



Catalina Mountains Patriot

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Interim Editor
Marlon Ruiz

PREAMBLE

“To encourage and assist in the holding of commemorations and the establishment of memorials of the World Wars;”



Commander:

Jean Nelson, HPM



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COL Pedro Najera



Chaplain:

Jean Nelson, HPM



Judge Advocate:

COL Pedro Najera

Commander's Comments:

This month I will pay tribute to a legendary ace and test pilot who was a giant in aviation. Charles E. Yeager, Brig. Gen. USAF (Ret) was a combat veteran in two wars and an aviation trailblazer. Chuck Yeager was not only the first to break the sound barrier but he was a World War II fighter ace. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941 right out of high school. He proved to be such a superb pilot in training that he was assigned to the Eighth Air Force for combat operations. In 1945 Chuck returned stateside with the rank of captain. One little known fact about Chuck: as one of the military's premier pilots, he was chosen to fly a Russian MiG that the U.S. had gotten from a North Korean defector. As far as is known, he is the only American to have flown a MiG. He was featured prominently in "The Right Stuff" by Thomas Wolfe and appeared in the movie adaptation. Yeager continued his military career with many prestigious awards and important commands. Gen Yeager retired on March 1, 1975, at Norton AFB, California. He died on December 7, 2020 in Los Angeles, California. What a legacy he left.

Chuck Yeager's Accomplishments:

- *Flew 64 missions over Europe during World WarII, downing 13 German aircraft (five in one day)
 - *Evaded the Germans with the help of the French Resistance after he was shot down*
 - *Recruited as a test pilot for the new Air Force
 - *Became the first person to break the sound barrier, flying the experimental X-1 at 45,000 feet (Mach 1)
 - *In 1953, set a world speed record of 1,650 mph in the X-1A (Mach 2)
 - *Served as Commandant of the Aerospace Research Pilot School
 - *Flew a total of 127 Viet Nam combat missions
 - *Recieved the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, The Distinguished Flying Cross, the Legion of Merit, the Purple Heart, the Congressional Silver Medal, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom
 - *In 1997, on the 50th anniversary of his most famous flight, he again broke the sound barrier in an F-15
 - *In 2012, on the 65th anniversary he flew again at the age of 89
- It is my hope many of you can come to the May 8 meeting. It will be both in person and Zoom.

Commander Jean



Chaplain's Corner

Psalm 59:16-17

"But I will sing of your might; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.

For you have been a fortress for me and a refuge in the day of my distress.

O my strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love."

Knowing God has been with us throughout this time of trial is a reason to sing for joy.

We are never left to fend for ourselves no matter how difficult our circumstances.

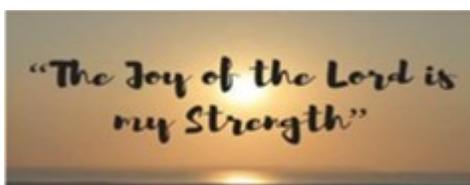
As things ease up and we are able to see friends and family again, we should show gratitude to our God and sing praises to him morning and night. How wonderful is his faithfulness!

Psalm 100:1-2

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing."

Chaplain Jean



OBSERVING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



[PLACE THE MOUSE POINTER ON THE BANNER AND LEFT CLICK FOR MORE CONTENT](#)

Why Discussing Children's Mental Health Matters

Statistics show that mental health issues in young children are more common than you may think. The top five most common childhood disorders are now mental health conditions rather than physical disorders.[1] In fact, as many as 10% of all children and young adults have mental health conditions that affect their day-to-day routines.[2]

What does this mean? A few factors could be coming into play here, like more awareness of mental illness and more people seeking diagnosis and treatment. But the bottom line is you likely know a child who struggles with their mental health, and how you react can help them.

In one survey, children said their family and friends were their most important emotional supports.[3] That means you can offer emotional support and guidance that your child trusts. And because experts predict that children are likely to have both immediate and long-term emotional trauma caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, now is a crucial time to focus on mental health for your family.[4]

Commander Jean



A Little About the Gray Rat

Written by
Companion Andre LeCault, Holland Chapter

~
Submitted by
Companion Joe Harris, Catalina Mountains Chapter

As we walked around the village and hamlets, you could see a few pigs, chickens, ducks, and a few dogs roaming freely looking for scraps of food on the ground. Most people wore white cotton shirts and black pajama pants. Some wore the black pajama shirts as well. Since we were always on our guard for the Viet Cong who wore mostly black pajamas, it was



weird to feel comfortable among these “friendlies.”

Near many of the homes or shacks fish and rat carcasses were strung up for drying and salting on rocks or large mats of bamboo. There were many huge gray rats! They were apparently freshly caught and killed.

Since there was no electricity or refrigeration, drying meats was a form of preserving the meats for short term storage (or long term however you define that term). Large earth pots were used for storage for the salted dried fish and rats. These were kept in the shade, under the houses. Each house had one or two pots.

The huge gray rats were a staple for those Mekong Delta villages and hamlets. I don't know about the rest of Vietnam. The gray rats lived by the thousands out in the rice paddies, so the men trapped them. They were a common meat source. Rats were also trading commodities with other villages and hamlets as well at the Cambodian Border.

The thought of eating rats was initially disgusting but after a few weeks and eating out often with some Vietnamese, it became the absolute finest in our cuisine. Rats and lima beans, green beans, and or rice. The rats were like pulled pork or pulled rats, braised in oil, and some kind of sauce was added for flavor. I remember taking my first bite with caution. But it was actually good. By the end of a meal, there wasn't a bit of rat left on anyone's plate.

Rats were also a problem when you went to bed! Although we used mosquito nets, the rats were night scroungers and they got pretty brave. If one ran across your chest, the idea was not to jerk. They could leave you with nasty bites. They gnawed their way through the mosquito nets. This is one reason I never slept more than 1 hour at any one time. Then it was my time for the night watch, dog barking which suggested somebody was moving, and countless other distractions for fear of being attacked.

Periodically we got a supply of mosquito spray. Although we sprayed ourselves, it did not have much of an effect. When going to bed, we would let the mosquito net down and spray the inside. That sometimes killed everything you had trapped inside. The idea, we learned was to get in and out without letting any blood-suckers in with you.

If you were lucky to have no bugs in the net with you, it also meant that there was also no air moving through the fine netting to relieve the muggy heat. Light breezes simply do not move thru fine netting. So you just have to lay there and suffer the fevered air. Immediately after dark the air became alive with mosquitos, moths, and many other nasty insects. That is one reason we went to bed as early as we could.

— The End —

Andre LeCault was born in Montreal, Canada and grew up speaking French. In his teens, the family moved to California where he graduated from high school in 1963. Andre enlisted in the US Army after two years of community college. Following Basic and Advanced Training, he attended OCS. Commissioned into the Field Artillery, Lieutenant LeCault attended both Ranger and the Jungle Training Schools before deploying to the Republic of South Vietnam in 1967. Pictured below are Andre and Dorene LeCault. Gail Harris is seated next to Andre's right. The LeCaults parented two children, a girl and boy, and have four grands.



They reside in Rancho Bernardo, California.

The Battle of Piacho Peak

By Companion Joe Harris

The American Civil War was in its second year when mounted patrols from opposing forces collided along the Overland Stagecoach route near Piacho Peak in southern Arizona. Arizona! How on earth did an eastern war spill over into the southwest?

The Civil War began at isolated Fort Sumpter, South Carolina sitting on an island in the middle of Charleston harbor. Confederate (rebel) artillery bombed it into submission on April 13, 1861 igniting the Civil War. A year later on April 15th, Union (California volunteers) and rebel patrols skirmished for approximately an hour in the Sonoran Desert near Piacho Peak. There being no clear winner, the rebels broke contact and raced back to Tucson.

The rebels were present because the Arizona Territory was rich in precious metals and other natural resources that could help finance the rebel cause. It was also in the path of a southern stagecoach route — Butterfield Overland Trail — that meandered through the New Mexico Territory connecting Texas with the Pacific Coast. Southern sympathizers raised a volunteer force of some 120 rebel rangers and based it at Tucson.



California was admitted into the Union in 1850. As a deterrent to further rebel expansion in the west, a force of some 2,350 volunteers and regulars headed east from California to reclaim the Arizona Territory. LT James Barrett made contact with a rebel encampment near Piacho Peak. His decision to attack was a fatal one. In the wake of the battle, Barrett and 5 other California cavalrymen were killed in the fray. Rebel losses were 5 killed.

History records that the Battle of Piacho Peak was the westernmost engagement in the American Civil War. March 28, 2021



[MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH - May 2021 | National Today](#)

May 2021

- [Arthritis Awareness Month](#)
- [Better Hearing and Speech Month](#)
- [Global Employee Health and Fitness Month](#)
- [Hepatitis Awareness Month](#) [Lupus Awareness Month](#)
- [Mental Health Month](#)
- [National Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month](#)
- [National Celiac Disease Awareness Month](#)
- [National High Blood Pressure Education Month](#)
- [National Nurses Month](#)
- [National Osteoporosis Month](#)
- [National Physical Fitness and Sports Month](#)
- [National Stroke Awareness Month](#)



[2021 Health Observances Calendar \(healthgrades.com\)](#)

Ted's Page

Heroes of our Time



It cannot be 55 years since my 3/18th Battalion Metro Section maneuvered our trucks into what we called "Happy Valley." On May 20, 1966, 1st Cavalry Division air assaulted into that area. Officially, it was really Operation Crazy Horse. The participants now are senior citizens, some might even be called super senior citizens. I have described the area in the June 2013 *Ted's Page*. It was all but what it was being called. An infantryman, adept at irony, probably came up with the Happy Valley name. Also called Song Con Valley, there was nothing happy about that valley.

Just minutes before I received the order to move out from our An Khe base camp I was told a 1st Cavalry patrol had engaged an unfriendly patrol, enemy probes at the head of a large force. This was the way battles began. A few on one side met another few on the other side, both called for reinforcements, a full-scale battle was on. Artillery needed our support. We loaded our trucks and headed out for the battle site.

At Happy Valley, 1st Cav was again clearing the North Vietnam Army from the mountain fastnesses of the Central Highlands which we believed had finally been taken care of with Operation White Wing/Masher that we had participated in and had ended back in March. But the NVA came back into the area.

Happy Valley was where a good friend, a lieutenant, was shot down, crash landed *for the 7th time*. We had met our first day in country. When not on operations, the two of us were tentmates at base camp.

In the photo above, taken about three months earlier in another operation, many miles from home camp, he and I, he is the one without a shirt, were standing on rubble in front of a Buddhist temple, talking about our experiences so far into this new war. The rubble underfoot came from another building; the temple itself not much damaged. After a conversation lull, in a purely matter-of-fact way, as if he were making calculations of a complex equation and merely noting the result, he said what no one could ever forget: "I'm going to be shot."



I believe he was not uncomfortable saying it to me because, having become a warrant officer after an atypical 18 years' service, I wouldn't have a smart-alecky response. We were young, even I at 37, and confident, indestructible, patriotic, reasonably fearless. I picked up a piece of rubble, pretending to examine it. I knew his calculation was right, yet, I said, "No, you're not." To which he said: "You don't know what it's like." He was a forward observer who did his observing and reporting of firing impacts from within an L-19 or H-13 that some would jokingly say could be brought down with a marble-loaded slingshot.

Our first stop during Crazy Horse was near a gnarled tree that stood alone in a meadow-like area. Huge, ugly, knobby-skinned lizards climbed on the tree. A strange thought: excepting for the solitary tree, the scenery was like that in the movie *Oklahoma* (that movie was photographed in the meadowland south of Tucson).



It was hot and dry. I had been guarding our water supply, kept in a water tank on wheels, critically needed for producing inflation gas as well as, incidentally, to fill our canteens. We needed water to produce balloon inflation gas. If we ran out of water, we couldn't provide trajectory correction data for the big guns.

But we couldn't turn away the infantrymen who asked if they could fill their canteens. As he filled his canteen, one of the infantrymen took me aside and asked if he could be put in my section. It was good to have a volunteer, especially one who specifically wanted to be in your section, but it would have to be done through battalion headquarters; more importantly in our work, to be trained in the Ft. Sill, Oklahoma Artillery and Missile School was a critical prerequisite. I reluctantly turned him down. He walked away.

He would soon see more water. Rain began pouring down as we moved farther up the valley into rising terrain, beyond that picturesque, flat, easy-going meadowland landscape. Vegetation and uneven, muddy ground made further movement quite impossible. Rain was good in that we could use it to wash sweat-stained clothing, but not good in this case. By this time, 8 months into full-scale war, we had dug many foxholes at many locations, of those, these were the only ones that became completely water-filled. Then, on June 10, the 21 days of Operation Crazy Horse ended.

Now, at my computer here in comfortable Tucson, I learn that in Happy Valley 83 Americans were killed, and among our allies: 14 South Koreans, 8 South Vietnamese and an unknown number of Montagnards, mountainous natives (Wikipedia).

My friend's 7th and final crash was bad enough to send him home. After being in a wheelchair for 38 years, doctors enabled him to begin walking again; and I hope that infantryman who filled his canteen made it through Crazy Horse and later got into meteorology.

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

YOU CAN EITHER CALL IN BY PHONE OR LOGIN USING YOUR COMPUTER BY JUST PLACING YOUR COMPUTER MOUSE POINTER OVER THE BLUE LINK PROVIDED BELOW AND “LEFT CLICK” ONCE

Jean Nelson is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: MOWW Catalina Mtns Chap May 2021

Time: May 8, 2021 01:00 PM Arizona

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84082371333?pwd=UU5RTjh2RXIUQjIkaVVPZGVaQ1NEUT09>

Meeting ID: 840 8237 1333

Passcode: 057348

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Meeting ID: 840 8237 1333

Passcode: 057348

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84082371333?pwd=UU5RTjh2RXIUQjIkaVVPZGVaQ1NEUT09>

NOTE: The Catalina Mountains Chapter will also be hosting their first MOWW Chapter “Hybrid” Meeting where the Chapter will host both a conventional “face-to-face” Chapter meeting that starts at 12:00 noon at the Nelson Family home at: 10027 E Creek St., Tucson, AZ 85730 and also be hosting the same Chapter meeting LIVE online via ZOOM. Contact Jean Nelson at: (520) 861-1749 or via email at: richandjean56@yahoo.com to get directions.