



The Patriot

General J. P. Holland Chapter

Military Order of World Wars
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Forgotten hero' of Korean War shares his story in Indianapolis

Captain Royce Williams - Holland Chapter

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Photo by Justin Casterline/The American Legion

Written by Henry Howard

On Nov. 18, 1952, Navy pilot Royce Williams shot down four Russian MiGs during a single encounter, landed his bullet-riddled plane safely on *USS Oriskany* and then was ordered to keep it a secret. More than 50 years later, after Russia identified the downed pilots, details slowly emerged.

Recently, the U.S. government declassified official reports, confirming the details.

Graham, a member of American Legion Post 331 in Brownsburg, Ind., first learned of Williams and his heroics in an exclusive interview in [American Legion Magazine](#), the first time the story was reported nationally.

In fact, Graham flew the same type of plane – a Panther – that Williams piloted during his unique 35-minute dogfight during the Korean War. “I just can’t imagine that airplane coming up against even one MiG and winning. That’s like entering your personal car in the Indy 500 and winning. It’s really unlikely. I’m just really amazed that he survived.”

Graham, who joined the Navy in 1951 and later transferred to the Army National Guard before retiring in 1979, knew several people who were aboard *Oriskany* when Williams performed his feat.

Upon learning the details, Graham served as the catalyst for bringing Williams, who lives in San Diego, to Indianapolis to share his story. The two Korean War pilots met and shared their experiences. “It’s just a miracle that he was able to pull this off,” Graham said.



For the Good of the Order

Forgotten hero' of Korean War shares his story in Indianapolis

Captain Royce Williams - Holland Chapter

More than 350 people, including American Legion members, other veterans, Junior ROTC cadets and military supporters attended the Aug. 16 event featuring Williams' story at the Indiana War Memorial in downtown Indianapolis.

Greg Ballard, the mayor of Indianapolis and a Gulf War era Marine veteran, welcomed the crowd. "We're in a building that was dedicated to the men who fought in the war to end all wars," he said. "But tonight we honor a man who fought in the 'Forgotten War.' Heroes like Royce Williams must never be forgotten."

Filmmaker and photo journalist C.J. Machado presided over the 90-minute presentation, which included her 15-minute film, "Forgotten Hero."

"His story was secret for a long time," Machado said. "It's about time we honor our forgotten heroes. Not much is known about the 'Forgotten War,' the Korean War, so that's why we decided to do the film."

Williams, 93, mingled with attendees, signed autographs and participated in a panel discussion. He recapped his experience, which also included landing his plane, minus its hydraulic system, on the carrier at roughly 200 mph – almost double the usual speed.

"I slowed it down as best as I could. But it was like being in a blizzard with heavy winds," he recalls, noting that the captain made an important last-minute maneuver to help the landing. "I couldn't line it up ... I didn't think I would land on the ship."

Once aboard the ship, Williams was told not to share what happened with anyone.

"There were NSA (National Security Agency) agents on board, and we didn't want anyone to know," he said, referring to the then-secret agency. "The information from radar and radio that they collected clearly showed those were Russian planes. Had this gotten out, it would have threatened World War III."

Former Navy pilot Peter-Rolf Ohnstad, who traveled to Indianapolis with Williams and Machado, was awed by the turnout for the event.

"To me, it's huge," Ohnstad. "As a kid growing up, all I ever heard about was World War II. I had an uncle who served in the Korean War and received a Bronze Star but no one ever talked about it. No one knew he received the Bronze Star until he passed away. It was just the way the Korean War was – no one talked about it. It was a forgotten war."



For the Good of the Order

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Captain Royce Williams - Holland Chapter

“Ohnstad and Williams are members of American Legion Post 416 in Encinitas, Calif. Along with Machado, they take these infrequent but educational trips. Their next appearance is scheduled to be at the Tailhook Association reunion in September.

“Last year we went to South Dakota and Minnesota, where he was honored in his hometown,” Ohnstad said. “Since no one knew about (the MiGs being shot down), we’re left to wonder: What would we have done if it had turned out otherwise, if we had lost four planes? What was our contingency plan? Nobody talks about that.”

Gen. J. Stewart Goodwin, executive director of the Indiana War Memorial, noted the difference between homecomings for World War II and Korean War veterans.

“When World War II folks came home, they were dancing in the streets, kissing the girls and there was a lot of celebration,” Goodwin said. “When our Korean War brothers and sisters came home, they saw no such celebrations.”

Noting that the memorial, which includes a museum, serves as an educational tool, Goodwin closed by talking about the importance of sharing stories like that of Williams.

“We need to tell our youth about people like Capt. Williams,” he said. “We need to tell people about those folks who put their lives on the line, leave their families and put themselves in harm’s way to ensure all of us are free. We don’t live in freedom today because it just happened. It happened because of people like him and everyone who wore the cloth of our nation.”





For the Good of the Order

Commander's Corner



Dear Companions and Friends of the Chapter

The 2019 MOWW National Centennial Convention will be held in Southern California, Simi Valley, in August 2019. This is a GREAT OPPORTUNITY for the Holland Chapter Companions to take part in this historical event. The Convention schedule will include five tours, one of them being the Dinner and tour of the Reagan Library and Museum. National will host a "Hospitality Suite". Accommodations will be at the Grand Vista Hotel. The price for this 5 - Star hotel will be approximately \$106 per night. Reservations will be open in October 2018. The Holland Chapter may create our own "Profile" and video for the Convention. National will have sponsorships for \$500.

This past year, the Holland Chapter created it's first Chapter Action Plan (CAP) and Recruitment Engagement and Retention Plan (RER) due to the guidance provided by Region XIV. The Holland Chapter succeeded in completing 95% of the Action Plan for year 2017 thru 2018. We also received a certificate from National for reaching our recruiting goal of 3% of the current Chapter's living membership. This year we have added a Command Action Plan (CoAP) and Chapter Program Engagement Plans (PEP) for Homeland Security and Law and Order. These new plans provide a guideline for our chapter membership to become more engaged in the acknowledging and awarding of individuals who are directly involved in Homeland Security (Border Patrol, Homeland Security, ICE, NCIS, FBI, Coast Guard or others) and Law and Order Police Officers, Fire Fighters, other first responders). The Chapter is in need of a Companion to Chair the Law and Enforcement Committee, to make these engagement programs a "Great Success." Make our Chapter "Great Again!"

Calendar of Events

Business Meeting - July 26th

RB IHOP - 0900

**General Meeting July 7th, GSP
-Past CINC Debbie Kash,&
Travis Putnam SDYLC 2018,
Installation of New Officers at
July Meeting**

**General Meeting August 4,
GSP- Lawyer John Shu - History
Fisa Courts**

**Business Meeting-August 23rd,
IHOP RB**

**Business Meeting - Sep 28th,
IHOP/RB 0930**

Birthdays



July

Jacob Morton 18th
Mariah Crittenden 28th
Phil Landis 28th
Virginia West 29th

August

Kay Lettington 4th
Marie Alverson 17th
Sue Brockman 22nd
Ken Gross 24th
Jack Crittenden 28th

Anniversaries

July

Earl and Nancy Wentworth 27th

August

none



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speakers July 7, 2018

Captain Debbie Kash and Travis Putnam



Captain Debbie Kash is the Past Commander in Chief (CINC) of the MOWW, SDYLC Admin Officer, / Board Member, San Diego Chapter Communications and Publicity Officer, and member of the Camp Pendleton Chapter.. Travis Putnam is the CEO/President of the San Diego Youth Leadership Conference and member of the Camp Pendleton Chapter. Travis is a multi-subject /Advanced Course Teacher at Orange Glen High

School.

Debbie and Travis will discuss the highlights and details of the June 2018 SDYLC. Travis as the primary Instructor, will discuss the three day, four night conference subject matter and performance of the 2018 Class. The class is anticipated to be perhaps the largest class in the last decade of operations. Debbie is the Admin Officer and “Go To” person for all emergent surprises and needs. Together with Dan Kash, Commander of the Southern Department of California and Camp Pendleton Chapter Commander, Debbie, Dan and Travis are the “Heart and Soul” of the San Diego Youth Leadership Conference.

The San Diego Youth Leadership Conference (SDYLC), is a patriotic education program founded by The Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW), and supported by the National Sojourners, Inc., Hough O'Brian Youth Leadership, and the Joe Foss Institute. The purpose of the YLC is to help prepare selected students for leadership roles in their respective schools and communities.

The Military Order of the World Wars Youth Leadership Conferences (YLC) provide students with an unique opportunity to participate in a leadership development seminar taught by leaders from the government, industry, military and the academic communities. The YLC's are educational conferences that give U.S. High School students the opportunity to develop leadership skills via patriotic education.

Participants, who attend public, charter and private high schools or who are home-schooled may attend the San Diego YLC offered during the summer.

This conference is designed to foster participants to develop leadership capabilities and then encourage them to utilize their new skills to make their communities a better place.



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speaker August 4, 2018

John Shu

John Shu is an Attorney and Expert on political issues, Constitutional Law, and the Courts.



He is a regular columnist and media analyst and commentator. He served both President George H.W. Bush and President George W. Bush. He also served Judge Paul Roney, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit and Presiding Judge of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court of Review; and Judge Stanley Sporkin, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, who was CIA General Counsel. Mr. Shu also served as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the National Association of Administrative Law Judiciary. He is a member of the Pacific Council on International Policy, the Foreign Policy Association, and the National Committee on U. S. – China Relations.

Mr. Shu will discuss the history and functions of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which hears the U.S. Government's applications for approval of electronic surveillance, physical search, and certain other forms of investigative actions for foreign intelligence purposes. The media sometimes refers to the court as the "FISA Court."



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speaker September 1, 2018

Captain Len Kaine

Captain Len Kaine, Retired US Navy Fighter Pilot and Retired Airline Pilot



Captain Leonard "Len" Kaine is a "real deal" Navy Top Gun Fighter Pilot. He began life as an unassuming coal miner's kid with a public high school education. But with high motivation and dedication, he was able to serve his nation with distinction earning two Combat Distinguished Flying Crosses, Seven Combat Air Medals, two Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V (Valor); Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon, National Defense Medal with one Bronze Star, Vietnam Service Medal with three Bronze Stars; a Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal with Device and a 'Command at Sea' Star.

Captain Kaine will discuss all we could have and should have done to end the Vietnam War in minimum time and without the loss of more than 58 thousand American Lives. It may come as a surprise of

what we were capable of doing, that would have ended the enemy's ability to wage war and their willingness to wage the war.

Founder and President of the Golden Rule Society Charity helping the defenders of our freedoms plus children, churches and charities nationwide and worldwide for more than 46 years,... with four nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize: 2018, 2017, 2014 & 2003.

Chairman of the Board of the Realty Pilot LLC, helping our American neighbors with all aspects of the Real Estate Industry.

A Partner / Advisor to Practice Interactive LLC's "INTIVA Program", helping nearly one Million Medical Professionals in the USA and expanding worldwide.

Received the "US President's Lifetime Achievement Award for volunteer service in 2006. Senator John McCain pinned on the medal.

Named 2010 Veteran of the Year by US Department of Veterans Affairs.

And, his Golden Rule Society was selected as the National charity of choice.

He's working with "World Peace One's" Director Klaus Nobel in their mutual peace efforts nationwide and worldwide.



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speaker October 6, 2018

COLONEL Vic Vizcarra *U.S.A.F. Retired*



Col. Vizcarra, a 24 year Air Force combat veteran, was commissioned in January 1960 through the ROTC program at Loyola University of Los Angeles, where he received his BS degree in Mechanical Engineering. **He accumulated 3,590 total flying hours**, 2,694 hours of which were in F-100s, F-105s, F-5s, and F-4s. A Vietnam combat veteran, he did three temporary duty deployments to Southeast Asia where he flew 59 combat missions in the F-105D. On 27 July, 1965, he flew in Operation Spring High, the first attack of a Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) in the history of aerial combat, where six of the 46 mission F-105's were lost. During his third deployment, he was forced to eject from his disabled F-105D on 6, November, 1966, and was rescued by a Navy helicopter after spending two hours on the ground in North Vietnam. **After a tour at Edwards AFB, CA as a Center Test Programmer**, he volunteered to return to Southeast Asia,

and flew 120 combat missions in the F-100D/F while assigned to the 35th TFW at Phan Rang AB, Republic of Vietnam. Follow-on flying assignments were to the 23rd TFW, McConnell AFB, KS, and the 425th TFW at Williams AFB, AZ. At McConnell AFB, he was assigned as an F-105 instructor pilot and then the Wing Functional Check Flight pilot as head of Quality Assurance. At Williams AFB, he was an F-5 instructor pilot for three years before being assigned to a series of non-flying assignments. In 1979, he assumed command of the 354th Equipment Maintenance Squadron in the 354th TFW, Myrtle Beach AFB, SC. Promoted to Colonel, his final assignment was with the 35th TFW, George AFB, CA as the Deputy Commander of Maintenance, where he flew the F-4E. He is the author of two books, "Thud Pilot" and "Hun Pilot" based on his flying experiences flying the F-105 Thunder chief and the F-100 Super Sabre.

Presentation is a 35 to 40-minute history of the Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) Vietnam Air War. Discovery of initial SAM sites construction around Hanoi in April 1965, generated on-going debates between the Whitehouse administration and the Joint Chiefs of Staff on how to respond to the new growing threat. The first SAM shoot down of the war forced a decision resulting in Operation Spring High, the first US retaliatory strike against SAM sites in the history of aerial combat. Being the first such mission, many errors were made causing high losses among the attacking forces. Although the operation was deemed a failure, the lessons learned from this mission generated development of new defensive equipment, weaponry, and tactics that made future operations in heavily defended SAM environments possible. Col. (Ret) Vic Vizcarra was one of forty-six F-105 pilots who flew the Spring High mission.



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speaker November 3, 2018

Mark Carlson



Mark Carlson is a local aviation and military historian with more than two hundred published articles and three popular books to his credit. His specialty has always been the Pacific War, which led him to the topic he will be presenting for the MOWW in November.

“Which way did they go?”

During the pivotal and desperate Battle of Midway in June 1942, three American carriers launched a full-scale air attack on the four carriers of the Imperial Japanese Navy. Of the more than 130 planes that were hurled against the enemy fleet, scores of torpedo plane crews were killed in doomed attacks. Then the dive bombers, which arrived over the enemy fleet at precisely the right moment, rained near-total destruction on the helpless Japanese ships. In five minutes the Japanese hopes of conquest in the Pacific War were crushed.

But one entire American dive bomber squadron failed to arrive and missed the opportunity to add the weight of destruction to the enemy. *USS Hornet's* dive bombers never showed up. They took off at the same time and took the same course, but failed to find the Japanese fleet. Thus the last carrier, *Hiryu* was left untouched to attack and sink the *USS Yorktown*.

Now you will learn the real reason why they missed the boat.



For the Good of the Order

Guest Speaker February 2, 2019

Christina Olds



In 2010, Christina Olds published a memoir of her father's life titled ***Fighter Pilot; The Memoirs of a Legendary Ace Robin Olds***. The book became a national bestseller, heralded by reviewers and readers as an exceptionally literary and lyrical biography. Christina has begun work on a screenplay for FIGHTER PILOT, and is working on a second book, the story of her grandfather, Maj. Gen. Robert Olds, an instrumental leader in the development of early air power and the U.S. Air Force. A Vassar College graduate with a degree in creative writing, Christina is a sought-after speaker at Air Force and NATO bases, aviation museums and air shows, both nationally and abroad, and is dedicated to furthering her father's legacy to

inspire today's active duty fighter pilots around the world. She lives in Sacramento, CA and is the mother of a beautiful daughter, Jennifer Olds Newman, a costume designer in Los Angeles.

“Christina Olds is one of the most dynamic, charismatic, powerful presenters we have asked to speak at any Warhawk Air Museum event. Her articulate, emotional, truthful, loving presentation of her father's life brings him into the room and gives everyone listening a very personal feeling toward a true American hero. Christina's public speaking is a true gift which she generously shares all over the world.” Sue Paul, Executive Director, Warhawk Air Museum, Nampa, ID



For the Good of the Order

Veterans Celebration May 23, 2018

Corona High School

56 yrs. of Naval Service



The BGEN J. P. Holland Chapter of the MOWW has participated in the Corona High School Veterans Celebration for the last four years. This wonderful Veterans event was started by History teacher Mr. Jeff Perry, who was once inspired by a similar event at a Riverside County high school. This event starts at 0830 and continues until 1100, after which, lunch is provided by Chick Fila. Three Companions from the Holland Chapter shared their Military and Life experiences with many Junior History students; They were Captain Royce Williams, Commander Tom Lettington (Chapter Adjutant), and LCDR Nick Herbka (Chapter Commander). LCDR Herbka was the first Senior Naval Science Instructor, who started the Corona High School Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps Program, and remained the Unit Commander for nine years.



Capt Williams shot down 4 Russian Mig15s that were headed for the carrier while conducting a CAP mission, and made a 3-wire on the Oriskany after taking a 30mm round that exploded near his left engine.

Capt Royce Williams



CDR Lettington was among many other things, a Destroyer Captain, having spent many tours on destroyers as a Junior Officer. He retired with 26 years in the Navy.

CDR Tom Lettington
LCDR Nick Herbka

Nick flew Helicopters (CH_46/UH-1N), and Multi-engine turbo props (C-12).



He retired after 20 years of Naval Service and 14 years as a NJROTC Unit Commander.



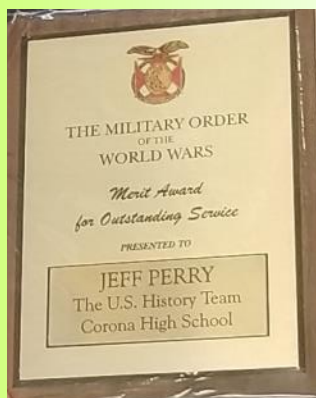
For the Good of the Order

Holland Chapter Present Plaque of Appreciation

to

Jeff Perry and The History Team of Corona

Holland Chapter Commander, LCDR Nick Herbka, USN (Ret), presents the MOWW Plaque of Appreciation to Mr. Jeff Perry, impetus behind the Corona High School Annual Veterans Celebration.



Jeff and his Team of History Teachers have done an amazing job to organize the Veterans from all parts of Southern California to attend this event. The Honor and Respect the veterans receive is heart warming. The veterans, when asked “what is the best part of this morning’s event?” responded, “talking with the high school Juniors. They are dressed so professionally and respectfully, something I was not expecting this morning. They are truly enthusiastic and interested about what I did in the military, and I enjoyed every minute I shared with them.”

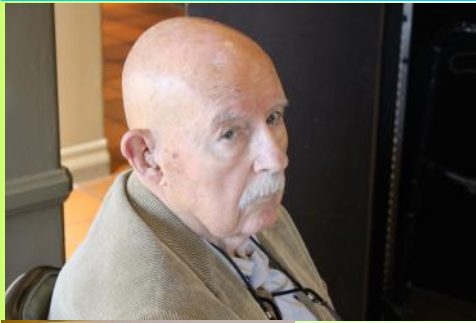
The ladies attire are dresses, skirts and blouses, and gentlemen in dress shirts, ties, with some wearing jackets. They are quick to introduce themselves and begin to ask questions, to which they must record the answers. They love having their picture taken, and will ask to do so with the Veteran with which they have shared the morning. The Holland Chapter has attended this Veterans Celebration or the last four years. I hope we will continue to increase the number of veterans that attend each year. Each Companion in attendance was most happy to have shared this morning with our future **Leaders, Military members, Civic servants, Voters, and Veterans.**

The Chapter Action Plan revolves around Patriotic Education, displaying the MOWW Brand and the Holland Chapter in the community. We have accomplished the above and also, to award our Patriots, young and old, with our Holland Chapter Challenge Coin. This beautiful coin was designed by our Chaplain and Navy SEAL, Carl Swepton.



For the Good of the Order

Pictures from June Meeting



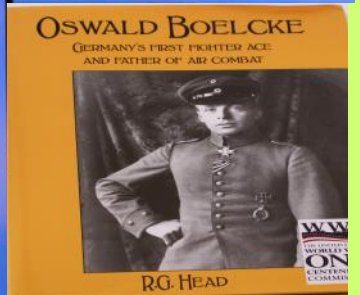
**Oswald Boelcke:
The First Fighter Pilot**

Oswald Boelcke
1891 - 1916
40 Victories

**Military Order
Of the
World Wars
2 Jun 18**

Brigadier General RG Head

Murray A. Robertson - image colouring
centralimaging@yahoo.co.uk





For the Good of the Order

San Diego Youth Leadership Conference 2018

The BGEN J. P Holland Chapter sponsored 15 students to the 2018 SDYLC.

Their names follow:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>*Logan Wilson</i> | <i>Mar Vista HS NJROTC</i> |
| Justine Gamba | Mar Vista HS NJROTC |
| Jose Castro | Orange Glen HS NJROTC |
| Evelyn Martinez | Orange Glen HS NJROTC |
| William Reuney | Westview HS NJROTC |
| Patrick Walthall | Westview HS NJROTC |
| Hannah Icban | Westview HS NJROTC |
| Brooke Lebidine | Del Norte HS |
| Karmin Mcrelaes | Ramona HS NJROTC |
| Davis Marousch | Ramona HS NJROTC |
| Daniel Huff | Ramona HS NJROTC |
| Brendan Lockie | Rancho Bernardo HS |
| Devon Golding | San Pasqual HS |
| Noah Dresselhaus | Liberty Charter HS |
| Jake Tran | Liberty Charter HS |



***Logan Wilson was selected by his Instructors and Peers as the Top Student in the 2018 San Diego Conference. Logan will have an opportunity, as the Top Student to write an Essay on the MOWW YLC Question for 2018. The winner of the essay contest will win the MOWW Phoenix Award, and \$2000. Logan Wilson was also presented the Bronze Patrick Henry Medallion for Community Service in 2018 by the BGEN J. P. Holland Chapter, at their May 23rd meeting.**

Logan Wilson is pictured right of the US Flag, with his sister, parents, grandparents, NJROTC Instructor, and Nick Herbka, Commander of the BGEN JP Holland Chapter (far right).



For the Good of the Order

San Diego Youth Leadership Conference 2018

SDYLC Graduation June 28, 2018



BGEN Paul Lebidine (Holland Chapter) was the Motivational speaker for SDYLC 2018



SDYLC Members of the Support Team 2018



Groups and Awards





For the Good of the Order
Joint Christmas Party December 1, 2018

Military Order of the World Wars
4th Annual Joint Chapter
Christmas Party

Hosted by the BGEN J. P. Holland Chapter

In conjunction with the

San Diego and Camp Pendleton Chapters

December 1, 2018

11:00 am to 2:00 pm

At

The Bernardo Heights Country club

Plated Lunch

Entertainment by Alfonso the Magician

www.themagicofalfonso.com

Cost - \$30.00

Silent Auction to support SDYLC
(Donate a basket to auction off)

Raffle - to Support Holland Chapter YLC Candidates
(Donate items, gift Cards, Wine and Spirits)

Bring an Unwrapped toy for the Marine Corps Children's
Christmas Gift Drive





For the Good of the Order

Military Order of the World Wars

San Diego Chapter

Massing of the Colors and Service of Remembrance

The 62nd Annual

Massing of the Colors

And

Service of Remembrance

Presented by the San Diego Chapter

Saturday - October 13, 2018

10:30 - 11:30 am

Spreckels Organ Pavilion

Balboa Park

Please come early and find close parking. Enjoy this Patriotic Event and Honor our National Flag



For the Good of the Order

Letter of Appreciation May 5, 2018



Commander Jessica O'Brien

The Companions and Guests of the General J. P. Holland Chapter sincerely thank you for sharing the next step of your career. You have given us the insight, knowledge and understanding of the duties and challenges of a Senior Officer on PHIBRON Three. We all are so very Proud to call you our "Companion." We look forward to your next visit at our Chapter meeting. The Companions of the Holland Chapter will keep you in their Prayers as you Defend and Protect our Nation with your Military Service in the United States Navy. We wish you the very Best in your future endeavors.

"Fair Winds and Following Seas"

January 7, 2017

Nicholas S. Herbka

Gen. JP Holland Chapter Commander



For the Good of the Order

Letter of Appreciation June 2, 2018



Brigadier General R. G. Head

The Companions and Guests of the General J. P. Holland Chapter sincerely thank you for sharing your most informative, enjoyable and historic talk on the Life and accomplishments of WWI Ace, Oswald Boelcke. We were most impressed by your Personal Sacrifice, Service to Country, and Dedication to the History of Aviation.

We wish you the very Best in your future endeavors.

"Fair Winds and Following Seas"

June 2, 2018

Nicholas S. Herbka

Gen. JP Holland Chapter Commander



For the Good of the Order



Chaplain's Corner



Carl Swepston, Navy SEAL, LT USN (Ret)

KA-BAR Knife Ceremony

Written by Carl Swepston

The comments in this article are based on my own experience of participating in the KA-BAR Knife Ceremony, which is held a few days before the SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) Graduation. The purpose of this event is to remember our fallen Teammates from WWII to today honoring our past and empowering our present.



It's the day before the next SEAL Qualification Training (SQT) Class Graduation. A very solemn and humble group enters the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery. They are heading toward a very special ceremony reserved for former and current UDT/SEALS, which is limited by invitation only.

Taking the lead are several active duty SEAL instructors followed by all the members of the upcoming SQT graduating class. Wearing camouflaged greens, the trainees walk in a single file line, not stopping, until they are facing the gravestone of an individual to be honored.

Before them, a presenter waits graveside. Closing ranks, the trainees take a knee as an instructor introduces the speaker, who then shares his personal connection with the KIA individual being remembered, as well as a brief description of how the honoree courageously contributed to the Teams and our Country, and how he was killed in combat.

When one of us passes, we are all affected and a precious part of us has gone with them. Thus, more voices join this event, as several trainees are bidden to lift their KA-BAR knives and remove the leather sheath. They hold their KA-BAR reverently as it is engraved with the name of a former CDU, S&R, UDT or SEAL who was killed in combat. One-by-one each speaks, "IN HONOR OF _____ (the name of the KIA, the unit assigned, and where the service member was killed)."

This honoring usually involves approximately 10 names being shared. Once these names are spoken, the trainees slide the KA-BARS into their sheaths and secure them to their person.

Silent and steadfast, they move toward the next gravesite. The only sounds are those of nature—birds and sometimes, falling leaves—as the group arrives at their next site to repeat this process.

I have personally participated in seven or more of these events. To be involved is a great personal honor and to experience this quiet somber moment with our future Frogmen is connection that is imbued with valor.

The individuals I recognize were close friends and Teammates. I was with one of the individuals when he was KIA in South Vietnam. Another was a mentor, Teammate, classmate and dear friend. We were both involved in a very dangerous and special program during the Vietnam War. As I hear the additional names called by the trainees, I usually hear at least one or two names of individuals I knew, or were with me when they were killed serving our country. As you may know, the KA-BAR knife is quite symbolic for "Navy Frogmen" of yesteryear. It was our only tool, and it often made the difference between life and death.