Section Four Brief Summary of the Day Our World Stood Still

IN AN INSTANT THEIR LIVES WERE ENDED BY AN UNPROVOKED TERRORIST BOMB ATTACK. THE NEWS SHOCKED THE NATION. THE NEWS CHANGED OUR LIVES. THE NEWS STILL SEEMS SURREAL. FOLLOWING ARE A FEW PRESS REPORTS. "THEY" SAY THIS SHOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED. "THEY" SAY SAUDI IS AN ALLY. "THEY", (THE SAUDIS, OUR ALLIES), DO NOT FULLY COOPERATE WITH THE FBI ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS.

"WE" SAY THINGS NEED TO CHANGE BEFORE THIS HAPPENS AGAIN.

"WE" SAID THAT IN 1996, BOMBINGS AND BEFORE COLE. "WE" MAKE PEOPLE LISTEN WHEN IT DOESN'T

BEFORE THE EMBASSY
THE ATTACK ON THE USS
UNDERSTAND IT IS HARD TO
AND REMEMBER THINGS
DIRECTLY AFFECT THEM.

UNTIL, ON THE UNTHINKABLE

SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 WHEN TOOK PLACE, A TERRORIST

ATTACK AGAINST AMERICA ON AMERICAN SOIL. THE TWIN TOWERS OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER CRUMBLED LIKE THE MAKING OF A CHEAP MOVIE, TAKING WITH IT ALMOST 3000 LIVES. THERE WERE TWO OTHER SIMOULTANEOUS ATTACKS THE SAME DAY.

THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE

NOW, TERRORISM HAS THE ATTENTION OF AMERICA, AS EVERYONE WHO LIVED THROUGH THAT TRAGEDY, WHETHER BY LOSING A LOVED ONE, OR RE-LIVING THE NIGHTMARE, OR JUST WATCHING THE EVENT UNFOLD ON NATIONAL TV AND

FEELING FOR ALL

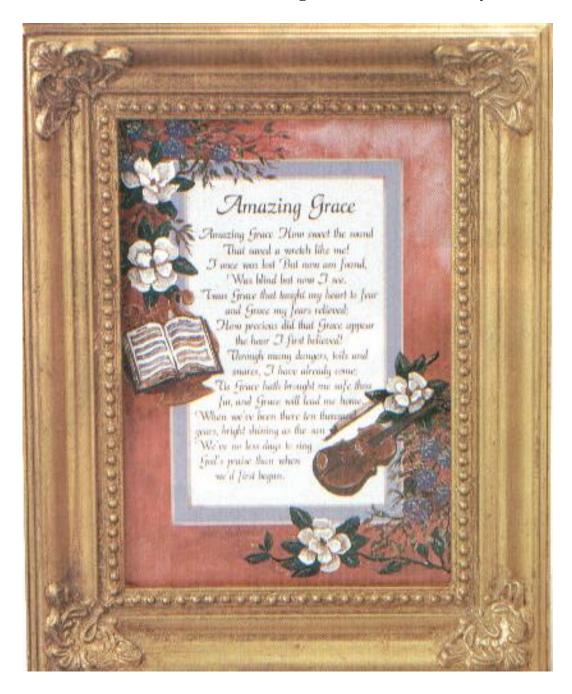
THE VICTIMS.

WHATEVER ROLE YOU PLAYED, YOU WILL NEVER FORGET. JUST LIKE WE WILL NEVER FORGET THE NIGHTMARE THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES ON JUNE 25, 1996 AND ALL FOR NO REASON OTHER THAN BECAUSE "THEY" DISLIKE AMERICAN PRESENSE IN THEIR DOMAIN.

IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM, WAS IT WORTH IT? IN THE NAME OF OIL, I ANSWER, NO!

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

The following two pages are a special tribute. This article was first published in Peggy's local Deleware newspaper. We met this special lady for the first time, a couple months later when she attended Mike's interment services at Arlington National Cemetery.



In Honor of MSgt Michael G. HeisMike Heiser and the 18 heroes from The Khobar Towers

Nineteen black hearses were parked along the runway's edge. All the rear doors were open in readiness for what was to come. We had been waiting for more than an hour to honor those who had lost their lives in Dhahran.

As we waited we watched the four groups of eight men and women that would carry their comrades from the C5 to the waiting hearses, practice. No step was missed, all were in unison. The honor guard waited, standing at ease, the wind blowing the American flag gently.

The ceremonies had been closed to the public and the media. The "circus" was detained on the outside of the fence. No one was there to point a camera, because none were allowed. No one asked a family member, "how do you feel?", or a number of other equally insensitive questions. No one pointed a finger, or stared. There was only dignity, honor, peace. Something these men certainly had earned.

A young woman passed among the crowd handing each person ear plugs, instructing each one how to use them. Explaining that we were to insert them as the plane taxied to the spot directly in front of us. Military personnel stationed at Dover silently filled the area behind the seats that had been reserved for the families and friends.

The silence was very noticable. The only sounds were the click of the honor guard's heel taps; the tap of the rifle butts, hitting the tarmac, as they went over the procedure again and again, and the hushed tears from the front two rows of seats.

As the C5 floated down from the almost cloudless blue sky, my thoughts were on the contents of the huge, gray airplane that had left earlier in the day from Germany. Inside the airplane was my friend MSgt Michael G. Heiser and 18 other heroes.

"Mike" was among those who died so senselessly on Tuesday, June 25 in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Mike was only a few years from retirement. He had served with honor, dignity and most of all pride. He was proud to serve his country. Proud of the difference he made.

As we sat on the edge of the tarmac watching the plane gracefully float from the sky and come to a halt at the northern end of the runway at Dover Air Force Base, tears silently rolled down every face in attendance. The C5 sat perfectly still for a few brief minutes then gently rolled south on the runway to an area just in front of us.

The roar of the engines covered the sobs of their family and friends that had gathered to honor their sons, husbands, friends. As the plane taxied to a complete stop and the engines were gradually stopped, complete silence rolled, once again, across the runway and surrounding area.

The Air Force band began playing, quietly, softly, in honor of those on board. The ground crew silently readied the plane to discharge its precious cargo. The nose was opened, the ramp (large enough to accommodate a tank) lowered and locked into place.

A twenty-one gun salute echoed across the field. The National Anthem was played. Taps, played expertly, chilled everyone gathered.

With practiced precision, the groups of eight moved in cadence towards the ramp. For a few brief minutes only the click of the shoe taps could be heard. Then, in groups of four, the flag-draped caskets were brought out of the plane. Each group was salluted as they were hand carried back onto American soil.

All 19 heroes were placed in the waiting hearses. Their names, rank, military unit and home base location were read. Each hero was presented with a Purple Heart, the medal pinned to the right corner of the flag-draped caskets.

The hearses pulled out to the right of their field, slowly moving towards the mortuary. The official ceremony was over.

The family and friends turned to each other, wrapping their arms around strangers that shared their sorrow, their grief and their horror. Then we turned away from the airfield to begin the long journey home. Home to prepare for the final observances for their family and friends.

Submitted by Peggy Granger



You can notice the families were not present. Why?



They forgot to invite us!



The ending of a military career. The beginning of a new life for those loved ones left behind. Life as we knew it was is now a book of memories.





The pages ahead are an overview of the 3 memorial services and some of the early shocking news.



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE PERSONNEL CENTER BANDOLPH AIR FORCE BARE TEXAS

2 3 JUL 1996

HQ AFPC/DPWC 550 C Street West, Ste 14 Randolph AFB TX 78150-4716

Mr. and Mrs. Gary G. Heiser 10 Live Oak Lane Palm Coast FL 32137

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heiser

On behalf of the Secretary of the Air Force, I am forwarding you this Certificate of Honorable Service in memory of your son. This certificate is awarded as testimony of his honest and faithful service to the Air Force and his country.

Sincerely

GEORGE E. ATKINSON Chief, Casualty Matters

Attachment: Certificate

The following pages contain copies of some of the early news articles and related events that took place that first long dark year.



Included is coverage of the three memorial funeral services we had to face upon returning home from our Alaskan cruise that ended so abruptly. It was supposed to be a vacation of a lifetime. One day out to sea, the ship to shore fax confirmed every parent's worst fear. How could it be? We still don't know the answers, there are none!

EDITORIAL PAGE

THE NEWS-JOURNAL

Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argu freely according to conscience, above all other liberties.

- Million

Herbert M. Davidson (1895-1985) Editor (1928-1985) Josephine Field Davidson (1921-1995) Editor (1965-1995)

> Tippen Davidson, Publisher & Co-Editor, Georgia M. Kaney, General Manager Dick Dunkel, Executive Editor Robert Hughes, Marketing Director Robert R. Kearley, Circulation Director

A shocking attack on U.S. servicemen

nce again Americans have been sickened to find that their servicemen have been killed at the hands of terrorists.

A truck-bomb loaded with 1.5 tons of explosives detonated Tuesday out-side Khobar Towers, an apartment complex for military personnel

It killed 19 American servicement and wounded 270 others.

Among those reported killed was an Air Force master sergeant from this area, Michael G. Heiser of Palm Coast.

It was the worst terrorist attack on the U.S. military since the 1963 bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, which killed 241.

THE SOLDIERS stationed in Saudi Arabia are part of a force oversee-ing the unfinished business of the Persian Gulf War.

They are enforcing the no-fly zone over Iraq. Their presence in Saudi Arabia is a powerful statement of American resolve in the region and a warning against future military attacks on world oil supplies.

This mission should not be altered

by Tuesday's tragedy.
President Clinton acted swiftly to dispatch a 40-person FBI team to investigate the bombing, which by its timing is suspected to be the work of Islamic militants opposed to any Western military presence in Saudi Arabia.

"We will not rest in our efforts to

EDITORIALS

The worst terrorist attack on the U.S. military since the 1983 Beirut bombing should not alter the nation's vital work in the Middle East.

find whoever is responsible for this outrage, to pursue them and to pun-ish them." Clinton said. "Anyone who attacks one American attack every American, and we protect and defend our own.

Clinton also said he will make counterterrorism a focus of the upcoming world economic summit in

Lyon, France.
Proposals are to include coordination of law enforcement and data-sharing efforts among the G-7 na-

All of these responses are appro-priate and necessary, but they can-not solve the problem or prevent the next outrage.

As long as zealots believe have the formula to mold the Middle East with the simple chemistry of truck-bomb explosives, innocent blood will continue to be shed. No matter what precautions are taken the nations seeking peace and stabil-ity can only comfort the families of the stricken, bear witness against their murderers, and renew their vi-

17-year Air Force vet was ready to plant roots

Helier tells Michael hit. Beiner tells Michael hit. planned to speed of less 30 years, in the military before returns. Be said the tepher bed so purfactor, reservations about being saugued to Soud Arabia.



hence's Melbourne neighbors such the new results in the block was engaged But he was away in management so offer they didn't per a chance to know him well hime said he wanted to plant come to a house and weller

Captain loved his country, Air Force

By Billy Cox
PLORIDA TODAY

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Care Cortscopter J. Manager Cortscopter

Land State Cortscopter

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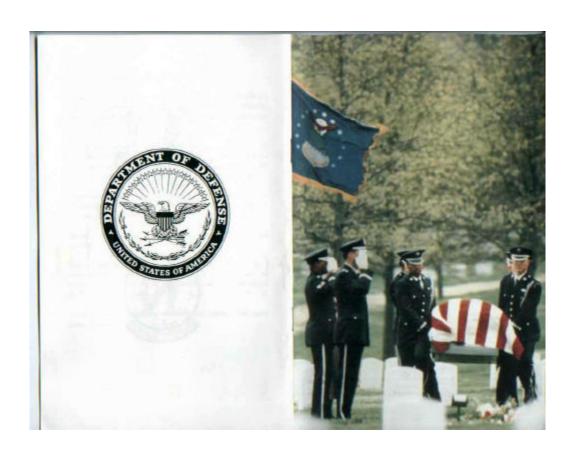


CAPT, CHRISTOPHER ADAMS was a gargeto officer fee to

man, he works five boutiers, two land ived the past several years safety, there is past and an income "Take is provided expecting." a

water, three techniques and a molest.

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In Memory Of Those Who Served

71st Rescue Squadron, 1st Rescue Group, Patrick Air Force Base, Florida

Captain Christopher J. Adams

Captain Leland T. Haun

Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser

Staff Sergeant Kevin J. Johnson

Airman First Class Justin R. Wood

55th Contracting Squadron, 55th Logistics Group, Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska

Staff Sergeant Ronald L. King

88th Civil Engineer Squadron, 88th Civil Engineer Group Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio

Airman Christopher B. Lester

Memorial Service

Base Theater Patrick Air Force Base, Florida June 30, 1996

Prelude Patrick Air Force Base Chapel Chair

Arrival of President

Opening Hymn....."Lord, Guard and Guide the Men

Who Fly" - Choir and Audience

r and althouse ordentation

Remarks The Commander 1st Rescue Group

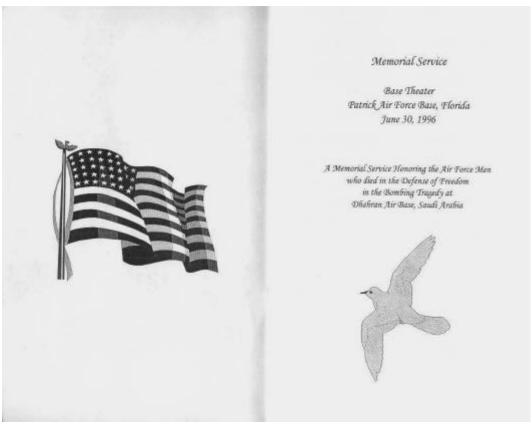
The President of the United States

TAPS......Mr Stewart Trushkowsky

President Departs Theater - Please remain seated until the families and distinguished guests have departed the Theater.

This is a reduced copy of the program from PAFB, memorial service with President Clinton presiding.





CAPTAIN CHRISTOPHER 1. ROBINS

Captain Christopher J. Adams was a HC-130 Pilot assigned to the 71st Rescue Squadron. He was born in Nassan, New York on 18 April 1966. He graduated from Farmingdale High School in June of 1984 and earned a Backelor of Science Degree in Aviation Management in June of 1988 from Daniel Webster College. He graduated from Squadron Officer's School in February 1996.

Captain Adams was commissioned through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps. He was essigned to undergraduate flight training at Reese Air Torce Base, Texas in November of 1990. Upon graduation, Captain Adams was assigned to the 41st Tactical Airlift Squadron at Pope Air Force Base, North Caroline where he volunteered to participate in airlist operations during Operation DESERT CALM. During this period, he was responsible for airlifting over 1,000 passengers and over 250 tons of cargo to resupply U.S. forces. He was chosen to fly a sensitive mission filming the oil fires of Kunvait. He later deployed to support Operation PROVIDE PROMISE, a humanitarian wirlift into Bosnia, where he flow 16 missions under combat conditions, delivering over 336 tons of food, equipment, and urgently needed medical supplies.

Capitatu Adams was assigned to the 71st Agecus Squadron in November of 1993 where he was in command of a nine-man MC-130 crew responsible for Combat Search and Rescue missions.

Captain Adams' military decorations include the Purple Hears, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, and the Air Fance Training Ribbon.

Captain Adams is survived by his mother, Catherine,

CAPOUN CECANO T. HOLON

Captain Coland T. Haun was a navigator for the 71st Agreeue Squadron. Captain Haun was born in Frezno, California on 25 April 1963. He graduated from Closis West High School in Freeno, California. Captain Haun attended Fresno State University and graduated in July of 1989 with a Bachelor of Arts Dogree in Industrial Arts.

He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the Air Force in July of 1989. His first assignment was as a student in Specialized Undergraduate Navigator Training at the 451st Hying Training Squadron at Mather Air Force Base, California. He graduated in November of 1989 and was assigned to the 41st Electronic Combat Squadron at Oavis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona flying EC-130H aircraft. In 1992 he was assigned to the 355th Operations Support Squadron at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Arizona and remained as an Academic Instructor until June of 1994.

In June of 1994 he was assigned to the 71st Resone Squadron as an HC-1300 Mavigator. During his tenure there, he participated in the rescue of an individual off a thip 1,600 miles off the coast of Herida resulting in the saving of a life. He attended Squadron Officer School in 1995. Captain Haun served in Southwest Asia, Dhahran, Saudi Arabis, 4411th Rescue Squadron (Provisional), enforcing the no-fly zone in Southern Iraa.

Captain Haun's military decorations include the Purple Heart, the Air Madal, Aerial Achievement Medal, with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with Valor, Combat Readiners Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and the Southwest Asia Service Medal, with two Oak Loaf Clusters.

Captain Haun is survived by his wife, Ibis Soledad Haun and his stepchildren, Milagritos and Jose Perez.

Crowds gather outside PAFB

He was separated by a fince of highway, but his heart was the tax servicespen's families in a base theater. And his heart was

O'Connect, like several of the hundreds of people gathered along State Road ALA, lives near the base. He said they're a close-knit community bound by feats of brav-

"We're warriers," his friend. Garland Jones, sald.

On Sunday, some of the warriors cried.

The grief in the sun-spinshed afternoon were for beyond mili-tary ties. Parkisk Air Force Base has friends in supermarkets, sigh-clums and homes throughout the neighboring beachside communi-ties.

66This community gether??

Edwins Hoffman, Miami Visitor

Another business has not related to flag to its full beight after lowering a to testful beight after lowering a to testful flag to the flag of Berward County, Shareff's Deputy Ray Warner section in the floots. Talls weekend, the flag Wan dropped book stewn again.

"I wanted to do semething for them, her I didn't know what," said mechanic George Trant subside Trant's Repair shop on SR ALA. So Lendina."

He pointed to a makeshift wreath of miniature American hags red, white and sho ribbesh and a poctage of an eagle hang from a beser post freating the hagi-

As he talked, a passing records solved his horn and flashed Tress peace sign.

a peace sign.

Choser to the service, an airman stood behind his base home on a second-floor wooden landing that overlooked SR ALA.

He said nathing and held me sign. He didn't have to the head was stamped down, his chie resting on his chest.

The day, sunny and breezy, comed if-exited for a memorial X ran weather for greeting returning cross, not memorialising them.

All the sumbine couldn't wipe out the stain list clong to Bre-vard's beaches this workerd. It

Their last forts everybedy, said Marjerie Bart, who was calling with her hashend and three cha-dren. They're a part of the mon-

The family than held an im-prompts minute of steams for the servicement before returning to incir brief charges.

their lived observes to this to the govern of the best, the military memorial abortion was personal.

Casey Roberts said the Wait in friend of two of the mirrors who fairly died, Roberts, and become the country of the mirror who into its military service, and becoming the said the service as the be delt it was imperface to be there.

"It's important to come out here and show that we care," he ead. "They were great guys. They all were."

Sense residents began gathering using Plants Conserway before even, possible fortheast in try in catch a gathput of Air Porce One as a brought Canton to the serv-

Some of the suchess was mixed with excitation over a rare visit by a sitting prosteet.

"I was thrilled," said Edwine Bothman of Marri, who is vesting numbers indica Harbour Brech. "I wared as hard in I could."



Joseph Steves, PLOFED
CROWDS WATCH: as Air Force One appropries Sunday from the south pide of Pastick Air Force Steve

Clinton's plane haded about 20 minutes before its acheduled 1-90 m arrive time Frank Kietz of Cores Searts

She was the of 100 people living was around those living the cases of series with every way, straining to get a rice of the SR AlA during the visit, but that

Air Force One passed with a dearest the basses River of the learning four away their spot tracks and a way to be a spot tree. The way security is, I fairly dearest size of the learning tracks and a way the research said.

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thing from police seasons to bisoccusion.

Air Porce One passed with a
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Cocce Beach and 8 wold.

Piece and other resources and
they have become on Smills with the season of the se

Macquess along SR ATA on reyed messages of sympochy Our thoughts and prayers are with you, PAFR. the morques at a resulty Dairy Queen road.

The signs put up for the fam-les were beautiful. Hoffman said. This community ready state to-pother.

Master Sergeant Michael G. Hoiser was a Master Aircrew Member and served as the NCOIC, C Flight for the 71st Rescue Squadron. Sergeant Heiser was born in Sanford, Florida, on 20 September 1960. He graduated from high school in Ocean, New Jetsey in 1978.

Sergeant Heiser entered basic military training on 25 June 1979. On 14 November 1979, he was assigned to the 1608th Security Police Squadron. Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. In May 1981, he retrained and was assigned to the 2148th Communications Squadron, Elloworth Air Force Base, South Dakpta, as an Airborne Communications System Operator. In 1986 he was assigned to the 10th Airborne Command and Control Squadron, RAF Mildenhal, England. He was assigned to the 58th Airlift Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany in 1989. Sergeant Hoiser served in Operation DESERT STORM from 5 September 1990 through 20 April 1991. In December 1992, he was upgraded to Airborne Communications System Instructor. He was assigned to the 71st Rescue Squadron in December 1995, and attended the HC-130 Combat Rescue School at Kirtland Air Torce Base, New Mexico.

Sergeant Heiser's military decorations include the Purple Heart, Meritarious Service Medal, Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Communication Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Force Achievement Medal with two Oak Loaf Clusters, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with four Oak Leef Clusters, Wavy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Combat Readiness Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with one Oak Loaf Cluster, Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Humanitarian Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Chusters.

Surgeant Hoiser is survived by his mother, Frances, and father, Gary.

STATT SERGEANT KEVIN 1. JOSENSON

Staff Sergeant Kevin J. Johnson served as a HC-130 Instructor Flight Engineer for the 71st Rescue Squadron. He was born in Shreveport, Louisiana on 25 June 1960. He graduated from Booker T. Washington High School in May of 1977. Sergeant Johnson earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Electrical Engineering in December of 1981 from Grambling State University in Grambling Louisiana. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force through the school's Reserve Officer Training Corps Program. Sergeant Johnson's Professional Military Education includes the Noncommissioned Officer Loadership School in 1989 and the Noncommissioned Officer Academy in 1991.

Sergeant Johnson started his career at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas as a C-130 Flight Engineer assigned to the 62nd Tactical Airlift Squadron from July 1983 to October 1986. He was also assigned to the 61st Tactical Airlift Squadron as an Instructor Flight Engineer from October 1986 to April 1993. He deployed in support of Operation DESERT STORM while assigned to the 61st Tactical Airlift Squadron. He was assigned to the 71st Rescue Squadron in August 1993.

Sergeant Johnson earned the Chief Aircrew Member Aviation Badge and had more than 5,800 ffying hours in the C-130E and MC-130 aircraft. His military decorations include the Purple Hears, Air Medal, Aerial Achievement Medal with four Oak Loaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Combat Readiness Medal with two Oak Loaf Clusters, and the Air Force Good Conduct Model with three Oak Loaf Clusters.

Sergeant Johnson is survived by his wife, Shyrl, his mother, Laura, and his brother, Bruce. He and his wife have three children, Che, Kevin Christopher, and Nicholas.

FLORIDA TODAY, Monday, July 1, 1996.

A FINAL SALUTE

President offers comfort at Patrick service

By Tony Boylan FLORIDA TODAY

As president of the United States, Bill Clinton's job Sunday

States, Bill Clinton's job Sunday was that of healer Clinton met families deep in grief and tried to give them hope. He sympathized with their loss and gave them a context; one of honor and heroism in which to place

gave them a context: one of honor and heroism in which to place their loved ones.

In a speech that caused those who knew the failen to weep and to reach out for one another. Clinton captured their sorrow. Yet he let them know they should feel proud for the men they had loved.

I know well that no one can ever make whole the loss of your father, your husband, your brother or son, your fancee or your best friend. Clinton said.

They made a difference in seeking for others the blessings of liberty we hold so dear.

Although the speech was emotional, a closed-door meeting with the families must have been heartwrenching. Clinton spent more than an hour, crying, consoling and listening to stories.

During that meeting, the parents of Master Sgt. Michael G. Heiser of Palm Coast gave Clinton a picture of the president and their son. It was taken near Air Force One in November at Ramstein Air Force One in November at Ramstein Air Force One in Gormany.

In the picture, Heiser, a 35-year-old communications specialist, is handing the president a coin bearing the official insignia of his military unit.

Heiser had been part of the ground crew servicing the president in the limportant moment in his

dent's plane

In one important moment in his



Rescue Squadron, whose motto hangs especially heavy on our hearts today. So that others may live."
Clinton had cut short a trip to France to come to Florida to help friends and families understand

whining Air Force One.

The president had taken more than 10 minutes to wade into the

than 10 minutes to wade into the crowd, shaking nearly every band extended to him, sharing moments of sorrow and good wishes. Hundreds more wanted to be there, but Clinton left earlier than expected, and many people who work or live on base were stranded near the main gate waiting to be shuttled to the runway, base officials said.

During the short service in the base theater, Clinton called for God to bless those who died, those who serve and the country they represent.

"We are the poorer for their passing. But the bright light of their devotion still shines. May their names live on forever." Clinton

devotion still shines. May their names live on forever, 'Clinton said in a slow, meaningful delivery.

"They gave their lives for our freedom. May they now rest in the warm embrace of God. May God bless the country for which they gave the last full measure of their devotion. Amen."

Another important part of the healing came earlier in Clinton's remarks. It had to do with avenging the dead and the wounded from the Middle East.

"In our time, terrorism is the enemy of peace and freedom. America must not, and America will not, be driven from the fight against terrorism."

will not, be driven from the fight against terrorism."

U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, R Palm Bay said Clinton's speech was a good one, particularly a line in which Clinton said, "We will not rest until our efforts to capture, prosecute and punish those who did this evil deed are successful.

Weldon found it difficult to focus on Clinton's words, though. He was fixated on the photograph placed beneath the wreath representing Airman First Class Justin R. Wood

of Patrick's 71st Rescue Squadron If was a picture of Wood as an infant.

infant.

"I was a fittle numb, actually, Weldon said." I just kept looking at that photograph and I just couldn't help but be overwhelmed with griet."

Weldon found another connection with the families of the dead. Capt. Christopher J. Adams graduated from the same Long Island, N.Y., high school as Weldon, and their families frequently attended the same Catholic Church, Our Lady of Lourdes.

Adams was from Massapequa Park, Weldon from nearby Farmingdale.

"For a lot of us, we hear about these things, and we don't emotionally connect." Weldon said. "But when you meet the family and you realize this fellow went to the same school you did and the family attends the same church you did, it really brings it home personally in a very emotional way."

Weldon and many others present said the president's visit was important in helping the families, the military community and the nation get over the tragedy.

"It's by his word that people's lives are placed on the line." the congressman said. "It's very important for him to be able to come and support the families in a time For a lot of us, we hear about

and support the families in a time of grief like this."

Brig Gen. Robert Hinson, commander of the 45th Space Wing, was part of the Air Force One greeting party. He spoke for many at Patrick, from officers to enlicted.

"Certainly the president's presence here is part of our healing process," the general said. It was very important to us as a military community and as a nation."



Craig Balley, FLORIDA TODAY

the importance of their sacrifice. By the time he left, some healing seemed to have been advanced. Two hundred or more people who had gathered for a glimpse of the Clinton entourage applauded and waved as he climbed aboard the

PRESIDENT CLINTON greets Lt. Jimmy Jackson of the Brevard County Sheriff's Office at Patrick on Sunday

rick — as well as two more men, one from Offut Air Force Base in Nebraska and another from Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio — Clinton stated the purpose of the day.

"Each was a part of the 71st.

ATRIKAN CHRISTOPHER & LESTER

Airman Christopher B. Lester was a Power Production Specialist for the 88th Cool Engineer Squadron. Airman Lester was born in Wyoming County, West Virginia, on 21 Tebruary 1977. He graduated from Pinevalle High School in 1995.

Airman Lester entend besic military training on 19 July 1995, He graduated from Basic Power Production Specialist School at Shappard Air Vorce Bass, Toxas. On 26 Wovember 1995, he was assigned to the 88th Civil Engineer Group, Wright-Petterson Air Force Base, Ohin.

Mirman Lester took charge of maintenance on 35 mobile gene immediately upon arrival at Wright-Satterion Air Fonce Base. He also was being trained to maintain aircraft arresting barriers.

Airman Lester valuencered for this contingency tour in Saudi Arabia and was looking forward to the challenge, it was his first deployment.

Arrean Lester was awarded the basic Civil Engineer Badge on 7 November 1995. His military decorations include the Purple Heart, Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, National Defense Service Medal and the Air Force Training Ribbon

Airman Laster is survived by his mother, Judy, father, Oscil, eister, Jossica, brother, Cacil, Jr., and his frances.





A final salute

"America stands with you in your sorrow and your outrage"

By Dennis Thumpson Jr. FLORIDA TODAY

Trying to recover from a terrible hurt, a tired and saddened 71st Rescue Squadron found new resolve Sunday in the words of its top com-

Less than a week after a terrorist bomb killed five members of the squadron, more than 700 military personne) — including Commander-In-Chief Bill Clinton — gathered Sunday at Patrick Air Force Bese.

During a memorial service heavy with loss, they provided comfort and support for both the families of the honored dead and the men and women who will carry on the slain airmen's work.

wirmen's work.

"We troops and the families are weary. We lost good men. Many others are wounded. But as of yesterday, Senior Airman (Paul) Blaise is no longer missing," said Col. Thomas Friers, referring is a member of the 71st who had been feared dead.

Friers—who commands the 1st. Rescue Group to which the 71st is assigned—then saluted Clinton, his strong voice filling the overflowing theater where the service took place. "Mr President, its Rescue Group is all present or accounted for. We

is all present or accounted for. We will heal. We will fight another day, all but those we remember here

"We must not allow for their tagic loss to be in vain, but rather we should return to our honored calling, that of rescuing those in harm's way, for it is these things we do that are our reason to live."

The five men from Patrick were among 19 American servicemen who died June 25 when a fuel truck loaded with explosives detonated outside their quarters at King Abdul We must not allow for their

Aziz Air Base near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. More than 300 Americans were injured in the bombing. Sunday's ceremony, which was broadcast live on CNN and local tele-vision stations, was brief, tasting less than haif on hour. The families entered first, clutch-ing each other for support excepted.

The families entered first, clutching each other for support, escorted by military chaperones.

The people wounded in Tuesday's bombing came next. Most of them walked in unassisted, although two came on crutches, and one, Staff Sg. Jefferson Craven of the 45th Civil Engineer Squadron, entered in a wheelchair.

The wounded still worse the house

The wounded still wore the brown desert fatigues they used in Dhah-

ran.

Clinton came in from a side entrance and quietly look a seat up front as a blue-garbed chapel choir began singing "America."

Sevea wreaths adorned with red and yellow flowers hung before the crewd—five for the "Ist's casualles, plus two more for other airmen killed in the blast. Each wreath was decorated with small memontos. decorated with small memontos from the men's family and com-

People stood in the aisles along reope stood in the atsles along either side of the theater, eager to pay respects even though the room had filled to overflowing Camou-flage fatigues blended with formal blue Air Force uniforms.

Onlookers sat passive, stone faced, taking in the words of their commanders. But tears and small sobs often overcame the quiet dignity of those present, particularly when Clinton stood to praise the fallen

In slow cadence, Clinton gave the names and ranks of each of Patrick's

■ Capt. Christopher J. Adams ■ Capt. Leland T. Haun ■ Master Sgt. Michael Heiser ■ Staff Sgt. Kerin J. Johnson ■ Airman First Class Justin R.

He also mentioned two other dead asso checitoded two other dead servicemen — Staff Sgt. Roneid L. King of the 55th Contracting Squad-ron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., and Alfman Christopher B. Lesser of the 88th Civil Engineering Group, Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

ohio,
Of the 19 killed in the bombing,
they were the only two not from Pat-rick or Eglin Air Force Base in Fort
Walton Beach in the state's Panhan-

die. The dead servicemen "repre sented the best of our nation, and they gave America their best," Clinton said.

on said.

"America stands with you in your sorrow and your outrage. Your loved ones were taken before their time, felled by the hand of hatred in an act whose sevagery is matched only by its cowardice. "But today, let us just for a

But though, ice us just nor a moment put aside our anger to remember those who were lost, to find strength in the service they gave to thank God for the lives they lived with us, and to resolve to continue the strength for brackers and disthe struggle for freedom and de-cency to which they were so de-voted."

As taps played, Clinton, facing the wreaths, bowed his head. Some found great solace in the

president's words.
"I couldn't have said it any more

eloquently. I think it meant a lot to a lot of people," said Master Sgt. Wil-liam Sine, one of the injured. That's the leader of our nation. It

shows a lot of concern, that he know

shows a lot of concern, that he knows what people are feeling."
But for many, the healing will continue for some time to come.
Although she appreciated the gesture, Jenny Haun—the widow of Capt. Haun—found tittle solace in Sunday's service.
"It made me feel like my husband isn't here. I appreciated the support of the military and the president and the entire nation, but it doesn't help," she said.
"It's going to take a while for my

she said

"It's going to take a while for my family to feel better, and for me it's going to take forever. It's going to take forever. It's going to take the rest of my life to be with him. It's like he's on the longest tour of duty in his life."

U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon, R. Palm Bay, who attended the service, said the memorial will help the squadron and the families deal with their loss.

"As a physician who has dealt with you that having a service is very important to help begin the process of healing." he said.

"Of course, for the people who

"Of course, for the people who were close to these airmen, espe-cially for the families, it's going to sake a long time. Some of them are never going to get over it for a life-time."

Friers summed up the pain to be dealt with in the days to come:

dealt with in the days to come:

Today we hart a terrible hurt, a
hurt that comes from knowing they
won't be at the next crew befelling.
They won't be there to pick us up
when we feel down. They won't be
there to replace us at the end of another long four.

"We carry the grief of the families,
what they're experiencing, because
we are a family. We're an American
family, we're an Air Force family,
and we're a rescue family.

and we're a rescue family.

SUNDAY AreaWatch

When terrorism hits home

It happened a half a world away, but the terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia last week hit home for two area families.

The phone call no one wanted to get was received by families in Palm Coast and DeBary.

The first confirmed local casualty of

S S S S S S S

Heiser

the truck bombing at the King Abdul Aziz Air Base was Master Sgt. Michael G. Heiser, who had been at Dhahran since June 3.

The 35-year-old serviceman is the son of a well-known Palm Coast couple, Gary and Fran Heiser. They were on a cruise when they got word of

their son's death.

Michael was their only child.
His uncle, Tom Heiser;
grandparents, Marie and John
Sullivan; and great-aunt Jean Munoz
also live in Palm Coast.

Volusia also may have lost one of its sons in the attack, which claimed 19 lives.

Airman First Class Brian McVeigh is among the missing. McVeigh, 21, is a 1994 graduate of Deltona High School and was completing a three-month duty assignment in Dhahran with the 33rd Fighter Wing from Eglin Air Force Base. He is the only child of Sandra Wetmore, who for 23 years has operated a beauty salon in DeBary. He was engaged to Carrie Cloaninger, his

PALM COAST VFW MEMORIAL



WE NEVER REALLY SAY GOOD BYE



PALM COAST VFW MEMORIAL

Lord, Guard and Guide the Men Who Fly

Lord, quard and quide the men who fly Through the great spaces of the sky. Be with them traversing in the air In darkening storms or sunshine fair.

You who support with tender might The balanced birds in all their flight, Lord of the temperal winds, he man, That, having you, they know no feat.

Control their minds with instinct fit When-e'er, adventuring, they quit The firm security of land Grant steadjast eye and skillful hand.

Aloft in solitudes of space, Uphold them with your saving grocs. O God, protect the user who fly Through losely ways beneath the sky.

Amon

"An Education Tenst Fund" has been established in monory of Michael.

Donations can be made through "SouthTenst Bank"

Arrangements By Alderson's Palm Coast Community Funeral Home Palm Coast, 3L Memorial Service

Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 8696 Palm Coast, FL July 3, 1996 11:00 AM

A Memorial Service Honoring Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser who died in the Defense of Freedom in the Rombing Tragedy at Dhahran Air Base, Saudi Arabia



Flagler honors fallen Heiser

By ANDREW MIKULA

PALM COAST — Master Sgt. Michael G. Helser was honored Wednesday on the eve of Independence Day, nine days after becoming the victim of a brutal act in a far off nation.

Mourners packed the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8696 for a memorial tribute to the 35-year-old airman who died when an explosives-laden truck blew up June 25 outside a military housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

The career Air Force veteran was the son of Gary and Fran Heiser, who own Coldwell Banker Heiser Realty in Palm Coast.

The Rev. Dave Rutledge, pastor of Praise Assembly of God Church, asked mourners to look at Heiser's death as an event that not only touched a small Florida community but "speaks to the cause of a nation."

Rutledge said it was natural and understandable to be angry about what happened to Heiser and the 18 other servicemen who died in the blast.

He said mourners could be angry at Islamic extrem-

He was awarded more medals than most units can put together with four or five people?

> Senior Master Sgt. Ray Speers, on Michael Heiser

ists who carried out the deed, angry at the American government for failing to protect its servicemen, maybe angry at the truck manufacturer. But, Rutledge said, anger ultimately makes one feel

foolish and lose control.

He appealed to the mourners to channel their anger toward the dark political motivations of the terrorists, not to all Muslims. In every religion, he said, there are extremists.

"The battle line here is spiritual," Rutledge said. "It is fought with the weapon of prayer."

SEE HEISER/ 2A



Capt. Benjamin Wash (left) gives Heiser's coffin to his parents Gi Coast. Heiser was one of the ser last week in Saudi Arabia.

Deaths

Michael Heiser memorial



Nancy Powell (center), the fience of Master Sgt. Michael G. Heiser, is conforted by Tracy Witt (left) while they, along with Michael's sister-in-law, Michael's Heiser, look at photos hanging on a wreath during a memorial service Thursday.

CONTINUED FROM 1A

Bibbodge said he condidn't imagine the pain the Heiser as a special person.

"He was awarded more medals than most units enter through although he deads with to often as a chargement of the seasons which the seasons with to often as a chargement. Three military trinseds of believe's past tribute to their comrade during the 45-minute construct. However, was marked to C. Pfight of the Tist. Rescore Squalron, susgined in Sasai Arabba from Particle Air Force was a single in Sasai Arabba from Particle Air Force sources who seasons the seasons he was a good man as also designed in Sasai Arabba from Particle Air Force sources who seasons who seared a Pargle tries the Tist Force vicerum who seared a Pargle tries the particle Air Force sources may be seared a Pargle these, a Merinforious Service of the Air Force with the Tist Squadron, she was a good man as also designed in Sasai Arabba from Particle Air Force sources and against Iron, House and they appear the the seasons he was a good man and other more and the particle Air Force sources who seared a Pargle the three sources and the seasons who may be a particle and the provided decrease of other doccordings during his 17-year curves in the Air Force.

Seator Master Sqt. Ray Speers, Heiser's units for the seasons when the seasons when a good and the provided decrease of other doccordings during his 17-year curves in the Air Force.

Seator Master Sqt. Ray Speers, Heiser's units

MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL GEORGE HEISER

Master Seegeant Michael G. Heiser, was a Master Aircrew Member and served at the NCOIC, & Hight for the 71st Rescur Squadron. Sergeant Heiser was born in Sanford, Florida, on 20 September 1960. He graduated from high school in Ocean, New Jersey in 1978.

Sergeaut Heiser entered basic military training on 25 June 1979. On 14 November 1979, he was assigned to the 1608th Security Police Squadron. Kirtland Air Force Rase, New Mexico. In May 1981, he retrained and was assigned to the 2148th Communications Squadron, Elloworth Air Force Rase, South Dakota, as an Airborne Communications System Operator. In 1986 he was assigned to the 10th Airborne Command and Control Squadron, RAF Mildenhal, England. He was assigned to the 58th. Airlift Squadron, Ramstein Air Base, Germany in 1989. Sergeant Heiser served in Operation DESERT STORM from 5 September 1990 through 20 April 1991. In December 1992, he was upgraded to Airborne Communications System Instructor. He was assigned to the 71st Reserve Squadron in December 1995, and attended the HC-130 Combat Rescue School at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico.

Sergeant Heiser's military decorations include the Purple Heart, Meditorious Service Modal, Air Modal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Aerial Achievement Medal with four Oak Leaf Chesters, Air Force Communication Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Bores Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters. Soint Meritorious Unit Award, Air Borce Outstanding Unit Award with four Oak Leaf Chesters, Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Combat Resolinces Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Borce Good Conduct Medal with four Oak Leef Clusters. National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Southwest Asia Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Humanitarian Service Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

MEMORIAC SERVICE 308 MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL G. HEISER

JULY 3, 1996

POST THE COLORS
PLEDGE TO THE 3LAG
PRAYER OF INVOCATION Paster David Kutledge
TRIBUTES TO MICHAEL
"A WAR WORTH FIGHTING" Factor David Rutledge
RAGPIPES SOLO
PRESENTING THE 3LAG
TAPS
BENEDICTION Pastor David Rutledge

Without our soldiers 'there would be no Independence Day'





News-Journal photo by Kelly Jordan

News-Journal photo by Nigel Cool

Honoring two soldiers killed in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Carrie Cloaninger, left, recalls the last conversations she had with her fiance, Airman 1st Class Brian McVeigh, during a memorial service Wednesday in Deltona. In Palm Coast, Nancy Powell, right, reflects on her memories of her fiance, Master Sgt. Michael Heiser.

tribute to the fallen

Sgt. Heiser 'always did what was right'

By ANDREW MIKULA From Our Flagler County Bureau
PALM COAST — Master Sgt. Michael G. Heiser was honored
Wednesday on the eye of Independence Day, nine days after becom-ing the victim of a brutal and cowardly act in a far-off nation.

Mourners packed Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8696 for a memorial tribute to the 35-year-old air-man who died when an explosivesladen truck blew up June 25 outside a military housing complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

The career Air Force veteran was the son of Gary and Fran Heiser, who own Coldwell Banker Heis-er Realty in Palm Coast.

The Rev. Dave Rutledge, pastor of Praise Assembly of God Church, asked mourners to look at Heiser's death as an event that not only touched a small Florida commu-nity but "speaks to the cause of a

Rutledge said it was natural and understandable to be angry about what happened to Heiser and the 18 other servicemen who died in the

SEE HEISER/ 9A



rnal photo by Kelly Jordan

McVeigh's mother, Sandra Wetmore, embraces friends during Wednesday's service at Trinity Assembly of God Church, At the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8696 in Palm Coast, Heiser's parents, Gary and Fran Heiser, listen tearfully as friends and family pay tribute to their son.



News-Journal photo by Nigel Cook

McVeigh family, friends try to 'stand tough'

By RON HURTIBISE

DELTONA — Brian McVeigh once told his high school wrestling coach to stand tough when dealing with problems.

Wednesday, Coach Mike Tarranto stood as tough as he could with McVeigh's family and friends as they paid tribute to the young De-Bary man, one of 19 military men killed June 25 in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

But he could not hold back the

"Tough guys don't cry, they hold it inside," he said McVeigh once told him. "Well today, he (McVeigh) is not here, so I can cry. And I'm going to cry. I have to."

Emotions were shared by many others at a memorial service at Trinity Assembly of God Church. Speakers included Tarranto, wres-Speakers included farranto, wes-tling and weightlifting coach at Deltona High School, McVeigh's fiancee, Carrie Cloaninger, and U.S. Rep. John Mica of Winter Park, among others.

The speakers described a vibrant, tough-willed man who SEE MCVEIGH/9A

Leading Edge Article

MSG Michael Heiser, Former Gulfstream C20 Crewman, Victim of Dhahran Bombing

Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser was laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery on Friday, September 20, a casualty of the June 25 terrorist bombing of the American military barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Mike was a member of the 71st Rescue Squadron our of Patrick AFB, deployed in Operation SOUTHERN WATCH. A crew member of a USAF C-130 assigned to patrol and enforce the southern no-fly zone in Iraq, Mike and his crew had returned to base with engine trouble. Grounded for service to their plane, Mike and his crew members were victims of the bombing of building 131. The explosion killed 19 American soldiers.

A career Air Force soldier, Mike was a highly decorated veteran of Operation DESERT STORM. His record and experience were exemplary. What stood out to family and close friends, however, was Mike's special relationship to Gulfstream.

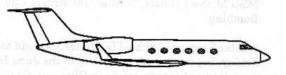
Before transferring to Saudi Arabia, Mike had been assigned to Ramstein AFB, Germany as a crew member of the elite fleet of Gulfstream GIII C-20s there. He was the radio operator on the C-20s flying many dignitaries and special missions while at Ramstein; Mike's parents cherish the photos of their son with President Clinton, General Norman Schwarzkopf, Senator Bob Dole, and many others. Prior to being assigned to Ramstein, Mike visited the Gulfstream plant in Savannah, a consultant on the configuration of the C-20s.

Mike's attachment to the plane continued long after he was transferred form Ramstein, and Gulfstreams were a real love of his. One of the first items to be unpacked in his new home in Florida was a model of the Gulfstream C-20.

It was because of Mike's heroic service to his country and his flag, and his special relationship with Gulfstream, that arrangements were made for the family of MSG Heiser to be flown to Washington on a Gulfstream for his final memorial and internment. Accompanied to Washington by Vice Chairman Bryan Moss, the Heisers received a salute from the employees of Gulfstream, with honor and great respect. The family was deeply appreciative, and the gesture was a touching final tribute and connection with their departed son.

The reason this has been placed in the middle of the Arlington services is because the wonderful folks at Gulfstream brought us to Washington, on a Gulfstream IV and we had a tiny taste of how the other half lives and why Mike loved his job so much.





Gulfstream Aerospace 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 2701 Arlington, VA 22209 Telephone: (703) 276-9500 Omnifax: (703) 276-9516

ELECTRONIC MAIL TRANSMITTAL

Page_ 1_of ___ (including cover sheet)

TO: Fran Newir	FROM:	
keep to CA, vaniquote may	Gulfstream / Washington, D.C.	
Fax: 904 1446-1504	Problems: Call (703) 276-9500	

Here is my article - it in no way does much more than light one candle for Mike, but I m glad to do what I

Please do call me before your visit en October. I will try to get you all once here for a visit.

Jake care; you allace in my prayers often.

fondly, Glazacth



On behalf of the Men and Women of the Air Force,
The Chief of Staff, General Ron Fogleman,
and Miss Jane
express deepest sympathy and
appreciation for faithful service to the
United States Air Force and our Nation

Proud to Remember

MSGT Michael G. Heiser

Arlington National Cemetery September 20, 1996



This day was to have been a celebration of Mike's 36th birthday instead we had to remember 35+ wonderful years.

110

We can think of a kazillion ways we would have preferred to celebrate our son's 36th birthday!







Arlington National Cemetery 20 September 1996











MOWW Helps Family of Bomb Blast Victim

A tragedy thousands of miles from home has brought the Flagler-Palm Coast Chapter closer to its home base in Northeast Florida and provided an opportunity for resident Companions to help establish a memorial to an airman who gave his life while wearing the uniform of his country. Air Force Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser, age 35, was one of 19 U. S. ser-

vice members killed in the bomb explosion in Saudi Arabia on 25 June 1996. He was one of the most decorated enlisted men in the Air Force, the Distinguished Graduate of his NCO Academy, and 1995 Aircrew Member of the Year in Europe. His death was a tragic blow to his family and to all those who knew him in his hometown of Palm Coast. Expressions of sympathy were received from well over 500 persons from all over the world, to include President Bill Clinton and General (Retired) Norman Schwartzkopf. It is at this point that MOWW enters the story.

The Heiser family want to create a living memorial to their son in the form of a scholarship at his high school alma mater. When considering who could best administer the scholarship fund and organize the student selection process, MOWW came to mind as an organization known in the community for its support of JROTC and for its caring concern for young people. Gary and Fran Heiser quickly developed a warm

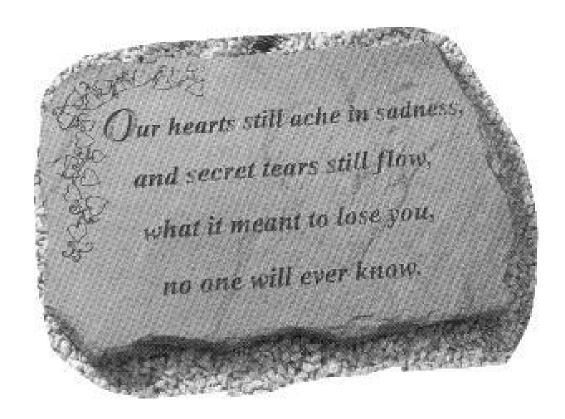


Funeral services for MSgt. Michael Heiser at Arlington National Cemetery.

friendship with Roy Savage and the other Companions of Flagler-Palm Coast Chapter.

MSgt Heiser's body was cremated, and a memorial ceremony held on 3 July 1996 at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida. Later, the family decided to have their son's remains buried at Arlington National Cemetery. The Flagler-Palm Coast Chapter contacted National Headquarters, which, in turn, passed the word to the MOWW Memorials Committee. Consequently, Companions Lt. Col. (Ret.) Bill Mangler and his wife,

the former Lt. Elizabeth Smith, of the Northern Virginia Chapter represented all Companions, and especially the Florida chapter, at the half-hour ceremony on 18 September 1996. It was a sad, but dignified recognition of an outstanding individual whose life was lost in service to his Nation. The Military Order of the World Wars is proud to play a small part in helping to keep alive the memory of Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser.



I think we know WHO killed Mike Heiser, We want to know WHY



BACK TALK

2/10/97



lany airmen gripe bout assignments to Saudi Arabia. but no one remembers Heiser doing so.

By Robert F. Dorr

want to know who killed Mike Heiser

living, breathing person. Not a statistic.

For a quarter century, the Air Force has sent Americans into Saudi Arabia on temposent Americans into Saudi Arabia on temporary duty Many have had uplifting experiences. But being temporary, these tours strain families and impose financial burdens. Most airmen would rather be slapped with a 13-month "permanent" tour in Korea or Greenland than a "temporary" stint at Dhahran or Al Khari

Dhahran or Al Kharj.

Last year, Master Sgt. Michael Heiser was dispatched from Patrick Air Force Base near Cocoa Beach, Fla., on a 60-day Saudi stint as a communications specialist on an HC-130 Combat Shadow aircraft.

Five years earlier, while stationed at Ramstein Air Base in Germany but deployed to the Middle East, Heiser had been the comnunications expert on a C-20A Gulfstream, a VIP transport.

Wearing enlisted wings and being a "crew dog" often meant inconvenience. Heiser was on temporary duty 250 to 300 days some years. "He was a professional," said retired Tech.

Sgt. Larry Helland of Tucson, Ariz, who flew with Heiser in earlier assignments. "He was very impatient with anybody who didn't share his dedication to the Air Force."

Heiser was born Sept. 20, 1960. He went to high school in New Jersey, moved to Florida, enlisted in 1979 and became a security po-

Soon afterward, he gained admission to the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, Colo.

21 was the oldest member of the class of 1986. One day, Heiser called his father, Gary

Heiser, and told him that "this is not for me. Then, he returned to the enlisted ranks where he excelled.

As an only child, Heiser remained close to his parents, even when shuttling "bigwigs" around in his C-20A with the former 58th Military Airlift Squadron at Ramstein.

TMike] would call from faraway places just to say he was OK and give us the schedule of the next leg of his trip," his mother, Fran Heiser, recalled.

No complaints

"I met Mike in March 1991," said Senior Master Sgt. Robert Witt. "This was right after the [Persian] Gulf War. His C-20 mission was solely dedicated to the transporta-tion of Gen. [H. Norman] Schwarzkopf, and Mike was very excited to be serving our coun-

try in that capacity."

Many airmen gripe about assignments to Saudi Arabia, but no one remembers Heiser

"My first ride on the C-20 was to Riyadh to swap out an airplane," Witt said. "Mike was on the same airplane." Heiser lost a bet with Witt over who would

be promoted first to senior master sergeant. The stake was a case of Crown Royal Scotch whisky. Witt never had time to collect.

When he went to Dhahran last year, Heiser left behind a fledgling live-in arrangement with a female friend. At 35, he was not ready

for marriage. "He had seen what long deployments do to marriages," said Helland. "He wanted to set-tle down after he retired."

"He looked at marriage like buying a toast-er," said Witt. "He wanted a guarantee." Heiser took the long view about everything

and was willing to wait, even for love.

In a Hollywood movie, when a building is blown to bits, we see it in carefully paced slow motion. Long seconds pass while flames spout outward, walls crumble and sound

In real life, it happens in an instant. Every-thing looks normal. Then a boom. It was like that June 25 when a terrorist truck bomb razed a dormitory building at Khobar Towers in Dhahran, killing Heiser and 18 other air-

Heiser's parents blame their son's death, in part, on "the negligent way of thinking [by] our government." They believe the commander on the scene, Brig. Gen. Terryl Schwalier, should be held accountable for the loss of 19

I disagree. It took courage to buck the trend, but the Air Force did right when it cleared Schwalier of neglect.

Now, FBI Director Louis Freeh and Attor-ney General Janet Reno say that Saudi officials refuse to turn over important evidence about the Khobar bombing, and the Air Force has announced that "temporary" duty tours in Saudi Arabia will be lengthened.

Perhaps it is time to end the "temporary" fiction and assign troops there permanently. Whatever happens, I want to know who blew up Mike Heiser.

Robert F. Dorr, an Air Force veteran, lives with hie family in Oakton, Va. Hie e-mail ad dress is RobertDorr@aol.com.

Now with the funerals behind us, the memorials begin and will continue forever. As long as people are willing to remember, this page in history

will remain open



Master Sgt. Michael Heiser

Memorials for area airmen

Master Sgt. Michael Heiser, a Palm Coast airman killed in the June 25 terrorist bombing of an American military housing complex in Saudi Arabia, will be among those honored today at a special ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Heiser's parents, Fran and Gary
Heiser of Palm Coast, will be at the
commemoration at Arlington
National Cemetery coordinated by an
organization called No Greater Love. No
Greater Love's annual commemoration
of the victims of terrorism worldwide
marks the day when 241 Marines were
killed in a terrorist attack at a barracks
in Beirut, Lebanon, 13 years ago.

Heiser and Airman First Class Brian McVeigh, whose mother and stepfather, Sandra and James Wetmore of DeBary, will also attend today's event, were among 19 Air Force personnel killed in an explosion at Khobal Towers near Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

The keynote speaker at today's noontime ceremony will be Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Families of victims will

Michael Heiser

From Our Flagler County Bureau

PALM COAST — Michael Heiser, 35, of Live Oak Lane, a communications engineer for the Air Force, died Tuesday after a bombing at an air base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Heiser, a master sergeant, was born in Sanford and came here in 1978 from Ocean, N.J. He served in the Air Force for 17 years, including several tours of duty during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He had been stationed overseas for many years and helped coordinate a security detail for President Bill Clinton's visit to an air base in Germany.

For his outstanding service in the Air Force, he was awarded the following the Purple Heart, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Air Force Commendation Medal, the Air Force Achievement Medal, the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award, the Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, the Combat Readiness Medal, the Air Force Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Service Medal. the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Southwest Asia Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Air Force Overseas Long Tour Ribbon, the Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, the NCO Professional Military Education Graduation, the Small Arms Expert Marksmanship Ribbon, the Air Force Training Ribbon and the Kuwait Liberation Medal from the Saudi Arabian government and Kuwait.

Survivors include his parents, Gary and Fran Heiser, Palm Coast; and his maternal grandparents, John L. and Marie Sullivan, Palm Coast Memorial donations may be made to the Master Sergeant Michael G. Heiser Scholarship Fund, care of Southtrust Bank of Central Florida, 14 Palm Harbor Village Way, Palm Coast 32137, Alderson's is in charge.

Families gather to remember



At Arlington National Cemetery: Paul Bucha, Carmella LaSpada, Saudi Prince Bandar Bin Sultan and Anthony Lake pay respects.

By Barbara Slavin USA TODAY

ARLINGTON, Va. green plastic signs mark the graves of Michael George Hei-

ser and Brian McVeigh.

Among the 19 Americans who died when a truck bomb exploded outside their barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on June 25, they were buried too recently to have received the simple white tombstones that dot Arlington National Ceme-

A few yards away, their families gathered at a commemoration Wednesday with relatives of other Americans slain by terrorists, from the World Trade Center in New York to Beirut.

"Terrorism is not an anony-mous act that happens to other said Wendy Giebler-Sefcik, whose husband, William Giebler, died when Pan Am Flight 103 was exploded over Scotland in 1988. "It is our duty to put a face on the ravages of terrorism."

Those who died in Dhahran were the focus of the ceremony. Apart from Heiser and McVeigh, they are buried elsewhere across the nation.

It was the 13th such commemoration by No Greater Love, an organization that as-sists the families of Americans who died in service to their country or in terrorist acts.

"I am here to share a little bit with the families who lost loved

Terrorism toll

So far this year 26 Americans have been killed in ter-rorist incidents worldwide. The toll since 1982:

Year	Terrorist Incidents	cans killed
1982	487	8
1983	497	271
1984	565	14
1985	635	39
1986	812	10
1987	665	7
1988	605	193
1989	375	15
1990	437	9
1991	565	7
1992	363	2
1993	431	7
1994	322	4
1995	440	12

Source U.S. State Department, Office of

ones in my country," Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar Bin Sultan told those assembled on an overcast, windswept day. "The American people should be proud" of those who died. "They were doing the Lord's job in a faraway place.'

The Pentagon has admitted that it failed to protect the base adequately. The Saudis had been reluctant to move an antiterrorist fence farther away from the barracks.

The prince promised "swift and harsh justice" for the per-

petrators, who have yet to found. Four Saudis who c fessed to the November bor ing of a U.S.-run military tra ing center in Riyadh, the Sa capital, were beheaded May That attack killed five Am

Grief, not punishment, more on the minds of mourners who listened und gray skies, twice interrupted hard showers that stopped suddenly as they began.

Bridget Brooks of Nicevi Fla., lost her son, Joseph R kus, 22, in Dhahran. "To were to come home in days," she said, a tear roll down her cheek.

"Some of these people still getting their feet on ground," said Washington Donna Bainbridge, who lost husband, Harry, on Pan . 103. She added: "I don't th you can avoid terrorism, who er you are military or civili My husband was an attorn coming home from a busin trip. He was killed in an un clared war."

Bainbridge, whose son to born after his father died, next to Thomasina Baynard Richmond, Va. Her son wa month old when his fatt James, was killed along v 240 other Marines in the box ing of their Beirut barracki 1983. "We come here ev year for my son," Baynard s "This is a way to honor his ther.'

THE OBJECT OF WAR IS NOT TO DIE FOR YOUR COUNTRY, BUT TO MAKE THE OTHER BASTARD DIE FOR HIS.



GENERAL GEORGE'S, PATTON, JR.



This letter was hand delivered to Prince Bandar after he met with us and promised to answer all our questions. This was in 1996. We're still waiting. What a surprise!

GARY AND FRANCES HEISER PARENTS OF MASTER SERGEANT MICHAEL G. HEISER 39 OLD KINGS ROAD NORTH PALM COAST, FLORIDA 32137

October 23, 1996

904-445-2254

To: His Royal Highness Prince Bandar Bin Sultan

WHY ARE WE HERE TODAY?

WHY DID THEY DIE?

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

I am compelled to address your courage in attending this No Greater Love Remembrance Ceremony. In America we deal with daily problems of varying sorts but Husseinism is not tolerated.

No one knows the pain of losing a child until you walk in our shoes. My husband and I lost our ONLY child on June 25, 1996 to a violent act of terrorism in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Michael was a very special individual in as much as he was dedicated to his family and his country. His country and your country let us down!.

Mike was an honor student who lived by the Code of Honor. He was a highly decorated Airman, in the top 5% of all Air Force. He loved his work but at age 35 he also looked forward to carrying out the plans of adulthood, marriage and children. Now he will never experience fatherhood and we will never know the joys of having grandchildren. I am an only child myself and if you can imagine how it feels to be an only child who has lost her only child, you may realize why I am writing to you. THINK ABOUT IT. This is not a pretty picture, it is very sad and very empty and was through senseless neglect that it happened. A parent sacrifices all his life to give a better life to his children not to have it taken away violently and for no reason. Mike was our life!

I don't blame you individually but I do blame the combined government officials of both countries WHO DID NOT heed the warnings, WHO DID NOT install the mylar on the exterior windows, WHO DID NOT insure a central alarm system was in place, WHO DID NOT conduct emergency drills, in total, WHO DID NOT CARE enough to insure the safety of those who were sent to a foreign land to protect the freedom of others. The most commonly asked question is WHY? WHY are we there? WHY don't the people of Saudi Arabia want our help? WHY are we trying to accomplish peace in a nation that lives with war? WHY did they let it happen?

My son had plans and dreams that will never be realized. We were a very close family who lived for each other and we were as proud of Mike's accomplishments as he was of ours. My husband and I had plans and dreams too which have been shattered. We are not alone, there are other victims and families here today, suffering as we are. Each suffers a loss, some a husband, father or child. Each has his own sad story.

Does anyone wonder what went on in the minds of those who were murdered? What was their last thought? Did they know their mission was ended? Did they die quickly or did they suffer? Did they cry out for help? Did they know there was trouble lurking nearby just waiting for them to relax and settle in for the night, just to kill them? What is it like to be dead? To never see or talk to or touch those you love? To never say good bye?

They were on a mission. Now I am going to carry on my own mission. My mission is to have this terrible incident end with a meaning, so the world does not forget Michael G. Heiser and his fallen comrades. I ask you and beg of you to insure the safety of our troops or send them home! Before another drop of blood is shed..

Thank you for listening and for looking into this terrible situation. I would like your response.

Sincerely,

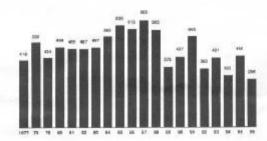
Fran and Gary Heiser

In Remembrance

Casualties of International Terrorist Incidents, 1996

REGION	DEAD	WOUNDED
Africa	36	44
Asin	98	1409
Eurasia	14	6
Europe	30	473
Latin America	7	9
Middle East	126	711

International Terrorist Incidents Over Time, 1977-96



The fight against terrorism has been an ongoing battle for states all over the world. In 1996, a total of six international counterterrorist conferences were conducted. More and more states are showing their willingness to cooperate with one another and take a stand against violent acts of terrorism.

Despite the complexity and variety of terrorism, one thing remains uniform. No individual, group, or nation is immune to these horrific occurrences. The ramifications of terrorism spread beyond the level of the immediate victims and are felt by a worldwide audience.

Through international pressure and deterrence, the number of state-sponsored terrorist acts has diminished in the past year. In addition, the number of international terrorist incidents has fallen to 296, a twenty-five year low. In spite of these statistics, international terrorism, as well as domestic terrorism, continue to pose serious threats to global peace and security. Nonetheless, whether terrorism occurs within or outside of state borders, the fight shall continue until peace prevails. Until then, we can only remember and pray for those who have fallen victim to acts of terrorism.

Source: United States Department of State Office of Countertess orien

"Fighting terrorism is like being a goalheeper. You can make a hundred brilliont saves but the only shot that people remember is the one that gets past you."

Paul Wilkinson, British scholar

Tragedy touches home

Master Sgt. Michael Heiser, whose parents, Gary and Fran Heiser, live in Palm Coast, died in Tuesday's bombing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Heiser, a communications



engineer, had been posted at Dhahran only since June 3, although he had been on several tours of duty in Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Palm Coast couple lose son to act of brutality

By ANDREW MIKULA From Our Flagler County Bureau

PALM COAST — The son of a well-known local couple, Gary and Fran Heiser, has been identified as one of the American servicemen killed in the bombing at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, Tuesday.

Master Sgt. Michael G. Heiser, 35, was one of at least 19 people killed at the Khobar Towers housing compound at King Abdul Aziz Air Base. He had been posted at Dhahran only since June 3, but was familiar with Saudi Arabia.

His uncle, Tom Heiser of Palm Coast, said Heiser had been on several tours of duty in Saudi Arabia during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. As a communications engineer, he flew aboard F-15 and F-16 fighter-bombers. He went to Dhahran from Patrick Air Force Base near Cocoa Beach, where he served with the 71st Rescue Squadron of the 1st Rescue Group, according to a base spokesman.

Tom Heiser was shaken by the news of his nephew's death.

"He and I were just about like brothers," Heiser said. "I was in the Army for 21 years, so there was always this battling and bantering back and forth about the Air Force and Army, which branch of the service was better — the family type of thing."

Heiser's parents were on an Alaskan cruise when they got word of their son's death. They are expected to return to Palm Coast today, Heiser said.

Mike was their only child.

His grandparents, Maria and John Sullivan, and great-aunt Jean Munoz also live in Palm Coast.

The Heiser brothers own Coldwell Banker Heiser Realty Inc. in Palm Coast and are ac-

WHO WISHES US ILL?

The CIA is casting a wide net for those who hate America, including groups from the Middle East

By KEVIN FEDARKO

N THE MIND OF EVERY OFFICIAL OR politician called upon to conduct a TWA-related press conference last week loomed the memory of the Oklahoma City bombing. The outcry against Muslims and Arabs initially kindled by that atrocity was swiftly silenced by the disclosure that the real culprits were Americans conducting a holy war of their own. And so when it came to pointing a finger at possible suspects last week, U.S. authorities recommended, in Bill Clinton's words. "keeping an open mind." Outside the public spotlight, however, it was a different story. The CIA immediately fired off secret cables to its foreign stations, ordering intelligence officers to comb their sources for leads. Agents quietly began checking the Athens airport, where the TWA flight originated, for security breaches. The names of all the passengers who flew the Athens-to-New York City leg, as well as those who boarded the plane in New York, were traced through computerized data banks for links with terrorist groups. The Israeli, Jordanian and Egyptian intelligence services were asked to run checks as well. The CIA was casting its net as widely as possible, considering suspects ranging from Colombian drug traffickers to disgruntled airline employees

The focus, however, quickly turned to the Middle East. In recent years, even the most jaded U.S. diplomats have been stunned by the intensity of anti-American resentment in this part of the world-much of it stemming from uncritical U.S. support of Israel. Over the past 15 years, the U.S. has closed embassies in Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Libya. Many remaining diplomatic outposts have turned into virtual fortresses. Part of the U.S. chancellery in Cairo is built to withstand a nuclear blast. In Beirut the ambassador travels in a military convoy protected by a machinegun turret. "It has been a long time," says a U.S. official, "since I have seen such strong anti-American feelings in the Mid-

Tracing this sentiment led investigators to a variety of suspects, any of whom may-or may not-be responsible. Among the candidates are Ramzi Yousef and his supporters. Yousef belongs to a new breed of Islamic zealot trained in the Afghan war. He was captured in Pakistan and extradited to the U.S. last year. Accused of masterminding a fiendishly elaborate plot to blow up U.S. passenger planes over the Pacific, Yousef is now entering his eighth week of trial in New York City. Counterterrorism experts fear remnants of his group may still be active.

Yousef and his allies have plenty of company on the wide-ranging suspect list. Hizballah, the radical Lebanese organiza-

Another possibility is an extremist Saudi organization calling itself the Islamic Movement for Change. The group has already claimed responsibility for two attacks against Americans in Saudi Arabia. The first, in Riyadh in 1995, killed five Americans. The second, in Dhahran last month, took the lives of 19 U.S. servicemen. Clinton promised that those responsible would be punished. Last week a person claiming to represent the group faxed a note to a Saudi newspaper just hours before the TWA explosion promising to "respond in an extreme way" to the "threats made by the stupid American President." Officials, however, were downplaying the letter's significance

Lurking behind all these groups, say U.S. investigators, may be the shadowy specter of foreign governments. Iran, known to sponsor a variety of radical Is-



tion, restricts its military operations to Israeli territory. But some U.S. officials suspect that Hizballah may now be seeking revenge against the U.S. for supporting Israel, even after its army shelled a United Nations compound in the Lebanese village of Qana last April, killing more than 100 civilians. Threats have also come from Egypt's Islamic Group, which has pledged to strike at the U.S. for imprisoning its spiritual leader, Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman. Rahman, a blind Egyptian cleric, was convicted last year of plotting to blow up the U.N. and several other New York landmarks. He is serving a life sentence in Springfield, Missouri. Speculation also surrounds the hard-line Palestinian group Harnas, which has vowed to attack the U.S. for agreeing to extradite Musa Abu Marzouk, a top Hamas official, to Israel.

lamic groups, is viewed as the country most determined to oppose the U.S. presence in the Middle East.

In the end, however, those responsible will probably remain undetected for some time. "This is going to take a long, difficult investigation," says a U.S. official. How long? In the case of Pan Am Flight 103, it took nine days just to determine that the disaster was caused by a bomb. Identifying the alleged eulprits—who were eventually found to have been sponsored by Lábya—took an additional three years of work. And because of protection from Libyan dictator Muanmar Gaddafi, the suspects were never even brought to trial. Unlike the 270 people they are accused of murdering, those men are walking the earth today.

—Reperted by Scott MacLeod/Paris, Lara Maclowe/Beirut and

Scott MacLeod/Paris, Lara Maclowe/Beirut and Douglas Waller/Washington

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Shock of bombing hits close to home

By Tony E. Windsor

When Lt. Col. James Fletcher and his wife, the former Deborah Williams of Seaford, heard the news about the terrorist bombing in Dhahran, Saudia Arabia they were shocked. Fletcher was also reminded of the many times he visited the military complex that was devastated by the bombing.

"I am just shocked and armized that these terrorists were able to get through the Saudi guards at the

complex," he said.

Fletcher and his wife lived in Saudi Arabia for five and a half years where James was stationed at U.S. military headquarters in Riyhad, about 75 miles from Dhahran. He was stationed in Riyhad during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

The Fletchers now live in Virginia where James is working out of the Pentagon with the President's National Telecommunications Security Commission.

His wife, the daughter of The Rev. Leon and Ethel Williams, of Seaford, works with the U.S. Defense Contract Auditing Agency

See related article page 31

at Fort Belvior, Va.

Because of his familiarity with Saudi Arabia and the Dhahran military complex itself, James Fletcher is serving as a technical advisor to the U.S. military teams that are working with the Saudis to investicate the hombing.

gaie the bombing.
"I often traveled to the Dhahran military complex while I was stationed in Riyhad. It is very hard to get onto the grounds of that compound unless you actually live there, Even then you have to have proper I.D. and papers proving it," he said.

Fletcher said when approaching the compound there is a guard post occupied by Saudi guards with weapons "loaded and cocked." Once moving beyond the Saudi side of the complex there is another post with U.S. military guards.

"I am very familiar with the layout of the compound. Not only did I visit it at least once a month while stationed in Riyhad, but my wife and I spent a couple of weekends with friends who lived in the complex. The security at this facility is

top notch and I still cannot imagine how these people got past the guards," he said.

Peggy Granger, of Blades, was at the Dover Air Force Base on Thursday morning, as the bodies of the slain military personnel were brought back to the United States from Saudi Arabia.

A close friend of Granger's, MSgt. Michael G. Heiser, of Florida, was among the 19 killed in the Dhahran blast.

This was a senseless act of violence. None of these people should have had to die like this.'

"Mike was a very special person," she said.

"He was quict, but he had the wildest sense of humor. It is just devastating that this has happened. He had just gotten there three weeks are."

Granger has been in close contact with Heiser's girlfriend who also

resides in Florida.

"I spoke with her as soon as the news broke about the bombing," Granger said.

"This was a senseless act of violence and none of these people should have had to die like this."

"People should take advantage of their loved ones and enjoy the time they are able to share. The way this world has become you can never tell when aone monster will take them away from you."

away from you."

Lt. Col. Fletcher said post-war Saudi Arabia has faced threats from small factions that oppose the United State's presence in Saudi Arabia.

Last year terrorists bombed a complex in Riyhad. The government apprehended the terrorists responsible for that attack and they were executed.

Fletcher said he has no doubt that the terrorists involved in the Dhahran Air Force Base bombing face a similar fate.

face a similar fate.

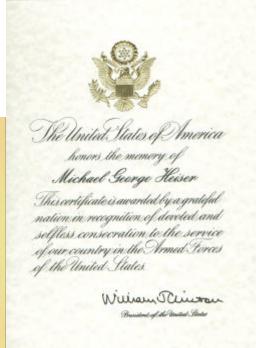
"I have no doubt these terrorists will be apprehended quickly and the Saudi government will just as quickly carry out their executions," he said.

Certificate signed by The Commander and Chief



The President has requested that the enclosed contribute to sent in marrors of your believed, deceased votation. If this certificate contains an error, or arrows in an inacceptable condition, or if you wish additional contributes for other family members, please complete the referencion areas on the other side of this most and natural of the

Office of Presidential Correspondence Attention: Code VA-NCS The White House Washington, D.C. 20500



Legacy of Memories

A legacy of memories
The treasures I hold dear.
The places I revisit,
So that I can hold you near.
I often touch the keepsakes
That you gently left behind.
Some that can be seen by all
And others, only mine.
I honor you each passing day
For the legacy bestowed.
I gently share the memories
So that you never really go.

Sherrie Bradley Neal 1999

TAPS is a wonderful organization that was formed by and for the survivors of victims of military disaster <u>Tragedy Assistance Program</u> is for the Survivors

Page 4

T*A*P*S

Fall 1996

*** Parents' Network

A Mother's Story by Fran Heiser

Dear TAPS,

You can't imagine how much your call meant to us. TAPS can really be a life saver for so many who are finding themselves desperately coping with a horrible loss. Mike was killed in the senseless bombing in Saudi on June 25th, and until we spoke, there was no one who really understood how we felt or where we were coming from. Of the many support groups offered, none was military-oriented and most were for older folks who had lost a spouse through illness (more of a "normal progression of life"). I would like to share with you a bit about our life, our son and our terrible loss.

My husband, Gary, was a Sergeant Major in the United States Army who retired with 22 years of active service. Thus, we understand the military, and the risks and benefits of this whirlwind life we have all chosen to become a part of. Raising our son Mike in Europe gave him a taste for travel and an international flair for excitement. After high school, he enlisted in the Air Force but tried for the USAF Academy. By the time he was accepted, he was the old man of the class, but he completed one year of prep and his plebe year before deciding this just might not be for him. It was a hard decision, but he gave it up and went back into the enlisted ranks and proved he During his 17 year could succeed. career, he had many cold weather Iceland, England, assignments — Germany, Ellsworth, SD -- but his flying took him all around the world so often he didn't know if it was hot or cold or what continent or country he was in most of the time. His favorite tour was flying on the C-20 out of Ramstein, where he was a radio operator. This was a job that kept him on his toes and always ready. There were many general officers and dignitaries from Washington who flew with him, even the President, and during the Gulf War, his crew was assigned to General 'Stormin Norman.'

Last December, he rotated to Patrick AFB in Florida near our home. was the happiest we had seen him in a long time - home for the holidays. He bought a lovely two-story home and Gary and I helped him unpack and get settled before he had to enter a three month training session in New Mexico for Search and Rescue. "So others may live" their squadron motto says. After only a couple more weeks to enjoy his home and be close to Mom and Dad, (you can burn up the highway when it's only 110 miles), the orders came for a 60-day deployment to Saudi Arabia. "No sweat," he said, "been there, done that." Even when he called his dad on Father's Day, he said it was like déja vu. He sounded relaxed and bored. We talked about our cruise the next week to Alaska. We teased him that he had logged in over 10,000 hours of flying time but had never taken a cruise, and we would just have to do something about that when he comes

We are experiencing things that a parent should never have to face.

That was to be our last communication with Mike. Gary and I left for the cruise and while we were only one day out to sea, the breaking news story on CNN hit like a knife in the gut. We knew his whereabouts and we knew he should be flying — and he was, until they brought the plane in early due to engine trouble. Twelve hours later a Ship-to-Shore phone and faxed message confirmed that Michael was the first identified casualty.

We lost a lot in that young man and so did the Air Force. Mike was one of the most decorated enlisted men ever. The reports say he was killed instantly while relaxing in his room. We are experiencing things that a parent should never have to face. There was a formal memorial at Patrick where President Clinton paid his respects, we had another formal memorial at our local VFW and on September 20th (Michael's birthday), he was interred at Arlington Cemetery.

It is too soon to share success or healing stories as we aren't there yet. I



Master Sergeant Michael Heiser, killed June 25th in the bombing in Dhahrai

can comment that one must not just sit and dwell on what can't be changed.

All of you who are reading this and remembering our fallen service members, stop and realize that each one probably had a Mom and Dad out there somewhere who are mourning. Don't let them be forgotten. Mike was still single and very close to us so we were not forgotten, but some parents aren't recognized once a family is extended. This was clear to Gary and me after attending several different support groups lately, most of the focus being on the widow or children. But I wanted to tell them, "A mom is a mom forever!" And even if the mom is mentioned, the poor dad is put on the back burner, like he is expected to heal fast, take care of details, and go back to work. This is the 90's and we work together but we grieve

TAPS is a wonderful organization because most groups don't understand the military family, therefore support is limited in a civilian community.

Mike was our life, our pride and joy, but as we fill the long days doing busy work, we stop to reflect on the good times, the joys and sorrows and memories. We asked our friends not to mourn but to keep Mike's memory alive in their hearts and take time to hug their kids. We probably don't realize the finality of all this at this time, but we do realize that there are a lot of people who really care.

Thank you for being there,

Fran Heiser

DON'T MINIMIZE MY LOSS

I've lost a precious child or grandchild - don't minimize my loss

- DON'T tell me you understand unless you've suffered the same loss and have walked in my shoes.
- DON'T tell me my child/grandchild is in a better place unless you would be willing to choose one of yours to go to "that better place".
- DON'T tell me to be thankful for my good memories. Those memories bring only sadness at this point because there is no future with my lost Loved one to make more "beautiful memories"
- DON'T tell me I have others (if I do) as the loss of any child creates unbearable pain and each child is loved differently. In many instances there is no other child/grandchild.
- 5. DON'T tell me "It's God's Will"...Why would God choose one innocent, precious child over another. Don't expect me to believe the Devil did it. Children are not within the Devil's power. BAD Things happen to GOOD people as part of humanity.
- DON'T tell me my child's/grandchild's death saved him/her from future great suffering. His/her death prevented the excitement of new love, the birth of a child, exciting achievement, or perhaps from becoming a world-renowned person.
- DON'T tell me "Life goes on". I know that and mine goes on, but will never be the same as I am forever changed.
- DON'T tell me my child is with God... that may be, but that child's or Grandchild's place is with me to share my life, make me proud, create new memories.
- DON'T give me advice as to how to go on my loss is too great to carry
 on normally, or tell me you're glad I'm "over" the death. At this time all I
 need is understanding and patience and the chance to talk about my loved
 one.
- 10. DON'T change subjects or be evasive when I talk about my departed child/ Grandchild. He/She may be gone, but still very important to me. Talking and remembering may bring tears, but helps me cope. Hearing and talking about a lost child/grandchild is important to healing.

Homework project for Hospice 1a Life with Mike 1b Life at death of Mike 1c Perception of life without Mike

15 September 1996 by Fran Heiser

Life with Mike was a normal satisfying parent/child relationship. Although we wanted more children and lost our only hope of having a daughter 23 years ago, we managed to be a very small but close family. In the early years we devoted lots of time helping him to develop into the man that he became. We can only remember one bad year, and that was at age 17 when he was learning to drive a car. After that feat was mastered, he went back to being the nice young man we were about to send out into the world with all the confidence that he would succeed. That is just what he did, he joined the Air Force soon after high school graduation, and enjoyed the higher learning of the AF Prep school and one year at the AF Academy. After that there were continuous schools and courses taken and being the good student that he was, he was always recognized for his ability to learn and to help others.

When he became an adult, he stayed closed to his morn and dad. We were his mentors and his best friends, unusual for a boy, but being single and devoted to the service of our country, we all understood each other. Most of his friends parents did not understand the military way of life and they did not have the open communication that we enjoyed. Mike traveled with dignataries all over the world but always keep us close to his heart. He'd send gifts and souveniers often, so much so that our home resembles a museum. He would call from far away places just to say he was ok and to give us the schedule of the next leg of the trip. That way we could watch the TV news and know what his job was about. It was a warm and comforting feeling to always know that we could communicate, and when he could, he would. That was unwritten knowledge. Of course, the morn thing was to write at least weekly, send care packages regularly and e-mail daily, even if we said nothing, it was reassuring we all were ok and we all care.

Michael is gone now and it hasn't been fully accepted, realized but not accepted yet. We lost a lot in losing that young man. Part of our lives were lost in that senseless explosion. The AF also lost a good man, one of the most highly decorated enlisted men in the AF. We hold on the the wonderful memories, look at "things" all around the house, remembrances that each has it's own story, and still wonder the infamous question, WHY? We know there is no answer but that doesn't make it easier to accept. Mike was our only child and with this loss, all our future hopes and dreams were lost too. Imagine the lonliness of being an only child who lost her only child before there could be any extended family or grandchildren. Think about it, this is not a pretty picture. We'll survive because we are tough, maybe the military made us that way, maybe having less than an average family for support made us strong, who knows why, but we'll do it. We'll do it to keep Mike's memory alive through his scholarship fund and through working with others. He lived only 35 years but touched many many people and we will remember and so will they.

The future for Gary and Fran is bright in all ways except for having that hugh void weighing heavy in our hearts. We know we will be kept busy running the business and we also know we will be stepping back and doing less work at the office so that we can devote more time to the cause. The cause being two fold, keeping Mike's memory alive, and working on some sort of congressionial bill to improve if not insure the safety of our men and women in uniform, at least during peace time. If a foreign land wants US assistance they must provide a safe haven for the troops. If they say it can't be done, then let's stay home. There is a lot of help needed right here in the USA.

Mike was born on 20 Sept 1960 and will be buried at Arlington National Cemetary on 20 Sept 1996. There were 2 other services in his honor, the first at Patrick AFB where the President and all high ranking military and civilians paid tribute, then the local service at the VFW that had an overflow crowd, and now the final small military salute to a fallen comrade. His cremains will be laid to rest in an area designated to other victims of terrorist activities and many memorials will be offered annually.

Sometimes I am asked why we feel Mike turned out better than most children we read about today. Old fashioned family values is the standard answer, take time to talk and to listen to your kids, take time to read with them, teach them the practical things in life, more than the 3 R's, and live as a family, share dinner daily, not just when out for fast food. Work together and play together and communicate. Turn off the TV and talk. And take time for love. It's real easy to do and it works. The benefit is the future.

Fran

WAS IT DEATH BY TRAUMA?

ANY DEATH OF A LOVED ONE CAN BE traumatic in its effect on us, but there are circumstances such as suicide, homicide, accident, natural or manmade disaster which make the stress of grief even greater.

A trauma is defined as any incident in which your normal coping abilities do not work. This means that the intensity of all the experiences of grief is going to be greater. This also means that you will more than likely need to learn or re-learn ways of dealing with acute stress.

It is important for you to understand that grief is physical. Your body is trying to adjust to a new reality. If that reality is so different from the way your life used to be, or the manner of death so beyond what you can accept as normal, moral or just, then your own attempt to adapt to the circumstances of the death will be harder.

PHYSICAL EXPERIENCES

In addition to the normal physical stresses in grief, trauma usually results in one or more reactions:

Startling at any noise or disturbance (beyond the normal response we all experience): this usually means that it takes your body several minutes to calm down again and come back to "reality". Your mind also recalls the traumatic event which is causing this response.

Nightmares: this includes night sweats and waking up with an acute sense of anxiety.

Hyperactivity or agitation: You may experience a need to pace or move around a lot and not be able to pinpoint why you are feeling restless.

Flashbacks (seeing the incident over and over): These experiences are often total sensory reactions (you smell, hear, and even taste the incident as well as having a vivid visual recall).

Violent fantasies (something awful is just around the corner): These tend to come with a sense of dread during daily activities which do not appear to promote or relate to the fantasies.

Difficulty making decisions: Concentration may be poor and the little things we do each day become big — such as what to have for lunch, what to wear, etc.

Amnesia for the event (For those who saw a traumatic scene): our minds sometimes close out events which are too horrible to us. This is a way to protect us and a primary survival tool.

NEVER ENDING QUESTIONS

Will justice be done? What is justice under these circumstances? How can we deal with intense

feelings of revenge? What role does forgiveness play? How could the event have been prevented?

You may be experiencing fear or even terror because of all these questions. The world is no longer SAFE. If murder or freak accidents or drunk driving can occur where you live, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN. Death takes place anywhere. Returning to that part of town, or anywhere similar tends to strike terror in the survivor. You may be thinking that this is crazy. You are not crazy. It makes sense that with your reality shattered, your deepest sense of fairness taken away, that you would be afraid.

OUTRAGE AND INJUSTICE

When you were a child you were taught that the world was fair. When something wasn't fair, you probably felt cheated. Do you remember how angry you became when you felt cheated? What did you want to do? More than likely you wanted to strike out at whomever caused the unfairness.

Can you see where your rage may be coming from since the death of your loved one? Our sense of fairness is buried deeply within the child in all of us. The child part of us remains throughout our lifetime. When that fairness is wronged we are outraged with the anger of the cheated child. WE GROW UP EXPECTING FAIRNESS FROM LIFE. We grieve the loss of fairness in our lives.

WHAT TO DO NOW

 Within the first 24-48 hours following a trauma, periods of strenuous physical exercise (doctor permitting) alternated by relaxation can ease some

symptoms.

- Structure your time keep busy
- Don't label yourself crazy
- · Scream if you feel the need
- Make as many daily decisions as possible which will give you a feeling of control. If someone asks you what you want to eat answer them, even if you're not sure and don't even want to eat.
- Keep talking Where were you when you heard about the death? If you were present, what is the worst part that keeps going through your mind? What did you think when it first happened? What did you feel when it first happened? How do you feel now? This is all part of "de-briefing". It does help!

SEEKING HELP

In addition to the five basic coping skills we use in grief (gaining information, expressing feelings, finding hope, developing new patterns of living, spiritual searching and reaching out to others), there is a greater need for outside support following trauma.

It is estimated that nearly 90% of trauma survivors can benefit from outside help. Don't be afraid or ashamed to get it. Your reactions are normal. When you break your arm you go to the doctor. Part of your life now may be broken—seek help. It is a sign of strength that you can reach out to take care of yourself.

THE WHITE HOUSE

July 3, 1996

Mr. and Mrs. Gary G. Heiser Suite 4 39 Old Kings Road, North Palm Coast, Florida 32137

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heiser:

I want you to know that Hillary and I are thinking of you. We were deeply saddened by your son's death, and it meant a lot for me to talk with you about him. I will always be grateful for his help during my trip to Germany earlier this year.

Master Sergeant Heiser was a credit to the Air Force, and all those who served with him will remember with pride his commitment to America's security. We hope that your sorrow will be eased by the love of your family and friends and by the knowledge that your son dedicated his life to the cause of peace.

While I know there are no words that can adequately comfort you now, I pledge that we will not rest in our efforts to bring to justice those who committed this cowardly act.

The hearts of all Americans go out to you at this difficult time, and we want you to know that we are keeping you and your family in our thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

Prin Chinon

france and at - I wongs

The handwritten note says, "I have your picture framed and up-thanks" This refers to the photograph we handed the president at the memorial service at Patrick AFB, the picture of him with Mike in Ramstein late 1995.

A FLAME OF HOPE THROUGH DECADES OF REMEMBRANCE

1750 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20006 WEB SITE: HTTP://WWW.NGL.ORG E-MAIL: CLASPADA@WOW.COM PHONE: 202-783-4665 FAX: 202-783-1168

GENERAL OMAR N. BRADLEY, USA.

December 20, 1996

CARMELLA LASPADA FOUNDER AND CEO CHARLES T. HACEL. CHARRICAN OF THE BOARD TED WILLIAMS

39 Old Kings Road North Palm coast, FL 32137

DR. LOHIS M. SAVARY, PAD. EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT MARK MONROE INCASURER

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Heiser:

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Heiser

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JOHN BANKS. SENDER
JOHN BANKS. SENDE

In remembrance of Michael G. Heiser, this golden medallion was specially designed and cast for families of the victims of the bombings in Saudi Arabia. It is intended as a tangible reminder, at this very special time of year, that your loss and your loved one's sacrifice will never be forgotten.

This remembrance gift was made possible by the support of H.R.H. Ambassador Bandar Bin Sultan and the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

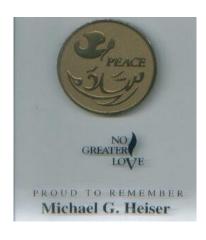
In a few weeks, I will be sending a videotape of the No Greater Love Remembrance Ceremony held in Arlington National Cemetery on October 23,

May God comfort you with His grace during this holiday season.

Warmest regards,

Carnelle La Spoke Carmella LaSpada Founder/CEO

A Peace Offering





DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF UNITED STATES AIR FORCE WASHINGTON DC 20330

HQ USAF/CC 1670 Air Force Pentagon Washington, DC 20330-1670

16 January 1997

Sergeant Major and Mrs. Gary G. Heiser 39 Old Kings Road North Palm Coast, FL 32137

Dear Sergeant Major and Mrs. Heiser

This is in response to your recent letter regarding the terrorist bombing of Khobar Towers which resulted in the loss of your son and 18 other outstanding Air Force members. Before I address your concerns, however, I want to again offer my deepest sympathy to you and others who have experienced the loss of loved ones because of this tragic incident.

As the FBI and Air Force continue to investigate the Khobar Towers bombing, we also continue to conduct prudent, routine reviews of our security strategies. In the aftermath of the November 1995 bombing of the OPM/SANG building in Saudi Arabia, extensive improvements were made in all our Arabian Gulf region facilities. Commanders at all levels put into place a wide variety of new security measures. At Khobar Towers alone, over 130 separate force protection enhancements were undertaken -- barriers were raised and moved out, fences strengthened, entrances restricted, and guard forces increased. The results of the Khobar Towers bombing could have been far worse had we not implemented sensible precautions. We realize, however, that there is much more to do.

I fully understand your call for accountability. You are not alone in your determination... the men and women of the Air Force stand with you, and we share your continuing grief. I have repeatedly emphasized throughout my tenure as Chief of Staff that we must hold accountable those found deficient in conduct or performance, and that our high Air Force standards must be consistently applied and nonselectively enforced. Furthermore, it is equally important to support those individuals who have been absolved of any wrongdoing.

As you know, the Secretary of the Air Force and I appointed Lieutenant General James F. Record to look into all aspects of the bombing, and to consider and make recommendations on issues raised in the Downing report. We have great confidence in General Record, both as a military commander and as a decision authority under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. General Record was directed to submit a written report, and I expect that report to be published soon. Based upon his findings, I can assure you that we will take appropriate and responsive action. Until then, I ask that you withhold any judgment until you have had an opportunity to review the report.

Thank you for taking the time to write. I hope the memory of this tragedy will soon give way to all the good memories you have stored up, and that the goodness Mike lavished on his friends and loved ones will be multiplied in the lives of most he's left behind.

RONALD R. LOGLEMAN General, USAF

Chief of Staff

ir Force chief resigns ||29 ||9

Blame for blast leads o early retirement

WASHINGTON (AP) — Air Force Chief of Staff Ron-Id Fogleman said Monday he would retire a year eary, a move he had warned he would take if U.S. officers vere held accountable for the terrorist blast that ... He will be greatly missed." tilled 19 airmen in Saudi Arabia.

Defense Secretary William Cohen said in an interriew that he had been prepared for Fogleman's resignation and added, "I've never responded to pressure

rom anyone." In the interview with The Associated Press, Cohen said he would announce later this week whether he would punish anyone in connection with the June 25, 1996, Khobar Towers bombing. "No final decision has

been made at all," he said.

Pentagon officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Fogleman took the dramatic step for a variety of reasons but clearly intended to signal that he believed Brig. Gen. Terryl J. Schwalier, commander of the air base where the attack occurred, should not be punished for an event beyond his control.

Cohen, asked about the situation, noted that talk of Fogleman's stand had circulated around the Pentagon for some time. He said he was prepared for Fogleman's move and was ready to name a successor fairly essary.

This didn't put me in a corner," he said 11 don't think any secretary of defense should ever be put in a position where he or she would have to make a deci-I shall have I experimentally requirement of a secretarian

sion based on whether an officer would stay or go."

In a statement, Air Force Secretary Sheila Widnall said she had accepted Fogleman's decision "with regret." She thanked him and his wife "for their many years of faithful and dedicated service.

Fogleman is the first chief of staff to step down voluntarily in

midterm.



There are several senior Air Force officers who ma be in a position to replace him: Gen. Eugene Habige head of the U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha, Ne Gen. Walter Cross, head of the U.S. Transportation Command; Gen. Michael Ryan, head of U.S. Air Force Europe, and Gen. Richard Myers, commander U.S. A Forces Pacific.

The Air Force celebrated its 50th anniversary th year and Fogleman, 56, is the 16th general to serve chief of staff. He has served three of the four years in

normal term.

Fogleman told Widnall he wants to retire as soon possible and not later than Sept. 1, one official said.

During his tenure, the stocky, blunt-spoken gene became known as an outspoken advocate of air pov and the Air Force's ability to conduct warfare arou the globe and even in space, should that become n

Shortly after he succeeded Gen. Merrill McPeak October 1994, Fogleman began to advocate that Force personnel take a new look at matters of char

ter and personal responsibility.

Mike was on many flights with General Fogleman but he must have forgotten there was a personal connection So much for accountability!



Sept 21, 1996

FRAN HEISER Palm Coast

military.

How ironic, in reviewing some of these editorials from the archives, the message is the same and remains a concern today. The more things change the more they stay the same someone once said. Guess we will live out our useful lives repeating the message until someone listens and hears it. With luck and perseverance maybe something will be done for change and to make a difference and to bring a meaning to a disaster. Below March 31, 1997



June 25, 1997

Readers' Views

Dhahran blast, one year later

One year ago the headlines read: "The nation mourns." One year later: "The nation remembers but there is still no accountability!"

Today, June 25, 1997 we recognize the one year anniversary of the senseless terrorist attack on Americans in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

People ask how we feel on this anniversary? The answer is, no differently, we will live this nightmare every single day of our lives. The ceremonial remembrances celebrated around the world are just a wake up call for America!

Gary and I feel extremely fortunate to have so many of Mike's friends continue to keep us "in the loop." When we meet we are able to briefly turn back the clock and live, love and laugh about the good times. It helps to know they are there and care.

This tragedy shocked and rocked the nation. Our hope now is that eventually someone will be held accountable so this history never repeats itself. The problem is, as long as people are allowed to get away with murder, a tragedy of this nature could easily happen again. The government is no different in their thinking than small children. If there is no punishment for wrong doing, there is no reason not to push the limits. All the special immunities hold them above the law.

I know I can't singlehandedly change the way things are done but someday someone just might listen. One can't help but wonder if the thinking would be different if one of those who so blatenly lied about "taking full responsiblity" had lost one of their own children, or their only child.

It's easy to feel for someone you can't reach. If these people actually experienced losing their link to

their future, the urgency in the investigations might be on a different level.

We need to humanize this and put it in a perspective that is better understood. To say, "only 19 died" doesn't cut it. To say you lost your only child and future has a mean-

Not many understand the magnitude of such a tragic loss. Nineteen young men are gone forever and those 19 extend to spouses, parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews and lots of friends. Many lives are affected and partially ruined because of negligence. Think about how many men and women make up our combined military services now and how many lives can be affected by any unfortunate incident. This number can extend into the millions of people. That is why we ask for change in the way the government offers our service people to be the nation's Boy Scouts. When safety can't be provided by a host nation, we don't belong there, not during peace time anyway.

All these 19 young people took an oath, they were willing to die for their country. They didn't. They died because of their country. We know people care about people, don't do it silently, speak out. Protect our troops so they can be there to protect us. That's how it is sup-

posed to work.

FRAN HEISER Palm Coast

We invite you to write to us. Clear, brief letters on a single subject are most likely to be published. Those selected might be edited. Please include your full name for publication, street address and daytime phone number. Letters should be written exclusively for the News-Tribune. Send letters to News-Tribune, 2 McCormick Drive, Bunnell, FL 32110.

*** TAPS Advisor

Siblings

by Ken Doka, Ph.D.

When Jan came in to talk to me, she was apologetic. Her sister had died some six months before. To Jan, this was a devastating loss. But her family, even her late sister's husband. seemed to have little patience with her grief. He seemed upset when she cried, at one point reminding her, "She was my wife, and only your sister." When a child loses a brother or a sister, we find it easy to recognize the loss. But when an adult loses a brother or a sister, we may not have the same degree of empathy. Yet the loss of a sibling can be a devastating blow. Sibling relationships are special and unique. First, while they are kin relationships, they are more equal than the relationships we are likely to have with other members of our family, such as a parent or a child. They are the longest lasting relationships we are likely to have, stretching from childhood through later life. Few other relationships have that duration. Our siblings are part of our own identity. Part of who I am is shaped by the fact that I am Dot and Franky's kid brother. That was part of my identity as a growing child, and it remains so now. Siblings may share a special solidarity. They have experienced many of the same moments, know the same people, recall similar memories. I can

> laugh at any time or place simply by asking her if she had a BM today. It evokes a time when we stayed at an aunt's house

make my sister

during our mother's illness. My aunt had a deep concern with the regularity of our bodily functions that we found both intrusive and embarrassing. Just the question reminds us of a shared experience. Naturally, relationships between siblings differ. A colleague of mine, Helen Rosen, once did a study on sibling loss. She found that sibling relationships varied along two dimensions. Relationships varied in warmth; some ties were especially strong, others nonexistent. The other dimension was distance. Some constantly interacted with their siblings, some not at all. This led to a variety of types of relationships. Some were warm and distant, with strong emotional ties but little day to day contact. Siblings

...we need not apologize for our grief, nor discount it. It is not only a sister or a brother, it is a piece of ourselves, or our past, even our present and future.

who battled all the time might be characterized as hostile, but close: they had regular, if largely unpleasant, contact. Those who never spoke might be seen as both hostile and distant. Rosen found that relationships that were the most intense, either very close or distant, very warm or hostile, generated the most grief. In the distant and hostile relationships, this grief was colored by feelings of guilt. This reminds us that each loss is different and each of us responds to loss in our own way. Even brothers and sisters may respond in distinct ways to the loss of a sibling. For each, the meaning of the loss is very different. But we need not apologize for our grief, nor discount it. It is not only a sister or a brother, it is a piece of ourselves, or our past, even our present and future. We not only can grieve these losses, we have to.***

***Around the country

One Year Later — Dharan Remembered

Just one short year ago, our lives were normal, our men shared a deployment in Saudi Arabia, and although we did not know one another. the families of 19 special airman all looked forward to the day their sons, husbands and fathers would return to US soil. This did not happen, instead they became the target of a violent Terrorist attack. Nineteen families are distraught, their dreams and hopes shattered in an instant. On the first anniversary of this tragedy, we joined together in Orlando, FL where most of us met for the first time. There were about 100 people representing 15 of the 19 families sharing an emotional roller coaster weekend. As strange as it sounds, it was both heartwarming and heartwrenching at the same time. We laughed, we cried, we shared fond memories and we all asked the same question, WHY? We are proud of ourselves for surviving such a traumatic year. Our weekend was one of healing. The family of Chris Adams organized the gathering and TAPS sponsored Dr. Darcie Sims, who is a wonderful person and a well known psychologist. She spent quality time with us and related to feelings we share and she made us know we are not alone, that what we feel is a terrible hurt and we are not crazy; merely "acting normal in an abnormal situation." She told us we hurt because we loved and that pretty much sums up why we do the things we do, because we loved them so much. Everyone reading this article can relate to this, we are all Survivors! We bonded and shared with each other and made tentitive plans to meet again next year. The circumstances won't change but maybe we will. Our lives all changed on June 25, 1996. I guess we are the "S" in TAPS! We are Survivors.

Fran Heiser

There are so many of these upsetting stories. The damage can never be undone but it would be nice to know measures are being taken to do a better job of force protection. We made several proposals for an amendment to be made. All requests were ignored. In a nutshell, it read, IF ANY FOREIGN NATION DOES NOT PROTECT U.S. TROOPS WHEN WE ARE THERE TO PROTECT THEM, THEN WE SHOULD PACK UP AND COME HOME. Using Khobar Towers as a prime example. Our leaders recognized a need to secure the building but when they asked once, they were told the perimeter we wanted to move was on sacred ground. A loose interpretation is the land was more valuable than our airmen lives. I'm sure our leaders didn't really think that but they did not want to rock the boat with the Saudis and allowed them to dictate and never did anything more to pursue the issue, such as installing the approved mylar on the windows, moving the wall away from the building, activating the Big Voice notification system and so much more.

The exception would be during a time of war but we apparently, we send troops around the world for reasons unbeknownst us.

When trying to justify our existence in these foreign lands, it is sad to have to read between the lines.

U.S. officers faulted in Saudi blast

Security lax; threats ignored

By PHILIP SHENON

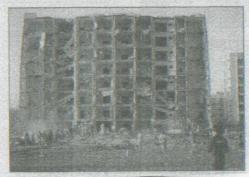
threats to an apartment complex housing Amer-ican troops in Saudi Arabia that was bombed in June, and later exaggerated the size of the ex-plosion in defending their lack of preparation

The report suggested that many of the 19 airmen killed in the bombing on June 25 might have been saved had military commanders insisted on a few basic security precautions, including the installation of Mylar sheets over apartment windows to prevent them from shat-

tered glass was a major factor in the deaths of

By PHILIP SHEADS
New York Times News Sandes
WASHINGTON — American military comnanders ignored repeated warnings of terrorist
hreats to an apartment complex housing Amercan troops in Saudi Arabia that was bombed in
a model later exaggerated the size of the extopic of the exsolution of the standard of the stand vulnerability of the sprawling complex, Khobar Towers, which housed about half of the 5,000 American troops in the country

The report was especially critical of the com-mander of the Air Force's 4404th Air Wing. housed in the Khobar Towers, near the eastern



June 26 damaged one of the Khobar Towers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia: which served as housing for U.S. servicemen At least 19 died and hundreds were injured. Associated Press

WINTENUED FROM PAGE 1A

□ Saudi

ure as the air wing commander and "never raised to his superiors force-protection matters that were beyond, his capability to correct, nor did he

tence with his Saudi counterparts. The report was also tought on polisicy makers in the Pentagon, asserting that they had failed to provide guidance or standards on security precautions for American troops abroad, and had failed to hollow through on repeated calls in earlier years urging stepped up intelligences gathering in the Middle East.

CONTINUED FROM 1A

that the general be referred to the "chain of command for action, as appropriate," which means that he could face disciplinary action.

The AF Force said Monday that it would consider disciplinary action.

The AF Force said Monday that it would consider disciplinary action, including coursemental, against AF Force commanders responsible of the fence with his Saudi counterparts. "The proper was also tought on policy makers in the Pantagom, asserting that they had failed to provide security measures at Rhober Towers, although the AF Force statement did not single out Schwaller by name. "Khober Towers was identified to General Schwaller as one of the three highest priority soft targets in the region" for ferrortists, Downing's report of the ferror traised of dats time, place, and exact method of attack on Rhober Towers, a considerable body of information was available that indicated terrorists had the capability and intention to target U.S. Interest in Saudi Arubia, and that Khobar Towers was potential target."

But Schwaller, the report said, did not spice to make the contral priority during his one-year tengathering in the Mindle East.

The report raised questions about it the credibility of Pestagon officials in their repeated statements about that repeated statements about that size of the bomb Downing rejected eithering that the homb had the power of about 20,000 pounds of TNT — so big. Pentagon officials said last summer, that there had been elimost no way to anticipate it. The report said, the bomb was closer to one-quarter that size, or about 5,000 pounds. Downing noted that an Air Force security policemen who had been within 60 feet of the detoration had survived 'and was on

Congressional Record

TRIBUTE TO M. SGT. MICHAEL G. HEISER

HON, TILLIE K. FOWLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, May 22, 1997

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me today in honoring the memory of M. Sgt. Michael G. Heiser, USAF, who died serving his country on June 25, 1996, in the bombing of the Khobar Towers complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

Master Sergeant Heiser entered the Air Force in 1979 and was a member of the Air Force Academy class of 1984. He traveled extensively in his Air Force career; he accompanied then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl to Berlin in November of 1989 when the Wall came down, and he was on the first United States plane escorted and allowed to land in free Russia. Master Sergeant Heiser was awarded the Academic Achievement Award and the Distinguished Graduate Award in 1993 at Klesling NCO Academy and in 1995 he was selected as the Aircrew Member of the Year in Europe. After he reentered the Air Force enlisted ranks, he became one of the most decorated enlisted men in the Air Force.

Master Sergeant Heiser flew more than 10,000 hours in 9 years while he was based in Europe, and in 1996 was assigned to Patrick Air Force Base in Florida. Shortly afterwards, he was sent to Saudi Arabia with his squadron, whose motto is "So Others May Live."

Master Sergeant Heiser was killed in the line of duty in Dhahran, Saudi Azabia, serving his country with honor and distinction. He was awarded the Purple Heart posthumously on June 30, 1996, which was accepted on behalf of their only child by his loving parents Fran and Gary Heiser, my constituents in Palm Coast, FL.

Next week, we will observe Memorial Day—
the day our Nation sets aside for honoring our
fallen heroes. In anticipation of that hallowed
day, this week Mr. and Mrs. Heiser were presented with a Fallen Friend medallion in Palm
Coast, FL. I ask all of my colleagues in the
Congress to join me this Memorial Day in paying tribute to the ultimate sacrifice made by
Michael and each of his brothers-in-arms who
gave their lives at Dhahran in defense of our
Nation's vital interests.

Printed By: Susan Siegmund 5/15/97 1:51 PM

From: Bill Klein (5/15/97) To: Susan Siegmund

CC: BCC:

Priority: Normal

Page: 1

Date sent: 5/15/97 12:09 PM

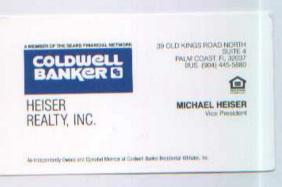
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)	Date:	5/15/97

Just talked to Elaine regarding the H's. Here is the latest:

- I contacted DoD after the Heisers' meeting with TF regarding changing the Survivor's Benefits Manual to include info about groups like No Greater Love and TAPS. The feedback I got was that this was not the right document for this info (the SBM is the document that goes to the Serviceperson regarding the benefits that will accrue to their families in the event of death, not something that goes directly to the next of kin). Rather, they identified the Casualty Information Manual -- which does go to next of kin -- as the more appropriate place for this info. Our request is pending with the office that coordinates publication of this memo. The person who handles the issue has been out on training, so I have not been able to nail this down definitively. It is ir work, however. I do not expect a wholesale change in the language of the manual, but probably more just a listing of additional, non-governmental places from which next of kin may receive support.
- 2) The FY97 Supplemental Appropriations bill that is pending in the House today includes a recission of \$10M from other programs and the application of this funding instead for force protection overseas. It will provide additional money for things like Mylar coatings on windows, surveillance equipment, etc. for U.S. forces at military installations in other countries. This is just a mid-year adjustment to current, FY97 DoD spending in favor of force protection. I expect this issue will receive additional attention when we mark up the FY98 DoD Authorization.
- 3) I have asked Elaine if she would like to write a tribute that TF could submit as an Extension of Remarks in the Congressional Record about Michael. She is going to do that based on info she has. I will make sure the remarks appear in the Record and will seek to get a copy to you prior to your meeting.

FROM: WHAT IT WAS TO WHAT IT SHOULD BE TO: WHAT IT IS







EVERYONES BEST FRIEND Master Sergeant MIKE HEISER 9~20~60 6~25~96 Murdered by Terrorists Khobar Towers Saudi Arabia

The MGH Foundation to Remember all Victims of Terrorism

501(C)(3) Tax Deductible Donations Gratefully Accepted More Information, Call: Fran or Gary Heiser (386) 445-2254 e-mail: heiser@pcfl.net

