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Community of Christ

# The Peacekeepers



Association for Ministry to Military Newsletter

December, 2006

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## Curt's Column

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I was told when I was a young man that time would pass faster as I got older. This year has been a prime example. It seems like only a couple of weeks ago Joyce and I were attending winter reunion in Arizona and now we are approaching the most joyous time of the year — the celebration of the birth of Christ.

I'm glad to see that some of our commercial establishments are recognizing this time of year for what it is. I understand that Wal-Mart is having their employees greeting their customers with Merry Christmas rather than Happy Holidays. I hope that more are willing to put Christ into the season rather than just a time to be off from work.

In a way, our year is not going to be as good as they have been for the past 12 years. For the past 12 years Joyce and I have spent our winters in Arizona and have met some fabulous people while there. We have had the opportunity to meet with our brothers and sisters of the Mesa congregation and have been welcomed as part of the family. We will be able to keep in touch, thanks to the medium of e-mail but it's not like face to face.

Those of you that are away from home and family can relate to this as there is nothing like being with our loved ones. Our comrades, on whom we depend daily, are great and we love them but they are not totally family. Whenever you have the chance, be certain to attend church when you can. You will find an acceptance there that helps fill the void of separation.

I can remember when I was separated from my family for the first time and was in the South Pacific the emptiness of being away. Our ship was a small community of 300. The officers and skipper tried to make it as comfortable as they could under the circumstances but a lot was left to be desired.

When my role was reversed and I was in Germany and was responsible for the welfare of the soldiers under my command, I tried to make this season of the year a



good one for them. It was different, however, as many of them had family with them. I was very fortunate to have had very good people to work for me wherever I was assigned.

With the approach of the New Year we need to turn our thoughts toward World Conference. We will not be able to greet all of you attending unless you decide to come to the banquet on Wednesday of conference. There will not be any booths this year so our only chance will be that Wednesday. I have talked to the caterer and he informs me that due to rising costs the meal will increase from \$7.50 to \$8.00 per person. For those of you that have attended in the past, you will remember that there was plenty to eat and well prepared.

I believe I have done about all that I can do, so it is time for me to step away and let fresh blood lead the organization. We will be having an election of officers and the opportunity to point the organization in the direction we would like it to go. If you have any suggestions, please send them to me and I'll see that they are brought before the body. There will only be one more newsletter after this one before conference.

The best to all of you and may the Lord keep you from harms way is my prayer.

Curt

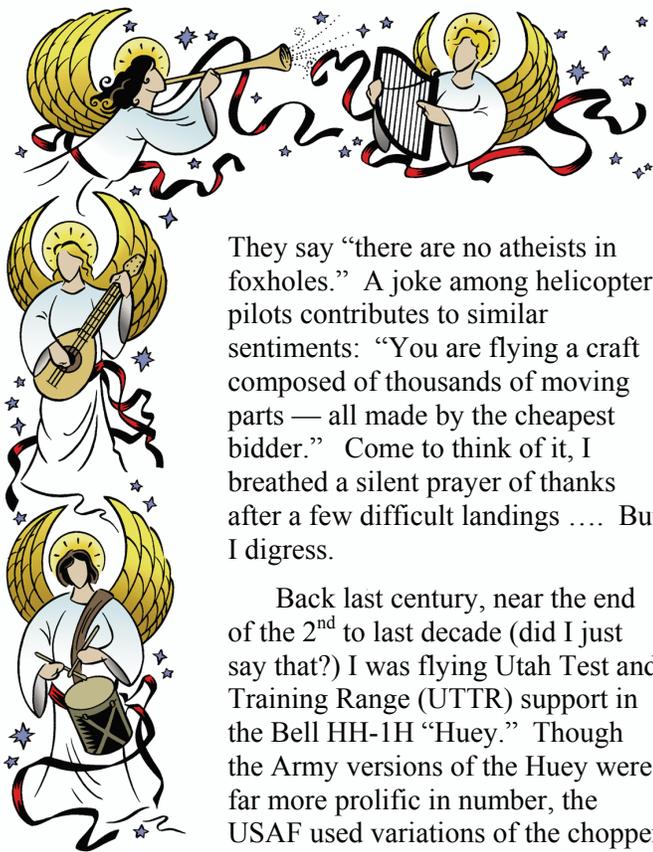
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## The Sacred in the (Not So) Ordinary

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Us old "bag wearers" are sometimes prone to get stuck in bouts of reminiscing about the *good old days of flying the line*. So far I suppose I haven't been so caught up in memories that I forget to enjoy *today* but we'll see how that goes as I get older. Certainly though, military flying has provided me some memorable moments (my current desk job NOT so many). Would you believe that I have found something sacred in helicopter flying?

**The Community of Christ Association for Ministry to Military Personnel  
is dedicated to bringing ministry to military members on active duty throughout the world.**



They say “there are no atheists in foxholes.” A joke among helicopter pilots contributes to similar sentiments: “You are flying a craft composed of thousands of moving parts — all made by the cheapest bidder.” Come to think of it, I breathed a silent prayer of thanks after a few difficult landings .... But I digress.

Back last century, near the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> to last decade (did I just say that?) I was flying Utah Test and Training Range (UTTR) support in the Bell HH-1H “Huey.” Though the Army versions of the Huey were far more prolific in number, the USAF used variations of the chopper to perform some very interesting

peacetime and combat-related missions. In Utah the single-engine bird I flew was a capable resource — though we had to watch the power margins for some of our mountainous operations. This story is about a portion of the desert range used for bombing, however.

The UTTR is composed of a variety of air and land resources — some owned by the Bureau of Land Management and some used pretty exclusively by the military. One such military portion is a bombing range. Problem: There was no fool-proof way to keep the public from crossing the fences separating the public lands from the military reservations. In the interest of safety then, the bombing ranges had to be visually “cleared” before the bombers came in to make their drops. Now, night sorties on the desert, with mountain ranges every “few miles,” could be “very interesting.” We flew predominantly according to visual flight rules out there — necessitating the ability to “see and avoid” obstructions — and other aircraft.

For the night range clearing missions we carried a flight engineer and a load of parachute-equipped LU-4 flares, rated at some enormous “gazillion” candle-power. I recall we had a pretty elaborate procedure to run through in preparation for the flare drops — safety being a high concern (and not JUST for the possible trespassers on the ground, or for the expensive piece of



taxpayer property we were flying — we also had a high desire to return home to shelter and family in one piece).

A short while before the bombers were destined to *turn sand into even finer sand* we whopped and whumped into the area and began our missions. I’ve already mentioned how bright the flares were. Whatever caused that brightness (burning magnesium perhaps) had a high potential to “ruin our evening” if the timing for the ignition was a little premature, like if the flare went off inside our cabin — or if the flare somehow got hung up on the airframe after we released it. There were, therefore, those few moments during each drop when, despite all the right precautions being taken, the wrong turn of events remained possible. During those moments we looked for some sign that all was well and that the flare drop had gone as planned.

Now you may recall how I titled this article “The Sacred in the (Not So) Ordinary.” Most any helicopter pilot will tell you that rotary-winged flight is already “extraordinary” all by itself. Flying in the dark with mountains nearby raises the bar even more. But what about the “sacred”? Well, I discovered one night how, immediately after a flare was dropped, the very air about us seemed to be illuminated in a brilliant glow. That fire was, in fact, so bright that the very microscopic (and normally invisible) dust particles in the Utah night air were bathed in white hot light. As the flare fell away from us I was amazed to note how I could actually see the entire outline of the Huey in a shadow painted against the sky above us. That shadow became figuratively known as our “Guardian Angel.” As the flare fell away below us the “angel” appeared to fly away above us. Once it finally shrank out of sight we knew we were basically safe and many silent prayers of thanks were offered even as we scanned the very surreally illuminated landscape below us — bathed in the eerily flickering light of a miniature sun. In all the missions we flew we never saw a soul trespassing — another reason for thanks.

Lord guard and guide those who fly!

In Christ, Victory  
TIM "K9" KUNZWEILER, Maj (Ret), USAF

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**Stacey Balicki is the daughter of Sharon & Charles Lakeman. She attended church in Jonesport, Maine. Please keep Stacey in your prayers. The following is from Stacey.**

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I'm working as a nurse in a Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility. The CASF is a facility with personnel/equipment necessary for aeromedical evacuation (AE) of ill/wounded US military/coalition forces and civilian contract personnel en-route from forward positions to medical centers in the European theater

(Germany) and the continental US. We help accomplish the quick, safe patient care/patient movement, including ground transportation for those entering, transiting or leaving the aerovac system. The bottom line is that we ensure patients are medically and administratively prepared for air evacuation on planned or opportune, fixed and rotary wing aircraft. Okay that was the military technical stuff — we are a hospital on the flight line that helps take care of the injured and sick military personnel that are being transported back to the US or to the hospitals in Germany. If you have any questions or if none of that makes sense — just ask me!

I've been in the military for 13 years now. I started my career as a med tech and then after graduating from college got commissioned as a nurse. I recently pinned on Captain. I love the Air Force and it has given me many experiences that most will never have. For all of us that serve in the military there are many sacrifices. I can tell you though that the sentiment is the same for all the soldiers that I have taken care of — they want to be here and they all can't wait to get back to their units and back to the jobs they have here. The injuries vary from person to person. Most have shrapnel wounds — some have illnesses such as cardiac issues that have been discovered since being over here — the amazing thing is that medicine in the battle field has come such a long way. These individuals make it out of here with a chance. They are doing some amazing things and saving lives everyday. I'm in awe at what we have the capability to do in a deployed location.

My husband and daughter (she just turned 2) are both doing okay. Jeff has to juggle school and being a single dad while I'm gone. He's doing a great job though and I'm very lucky to have such a wonderful person in my life. We are all very blessed.

I'll close this for now but thank you so much for e-mailing. It was great to hear from someone back home.

Her postal address is:  
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386 AEW/CASF

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e-mail address is:  
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## The Kingdom of God is Near

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Mary—Can You See Her?

Eyes wide, mouth open, face flushed, ears burning; mind parked in neutral— nothing making sense, her heart pounding like a jackhammer.

*Pregnant? I'm going to be pregnant?  
How can this be? Conceived of the Holy Spirit?  
I don't understand! Why Me?*

Then slowly, softly, slipping through the shadows of muddled thoughts, she whispers to herself, "O, my God, what will Joseph say? What can I say?"

*Whose Child is this?*

*Knowing and not knowing;*

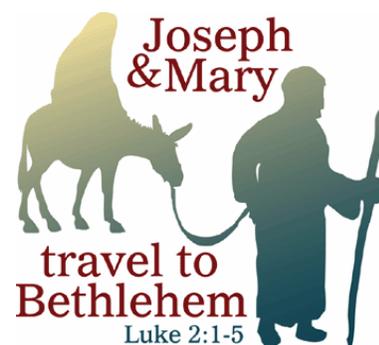
A young terrified girl, a heavenly messenger, and a promise given. "Don't be afraid!"  
Something remarkable,  
something uncertain is going to happen,  
and the clock is ticking,

I wonder if she saw herself as a person of faith.

—Danny Belrose

*Wave Offerings*

*Personal Psalms, Prayers, and Pieces*



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## Speak the Hope

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Joseph—Can You See Him?

How old? Eighteen? Nineteen?  
Face drained of color, brow furrowed  
—deep lines that weren't there moments ago  
—lips pursed, jaw tight, nostrils flared,  
Words stuck in his throat like broken glass,  
Beads of sweat sliding down an angular nose,  
And look! Look closely. Are those tracks of tears  
dampening his fledgling beard?  
“You're WHAT?” How can this be? WHO?  
*Give me his name!* Whom have you been with?”  
A pause, then slowly, softly, more to himself than to her,  
“My God, Mary, how could you?  
I don't understand!”

Months from now he will be a bit player,  
no speaking part—standing on his mark  
in the hay by a feeding trough,  
smelling animal sweat  
and squinting through murky shadows  
at a squalling infant.

*Whose child is this?*

The question echoes down through the ages.  
Something remarkable,  
something uncertain is going to happen  
and the clock is ticking,  
Knowing and not knowing,  
A dream, a mystical message, a promise given,  
“Don't be afraid.”

I wonder if he saw himself as a person of faith.

—Danny Belrose

*Wave Offerings*

*Personal Psalms, Prayers, and Pieces*



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**Available in an E-mail and a “snail mail” edition.** Active-duty military members who join the association can receive either edition for free. Non-active-duty members receive either edition with a paid membership, **\$10.00, due in April.** The newsletter is also available on our Web site: <http://www.cofchristpeacekeepers.org/>

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*Focus on Christ  
this Season*

