



Shotgun Blasts

Volume 3, Issue 1

January 2011

Happy New Year

Chaplain's Corner

The Beginning – and, in The End – What?

By Ned Moore, Shotgun Chaplain

¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. “Genesis 1:1-2 NIV”

[I suppose this reminds of the baseball pun - In the Big Inning – OK. That is done. Leave it lie right where it is.]

Here I sit almost in mid-December. Don asked if there was anything I could do with the phrase, “In the beginning - God”. My first thought was, “No. God has already done it all”. But wait. Has He? On reflection, I think not.

Yes, God can see not only all the way down the road, so to speak, but also around corners. I

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Chaplain's Corner by Ned Moore
- 1 Reflections by Don Smith
- 3 Dates to Remember
- 4 Reminiscences by John Theiler
- 5 Reunion Notes
- 6 Reunion Registration Form

Reflections

...should we look back or to the future?

By Don Smith, Shotgun 8A

At this point every year I believe that each of us takes a few moments or even hours to pause and reflect on the things that have occurred in the past year while we await the final curtain to drop on our current year. Is this what we should be doing or should we be using our time more effectively to look to the future and to the things that we may be able to accomplish to make this planet we live on just a bit better for our children and our grandchildren?

I do believe that the past is important and that we do need to study history so that we can learn from the mistakes that have been made and make every effort to preclude their happening again. But...I do not believe that we can change what has taken place any more than we can still get into the trousers that we wore to the senior prom so many years ago. Therefore, let's not dwell on what has passed.

Suffice it to say, we all suffered loss in one form or another during the past year. For many of us it was a loved one, a family member or a close personal friend, for others it may have been business related or the death of a pet but a loss none-the-less. We have survived these losses and we will go on with our lives, perhaps a bit sadder, perhaps a bit poorer but we will go on and we will accomplish the goals that we set for ourselves and we will encourage others to do the same.

Hand in hand with our reflecting at this time of year we also tend to make resolutions for the coming year. Some of these resolutions we will

continued on page 3

looked at that sentence for a while, and thought, "That is stupid". But is it?

When you read this, it may well already be 2011. All of us have plans for our year 2011. It is the Jewish year 5718, I think, depending on the "New Year" time for them. What other societies have different numbers? Are we really as smart and far-seeing as we would like to think we are? I doubt it.

Case in point: I have never been to Bali, but I have a retired Navy Chaplain friend who has been many times, pastoring English-speaking churches there. I can trust him to not only recommend the best way(s) to get there, but also for how to get around, where to go, what to do – and where not to go – or to do . . .

So – here is the point of thought. We think we know what we want to do with our lives next year. But do we spend much time thinking about what we ought to be doing, in that context. What is the point of Trust in our lives?

God neither drives us as puppets nor smacks us upside-of-our-heads if we stray from good paths (normal consequences of bad decisions can do that all by themselves). But God has planned out how our lives should go – for our own good (Rom 8:28) and is always holding out for us to make the right decisions, the first of which, in my mind, is to Trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior. I honestly do not know "where" Heaven is, much less how to get myself there.

That said, let us return to our quickly approaching calendar milestone – What will it be in 2011 – your ideas of good, or God's plan for your best? Are you going to trust in your own understanding - you who cannot see into nor really control the next hour, much less the rest of the way down the pathways of your life?

- Or -

Will you place your trust (faith) in the One who has known you before you were born (Jeremiah 1:5a), planned paths for your life that have your best interests at heart, and is willing to empower you to be and to do the best there is for you (Phil 2:13).

As one of the (Christian) posters on an internet

forum I visit asked: "There is a fundamental question that science cannot answer. The most fundamental question of all, "Why is there something instead of nothing?" If, as science maintains, everything that exists, every interaction, every event, has a cause. If this is true, then the existence of the universe itself must have a cause. What made the Big Bang bang?" - Colin

He was pointing to faith. And the answer which he gave by inference – It was not a "what", but a "Who" that made the Big Bang bang – if indeed there even was one. (I have maintained the "Big Bang" was just God clapping His "hands" in joy regarding His Creation).

He, Colin, and I maintained: "In the beginning – God!" Theology (and some Philosophies) maintains God as "First Cause" – and since nothing "Caused" God, there is an issue which must be decided by each and every living human. (Animals do not have this problem, God has it all squared away for them. We are the ones he has given the ability and necessity to choose.)

We must choose in whom we shall trust for our life's paths (and our Eternity) - our own fallible judgments - or God's infallible Love for us. Would that we would all choose, as Joshua stated so well:

¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15 NIV)

In the beginning – God! And, he will be there beyond "The End".

Ned



DATES TO REMEMBER

NEW YEAR'S DAY

JANUARY 1, 2011

PAUL REVERE'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 1, 1735

BETSY ROSS'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 1, 1752

ELVIS PRESLEY'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 8, 1935

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 15, 1929 (OBSERVED JANUARY 17)

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 17, 1706

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San Antonio River Walk

strive to keep and others just seem to be the same each year with no real commitment on our part to live up to them, I maintain that this is because we tend to set the crossbar a bit too high and when it becomes too difficult to leap over it we just tend to walk around the post rather than crawl beneath it or to think of perhaps, lowering the height of the bar. As we make our resolutions this year let's all try to set realistic goals so that we can attain them, not without effort, but with the ability and the strengths that we have and with a little help from our friends.

I have no plans to burden you with a long list of should do or don't do items that could be added to your agenda for 2011 but I will list some that I plan on accomplishing.

- I resolve to become more tolerant of my neighbors in 2011.
- I resolve to greet each new day with grateful anticipation of what is to come.
- I resolve to express my love for my wife each day and to thank God that I have her.
- I resolve to each day thank God for the great nation in which I live and to ask him to watch over the men and women of the Armed Forces of our nation.

No, I have not ranked them by importance to me or to anyone else but I feel these are the kind of things each and every one of us can and should do, not just for 2011 but for all of our remaining years. We have all seen the evil side of life and we have all enjoyed the great and good things that life brings to us, now we must pass the torch to the "kids" and let them learn as we did. They are our future.

I want to wish each and every one of you, my comrades-in-arms and your families a happy, prosperous and faith filled New Year.

Don

Isn't making a smoking section in a restaurant like making a peeing section in a swimming pool?

REMINISCENSES - Part V

1965 Dawns

By John L. Theiler

When I arrived in South Vietnam in 1964, Americans were considered to be "advisors". I recall things called Support Command and MACV (Military Assistance Command - Vietnam). Well, that would change in 1965. But my first recollection of the New Year was a coup d'état. From what I understood the South Vietnamese Air Force took over the South Vietnamese Army. I remember A-1 Skyraider planes diving overhead. Americans were put on alert. At one point, I jumped into a sandbag bunker.

Here, while the US was assisting the southern government, they in the south were having an internal squabble. That was my simple assessment. I didn't understand the politics, but Nguyen Cao Ky was now in charge in South Vietnam. Okay, that didn't personally affect me; I continued my daily routine in the medical dispensary.

I'm not clear on the sequence of events however, at some point in time our large, brand-new medical facility was completed and we began to move in. Maybe it was December '64 or January '65. We had an official opening with a walk-through by a general. There might have even been a "ribbon-cutting". Anyhow, we had a nice, clean, well-lit place in which to work. In addition to the pharmacy, there was a waiting area, medical records section, x-ray room, medical lab, an inoculation room, and doctor's offices. The one drawback was no air-conditioning in the tropical heat. But a/c was in the works.

I walked into the new pharmacy to find four walls, a ceiling, and floor. It did have a window unlike the old pharmacy. No shelving or closets for medications - a completely empty room. My task would be to make a pharmacy. That, I did not learn in school in Texas. I'd have to order shelving, unpack supplies, and "set up shop".

The operation of the war was about to change dramatically. In February 1965, US Marines went ashore in Da Nang. What had been US Support Command became US Army - Vietnam. Military dependents were sent out of the country. Ominous changes thought I. My worry level increased. What is afoot? Well, what it was was the US took over the prosecution of the war. President LBJ sent in more and more troops. I saw that reflected in the increase of morning Sick Call patients. The line at my little apothecary was increasingly longer. The dispensary was getting busier all the time.

Despite the obvious dangers of service in Vietnam, there were advantages and benefits that came along with the risks. For one thing, it was more lucrative than stateside duty. In my case, I was promoted soon after arrival. I also received overseas pay + hazardous duty pay. The latter was \$55.00 more per month. Another thing was sending a letter back home was free of charge. And we did not pay income tax. I was actually able to save a few dollars.

One more benefit of duty in that zone was five days of Rest and Recuperation, popularly known as R&R. And those five days didn't count against our leave time of 30 days per year. My turn came in the spring of '65 when I was given the opportunity to travel to Bangkok or Hong Kong. Someone would take care of the pharmacy while I was away. My buddy, a medical lab tech, was also able to take time off and we both decided on Hong Kong for R&R. The Air Force would supply the free round-trip flights. I would only need a little cash to spend in HK + money for the hotel bill. We went in April, apparently during the monsoon season in China; we experienced rain & mist for the five days. But so what? Here I was in one of the world's greatest cities - a chance of a lifetime. A recalled highlight was, one morning for breakfast at the Park Hotel, I enjoyed an ox kidney omelet. I thought that to be, at least,

continued on page 5

continued from page 4

unusual. Well, we had a fine time in semi-luxury, incl. room service. Just wasn't used to such niceties. I didn't get around much in civilian life.

Another pleasant experience in my Tour of Duty was a weekend trip to Vung Tau on the South China Sea. It was a resort, the former Cap St. Jacques when Vietnam was a French colony. So there in the middle of the war, I, and a few others from my unit, was able to spend some time at a beach and seaside villa. Our transportation was via Caribou, the airplane, that is. Just like life itself, there were the good times and the bad times.

Next: "Good-by, Vietnam"

Editor's Note: I have received e-mails from some of you asking why this series has been included in *Shotgun Blasts*. Following is a copy of my original note from the September issue:

Editor's Note: *I have taken the liberty to include the following series in the Shotgun Blasts in hopes that it will inspire a few of you to share your experiences with us...Don*

Further: My good friend, John L. Theiler passed away on December 23, 2010 and has gone home. May he rest in peace.



John L. Theiler June 1940 – December 2010

2011 Delta Birddog Reunion

We continue to plug along with planning for the 2011 reunion in San Antonio, Texas. I am sure that by now you have all received information regarding the dates, October 13 to October 16 and the location of the reunion headquarters at the San Antonio Doubletree Hotel (Downtown). Additionally, there will be some activities taking place at Cannon Field, home of the Alamo Liaison Squadron, just south of the city where our friends from the International Bird Dog Association have agreed to join with us for some Texas Bar-B-Q and a bit of flying activity.

A copy of the registration form is attached to the Shotgun Blasts and you are encouraged to complete it and get it in the mail to Tim Brinkerhoff as soon as possible so that we can get our numbers together and complete some final organizational activities.

Just a note, if you have not yet joined the IBDA this would be a good time to consider signing up, they have been great supporters of our reunions and as an organization they are continually working to keep the memory of the greatest little war bird ever built alive. The \$30.00 annual dues are a real bargain. For information you can contact them through the web site www.ibdaweb.com.

More information on the hotel arrangements will be in next month's *Shotgun Blasts*.

2011 Delta Birddog Reunion

13 – 16 October, 2011

Registration Form

NAME (Last, First)	
STREET ADDRESS	
CITY, STATE, ZIP	
HOME PHONE	
WORK PHONE	
CELL PHONE	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	
CALL SIGN OR DUTY POSITION (i.e. Clerk)	
GUEST	
GUEST	
	Sorry, I am unable to attend the Reunion, but please keep me on the mailing list.

ITEM	UNIT PRICE	QUANTITY	TOTAL PRICE
REGISTRATION FEE (Includes Reception, Banquet, and Airfield Cook-out.)	\$150.00 PER PERSON		

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have any special needs let us know when you register so that we can plan.

Activities such as golf and tours to local attractions are being planned to fill free time. These will be announced on the Web Sites and in separate information e-mails as the reunion approaches

Please make your check payable to Delta Birddog Reunion and mail it with this form to:

**Mr. Tim Brinkerhoff
28 Meriden Avenue
Meriden, CT 06451**