

Fred Weems' 20th Reunion Gift to the Cadet Wing

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From: Fred Weems [sleepvark@hotmail.com]

Sent: Friday, November 30, 2007 1:28 PM

To: Jim Carlson

Okay, Jim, here's my story about our 20th Reunion. I hope you're right about the running of the statute of limitations . . .

The 20 year reunion was my first reunion – and I was getting a little bored with being so nice all the time. Then Saturday came along, and with it the football game.

My Warthog squadron sent a 4-ship to be in the flyby for the game. One of the guys graciously consented to step aside and let me fly in his place in the flyby. There were 3 green hogs and 1 grey one. For a number of reasons, including having the most grey hair, being the oldest, etc., I got the grey one, and flew as the slot in the slot. We of course flew the lowest and tightest formation of any of the many flybys that day, and all I ever said was "four!"

After putting the airplanes up for the night, we stopped by a store and got a couple of cases of beer. When we got to the stadium, we stuffed beers into our many flightsuit pockets and sloshed into the fray.

Once inside, we found ourselves in a sea of thirsty cadets. The need in their eyes was manifest, so we gave away all our beers to the kids, who seemed grateful. But here's the problem; where would we now get beer at such a time and place?

The only logical choice was the general's box. One of my troops had been unceremoniously thrown out of that facility the year before, so there was some trepidation expressed. I just told them to follow my lead and hit my smoke, and pressed on. They loyally followed.

The first issue upon arrival was how to enter the general's box. Quietly, perhaps? Not my style. I had one of the boys unlatch the door, and I promptly kicked it open, marched in as if I owned the place, and announced to all and sundry that we were the Hog drivers that had put on that magnificent flyby, and that we were there to drink their beer, eat their food and molest the women.

You have to understand that none of the ladies present in that facility had been properly molested by a fighter pilot in, well, a long, long time. Again, the need was manifest. I got up close and personal to the nastiest old hag I could find, pinched her in the ass, and told her in no uncertain terms to ditch the jerk, come with me and we'll have a good time. My boys did me proud by courageously following suit.

The ladies did their part, giggled like high school virgins, if there ever was such a thing, and we were in. It was a totally successful takeover.

At one point, when things were going smoothly and we were all comfortably enjoying the beer and the game, one of the generals told me that he would really like to get a ride in a hog sometime. I told him he wasn't qualified. It got real quiet, and my boys started getting a little nervous. The general allowed as to the fact that he had flown a number of exotic aircraft, and what was it that made me feel he wouldn't be qualified to ride in a warthog.

With all attending paying rapt attention, I explained to him that there were no 2-seaters or family sedans available in the hog fleet, and that the only person who would qualify for a ride with me would have to be a scantily clad nubile wench with large American breasts, and that he wasn't qualified. I then pinched the gal I was standing next to on the ass, she started giggling uncontrollably, and the whole crowd followed suit, much to the relief of my squadron mates. This exchange did more to cement our continuing relationship with the crowd up there than anything else I can remember.

In the end, we were the only ones left in the box. We had indeed drunk their beer, eaten their food, shit in their toilets, and molested the women. We were large and in charge – and very ugly to boot.

But that wasn't the end. There had to be more! So we drove over to the cadet area where, as a class we were supposed to dine at Mitch's. I gave up early on that idea, and talked the guy who was driving our rental car to drive up the ramp and circle the terrazzo, then go up the ramp to the Cadet Chapel.

We stopped by some doolie who was marching along, and asked him where the terrazzo was. The poor kid was a little nonplussed, but recovered enough to let us know that we were indeed on the terrazzo. I had him carry on, and let him escape.

There were two rental cars, and the driver of the other one took a lot of verbal abuse before he finally got up the courage to drive up the ramp and go straight to the chapel to rejoin. Okay, we had regained proper formation integrity. Now what?

We went to visit the Dirty Dozen, my old squadron, but shortly thereafter was that distinctive call for all the cadet criminals to assemble at the tour pad. Now this I had to attend! Tours were my life back when I was a cadet.

I grabbed about 4 or 5 of their rifles and marched with them, regaling them with stories of gross buffoonery I had so often committed, trying my best to let them know that it's okay to f*** up – just don't give up. Hang in there, it'll be worth it in the end when you become a fighter pilot. The kids were paying rapt attention.

In the meantime, my squadron-mates were getting restless. None of them had spent the kind of quality time I had on the tour pad, and didn't see the charm in hanging out and walking around. So we decided to do a command post takeover.

My boys constituted one of the finest goon squads ever assembled. They were all grads, and most of them had been jocks of one sort or another, mostly football and hockey, with a smattering of wrestling and rugby. So when we took over the command post, it was physical, with cross body blocks and aggressive checking. I was then presented with the PA system. The campus was mine to rule.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I used to stay up at night to contemplate the most inane, senseless and downright stupid announcement anyone could make, and I had been carrying it inside me for two decades. This was my big chance.

"Attention in the area, attention in the area. All cadets who have not done so must do so immediately or form 10's will be issued. I say again, all cadets who have not done so, must do so immediately or form 10's will be issued. Command Post out."

The phone bank lit up in a gratifying fashion, confused voices pleading "Do what? We'll do whatever it is, just don't go writing us up, please!"

Then it hit me. I could do something really meaningful!

"Attention in the area, attention in the area. All tours for this weekend are canceled; credit will be given in the name of the class of '75 Liberation Committee. I say again . . ."

There was a cheer from the tour pad when we started to depart! Then I stopped short. I just knew that some sort of adult authority was probably going to show up and try to undo what we had accomplished. So we waited in ambush.

Sure enough, not three minutes later some Captain with his pet Wing staffer showed up demanding to know what was going on. He found himself surrounded by my goon squad, knuckles dragging, toothy grins and all. The captain looked like he wanted to soil himself.

I stepped in to advise him that we were the Warthog drivers of the magnificent football game flyby, and that for a number of reasons, such as the sound thrashing our football team had administered (we had won really big), my own 20-year reunion, and his own continued good health, he should promptly and without delay sign off all these kids for the weekend quota of tours. The good captain readily agreed, and started signing off all and sundry with great enthusiasm.

In all my 21 years of service, this was by far the most heroic action of my career. As you all know, we were the seventeenth class to graduate. There were no 20-year reunions while we were there. I could have really used a break from the tour pad on any generic weekend.

So that was my gift to the institution: amnesty for a weekend. I trust they used it well.