

Remembering George G. Cusack (1931 - 1969)



George Over Grand Canyon in A4
(Photo by Curt Osborne)



George's First Aircraft as Command Pilot

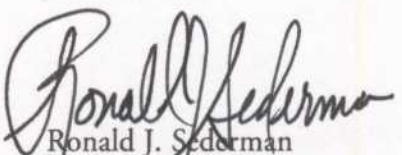
April 27, 2002

To: George and Dawn Cusack II
From: Former fellow pilots and friends of George G. Cusack
Subject: Remembrances of the man

- I. Kerry initiated contact with those that would perhaps best remember George G. Cusack (outside of family) as a person in his occupational specialty; to wit, Eastern Air Lines Flight Captain and Marine Aviator. The result appears as enclosures in the form of letters and photos as follows:
- a. Military and Air Line Pilot History.
 - b. Photos as US Marine Corps Seargeant serving during the Korean War.
 - c. Correspondence in December 1969 from Air Line Pilots Association following his death.
 - d. Inquiry of Kerry Woodilla to "the rEAL World", Official Newsletter of the Silver Falcons (Retired Eastern Pilots Association) and responses of Bill Malone, Sandy McCulloh, C.P. (Kit) Baker and Ed Bruce.
 - e. Pall Bearers at Georges funeral were Jerry Mitchell, Ron Sederman, "Pierre" LeClaire, Curt Osborne, "Smokey" Sherman, and Dick Brooks. (Honorary pall bearers were all the Eastern Air Line Pilots on the Eastern seaboard that were not committed to flights on December 9, 1969.) Smokey died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) many years ago, Dick Brooks recently lost his wife and could not respond. Letters (with photos) by Curt and Lurancy Osborne, Jerry Mitchell, Pierre LeClaire and Ron Sederman appear as enclosures.
 - f. Miscellaneous photos.

- II. We trust that his pamphlet achieves the goal for the benefit of George II and his new bride, Dawn, toward having some insight, through words and pictures, of the George G. Cusack that may well not have been recognized as an integral part of your life and destiny together. Of no minor importance is the underlying benefit that inures to your siblings and mother who will simultaneously receive a copy of this brochure. It should also be of great significance in the order of primogeniture that the 13 grandchildren, presently, and these to come (hopefully as blessing's to your union in marriage) will be able to share and have some understanding of the man remembered by this pamphlet.

God bless you both and your families.


Ronald J. Sederman
Memorabilia Coordinator

Military and Air Line Pilot History

George G. Cusack enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in February 1950, and, after completing "Boot Training" at Paris Island, South Carolina, and a tour of duty at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, served overseas with an Anti-Aircraft Battalion during the Korean War. While in this combat area he was promoted to sergeant and recommended for Officers Candidate School, which he attended upon his return to the United States.

Upon graduation from Officers Candidate School he was commissioned a second lieutenant and attended the Officers Basic School at Quantico, Virginia. He then received orders to flight training at Pensacola, Florida and advanced training at Corpus Christi, Texas.

After completion of flight training, George was designated a Naval Aviator and joined Marine Attack Squadron at Opa Locka (Miami), Florida, where he served as a special weapons delivery pilot until his release from active duty in January, 1957.

Following his release from active duty, George joined Marine Attack Squadron -322 at NAS, South Weymouth. Over the next twelve years as a pilot with this jet squadron flying Cougar (F9F-6), Sabre (FJ's), and Skyhawk (A4) aircraft he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and became Executive Officer of the squadron. On 6 December 1969, he was killed while flying a T33 with Captain Alan Holbrook as the rear seat dual pilot.

His civilian occupation was with Eastern Airlines. He started in 1957 rising to the position of Captain as well as Chairman of the Boston Council of Eastern Airlines Master Executive Council.



CIRCA 1951 - Korea



CIRCA 1951 - Japan (R&R)



CIRCA 1951 - Japan (R&R)



CIRCA 1952 - Fishing



Summer 1959 NAS Olathe, Kansas

George

LeClaire



Mitchell

Sederman

20 October, 2001

Dear George II,

We think you should know about your dad from people who worked and played with him and had our own vision of him.

Without a doubt George was one of the most unusual persons I ever knew. We both worked for Eastern Air Lines and flew in the same squadron at South Weymouth.

Our first impression of George was "a tall, skinny bean pole guy who was a little shy and awkward."

Our first social outing was a skating affair at a local pond where George was a total disaster. Most of the time horizontal! He told me he would learn to skate. I can't imagine the spills and bumps he must have endured but later in the season he shows up skating as if he were born on skates. You don't learn skating overnight, George did!

At a social function with dinner and dancing George again reminded me of a centipede trying to arrange his feet. "I'll learn to dance", says George. The next function we attended together, George looked like Fred Astaire. How does he do it?

Bodybuilding was the next adventure. He devoured a library full of books on conditions, nutrition, you name it. Months later out pops Mr. Muscleman, a completely changed person. Your dad was one dedicated person!

One day George told me he was upset that a big restaurant north of Boston was flying the American flag in the rain. He stopped in and gave the management a pamphlet on proper flag display. Was George taken seriously? Eventually!! Because he stopped by day after day after day.

Steve Perlin, one of your squadron mates, skipped off the ground in an ordinance demonstration and was killed. George accompanied the body to Long Island for burial and somehow dug up all the relevant rules and ceremonies for this sad occasion. He about drove the mortuary people crazy, but the result was a proper and suitable Marine burial. God bless the dedicated!

Our family and the Cusacks skied in Vermont a few times. If guts was all it took to be a good skier, George would have been great. The truth was George was a danger to himself and anyone else on the slopes. George was going to be a skier!! The next year we all just waved goodbye as George picked the advance trails and left us behind to wonder how he became so good. I sure haven't a clue.

George became our squadron X.O. and at the same time he was the local executive council chairman of the pilot's union in Boston. He never ceased to amaze me. When he saw something that needed doing or he wanted to do he just "did it". I don't have any idea how he accomplished some of the things but they got done.

Now to give Jean her due where it is deserved. Jean went through all these transformations with a dedication that only military and airline people know. Kids, dogs, moving, sickness, nights alone, midnight call-outs. The whole magilla.

George you come from super stock. Your dad was literally one of a kind and didn't seem to fit any mold. You should carry on the tradition.

Be a good Cusack



Love,

Curt & Lurancy Osborne

Curt and Lurancy Osborne



General Leek inspecting Captain George G. Cusack, Platoon Commander, at annual military inspection - 1960



CIRCA 1961 - NAS South Weymouth

4 April, 2002

Mr. George Cusack, Jr.
Hilton Head, S.C.

Dear George,

My wife, Nan and I send our best wishes to you and your bride-to-be, and we wish that you have a wonderful and happy life together. We both knew your father and although we have not kept in close contact with your mother we have occasionally shared Christmas greetings over the years. We hope that your marriage will bear good and healthy children; perhaps one will decide to join "the few, the proud, the Marines."

Certainly your dad was one of those proud to live by the motto "Semper Fidelis." I first met your father in 1957 when he joined our reserve squadron VMA-322 at South Weymouth. He had served in Korea as did I; George was an enlisted Marine and proud to have served in that capacity. I received my wings and commission in 1951 and went to Korea four months later, one of two-second lieutenants in the VMA-212 Devil Cats squadron. As you know, your dad went through flight training after returning from Korea; I had been an instructor at Pensacola when I returned.

George was first and foremost a Marine; just a bit lower on his scale of priorities he was an excellent aviator and inspiration to all of us as we made the transition from the Korean vintage Corsairs to the jet Panthers. Cougars and Skyhawks. He constantly thought, talked and taught tactics along with flight safety. His training and professional status as a captain for Eastern Airlines enabled him to help many of us increase our proficiency in instrument flying. The flight crews especially respected him because they knew he had been one of them and he treated them with respect.

I enclose a picture of your father taken at MCAS Beaufort S.C.; Lt. Col. Bud Williams is briefing the flight that includes George and Pierre LeClaire on the floor, myself and Dave Healy seated to the left of Col. Williams, our then C.O. I also enclose one of the squadron patches that your father designed; it was turned down by HQMC because it resembled the Austrian national emblem too much. We thought it was a great portrait of the "Fighting Cocks" of VMA 322.

Please extend our warmest regards to your mother, sisters and brothers. Again, George, my best wishes for your marital happiness to you and your bride.



Sincerely yours,

James M. Mitchell, Jr.

James M. Mitchell, Jr.
Colonel USMCR (Ret.)



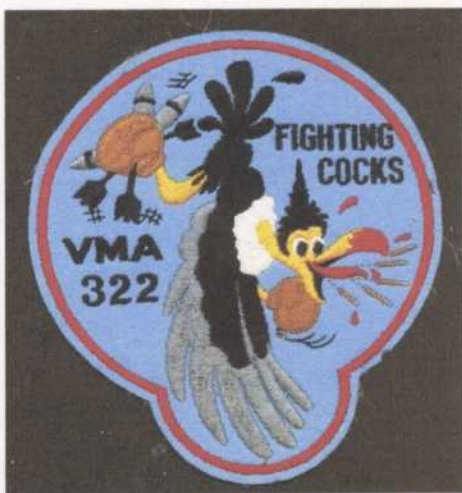
Left to Right: Dave Healy, Jerry Mitchell, Bud Williams, George Cusack, Pierre LeClaire



CIRCA 1965



1963 NAS Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico



George's 1st Design of Squadron Patch



George's 2nd Design of Squadron Patch

Dear George, Jr.,

Even though it's been 33 years since your Dad died, his image remains crystal clear. Proud, strong, tall. In short, a recruiting poster Marine.

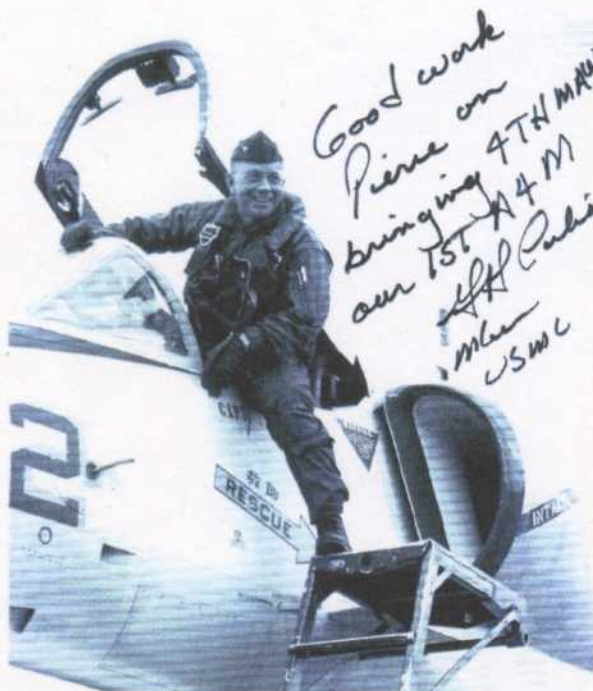
He possessed many qualities that I admired. One was his tremendous curiosity. When something caught his imagination, he became an avid student, always eager to share his new knowledge. I remember one fall when your Dad and Mom visited us on Cape Cod and stayed at one of our cottages. I can still see him lunging around the living room, kicking and chopping the air with his cupped hands and shouting huge "Hah!"s as he demonstrated karate, his newest passion.

He was a brilliant aviator, always knowledgeable about new tactics. In 1962, during the Cuban Missile crisis, the squadron was on two weeks active duty in Beaufort, South Carolina. Your Dad was the one to acquire information on a new maneuver, the "Pop Up" and had us all practicing it the next day.

He was sometimes impatient with those less skilled. I remember one flight to shoot rockets at the target ship James Longstreet in Cape Cod Bay. Your Dad was leading the flight of four, one of whom was a new pilot, a transfer from the Navy, which meant he already had two strikes against him. Compounding this problem was the fact that he was not a very accomplished pilot and had a high squeaky voice on the radio. The Navy pilot was coming in much too low, from too far away and really screwing up our pattern. Your Dad kept telling him to tighten up the pattern, but he ignored this advice. On the fourth run, the Navy lad was still too low when he fired his rocket. George was in a proper steep dive and simultaneously fired. I can still hear the Navy pilot's squeaky voice crying, "Good God, George, this is dangerous." In George's defense, I have to say it was a safe - if attention-getting-maneuver, but for years this became a frequent cry around the squadron. *Good God, George, this is dangerous.*

Authority did not intimidate your Dad. I remember one inspection when the Colonel who was conducting the debriefing said that he didn't think we were ready to be mobilized for an extended period of time. Now the normal response in the Marine Corps would be, "Yes, Sir. We'll work on this," but your Dad got up and said, "I don't see what the big deal is. Every year we go on active duty for two weeks, take all our men and equipment and we have no problems. The only difference in being on extended active duty is that you are gone for a longer period of time."

Your Dad was tough, but he was caring. There was never any doubt but that he would be there for you in any time of need. It says a lot, I think, that even now, 33 years after his death, he is remembered so vividly by so many who were lucky enough to call him friend and squadron mate.



Congratulations on your wedding and Semper Fi.

Pierre LeClaire
Col. H. M. (Pierre) LeClaire

ROWLEY CAPT. ON DUTY FOR TWO WEEKS

SOUTH WEYMOUTH -- Marine Capt. George G. Cusack, 29 Longbrook Road, Rowley, is among Marine Air Reservists currently on two weeks summer training duty at Marine Corps. Air station, Cherry Point, N.C.

Lt. Col. Thomas Conlon of Winchester led the flight of 12 Douglas A4-B "Skyhawk" jet fighters which departed July 6. The remainder of the squadron was airlifted to North Carolina in KC 130-F prop jet transports.

Capt. Cusack is a member of VMA-322, an attack squadron which specializes in close support of Marine ground troops.

The squadron recently changed over to the A4-B and completed qualification of all its pilots in the aircraft earlier this year. Pilots will participate in bombing, gunnery and rocketry exercises.

Ground personnel will attend special schools as well as perform their normal maintenance duties.

The squadron will return from Cherry Point July 20.

ROCKLAND CRASH SERVICES SUNDAY FOR RESERVISTS

Memorial services for two Marine Air Reserve officers killed Saturday when their jet trainer crashed in Rockland, will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday at South Weymouth Naval Air Station Chapel.

Killed were Lt. Col. George Graham Cusack, 38, of 24 Towle Ave., Hampton, N.H., and Capt. Alan Butterworth Holbrook, 31, of 14 Eaton Ct., Wellesley Hills.

The Navy yesterday began investigating the crash of the T-33 Shooting Star, a two-seat, single-engine aircraft. The plane crashed two miles south of the air station runway.

Both of the officers were on weekend training duty with Marine Air Reserve Attack Squadron 322 based at the air station.

Lt. Col. Cusack was executive officer of the unit, and was pilot of the aircraft. In civilian life he was a pilot with Eastern Airlines.

Capt. Holbrook, who was the plane's co-pilot, flew with Pan American Airways.

Eyewitnesses said the aircraft went into a spin at an estimated altitude of 2000 feet and the pilot seemingly gained control at a very low altitude.

He guided the aircraft to a wooded area, away from a heavily populated area near West Water Street, in Rockland and crashed in the trees.

Lt. Col. Cusack was commissioned in the reserves in 1953. He served before that as an enlisted man from 1950 to 1953, and was a veteran of the Korean conflict.



CIRCA 1968



Captain Alan Holbrook - CIRCA 1968
Killed in December 6, 1969 Crash



Left to Right: "Smokey" Sherman, Dick Brooks, (C.O.) Bud Williams



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION

ATLANTA JOINT COUNCIL OFFICE
3581 N. MAIN STREET
COLLEGE PARK, GEORGIA 30022
(404) 767 9725

AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.

INTL -----

774 Lullwater Road, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30307
December 18, 1969

Mrs. G. G. Cusack
24 Towle Avenue
Hampton, New Hampshire 03842

Dear Jean:

We thought perhaps you might like to have the original letters expressing our feelings for George Cusack, that appeared on our Atlanta Bulletin Board, to place among your remembrances.

Again, we extend our deepest sympathy, and hope we will meet again under happy circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Malone
W. T. Malone
Chairman, Council 7

W. T. MALONE
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Atlanta, December 7, 1969

Dear Mrs. Cusack:

In this sad time, I think perhaps I can best say to you what I have said to my fellow pilots regarding your husband's death. So I am enclosing a copy of our letter which was displayed on the Atlanta Bulletin Board, in the Eastern Air Lines' crew lounge.

I offer my deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Malone

Mrs. G. G. Cusack
24 Towle Avenue
Hampton, New Hampshire

Telefax

WESTERN UNION
SENDING BLANK

Telefax

Use Type or Use SOFT LEAD PENCIL or HEAVY
PEN. Both available at Clerk's Desk in Lobby.

NO. WDS.-CL. OF SVC.	PD. OR COLL.	CASH	CHARGE TO	TIME FILED
<i>To</i> MRS. G. G. CUSACK DECEMBER 7, 19 ⁶⁹				
<i>Address</i> 24 TOWLE AVENUE, HAMPTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE				
THE ATLANTA PILOTS ARE STUNNED OVER THE				
LOSS OF OUR FRIEND GEORGE CUSACK AND SEND				
DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY				
BILL MALONE				
CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL 7				

Send the above message, subject to the terms on the back hereof, which are hereby agreed to



AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION
Atlanta Joint Council Office
3581 North Main Street
College Park, Georgia 30022
404-767-9725
AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.

INTL

Atlanta, December 7, 1969

TO THE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL 7:

With deep regret, we announce the death of Captain George Cusack, outgoing Chairman of Council 72 - Boston, who was killed in the crash of a T-33 on take-off, while flying with the Marine Corps, yesterday.

It was my privilege to know George, and to work with him on the Eastern Air Lines' Master Executive Council. He was a credit to the members of his Boston Council, the pilots of Eastern Air Lines whom he represented at the 1968 Convention in Miami, and to all of us in the Air Line Pilots Association. At the last MEC Meeting he attended, prior to going out of office, I was honored to be selected to write the following resolution:

WHEREAS two members of the EAL MEC have now completed their terms of office on the MEC, and

WHEREAS the EAL MEC has enjoyed the influence and dedication of its two esteemed members throughout their terms of office, and

WHEREAS the MEC has been guided by this influence through many difficult decisions, and

WHEREAS all pilots on Eastern Air Lines have benefitted from their efforts,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the EAL MEC expresses its warm feeling and deep gratitude to its Boston Council members: George Cusack and Dan Hackett.

Our friend, Captain George Cusack, is dead but he will not be forgotten, because his influence on his fellow pilots and the MEC on which he served, will continue to be felt and be an inspiration to all of us as we strive to reflect credit to our profession.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Malone".

W. T. Malone

Chairman, Council 7

Honor, integrity, pride, fellowship — The rEAL Flight Crew!



THE rEAL WORD



Official Newsletter of the The Silver Falcons

Volume 5 Number 4

Fall 2001

LETTERS

My name is Kerry Woodilla. My father George G. Cusack was a pilot for Eastern Airlines. He flew out of Boston. I do not know if you knew him. My father died in December of 1969 as a result of mechanical failure in a jet he was flying for the Marine reserves. I was 5 years old when he died. My mother, Jean, was 1 month pregnant, with my brother George II, when the accident occurred.

The death of my father at such a young age has left a gap in all of my siblings' lives, especially for George II, who never knew him.

My brother is getting married in April of 2002. I thought it would be nice to give him some insight into who his father was. It would be nice for all of us to know what other people thought of him, what he was like to work with, etc.

If it is not too much trouble, I would greatly appreciate it if my request could be placed in a news letter or on-line and any or all responses be forwarded to me. If it is not too much to ask photos would be a wonderful addition. I will leave my mailing address should any one need it and hopefully my e-mail address will be listed with this message.

Your help with my request is greatly appreciated. look forward to hearing from you.

*Very truly yours,
Kerry (Cusack) Woodilla*

Capt. L.D. Smith
President & Director

Capt. H.E. Stevens
Vice Pres./Pres. Elect

Capt. T.A. Brown
Vice Pres. & Director



Capt. G.A. Deskin
Secretary & Director

Capt. John M. Billings
Treasurer & Director

Capt. James L. Friday
Conv. Chmn. & Director

Capt. Albert E. Brillaud
Director

774 Lullwater Road, NE
Atlanta GA 30307-1238
September 21, 2001

Mrs. Kerry Woodilla
1 Winterberry Lane
North Hampton NH 03862-2054

Dear Mrs. Woodilla:

Yes, I knew your father when we both served on the Eastern Air Lines Master Executive Council as Union representatives in our respective pilot bases back in 1968—me representing Atlanta and your father, George Cusack, representing the Boston base. It was a very controversial time for us. We could not reach an agreement with the Company regarding pay on the new equipment, we had trouble within our own pilot group and finally we could not agree on a new contract with our management regarding pay and working hours as our previous contract had expired. We took a strong stand and had a 90% backing of our membership. As a result, all of our problems were eventually resolved and, as is so often the case, our troubles brought us closer together and the Eastern Air Lines pilots became leaders in the air transportation business. We had become such a close knit group that it was devastating when George was killed flying a jet trainer with the United States Marine Corps Reserves.

I am enclosing copies of my correspondence with your mother along with notices that were posted on our Atlanta bulletin board and read by all—not just the Atlanta pilots but also those from other bases about the system. Perhaps these copies will give you some insight as to what a great guy your father was and how he was held in such high esteem by all who knew him.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Malone
Memorial Committee

Enclosures:

From: Sandy McCulloh
To: woodilla5@earthlink.net
Date: 9/18/01 10:13:24 PM
Subject: Re: George G. Cusack

Dear Kerry (Cusack) Woodilla,

My name is Gordon 'Sandy' McCulloh, I was hired by Eastern in September 1966 and my first assignment was in Boston as a copilot on the 'Connie' (Lockheed Constellation). I flew with your dad a number of times in 1967. He had fairly recently been promoted as a Captain on the 'Connie'.

The mission of the 'Connie' in those days was as Shuttle back-up, where we only flew to New York (LaGuardia or Newark) if the scheduled hourly departure (Electra or DC-9) filled up before its posted departure time. We worked our butts off around the holidays and at other times we would stand-by and not leave the crew lounge except to stretch or to get something to eat. This afforded much time for small talk and playing cards which I remember fondly. I think your father and I both had an aversion to early get-ups, so we often found one-another on afternoon standby.

Occasionally there was a shortage of aircraft for the schedule and the 'Connie' would fill in, flying the prime section schedule of two round trips to NY. Such was the case on 2/15/1967 when your dad and I flew together for the first time, making two round trips to Newark. We flew together seven days that month and I can't recall anything but smiles. We flew together many times and certainly spent quite a few days sitting and waiting for the call that didn't always come.

I liked your dad and remember him fairly well. I have many wonderful memories from that era. I retain a strong photo-like image of him in my mind. What I remember best is his irrepressible smile. I vividly recall his Marine style crew-cut, his proud tall and muscular build and his distinctive facial features, which I suspect his children would share. He was a man of great humor and he shared it with those he worked with. He was the kind of man that everyone enjoyed working for and being around. He was easy-going and didn't let little things get him down. As captain he knew his job, and he did it well. He enjoyed his profession very much, as did most of us. He led by example and nothing pleases a copilot more than having his captain set a high standard and then sit back and watch the copilot try to replicate the performance. And you do your darnedest because you enjoy the company you are in and are so comfortable. I was greatly saddened to hear of his untimely passing just two years later.

My very best wishes to you all,

Sandy McCulloh

Subj: Re: Kerry Woodilla wants information on her father, EAL Captain George Cusack
Date: 9/18/2001 3:09:39 AM Eastern Daylight Time
From: a737flyer@hotmail.com (Kit Baker)
To: Roadhog5555@aol.com

Jim,

I started with EAL in 1968 and remember Cusack's death well. I was based in Boston from 1973 to 1986 and I heard a lot of nice things about him. I didn't know him, but there were a lot of guys in Boston who did. I don't see any of them on the Silver Falcon's list, but mine is an old list, so things might have changed.

I know a lot of retired guys knew him...I don't know if anyone is still active in the area, but Hawthorne Associates is a company that did a lot of work with the retirement funds and I know for a long time the gal in the office was the chief pilot's secretary. Her name is Elaine, and I am sure she know George.

Jim, my father died in a B-24 accident in Italy in October 1944. it was a sad co-pilot-feathered-the-wrong engine story that was recounted in the March or April 1989 issue of the "Air line Pilot" It was because of the establishment of the internet that now have the original accident report AND photographs of the accident scene, which occurred 40 miles north of Manduria, Italy. There is an organization that might help Kelly. It is called the American War Orphan Network. They have access to all kinds of records of plane and other deaths that you just wouldn't believe. I was even able to reach the son of one of the only two survivors of the accident that claimed my father's life. I missed meeting his father by only a few years...and they lived about a hundred and fifty miles from me when I lived in New Hampshire. Tell her to contact www.AWON.com and tell her story. I am sure someone can help her with official records...and if Hawthorne Assoc is still in business I know Elaine can help. I know what a comfort it was to both my mother and me to find a few more details about the accident that took my father. Under the small world category...the CO of the squadron lives about 10 minutes from my mother, and used to date a woman that works for her! He and my mother had spoken a number of times, but she had the squadron wrong, so they didn't make a connection until I called him out of the blue!

Also, I just thought of this. Jack Flick is a SF member. he lives just north of Boston and I know he knew George. Have her call him...he's a really nice fellow. I used to fly with him and we always got an ice cream in Atlanta when we passed through.

Another interesting note...I made Captain at Eastern in the midst of the Lorenzo regime, so my tenure was not long... I flew my first trip as a Captain at Aloha Airlines yesterday. Queen for a day again? We'll see.

C. P. (Kit) Baker

From: Skeeta300@aol.com
To: Woodilla5@earthlink.net
Date: 11/19/01 11:08:20 AM
Subject: Captain George

Monday, Nov,19, 2001

First, let me apologize for the delay in responding to your request for information about your Father. It was accidentally lost in the mess on my desk .

Yes, I knew your Father George Cusack. He and I became acquainted while in the Marine Corps. We were both based at Marine Corps Air Station At Opa Locka , Florida--Miami . We were in different squadrons, so did not really know each other well. Later , after separation from the Marines, we both were hired by Eastern Air Lines. I 'm not sure when he first came aboard , but I was hired on January 7, 1957. For a period of time we were based in Miami. He and I would occasionally play tennis together in that first year or two with EAL. I was not married at the time --I don't think he was either -- not sure ..Some time later , he moved North --Boston , I think. I remember having a layover in Boston and George picked me up at the airport and I spent the night with them ---somewhere on the North side of town --maybe N.H. ?? He was married then --Jean-- I believe. I 'm not sure that you had arrived ??? He visited me and my wife, June , While we lived at Cutler Ridge in Miami . We worked on an old '55 Chevy convertible that we had at the time.

George and I were in the same Marine Reserve Squadron at Opa Locka after joining Eastern. He gave me a-- walk around-- check out on the F9F-6 Cougar --which we were flying at the time. Later he moved to Boston ---and we would occasionally see each other on the road. He became involved with ALPA--and served as Chairman of the Boston Council , I believe. I was very sad to hear that he had had an accident and lost his life while flying for the Corps. It was in a TV-2 , I think ??? I remained in Miami until 1970 ---then moving to Atlanta, where I remain today , having retired from EAL after 32 plus years...

George was a Proud Marine --as well as a Proud Eastern pilot . He wore his uniform with pride and was always impeccably dressed . I remember , some guys would kid him for wearing the one and only ribbon we were authorized to wear ---we called it the --I AM AN AMERICAN--ribbon .

Your Father was a fine man and I'm glad to have known him ..My Best to your Mother and to your Brother , George II. I'm sorry , I have no pictures.
Good luck to you all , and God Bless.

SEMPER FI,

Ed Bruce

5317 Antelope Lane
Stone Mountain , Ga. 30087

April, 2002

Dear George II:

Your sister, Kerry, contacted me last October with the request that I act as "coordinator of memorabilia" concerning insight that could be produced regarding your father, who you never had the opportunity to know. Her plan to seek a curriculum vitae from those who worked with him was, perhaps, the best source for you to know the man who departed eight months before you were born.

My memory of Saturday, December 6, 1969 is very vivid because of the way events developed. The Commanding Officer of VMA 322, Jerry Mitchell was away that morning, so your dad was the leader. I was next in line and, as Operations Officer, was eager to get the first launch of A4 skyhawks and one T33 out on time. I was scheduled to fly the T33 (the only dual pilot aircraft) with Captain Al Holbrook. I asked George to take the T33 flight and I'd catch an A4 later. His last words to me, "Major, you have a button missing on the back pocket of your uniform" (I thought - typical George!).

I later watched from the cockpit of an A4 while taxiing on the parking ramp, as our one and only T33 went nearly straight in and exploded off the end of the duty runway. It was my painful experience later to go by Marine helicopter with the Navy Chaplain and Jerry Mitchell to Hampton to tell your mother of the tragedy.

For your information, the Accident Investigation Board determined that the "clothespin type" fastener for one of the access panels in the nose of the T33, was defective. The panel opened when George dropped the landing gear, resulting in a "back flip" followed by a spin. It happened when the aircraft was too low for successful ejection.

So much for the fateful day of December 6, 1969. I met your father in September 1957 when I joined the Marine Air Reserve squadron, VMA 322, at NAS South Weymouth.

We were "weekend warriors" together over the course of the next 12 years. To say that George was a dedicated Marine and Naval aviator is an understatement. He put his heart and soul into every task presented, with particular focus on change and improvement. One might say that he leaned toward black or white, with no gray areas. I am fortunate to have reviewed the reflections of fellow airline pilots and other fellow Marine pilots that appear in the pamphlet, of which this is a part. This being so, I need not be redundant by simply saying that his character and personality are accurately reflected in the letters to you and your mother.

An incident comes to mind that demonstrates what your father was like. During the summer of 1968 or 69 the squadron had our two week active duty training period at MCAS Yuma, Arizona. Mid-way through, a report came into the ready room from the Sergeant Major that one in our enlisted ranks had been arrested by local police on a rape charge. As a lawyer I was able to determine through sources that whatever evidence existed against him included his being picked from a line-up at the Yuma Police station. I felt the die had been cast and there was nothing we could do. However, your father took it upon himself, in spite of his scheduled flights, to go to the city and investigate the facts personally with the local authorities. It turned out that our squadron member had been identified only by the fact that he had a mustache and pock-marked skin. He was released and I truly admired George's tenacity in saving one innocent Marine from potential disaster.

I would go on to tell you that no one could beat your dad at arm wrestling, his impeccable appearance in his Marine uniform, physical fitness, and all of those characteristics that led to his nickname "the Iron Major" and later, "Iron Colonel". As stated by others, he was one of a kind, determined and dedicated to his dual occupations in aviation.

I trust that the remembrances of those that knew him in their professional capacity, as well as socially, will fill the gap, to some degree, regarding the father you never had the opportunity to know.

I am unable to join the families and friends of you and Dawn at Hilton Head on the occasion of your wedding on April 27th, but I am grateful to Kerry and your mother for the opportunity to play a role in our group effort to help you to learn something about the father you never met. For myself as a father of 4 that are about the same vintage as your 5 siblings, and grandfather to 6 that must have ages similar to your mothers 13 grandchildren, I would expect that all descendants will, at one time or another, share the reminiscences of their father-grandfather that are to be presented at your wedding reception by some of those that knew your namesake.

My congratulations and best wishes to you and Dawn. May you have a joyous life together.



Ronald J. Sederman
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