



A Word from Willie

Society of Wild Weasels Newsletter May 2021



CINCWW's Corner

Fellow Weasels,

It's official, the Weasel Reunion is a go 7-10 Oct this year in Phoenix. The theme for this reunion is Desert Storm - 30 Years. Details in a separate piece

below. As we cautiously creep out of the COVID shadow, we are mindful on this upcoming Memorial Day of those fellow warriors who made the ultimate sacrifice in defending our Constitution. May your Memorial Day this year be a time you can reflect on all those Weasels that have gone before us whether it's KIA, MIA or RIP.

Budman continues to improve Word from Willie and in this edition is a recap of a zoom call between he and four of the Weasels who were rapidly deployed in response to the Pueblo crisis in Jan 1968. In addition to the usual fare, you will also find updates from the Aircrew Medical Issues Committee, on the USAFA Cadet Sq 35 Wild Weasel Dayroom, and added histories and inputs at the Weasel Web Site. We are pleased to recognize Wild Weasel #2551, Mr. Jeffrey Duford for his work on the National Museum of the Air Force Weasel Southwest Asia exhibit and I think you will enjoy the article and pictures.

I hope to see all of you at the Phoenix Reunion, with the pandemic "hopefully" fading in the rear-view mirror it's time to reconnect. This reunion promises to be special.

Uke

YGBSM!

Financials

As of today, we have \$58,395.82 in our bank account.

Membership Update

Fallen Wild Weasels

[Frank A Buchanan](#), WW #1255, Pilot, F-105G, 22 Apr 2021

[Ronald L "Laughing Bear" Davenport](#), WW #378, EWO, F-105F, 24 Apr 2021

[Joshua T "Skip" Day III](#), WW #657, Pilot, F-105/F-4, 15 Jan 2021

Thomas H Edge, WW #1111, Pilot, F-105, 10 Nov 2020

[James P "The Great Fake" Fake](#), WW #1058, EWO, F-105, 28 Jun 2019

William N Holway, WW #2482, EWO, F-4G, 31 Jan 2021

[Joseph M Moriarty](#), WW #1330, Pilot, F-4/F-16, 8 Mar 2021

[James P Qualey Jr](#), WW #943, Pilot, F-105G, 10 Apr 2012

David T Roen, WW #1091, EWO, F-105G, 2 Feb 2017

[Clarence H Sonderman](#), WW #978, Pilot, F-105G, 23 Jul 2011

[Robert M "Tommy" Thompson](#), WW #151, Pilot, F-105F/G, 16 Mar 2021

[Robert P White](#), WW #455, Pilot, F-105, 13 Dec 2010

Patti Sheridan, Wife of Francis "Frosty" Sheridan, 10 May 2021 who was active in Nam POWs, Wild Weasel Society and the River Rats

Our Condolences to their families, friends, and brothers in arms. Hand Salute! Rest in Peace!

Chili

New Members

We welcome the following new members:

Cole Burton, WW #2812, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Dave Cannon, WW #2814, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Shayne Davern, WW #2816, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Adam Dengler, WW #2817, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Brittany Dippel, WW #2818, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Mark Habermeyer, WW #2819, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Kelly A Jackson, WW #2809, Cadet

Jordan Kendall, WW #2820, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Jeremy Krohngold, WW #2821, Fighter Pilot, F-16

McKenzie L Mercer, WW #2808, Cadet

Ambrose Morris, WW #2822, Fighter Pilot, F-16

Bryan Mussler, WW #2810, Pilot, F-16

Clarke Niles, WW #2823, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Nick Seto, WW #2824, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Aaron Tollon, WW #2825, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Zachary Vohs, WW #2826, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Marcus Ward, WW #2827, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Connor Watson, WW #2828, Fighter Pilot, F-16
Michael D Willhide, WW #2829, Pilot, F-16
Kennedy Bryan, WW #2830, Pilot, F-4G
William Kinworthy, WW #2831, Pilot, F-4G

Surviving Family Members

Arlene Day, WW #657
Mary Holway, WW #2482

If you know of family members who qualify, have them contact us
at membership@wildweasels.org.
Chili

Medical Report for the May Word from Willie by Phil (Quack Bear) Steeves

Next major mission for the Aviator Medical Issues Committee (AMIC)

The Aviator Medical Issues Committee of the River Rats has been justifiably proud of its contribution to the success of getting Section 750, the Cancer in Military Aviation Study, passed as part of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It's now a congressional mandate, and I've already been contacted indirectly by someone at the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine regarding some information gathered in the River Rat survey last year. Working with Congress, we deliberately fought for the DOD to have the lead, not the VA, hoping for a better response. We will be following it as closely as we can. So now we are starting another similar mission, this time investigating what seems to be an abnormal frequency of spine difficulties in the population of those of us who flew high performance jets. We are calling it High-G RSI (Repetitive Strain Injuries).

So now we are starting another similar mission. First to get the VA to recognize these medical problems as inherent in flying fighters, and thus to get them to the position that they automatically award proper disability compensation;

and second to see if the DOD can mitigate the problem in those who are currently flying. The AMIC will fly the same mission profile for High-G RSI that we flew for the Cancer in Fighter Pilots mission, starting with a survey in the MiG Sweep. This time, we will try to expand the initial survey to include other orgs of fighter pilots, trying to capture more Navy and Marine pilots at the initial phase. Therefore, be looking for the High-G RSI Survey, planned for the next MiG Sweep. And just as for the Cancer survey, I expect that all Wild Weasels will want to get their experience into the record in this survey. It will be brief, and it will be sterilized of any personal info.

On another note, the Corona virus vaccination program is proceeding well, and the nation is beginning to open again, some states better than others as to be expected, increasing optimism for our reunions this Fall. Hope to see you all in Phoenix and Dayton later this year. As I tell my wife who gets confused between the Weasels and Rats, “All Weasels are Rats, but not all Rats are Weasels.

Editor’s Note: (The High-G RSI Survey is now OPEN. Accessible at the RRVA website. Go to the RRVA Website to access the survey—link below. It will be staying open till the end of CY 2021.)

[MEDICAL - Red River Valley Fighter Pilot Association \(river-rats.org\)](http://river-rats.org)

A Willie Weasel Interview with Mr. Jeffrey Duford

Jeff Duford was a National Museum of the Air Force Curator for many years and his work helped create many of the Wild Weasel exhibits that are near and dear to the heart of our warriors. He served as the overall Curator for the Weasel Southeast Asia exhibit and for years has been the subject matter expert on the Wild Weasel history for the active Air Force. He has recently taken a job as Air Force Research Lab historian and he will be missed but will do great things for the AFRL. In this article we look at Jeff and get his thoughts on the Museum, the Wild Weasel exhibits and give a great vote of thanks for making our history available to millions (his words).

How did you get started in history?

“From an early age I started reading about airplanes, then my family took me to the National Museum of the Air Force when I was 8 and I really think of that as a seminal moment in my life and set my course.”

Jeff went on to graduate with a master's in history from Eastern Michigan, and after graduation he took an internship at the Museum in 1998 and later became a Curator. For the Museum as a Curator, he became over the years a subject matter expert on missions, building a great knowledge of the objects (artifacts) from missiles to weapons to ground equipment, the planning/design of galleries, aircraft restoration, understanding of configurations, curate exhibits, work on contents, responsibility for the overall project and how it meshed within the Museum.

When Jeff became the Curator for the Wild Weasel Southeast Asia project, he reached out to lots of Weasel Veterans and was amazed by the turnout and the products he received. From conversations with Leo Thorsness who was awarded the Medal of Honor on a Weasel mission to understanding the risk and success of the first Wild Weasels he became passionate about the SE Asia story of the WWs from the F-100s through the F-105s and the F-4Cs.

As Jeff so elegantly put it in his interview, “It was a Life experience working with the Weasels. Spending time working with people who raised their hand and said send me was amazing.” Jeff went on to add, “it was incredible to me that I could ask people to give away their treasured artifacts and because of the generosity of the WW donors, millions of people have read about the Wild Weasels.” Jeff became so enamored of the mission and the people he met that he and his wife count them as lifelong friends today. Over his fireplace he has “First in Last Out” and in his office at work “Big Brass Ones” to remind him of the legacy of the Wild Weasel Mission.



The F-100 Exhibit at the National Museum

Jeff took some great lessons from his work at the Museum as a Curator for the Wild Weasels, “Small teams of talented people can do amazing things.” He felt the Weasel mission from start to deployment to Vietnam was a success in rapid acquisition that the Air Force strives to recreate today. Jeff went on to state, “The time from the first aircraft loss to a SAM (July 24, 1965) to the first Weasel kill of a SAM (Dec 22, 1965) by Allen Lamb and Jack Donovan was 5 months. The contract was signed on a board and a photograph taken for records. The Electronic Warfare gear was designed into the F-100 taking advantage of an expert in the system who could look at the design of each black box and say, put it there.”

As a great Air Force historian Jeff has carried these lessons into practical application by teaching an acquisition course to young Captains who are eager to understand how rapid technology can be achieved. He tries to blend the current state of industry rapid development to the historical success in rapid complex systems that the Air Force has accomplished.

What is next for Jeff as he becomes the senior Historian for the Air Force Research Lab (AFRL)? His new goals are simple:

- Provide knowledge that is relevant to the warfighter now!
- Learning from your history increases your odds for today
- History is actionable and provides a set of tools to the warfighters.
- Speed matters in acquisition

Jeff has been a great Air Force Historian and a great teller of the Wild Weasel story. As Wild Weasel #2551 he has been a great contributor to the Society. **The Wild Weasel Society thanks him for his service to his country and his skill and passion in being a guiding light for yesterday, today and tomorrow!**



Jeff's closing remarks, "Tell the Wild Weasels I love them"

Editor's Note: Jeff's views of how history needs to be captured/taught and his pride in telling the Wild Weasel story is exemplary. We are lucky that he has been a great part of our history and I am proud to know him!

Word from Willie Salutes

Cadets **McKenzie Mercer** and **Kelly Jackson**

for their great work on a CS legacy room featuring the Wild Weasels!!

The United States Air Force Academy brought cadet squadron 35 to inception in 1969 and it reflected the courage of the Wild Weasel aviators and was especially dedicated to the F-105 Weasel crews. Today's 35 CS patch illustrates the Weasel always on the attack!



Two cadets who really enjoy their time in the 35 CS decided to build on the Wild Weasel legacy and as sophomores (they are just finishing their junior year in 2021) reached out to people attempting to do what none of the other squadrons have been able to do and build a legacy room celebrating the Wild Weasel heritage of the 35th.

Cadets McKenzie Mercer (MinM) and Kelly Jackson (KJ) both aspire to be aviators and hope one day to fly in the Wild Weasel mission. Their aim was simple as MinM put it, "Our generation is known as one that doesn't understand history and I believe that it's important to recognize what has been done and we wanted to build that legacy within the 35th." They contacted a number of people and one of the ones that helped immediately was Col. (Ret) Andi Biancur (USAF Class of 1960 and their honor representative) who has since flown West. MinM and KJ stated they "wanted to do this for the freshmen so they could share that sense of pride in the legacy of the 35th." With the Colonel's help as well as others,

the Cadets were able to make a great start on the room as the pictures below illustrate:



35 Cadet Squadron Replica Bar



A Close Up of one of the Engravings



Patches and Coins Celebrating the Heritage

From Jack Donovan's YGBSM as a great logo to Shadow Boards from former Wild Weasel members of CS 35, MinM and KJ have done a great job. There are pictures of some of the more well-known Wild Weasels and many more photos to be added. The replica bar engraved with the F-100, F-105, F-4G and the F-16 would be a great addition to any squadron area. They are truly doing amazing work.



The Wild Weasel Society, with Stan Goldstein, have been mentors and we have recently deferred some of the out-of-pocket costs to support their efforts and our heritage. To understand that the Cadets were paying for frames and other things from their own pockets and to see what they have accomplished makes us feel secure and proud of these two soon-to-be officers! Curt Emery is now the Wild Weasel on-station in Colorado Springs mentor for the efforts. One of the ongoing projects is to provide models of the different Weasels for display in the legacy room. As the Cadets build out the room, we might come back to all of you for memorabilia but right now they are working on gathering more pictures of famous Wild Weasels.



Mike Worden's Donated Shadowbox

A job extremely well-done by two Cadets who wanted to make a better place for the cadets that will follow them. They understand that history is important and fell in love with a mission that we honor and cherish!

Cadets

Mckenzie Mercer and Kelly Jackson

Well Done!!

The Wild Weasels and the USS Pueblo

The United States military was challenged on all fronts in 1968. In late January North Vietnam and its allies would stage the Tet Offensive which was predicated on the hopes that the South Vietnamese population would rise and join the attackers. A reform minded government in Czechoslovakia was invaded by members of the Warsaw Pact and returned behind the Iron Curtain. In Korea on January 20, 31 men of North Korea's KPA Unit 124 had crossed the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and killed 26 South Koreans to attack the South Korean Blue House (executive mansion) in Seoul.

On January 23, the USS Pueblo which was attached to Navy intelligence as a spy ship, was attacked and captured by North Korean forces. The boat had been sent by Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson and its mission, approved by then-President Johnson's National Security Council, was to intercept communications from communist North Korea. As part of Cold War reconnaissance, the Navy and the National Security Agency wanted an update on North Korea's military, and the Pueblo—a specialized spy ship packed with advanced sensors and sensitive encryption devices—was the tool for the job.



USS Pueblo with NK as a backdrop

The seizure of the U.S. Navy ship and her 83 crew members, one of whom was killed in the attack and the abuse and torture of her crew during the subsequent 11-month prisoner drama became a major Cold War incident, raising tensions between western and eastern powers. U.S. forces had been on alert in Korea and the Pacific theater prior to the capture of the Pueblo but now a war in Korea or at least a rescue attempt was on the planning table. North Korea at the time had a million-man army and had been supplied by both Russia and China with Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs) which were SA-2 predominantly and radar guided Antiaircraft (AAA) ranging from 23 MM to 85 MM and the capital city (Pyongyang) was almost as dense a threat as Hanoi in North Vietnam. Part of the plan was to destroy the North Korean Air Force and that meant destroying the Air Bases in the heart of the threat with their SAMs and AAA. Planners quickly decided that Wild Weasels were needed, and the order went out to deploy to Korea.

At Nellis AFB the latest class of Wild Weasels in the F-105F had just finished their pre-graduation party with their instructors downtown when they were alerted in the morning that they would be traveling to South Korea for a classified mission. With a real world need it was determined that the student crews had “graduated” and were on their way with their instructors to a possible war in the Korean peninsula.

Fortunately for the graduates the bulk of the crews would be experienced instructors and would be augmented by crews from Kadena, Nellis and McConnell Air Force Bases and when the 7 aircraft left Nellis, 6 were manned by instructors. This blending of the experienced crews, instructors and newly graduated students would have to blend together and be ready for combat. Fortunately there was great leadership and the crews worked hard to protect South Korea and be ready for North Korea if war came.



Blended Warriors At the Ready!



Graduate Party!

. Getting the crews ready and mission planning was based on the “hurry up you are late principle” and 7 aircraft started their mission within days using tankers to hop from Nellis through Hawaii through Guam and finally into Osan AFB. The crews remembered the deployment as very tough since they were completely caught unawares of any plans and had enjoyed the graduation party. It was a “take care of your wingman” approach that had everyone ready to go to war by the time they landed and learned the specifics of the war plan.



Mission Planning



January in Korea is cold and immediately going on alert was tough duty. Part of the time was sitting in the cockpit freezing and part of the time was used to run hot generator air to ensure the aircraft was ready in case they were needed. There was also both familiarization training and wartime mission prep to accomplish so the days and nights were busy. The Weasels were even given some low-level flights just south of the border to become accustomed to the terrain and

to missions they might fly to get into North Korea. In addition, planning ranged from attacking the North Korea Air Force (and the radar threats) to throwing everything to stop a possible North Korean invasion. The 90-day deployment was a good time for the Weasels to refine tactics, get to know the Korean terrain and the North Korean threat while being ready. After 90 days the Weasels were redeployed and would go on to tours in Vietnam and back to Nellis to train more Weasels or to their operational units.



Ready for Action

After months of negotiation and tremendous heroism by the crew under torture and abuse the sailors were released on 23 December and the USS Pueblo became a tourist attraction for North Korea.

Links to interesting stories about the USS Pueblo:

[The Time the U.S. Nearly Nuked North Korea Over a Highjacked Spy Ship | Smart News | Smithsonian Magazine](#)

[USS Pueblo captured - HISTORY](#)

Wild Weasel History Update

Your SoWW Historians, Frank and Larry, are following developments at the 35th Cadet Legacy Room and the Weasel portion of the River Rat Museum.

If any Weasels have items they wish to donate to museums or the SoWW, contact us (larlemieux@aol.com, fjalfter@gmail.com) as we can facilitate finding the best homes for donations.



Keep your coin handy! ROE is in effect!

Upcoming Events (with COVID-19 new dates)

Wild Weasel Reunion – Phoenix

Schedule:

6 Oct - ADVON arrives for setup

7 Oct - Main body arrives. Buffet dinner at Comfort Inn conference room/hospitality suite

8 Oct - Buses to Luke AFB for 56 FW Mission Brief, F-35 flight line crawl, Wild Weasel Memorial

Wreath Ceremony, and buffet lunch at Club.

Back to hotel for a break followed by the Business meeting mid-afternoon.

Return to Luke Club for Friday night Flight Suit Party and light dinner buffet. RTB

9 Oct - AM up to mid-afternoon open for optional events. (see below)

Buses to Luke for Banquet Dinner buffet in a hangar setting. Guest Speaker and

Awards. RTB

10 Oct - Depart

Hotel Information:

Primary Hotel

Comfort Suites

9824 W Camelback, Glendale, AZ 85305

Reservation phone #: (623) 271-9005

Hotel Link: [//www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/GT85G7](http://www.choicehotels.com/reservations/groups/GT85G7)

Added info:

50 rooms available - majority are with double queen and rest are single king

Rate: \$119 a night for all - mention you are with the WW reunion

Usual cancellation rules, group rate ends 5 Sep

If using link, disregard 4 Oct start. The Manager did that to get a better rate for any who may have wanted to come early

This hotel has a conference room we'll be using for hospitality suite and visiting

Overflow Hotel

Holiday Inn

6151 N 99th Ave, Glendale, AZ 85305

Reservation phone # (602) 603-5800

Hotel Link: Wild Weasels Reunion Group

HTML-

https://www.holidayinn.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=HI&localeCode=en®ionCode=1&hotelCode=PHXBH&_PMID=99801505&GPC=WWR&cn=no&viewfullsite=true

Added info:

Starting with 15 rooms available, Manager says she will add rooms as needed
Rate: \$119 a night. Same cancellation and cutoff date rules.

Brand new hotel - ribbon cutting will be 1 Jun

About 1 mile North of Comfort Suites, across the freeway from the Arizona Cardinals and Phoenix Coyote stadiums

Driving Information:

From the North

I-17 to Loop 101 West (Freeway). Loop 101 will turn South. Exit at Camelback Rd for Comfort Suites. Hotel 1/4 mile NW from exit

From the East or West

I-10 to Loop 101 North. Exit at Camelback Rd.

Comfort Suites is approximately 22 driving miles WNW of Sky Harbor Int'l Airport

Some activities available in the area:

1. Heard Museum - Native Am artifacts/displays going back 10,000 years including the Anasazi and Hohokam Cliff Dwelling Cultures, and Pueblo through more modern-day Hopi, Navajo and Apache artifacts, pottery, jewelry
2. Desert Botanical Gardens - extensive displays of all cactus types, trees (e.g. palo verde, Joshua, ironwood) cholla, ocotillo, desert flowers, and more
3. West Gate entertainment district with multiple dining and night-club venues. Also, AZ Cardinals Football and Phoenix Coyote Hockey stadiums and Trager Outlet Malls - 1.5 mile from hotel
4. Top Golf- 1 mile from hotel
5. Luke's Falcon Dunes Golf Course - recognized several times as USAF or DoD best
6. Desert Diamond Casino - large Vegas style casino with full up black jack, poker, roulette, craps, slots, etc. - 3 miles from hotel
7. Down town "Old Glendale", out of the 1950s and features several antique shops, coffee shops, etc.
8. Cabelas Outlet - 2 miles from hotel
9. Hot Air Ballooning (information for booking personal balloon flights)
10. NFL game Sunday on Sun. (49ers at Cardinals)
11. Potential Coyotes NHL game. Season starts 5 Oct, schedule not yet released.

You will be getting information on most of the above in your "goodie bags" at check in.

Suggested day trips if you'd like to like to come a day or two early or stay later.

1. Grand Canyon (requires National Park Pass)
2. Sedona and the Red Rocks Country
3. Tombstone - the town too tough to die.

Notes:

As I am still working meal and transportation costs, I hope to have registration information and costs to each of you by mid June via e-mail and WW Web Site. Note the NFL schedule was just released this past week and there is a 10 Oct (Sunday) game against the 49ers Suggest you make your hotel reservations soonest as I expect any rooms that may have still been available outside our blocked rooms will go fast.

The planned Memorial Wreath Service at the reunion will announce the names of all Weasels who have passed since the last reunion or those who passed earlier but we just became aware of since. Also, any MIAs found and returned home.

Uke

2021 DFC Society Reunion Update: Riders on the Storm—Desert Storm
9/23/2021 » 9/26/2021

River Rat Reunion, now in Dayton Ohio (<https://www.river-rats.org/events/EventDetails.aspx?id=1420649>) moved to 27-31 Oct

Contact: greg.lewis@river-rats.org

Warhawk Nation Reunion (has not been rescheduled as of this time), POC Pete Zimowski reunion, (petezimo@me.com)

(Warhawk website: <http://greatwarhawknation.com/>)

What is in the next issue of Word from Willie!

A look at our new CSAF and his work to improve Air Force Electronic Warfare
A look at the Air Force's new Electronic Wing and its Mission
Operations Update and the F-16 CJs
The F-35 and the SEAD Mission

We are open to any ideas you have—let us know if you want to see a special article!

Links of Interest (in this section we will periodically scan links for reading):

[Home - AUP Hot Topic: Desert Storm: 30th Anniversary - AUL LibGuides at Air University Library](#)

This is the parent page for all books, articles etc. for the 30th Anniversary of DESERT STORM

[Memorial Day: Complete History, Meaning, Facts & Traditions \(usmemorialday.org\)](#)

A great site celebrating Memorial Day

[EA-18G Growler | NAVAIR \(navy.mil\)](#)

Naval Air Systems Command introduction to the Growler

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