

"THE TRUTH WILL OUT"

Speaker #1 (Frank)

Ladies and gentlemen, we've been having farewell luncheons for a number of years and for sometime its been customary when an individual retires to devote a portion of the program to recounting his military career. Colonel Rudell, our new Deputy Chief of Staff for Civil Engineering has granted us permission to continue this custom; however, he has properly criticized some of our past efforts as "guilding the lilly." Colonel Rudell insists that in the future our career briefings must be completely serious, straight forward, and strictly truthful.

In order to insure that what you are about to hear is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, we've been forced to institute the two man policy. Your briefors today have been selected from a carefully screened list of individuals who have nothing to lose. So without further delay, -- and with warm respect for Colonel Taylor -- but nevertheless a firm dedication to the truth, we would like to review with you a brief account of the career of our honored guest, Colonel Lester G Taylor.

Who today will enter the ranks of a civilian ---- and a big taxpayer.

Skip:

Facts surrounding Colonel Taylor's childhood and early growth have been difficult, in fact, near impossible to obtain. We have established the fact that he was born in the middle western United States sometime ago and accomplished his early education in Kansas City, Kansas. A childhood friend, John Brown, later achieved fame of sorts in an incident at Harpers Ferry, but that's another story. Records reflect that young Master Taylor graduated from Rosedale High School early in this century and moved on to Junior College in the same city where he graduated after two years. With a Junior College diploma under his arm he matriculated at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Kansas where he spent a successful third college year. After reaching the three quarters milestone in his college career, Colonel Taylor finally realized one of his great life's ambitions. He accepted an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and turned his back on the civilian academic world to seek the path of military glory.

Frank:

Excuse me Skip, I'd like to interject a comment here to keep the record straight. Our unbiased background investigation revealed that Colonel Taylor was actually a school drop out. Having heard Horace Greeley's advice to American Youth - "Go West Young Man Go West" -- Lester Taylor decided to go east to West Point to fill the vacuum.

Although he tends to hide his light under a bushel, his career at West Point was quite exciting. I know that some of you have seen the movie, "The Long Gray Line," and that other great picture, "Ten Gentlemen from West Point," -- well, Colonel Taylor has seen these also.

Skip:

On January 19th, 1943 Colonel Taylor pinned on the gold bars of a second lieutenant and departed the plains of West Point. He really found his nich in what was then the Army Air Corps, and quickly checked out as a fighter pilot. October 1943 found him on his way to Europe where he served most of the following two years as a P-47 and P-51 pilot. During this period Colonel Taylor flew 87 combat missions and collected 285 combat hours. This excellent combat record also included at least one enemy kill, but we've

been hard pressed to find out the details on this event. We understand that this first victory came as a result of vicious dog fighting in norther France one day -- at least the only reference we have refers to a dog fight which occurred one day when --

Frank:

Just a second Skip, I believe that an extract we have from Colonel Taylor's diary tells the whole story. As you know, Colonel Taylor was actually a pilot who washed out from the 8th AF Bomber Command. This was rather unusual since washed out Fighter Pilots are assigned to bombers. -- But then Les Taylor was a rather unusual guy ---- and hence became a Fighter Pilot with the 8th AF in England.

Actually "his kill" was made in a P-51 Mustang Fighter high in the skies over France.

The records reflect that in escorting bombers to their targets his flight was attacked by

12 German Fighters - directly from the sun. Although the call "Bandits" one o'clock

high was made over and over again by his flight leader, Colonel Taylor's mind was

elsewhere ----. Specifically in a below street level pub in Piccadilly Circus noted

for its excellent warm beer and slightly higher temperature female company ---

but back to the kill --

Transfixed he flew on toward the formation of enemy fighters, completely oblivious to the inherent dangers --- of course, the rest of his flight had already broken for combat but our hero flew on - to the' astonishment of the enemy. Within a 1,000 yards of the enemy he suddenly realized his position and as he jerked violently at the stick, to get out of there, his forefinger hit the red trigger on the stick and off went his armed guns. His camera recorded the kill clearly of the German Flight Leader, who it was subsequently determined had 25 kills to his credit.

This act of bravado by a single fighter plane so unnerved the enemy flight, they broke off combat and scurried for the safety of their aerodrome - -

Meantime, still in a state of some shock, our hero scanned the sky in search of the enemy. Seeing none, he again settled down to what was a ho hum mission.

In the pubs of England and the Aerodromes of the RAF he is still toasted as the Fearless Baron of the Skys.

Skip:

Well, to get back to the record. During his service in Europe, Colonel Taylor rose

rapidly to the rank of Captain just two years after leaving West Point. For his combat service in France he also was awarded the DFC with one cluster and the Air Medal with 6 Oak Leaf Clusters. After his combat tour Colonel Taylor saw service as a flying instructor and staff officer in Air Training Command. His flying experience and skill were later capitalized upon when he became a staff flying safety officer. One outgrowth of this assignment was his job as an early editor of the Air Force Flying Safety Magazine. We suspect that this position made him the proofreader par excellence his is today.

Frank:

I don't know about the proofreading Skip, but I do understand that the Safety Magazine changed its name not long after Colonel Taylor left the staff. Be that as it may, our hero soon after entered the hallowed halls of the Air Tactical School to obtain further grooming and preparation for the days ahead. Come to think of it, the Air Tactical School changed its name also after Colonel Taylor graduated. I suppose that's another story, too. Anyway, in December 1952 duty called Colonel Taylor, who by now, was wearing silver oak leaves to the mysterious east for assignment with Fifth Air Force in Korea.

Once again he was decorated for outstanding performance -- this time earning the Bronze Star. In December following termination of hostilities in Korea, Colonel Taylor returned to the US where he commenced service as Director of Combat Operations for the 34th Air Division at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico. While performing this role he was responsible for the Air Defense of five states. Once again, hardwork, dedication, and superior performance were justly rewarded and Colonel Taylor was moved up to the position of Director of Combat Operations for the entire Central Air Defense Force. As a matter of fact, the outstanding exceptional --

Skip:

Now wait a minute Frank, all those adjectives Colonel Taylor wrote in his autobiography may be true but you know that we weren't able to find any substantiating documentation for this phase of his career.----- Folks, the truth of the matter as we understand is that Colonel Taylor started out as Director of Combat Ops for five states and gradually built himself an empire. There's no telling what this would have led to if the Air Staff hadn't grown suspicious and eventually brought the situation under control but not before

Colonel Taylor had become Director of Combat Operations for the entire Central Air Defense Force which included the middle 1/3 of the United States. In this position he controlled all radar and fighter aircraft in this section and was apparently well on his way to some sort of coup when the insidious plot was detected and he was safely packed off to the Armed Forces Staff College for observation. After graduating from the Armed Forces Staff College Colonel Taylor was posted to the U S Navy as an Exchange Officer with the Western Sea Frontier. This selection was apropos in view of the warm spot he has held in his heart for all Navy men since his days as a cadet.

Frank:

Skip, I think that in all fairness we should mention that Colonel Taylor's days with the Navy were apparently trouble free. During this period his record reflects no reference to reprimands, court martials or other adverse actions. As a matter of fact, Colonel Taylor did another outstanding job of coordinating the Air Force defense efforts with Navy Air and SEA defense activities. He participated actively in planning and execution of joint defense maneuvers and we can trace his enthusiasm for Damage Evaluation Team

activities back to these early fun filled days on the west coast.

Following two years before the mast Colonel Taylor at last gravitated to the exciting career field for which he was always predestined. August 1960 found him assigned to duty at Castle AFB, California, where he cut his teeth as a Base Civil Engineer.

After dazzeling the 93rd Bomb Wing at Castle with fancy engineering footwork for 1 1/2 years Colonel Taylor received an assignment to Turkey. In Turkey as Director of Engineering for TUSLOG he was affectionately known as Mestepha Taylor the Black Prince of Ankara. While serving in this capacity he was responsible for the maintenance, repair, and construction activities at all U S bases in Turkey.

Skip:

Information published by the John Birch Society indicates that during Colonel Taylor's assignment to Turkey, American missiles were removed, there was rioting in the streets, and our relationship with that country worsened considerably. No direct connection can be traced between these events and Colonel Taylor.

In July 1964 fortune smiled on Colonel Taylor and he was assigned to McCoy AFB as BDCE.

His record at McCoy is practically unblemished except for a small misunderstanding with

the Wing Commander regarding installation of a private sprinkler system. By judicious employment of fancy footwork and effective delaying tactics, Colonel Taylor acquitted himself with distinction. Despite accusations of being nonresponsive to operational requirements he managed to depart the base before the IG and Auditor arrived, thereby avoiding participation in purchase of the most elaborate private sprinkler system in the Air Force.

Frank:

Although virtue is its own reward, Colonel Taylor continued to receive recognition for his expertise as a Civil Engineer. Like the farmer, he was "outstanding in his field." In March 65 McCoy's loss was the Eighth Air Force gain when Colonel Taylor was transferred to this headquarters to assume the mantle of Deputy Director of Civil Engineering. Those who say that he was brought up here so that the Commander could keep an eye on him are regarded merely as malicious gossips.

Skip:

Since Colonel Taylor's assignment here he has earned the respect and admiration of our entire DE Staff. We regard him as a fine gentleman, an excellent manager, a wit,

stabilizing influence, and a connoisseur of the fair sex. Not the least of these he's been a good friend to all of us who have worked for him.

Frank:

I'm sure that our whole staff will agree with those sentiments, Skip. If he wasn't a real sport and a good friend we'd never get away with a briefing like this. Of course, we're going to miss Colonel and Mrs Taylor -- however, he's finally taking Horace Greeley's advice and starting west - this time to Clayton Place (not Peyton Place) in Toms River, New Jersey. Those of us who know him are expecting big things as Colonel Taylor commences his second career.

Skip:

Well Frank, I guess this just about winds up our briefing. I suppose its time to sign off and move on to the final events in our luncheon.

Frank:

Right you are --- goodnight Chet.

Skip:

Goodnight -- David