



Flight Instructor Refresher Clinic Held in Helena

By: David J. Hoerner, MDT Aeronautics

The 2011 Flight Instructors Refresher Clinic that is sponsored by MDT Aeronautics was a great success this year. Fifty four Airplane and Helicopter Flight Instructors showed up to refresh their knowledge and listen to long time educator, Greg Gorak.

Greg kept the program flowing with continuing video programs on teaching techniques, the Sport Pilot Program and use of the Pilot Training Standards. Some of the comments about Greg's program were: "The complete array of information you provide in this course has been and continues to be outstanding. Your presentations vary so as to keep one's interest and give a sense of, "Oh, boy, what's next kind of anticipation."

One thing for sure, Greg said we wouldn't get bored. He was right; the program went fast and smooth. Greg provides an educational and exciting program. Greg has been flying since 1962, where he earned his pilot's license in a J3 Piper Cub and flew as an Airline Transport and flight Instructor. Greg has eighty five hundred flight hours. Good job Greg.

The two oldest flight instructors renewing their certificates were Mike Strand of Kalispell and Douglas Parrott of Roundup.

Mike is the young age of eighty years. He received his pilot's license in 1954. He served in the Army as a helicopter and airplane pilot and instructor. After retiring from the Army he remained in active duty as a Warrant Office flying for the Air Guard out of Helena. Mike has twenty thousand flight hours. Mike started Strand Aviation in Kalispell and ran the charter business until he retired in 2002. Good job Mike.

Douglas Parrott became a navy Cadet in 1945, where he flew Stearman, Grumman TBMs and Hellicat fighter airplanes. After his military career Doug became an airline pilot with Northwest airlines where he flew Boeing 737 and 747 airplanes. Not a person to sit back and take it easy, Doug purchased a ranch in the Roundup area and now spends his time keeping the ranch working. Doug is the young age of 84 and has twenty six thousand flight hours. Good job Doug.



Pictured (l-r) Doug Parrott, Mike Strand and Greg Gorak.



Participants were able to share their own valuable knowledge with others during the 2011 FIRC.

Welcome Wade!

Wade Cebulski was recently hired as the MDT Aeronautics Divisions Aviation Support Officer with emphasis on 5010 airport condition reports. Wade will be traveling around the state in the Cessna 206 or A36 Bonanza conducting the 5010 reports.

Wade was born in Havre and then moved to western Montana and grew up west of Missoula by Rock Creek, attending schools in Clinton and Missoula. He then spent five and a half years in the US Army with the construction engineers and transportation companies. During this period of time Wade married his wife Geanette. They have a daughter named Sandi. Sandi has two sons Tristan age 13 and Alex age 7.

After being discharged from the Army they moved to Seeley Lake and spent twenty five years in the trucking business, first with his parents company then many years with their own company. Wade was involved with hauling log homes from Condon, Montana to all points in the U.S. and as far north as the Yukon. In later years he worked exclusively in the northwest doing contract work with wholesalers and manufactures in Montana. Nine years ago Wade sold the trucking business and went to work for Pyramid Mountain Lumber in Seeley Lake working in lumber sales and management.

Wades aviation interests started at a young age as his uncle Russ and cousin Kenny had a flying service in Malta doing aerial application, flight instructing, etc. Wade eventually bought an Aero Commander Darter along with some other folks forming a flying club and received his pilot's license. Shortly after getting his license he purchased half interest in a Beechcraft Bonanza. Since then he has purchased two more Bonanza's and currently own a 1964 S model Bonanza. Geanette earned her pilots certificate in a Cessna 172 with a 180 hp/constant speed prop which they are still part owners of.

Wade & Geanette have traveled quite extensively in their aircraft going to the Caribbean, Mexico and Alaska numerous times.

They currently live adjacent to the Seeley Lake airport in their dream home. Wade & Geanette worked on this hanger/home for two plus years doing all the construction themselves from beginning to end. They had built numerous homes, hangars with apartments and a log homes prior to their current residence.

Wade is enjoying his new position at MDT and is looking forward to seeing many of you in the field. Wade can be contacted at (406) 444-9568 or email wcebulski@mt.gov.



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Montana and the Sky

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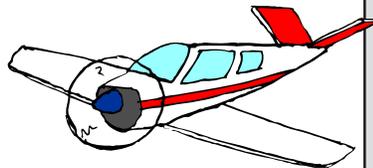
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Calendar of Events

May 28-29 – Spotted Bear Annual Work Session.

June 4 – Benchmark Annual Work Session. Lunch provided by the MPA Vigilante Hangar.

June 8 – Aeronautics Board Teleconference Meeting, Loan/Grant Extensions. For further information contact Patty Kautz at (406) 444-9580 or email pkautz@mt.gov.

June 11 – 7th Annual Lewistown Airport Fly In and Pancake Breakfast. Enjoy War Birds, Experimentals, Young Eagle Rides. For further information contact Jerry Moline (406) 350-3264.

June 24-25 – Havre Airport pilot patio party & hangar theatre the evening of June 24. On June 25 annual fly-in breakfast. Breakfast and rides start at 7 a.m. For further information contact Darren Huestis at (406) 945-1861 or email darren.huestis@nuwaveservices.com

June 25-26 – Meadow Creek Annual Work Session.

July 9 – Del Bonita Hands Across the Border Annual Work Session.

July 15-17 – Schafer Meadows Annual Work Session.

July 21-23 - Second Annual Aerobatics competition at Cut Bank Airport. Includes top aerobatic planes and pilots from the U.S. and Canada. Friday practice, Saturday competition and Sunday carry over in case of bad weather. For additional information contact the airport at (406) 873-8683 or go to www.cutbankairport.org

July 24 – Good Ole’ Days Huckleberry Pancake breakfast and Young Eagle EAA Fly In, St. Ignatius Airport - 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For further information call Mike Kuefler at (406) 544-2274.

August 4-6 - Montana Antique Airplane Association’s Annual Fly In at Three Forks, MT. Flour Bombing & Spot Landing. Free camping on the Airport. For further information call Ken Flikkema at (406) 580-6207; Bob Green at (406) 539-7830 or Tim Linn at (406) 451-5897.

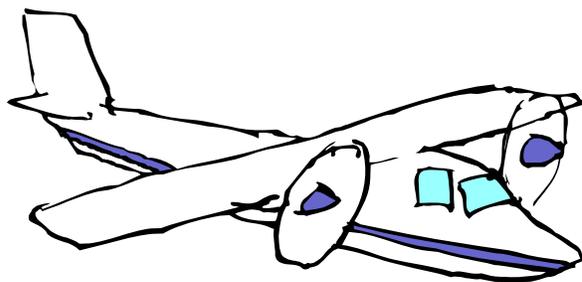
August 13 – Superior Airport Fly In sponsored by Mineral County Chamber of Commerce and Mineral County Pilots Association. For further information phone Mary Jo Berry (406) 822-4800 or email spr4800@blackfoot.net.

August 14 - Hysham Airport Fly In Pancake Breakfast.

August 19-21 - Tenth Annual Montana Fun Weekend Fly-in and Car Show. Fly-in Breakfast Saturday and Sunday. Bowling ball drops on Saturday before the drag races. Prize for direct hit is \$350.00. All aircraft and cars invited with \$100.00 awards for top three aircraft on display, and top five cars. For additional information contact the airport at (406) 873-8683 or go to www.cutbankairport.org

September 9-11 – Mountain Search Pilot Clinic, Helena. For further information phone Dave Hoerner at (406) 444-9568 or email dhoerner@mt.gov.

MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406) 444-6331 or TTY (406) 444-7696. MDT produces 2,200 copies of this public document at an estimated cost of 39 cents each, for a total cost of \$858. This includes \$465 for postage.



Teachers Takeoff with Aviation Education

By: Kaye Ebel

The 2011 Montana Aviation Conference will be one that many Montana teachers and seventy Helena students will remember for years to come. Teachers from around the state gathered in Helena to participate in an inquiry based science of flight workshop, led by aviation instructors Kaye Ebel and David Hoerner. The teachers were also entertained by presentations like Barnstorming the Midwest told by Travel Air Pilots, Hank Galpin and Ray Sanders. Aerodynamics 101 and So You Want To Fly presentations were given by pilots, Bill Burkland and Harold Dramstad. Their talks provided the science behind flight and the steps it takes to acquire your private pilot's license. Larry Chambers delivered a fascinating B-17 story, Ye Olde Pub. Jeanne MacPherson and Bill Gallea shared a true survival story and two young children's will to survive. Next they challenged the teachers to measure their own will to survive. They gave them five seconds to select five items they could use for basic survival.

Excited Helena students arrived on Friday morning to fill their minds with Bernoulli's principal and Newton's 3rd Law of Motion. They became air traffic controllers and had to bring in five airplanes while diverting some due to bad weather. The history of flight was a favorite station and students played a game in which they matched planes with the famous aviators who flew them. The build Cessna 172s, learned how to make radio calls on final approach and tested airfoils in the wind tunnel. Quay Painter, a high school student who recently soloed in a single and multi-engine airplane shared his solo adventure through a video his dad, Greg Painter, produced. Not a dry eye in the room when Quay touched down in the multi-engine airplane. Quay was such an inspiration to these young students.

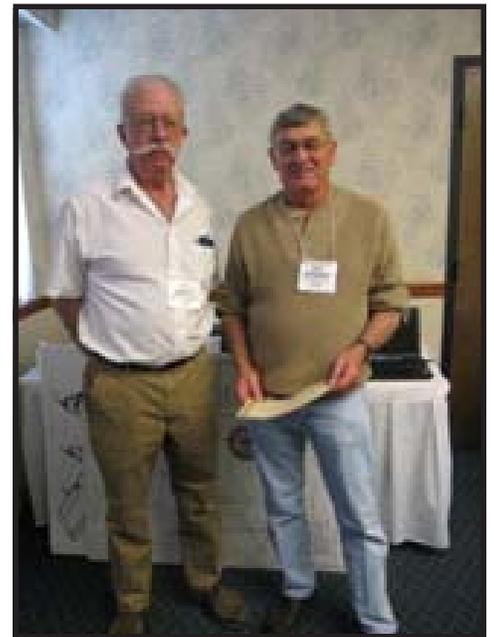
Out came the sectional charts, plotters and E6B flight computers to learn some basic navigation, instructed by Kaye Ebel and Trevor Throop. The teachers were joined by local students from the College of Technology earning their AP rating. They successfully planned a cross-country flight from Missoula to Glacier International. Planning a cross country flight also includes knowing your weather. Erik Gustafson and Jeff Kitsmiller, provided the teachers and students with weather information and how to obtain weather information that would assist in good decision making. David Hoerner, shared his extensive search and rescue background with the group. He demonstrated how to train your eyes to see crash sites. He also retold his search and rescue effort and encounters of grizzly bears. Pete Graff, SkyWest Captain provided the teachers and students with information of how to become a commercial airline pilot. Knowing about all the training and skills it takes to be a commercial airline pilot made the teachers and students appreciate all that he does.

The culminating event took place on Saturday at the Helena Airport. Teachers were given instruction of how to make their own radio calls to ground and tower control. They were all given a tour of the control tower so they could meet who they would be talking to on the radio. They listened to ATIS and were able to translate the information back. After the planes were all pre-flighted, the instructors took to the sky with smiles on their faces. This experience will change their lives forever. How lucky are the students they will be going home to.

Teachers truly touch the future and make an impact on so many students' lives. Thank you to Dave Hoerner and Patty Kautz for your help organizing a great workshop and to MDT Aeronautics for an unforgettable aviation opportunity to teachers and students.



Dave Hoerner and Kaye Ebel provided a top notch program for the teachers.



Hank Galpin and Ray Sanders (l-r) kept teachers entertained with their presentation on "Barnstorming the Midwest".

Central High student enjoys brief moment in spotlight

By: Rob Rogers, Billings Gazette Staff, Story originally appeared in Billings Gazette on January 25, 2011, reprinted with permission

Overwhelmed and almost giddy, Central High freshman Mikayla Nelson was ecstatic as she left the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday night after the State of the Union address.

“It was the most amazing and touching experience of my life,” she said.

Nelson was invited by the White House last week to sit with first lady Michelle Obama and her other guests at the State of the Union address. She said the invitation and then the actual experience of being there Tuesday night were surreal.

During the broadcast, Nelson was featured on screen five times through the course of the address, although President Barack Obama never mentioned her by name.

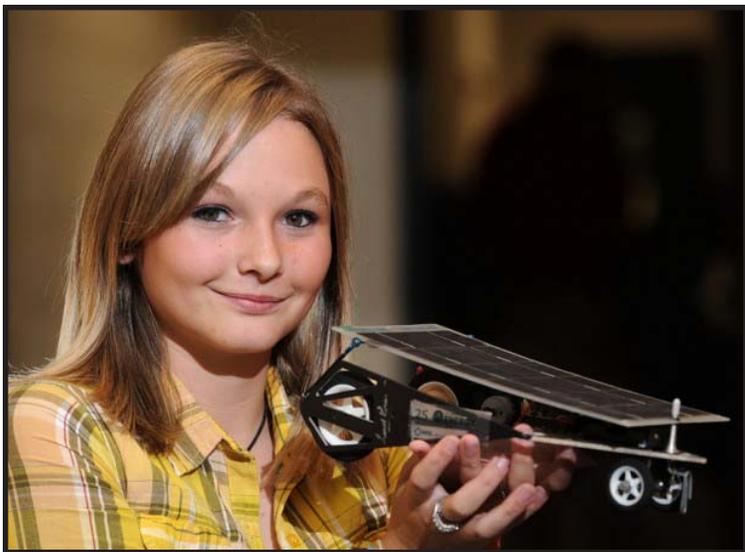
At one point, when Obama was speaking on the importance of science education, the camera cut directly to Nelson and lingered there for a few seconds while her name appeared on screen.

“It just doesn’t get any better than this,” said Patrick Kenney, Nelson’s former science teacher from Will James Middle School and one of her mentors.

Kenney said he understands why the president didn’t mention Nelson by name — there were a lot of special guests in the room. Speaking in general terms about pursuing science, engineering and math skills was the best way to handle it.

“I think they did the right thing,” he said. “I thought it was very appropriate and just well done.”

It was long day for Nelson. She was up at 4 a.m. Tuesday to catch her flight out of Billings.



Central High School freshman Mikayla Nelson shows the solar powered car she helped design and build that won the top design award at the National Science Bowl last year. Nelson was invited to Washington, D.C. at the request of First Lady Michelle Obama to attend the State of the Union address. (Gazette Photo)



Mikayla chats with President Obama about the electric car and showed him how it worked at the White House Science Fair in October. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

On the plane, she was recognized by some of the first-class passengers, which led Delta Airline officials to bump her up from coach to first class.

Before the speech, Nelson, 15, met with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and the president’s science adviser, John Holdren. She and the other guests met Michelle Obama at the White House, where they all received a tour.

From there, she rode in the White House motorcade to and from the Capitol and at the speech sat directly behind Daniel Hernandez, who is Rep. Gabriel Giffords’ aide and is credited with saving her life.

Nelson’s goal during the speech was to make sure she didn’t do anything embarrassing.

“You know, making sure I was sitting up straight and everything,” she said.

Wednesday, Nelson will sit down with Sens. Jon Tester and Max Baucus. From there, she’ll head over to the Department of Energy and then receive a behind-the-scenes tour of the Smithsonian’s Air and Space Museum.

She flies home Wednesday night.

Nelson first caught the attention of the White House when she and her team from Will James Middle School competed last April at the National Science Bowl.

The super-light mini electric race car she and her teammates created won the top design award at the Science Bowl and got their team interviewed during the competition by the Discovery Channel.

The attention led to an invitation by the U.S. Department of Energy for Nelson to participate in the White House Science Fair in October, where she met President Obama and briefly chatted with him about the car and showed him how it worked.

A National Hero

By: David J. Hoerner

The first time I saw Old Steve Lowe, his old Ford blue station wagon crawled into the parking lot of my FBO. The person driving the car looked through the giant steering wheel. My first thought was a child was driving the car. I waved at him and he waved back with a big smile.

An hour later I flew away on a Grizzly Bear flight and noticed that the blue ford was still there. The small man didn't miss a thing. If an aircraft or helicopter moved he was there flying with the pilot from a distance. As I lifted off I thought "this guy had to be a pilot."

Almost daily he showed up and parked in the same spot. When I looked at him he would wave vigorously with his bald head and toothy grin. I walked out to the car and introduced myself. He replied in a low voice. "Hi, I'm Steve, is it ok to sit out here and watch the airplanes takeoff and land?"

Steve looked to be in his eighties, his head hung forward and down. His chin rested on his chest and when he looked up he leaned away as he strained to turn his head enough to see me standing above him. I could envision the pain he felt as he strained to turn his head and knelt down to the ground with both knees.

His face and eyes showed happiness, now we looked straight into each other eyes. I said, "Come in and sit on the couch, it is a lot cooler in the office." Steve nodded in agreement and hunted for the door handle.

I opened the door and reached in to help Steve. He was so frail and small that I reached down and picked him out of the car and steadied him onto the ground. He shuffled his feet a few inches at a time and slowly made his way to the office door. I kept one arm around his shoulder and the other hand hung onto his arm.

I sat him close to the big front window and he thanked me with a big smile and wide shining eyes. I asked, "Are you a pilot?" He just kind of moved his head. By his reaction to my question I could tell he hadn't heard what I'd said. I repeated myself but this time a lot louder.

"Yes I am, I trained Chinese cadets during the war." Steve was excited to have someone pay attention. Without thinking I said, "which war?"

I was immediately disgusted with myself for asking such a poor taste question. It was hard to tell if he was eighty or ninety, but that still didn't make it right to ask such a forward question.

Steve replied, "The Korean war, I taught Chinese cadets in Boeing-17 Kaydete." I had never heard of this type airplane. He told me it was like a Stearman bi-plane.

I thought, "how could he instruct in an open cockpit airplane with non-speaking English students. To make matters worse, there was no headset or intercom."

Steve took a deep breath and said. "I sat in the back hole and used a four foot pointer, you know the ones used by school teachers, the kind with the black rubber tip."

I shook my head in acknowledgement.

"The Chinese didn't speak any English, so from the back seat I would reach forward and hit the pilot on the right shoulder to turn right and the left shoulder to turn left. If I wanted him to climb I would hit him on top of the head and on the right side of the head meant go down."

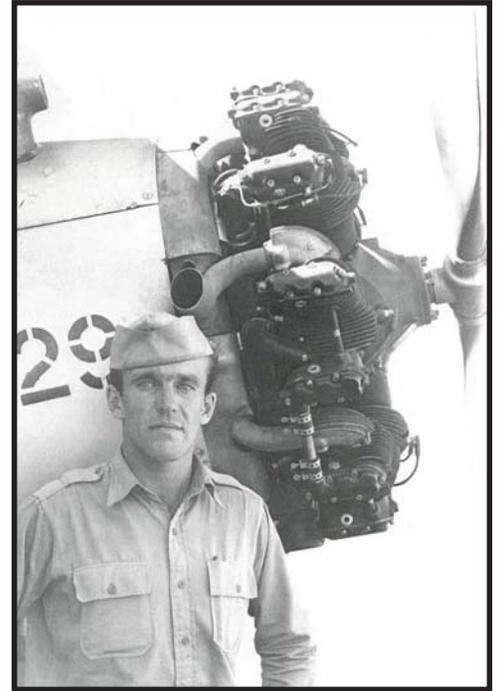
I'd been instructing for a lot of years, with headsets, inter-coms and enclosed cockpits. After hearing what Steve had accomplished, I would never complain again about instructing.

Over the next couple of years Steve would show up almost daily and sit in the car until I went out to help him into the office. He would stay all day and loved the attention the pilots showed him. When I closed for the day I would help him back to his car and in slow motion he drove out of the parking lot and disappeared for another day.

Even though Steve was frail and his old body had given up, his mind was clear as ever. Steve was back in his element being at the FBO.

I got a look of astonishment and then excitement when I asked him if he wanted to go for a flight, he replied in a low voice, "I can't get into your airplane."

"I'll get you in," I replied. I picked him up, he was actually heavier than he looked. I sat him in the front seat. As we lifted off Steve grinned from ear to ear. He hadn't been in an airplane for years. Because of his head leaning forward and down position he was in a lot of pain, but in the airplane he could lean his head against the bubble window and looked down and see the world below.



Steve Lowe

continued page 7

A National Hero, continued

His eyes watered and sometimes tears would run down his face on the flights. But, when I placed a headset on his head, he turned and looked at me with a shocked look. The hearing abilities of his youth returned. Now he could communicate like everyone else. He never said it, but I believe those flights were the highlight of Steve's later years.

Steve and I discussed many subjects. Since the war he had been a reporter for a newspaper company. He had been a member of the famous Thunderbirds Army unit and told stories of training Chinese soldiers and chasing coyotes with the open cockpit airplane out in the desert. He talked about his military flying career as being the best time of his life.

He married shortly after his military discharge and had adopted a boy, but for an unknown reason to me, his son had lost touch with his dad years ago.

On one of my last visits to Steve's house I found him sitting with tears running down his face. I asked, "What is wrong?" Steve replied, "I miss my wife."

She had died in 1976 while having surgery. At the time they were at Seattle. Steve took a deep breath and continued, "She hated that cold wet weather in the Seattle area and then I buried her there." Steve's heart had been in pain for a lot of years. That is what you call true love. It had been twenty-four years since her death and he missed his partner with his whole heart and soul.

I replied, "Why don't we have her dug up and cremated. Then we can have the ashes sent here and put her wherever you want." He looked at me with a surprised look and said, "Can you get that done for me?"

In four weeks the package arrived. While we waited I flew Steve over the spot where I wanted my ashes dumped.

Wildhorse Island is an island that is located in a big west bay of Flathead Lake. On the island is millions of wild flowers and Bighorn sheep. On the west end of the island is a small mountain that if a person sits on the highest knob and looks in any direction, the lake sparkles like diamonds.

This would be my final resting place. It is the closest place to heaven that I have found on earth. Steve wanted his wife's ashes dumped on the same spot. He asked, "Would it be alright to share your spot with my wife?"

I replied with watery eyes, "I would be honored."

If you drop ashes out of an airplane, there are a couple of precautions that have to be taken. The remains need to be dumped into a couple of garbage sacks and the sack needs to be hung out behind the window. The person holding the bag reaches back and puts a hole in the back of the sack. The remains will sift out and a sharp right turn makes it possible to see the cloud of ash floating to the ground.

My daughter Bree wanted to go along and help drop the ashes. We circled the spot and Bree put the bag out the window. The sudden pressure of the wind hitting the sack scared her and she loosened her grip. The sack blew apart right outside the window with most the ash blowing out and back, and some came into the cabin.

Bree's face was covered in white gray ash and the gritty taste of ash filled my mouth. Steve's head hung low as tears



Steve (top center) with what he described as his "best class in Army primary".

dropped on to his lap and a small smile showed on his face. He finally had managed to get his wife to a spot that matched her beauty. We all flew back to the airport in silence and thoughts about this man and the love he had for his wife.

Over the next few months Steve's health worsened. I found him on the floor of his house and he couldn't get to the phone to call me. His only relative, his sister had no choice but to put him in an assisted living home.

Steve hated being there and voiced to me that he wanted to go see his wife. I received a call, Steve had fallen down, hit his head, and my friend was dead.

I was there in a few minutes; Steve had my name and phone number written on his counter. Call David in an emergency. As I stared at Steve I thought about this hero who loved his county, flying airplanes, being a Thunderbird and his wife. I was sure he was with her now.

In my mailbox that evening I had a letter from Steve. Inside was a check for \$250.00. His sister refused to take the check back, she said, "I'm sure that check is for you to drop his ashes. He also said you knew where to dump them."

A week later Steve and I circled the small mountain on Wildhorse Island. I was sad and happy. Steve had come into my life for this reason. As I picked up the sack of ashes it snagged on the floor and about a cup of Steve's ashes fell on the floor of the airplane. The rest went out the window and floated down in a cloud of ash.

In respect for my lost friend I left the spilled ash on the floor for a couple of weeks. Steve would have loved flying along looking for Grizzly Bears or Wolves. I thought of him and when I was by myself, I spoke to him as if he was still sitting right beside me.

A few days later Steve's sister called, she said, "Steve willed all his flying memorabilia to you. I had boxes of his most precious belongings and he left them to me. How privileged was I?"

Even though I had only known Steve for a few years, I came to know him as special person and friend. All of us lost a National War Hero that day and this story is written to my little buddy, Steve Lowe.

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