

Innocence, A Casualty of War

By: Matt Haney
Assistant Editor

It is Saturday night, or Sunday morning depending on how you look at it. Tonight my best friend, who was just reactivated into the Marine Corp, called me and told me that it looks like he will soon be going to Saudi. About an hour later the announcement was made that the ground war was underway. Now, as I sit here in front of this computer and think about the happy little article I was supposed to write, I realize how trivial it all is.

Tonight my mind goes back to my tenure in Naval Aviation. All told, the good times far out numbered the bad times, but tonight my thoughts are dark. My mind wanders back to my first real operational squadron. I had just finished over a year and a half of electronics training in Memphis, TN, and thought I was truly a man of the world. But, in reality, I was still just a 19 year-old boy from the mountains.

One of the first people to befriend me was my Assistant Maintenance Officer LCDR Ivey. LCDR Ivey and I recognized each other's accents right off, and as it turned out, we were raised less than 20 miles from each other. He took me under his wing and made sure this *newbee* didn't get too much of a hassle. Six months later, Mr. Ivey crashed at a bombing range in Dare County, NC. The only body part we found, that was definitely his, was the finger that bore his wedding band.

That next summer, my squadron was at a bombing

range in El Centro, CA. We and our west coast sister squadron were performing bombing detachment together. We had just finished a launch and were watching the jets climb to altitude, when one of our sister squadron's jets exploded in mid-air. It was determined that a fuel line had ruptured where the wing meets the fuselage, the fuel hit the outside of the hot turbine engine and ignited causing the explosion. The pilot of the aircraft was our sister squadron's Executive Officer (second in command). The Bombarder/Navigator was a 'nugget' straight out of flight school. The nugget panicked, so the Executive Officer reached over and ejected him. On the ground we saw the nugget's ejection, his chute opened and carried him safely to the ground. Right after the nugget's ejection the jet disintegrated. The Executive Officer never had a chance.

My next operational squadron was the Fighting Tigers of Attack Squadron 65. By now, I was solidly rooted in my faith in Jesus Christ. I was heavily involved with the Christian ministries onboard the ship which my squadron flew off of; I even hosted a two hour Contemporary Christian Show on the USS Coral Sea's radio station. About two days before we pulled into Naples, Italy, the Spirit moved me to talk to a friend who was in charge of my squadron's line division. His name was Chuck Charles. Although we had been friends for a number of months, he had never given

me an opportunity to witness to him. That night, we were sitting on top of a jet near the ship's fantail. We were passing though an area where a phosphorescent algae grew, as the USS Coral Sea would pass through, it would stir this sea of light into many strangely beautiful green patterns within our ship's wake. On top of that wing, watching the sea float by, Charles opened up to me. We had a long talk about God and what the universe was all about. I told him about how to accept and serve Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. Three days later, while in port in Naples, Charles was killed in an accident. I do not know whether he had accepted Christ or not, but I do hope.

I could tell more but this will suffice. Today, as you read this, the war in the Persian Gulf might still be going on. Young men might still be fighting, dying. I know what

it is like to lose a friend, to go to a military funeral and watch the wife receive the flag that draped her husband's coffin. I know what it is like to come back home after a cruise and see the newborn child of a friend, one who will never see his daddy. These are the thoughts of war that haunt me when I try to sleep at night.

Please, I solemnly ask you, when you have your quiet time, before you eat or before you go to bed at night, say a prayer. Say a prayer for our men in conflict, those dead, those wounded, and those left to carry on in their absence. Pray for the wives, for the mothers and fathers, and especially for the children. Pray for our nation. Pray for Peace with Honor and Dignity. **Pray for God's Blessing of this the Nation, Home of the Brave, Land of the Free.**

Survey Says...

By: Paulette Mixon
Staff Writer

The last issue of the *Aletheia* contained an article on the things which the students would like to see here at Montreat. One main improvement that interested students was the addition of more special interest clubs. As it turns out, the responsibility of initiating new clubs falls upon the student body. But how do we do it?

First, a group of students wishing to start an interest club should draft a proposal. They should then submit the proposal to SGA for review. SGA will either approve, disapprove, or return the proposal for revision (with suggestions, of course). A faculty sponsor is needed to advise the club. It is usually a good idea secure a teacher in the same field as the student interest club. We as students should not just sit and complain, rather we should move to make constructive events happen at Montreat.