former AFACAD cadet, former Ranch Hand, and former test pilot student finally got a job at Wright Pat. It's a good thing I'm an instructor at the test pilot school because Gene needed a lot of help getting his arm gold plated in order to graduate. L/C Bob Dyer now a Squadron Commander at Dyess. MSgt Ron Fowler is keeping up the Ranch image in Panama. Major T O Williams transferred, as he put it, "to the frappin pentagon" - he'll still be griping when he makes bird colonel in two years. Joe Meadow retired and claims he is the world's greatest manager of the Lakeview mobile home park in Weslaco (is that in the US? must be Texas). Rex Stoner (Ford dealer par excellence) found Dave Stockton in Atlanta for me. Jack Gentry alive and well living the retired life in Dallas. TSgt Jack ST Pierre at WPAFB. Capt Lloyd West in Europe getting more addresses for me. Leo Gagnon retired to sunny Tempe, Arizona. Tom Boone now a Colonel. I wonder if he still wears his purple scarf under his uniform? Jack Anderson retired to Dallas. We'll miss his airlift to the reunions.