

**80th FIGHTER SQUADRON HEADHUNTERS ASSOCIATION
HEADHUNTER HEADLINES**



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"AUDENTIS FORTUNA JUVAT"

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Happy 4th of July! Today marks the 244th year since the Continental Congress formally adopted the Declaration of Independence, written for the most part by future President Thomas Jefferson. And so began this experiment in modern democracy, who's survival seems to hang in the balance during these uncertain times. Speaking of survival, Marcia and I have pretty much been hunkered down since the last newsletter was published in January. We managed to get mostly into our new house here in the West Phoenix Valley before Genghis Khan and Gunga Din teamed up to conquer the world with a new flu pandemic, which we have so far beat. There has been very little in the way of news from the membership, including from Kunsan, so I suppose most everyone is in the same day to day survival mode, just trying to get used to a new normalcy, whatever that may be. We hope everyone out there has remained healthy throughout this difficult time, and we remain optimistic that like all crisis, this too will pass.

HEADHUNTER REUNIONS

As you all know our April 2020 Reunion at the USAF Museum in Dayton, Ohio was cancelled. Looking back with 20/20 hindsight it may have been OBE due to Corona Virus concerns, but overall enthusiasm was lacking to say the least. With future reunions in mind, I received the following email from Gregg Lewis, Executive Director of the Red River Valley Association (River Rats). He was prompted to contact me by Headhunter member Mike Steadman, who was disappointed with the cancellation and the opportunity to mingle with current and former Headhunters and Juvats.

Guys,

If I could be so bold, I'll suggest recommending all Juvats join the Red River Valley Fighter Pilots Association, www.river-rats.org. Membership is open to all military aviators, common misconception is one must have combat time, not required anymore and hasn't been for many years. We have our annual reunion this year in San Antonio, 1-5 April (It was subsequently cancelled, Ed.) and will among other things feature Gary Sinese and the Lt Dan Band. Several "side groups" like the Night Owls, have their smaller reunions within ours, perfect fit for the Juvats. We're working to incorporate

all the smaller associations out there, can't think of a better fit than bringing in the Juvats. We're a great organization and besides our scholarship work, the reunions are a blast!

Greg

With the above in mind I propose that we link up with the River Rats for future reunions. We will have a Headhunter table(s) based on turnout and can have a business meeting on the side. The annual event gives everyone more opportunity to reconnect with squadron mates from not only the 80th, but all of their past units around the globe and throughout their careers. I know that many of you are already Rats, so by attending these reunions you can kill two birds with one stone! I myself have been a member since 1976, when I was an F-4C RTU student at Luke. Definitely no combat time back then, and had never been anywhere near the Red River. The next reunion is scheduled for 23-27 Sept 2020 in San Antonio, TX. I plan to attend and hope to see many of you there!

WWII HEADHUNTERS

Since my return from Brisbane, Australia and the Lowood Aerodrome Memorial last November, I have remained in contact with several people that I met during our 8th Fighter Group dedication ceremony. An interesting email from Sqn Ldr Chad Chadwick regarding our 8th Group WWII history follows:

Muskkrat,

Are you familiar with the term "Short Snorter?"

The attached artifact is a short snorter. There are numerous names from the 8th FG there, approximately 33 signatures of U.S. personnel (we think all are pilots) and 5 signatures of RAAF fighter pilots. Of the RAAF signatures, all carry very high significance for us. Three of the five had been called back to Australia by our Prime Minister to counter the Japanese threat post 8th December 1941 (Turnbull, Truscott and Wawn). These guys had combat experience in Spitfires in France and Kittyhawk's in Africa. The remaining two RAAF signatures were trained but had not experienced combat at this stage, but we think within 2-3 weeks of the short snorter being signed, they would encounter the Japanese at Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea (late July 1942).

I have included images of the Short Snorter. The reference noted attachments are the working research we are doing to capture the information we find out about each signature. This needs to be validated as some are difficult to view accurately.

Could you view the note and see if there are any “Headhunters” on it?

Charles Falletta may have served with the 80th on the outskirts of Townsville at a place called Antill Plains. I fly past it a lot on my approach into Townsville Airport. Does the name come up as a Headhunter? Here is a link to his possible connection to the 80th FS: <https://www.pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/p-39/41-6951.html>.

There is a great story to be told from this one artifact, so much rich relationship and sacrifice of our two nations air forces.

Hope you enjoy Muskrat.

Cheers,

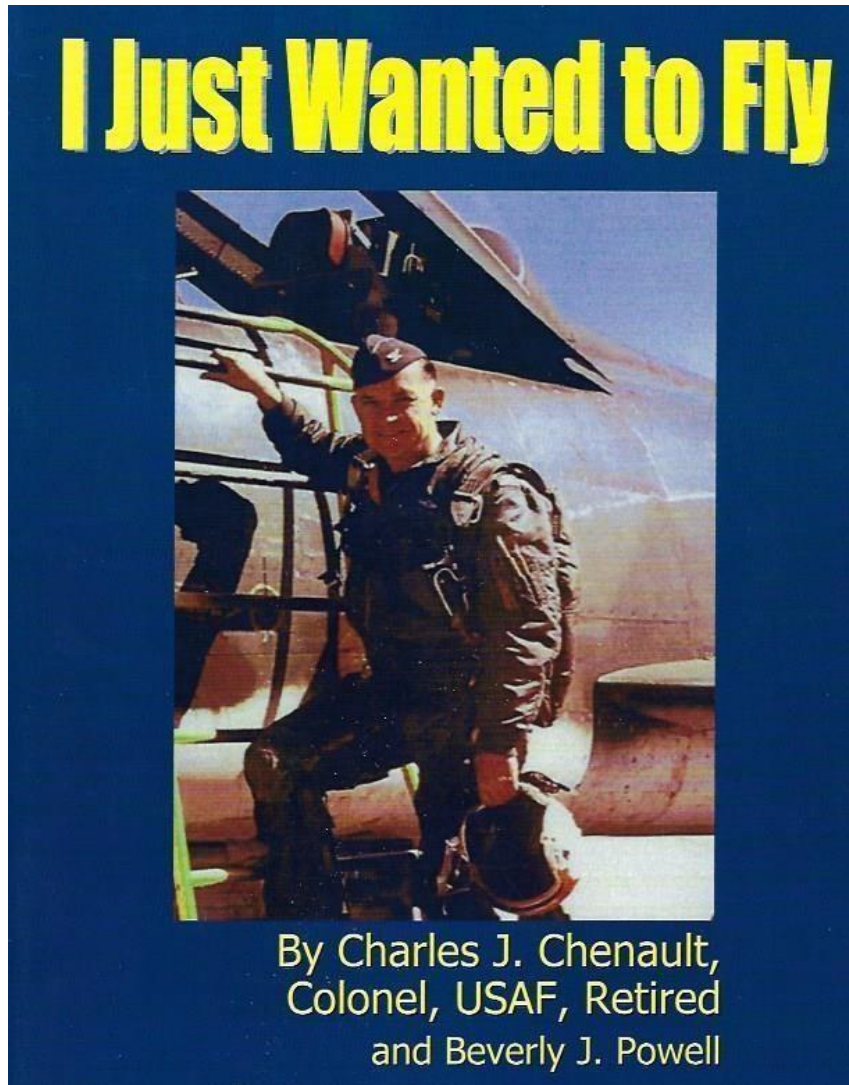
Chaddy



Editors Note: A short snorter is a banknote inscribed by people traveling together on an aircraft. The tradition was started by Alaskan bush flyers in the 1920s and spread through the military and commercial aviation. In this instance an Australian 10 Shilling.

Charlie Falletta's signature is on the left image, 9 from the bottom. And YES Charlie Falletta was a member of the 80th! Although the majority of his time in the 8th Group was with the 36th, he was the Commander of the 80th for a short period during April, 1943.

KOREAN WAR HEADHUNTERS



Last week I received a phone call from Gus Mellick, an Association Member who is the son-in-law of 80th F-80 pilot Charles J. Chenault. He and Colonel Chenault's daughter Donna were in the Phoenix area and he had book that Chenault had written prior to his passing in 2016 titled "I Just Wanted to Fly." We met for an hour or so talking about the book and some of the experiences related by Chenault, included stories of his time with the 80th FBS in the Korean War. The story of his shoot down is especially interesting!

“On May 22, 1952 a date I remember every year on its recurrence, we were targeted against gun emplacements in the vicinity of the Haunchan River. The weather was cloudy with low ceilings and no breaks in the clouds over the target area. We flew out over the ocean to make a let down to insure we would not fly into a hill while still in the soup. The procedure for this is to go out over the water and descend down losing half of your altitude outbound and then descend losing altitude on the way back until you break out below the clouds and hopefully get underneath before being overland.

We could only attack the target in one direction coming over a hill and dropping down into the valley where the enemy guns were. I put the flight in trail, located the guns and we came in firing rockets and 50 caliber machine guns. As I was making my pass over the target I felt thumps on the airplane which I knew were either bullets or shrapnel. I pulled off the target and told the other pilots to break it off until we could figure out how to get in with the least exposure. As I climbed out, Harold Fisher, my number 3 man and element lead flew up to look my aircraft over. He saw holes in the underside of the fuselage and that I was beginning to trail some smoke. I looked at my gauges and saw that the exhaust gas temperature gauge was climbing.

I continued to climb to get as much altitude as I could. The exhaust gas temperature continued to rise, but even though it meant the engine might be on fire I wanted to get as much altitude as I could before I was forced to shut the engine down. I got to 20,000 feet and the gauge pegged and I shut the engine down just as it started to quit. The F-80 has a terrific glide ratio so I had time to try and decide what to do. As I recall for every mile in altitude you can glide 12 miles across the ground.

During this climb I covered considerable miles going back toward the base. I was talking to my element lead on the way back and told him to take the other two members of the flight and head back to home base at Itazuki. The airfield we normally used in Korea on that route had a runway under construction and we'd been told not to try to use it because of construction equipment on the runway.

By this time we were above the clouds and I had no navigation aids, my batteries were out, and I couldn't talk to anyone – not even to my wingman. There was a mountain peak right close to this base. The clouds had piled up on the peak and I knew that had to be the location of the base so I knew pretty well where I was. As I was gliding back towards the base I was considering what I should do. I didn't want to eject if I could help it because there was a good chance I would be taken prisoner. Also the natives, while friendly, had a reputation for being so desperate they would shoot you for your shoes.

As I got closer to the base I began to see breaks in the clouds and I saw a river which I knew would be near the base. I was either going to try for the base or try to put the aircraft down in the river. As it turned out when I did get underneath I looked over to my right

and I saw the airbase and turned toward it. All this time I'm steadily losing altitude. As I got in closer to the base, I saw that the runway did have construction equipment on it. On the sides of the runway there was a grassy area I thought I could land on. It even looked hard enough I thought I could put my gear down and land. At this point the airplane had no hydraulic pressure so I couldn't put the gear down normally. The emergency gear-lowering switch on the F-80 is on the left hand side of the cockpit and slightly to the rear of the seat. The pilot can reach it but it's awkward. I had a perfect glide speed and thought I had that grassy strip just made. When I decided to put the gear down, I turned back to find the switch and took my attention away from the altitude of the aircraft. When I brought my head back forward I had slowed the airplane by raising the nose and was beginning to lose altitude faster. I did not have enough speed and altitude left to make the grassy strip. I picked out a rice paddy and aimed for that. I was right down on the rice paddy. The airplane was through flying. When this happened you could take the stick and move it all around and nothing happens. I had no control left. I looked up and was horrified to see that there was a 20 foot dike dead ahead of me. I thought it was all over. The good Lord looked down and picked that airplane up and lifted it and took it over the dike and set me down on the other side. Since that time I have believed that my Mother, who died twelve days after I was born, was still looking after me, and with our good lord's blessing.

I blacked out. When I came to I was in a flooded rice paddy and knew I was hurting but didn't know how badly. I was still strapped in my harness and the force of the impact slammed my head down onto the stick. The stick was about knee high and between my legs. I was fairly near to the base so they knew I had gone in and they started out the crash crews. The first guy out there was the Catholic Chaplain."

To be continued...

P-38 JANDINA ARTIFACT FOUND



In late April I received the following Headhunters Facebook page message from Chris "Zippo" Fahey:

"Hey Bob. Hope all is well! Do you have Robbie Robbins (Son of Headhunter Commander and 22 victory Ace J.T. "Cock" Robbins and former F-16 Juvat) contact info? There's a fellow who has the cut out kill flags from Jandina III, maybe II. But he'd like to reunite it with the family!"

I sent Robbie the following email:

Robbie, "Zippo" Fahey is in contact with a guy who has the fuselage cutout of kill markings from Jandina III. He'd like to pass this artifact on to you! Is this a good contact address for you, and what's your current phone number please.

WIG?

Muskrat

Robbie replied with his address, phone number and "Hard to believe. This sounds too good to be true. Thanks to you and Zippo."

Well it was true. Robbie sent the photo above and said that "Bruce Kirk from Suffolk, VA sent him the artifact. His father, Lt Col J. Stokes Kirk was in the Army Corps of Engineers stationed in New Guinea during the war and bought it back to the US. Bruce stated that he, his siblings and grand kids used to take the relic to school to show and tell. Ain't that some shit!"

Also, "The last two blank flags represent the kills my Dad had on 26 Dec 43 – same mission where Porky Cragg was lost. Probably blank while awaiting confirmation. Entire squadron switched to P-38J models on 1 Jan 44. Since first three kills were achieved in a P-38G model, the artifact plane, P-38H-5 (42-66820) may have accounted for 10 victories."

8th FIGHTER WING/JUVATS



U.S. Air Force Col. Christopher Hammond, 8th Fighter Wing commander passes the guide-on to Col Lynn Savage, 8th Operations Group commander during a combined change of command ceremony at Kunsan Air Base, ROK, June 12, 2020. The 8th OG provides the aircrews who fly the wing's F-16's and is composed of the 35th Fighter Squadron, 80th Fighter Squadron, and the 8th Operations Support Squadron. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jessica Blair).

JUVAT JERSEYS AND PARTY SUIT

Tim Vitali, who describes himself as “just a regular guy that’s worn many hats in my life with the ability to adapt” found us through our website and set photos of several sports jersey’s and a party suit he picked up at a flea market! He then mailed them to me so that I might find the rightful owners, or family who would like to re-claim them. If anyone recognizes these names please let me know!





“BOOM”





***“TWIN TAILED LIGHTNING WAS OUR WARPLANE, AS WE ROAM’D PACIFIC SKIES...
SEARCHING OUT, THE SONS OF NIPPON, SENDING THEM TO THEIR DEMISE.”***

