



Merry Christmas

Chaplain's Corner

...there was no guest room available...

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

Luke 2: 4-7 (NIV) ⁴“So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.”

Mrs. Yetta Rosenberg gets off the plane in Miami and, being tired from the flight, goes to the first hotel she sees in order to get a room. She walks up to the desk and tells the clerk, "I'm Mrs. Yetta Rosenboig, and I desire a room for de night."

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Ramblings

"Battle Damage Sir" A true story...

by Gene Alexander, Shotgun 21

Feb '69 - Feb '70

In January 1970, I was nearing the end of my tour of duty in RVN. It was the height of the dry season in the Delta and the heat was almost unbearable. Chi Lang always seemed like the hottest spot in the whole country. But things were not so bad. B-43, the Special Forces B-Team that I had been supporting for the last nine months had moved to a newly constructed compound a mile northeast of the airfield. Now, with less than a month left in country I was finally able to take a hot shower every day and had access to a genuine flush toilet...a real luxury. Despite our new digs, I kind of missed the old compound.

As a brand new Captain, I was in command of a section of three O-1Ds, with two very competent warrant officer pilots, both of whom were older than me, and four enlisted men who took good care of the aircraft despite the difficult conditions. Together, we lived with and supported an elite group of American combat soldiers whose mission it was to prevent the infiltration of men and arms out of Cambodia into the Seven Mountains area of South Vietnam. What more could a combat pilot ask for.

Even though our job was well defined we never knew from day to day what Major Zachary, the CO of B-43, would have us doing...everything from mail runs to adjusting artillery. He kept us busy and I was proud of the job we were doing for his team and genuinely felt that he considered us a vital part of it.

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The clerk looks disdainfully at her and coldly says, "I'm sorry, madam, but our hotel is "completely booked."

Just then, a man with his suitcase in hand, drops his key and a check at the desk, and heads for the door.

"Oy, vot luck, says Mrs. Rosenberg."I can take 'his' room."

"I'm sorry, madam," says the clerk, "but I thought you understood my meaning. To be blunt, we do not cater to Jews."

"Jews?" exclaims Mrs. Rosenberg. "So, who's a Jew? I'm a Cat'lic."

In obvious disbelief, the clerk asks her, "If you're a Catholic, then answer this question: Who is the Son of God?"

"Dot's easy," says Mrs. Rosenberg, "Jesus Christ."

The clerk, still not convinced, then asks, "Who was Jesus' mother and father?"

"Mary and Joseph," replies Mrs. Rosenberg, testily.

Then the clerk asks, "And where was Jesus born?"

"In a manger in a barn," answers Mrs. Rosenberg, becoming agitated.

"And why was Jesus born in a manger in a barn?" asks the clerk.

"Cause a shmuck like you wouldn't rent a room to Jews!!!"

OK, so that is not really what happened back then – but Now?

I am thinking I see some similarities. People being excluded, slighted, abused, discriminated against for one reason or another.

I choose to think, that in this case – there were just too many people in town due to Caesar's decree for a census. Joseph really did belong there, it just took them so long to get to Bethlehem, (meaning in Hebrew, "House of Bread") the birthplace of the "Bread of Heaven", that every room was already filled.

Accident? No.

Coincidence? I think not.

Divine intent? I choose to think so.

There is much that can be said in the context of "Bread". That is for another time.

Jesus said He came to draw people together and yet to drive people apart. Did He really do that? No, I think not. We can do that just fine by

ourselves, thank you very much.

What Jesus did, by His birth, life, ministry, death and Resurrection was provide a way, an avenue, a portal, by which – if we will we can be drawn closer to each other and thus closer to God – and vice versa. Unfortunately, our human nature more often prefers the Vice to the versa, however.

This came home to me on the part of a rather vicious and offensive person. No, it was not the person who forwarded this joke to me.

It was much more serious and intensive than that. I was seriously contemplating some actions which most certainly would have landed me in very bad trouble.

The answer came to me from an unexpected source: Corrie Ten Boom. Yup, "The Hiding Place" lady. A person who had so much more perpetrated on her and her family as to make my injury to be no more than a bruise on a banana.

She said she found a way to forgive her tormenters by mentally tattooing "F.W.C.D." on their forehead, marking them a being a person "For Whom Christ Died".

Yes, He did come first to the House of Israel, but He showed several times that He came for everybody, first by the arrival of the shepherds, people at the bottom of social ladder,. And then by the Magi, the Three Wise Men or Three Kings. Tradition has it that they were not Hebrews.

Jesus came that there might be a way for God's children to be reconciled to Him. God has made the offer – but it is conditional in that it must be accepted, on a person to person basis.



DATES TO REMEMBER

HANUKKAH

DECEMBER 1 – 9

PROHIBITION ENDS

DECEMBER 5, 1933

THE UNITED STATES DECLARES WAR ON JAPAN

“A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY”

DECEMBER 7, 1941

FIRST ARMY HELICOPTERS ARRIVE IN SAIGON BY CARRIER

DECEMBER 11, 1961

FIRST SUCCESSFUL MANNED POWERED AIRPLANE FLIGHT

DECEMBER 17, 1903

CHRISTMAS DAY – CELEBRATING HIS BIRTH

DECEMBER 25

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He came not only to be “The Door” to heaven, but also to show us how we might live more closely to what God had intended in the first place.

How will it be for you this Christmas? Will you make “room” for Him in your life? And if you already have – would you consider a remodel, a renovation? And maybe, just maybe . . . an addition!

May The Bread of Heaven be honored at the table of your life, as you invite Him to live in your “Inn” in this Advent of His birth.

Grace and Peace to you all.

Ned



But, despite the successes, I was growing tired of the war. Every mission seemed to get longer and I noticed that I was thinking more about going home than the missions at hand.

It was probably home that I was thinking about that morning as I pulled my bird onto downwind leg at Chi Lang and announced my intentions to land. The controller, sitting in the sweltering heat of the little mobile control tower, informed me that part of the ramp was blocked by an aircraft but that the east ramp was clear. Peering down from the open window of the little Bird Dog I could see that the ramp was indeed occupied, but not by the type of aircraft that we normally see there. This was clearly something different and I knew immediately what it was.

As the little O-1 rolled to a stop, opposite the obstructing aircraft, my suspicions were confirmed. There with its tail high in the air was a North American OV-10 Bronco...probably one of the Black Ponies out of Navy Binh Thuy. But there was something terribly wrong; the airplane appeared to be standing on its nose. Several individuals were milling around the airplane, two of whom were my own crew chiefs. I couldn't, for the life of me, imagine why a pilot would land his OV-10 at Chi Lang...unless he had an emergency...which certainly seemed possible considering the condition of the airplane.

The Black Ponies had lost one of their birds just north of Chi Lang back in July. It seemed likely that this aircraft had battle damage and the pilot had simply made a precautionary landing at Chi Lang. It would be forty years, however, before I would learn the whole story of the drama that had taken place in the hour before I landed and why the OV-10 was there, who its pilot was, and more importantly...who was riding in the back seat.

Background:

The Black Ponies of Light Attack Squadron Four (VAL-4) showed up in country in the early spring of '69. Their mission was to support Naval operations in the Delta, mostly Swift boats, PBRs and Mike boats on the rivers and canals and Navy Seal Teams operating throughout the Delta.

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They were heavily armed twin turboprop aircraft, very capable but generally considered underpowered for the weight they carried....with just under a thousand horsepower per side.

At the time the Air Force and the Navy were at odds about the mission of close air support. It seems the Air Force felt that they had the mission of providing close air support to all the services in Vietnam and didn't want any of the other services to have their own indigenous air support. Well Vice Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Jr....the commander of the "Brown Water" Naval forces in Vietnam disagreed with that attitude and was instrumental in getting a squadron of OV-10s for the Navy. After the Ponies had been in Vietnam for a while he was anxious to demonstrate to the Air Force just how effective the Bronco...and the Navy pilots were. So, in January '70, he invited the Tac Air commander of Seventh Air Force, Brigadier General Roberts, to accompany him on a combat air support mission. Roberts agreed, ostensibly to compare the capabilities of the Bronco with that of the Air Force's own A-37A Dragonfly. The stage was set and the two flag grade officers flew down to Binh Thuy and met their pilots for the mission, two experienced Black Pony pilots from VAL-4...the CO and XO of the unit....bad move.

After donning their flight gear the two officers climbed into the back seats of the two OV-10s...Zumwalt with the CO and General Roberts with the XO. The two pilots put in an air strike just north of Chi Lang along the Vinh Te Canal. The mission went well, with both pilots proficiently putting their ordinance on the target. As planned, Zumwalt wanted to be left off at Chi Lang so he and the General could board his personal helicopter. On downwind, his pilot, Commander Marty Schuman, was bragging to Zumwalt about the short field capabilities of the Bronco. Unfortunately, he was not a proficient pilot in the Bronco and managed to plant the nose wheel hard enough to fold it under the airplane. The Bronco skidded down the runway on its nose and the pilot actually managed to turn it onto the ramp at the east end of the runway...clearing the path for the second aircraft. After seeing the accident from the air, General Roberts decided that he wanted his pilot to take him back to Binh Thuy instead.

The immensely embarrassed pilot and his illustrious passenger made a rapid exit from the broken aircraft. The Admiral, who is not an aviator, obviously feeling badly for his pilot, put his arm around the Commander's shoulder and said..."...any landing you can walk away from is good enough for me...", then walked across the ramp to his helicopter...which was already running....probably wondering what he was going to say to the AF General now on his way back to Binh Thuy in the other aircraft.....you can imagine his thoughts.



The pilot, now alone on the ramp with his dead bird, radioed forward to his XO and ordered him to have the unit's maintenance officer get on a chopper and head out to Chi Lang with all the necessary paraphernalia required to airlift the Bronco back to its home base.

When the MO arrived the two officers walked around the bird assessing the damage. After his embarrassing performance with the Admiral in the back seat Cmdr Schuman was probably searching for some way to salvage anything from the events of the day. He looked at the MO and said...."....how are we going to write this up...???" The quick thinking MO thought for a moment then drew his side arm and shot a hole through the nose wheel tire, poking unceremoniously out from under the crumpled nose, then said to his commander, "...battle damage, Sir" And that is the way it was written up.....!!!!

For almost 40 years I've wondered why the Bronco had landed at Chi Lang. I always assumed that the aircraft had been damaged and made a precautionary landing at Chi Lang....and

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indeed that is the way it was written up....but now you know "the rest of the story".

Epilog:

A couple years ago I decided to research the incident and find out, once and for all, why the Black Pony aircraft had ended up on its nose at Chi Lang. After finding the Black Pony (VAL-4) website, I sent the webmaster a picture of the damaged bird and left a message asking about the particulars of the incident. I also told him that I had some 8mm movies of Black Ponies doing touch and go's at Can Tho....a few seconds of which I included in the "Can Tho" chapter of the Bird Dog movie that I had created just before the first Delta Bird Dog Reunion.

About 6 months later, the webmaster finally got around to answering the query and asked me to send him the videos. They were planning a reunion in Washington DC and would like to have all the video available. Well, I modified the Bird Dog movie and added a chapter to the end of the video and put in all the Black Pony video that I had. He was thrilled with the results and finally decided to relate to me the story that I just told you. The pilot of the ill-fated aircraft, Cmdr Schuman, the CO of the unit...was the one who was organizing the reunion. The webmaster got with some of the other pilots of the unit and showed them the video and pics. They decided to spring the whole story, complete with video and still photos, on their CO at the reunion as a surprise. Well, that's what they did. I have pictures of the CO holding an enlarged copy of the picture I sent. He took it quite well and all had a great laugh. Evidently, that particular aircraft was not the only OV-10 that he pranged while in Vietnam.



In July 1970, at the age of 49, Vice Admiral Elmo Zumwalt II became Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) well ahead of many, more senior, admirals. His tour as CNO was very controversial but he is considered by most naval historians as the most dynamic naval leader of our time and was instrumental in changing the US Navy into the modern efficient fighting force it is today. The admiral's son, Elmo Zumwalt III, was a US Navy officer as well and commanded a PBR unit in Vietnam. Years later, the young man died of cancer...believed to be the result of exposure to Agent Orange.



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WHAT'S THE MOST AWESOME GIFT YOU HAVE?



You might be an Aircraft Mechanic if...

You've ever wondered why it takes a college degree to break an airplane but it only takes a high school diploma to fix one.

Both optimists and pessimists contribute to society. The optimist invents the aeroplane, the pessimist the parachute.

George Bernard Shaw

A Few Words from Our "Sixes"



My Christmas message to all Shotguns all years all ranks and grades.

Over the my years in the U. S. Army I served in or led many units, tank platoon thru armor brigade, but the unit I think of most is the 221st Shotguns. If you have taken time to read the annual commanders report, 1965-1970 you will read about a unit that was given a task as large as IV ARVN Corp itself and covered itself with honor. At first the advisor at lower level looked upon the addition of an aircraft, pilot and crew chief as an additional burden to their already over tasked resources, but by Christmas 1965 the Shotguns were proven to be a valuable asset to advisors at all levels. This respect of Shotgun support was a result of everyone involved putting out everything and more than was asked and carried on until deactivation.

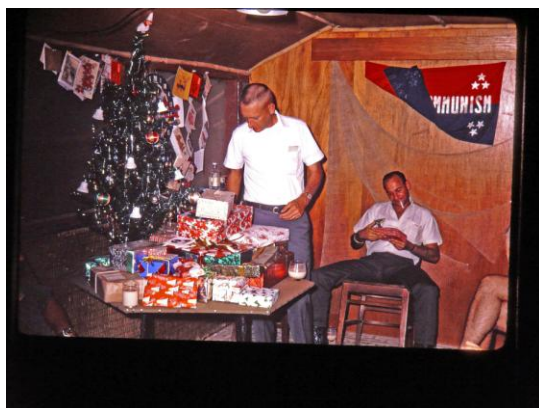
Merry Christmas 2010 Shotguns, I will be proud to be with you in San Antonio 2011

Don Modica, Shotgun 6 `65



Christmas Greetings to All "Shotgunners."

Looking through the collection of pictures from the 2007 Reunion I ran across this picture of Christmas '66 from the collection Fritz Guenther sent me.



That's Frank Allen contemplating a package, and I am either looking for one or acting as Santa. You'll have to guess whose legs those are on the right. It was a lonely time, being away from our families and other loved ones. But on a positive and personal note, I was among a great group of professionals who were doing an outstanding job at the mission given us -- the Shotgunners of the 221st.

Ann and I wish you all the merriest of Christmas and the most prosperous of New Years. May God bless and keep each of you in His Love and Grace as we celebrate the birth of His Son our Lord, Jesus Christ!

God willing and the Creeks don't rise; we'll see you in San Antonio come October!

Bill Poor, Shotgun 6 `66



Here it is Thanksgiving week 2010 and I am having thoughts of past holidays. The one that floods my mind is 1966 and the first Christmas that I was alone without my beautiful wife and two wonderful children.

Well, there I was – halfway around the world in Vinh Long, Vietnam and feeling sorry for myself. What was I going to do and what will it be like all day long? No cold weather and no Christmas decorations. No one had the Christmas spirit. Oh, woe is me!

It's the middle of December and the mail has come. What? Something for me? It's a package, a big package from my loving wife! What could it be? Like a kid on Christmas day, I started tearing it apart. What is this? Oh my! A small Christmas tree and all the trimmings? Yes!

I spent the next two hours decorating the tree and putting up the trimmings. The guys started coming in wondering who in the world was singing Christmas Carols. All of a sudden we had the Christmas Spirit and everything was right with the world.

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Soon we all started receiving Christmas presents and that group of Shotguns actually had a Merry Christmas!



I didn't celebrate Christmas with Shotguns on my second tour with the 221st, but I'd like to wish all those who served with me from January to July 1970 as well as those from my first tour in '66 - '67 and all Shotguns, no matter where you may be a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Jim McGraw, Shotgun 6 '70



Christmas Season's Greetings

Amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays may you find time to pause, to reflect...and to rejoice in the true meaning of Christmas. Christmas has become so "politically correct" that no mention of Christmas is made by many retailers.

I for one miss the Old Fashioned Christmas when everyone wished each other "Merry Christmas"...so this year let's make a conscious effort to wish everyone a Merry Christmas which is our way of saying that we are celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. Perhaps we can prevent one more tradition from being lost to "Political Correctness".

To All Shotguns and Swamp Foxes

May the Peace of Christ reign in your hearts! May God bless each and every one of you and your families. Also, let us not forget our men and women currently serving in uniform, many in harm's way, this holiday season. We pray that God will hold them in his loving hands and put a hedge of protection around each of them.

Nita and I wish you all a Very Merry Blessed Christmas and a Healthy Prosperous New Year.

Lou and Nita Sokowoski
Shotgun 6, '70 - '71



Truly superior pilots are those who use their superior judgment to avoid those situations where they might have to use their superior skills.



REMINISCENSES - Part IV:

South Vietnam

By John L. Theiler

I don't recall the exact date, but the 16th Medical Detachment arrived sometime in October, 1964. We had traveled from the US with another medical unit that would continue on to its destination in Soc Trang.

The 16th Med. would stay at Tan Son Nhut. An immediate Army foul-up: No housing for us. Either we arrived early or we weren't expected. That would be the theme throughout whole year we were there. We had no permanent quarters, and we would move around several times.

We spent our very first night at Tan Son Nhut sleeping on cots in the Dayroom. The next night it was the "movie theater", essentially a barn w/ benches. We had not yet been issued mosquito netting, and I for one was feasted upon by voracious Vietnamese mosquitoes. Welcome, GI. Soon, housing was found for us - a hut or "hooch". Somewhere along the way, we were supplied with netting to go over our bunks. The little winged, blood-thirsty critters could no longer chew on us. But there were lots of other bugs. It was the tropics.

A new dispensary was being built for the 16th Med. In the meantime, we would work in one already in operation on the compound. Rather simple accommodations, it consisted of two hooches facing each other. And so we began the mission we were sent over there to do. We'd see Sick Call patients and other outpatients who were ailing. If a soldier needed to be hospitalized, he was sent to the Air Force facility nearby or would go to the Navy Hospital in Saigon. My job was to run the tiny pharmacy with its small inventory. It was "my" first pharmacy, and I was in charge.

Many nights as I lay in my bunk awaiting sleep, off in the distance I could hear gunfire and explosions, it was a reminder that I was serving in a combat zone. What would the night bring, I wondered. Well, there did come an incident. The next memory is permanently imprinted on my mind. The date was around the 1st of November, when we were awakened after midnight. ALERT!

Huey helicopters (UH-1B) flying over dropping red flares against the darkness. Now what?

We rushed to pull on our boots & fatigues and get over to the Air Force Hospital. There had been a mortar and rocket attack on Bien Hoa airfield about 15 miles from our location. Wounded were being brought down to our site and probably to the Navy facility in Saigon also. As a pharmacist I had nothing to do, but was ordered to help carry stretchers. For the first time I witnessed the results of such an attack. I was shocked! There were men on litters, groaning, with bloody holes all over their bodies from shrapnel. My initiation to war!

Most dramatically I had been shown we weren't in any game - this was for real. People were trying to kill us. Right then, I wanted out of that hellish situation. "Why are we here?" I thought. Had I wings, I would have flown out of Vietnam that night. The terrible reality was that I was trapped in harm's way. And I had about ten months yet to serve. After that experience, I could only suppress my fear and concentrate on the pharmacy work.

It had to be later that same November when one day I was called out of the pharmacy and over to the CO's office. How should I describe this? Serio-comic? Our CO was a Captain and also a medical doctor. Well, with a Staff Sergeant in attendance, the Captain proceeded to chew me out for some minor thing. (My memory is not clear on this, but I think I had given a Vietnamese local an aspirin tablet.) I was taken aback, puzzled, and hurt all at the same time by the criticism. To make it worse, the sergeant appeared ready to cut off my PFC stripes. What had I done?! At the same moment the CO handed me a paper. It was orders promoting me to Specialist 4, E-4 pay grade. I was almost overwhelmed and had to sit down and take a couple of breaths. What a dirty trick! I did not find their "joke" at all funny. Getting broken in rank would also have broken my spirit. I believe that method of promoting a soldier was traditional.

On Christmas Day, 1964, I found myself a seat atop an Army ambulance at the airfield to watch

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Bob Hope and his troupe of entertainers. It was a welcome sight; a little piece of home. It was about 90° in the shade. This was a far cry from any Holiday I had ever experienced back in Pittsburgh. One to remember.

One particular memory is of singer Anna Maria Alberghetti who was not in good voice. She might have been ill or tired from the long flight from the USA. I admired her and the others' courage and sense of service. Mr. Hope stayed at the Brink's Hotel in Saigon and was welcomed by some bombing incident. If I recall, our unit had been alerted on Christmas Eve. Such was life then and there.

Next: 1965 Dawns



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Thanks to Dan

12-03-2007

ANOTHER ESKIMO BAPTISM GONE BAD



A Word from the Editor

Well folks, the beginning of a new year is rapidly approaching. What will this New Year bring? It will, on a positive note, bring the third in a series of reunions for the Delta Birddog soldiers of the 199th RAC Swamp Foxes and the 221st RAC Shotguns, a few days of renewing old friendships and hopefully, making new ones.

During the year our group has lost a few folks that we loved and respected but we have also "found"

a few that we had not seen nor heard from for many years. Perhaps before our reunion rolls around in the Fall we will locate even more of our Comrades-In-Arms who will celebrate with us our memories and rebirth of our youth.

I have enjoyed preparing the *Shotgun Blasts* each month and I must express heartfelt thanks to the folks that have helped and encouraged me in the effort. There are several and I am sure I will overlook some but the names that come to mind are; Hank Collins, Bill Poor, Fran and Jim McGraw, Gene Alexander, Bob Preble and, of course, our Chaplain Ned Moore. I also need to thank the folks that have contributed to the content of each issue, believe me, I don't think up the tales. Each and every one of you has a tale to tell and I urge you to send them to me to be recorded so that we do not lose the memories of what we have experienced.

Let me now add to the messages of the "Sixes" that appeared earlier in the *Blasts* by wishing each and every one of you and your families a very **Merry Christmas** and a happy and blessed **New Year**.

Don Smith, Shotgun 8A '65 - '66



If you wish to contribute a tale or two to **Shotgun Blasts** just send it by e-mail to:

Shotgunblasts@live.com

Or

Shotgun-8A@hotmail.com

Please use **WORD** format for the tales

Great for Cold Weather

Kohlsuppe

(German Cabbage Soup)

Ingredients

- 4 Slices Thick Cut Bacon – Diced
- 1 Piece Smoked Ham Hock or Ham Shank
- 1 Head Green Cabbage – Cored and Coarsely Chopped
- 1 Large Onion – Coarsely Chopped
- 2 Stalks Celery – Coarsely Chopped
- 2 Medium Carrots – Coarsely Chopped
- 2 Potatoes – Peeled and Diced
- 6 Cups Low Sodium Broth (Beef or Chicken)
- 2 Cups Cold Water
- 6 Sprigs Parsley
- 2 Bay Leaves
- Salt and Pepper – To Taste
- 6 German Wieners (Optional)

Preparation

1. In a large stock pot add the first 11 ingredients in layers. Simmer covered for approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours or until ingredients are cooked.
2. When ready to serve, remove ham hock, parsley sprigs and bay leaves from the soup. Salt and Pepper the soup to taste. Optional: Add German Wieners and let cook another 5 to 10 minutes.



Grüne Bohnen Suppe

(Green Bean Soup)

Ingredients

- 1 Pound Stew Beef or Round Steak – Cut into ½ inch cubes
- 1 ½ Pounds Fresh Green Beans – Clean and cut into 1 inch pieces
- 1 Pound Potatoes – Peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
- 2 Teaspoons Dried Savory
- 1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
- 2 Cups Beef Stock
- 2 Cups Water
- 3 Tablespoons Butter
- 3 Tablespoons Flour
- Salt to taste
- White Pepper to taste

Preparation

- In a mixing bowl toss beef with French's Mustard to coat – set aside.
- In a heavy skillet, preheat olive oil and then brown the beef in small batches and transfer to a bowl as it is browned.

- Place the beans into a Dutch Oven type pot and add the meat, add water and beef stock to cover.
- Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally.
- Add potatoes and savory, and return to a boil.
- Reduce heat and continue to cook stirring occasionally until beans and potatoes are cooked.
- *Optional for thickened soup: melt butter in frying pan.*
- *Add flour to butter and make a roux about the color of chocolate.*
- *Add roux to soup to thicken.*
- Season with salt and white pepper to taste.



Need a Last Minute Gift?

If you are in need of a last minute gift think about a membership in the organization that supports our reunion efforts, the International Bird Dog Association (IBDA). You can visit the web site at:

www.ibdaweb.com



Happy New Year!