

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

SUNNY ANDERSON



BIOGRAPHY

Senior Airman (Sep.) Sunny Anderson is a five year Air Force veteran who served as an award-winning radio and television broadcaster. She was first a radio host in Seoul, South Korea, and later she worked for the Joint Hometown News Service in San Antonio, Texas, traveling the globe to film holiday greetings for service members stationed overseas. "I see those videos and I say, 'Wow, I was part of that and it's still doing it's thing,'" she said. "Now I see how important those videos are for so many people. It seems like such a small thing, but to a lot of people it means a whole lot."

After separating in 1997, Sunny worked as a radio DJ in New Orleans, LA; Montgomery, AL; Detroit, MI and finally New York, NY. She found her calling after being a guest on "Emeril Live". After several years and a lot of persistence, she began working at the Food Network in 2007. Today Sunny is the host of "Cooking For Real" and also hosted "How'd That Get On My Plate".

"You know, you learn a lot of intangibles in the military, things like duty, honor, integrity and confidence," she said. "I've taken these with me throughout my life and they've helped me get where I am today."



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Jim Varhegyi

ROBERT BEATSON



BIOGRAPHY



Lieutenant (Sep.) Robert Beatson enlisted in the Army Jan. 8, 1941, then volunteered for the Army Air Corps and received his navigator wings April 22, 1943. A year later he had flown 30 missions over Europe aboard a B-24 Liberator from England. During his 28th mission, his aircraft was attacked head-on by German fighters. Beatson, at his navigator's station was hit by a German 20mm cannon shell that ripped into his chest, left side, thigh and leg. The waist gunner had also been hit and an on-board fire forced the pilot to pull out of formation. The crew had a choice ... try to land in neutral Switzerland or nurse the crippled bomber back to England. They voted and turned towards England. Beatson, while injured, continued to perform his navigator duties. His blood dripped onto the aircraft's floor and bombsight, freezing. "I will always remember the color of frozen blood," he recalled. They made it home and Beatson would spend a week in a hospital recovering. For his actions, Lt. Beatson was awarded his second Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the war, Beatson graduated from Georgetown University and became an F.B.I. agent. He was also very active in veteran's affairs and is a former president of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, National Capital Area Chapter.

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS

IN BLUE

VOLUME II



Photos by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young Jr.



JAMES BROOKS

BIOGRAPHY

Major (Ret.) James Brooks attended pilot training in Texas as an Army Air Corps Cadet in 1942. Upon graduation, he was selected to fly fighter aircraft. "I always knew I wanted to fly fighters, but I will tell you, the bravest pilots flew bombers back then," Brooks said. On May 18, 1944, while escorting bombers over Ploesti, Romania, he scored his first aerial victory, downing a Romanian G-50 fighter. Brooks finished his combat tour with 55 missions and 280 combat hours. In total he scored 13.5 victories and became the leading Ace of the 307th FS. Following World War II, he flew F-86s during the Korean War and participated in the first big, all jet air battle over the Yalu River on Dec. 22, 1950. 12 MiGs and four Sabers were involved.

After the Korean War, Brooks became an engineering test pilot, logging test flights in the F-86, the B-45, the XF-100 and the F-86 rocket augmentation program. "I am very lucky," he said. "I was part of the supersonic '50s at Edwards Air Force Base. Everything we have today came from there. I'm glad to have been a part of it."

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photo by Airman 1st Class Christopher Toon

ROBERT CLARK

BIOGRAPHY



Senior Master Sergeant (Ret.) Robert Clark helped raise money and obtain supplies for the China Beach Orphanage during his time as an air traffic assistant with the 366th Fighter Group at Da Nang Air Base, Vietnam, between 1971-1972. After raising funds for the orphanage, Clark realized it was still in need of help. He eventually succeeded in contacting the Pfizer Pharmaceutical Corporation to request donated medical supplies for the orphanage. "About a month later, a civilian airliner came in," Clark said. I got a call from a very irate colonel who accused us of smuggling drugs into Vietnam. Eventually the word spread that this delivery wasn't for the troops – it had been delivered for the orphanage.

Da Nang Air Base was overrun by the North Vietnamese in 1975. "[I miss] the orphanage at China Beach – we did a lot of work, and then to know that everyone was killed – we did the best we could while we were there," Clark said, tears nearly brimming his eyes. "A lot of the little kids did escape though." Thanks to the compassion and dedication of Clark and other service members, the lives of many orphan Vietnamese children were saved.

MISSION FIRST . . . PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photo by Airman 1st Class Daniel Hughes

JOHN COOMBS



BIOGRAPHY

Master Sergeant (Ret.) John Coombs served as a Navy Sailor and Army Air Corps Soldier before becoming an Airman in the Air Force. He has seen a little of everything throughout his military career. He enlisted before he was 18 so the Army wouldn't draft him. "I wanted to enlist for myself to have the choice of joining, not them telling me I had to," he said. He turned 19 on June 6, 1944 on the beaches of Normandy. "We were the first boat to hit Normandy," he said. "Everyone was about my age; the oldest person was an officer, who was 23. I tried to just keep my head down and hope for the best for most of it." After the war, he played many different roles in the Army, Navy and Air Force, such as working on a crash rescue boat out of Bolling Field, Washington, D.C., working as a recruiter in Philadelphia and managing the NCO Club in the Miho Islands of Japan. "It was a learning experience for all of us," he said. "We almost burned the place down once, but other than that it went well."

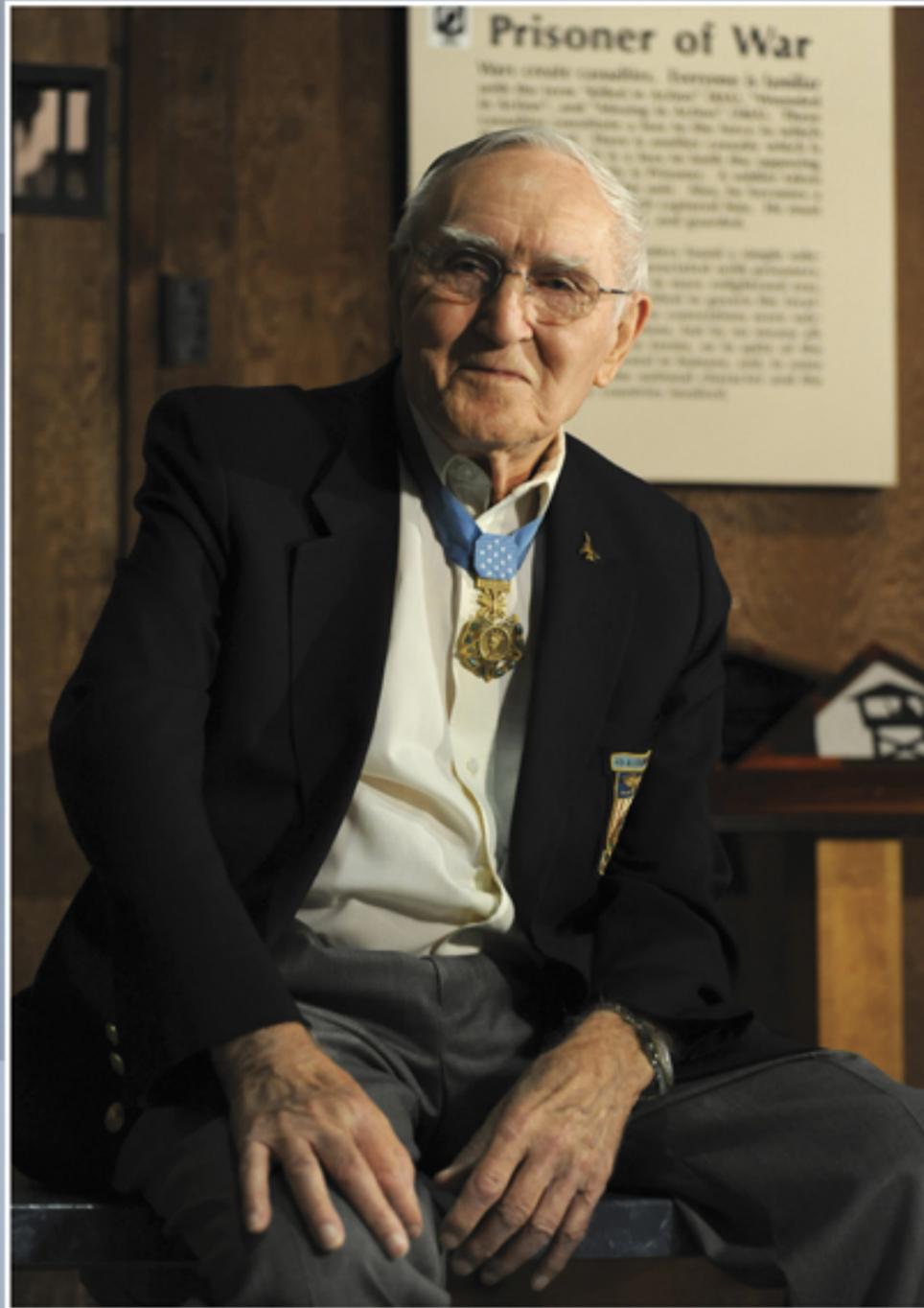
He retired out of McChord Air Force Base, Wash., as the manager of the officers' club after 20 years of military service. "I accomplished a lot in my career... just do what you're told and do it to the best of your ability," he said.



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Airman 1st Class Caitlin O'Neil-McKeown



GEORGE "BUD" DAY

BIOG
RAPHY

Colonel (Ret.) George "Bud" Day is the most highly decorated American military warrior since General Douglas MacArthur. In a long military career spanning 34 years and three wars, Day received nearly 70 decorations and awards. More than 50 of them were for combat, including our nation's highest military decoration, the Medal of Honor. In 1967, he organized and commanded the 416th Tactical Fighter Squadron, flying the F-100 Super Sabre. He was shot down over North Vietnam Aug. 26, 1967, and immediately captured by the North Vietnamese. Despite his injuries, he managed to escape captivity and evade the enemy as he traveled back into South Vietnam, earning him the distinction of being the only prisoner to escape from North Vietnam. After numerous unsuccessful attempts at signaling friendly aircraft and two weeks of exhaustion and hunger, he was shot and recaptured by the Viet Cong just two miles from freedom. He suffered a brutal, 67-month imprisonment that finally ended March 14, 1973. Three days later, Day was reunited with his family in California. After recuperating, Day was returned to active flying status and retired as a colonel in 1977.

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

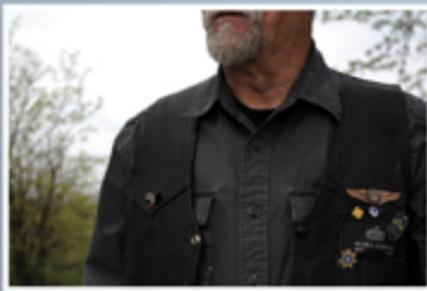
THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Senior Airman Staci Miller

WILLIAM DERRINGTON



BIOGRAPHY

Master Sergeant (Ret.) William Derrington is an Air Force veteran with 21 years of service as an Aircraft Electrician, Mobility NCO and an Aircraft Battle Damage Instructor. His assignments include Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento, California; Zweibrucken Air Base in Germany, MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida and Kunsan Air Base in South Korea. While assigned to the 4th Fighter Squadron at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, he participated in Operations Desert Shield, Desert Storm and Southern Watch. "The Air Force taught me integrity and work ethic," he said. "It taught me there was something bigger than just me living through life. Plus, the people that I got to meet made my life so rich."

After he retired, Mr. Derrington continued to serve, working in the civil service. He is currently a member of the Patriot Guard Riders. The group attends the funeral services of fallen military members. Through strictly legal and non-violent means, they shield mourners from any interruptions created by protesters. "I think it's important that when somebody comes back, that the fallen soldiers, airmen and their families should have that time to themselves without someone bothering them."



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

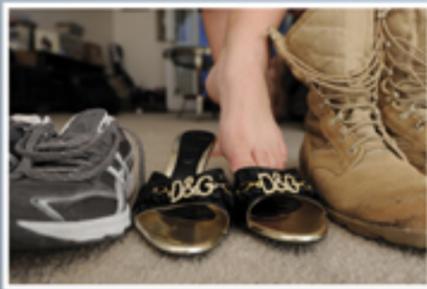
THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Senior Airman Staci Miller

TERESA DOSKEY



BIOGRAPHY

Senior Airman (Sep.) Teresa Doskey served in the Air Force for four years as a finance specialist. She was stationed at Columbus Air Force Base in Mississippi and also Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. Doskey deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom as a Third Country National (TCN) escort. An escort's job is to monitor workers and provide security. It was during this deployment in Kirkuk, Iraq, that she met her future husband and fellow airman, Devin. Teresa later made the decision to separate from the service in order to start a family. While in the Air Force, she became focused on fitness, ultimately training for a half-marathon. She was a Physical Training Leader (PTL) and it's one of her greatest accomplishments while in the service. Today she still holds herself to the same high standards.

"The Air Force has impacted my life in so many ways," Doskey said. "I have a keen attention to detail, and I'm more direct. Being a veteran makes me feel like I'm part of something, and I definitely miss the camaraderie." She plans on returning to the Air Force as an officer in the near future.



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Michael Holzworth

HENRY FOUTS



BIOGRAPHY



Chief Master Sergeant (Ret.) Henry Fouts was an aerial gunner in the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF), completing 35 combat missions over Nazi occupied Europe during World War II. Knowing he was going to be drafted when he became of age and not wanting to be a part of the ground infantry units, he read an article in Life Magazine which inspired Fouts to become an Aerial Gunner. During a bombing mission over Czechoslovakia on September 23, 1944, Fouts's B-17S was badly damaged resulting in the aircraft having a loss of hydraulics, electrical systems and brakes. Fouts came up with the idea to deploy a parachute to stop the plane during landing and is believed to be the first person to use a parachute to help stop an aircraft with no brakes. As a result of his actions, Fouts received the distinguished flying cross. He has also been awarded the Air Medal, Purple Heart and World War II Victory Medal.

Henry Fouts now lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, and has been retired from active duty since 1977.

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS

IN BLUE

VOLUME II



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

RODOLFO GUERRERO



BIOGRAPHY

Rodolfo Guerrero, Army Air Corps (Sep.) was a B-24 Liberator turret gunner with the 8th Air Force during World War II. Drafted in 1943, into the Army Air Corps he missed the pilot test by a couple of points, so he served as an upper turret gunner and radio operator with the 475th Bomb Squadron in the 8th Air Force at Norwich, Norfolk, England. He received the Air Medal five times for 30 combat missions and the Distinguished Flying Cross for the bombing of Berlin. He flew twice on D-Day and played a part in General George Patton's Third Army's 600-mile march across France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia.

"When Patton was racing across with his army and was short of gas, they took us off bombing, and we were hauling gas into Lyons, France," Mr. Guerrero said. During the war, he flew a total of 30 combat missions against the enemy.



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS

IN BLUE

VOLUME II



Photos by Staff Sgt. Desiree N. Palacios



SEAN HALSTED

BIOGRAPHY

Sean Halsted, U.S.A.F. Combat Controller (Ret.) went from being an active-duty Air Force combat controller to a U.S. Paralympian in the 2010 Vancouver Games. During a training mission at Hurlburt Field, Florida, he fell 40 feet to the ground while fast roping from a helicopter. As a result of the accident, he incurred a first lumbar vertebrae burst fracture that damaged his spinal cord. "When I got hurt it was like my life was over. I found out that's not the case. Life goes on. Life is still there." Upon the urging of his physical therapist and the staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Halsted discovered the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, and soon realized he had a passion for adaptive Nordic skiing.

In the 2010 Vancouver Paralympic Games, Halsted finished in the top 10 in all three of the events he participated in and he's not planning on slowing down anytime soon. "Get off your (butt) and get out here," he said. "Life is still going on, you have to live life. You don't stand outside the fire, you keep going. Don't exist, live!"

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Bennie J. Davis III

GAIL HALVORSEN



BIOGRAPHY

Colonel (Ret.) Gail Halvorsen is known worldwide as “The Candy Bomber”, and through his selfless actions offered hope to children in post World War II West Berlin. Then 1st Lt. Halvorsen was an American pilot flying round-the-clock missions during the Berlin Airlift. One day, while filming aircraft landings from the ground, he had a chance encounter with about 30 German children through a barbed wire fence. “Right then, the smallest decision I made changed the rest of my life,” said Halvorsen. He combined his candy rations with those of his copilot and engineer, made the first parachutes with handkerchiefs and strings and tied them to chocolate and gum for the first drop from his C-54 Skymaster on July 18, 1948. The amount of candy steadily increased, and by the end of the airlift, “Operation Little Vittles” and the American pilots involved had dropped 250,000 parachutes and 23 tons of candy.

At 90, Colonel Halvorsen still flies the C-54 with FAA certification to fly second-in-command. “The thing I enjoy the most about being the Candy Bomber is seeing the children’s reaction even now to the idea of a chocolate bar coming out of the sky,” he said.



MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS

THE USAF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AGENCY PRESENTS

PIONEERS IN BLUE VOLUME II



Photos by Staff Sgt. Vernon Young Jr.



PHIL HANDLEY

BIOGRAPHY

Colonel (Ret.) Phil Handley is a 26 year Air Force veteran who served as a cargo and fighter jet pilot, and is credited with the highest speed air-to-air gun kill in the history of aerial combat. While leading a 4-ship of F-4Es in a combat air patrol on June 2, 1972, northeast of Hanoi, Vietnam, his element was attacked by two MiG-19s. After firing all of his AIM-7 and AIM-4 missiles, which failed to guide, he destroyed a MiG-19 with a three-second burst from his 20mm M-61 Gatling gun. His aircraft was traveling at Mach 1.2, or almost 4.5 football fields per second, while only 500 feet above the ground. When asked about his achievement, Col. Handley recounted that he only did what he had always trained to do and offered that he owed much of his success to his family and the men and women of the Air Force. "I'm just a representative of the all the men and women of the Air Force," Col. Handley said. "I've been face-to-face with the hunter and I'm honored to still be here and a part of the Air Force today." Col. Handley flew including 275 combat missions during two tours in Southeast Asia. Upon his retirement on June 1, 1984, his awards included 21 Air Medals, three Distinguished Flying Crosses and the Silver Star.

MISSION FIRST ... PEOPLE ALWAYS