

Seattle Mariner Pitcher Miguel Batista Visits South Lawrence East School



Seattle Mariner relief pitcher Miguel Batista made a special trip to Lawrence last month to speak to the children at the South Lawrence East School. Batista spoke to students about the importance of fighting adversity, staying in school and tapping their own imagination.

After his talk, which included good natured barbs at rival David Ortiz, Batista took time to sign autographs for every single student who attended the event. Batista was brought to Lawrence by Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy. Batista had dinner at Bali's Restaurant on Essex St. the night before because, he says, "I LOVE that place!"



Dick Dube from Dick's TV in Methuen with his wife Kathy Sullivan Dube were on hand to honor Methuen High School principal Arthur Nicholson (picture to the right) at the Methuen Board of Trade's annual dinner at the Tara Mara Guesthouse Suites.



Methuen High School Principal Arthur Nicholson was honored by the Methuen Board of Trade last month. Nicholson is joined here with his wife Susan, who is the principal of North Andover High School.



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Three NECC Employees Receive Quarterly Awards

Three Northern Essex Community College employees, Virginia Anderson of North Andover, Lisa Shores of Georgetown, and Lynne Nadeau of Salem, N.H., recently received the college's Employee Performance Recognition Award for the first quarter of 2007.



The Employee Recognition Award was started by NECC President David Hartleb as a way to recognize the many and varied contributions of the college's nearly 700 employees. Employees are selected each quarter based on recommendations from supervisors and co-workers. Recipients receive a \$100 certificate to the restaurant or mall of their choice.

A nearly 10-year veteran of NECC, Virginia Anderson, academic counselor in the Career Development Center, was nominated by a co-worker who wrote, "Ginny does an extraordinarily fine job in providing outstanding services for participants in the Women's Network. Each year Ginny coordinates two "Women Returning to School" information fairs. Literally hundreds of women have been introduced to Northern Essex and the services the college offers by attending the fairs."

Anderson was lauded for her welcoming and reassuring manner and for encouraging current women students to host tables at the fair. She was praised for her diligence in working to retain students through workshops she designed, including Coming to College, Understanding Personality Type, and Finally Friday, as well as a Women's Book Discussion Group, a forum where women students, faculty, staff, and community members can meet to discuss books of particular relevance to women.

Coordinating the Women's Network is only a part of Anderson's job. As coordinator of career exploration, she also develops jobs for cooperative education students in computer and graphic arts certificate and degree programs, meets with students about career issues and holds a number of workshops and seminars.

Lisa Shores of Georgetown, Deaf & Hard of Hearing specialist at NECC for the past two years, was nominated by co-workers and faculty. She was praised for providing assistance to deaf and hard of hearing students throughout the enrollment process. Shores has organized several very successful open houses for deaf and hard of hearing students. She was commended for updating brochures and other materials and making them more visually appealing and understandable. She was praised for her unwavering devotion to the college's mission of "student success." As an alumna, Shores is familiar with the struggles and issues most college students face. In addition, they noted, she is a role model of success.

Shores's ASL skills put her in a unique position to help recruit and provide support to any and all deaf or hard of hearing students. She puts them and their families at ease from the beginning of the enrollment process and remains a "friendly face" on campus to graduation day.

Lynne Nadeau of Salem N.H. has worked at NECC for five years. She is a tutor in the Lawrence Writing Center. She was nominated by her supervisor Diane Gori, who wrote, "Lynne is the only Writing Center tutor during the day at the Lawrence campus, and therefore is totally responsible for the Center and its delivery of services... She conducts hundreds of conferences with students about their writing ... no matter how many conferences she conducts, Lynne gives each student her undivided attention. She is very sensitive to students' needs and their concerns about writing, but at the same time upholds high standards, thus earning the students' respect."

For additional information, contact Mary Chatigny at 978-556-3925 or mchatigny@necc.mass.edu.

With campuses in Haverhill and Lawrence and extension sites in Andover, Methuen, and North Andover, Northern Essex Community College is a state-assisted college, offering over 70 associate degree and certificate programs as well as hundreds of non-credit courses designed for personal enrichment and career growth. Close to 13,000 students ranging from recent high school graduates to workers employed locally attend classes days, evenings, and weekends. Northern Essex is the only state college located in the lower Merrimack Valley Region of Massachusetts.

COME HELP THE METHUEN YOUTH CORPS

Methuen Councilor Kathleen Corey Rahme

Saturday, May 12, 2007, flag replacement at **Walnut Grove Cemetery**. Annually, flags must be replaced on all veterans' graves. Join in this effort at **9:00 am** on Grove Street off of Lowell (the first right turn after Mt. Carmel School going west). This event should last only about 2 hours.

Sign up is required. An excellent project for younger scouts! This is with the director of veterans' services.

Saturday, May 19, 2007, flag replacement will begin at **9:00-12:00?** at the **St. Mary's Cemetery** in Methuen. We will meet in front of the Mausoleum. This is a huge event and we will be replacing over 5000 flags. Lunch will be provided.

Sign up is required. I need **leadership** for the event which involves recruitment and planning. This is an excellent opportunity for students who need volunteer hours. This is in conjunction with the director of veterans' services.

Sunday, May 27, 2007, volunteers are needed to host the 7th annual **Wall of Honor** at **St. Monica School Hall**. Every year a display of more than 400 veterans' photographs is placed on the wall in honor of Memorial Day. Coffee and pastry are served at the open house on Sunday. Everyone is invited to view the wall. Copies of photographs (no originals) are accepted all year.

It is a wonderful way to remember your favorite veteran. The only requirement to have your photograph be placed

on the wall is to have someone who cares enough to submit it. Photographs should be submitted to me and cannot be returned. They will become part of the permanent, yearly exhibit. The veteran's name, branch, rank and dates of service should be included. Any other information is also appropriate such as medals, or interesting facts.

Volunteers are needed to be on hand to host attendees and assist elderly attendees where needed. Various shifts will be available from **9:00 am to 4:00 pm**. **Sign up is required**. Help a little or a lot.

There will also be an open house on **Saturday, May 26**. Volunteers will be needed from 9-3 pm.

Call **Councilor Kathleen Corey Rahme** 978-686-0008 for information or email kcoryerahme@comcast.net.

Letters of service hours will be available upon request.

Families are welcome to participate in these service projects. I am putting out the challenge. Volunteerism benefits everyone!

Kathleen Corey Rahme is the former Central District Councilor in Methuen and was elected as a city councilor "at large" in 2005. She is also the vice chair of the city council and founder of the Methuen Youth Corps. She also hosts "Call to Serve." You can email her at kcoryerahme@comcast.net

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Methuen Youth Corps is recruiting volunteers for many upcoming events. Of course volunteerism is something that you should do because it makes you feel good and it serves as a way of giving back to your community. But it can also serve as a way for students to stand out among college and scholarship applicants. It is a positive way for everyone to benefit. Since its inception in 2004, the Methuen Youth Corps has performed many hours of volunteerism. It is always looking for new members. It is fun and rewarding. Listed above are numerous opportunities to volunteer.

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Local 'Faces of Prevention' honored for work to prevent child abuse. The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (CTF) recently honored the staff of Healthy Families Lawrence as "Faces of Prevention" in recognition of their commitment to creating safe and healthy communities every day for children. Shown, from left: Zoraida Lopez, Glenda Marrero, Yassory Peña, Carmen de Jesus, all of Lawrence, Maria Avila of Winthrop, Sonia Morales of Lawrence, Christina Pagan of Methuen, Christine Dooley of Beverly. The CTF-funded Healthy Families Lawrence is operated by the MSPCC.

Children's Trust Fund recognizes local "Faces of Prevention" During Child Abuse Prevention Month

LAWRENCE – Employees of Healthy Families Lawrence recently received honors as "Faces of Prevention" in recognition of their work to prevent child abuse and neglect in the local community.

The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (CTF), the state's leading child abuse prevention agency, presented the honor as part of its observance of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. The "Faces of Prevention" campaign showcases hundreds of community leaders who are committed to preventing child abuse everyday throughout the commonwealth.

Child abuse is a severe problem in Massachusetts, which ranks third in abuse rates compiled by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The number of children confirmed as abused each year by the Department of Social Services would fill Fenway Park.

The local honorees are employees of the CTF-funded Healthy Families Lawrence, which is operated by MSPCC. They include: Zoraida Lopez of Lawrence, Glenda Marrero of Lawrence, Yassory Peña of Lawrence, Carmen de Jesus of Lawrence, Maria Avila of Winthrop, Sonia Morales of Lawrence, Christina Pagan of Methuen, and Christine Dooley of Beverly. The CTF-funded Healthy Families Lawrence is operated by MSPCC.

"By applauding and supporting these terrific people, we embrace and build a

crucial culture of prevention in Massachusetts. From there sprout communities of safe, healthy children for generations to come," Donoghue said.

Healthy Families Lawrence is part of the statewide Healthy Families Massachusetts newborn home visiting program that offers support and education to first-time young parents as they face the greatest challenge of their lives. Home visitors meet with parents on a voluntary basis until their child's third birthday. Services are available in every Massachusetts community through a network of local providers.

Research shows that home visiting is the most effective practice in preventing child abuse and neglect, said CTF Executive Director Suzin Bartley.

The Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (CTF) leads statewide efforts to prevent child abuse and neglect by supporting parents and strengthening families. As an umbrella organization, CTF funds, evaluates and promotes the work of more than 100 agencies statewide. Supported by private, state and federal funding, the Children's Trust Fund invests in Massachusetts' most precious resource - children and their families.

For more information about the Children's Trust Fund, access www.mctf.org or send an email to info@mctf.state.ma.us or call toll-free (888) 775-4KID.

RAISE 'EM RIGHT™ "Speak Positively, But Firmly"

Barbara Peary, M.Ed.

Some days I really dislike the way I sound when talking to my four and five year olds. Seems I'm always saying, "Don't touch," "Don't run," "Quit screaming," and on ad nauseam. Even to myself I sound like a shrew. What is the alternative when they need so much guidance at this age?



Now that you are aware of the negative comments you are making, start to replace them with more positive instructions. It really is a habit you can build into your speech. Primary school teachers habitually say, "Please walk" as a child is going down the hall instead of "Don't run." They also ceaselessly repeat the phrase "Use your inside voices" instead of yelling, "Stop screaming." Chose one or two common requests to work on and practice this rephrasing. Soon it will replace your old routine. You will be surprised how much more pleasant directives given to a child sound when they are given in a positive, but firm voice.

Our three year old son seems prone to accidents. He is always getting minor cuts and bruises on his legs and arms. Is this typical at this age? I hope he is not going to turn into a klutz!

Children two to five years old may be prone to accidents for several reasons. At this age, children tend to be impulsive - they act quickly without thinking about the situation. Their inherent curiosity also gets them in trouble. Throughout the day they explore their world using all of their five senses. As they investigate, however, they have not developed the capacity to anticipate what the consequences of their actions will be. Coordination of their body is also not refined. You will notice that in young children their arms flail out as they run. By six, children have become more "masters" of their own body; they become

more fluid in their body motions and consequently tend to have less mishaps.

Recently I was on a two-hour flight seated behind a mom with a three year old boy. Behind me was the dad with the child's twin, a girl. Throughout the flight the parents sang songs with them and the children stood up and waved to each other countless times, over my head of course. It was incredibly annoying. I didn't feel like I should say anything to the parents, but maybe I should have?

It is too bad you did not think to trade seats. Then you could have been in front of the family and perhaps found it easier to relax. I am sure the nonsense songs got aggravating, but would you rather they yelled or cried for the duration of the flight?

I work in a child care center with five year olds and it seems like we have a lot of accidents happening outside, especially on one particular piece of equipment. As a new teacher in the center, I don't want to make waves, but the children's safety is my main concern.

In child care centers in some states, when a child has an accident, in addition to filling out an accident report for the parents, teachers keep a log of occurrences. A separate record is compiled indicating where accidents have occurred, when they took place, and the equipment involved. If your center doesn't do this, it would be a good idea to speak to the director about starting such a log. When teachers review this log, they often find that one piece of equipment is causing a majority of the accidents. If this is the case, perhaps it needs to be removed (if it is not appropriate for the age of the children) or monitored more.

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Thomas Hudner- Hero in Our Midst - From Page 1

Four years after Annapolis, however, Tom would find himself in another war, the Korean War. Here he would lead a heroic effort to save a downed pilot when his flight was on patrol over the Chosin Reservoir. For this extraordinary rescue attempt, President Harry Truman would present the first Congressional Medal of Honor of the Korean War to Tom Hudner.

Born in 1924, Tom grew up in Fall River, Mass. where the family had a chain of meat and grocery stores called Hudner's Markets. His father and uncle had attended Phillips Academy and later he and his brothers would do so as well. While at Phillips, Tom was co-captain of the track team, a member of the football and lacrosse teams, a senior class officer and student council member. These endeavors would later help prepare him well for the responsibilities of a military career.

Tom's father had attended Harvard after Phillips, but Tom had always thought about going to Annapolis and subsequently into the Navy. In 1943, Congressman Joe Martin, then Speaker of the House of Representatives, appointed Tom as his second alternate to the U.S. Naval Academy. As luck would have it, a position opened up and Tom was told to report to Annapolis on July 7, 1943.

During the next few years Tom would train to be a naval officer. His ultimate goal was to be stationed aboard a destroyer or battleship. In 1946 Tom graduated from the Academy and now Ensign Thomas Hudner was assigned to the cruiser USS Helena. That September, Tom became a communications watch officer on the Helena stationed off of Tsing-Tao, China, about 150 miles north of Shanghai. Although the Nationalists were still in control of China, the communists and Red Army were making it increasingly difficult for Americans. It was Tom's duty to read incoming and outgoing messages, decode/encode them, and pass them along to interested officials.

After six or seven months on the ship, the Helena sailed back to Long Beach, California. There, Tom received new orders to report to Pearl Harbor as a communications officer. Unhappy at his new post because he was not at sea, several classmates serving with him eventually convinced him to put in a request for flight training. Tom was accepted and in April 1948 reported to Pensacola Naval Air



Lt. j.g. Thomas J. Hudner, Jr. - 1952
United States Navy

Station in Florida for flight school. He learned to fly in the North American SNJ, the naval equivalent of the Air Force T-6 trainer. He had to complete six successful, arrestor-hook carrier landings to graduate.

Then it was on to Corpus Christi, Texas for advanced training with the Corsair F4U and finally back to Pensacola where he received his aviator wings in August of 1949. His first duty was at the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point, Rhode Island where he was assigned to VA-75, an attack squadron of Douglas AD-1 Skyraiders, as part of Air Group 7. About a month later, VA-75 was decommissioned and he was reassigned to VF-32, a Corsair squadron aboard the USS Leyte aircraft carrier. On May 1, 1950 the Leyte sailed to the Mediterranean for a six-month deployment.

Tom was now Lt. j.g. Tom Hudner.

It was at Quonset Point where Tom would first meet Ensign Jesse Brown, another aviator assigned to the same squadron. Ensign Brown was the Navy's first black aviator. Although the Tuskegee Airmen had paved the way for black aviators in World War II, it still took years for the other services to accept this cultural change.

Brown had grown up in Mississippi, was valedictorian at his high school, and attended Ohio State University. While at Ohio State, a naval officer encouraged him to apply to the Navy's flight school. Jesse had always wanted to fly, so this became his goal. He eventually went through the same training as Tom Hudner, first at Pensacola and then Corpus Christi. Tom believes Jesse was eventually assigned to Quonset Point to get him away from the bigotry that was still widespread in the South.

The USS Leyte was off the coast of Cannes, France, about a month and a half into its deployment, when North Korea attacked South Korea. Like Pearl Harbor, the first question on most people's minds was "Where is Korea?" On August 8th, five to six weeks after the initial attack, and after being relieved by another carrier stationed off Lebanon, the Leyte was ordered to Korea. The first port of call was back to Norfolk for war preparation and to take on six Marine Sikorsky helicopters and ten Marine pilots. The USS Leyte left Norfolk and after traversing the Panama Canal headed west into

the Pacific. She dropped off the Marines and their helicopters in Japan and then arrived off the east coast of Korea on 8 October 1950. The Leyte joined with three other carriers to provide close ground support to U.S. troops ordered in that summer by President Truman.

The Leyte at this point had one squadron of Grumman F9F-2 Panther jets, two squadrons of Chance Vought Corsair F4U-4 fighters, and one squadron of Douglas AD-1 Skyraiders. The jets were the superior fighters, but they could only stay in the air half as long as the other aircraft. Thus, close ground support missions were generally left to the Corsairs and Skyraiders.

Flight operations started immediately and consisted of 12-hour days where Tom, Jesse and the other pilots would fly one, sometimes two, missions a day, standing down every fourth day for replenishment and refueling. Every one-and-a-half hours the carrier was launching or recovering aircraft. Early on, one of the Leyte pilots brought back word that the Chinese appeared to be entering the war.

When hoards of Chinese troops suddenly appeared everywhere on November 28th, all hell broke loose. Air operations then shifted to protecting the retreating

harness is locked and the canopy is open!" Then Jesse, wheels up with no power, brought his Corsair in for a hard, crash landing. The impact buckled the fuselage at the cockpit.

Other flight members who were circling the area at the time first thought he had been killed because of the force of the impact. The flight leader had even started climbing to a higher altitude so he could radio for a helicopter to come in and retrieve the body. But then some of the pilots could see Jesse waving from the damaged craft. He was still alive although he didn't appear able to get out of the aircraft. There was also smoke coming from the cowling, an ominous sign.

It was obvious that Jesse was trapped and, with the imminent threat of a fuel fire, he needed immediate help to survive. The helicopter wouldn't arrive in time to do any good. Then Tom Hudner radioed the rest of his formation, "I'm going in to get him out!" He says there was silence on the radio after that. No one tried to talk him out of it.

Then he turned towards a nearby hillside and fired off all his rockets and ammunition to both lighten the plane and reduce the hazards of a crash landing. Looking for how best to land, he slowed to about 85 knots and maneuvered the Corsair into an area near Jesse on a slope of about 20 degrees.



Tom Hudner in the cockpit of his Corsair F4U-4 fighter

American troops, now well north of the 38th Parallel.

On December 4, 1950, Tom Hudner, Jesse Brown and four other Corsair pilots left the USS Leyte at about 1330 hours to fly an armed reconnaissance mission over the northwestern part of the Chosin Reservoir, a mountainous, snow-covered, inhospitable area about 70 miles from the Chinese border. They were flying low, only 500-700 feet above the terrain, looking for enemy targets of opportunity.

Suddenly, Jesse radioed that he was losing oil pressure and power. He would have to land. Another pilot noticed a small clearing only about a quarter mile in size on the side of one of the slopes and radioed the location to Jesse. Tom also radioed to him, "Jesse, make sure your shoulder

Wheels up, he landed hard about 100 yards from Jesse's Corsair. The snow didn't help the impact at all, as the ground below was frozen solid. The crash landing broke his windscreen and injured his back. Tom later said, "That was the hardest landing I ever made."

With adrenaline pumping, Tom ran through the snow to Jesse's plane. It was cold, perhaps no more than 5 or 10 degrees. He didn't see any enemy soldiers, but was confident that his air cover, now increased to 10-12 planes, would keep them away. When he reached Jesse, he saw that he had his helmet off and his gloves were missing. Tom surmised that Jesse had taken the gloves off to unbuckle his chute and dropped them. Tom then put a woolen watch hat on Jesse and wrapped his hands in a scarf that he had brought with him. Jesse was obviously badly injured.



President Harry Truman fastens the first Congressional Medal of Honor of the Korean War around the neck of Tom Hudner at the White House - April 13, 1951

Bethany Community Services: Day and Overnight Trips

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July 22-2, 2007-A Gambling Getaway includes motorcoach transportation-four meals-one day at Mohegan Sun with meal voucher and gaming bets/one day at Foxwoods with meal voucher and gaming bets/evening dinner and show/baggage handling, taxes and gratuities \$139 double/\$50 deposit at sign up/final payment due 6-20

November 3-13, 2007-San Francisco City Tour and Hawaii Cruise on the **Pride of Hawaii**/includes three days of touring in CA with deluxe accommodations-four meals-city highlights-vineyard tours/eight day cruise-insurance-Pearl Harbor and Honolulu City Tour-Best of Times Cocktail party-luggage handling costs-driver gratuities/escorted by a Professional Tour Director/\$2699 plus taxes and transfers/final payment due on August 1st

September 16-17, 2007-King Tut Exhibition-includes Deluxe Doubletree Hotel in the Brandywine River Valley-Historic Philadelphia tours include The liberty Bell-Independence Hall-Betsy Ross House-King Tut Exhibition-dinner and entertainment at the hotel-two meals-round trip transportation-tour escort from Haverhill-/cost is \$229 pp double or triple-\$299 single/\$50 due at sign up with your final payment due on July 2nd.

DAY TRIPS

May 14-Luciano's-Wrentham, MA/**Prima Vera!**-nine-piece band celebrating the music of Louis Prima-Keely Smith-Sam Butera-Las Vegas style show from the 1950's and 1960's/includes transportation-show-Stuffed Chicken or Baked Haddock/\$63

May 23-TasteFull'a Fun! Merrimack, NH with a stop at **Swan Chocolate**/lunch at the **Common Man**-Chicken Kiev or Pot Roast/with a tour of **Anheuser-Bush** and Budweiser Clydesdales horses/bus-lunch-tour-step on tour guide \$65

June 2-**Bill Gaither Homecoming**-DCU Center-Worcester, MA/luncheon=fresh fruit-salad-roasted pork loin with grilled apple compote and carrots-blueberry cheesecake-coffee/tea/tickets are limited/final date for sign up and payment is May 7th /\$70

June 11- **Frankie Avalon** at Mohegan Sun Arena. Hosted by Bet of Times who will have \$1000 grand prize drawing. This tour includes your show motorcoach transportation, a casino package and a lunch voucher. The cost is \$66 due at sign up.

June 14-Reagle Players presents **Singin' in the Rain**-Robinson Theatre Waltham, MA-Lunch at The Chateau, meal choices are Chicken Supreme-Broiled Scrod-Italian Combination-coffee-tea-dessert. Sign up and payment is due on June 4th and includes bus, lunch and show, the cost is \$67.

July 11-Summer Celebration! At the Venezia Waterfront Restaurant, Boston, MA- enjoy the waterfront, revel in the music! This husband and wife team Mary Mancini and Mario Tacca, together this "World Class Duo" will enchant and delight you. Your meal choices are chicken parmesan with pasta or baked haddock with potato and vegetable, both include salad, bread, dessert, coffee/tea. The trip cost is \$62, sign up and payment is due before June 25th.

July 12-Reagle Players presents **The King and I** at the Robinson Theatre Waltham, MA with lunch at The Chateau. Your meal choices are Chicken Cutlet Parmigiana, Broiled Shrimp and Sea Scallops Nantucket or Veal Cutlet Parmigiana served with coffee, tea and dessert. Your sign up and payment is due on July 2nd and includes bus, lunch and show, the cost is \$67.

July 18- Spirit of Boston Lunch Cruise leaving Haverhill at 9:30a returning approx 3:30p.

The Classic Lunch Buffet Menu includes your entrees choices; Filet of Sole-Oriental Pepper Steak-Chicken Julienne-Baked Chicken-Lasagna plus several salads, side dishes and dessert choices. Sign up is required in advance, cost for transportation, cruise and lunch is \$50 to be paid in full by Friday, June 15th.

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Thomas Hudner- Hero in Our Midst - From Previous Page



Tom Hudner's Congressional Medal of Honor

A quick glance showed that Jesse's knee was pinned between the bent fuselage and the central instrument column. The snow made it slippery and Tom struggled to maintain his footing as he leveraged himself to free Jesse. It didn't take him long to realize that he would need some kind of tool to help. Tom returned to his plane and radioed his flight leader to have the helicopter bring an ax and fire extinguisher. Then he returned to Jesse's plane to consider what else he could do. He started packing snow into the cowl openings to suppress the smoldering fire. At this point, Jesse was fading in and out of consciousness from the injuries and the cold.

Meanwhile, the helicopter which had been launched from a nearby Marine camp was already in the air when it got word that there were two pilots on the ground and they needed an ax and fire extinguisher. The news meant that the chopper had to return to base and drop off the crewman that the pilot had taken with him and pick up the requested items. Finally, in what seemed like forever, the helicopter arrived over the crash scene.

As it circled the area, Tom fired a flare/smoke emitter to show the pilot how the wind was blowing. But the helicopter took its time landing because, as Tom later learned, the brakes on the chopper were poor and the pilot was afraid that if he landed on a slope the helicopter might slide off the hill. Also, the engine on this chopper had a history of trouble starting so the pilot would have to leave it running.

The Sikorsky finally landed and out stepped 1st Lt. Charlie Ward. Instantly, Tom recognized him as one of the Marine pilots the Leyte had ferried to Japan several months earlier. The two then hurried over to Jesse to try to free him. But the ax was ineffective on the metal fuselage no matter what they did. Try as they might, they could not get Jesse out of the aircraft. At one point when Jesse was conscious, he told Tom, "If anything happens to me, tell my wife Daisy I love her."

It was now getting late in the day and Ward turned to Tom and said, "We have to leave. I can't fly out of these mountains in the dark." Tom reluctantly agreed. He then turned to Jesse and told him they had to leave to get some equipment. He knew, however, that there was no chance they could get back before morning and Jesse wouldn't survive the night.

Charlie and Tom then boarded the chopper and flew south to the Marine base camp at Hagaru-ri. It was cold and Tom would have to spend the night in a tent. A young Marine appeared and gave Tom his bedroll. He said, "Sir, tonight I think you will need this more than me." Tom says he didn't sleep at all because of the cold and his thoughts of Jesse.

The next morning, December 5th, Tom was flown to another Marine base at Yonpo where he would spend the next two days because of bad weather. Finally, on December 7th a Skyraider from the Leyte came in to take him back to his ship. On the way to the carrier, Tom learned that the captain wanted to see him as soon as he came on board. Radio communication had been poor over the past several days and Captain Thomas Sisson had little information on what actually happened.

After listening to Tom's story, Capt. Sisson said he would send in a helicopter with a flight surgeon to retrieve Jesse's body. Tom advised him that would be too dangerous and needlessly risk the lives of two more men. The captain then said he had a backup plan. He would send in planes with napalm to incinerate the crash area - a makeshift warrior's funeral. Within the hour, seven aircraft from Squadron 32, all flown by Jesse's friends, left the carrier for the crash site. Six carried napalm and while they were diving to drop their ordinance, the lone seventh plane climbed above them in the traditional tribute to a fallen comrade.

After the mission had been completed, Capt. Sisson started the process recommending Tom for the Medal of Honor. Meanwhile, Tom's injured back now started to really bother him and he was grounded for the next month while recovering. Shortly after he returned to flight operations, the USS Leyte got orders to head back to San Francisco. In mid-February, VF-32 returned to Quonset Point.



Ensign Jesse Brown, 1926-1950, the first black Navy aviator

On April 1st Tom got word that the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Congress had approved him for the Medal of Honor. On Friday, April 13, 1951, President Truman presented the medal to Tom in a White House ceremony before family and friends.

Tom would also find out later that Charlie Ward, the Marine helicopter pilot, received the Silver Star for his heroic efforts on that day. Jesse Brown was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his Korean War combat service.

Tom now settled in as a career Navy aviator. He spent time as an instrument instructor, admiral's aide, assistant air officer, executive officer of an aircraft carrier, exchange pilot flying Air Force interceptors, and finally a tour with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon before retiring in April 1973 with the rank of captain.

Tom returned to Massachusetts and over the years worked for several Boston area companies in various consulting, management and administrative capacities. In 1988 Governor Dukakis appointed him to Deputy Commissioner of Veterans Services. He eventually became Acting Commissioner and in 1991 Governor Weld appointed him to Commissioner, where he remained until retirement in 1999. Tom is currently vice president of Battleship Cove, the USS Massachusetts war memorial and museum complex in Fall River.

In 1963, while undergoing jet training in San Diego, Tom met the recently widowed Georgea Smith at a Christmas party. They started dating and were married in August of 1968. The Hudners have a son, Tom, who lives in Concord. Georgea has three children from her prior marriage: Kelly, Stan and Shannon. Between them, the Hudners have 11 grandchildren.

Captain Thomas J. Hudner, Jr., we thank you for your extraordinary service to our country.

To nominate a veteran to be honored as a "Valley Patriot of the Month," please email us at valleypatriot@aol.com, or call us at (978) 557-5413.