

**Compilation of Dahlia's Report on Frank Ralston
Clovis High School, NM (Early 2009)
(Edited by JLB for Class History purposes Jan 20, 2012)**

THIS IS WHAT STARTED THIS TRIBUTE TO OUR GOOD FRIEND FRANK:

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

From: "dahlia" <dahlia@>

To: Roger Knopf ([Roger is our 433rd TFS squadron mate who is the keeper of info for Frank and Don King](#))

Sent: **Thursday, January 29, 2009 2:54 PM**

Subject: Frank D. Ralston III

Mr. Knopf,

My name is Dahlia Moore, I am a student at Clovis High School in Clovis New Mexico. My English class is doing a research project honoring Vietnam Veterans, and I was assigned Frank D. Ralston III. I was on www.virtualwall.org when I found your contact information. I was curious if you had any information concerning this man and his life or if you know someone who would. I want to give a worthy tribute to him and his accomplishments, with all the facts about him as possible. I would really appreciate any information you may have.

Sincerely,

Dahlia Moore

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

From: "ROGER A KNOPF"

To: "Ken Keller"; "Wilson Parma" ; "John Borling"; "Jim Beatty"; "Jim Cizek" ; "Bob Kan"; "Bob Jeffery"; "Bernie McGill"; "Steve Leisge"; "paul moore" "J B Stone"; "Joe Moran" . Joe Lee Burns (**All 433rd F-4 pilots**)

Sent: **Thursday, January 29, 2009 5:49 PM**

Subject: Fw: Frank D. Ralston III

> Hi good people. I will be responding to Dahlia Moore. You might want to
> do so also. Best Wishes. **Roger**

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

From: joe moran

Sent: **Friday, January 30, 2009 6:20 AM**

To: ROGER A KNOPF; dahlia@

Cc: 'Benny Wallace'; John Spencer; paul moore; charles lobdell; George Lippemeier; sam johnson; charlie cox; jim beatty; dick barkstrom; J B Stone; Burns, Joe L; Ralph Wetterhahn; Steve Leisge; Bob Jeffery; Bob Kan; Ken Keller; Cizek, James W; John Borling; Wilson Parma (**All 433rd F-4 pilots**)

Subject: Re: Frank D. Ralston III

Roger,

U bet I will. Have added eight names to the address list.

Joe Moran

From: Joe Lee Burns

Date: 1/30/2009 9:23:35 AM

To: Dahlia

Cc: 'Benny Wallace'; John Spencer; paul moore; charles lobbell; George Lippemeier; sam johnson; charlie cox; jim beatty; dick barkstrom; J B Stone; Burns, Joe L; Ralph Wetterhahn; Steve Leisge; Bob Jeffery; Bob Kan; Ken Keller; Cizek, James W; John Borling; Wilson Parma

Subject: RE: Frank D. Ralston III

Dahlia,

Please email me if you have any questions!! Willie, George and I would be grateful if you would allow us to send you a POW bracelet with Frank's info - please send me your snail mail address!!

Thank you and your teacher and Clovis High School for selecting Vietnam Veterans as a project!!

An East High School (Denver) classmate ('59) of Frank's recently found info on the Virtual Wall and many of Frank's fighter pilot friends responded to his request for info. I will share with you parts of our Email exchange - I think it will be helpful to you.

He was loved by all that knew him.

Willie Parma, Frank Ralston and I (Joe Lee) were best friends at the USAF Academy (we all played varsity sports). At pilot training, Willie and Frank 'adopted' **George Lippemeier, a West Pointer**. The 4 of us were best of friends. Willie is the godfather of my oldest **son (Mike)** and Frank was the godfather of my **youngest (Patrick)**. George took over as godfather after Frank was lost.

INFO sent to Pat Owen, Frank's East High School (Denver) classmate (Indented)

15 May 1966 - Don King and Frank Ralston (both had high 90s missions over NVN) "disappear" on night mission in southern NVN - MIAs, never found - F-4C tail# 64-0760

I will never forget the sick, nearly debilitating nausea that swept over me the night (and next 4 days) when Frank Ralston and his front seater 'bought it'. I couldn't even help my best friend Willie Parma pack up Frank's things to send back to his Mom and Dad in Denver. "Combat is also the place where you make friendships that last forever. There's something about sharing danger, overcoming fear, earning each others' mutual trust, and surviving that bonds warriors together for a life time. I keep in contact (if somewhat irregularly) with some of them to this day!"

1/9/09 - From **Roger Knopf: (Previous info to one of Frank's East High School classmates for its Class of 1959, 50 Year Reunion)**

Hi Joe Lee,

You and the remaining four musketeers have really responded to **Patrick Owen's** request. You have done Frank proud.

I didn't know that bracelets were still available until reading your note. Now have two bracelets on order: Frank's and Don King's.

Thanks again for your follow through on this. **Roger**

1/8/09 - From **Joe Lee** to Pat Owen and Willie & George:

Pat, Willie, and George,

Here's the order!! I decided to send you (Pat) two, just to be sure. Mount one, keep or share the other. Willie, George and I thank you for helping us to help you honor our friend Frank. We too miss him often. He was, just as you remember him, a great guy, a true friend, a great athlete, a very good fighter pilot, and really, really fun to be around.

Believe me when I tell you that your East High School Class of 1959 should be very proud of what Frank stood for as a young man, an emissary for EHS, and an Angel. He was flying with the 433rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, Satan's Angels.

I trust delivery in 30 plus days is early enough for your reunion - unless you hold it at Vail (just kidding ~(:;)).

1/9/09 - From **George Lippemeier**

Let's make that a case of Coors from Willy (I know it should be Wilson but I can't get over bad habits) (at least you spell it with a "y") and myself for all the free meals the Burns household provided to us bachelors back in the good old days.

I cannot find any pictures of Frank with Willy and spade (Willie's monkey) but maybe Willy will find some.

I have misplaced Frank's POW/MIA bracelet and will order one from the web site. We cannot forget of the promising young life that was cut short by war.

1/9/09 - From **Joe Lee** to **Pat Owen** and Willie & George:

De and I talked about Reese/George AFB days when we were at the Aggressor reunion in '08.

We remembered 'beanie weenie's over hot dog buns and home-made popcorn in paper bags smuggled into a Drive-In theater at Lubbock; also, home-made chili, and maybe her Tuna Loaf dinner at Holloman (Alamogordo), but mostly the 'Chili Dog' bachelor parties at Escalante Gardens (Tucson)!! Great times and memories. What was Frank's Siberian Husky's name????

I have to admit I have on occasion asked myself 'what Frank would have done' in certain situations. (Usually AFTER the fact, unfortunately.)

He may have been an instigator, a source of 'Watch This' crazy shenanigans, but he had a moral compass that stayed locked on True North all the time.

I admired, and envied, his balance and trustworthiness. Yours, too, George. Solid and dependable.

And, Boy, was he strong.

I think Willie and I kept a wary eye on each other to try to gain/prevent an 'advantage' of one sort or another on each other. ~(;o)

I think all four of us are cut from the same cloth. We are truly blessed to have had our lives intertwined. Frank would have continued to make our lives much richer.

Your new friends,
Joe Lee, Willie and George

From: Bob Kan

Sent: Friday, January 30, 2009 9:59 AM

To: dahlia; Burns, Joe L

Cc: Benny Wallace; John Spencer; charles lobbell; George Lippemeier; sam johnson; charlie cox; jim beatty; dick barkstrom; J B Stone; Ralph Wetterhahn; Ken Keller; Cizek, James W; John Borling; Wilson Parma; joe; ROGER A KNOPF; doc

Subject: RE: Frank D. Ralston III

As you all know, Don King and I were best of friends. We joined the **433rd** and became acquainted with y'all on the C-130 (Hawaii, Okinawa to Ubon). I felt the loss of Don like you did with Frank. Don & I checked out in the F4B together, and flew the C at Eglin for two years before we met you. Don was one of the best fighter pilots I have known, and like Frank, a terrific guy.

I am visiting Don's wife, Ginny, in PHX in April and would like to know how I can acquire a bracelet to give to her.

This tribute to Frank is wonderful, heartwarming. I'm sure you're getting a big smile from those guys looking down at us from above.

Bob Kan

From: John Borling [] (USAFA Class of 1963 and POW)

Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2009 3:35 PM

To: joe; ROGER A KNOPF; dahlia

Cc: Benny Wallace; John Spencer; paul moore; charles lobbell; George Lippemeier; sam johnson; charlie cox; jim beatty; dick barkstrom; J B Stone; Burns, Joe L; Ralph Wetterhahn; Steve Leisge; Bob Jeffery; Bob Kan; Ken Keller; Cizek, James W; Wilson Parma

Subject: RE: Frank D. Ralston III

Joe Lee (and all): Deep respect for the enduring feelings you cause to spin up--will contact Dalia and offer thoughts on first (and reluctant) trip to wall one drizzly early morning years ago.

Had jogged down the hill from Ft Meyer and came to the Lincoln and saw the wall entrance and stopped and walked down. In the pre dawn, about a third of the way down, there was a scruffy guy in a field jacket hugging a gal and crying his eyes out holding on to her and the wall.

I tried to ease past unnoticed but he fixes me with a stare and says" Were you there man?" I said, "I was there" and moved on down the way but stopped further on and reached out to the wall for my own needs and the panel was 7E.

Haven't been back but a few times since. John

John Borling
(POW)

From: ROGER A KNOPF [mailto:rogerknopf@verizon.net]

Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2009 10:07 AM

To: dahlia

Cc: Burns, Joe L

Subject: Frank Ralston

Hi Dahlia,

A while ago you had requested information about Frank Ralston. You have received responses from at least six friends of his, all of whom were fighter pilots who flew combat missions in Vietnam.

I'm sure you are busy putting that information into your research project. But it would be a very good idea to send a short e-mail to those who responded acknowledging that you received their information.

Joe L Burns had offered to send you a MIA bracelet with Frank's information on it as a thank-you for your English class undertaking a project relating to the Vietnam War. He would need a mailing address to which to send that bracelet.

We wish you the best in completing your research project. What we enjoy in the many freedoms we have today are the result of the combat risks taken by people like those who responded to your request (two of those had been shot down and rescued; one had been shot down and spent 7 years as a prisoner-of-war) and by the sacrifices made by people like Frank Ralston.

Best wishes,

Roger Knopf

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

From: dahlia

Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2009 8:42 PM

To: Burns, Joe L

Subject: RE: Frank D. Ralston III

Mr. Joe Lee,

Thank you so much for the response!! I am really sorry it took a while for me to reply, with school going on academics, cheerleading, choir, and church are eating away at my time, and this is the first day I have had to opportunity to even check my email! I would LOVE to have a bracelet!!!! I live at xxxx Clovis, New Mexico,

88101. I noticed in the e-mail that Reese AFB Lubbock, TX was referenced. I travel to Lubbock very often, it is only about an hour and a half away from Clovis! Reading y'all's conversation really reveals how close to Mr. Ralston each of you were. Thank you so very much for sharing this with me! I appreciate it more than you know! My project is not due until the end of March so if any other information is out there I will be seeking it! Getting to know what Mr. Ralston was like and the kind of friends he had has been amazing, I hope someday I will have friends like he and yourself do. I can not wait to share what all has been told to me to the people I will be presenting to.

Also, I noticed it was asked what Mr. Ralston's Siberian Husky's name was (I too have a Siberian husky) and facts like these will make my paper about him that much more of an intimate and personal tribute. I learned that he had a solid teakwood elephant he had named "Elmer" from a Mr. Ben Wallace. This fact will be included in my project along with some pictures I was sent of Mr. Ralston and the elephant.

If anything of this sort that would really create a true image of Mr. Ralston and who he was are known please do share. I greatly appreciate your time and memories! Thank you for everything!

Dahlia

---- Original Message ----

From: joe.l.burns

To: pat, dahlia

Subject: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Date: **Fri, 13 Feb 2009 09:13:37 -0600**

Pat and Dahlia,

The first bracelet I had for Frank was an aluminum one with the rank of 1/Lt (a First Lieutenant - insignia is one silver bar) .

Since he and Capt Don King were classified as Missing in Action (MIA), they were still promoted until they were finally declared KIA.

So the current bracelets shows Frank as a Major and Don as a Colonel.

A little background on the POW/MIA bracelet:

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/exhibition/flash.html?>

<http://www.virtualwall.org/dr/RalstonFD01a.htm>

A.

POW Bracelets

Credit: Armed Forces History, Division of History of Technology, National Museum of American History

Dimensions / Weight

Dimensions: 0.5" H x 3" W x 2.5" D

Physical Description
bracelets

Specific History

Worn to honor and increase awareness of POW/MIA soldiers.

Traditionally, these bracelets were worn until the POW returned to the U.S. at which time the bracelet was presented to the former prisoner.

General History

The idea for POW Bracelets originated in 1970 from Carol Bates Brown and Kay Hunter, two college students looking to support US troops in Vietnam without being involved in the controversy that demonstrations and protests had brought.

Through their student group VIVA (Voices in Vital America), they were able to distribute millions of bracelets and other memorabilia nationwide

B.

History of the POW/MIA Bracelets

In recent months, several individuals have contacted me looking for information on the origin of the POW/MIA bracelets worn during the early 1970s. The following is offered for those interested in learning the history of the bracelet phenomena.

I was the National Chairman of the POW/MIA Bracelet Campaign for VIVA (Voices In Vital America), the Los Angeles based student organization that produced and distributed the bracelets during the Vietnam War. Entertainers Bob Hope and Martha Raye served with me as honorary co-chairmen.

The idea for the bracelets was started by a fellow college student, Kay Hunter, and me, as a way to remember American prisoners of war suffering in captivity in Southeast Asia. In late 1969 television personality Bob Dornan (who several years later was elected to the US Congress) introduced us and several other members of VIVA to three wives of missing pilots. They thought our student group could assist them in drawing public attention to the prisoners and missing in Vietnam.

The idea of circulating petitions and letters to Hanoi demanding humane treatment for the POWs was appealing, as we were looking for ways college students could become involved in positive programs to support US soldiers without becoming embroiled in the controversy of the war itself. The relatives of the men were beginning to organize locally, but the National League of POW/MIA Families had yet to be formed.

During that time Bob Dornan wore a bracelet he had obtained in Vietnam from hill tribesmen, which he said always reminded him of the suffering the war had brought to so many. We wanted to get similar bracelets to wear to remember US POWs, so rather naively, we tried to figure out a way to go to Vietnam. Since no one wanted to fund two sorority-girl types on a tour to Vietnam during the height of the war, and our parents were livid at the idea, we gave up and Kay Hunter began to check out ways to make bracelets. Soon other activities drew her attention and she dropped out of VIVA, leaving me, another student Steve Frank, and our adult advisor, Gloria Coppin, to pursue the POW/MIA awareness program.

The major problem was that VIVA had no money to make bracelets, although our advisor was able to find a small shop in Santa Monica that did engraving on silver used to decorate horses. The owner agreed to make 10 sample bracelets. I can remember us sitting around in Gloria Coppin's kitchen with the engraver on the telephone, as we tried to figure out what we would put on the bracelets. This is why they carried only name, rank and date of loss, since we didn't have time to think of anything else.

Armed with the sample bracelets, we set out to find someone who would donate money to make bracelets for distribution to college students. It had not yet occurred to us that adults would want to wear the things, as they weren't very attractive. Several approaches to Ross Perot were rebuffed, to include a proposal that he loan us \$10,000 at 10% interest.

We even visited Howard Hughes' senior aides in Las Vegas. They were sympathetic but not willing to help fund our project. Finally in the late summer of 1970, Gloria Coppin's husband donated enough brass and copper to make 1,200 bracelets. The Santa Monica engraver agreed to make them and we could pay him from any proceeds we might realize.

Although the initial bracelets were going to cost about 75 cents to make, we were unsure about how much we should ask people to donate to receive a bracelet. In 1970, a student admission to the local movie theater was \$2.50. We decided this seemed like a fair price to ask from a student for one of the nickel-plated bracelets. We also made copper ones for adults who believed they helped their "tennis elbow."

Again, according to our logic, adults could pay more, so we would request \$3.00 for the copper bracelets.

At the suggestion of local POW/MIA relatives, we attended the National League of Families annual meeting in Washington, DC in late September. We were amazed at the interest of the wives and parents in having their man's name put on bracelets and in obtaining them for distribution. Bob Dornan, who was always a champion of the POW/MIAs and their families, continued to publicize the issue on his Los Angeles television talk show and promoted the bracelets.

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1970, we officially kicked off the bracelet program with a news conference at the Universal Sheraton Hotel. Public response quickly grew and we eventually got to the point we were receiving over 12,000 requests a day. This also brought money in to pay for brochures, bumper stickers, buttons, advertising and whatever else we could do to publicize the POW/MIA issue. We formed a close alliance with the relatives of missing men - they got bracelets from us on consignment and could keep some of the money they raised to fund their local organizations. We also tried to furnish these groups with all the stickers and other literature they could give away.

While Steve Frank and I ended up dropping out of college to work for VIVA full time to administer the bracelet and other POW/MIA programs, none of us got rich off the bracelets. VIVA's adult advisory group, headed by Gloria Coppin, was adamant that we would not have a highly paid professional staff. As I recall the highest salary was \$15,000, a year and we were able to keep administrative costs to less than 20 percent of income.

In all, VIVA distributed nearly five million bracelets and raised enough money to produce untold millions of bumper stickers, buttons, brochures, matchbooks, newspaper ads, etc., to draw attention to the missing men.

In 1976, VIVA closed its doors. By then the American public was tired of hearing about Vietnam and showed no interest in the POW/MIA issue.

<http://www.virtualwall.org/dr/RalstonFD01c.jpg>

Joe Lee Burns

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

From: **dahlia]**
Sent: **Saturday, February 14, 2009 2:52 PM**
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Thank You so so so much!! I am looking very forward to receiving it!!

---- Original Message ----

From: **joe.l.burns@boeing.com**
To: **dahlia@**
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet
Date: **Tue, 17 Feb 2009 09:09:45 -0600**

Dahlia,

A little more personal info on Frank.

He played varsity football and was on the wrestling team at the academy. I seem to remember him as a little **over 6' and ~ 190 pounds and very strong**. He was freckled all over especially after being in the sun; had **reddish brown hair and blue eyes**. His thighs were really strong from sports - he had to **buy his jeans and khakis 2" larger than his waist size** so he could get them up over his thighs.

He was someone you could always count on. I miss him still.

Joe Lee

Joe Lee Burns
Aviation Training Specialist
Boeing Aerospace Operations
Training Support Center
925 Coronado Blvd, Ste 200
Universal City, Texas 78148-3236
joe.l.burns@boeing.com

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

From: dahlia [
Sent: **Tuesday, February 17, 2009 11:25 PM**
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Thank you so much for those more personal facts! I can now have a more vivid image of him in my mind as well as be able to paint one for the people I will be presenting to. I was wondering, would you happen to know if Mr. Ralston had any siblings? a favorite pet? I'm just trying right now to get some intimate details about his life. Thanks again, you have helped me tremendously.

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

From: Burns, Joe L []
Sent: **Wednesday, February 18, 2009 9:04 AM**
To: dahlia
Cc: George Lippemeier; Wilson Parma
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Dahlia,

I think Frank was an only child - I'll let Wilson fill in some blanks for you.

Willie and Frank were roommates for several semesters at the Academy (**CS-9**) - both involved in sports.

Were roommates in pilot training at Webb AFB, Big Spring, TX and again at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ (Tucson) for F-4C training.

He loved his Siberian Husky (named **Tanya**) Don't know what he thought of Wilson's capuchin monkey.

Willie, over to you, Mr. fleet-of-foot!!!

Joe Lee

Joe Lee Burns
Aviation Training Specialist
Boeing Aerospace Operations
joe.l.burns@boeing.com

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

From: Wilson Parma
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 10:24 AM
To: Burns, Joe L; dahlia
Cc: George Lippemeier
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Dahlia

As you know, Frank graduated from East High School in Denver and was an only child. Most of his aunts and uncles were from Nebraska and his family was of modest means, so it was a great, great source of pride for his parents, Frank and Helen Ralston, that their son was a **cadet at the Air Force Academy**.

Frank, perhaps unlike some of us, also realized his good fortune and strove to make the most of every day at the Academy. He was always the **first to volunteer** for clean up detail, for helping other cadets, for running up a hill, for running the obstacle course and any other task we were asked or expected to do. And he did it with a **happy enthusiasm** and **vigor** that few of us could match.

Prior to going to Viet Nam, we were stationed at George AFB in Victorville, CA., in our first operational F-4 squadrons. We rented a home in Apple Valley and interestingly enough, we lived across the street from **Roy Rogers and Dale Evans**, the "King of the Cowboys" and the "Queen of the West". Of course, **Tanya** ran all around our rather large yard for all to see. One day there came a knock at the door and when I opened it, there stood Roy Rogers. I was totally taken aback but he was very nice and told me that their dog had disappeared and they wondered if he had come across the highway to visit Tanya. Roy, Frank and I walked around the house to look for the dog but didn't find him, so Roy thanked us and went back home. We saw him several times at local stores in Apple Valley, where the Roy Rogers Museum was located, and he always spoke to us and asked how we were doing.

Frank was also a very **physical person** and sometimes found it **difficult to focus on his studies** for extended periods of time in the evenings. We would be sitting at our desks studying and all of a sudden, Frank would jump up, bouncing on the balls of his feet, and say, "**Let's wrestle, Willie**", or he would just yank me out of my chair and try to pin me on the floor. I would resist for awhile but he was so strong I would always either get pinned or give up. And he always did it **with a smile**.

I'll hold off on Frank's epic graduation story for another time, but it is truly unique to the history of the USAFA.

Wilson

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

From: Dahlia Moore [
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 12:00 AM
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject: Re: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

I find out/ receive new information daily on this honestly incredible individual. I get so anxious to read my messages because each new e-mail tells another unique story about his life. Mr. Burns, you have helped me so very much I can't thank you enough! Mr. Parma's input was very helpful as well. I just pray I can convey a

worthy depiction of how impressive of a life was lead by Mr. Ralston to my fellow classmates and others who will be sitting in.

Dahlia

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

From: "Burns, Joe L"

To: "Dahlia Moore"

Cc: "George Lippemeier"; "willie wk"

Sent: **Thursday, February 26, 2009 4:12 PM**

Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Dahlia,

Willie, George and I are SURE you will do a wonderful job telling about Frank's life to your schoolmates. And you do us honor as well by keeping Frank 'alive', at least in our hearts.

Thank you again, Dahlia!

After the class project is finished, perhaps you could email us with a brief story of how it went for you and other classmates.

Please wear his bracelet anytime you feel happy or want to be strong.

Your friend,

Joe Lee

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

From: Dahlia Moore

Sent: **Monday, March 16, 2009 12:08 AM**

To: Burns, Joe L

Subject: Re: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

Just a brief update! Received the bracelet and I LOVE IT! I haven't taken it off... Thank you guys so much... I can't even express all of my gratitude.

I will send an email of the outcome of the presentation. It will be given around March 31st.

Dahlia

From: Beatty, Jim J Jr. (433rd TFS George and Ubon '65-'66)

Sent: **Monday, March 16, 2009 10:58 AM**

To: Burns, Joe L

Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

This gal is doing a very good thing. Jim.

From: Burns, Joe L [<mailto:joe.l.burns@boeing.com>]

Sent: **Monday, March 16, 2009 11:05 AM**

To: Beatty, Jim J Jr.

Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

It's her English Class teacher (Clovis High School, NM) who assigned them reports from the Virtual Wall.

Dahlia has been quite surprised by all the responses, I think.

Makes us all proud.

Joe Lee

From: Beatty, Jim J Jr. CTR Contractor AETC 325 OSS/LM
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 11:42 AM
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston POW/MIA Bracelet

It's nice to know that at least a few students will get an insight into a very fine young American fighter pilot and what it took for him to achieve his dream. They will also get to see what the men who knew him best thought of him.

Jim.

From: Wilson Parma
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 10:24 AM
To: Burns, Joe L; dahlia
Cc: George Lippemeier
Subject: RE: Presentation

Dahlia

The Graduation Story, somewhat shortened by memory loss over time, but factual. And untold.

I hope this is something you can use in your presentation, as it is part of Academy underground legend. As all involved have passed away, I don't think this story anyone will be hurtful to anyone, otherwise I would not have shared it.

And I share it as a loving memory of a great man and best friend.

Wilson

From: Dahlia Moore]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 11:44 PM
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject: Frank Ralston

Oh I apologize for the blank message I'm unsure as to why it sent..

I have been told that my day to present is not until April 17th! I am absolutely the last person to present, every other student (27 of them) present before me. But the cliché saying pretty much sums it up, "saving the best for last." I'm pretty certain I have all the information I need. However, I received a rather lengthy graduation e-mail from Mr. Wilson that left me wondering about a few things.

Were Donna and Mr. Ralston still dating at the time of his passing?

Throughout all the e-mails this is the first that has mentioned her so I was unaware of her existence until now.

Wow, the story that was shared with me was quite entertaining! I visited the Vietnam National Memorial in Angel Fire, New Mexico (I asked my dad to take me there since it was only a little ways away from where we were camping in Eagle Nest) this Spring Break and was surprised to find Mr. Ralston's name amongst few others on a plaque of Colorado's POW/MIA men. I have pictures of it and the Memorial itself. I have loved doing this research. I think about him often, and about how queer it is that when he passed away my parents weren't even thinking of me, yet I feel like I know him so well. But I am so grateful for him and all he and you all did for me, even when I wasn't alive.

From: Burns, Joe L
Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2009 08:05 AM
To: Dahlia
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston

Dahlia,
Thanks for responding!!!
You'll do great on the 17th of April!!!

I forwarded your Email to Wilson to answer your questions about: Use his answers as gospel; 'cause mine are just 'gut feel' answers.

1. Donna (all I remember is that she broke his heart, but as a "guy" he worked his way through it. She was his FIRST love - you ALWAYS remember that first real love).
2. Being 'late' for ANYTHING in the military gets you in trouble and results in punishment of some kind (extra marching, loss of vacation (leave) time, etc.). So, no, it was a one time event. His friends were able to 'cover' for him so his graduation wasn't delayed.

Like I said before, you do Frank great honor with your report. And, by association, you do all of us who provided you information great honor.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Joe Lee

From: Wilson Parma [mailto:whparma@fedex.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2009 10:15 AM
To: Dahlia Moore
Subject: RE: Frank Ralston

Dahlia

Donna and Frank dated in high school and during his time at the Academy. As you know, more than three years had passed from graduation until he was killed. We had been through pilot training, F-4 training, and our first operational assignment before we went to Viet Nam. The separation had an effect on their relationship and by the time we went to Viet Nam, she was either dating another man or was married, I just don't remember. At any rate, their parting of ways was mutual and they remained good friends. I know she was close to Frank's parents even after his incident and throughout their sad time of uncertainty dealing with his missing in action status. I'm sorry I don't remember her last name but it isn't important to the story, and if I remember it before April 17th, I'll let you know.

Frank, as you might imagine, was always up at the crack of dawn and generally trying to get the rest of us moving. Because of that, it is even more ironic that he would oversleep the morning of our graduation. President or no president, his sense of responsibility would require that he be there on time. I often wonder if that whole thing was preordained to perpetuate the reputation and legacy of Frank Ralston.

I join Joe Lee in thanking you for your research and efforts on behalf of your presentation and Frank. We who were privileged to know him appreciate the opportunity to remember him again and relive the memories we all shared together while we were becoming men and brothers in arms.

Wilson

From: dahlia
Sent: Sunday, June 07, 2009 9:55 PM
To: Burns, Joe L
Subject:

hey guys! busy busy busy!!!

School getting out and I got a new job so I am so sorry for the wait, but I hope you will be glad to hear my project went amazingly well!!!! **I got a 100 on it!!!** Everyone was so moved, it was truly a tribute to Frank and his life. It was the most intimate of all the other projects for sure and I have you all to thank for that! **The stories you shared with me are what really made the essence of Frank as a person shine through.** I feel as though I knew him.

Getting to email you all was such a rewarding experience in and of itself. Thank you for all your time and effort you gave to me for my project I don't think you will ever know just how much I appreciate all you've done for me. I thank God He made it to where I received Frank and enabled me to meet you all and really get to know about Frank's life and everything that he did.

It opened my eyes and just strengthened my great admiration for veterans and their unmatched service they give our country. No words can I find to depict to you how I feel about Frank, knowing bits and pieces about his life.

It's as though I have this attachment and adoration for him, and he never even knew me.

I NEVER take off my bracelet.

Thank you so much. Mr. Burns and Mr. Parma I will never forget you two!!!!

From: **dahlia**

Sent: **Tuesday, June 09, 2009 1:02 AM**

To: Burns, Joe L

Subject: RE: Frank

You guys have truly touched my heart with everything you've done for me! I wish I had a picture of my own to show you, of my board at least! I think my teacher may have one so I'll try to get it! But I took my board home and left one day after school, and my younger brother (Marshall who is 12 and has only the dream of someday attending the USAFA) stole all of my Air Force stickers, flags, and some pictures and he stuck them all up on the walls in his room! So needless to say the board was then incomplete. It saddens me to think that this whole experience is over because it was so amazing to read everything you have sent me throughout this, I looked forward to it so much!

Thank you once again! and a million times more...

Dahlia Moore

Joe Lee adds:

What a nice ending to a great tribute to our good friend **Frank Ralston**.

I hope he enjoyed it as much as we did!!!

Joe Lee

From: Wilson Parma

Sent: Monday, **January 23, 2012 2:35 PM**

To: Burns, Joe L

Subject: Frank Info for Dahlia 3

I re-reviewed just now and I have to admit, the monitor got blurry again...I think it's pride in what we were, and what we did, and what we are today. **Bloodied but unbowed**. You did a great job of compiling the information and encapsulating Frank's short life and what he meant to all who knew him.

I don't think I ever heard a bad word said about him.

Have you been in contact recently with Dahlia? We should try to keep in touch with her just so she doesn't forget the experience.

W