

412TW-PA-24181



**EMAIL FROM PROCACCINI TO YEAGER
RELATED TO COL SIGNA GILKEY**

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**AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE,
CALIFORNIA**

1 JUL 08

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**AIR FORCE FLIGHT TEST CENTER
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, CALIFORNIA
AIR FORCE MATERIEL COMMAND
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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Young, James Civ USAF AFMC AFFTC/HO

From: Editor Yeager [editor@chuckyeager.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2008 7:52 PM
To: Young, James Civ USAF AFMC AFFTC/HO
Subject: Fwd: Col. Signa A. Gilkey

Jim,

Chuck thought this might interest you -

Victoria

----- Forwarded message -----

From: repairsquadron38@aol.com <repairsquadron38@aol.com>
Date: Jul 1, 2008 9:46 PM
Subject: Re: Col. Signa A. Gilkey
To: editor@chuckyeager.net

Dear Gen. Yeager,

Thank you so much for your reply! Col. Gilkey was definitely not a close friend of mine, he is the "villain" so to speak in the story of the 38th Depot Repair Squadron. It appears that the the 38th Air Depot Group and the Depot Repair Squadron were for the most part commanded by well liked and respected men, Col. Charles E. Batstone, Maj. Harold A. Tapert , Capt. Robert E. Johnson and Capt. Mike Kundrat. When I mention these men to any of the few living veterans of the 38th they just beam and have nothing but compliments. On the other hand if I mention Gilkey, the entire mood changes. They have not much good to say about the man. Gilkey was the the CO of the 36th ADG and when it was transferred to Capodichino Airport (Air Force General Depot #3) he replaced then Lt. Col. C.E. Batstone as depot commander. It appears that Gilkey was jealous of the outstanding reputation of the 38th compared to his own 36th ADG and purposely broke up the 38th sending the HQ Sqdn between Capodichino, Pisa and Marseilles with some elements of the Depot Repair and Supply Squadrons and sending other portions of the Depot Repair Sqdn to Gioia Del Colle and Santa Maria. According to Capt. Johnson (who is still going strong at 91 in Dalhart TX) Col. Gilkey admitted to doing this purposely in order that the 38th would not be able to report as a complete unit and therefore lose its high efficiency rating. This also destroyed any hopes that the men of the 38th had of returning to the States as a cohesive unit.

Again I thank you sir for your input. I have thoroughly researched all of the other officers involved in the 38th history but Gilkey was very elusive. It appears that he did not have any offspring. I will greatly appreciate any other information or recollections concerning Col. Gilkey. May I have you permission to quote this email in the history of the 38th?

This project is has become very close to my heart as my Grandfather, Louis Procaccini was a Sergeant with the motor pool of the 38th Air Depot Group Repair Squadron from its inception in Macon GA. until he was sent home in November of 1945 and was wounded twice.. He passed away in 1985 at the age of 61 and spoke very little about the war . I have learned more about him from the men that served with him .

I thank you again sir for taking the time out of your busy schedule to answer my letter.
Sincerely David M. Procaccini

-----Original Message-----

From: Editor Yeager <editor@chuckyeager.net>
To: David Procaccini <repairsquadron38@aol.com>
Sent: Tue, 1 Jul 2008 10:44 pm

> be able to shed some light on the man for me. I have contacted the US
> Air Force Museum, The Air Force Historical Research Agency and the
> base historian for Edwards AFB, all of which were unable to contribute
> any information except for one newspaper clipping discussing Col.
> Gilkey's removal as Edwards Commanding Officer.

> I thank you for any information you may be able to provide.

> Sincerely, David M. Procaccini

> Repairsquadron38@aol.com

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Young, James Civ USAF AFMC AFFTC/HO

From: Editor Yeager [editor@chuckyeager.net]
Sent: Wednesday, July 02, 2008 7:52 PM
To: Young, James Civ USAF AFMC AFFTC/HO
Subject: Fwd: Col. Signa A. Gilkey
Attachments: gilkey.jpg

And this.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: repairsquadron38@aol.com <repairsquadron38@aol.com>
Date: Jul 1, 2008 9:59 PM
Subject: Re: Col. Signa A. Gilkey
To: editor@chuckyeager.net

Dear Gen. Yeager,

Attached is a newspaper clipping that I recently found discussing Col. Gilkeys retirement. Thank you again.
David Procaccini

-----Original Message-----

From: Editor Yeager <editor@chuckyeager.net>
To: David Procaccini <repairsquadron38@aol.com>
Sent: Tue, 1 Jul 2008 10:44 pm
Subject: Re: Col. Signa A. Gilkey

Dear David,

I am sending you my bio with some of it highlighted when I was TDY to Muroc Air Base on the X-1 program during the time that Gilkey was base commander.

Muroc was staffed with the dregs of the Air Force including Col Gilkey.

All of the flight test programs were run out of Wright Field. The hazardous ones were sent to Muroc Air Base because of the dry lake bed.

Col Gilkey was one sorry commander who hated to see programs come to Muroc Air Base over which he had no control, or even understood.

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I don't mention Gilkey much in my book. But Glennis talks a lot about Gilkey and the hard times caused by him because of my being TDY. Glennis was not allowed to use the hospital, PX, commissary or base housing.

Gilkey had integrated himself with Bell, Slick Goodlin, CACA (per-cursor to NASA) and the Hollywood bunch.

So when the Air Force took over the X-1, he was out in the cold. I don't know what happened to him after that. Very few people respected him and rightly so.

Let me see your comments. I don't imagine he had a very good war record.