

Aerie News

The Eagles Aerie News of the USAir Soaring Eagles

First Quarter 2020

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Soaring Eagles Write

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Captain Joe Kernan

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It is sometimes difficult to come up with a topic to write about in the Aerie. As I contemplated what to write for the first issue of The Aerie 2020, I decided to include an article that I wrote six years ago about the same time as I was getting actively involved with The Soaring Eagles.

In the period 2000-2004 I was living on a little grass strip near Rehoboth De, and became involved with The Tuskegee Airmen, actually I became a member, hence my connection to the fine gentlemen, and authentic American Hero described in my narrative. If you watched the 2020 Super Bowl opening with the coin toss, or The State of The Union Address where the Tuskegee Airman was recognized, then you too became aware of the name General Charles McGee.

Traditionally February is designated as “Black History Month” or should it be “African American History Month”? my personal view is that neither of those terms should apply as it is actually American History to which African Americans contributed.

" A Wonderful day"

“409 Combat Missions, 94 years old, and still going strong”

In mid-June I had been planning a BBQ for later in the summer, and while searching for something on the computer I stumbled onto a USAIRWAYS site and clicked on a link to the (AADN) African American Diversity Network link within the USAIRWAYS system. Seeing an AADN meeting at Washington's Reagan National Airport as an opportunity to promote the BBQ I was planning. I contacted Bridget Tarkington who is the person in overall charge of the AADN. Bridget asked me that I not use their event to sell BBQ tickets, but being curious by nature I decided that it would still be an opportunity to see what was going on, and I might even meet some of my old friends from Washington with whom I once worked.

I had for sometime, been trying to get my friend Colonel Charles McGee to commit to attending the BBQ since he is an original Tuskegee Airmen having served with distinction in World War 11, Korea, and Viet Nam compiling the record from which I drew the title of this article. I called Colonel McGee and asked him if he would like to attend the AADN meeting with me, so that together we could find out what was going on. He being the gentlemen that he is, readily accepted my invitation, and we made the necessary arrangements for me to pick him up. Since I live some five hours southwest of Washington, D.C. I had to leave my home around three in the morning to allow sufficient time to get to his home outside Washington D.C.

It was decided that we would ride the Washington Metro, as there is a stop within blocks of Colonel McGee's home and a stop right at Reagan National Airport. All during my auto trip to D.C. I was worried about whether my bringing Colonel McGee would somehow overshadow the event guest speaker. Since Colonel McGee is 19 years my senior, as soon as a seat was available on the train, I deferred to him and stood by his side so that we could talk while riding. Sitting about six feet in front of Colonel McGee was a Young man who was facing the center of the subway car, but he could see my "Red Tail" golf shirt. He asked me, "Did you fly?" to which I replied not like he did while pointing to Colonel McGee. I then went on to describe what Colonel McGee had accomplished as an original Tuskegee Airmen, and many within earshot heard me. It was as though I was doing my own little Tuskegee presentation not unlike those that I do from time to time at Schools, churches, and civic groups. When I finished speaking the Young man leaned over to Colonel McGee and said, "May I shake your hand"? Was I proud or what? Apparently, this Young man had a smart phone, and after several minutes, he loudly declared "You're famous" with a very large smile on his face. Colonel McGee is such a humble unassuming person that no one would have known of his accomplishments if I hadn't told them. I could tell that the Colonel was proud, but not as proud as I was to be in the presence of an Authentic American Hero who happens to be African American. As far as the subway ride was concerned the best was yet to come. At a number of subway stops, people who had overheard my description of the then Colonel McGee stopped by his seat as they exited the train to thank him for his service. For me it didn't get any better than this. But wait we're not even to the event yet.

On arrival at the Airport, and since we weren't traveling, special arrangements needed to be made to get us through TSA to the secure part of the Airport where the conference was being held. All of the USAIRWAYS personnel were extremely helpful, they were all over Colonel McGee requesting any number of photographs with him, and also thanking him not only for his service but for coming with me to the event as well. My earlier concerns about the Colonel overshadowing the event were quickly put to rest with the gracious manner in which both Colonel McGee and I were accepted into the group. Toya Allen the Director of Human Resources for USAIRWAYS in Charlotte was the guest speaker and did a wonderful job in covering the subject of "The Emancipation Proclamation". The central theme was that although the "Proclamation" is one hundred fifty years old the results for African Americans is an ongoing process. To me the recent recognition of the accomplishments of the "Tuskegee Airmen" is proof of that premise. We had some light refreshments as people continued to clamor for photographs with Colonel McGee, and I was bubbling over with pride that I was the one that had brought Colonel McGee to the event.

Following the presentation by Toya Allen, the group made its way to a location in front of Reagan National was my friend and fellow USAiRWAYS Pilot Captain Sydney Clark was manning the BBQ Grill for some real food. The Colonel remained the center of attention, and we wasted no time in assisting the group in making the BBQ and hot dogs disappear. The Grill master Sydney Clark is also the Base Chief Pilot for USAIRWAYS at Reagan National Airport. Sydney is African American, so as Toya Allen said, the benefits of the "Emancipation Proclamation", is slowly being felt.

I spoke to a friend who has been in the employ of USAIRWAYS and its predecessor companies for fifty-three years and asked him what he thought of Colonel McGee. His response to me was, "I was in awe of him".

A short walk back to the Metro Station for the ride back to Bethesda Maryland where the Colonel and I parted ways after what can only be described as an absolutely wonderful day spent with my hero and friend Colonel Charles McGee.

Joe Kernan

John H. Porter First State Chapter

Tuskegee Airmen

N-7418-RETA

Mark your calendars for Oct. 23, 24, and 25 for the 2020 reunion.

See you in Tampa.

Joe

(724) 378-7025	FIRST VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	schonevalds64@aol.com
	Flight Attendant Judy Schmidt Colbath	

2020 Got off to a sad start, as I attended Captain Jack Semenko's funeral in December along with Joe Kernan, Al Mondell, and several other Soaring Eagles. Jack will certainly be missed. Not fun, but I suppose part of the aging process. That said, it is all the more important that we get as many people as possible to join the Soaring Eagles and attend the upcoming annual Reunion so that we can reminisce about the "Good Times", while we still can.

Remember the challenge that I issued at the 2019 Reunion to get at least three new members to join and bring them to the 2020 Reunion.

I had been showing my dogs with some success until the coronavirus struck and screwed that up. Hopefully it will be a temporary disruption

Remember the dates: Oct. 23, 24, 25, Tampa Westshore Marriott

See you there,

Judy

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(330) 277-6233

Captain Alvahn Mondell

captalvahn@aol.com

Like most, just sitt'n and await'n. My prayers go out to all!

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

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Flight Attendant Judi Todd

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The other day a group of us were reminiscing about days gone by and one of the "gals" asked me about being a Flight Attendant. I told her I started out as an Airline Hostess with Allegheny Airlines in 1964 as a fluke!!!! They all of course wanted the story so here goes:

I was a physician's assistant for Northern Pittsburgh Medical Associates and was engaged to one of my patients (who was a Pennsylvania State Trooper). Well, his sister saw an ad for Airline Stewardesses for Eastern Airlines and asked me to go with her for the interview. While we were there the recruiter asked me to fill out the application also, and being bored, I did. As it happened, I got hired and my fiancé's sister didn't (which took care of that engagement). As it turned out, Eastern did not have a base in Pittsburgh, and United's base was senior, so I went to Allegheny for an interview and was turned down. hmmmm I got to be thinking, If I could be hired for Eastern and United who did Allegheny think they were to turn me down!!!! I went back over to their offices at the Greater Pittsburgh Airport (in my PA uniform) walked into Don Slept's office and said I was going to fly for them and what class did they want me to be in and he stuttered and flushed and hmmmmed along and finally said "we have a class in two weeks and signed me up And that's how I became a Flight Attendant.

Judi

TREASURER'S MESSAGE

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Captain Paul Sturpe

sturpe@gmail.com

If you haven't paid your dues for 2020 you are now past due. Remember, dues are now to be paid in January instead of during your birthday month. As I mentioned last quarter, PayPal payments are now accepted. If you want to pay your dues via PayPal send them to SoaringEaglesTreas@gmail.com (not case sensitive.)

A reminder once again to check the Soaring Eagles web site often at <https://usairsoaringeagles.org/> The latest news is always posted there and we add new content every week or so. Look for "UPD" on the top menu items to see if there are recent changes or additions to that particular section.

Under the History Tab of the web site are spaces for the history of the airlines that formed USAir. We have sources for Allegheny and Lake Central and that history is being added a few pages at a time. We would like to have history for Mohawk, PSA, Piedmont and America West. If you have appropriate history, please send it to myself or Captain Kernan.

So long until next quarter.

Paul Sturpe, Treasurer

USAir Soaring Eagles Website is available with current daily information

<https://usairsoaringeagles.org/>

“SOARING EAGLES WRITE”

Richard O'Harren reporting from Utah

Glad to report that all is well here in the State of Utah. All of the shortages that everyone is experiencing at the supermarket around the nation is happening here. Toilet paper is in high demand and the market shelves are empty here, however the folks in Utah are tough, and as we've discovered Cactus works well when the prickly parts are removed first before using.

The Costco truck just pulled in and will be unloading soon, hopefully toilet paper will be unloaded first as I've been waiting in line since 5AM, I think a two-year supply ought to do it for now!

Dick O'Harren PSA, US Airways 03/19/20

Fred and Selma Bettis

Fred and Selma have wandered back to Florence SC after spending the winter in their RV in Punta Gorda FL. Looks like we may be staying put a while

Fred is still doing some contract flying and flight instructing. We are both blessed to still be enjoying good health.

We hope all of our Eagles will stay safely in the nest until it is safe to spread our wings again. We also hope this pandemic will be short in duration.

Gloria Todd Collett (Bert and Judi Todd's daughter)

A big thank you to President Joe Kernan for carefully packing and shipping the UsAir print to me. The care and attention is much appreciated!

From Captain Ed Slattery

On March 7, 1949 I was serving as the Flight Agent on a flight with the Crew of Captain Byron Moe, and First Officer Barney Burns. This was the same day that All American Airways initiated roundtrip service between Washington, Baltimore to Pittsburgh with intermediate stops at the following stations, Frederick, Hagerstown and Cumberland Md, McConnellesville/Uniontown Pa., and then on to Allegheny County Airport, All American Airways Headquarters at the time.

We had completed the westbound portion of the trip and were returning to Baltimore/Washington in the reverse order listed above. I had heard some unusual noises coming from the left engine during several takeoffs during the day, but Captain Moe and I were never able to pinpoint any problem with the engine. As we were crossing North Mountain west of Frederick at night the left engine fire warning light

illuminated. Captain Moe instructed me to go look at the left engine, and report back to him. My visual inspection revealed that there was in fact an engine fire that was shooting flames out of the cowling. The engine was immediately shutdown, and the fire went out. The approach was continued single engine to a runway that was only lit with smudge pots every two hundred feet.

The landing was uneventful, but the aircraft couldn't be turned around on the runway with the left engine shutdown. Arrangements were made to get a car to transport the five passengers to the terminal. Knowing that I had owned a BT13 during the war, Capt. Moe asked me if I thought I could get the aircraft to the gate, since we couldn't leave it on the darkened runway. I told him I thought I could and made arrangements to get an older model Oldsmobile and a length of good rope. Once I removed the tailwheel fairing, and unlocked the tailwheel lock I started the one mile per hour trip to the gate. By the time I got to the terminal, Washington maintenance had called, and said, 'Get Slattery to climb up on the wing and tells us what parts we need'. Once I had compiled a list of the needed parts the Mechanics left Washington by cab with tools and parts.

After a late dinner, it was off to bed to get some rest to be ready to fly the same segment the next day. We got a call from the mechanics early the next morning bright and early, advising that the ship was ready to go. All in all, quite a start to my career, and to All American's new service.

Great memories of a Great career

Captain Ed "Slatts" Slattery

604 Spring House CT
Brentwood, TN 37027-4305
2 January 2020

Soaring Eagles
c/o Captain Paul Sturp
8860 Peninsula Dr
Terrel NC 28682

RE: Annual Dues

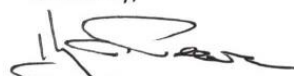
Dear Paul,

Enclosed please find my check for this year's dues.

I am sorry that I did not attend the annual reunion this Fall. I know I missed a good time. There just seemed to be so many things that came up. So many things came up around that time. I will make a stronger effort this Fall.

Thank you for all that you do for the Soaring Eagles. May the new year bring to you health and wealth and the time to enjoy both.

Sincerely,



Harry Pearce

Vince Sbardella

Captain Sturpe: I recently ran across this photo of five retired former, “Mohawkers” at the funeral of Captain Nino Ciancetta, on May 2, 2006, in Daytona Beach. They are, left to right: Vince Sbardella, Bob Nemecek, Carl Pflanze, Jim Johnson, Don Hollinsworth, Jack Wangenstein, and Larry Channing. I thought it might be appropriate for the Aerie photo album section. If so, please forward it to the proper person. Thanks ---- Vince Sbardella



Bill and Mary Jane McGinnis

Bill and Mary Jane McGinnis are moving to a smaller, main floor living space, still in Medina, Ohio, and still a 2-hour drive from GPIT! We drive to see John and Linda Lednak’s gathering in Robinson TWP every August, and see everyone from Pittsburgh!

Snow-birding to FLORIDA after Christmas for the past three years, so Winter is much less dreary and icy! We rent space in the Villages, just south of Ocala, and this year, found Soaring Eagle Joe Kelley and his lovely spouse Teresa, residing in an Airpark between Ocala and our winter rentals! We are busy, socializing puppies from Canine Companions for Independence and are on pup #4!

Jeff Schiller

I’m original US Air hired 1986 (former People Express before that) and retired early on my 59th birthday 6.5 years ago. I miss the camaraderie at work and the European overnights, but not the time zone ping pong and especially the long commute from the W coast. I flew part 135 charter for the first year of retirement as an Fo on several small business jets but was gone more than I wished plus flying a lot of day trips, and hated driving in traffic back and forth to the airport. So just regular retired since then. I

still fly my Piper PA-12 Super Cruiser that I've had for 22 years. Although original US Air, I'm from San Diego so knew many PSA pilots and was based in SAN and LAX for years after the merger. A number of former PSA pilots (plus me) get together at a local restaurant once a month, so I've enjoyed regularly seeing some of my buddies that I've known and flown with over the years. I'm going to miss the get togethers now that we're all confined to eating take out from restaurants and not seeing people socially until the current chaos abates. Of course, all of us retirees are in the vulnerable group if we were to catch the coronavirus, so it's for the best.

Regards,

Jeff Schiller

Don Burrows

1st off, I hope all who are reading this are safe & WELL. These are epic times we're witnessing indeed! I'll try NOT to write a novel. It's been 20 + yrs since I set the parking brake @ CLT gate B-14 on Oct 12th'99. I turned 60 the next day!! Time flies way faster than I ever did. Patti & I downsized & sold our great country place last Nov. & moved into town & so we went from being "country bumpkins" to "city slickers". It made sense to do this while we could still call the shots & since we still know what day it is & who we are. Life turns on a dime & doesn't always give back change, righteeoooo?? I/we do miss our elbow room & large shop/garage but we're in a very nice area across from the golf course. Gotta break out & dust off the clubs & see if I can tell the difference 'tween a steam iron & a 9 iron! After retirement, I immersed myself in things Masonic, (I've been one for 53 yrs!) & am a Past Master twice, immediate past Grand Tyler of the Grand Lodge of Oregon & a Knight Commander in the Scottish Rite & a Shriner. I'm also a 5 time chaplain of the Baker Elks. I was active on the Sumpter Valley Narrow Gauge Rwy (we run steam eng's, 1 oil fired, the other wood) as head & rear brakemen & did some conductor work too. I also ran the fire train, just in case!!! Patti retired from nursing & has found a talent in art & so after we sold the horses, she dove into that & has really improved. I'm pleased & happy for her. Miss the paychecks & flying in good wx with a good crew but these here daze, I don't even want to fly off the handle. Yikes! I got to do what I always wanted to do since I was a lil' kid, even though Frank Lorenzo disturbed my flight plan along with many others too. keep the blue side up all, unless you're a-doing an airshow. Keep the faith, we'll get through all this just like we did on 9-11. GODSPEED to you & yours. Don Burrows in Baker City, Or.

Hi All,

Lynn and I are spending more and more time up in Sacramento. We bought a small house near my daughter and her family which includes a wonderful granddaughter. My son Adam and his wife are holding down the fort in San Diego. He has finally come around to deciding that a pilot career is the best way to go. Never too late I say. Lynn and I have been going back and forth on Southwest up until recently. It's a difficult drive. I continue to volunteer for the local Scripps Ranch Civic Association, and so far staying healthy.

Jim and Lynn Caughey

worrying won't stop
the bad stuff from happening
it just stops you
from enjoying the good.

