

SECTION 8

THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

June 25, 2001

After almost a year of careful planning and coordination, we were guests of the Department of Justice who reserved rooms for us in The

Grand Hyatt Hotel to make us as comfortable as possible on such an uncomfortable occasion. The itinerary looks simple but it was a carefully coordinated plan carried out flawlessly.

The ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery with Secretary Peters as moderator was lovingly planned by Carmella LaSpada and the No Greater Love organization.

Khobar Towers Family Visit Washington, D.C.	
Agenda June 25, 2001	
Monday June 25	
7:00 AM – 8:15 AM	Continental Breakfast at the Grand Hyatt Hotel Franklin Square Room, Independence Level, 5B
8:30 AM	Buses Leave Hotel to Arlington Cemetery
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Ceremony at Arlington Cemetery
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Transport to FBI Headquarters
10:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Briefing and Lunch in the Flag Room FBI Headquarters
2:00 PM	FBI Tour or Return to the Hotel
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Franklin Square Room, Independence Level, 5B Refreshments Available for Families
EVENING	Family Free Time

The briefings at the J Edgar Hoover building were conducted by FBI legal staff and we felt honored that Mr. Louie Freeh was included inasmuch as he had stepped down as Director only a few weeks earlier. He spent some quality time with the families and we showed our appreciation in the form of a few token gifts. He told us the agency is committed to this case and wants to see justice served. He also told us again he is a policeman and not a politician. It's no wonder we get along so well!



***Tremendous
group effort by
the AF, FBI,
NGL & DOJ!***

***Relaxing at the
Hyatt, getting
mentally ready
for the 25th***



**Mike Rolince, FBI Head of
Counter Intelligence
Division**



**Mr. Peters
introduces the
distinguished
guests.
There were many!**



**A solemn
ceremony
conducted with
such feeling**



**Whit Peters observes
while Louie Freeh
assists with wreath**



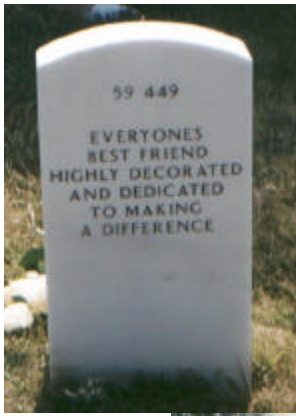


19 beautiful yellow roses were placed by ‘the tree’. The roses are to honor 19 Fallen Heroes. The tree is to remember all victims of all acts of terrorism and is in a specially designated area at Arlington, Section 59.



Carmella thought of everything, even soft music





Family members mingled and met with media after the ceremony. For some family members it was a first time meeting. For others, we wiped our tears and reflected over the past long empty years and we wondered how we made it. We all agreed we are 'doing better'. Apparently we are. We are the survivors!



A while after the ceremony our Air Force bus took us to FBI Headquarters, the J Edgar Hoover Building. We sat through briefings and were served a nice catered luncheon followed by an escorted tour of the building with a final stop, at none other than the gift shop.



Things for Louie to remember us by. At Right-George Beekman and Fran present The Purple Hearts.



Hugs for Fran from Louie. Wow!

He knew I was facing major brain surgery and made the effort to be part of this event. Actually, it was the best medicine anyone could offer! (even if the doctors didn't agree at the time) Sometimes the patient knows best.



Dawn Woody and Bridgette Brooks present Louie with a framed remembrance that was signed by each Khobar Towers surviving family member.



June 25, 2001

In Appreciation To Louis J. Freeh

Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

The Families Of The Nineteen Airmen Killed In The Khobar Towers Bombing Wish To Express Our Sincere Thanks For Your Diligent Effort To Find The Truth And To Bring About Justice In The Khobar Towers Bombing Case Without Regard To The Personal Political Consequences.

Thank You

Edlin AFB, Florida
 MSgt Kendall K. Kitten, Jr., TSgt Daniel B. Calhoun, TSgt Patrick P. Fenning,
 TSgt Thuan Van Nguyen, Sgt Willard D. Campbell, SrA Earl F. Cartwright, Jr.,
 SrA Jeremy A. Taylor, A1C Brent E. Marshall, A1C Brian W. McVulph,
 A1C Peter J. Margera, A1C Joseph E. Rinkan, A1C Joshua E. Woody

Patrick AFB, Florida
 Capt. Christopher J. Adams, Capt. Leland T. Haun,
 MSgt Michael G. Heller, MSgt Kevin J. Johnson,
 A1C Justin R. Wood

Offutt AFB, Nebraska
 SSgt Ronald L. Kling
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio
 A1C Christopher Lester

June 25, 2001

Victims mark Khobar anniversary
Relatives remember love ones lost in 1996 terrorist bombing
By John McCarthy
FLORIDA TODAY

Jenny Haun likes to have a beer now and then. Whenever she does, she also pours one for her husband.

That happens in thousands of homes every evening. Except for one thing: Tim Haun has been dead for five years.

On the evening of June 25, 1996, two thousand U.S. servicemen and women were settling in for the night at King Abdul Aziz Air Base in Saudi Arabia. They were part of the continuing military presence in the Middle East enforcing the "no-fly zone" imposed on Iraq following the Persian Gulf War five years earlier.

The men and women were housed in Khobar Towers, a high-rise dormitory complex. Life in the evening at Khobar Towers was probably little different than at a college dormitory. Some were listening to music or visiting with friends. Others were reading. Some were playing video games. Still others were writing letters to their far-away families.

But if any of them stepped outside Khobar's concrete walls they would have been reminded they were on a military base, not a college campus. A chain-link fence topped with razor wire surrounded the base. Armed guards manned the gate. Sentries were posted on rooftops.

Just before 10 that night, the sentries noticed a tanker truck park just outside the base's perimeter fence. When a guard approached the tanker, two men leapt from the truck and fled in a waiting car.

The sentries suspected the truck might be a bomb. They began to evacuate the buildings. It was too late.

Within minutes, the truck exploded in a fireball that could be seen and heard miles away. The blast sheared the concrete walls off the closest building. Glass shards flew through the rooms with such force that they were embedded in the interior walls of the eight-story building. The blast left a 30-foot deep crater.

Nineteen men were killed in the blast. Hundreds more were wounded. Among the dead were five from Patrick Air Force Base.

But the victims weren't limited to that airbase outside Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Thousands of miles away, family members were wounded forever.

Now, five years later, the name Khobar Towers has faded from most Americans' memories. Last week's indictment of 14 members of the Islamic militant group, Hezbollah, in the bombing might have brought it into the public's consciousness again, but likely only for a short while.

For others, though, not a day goes by without thoughts of Khobar Towers. For the wives and children, mothers and fathers of those killed, that blast in the desert meant a lifetime of remembering someone who is no longer here.

Like Jenny Haun, they are still pouring beer for men who will never drink it.

Nicholas Johnson was just 10 weeks old when his father, Staff Sgt. Kevin Johnson, died at Khobar Towers. Soon, he'll start kindergarten.

"Sometimes I say, 'Kevin, look at how big he is getting,'" said Nicholas' mother, Shyrl Johnson.

Shyrl sometimes talks to a picture of Kevin. When things are particularly tough, she asks him what he would do.

Things have been tough in recent days. First came Father's Day. Then news of the indictment brought a rash of phone calls from reporters around the country. Today, she is in Washington, D.C., for a memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery.

"After a while, you just don't think about it all the time," she said last week after the indictments were announced. "Then something like this brings it out. It's been a rough week."

Shyrl talks to her three sons about their father.

Che, now 18, is old enough to clearly remember his father. Nicholas was too young. Kevin Christopher, "K.C." was just five when his father was

killed. Shyrl reminds him of good times with his father, hoping to keep those memories alive. "I just want to make sure he still remembers him."

Never closure

"I still dream about him," Gary Heiser said.

Master Sgt. Michael Heiser was Gary and Fran Heiser's only child.

Early in 1996, Michael called his parents, who owned a real estate agency, at their Palm Coast home. A friend was getting transferred to Patrick, he said. Could they help him find a house?

It wasn't the first time they had done this for one of Mike's Air Force buddies, so Fran knew the drill. Where does he want to live, mainland or beachside? Any kids; are schools important? How many bedrooms? How much was he looking to spend?

Oh, and what's his name?

Mike Heiser, came the answer.

In February, Mike transferred to Patrick and bought a home in Melbourne. In his nearly 17 years in the Air Force, Mike's job had him constantly traveling around the world. Now he would be just 90 minutes away from his parents.

But not long after settling into his new home, Heiser went on temporary duty to Saudi Arabia. By the end of June, his tour was wrapping up.

"He called on Father's Day," Fran Heiser said. "He said 'I'll be home soon.' " They were looking forward to the opportunity to spend more time together, she said.

It was the last time the Heisers ever talked to their son.

On June 25th, Fran and Gary were on an Alaskan cruise when they saw the news on CNN. Soon afterward, they got the message from shore.

Gary still can't say for sure how long it took them to get home. "A couple of days, I guess. Forever."

Fran Heiser has been the unofficial leader of the victims' families for the past five years. She led the fight to get a memorial built at Patrick. She pressed officials for details of the investigation. She got to be a first-name basis with FBI Director Louis Freeh.

Former Secretary of the Air Force F. Whitten Peters was "Whit" to her. In fact, when he was in Florida for a conference earlier this year, Peters stayed with the Heisers.

It's a rare day when Heiser isn't on the computer, searching the Internet for any news of the bombing. She regularly exchanges e-mails with other victims' families, keeping them informed of the latest developments. Since retiring from the real estate business, she devotes about 25 hours a week to Khobar Tower-related activities. She is pushing for a postage stamp honoring victims of terrorism.

And while making it through each day gets easier with time, the pain never goes away, her husband said. "There never is closure," Gary Heiser said. "I think about Mike every day. You learn to live with it."

Doesn't get easier

The third week in June is always the toughest time of the year for Catherine Adams. Her husband died on June 24, 1976, leaving her a 35-year-old widow with eight children.

And each Fathers Day was just a reminder that another year had passed without her children's father.

And then 20 years and one day after her husband's death, her oldest son, Capt. Christopher Adams was killed at Khobar Towers.

"At least one week each year, that pain comes back full force," she said.

Adams said time has made the pain worse in many ways as fewer and fewer people she met even knew what Khobar Towers was and what happened there. "You say to yourself 'Five years is a long time. You should be feeling better.' I think this is the worst year I've put in."

Last week's indictment of 14 members of a radical Shiite Muslem militant group helped some. Still, Adams wondered why it took nearly five years. "Why we had to wait for years, I'll never know. . . . You say to yourself that these 19 people died in vain for a country that doesn't give damn."

The indictments did little to quell the loneliness Jenny Haun feels every day. "Every day I miss him more," she said.

As a navigator with the 71st Rescue Squadron, Capt. Leland "Tim" Haun spent weeks at a time deployed overseas. And while many of these

missions were for peacekeeping or training, he always acknowledged the fact that he had chose a dangerous way to earn a living.

"Tim told me many times 'Some day, I may go away and not come back,' " Jenny Haun said. "But I didn't believe him."

But then one day he did.

Jenny drove Tim to Patrick the day he headed out to Saudi Arabia.

She remembers looking out the car window watching him walk away. "I had this feeling that I wanted to run after him and hug him again. But I didn't do it.

"I wish I did. I always regret that moment."

She still talks to Tim. Sometimes when she drives past the Rockledge cemetery where he is buried, she'll wave and say "Hi, Honey." Sometimes, she said, he comes to her in dreams.

She knows how that sounds. But she doesn't care. "Sometimes, when I tell people about it, they think I'm crazy. But I'm not."

Jenny has a shrine to Tim in the Cocoa Beach house they once shared. There are pictures of Tim, the flag that was draped over his coffin, candles and his medals and his Air Force wings.

A few days after the bombing, Haun received a letter that Tim had sent before the blast. He wrote about the heat in the desert. "You know, Baby," he wrote. "I want a cold beer."

So occasionally, there is a glass of beer on the shrine.



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Use
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June 26, 2001

Tears flow at Khobar memorial

Families, friends honor victims of 1996 terrorist attack

By Larry Wheeler
FLORIDA TODAY

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY, Va. - Fran and Gary Heiser sat motionless, listening to the solemn recital of names.

Their son, Air Force Master Sgt. Michael Heiser, was one of the 19 American servicemen killed in the 1996 terrorist bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia.

"When you are an only child that loses your only child, you never forget," said Fran Heiser of Palm Coast. Her son was one of five from Patrick Air Force Base to die in the attack. "You feel lost."

A bugler sounded taps, the military hymn so often heard on this historic Virginia hillside with its sweeping view of the Potomac River and other grand monuments to democracy that rise from its banks.

A brilliant morning sun heated the June air as guests and officials gathered in a part of the cemetery where pine and cedar trees offered shade and memories of lost sons, fathers and husbands are thick.

For the Heisers and other families, five years and Monday's ceremony could do little to ease the pain. The long-planned memorial was made all the more poignant by last week's federal grand jury indictment charging 14 members of the Islamic militant group Hezbollah with the bombing.

In a brief graveside speech, former FBI Director Louis Freeh said the indictments were partial fulfillment of a promise federal officials made to the victims' families.

"We made a promise to you in 1997, a promise we won't forget," Freeh said. "We will pursue this matter to whatever end, whatever consequence."

The indictments were welcomed news but victims' families see them as a beginning, not an end.

"We need answers," said Jenny Haun of Cocoa Beach, whose husband, Air Force Capt. Leland "Tim" Haun, was killed in the blast.

Haun credited Freeh for taking a deep professional and personal interest in the Khobar Towers bombing investigation.

Freeh sought to reassure family members about the FBI's investigation.

"I'm not a diplomat. I'm not a politician. I'm a policeman, and that's how I conducted this case," Freeh said.

Some of the 14 indicted individuals are in Saudi custody.

"This is just the beginning," said Gary Heiser, who sat with his wife in front row chairs just feet from the headstone marking their son's grave.

Young Kevin Johnson Jr., 9, whose father, Staff Sgt. Kevin Johnson, was killed in the Khobar blast, bravely helped lead the Pledge of Allegiance during the memorial.

"Five years is a long time," said Shyrl Johnson of Melbourne, who has been raising Kevin Jr. and his two brothers on her own since 1996. "I'm hoping it won't take another five years before they are able to bring them (those responsible for the bombing) to justice."

The nonprofit organization No Greater Love organized Monday's ceremony. The group is dedicated to providing annual programs of remembrance for the families of Americans who died while serving the nation or by acts of terrorism.

In a statement read at the ceremony, Attorney General John Ashcroft pledged to pursue the prosecution of the indicted individuals despite continued Saudi reluctance to deport the alleged conspirators.

Sunday May 20 04:13 AM EDT

WHEN AMERICA CLOSES ITS EYES TO TERROR

On the eve of the fifth anniversary of the Khobar Towers bombing, it's becoming clear why America, after all this time, has yet to hold a *single* individual accountable.

It's plain that the Clinton administration simply didn't *want* to respond.

Khobar Towers was the U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, where 19 American airmen lost their lives in the horrific 1996 terrorist attack.

Meaningful action by the United States - legal steps to prosecute perpetrators, military reprisals or other political measures - would have conflicted with the Clinton game plan for the Mideast.

That approach was appeasement, plain and simple.

President Clinton ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and his foreign-policy team sought to head off measures that might have upset Saudi Arabia, punished Iran for terrorism and brought those responsible to justice - because they might have damaged relations with Riyadh and Tehran.

There's no public, smoking-gun proof of this, of course. Not yet, anyway.

But such suggestions are the gist of Elsa Walsh's intriguing recent piece in The New Yorker about the government investigation of the bombing.

Walsh says that FBI ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) Director Louis Freeh - who was deeply involved in the probe - believed much.

Freeh has drawn up a list of key suspects, and the Bush team is expected to decide soon whether to pursue indictments in the case.

We hope so, because America needs answers to such questions as:

- * Did any of the Clinton folks intentionally impede the FBI probe?
- * If so, does such activity constitute an obstruction of justice?
- * Did anyone suggest to the Saudis - explicitly or otherwise - that America was *not* interested in information Riyadh had obtained that might have implicated high-ranking Iranian officials?
- * And were the Saudis led to believe that U.S. officials would rather play a game of "See No Evil, Hear No Evil" rather than be given information on which they'd be forced to act?

That, Walsh says, was the conclusion Freeh reached.

"Freeh," Walsh wrote, "had become so mistrustful of Clinton that, although he believed that he had developed enough evidence to seek indictments against the masterminds behind the attack . . . he decided to wait for a new administration."

True, the president has the right to conduct foreign policy - and it well may be that Clinton's plans for the Middle East conflicted with Freeh's probe in an entirely legal way.

Still, it would be nice to know for sure. Besides, even if Clinton & Co. had acted legally, the question would remain: Did they act *wisely*?

Appeasement might be lawful, even if it hinders a federal investigation; but is it likely to advance America's interests? Is it likely to curb terrorism?

Indeed, viewed that way, Clinton's Iran policy was a colossal failure.

The attacks by Iran's terrorists, after all, are essentially acts of war. Nor did the Clinton suck-up - if that's what it *was* - seem to have done much to reform the Islamic republic. Instead, it has allowed the Khobar thugs to walk free - free to bomb again, if they so choose.

And it has sent a message to other would-be terrorists that they can attack Americans with impunity.

The result is tragedies like last October's bombing of USS Cole ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) in Yemen, which claimed 17 American lives.

The Clinton folks, of course, would deny any policy of appeasement. They'd insist that they had opposed terrorism and pursued its perpetrators, no holds barred.

There's scant evidence of that, though - notwithstanding Clinton's missile attacks on suspected sites linked to master-terrorist Osama bin Laden ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), following the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. (More likely, those attacks were meant to distract from Monicagate.)

Clintonites also would argue that Iran had provided real hope for change: In 1997, a "moderate," Mohammad Khatami ([news](#) - [web sites](#)), was elected president. Khatami publicly condemned terrorism and signaled a desire for greater contact between Americans and Iranians.

Yet, Khatami had - and still has - little power. Iran continues to back terrorism and groups like the Hezbollah. Since the election, Tehran has cracked down brutally on dissidents.

Still, Clinton moved quickly to send lollipops to the mullahs.

* He encouraged contacts: An American wrestling team visited Iran, and Clinton extended a reciprocal invitation.

* He moved to relax sanctions.

* And, in one bizarre - and audacious - twist, his aides pushed for *American taxpayers* to pick up the tab for court judgments against Tehran for its role in terrorist attacks against Americans.

Freeh, on the other hand, seemed genuinely committed to the Khobar case. He visited the bomb site immediately while it still resembled a war zone. And he spent hours with the victims' families.

The director, who recently announced plans to resign, told Walsh that "the only unfinished piece of business that we have is the one you're writing about."

Now he has handed the ball to President Bush ([news](#) - [web sites](#)). Americans can only pray that the new president will run with it - that he'll OK the indictments and help see that those responsible pay.

If *that* doesn't happen, then Congress must step in and determine what really occurred.

And then there is one overriding question here, too: Why is a terrorist bombing a matter for U.S. policemen - rather than for the State Department, the National Security Council, the Defense Department and the president himself? It's not shoplifting, after all.

With the end of the Cold War, terrorism is, arguably, the most dangerous foreign-policy threat to Americans.

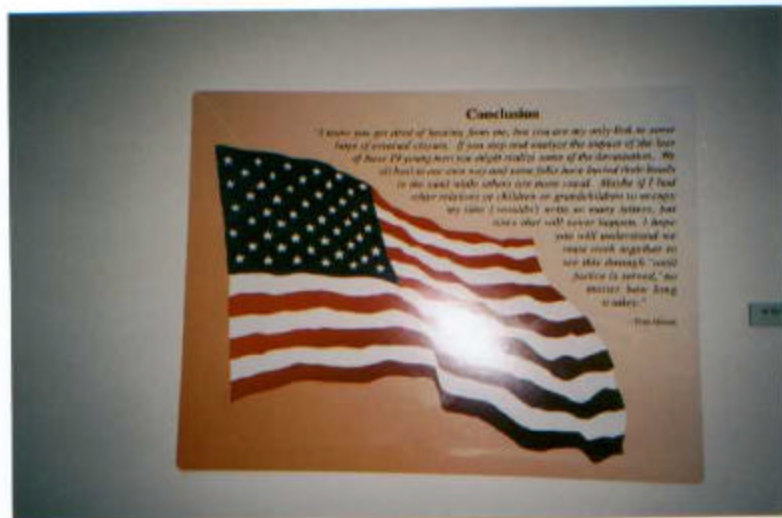
In deciding how to proceed on Khobar, Bush - and America - should start thinking *now* about how to handle the *next* bombing.

Which is sure to come soon enough.

**NOTE: THE ABOVE NEWS ARTICLE
WAS WRITTEN PRIOR TO THE
SEPTEMBER ATTACK ON AMERICA,
THE BOMBING OF THE WORLD
TRADE CENTER. FOR YEARS WE
CONSIDERED KHOBAR TOWERS ONE
OF THE EARLY WARNINGS! WHY
DON'T THEY LISTEN? WHAT WILL BE
NEXT?**

The 'Conclusion' was a shock to read as it is a quote from an early letter written to Director Freeh from Fran. He took it to heart, and the agency uses it for training purposes. This was pointed out to us while on tour.

**IN THE HALLOWED HALLS OF THE J. EDGAR HOOVER
FBI BUILDING, WASHINGTON, DC COUNTER TERROR SECTION**



Front Panel

(Engraved)

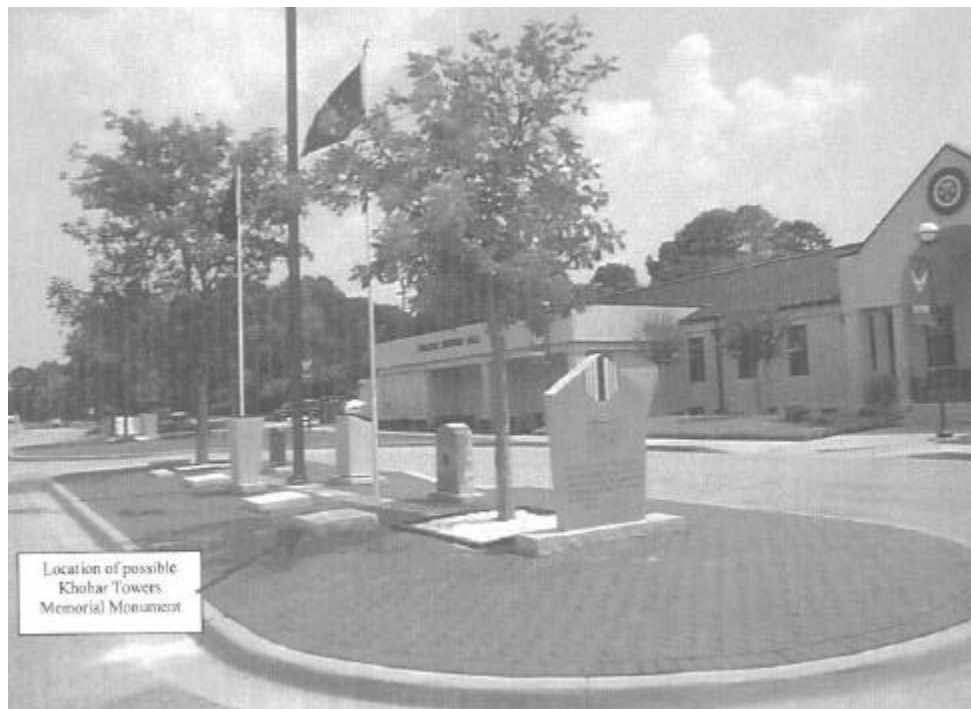


Back Panel

(Engraved)



Heritage Hall Enlisted Museum dedicated an outside area of commemorative monuments on 2/15/03. Photos were not available at the time of this printing.



Conclusion

"I know you get tired of hearing from me, but you are my only link to some hope of eventual closure. If you stop and analyze the impact of the loss of these 19 young men you might realize some of the devastation. We all heal in our own way and some folks have buried their heads in the sand while others are more vocal. Maybe if I had other relatives or children or grandchildren to occupy my time I wouldn't write so many letters, but since that will never happen, I hope you will understand we must work together to see this through 'until justice is served,' no matter how long it takes."

- Frank Whitson

06 25 '01

STAY FOCUSED!