



Rock Island Rotary Weekly Review

April 27, 2021: Volume XXVIII, Issue 42

MEETING EVERY TUESDAY NOON - QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER



Lindsey Kerr Executive Director at LifeLine Pilots

LifeLine Pilots, “The shortest distance between home and hope.” Founded in

1981, LifeLine Pilots’ mission is to facilitate free air transportation through volunteer pilots for financially distressed passengers with medical and humanitarian needs. Supporting 10 states in the Midwest, their flights are flown in private aircraft by volunteer pilots. The flights are offered completely FREE to the passenger, their family, and travelling companions. We encompass everyone from babies to senior citizens. With more than 8,000 missions flown, LifeLine Pilots has made a lasting difference in the lives thousands of individuals and families. For almost 40 years, LifeLine Pilots has been facilitating free flights, covering 10 states in the Midwest. People with medical and humanitarian needs are flown at no cost to the passenger. This is possible because of generous volunteer pilots who donate their time, aircraft, and fuel. LifeLine Pilots frequently fly passengers to the University of Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital. “The transportation barrier to healthcare can be reduced with the increased awareness of volunteer pilot organizations, who provide free flights for people in need.” Lindsey stated that Lifeline Pilots have a 100% safety record for all 40 years they have existed. They have 250 volunteer pilots, some owning their own planes, some flying through a flying club, and other actually rent planes to make LifeLine flights. The flights are absolutely free to people in financial need or with a compelling health need. Ms. Kerr stressed that people don’t have to be destitute, just facing a significant medical need with transportation issues possibly preventing the ability to get needed care. Pilots must be 21 years old and must have logged 250 flight hours before they can volunteer for LifeLine. Persons needing the service must provide a medical release stating that it is safe for them to fly. They must also be able to enter and exit the plane and must be able to sit in a seat. They are allowed to take one companion/care giver on the flight, children may take two. Largely due to Covid, there was a 48% increase in flights in 2020 compared to 2019. Ms. Kerr also pointed out that 3.6 million people don’t get needed care because of transportation barriers. She provided an interesting photo album showing many of their planes, pilots, and those they served including a number of children. One four-year-old has made over 20 flights with LifeLine Pilots, illustrating that there is no limit on the number of flights that can be taken. Noting that most of their planes are small 4 to 6 seat aircraft, she said that they can land at most small single runway airports to pick-up those needing transportation relatively near their homes. The pilots volunteer their time, their plane, and the fuel to provide the service. They are allowed to use their expenses as a charitable tax deduction. Some of their volunteer pilots fly donate one or two monthly flights, others donate once annually. For each flight LifeLine Pilots follows the CDC flight checklist, masks are required, and the plane is wiped down and sanitized after each flight. Ms. Kerr also stated that the organization receives no government funding and is supported solely by donations for services, equipment, and fuel by the pilots, and contributions from the public. Their biggest issue is getting the word out, so people know about the service. They have a limited staff and just a \$10,000 outreach budget trying to cover 10 states and 500,000 square miles. She asked for our help in letting people know about the program and in recruiting pilots for an ever-expanding need trying to ensure that all have access to needed health care. Thank you, Lindsey, for a very informative program and thanks to LifeLine Pilots for serving those in need. If any of us know of other groups that might enjoy Lindsey’s program, notify Bob Swanson to obtain Lindsey’s contact information. She would love the opportunity to speak with others.

April - May Calendar

- Apr 24-30 WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK – Rotary continues to Battle Polio!
- May 3 - RIHS Incubator Pitch 9am #1 9:00am at Rock Island High
- May 4 - Denise Browning, Sunset Marina Manager. **RESUME IN-Person Meetings at the Botanical Center.**
- May 6 - RIHS incubator Pitch 9am #2 9:00am at Rock Island High
- May 11- Marcy Mendenhall, Exec. Dir. of Skip-a-Long childcare
- May 12- RIHS Final Incubator Pitch 5pm
- May 18- Tyler Mitchell, Public Relations manager for The Project of the Quad Cities
- May 25- Rotary Awards Luncheon Rev. Dwight Ford, Speaker

Officers

Angela Campbell President
Justin Peterson, 1st Vice Pres.
Cindi Gramenz, 2nd Vice Pres.
Anne McGlynn, Secretary
Carrie Crossen, Treasurer
Mark Mayeski, Past President

Board Members

Howard Beck
Kim Calhoun
Molly Shattuck
Eric Westphall
John Daly
Chris Lemon
Sue Rector
Gary Rowe
Bob Swanson Co-Sgt.-at-Arms
Cindi Gramenz Co-Sgt.-at-Arms

Program Chairs 2019-20

Aug – Sept Rebecca Arnold
Oct – Nov John Daly
Dec – Jan John Wetzel
Feb – Mar Gary Rowe
Apr – May Bill Stengel
June - July Tom Hammar
Have a program idea? Contact
the chairman listed above for a
possible date.

Club Notes & Announcements!

- ☐ **WELCOME GUESTS** – Stan Coin, though not a visitor, joined our meeting again from Tempe, Arizona. We got so involved doing a “dry run” from the Botanical Center, I forgot to check to see if other visitors joined us. Duncan and Mark, if you were out there, I apologize and will get you next week! Guests are always welcome at the “Number One Club”.
- ☐ **WINE RAFFLE POSTERS STILL AVAILABLE** – If you have a business or know of a public location where a wine raffle poster could be posted, please contact Kathy Trone at 309-794-9400. The posters are attractive and professionally done. Getting the word out is a big part of having a successful fundraiser. **Also the easiest way to purchase tickets is to go to www.rirotary.com. Right at the top you can click to buy 5 tickets for \$20 or 1 ticket for \$5!**
- ☐ **REMINDER** if you still have not returned or paid for the five tickets sent to you in December, (over 30 members still have tickets out) we need the check & stubs or the tickets returned ASAP! You can drop them of at next week’s meeting!
- ☐ **HELP NEEDED – AT HEART OF HOPE FOOD PANTRY** Volunteers are needed from 3:30pm to 5:30pm every Thursday to help make up food packages and assist in handing them to needy recipients. It is strictly as drive thru, no contact distribution. Heart of Hope also needs old grocery sacks. They also have a clothing ministry and need donations of clothes. Older or slightly used men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing will be appreciated. This time of year, coats, gloves, and caps, as well as warm pants and shirts/blouses are greatly appreciated. Project chair Steve Morenz will arrange to collect sacks and clothing. Email Steve at smorenz3@gmail.com.
- ☐ **SELL OR BUY** – We need to move 125 books of Wine Raffle tickets (at \$20 per book) in the next three weeks! Please don’t assume someone else will do it. Go to the information on page 4, go on line and buy tickets, keep them or sell them at your preference. We need all to help with at least one, hopefully more books!
- ☐ **HAVE ITEMS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?** Email items, including photos to Bob Swanson at bobdebswanson@att.net.

Rock Island Rotary Trivia Night November 12, 2021

Serving our community through our generosity of time, talent, and treasure



It is NOT too early to start collecting great ideas and items for our Silent Auction. Sue has empty baskets to fill and will pick up whatever you have! Just call or email.

Sue has already started collecting some favorite products to make a Sustainable Products Basket, and there are always great sales around the holidays, closeouts from the summer that we can take advantage of not to mention re-gifting opportunities!! And she's got a stash of baskets if you will need one. If you don't want to do a full basket Sue is happy to take random items and put them together to make great baskets. Sue will store things until the event and will event come pick items up from your home. Call 563-343-7985 or email srector3614@gmail.com.



THE TAB

It was a great day for our TAB today. We started with some very sad dollars, as Jeff Rose donated \$90 in honor of his mother who passed away during the past week at age 90. Our thoughts are with you Jeff. Anne McGlynn had a happy dollar for spotting Kevin and Jane Koski getting in their daily outdoor walk. Kevin added his own dollar noting that today marked 408 consecutive days of outdoor walking. Stan Coin had a happy dollar for a brand new grandson and sad dollars for the death of his friend Bob Gildea at 95 years old. Stan rounded his donation up to \$100 encouragement saying, "it's early". Molly Shattuck closed out the TAB Contributions offering a happy dollar and displaying a sonagram of her well developing baby and great reports from her doctor that all is progressing well toward a scheduled delivery in 5 weeks. Thanks to all who made it a very good day for the Foundation!



FOUNDATION MINUTE

Welcome to the Last Week of RI's Month of Maternal and Child Health.

On April 19th, to commemorate the 153rd birthday of Paul Harris, the Rotary Club of Colombo, Sri Lanka, marked the occasion with the installation of their Cervical Cancer Elimination Project. With the support of TRF, the Rotary Club of Birmingham and several other clubs and districts, the screening and testing center for cervical cancer was inaugurated. The Rotary Foundation funded a Global Grant in the amount of \$1,334,570 USD. The grant provided a COBOS 4800 HPV DNA testing machine and 10,000 test kits for screening and early detection of cervical cancer. Cervical Cancer is the second highest killer of women in Sri Lanka with over 1800 new cases annually resulting in more than 800 deaths annually. The machine and kits were officially handed over to the Sri Lankan Ministry of Health on Monday, the 153rd anniversary of Paul Harris' birthday. Rotary has joined hands with the Sri Lankan government to eliminate cervical cancer by 2030. With help from TRF, Sri Lanka is poised to becoming one of the first countries in the world to completely eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem thus saving thousands of women and improving the quality of their lives.

To round out the Rotary International Month of Maternal and Child Health, The Kokomo Early Risers Rotary Club, Kokomo, IN (District 6560, USA), spearheaded a Global Grant aimed at purchasing an ambulance for pregnant women and their children in Uganda. The \$85,000 Global Grant supported by TRF will fund a well-equipped specialty ambulance manned and maintained for pregnant women in the Kyenjojo District of Western Uganda. The coordinator of the project and a member of The Rotary Club of Kokomo, Cheryl Maple said Rotary is an incredible organization and that "Involvement in a local Rotary Club not only allows for great networking within your community but allows you to change lives both locally and worldwide."

If mothers are empowered and healthy, so are their families, leading to an alleviation of poverty and hunger." Robert Zinser, co-founder of the Rotarian Action Group for Population and Development and retired president for Asia at chemical giant BASF

NEXT WEEK!

Rock Island Rotary returns to in-person meetings at the Quad City Botanical Center. Face masks are required and social distancing will be practiced. Lunch service begins at 11:45. Cost for lunch \$10 – pay at meeting. Receipts are available if needed. If unable to attend, join via ZOOM. The link will be sent next Sunday.



The Rotary Club of Rock Island
is proud to present the 2021

Wine Raffle

All proceeds benefit the
Rock Island Rotary
Service Above Self Scholarship
with the
Rock Island-Milan
Education Foundation

1st Prize— \$500 in Wine

2nd Prize— \$300 in Wine

3rd Prize— \$200 in Wine

* Winners get to choose their own
Wine from The Grape Life!

Tickets:
1 for \$5 or
5 for \$20

Drawing will be held
on May 25, 2021

Purchase Tickets Online via Square at:

www.rirotary.com

Or email us at:

rotaryclubrockisland@gmail.com for more info.



HAVE A PLACE OF BUSINESS OR PUBLIC LOCATION WHERE A WINE RAFFLE POSTER COULD BE
DISPLAYED? PLEASE CALL KATHY TRONE 309-794-9400

ROCK ISLAND ROTARY SPENDS EARTH DAY WORKING AT THE QUAD CITY BOTANICAL CENTER

At times the work was hard, but the day was fun for Rotarians serving the community, working together, weeding, planting, digging, and landscaping. Rotary crews worked morning and afternoon shifts and were treated to Portillo's chicken, hotdog, and Italian Beef sandwiches, salad and chocolate cake for lunch!



Dave Geenen, Tom Showalter & Sara Cross clear weeds
From one of the main planting areas.



Jane Koski prepares her area for new growth.

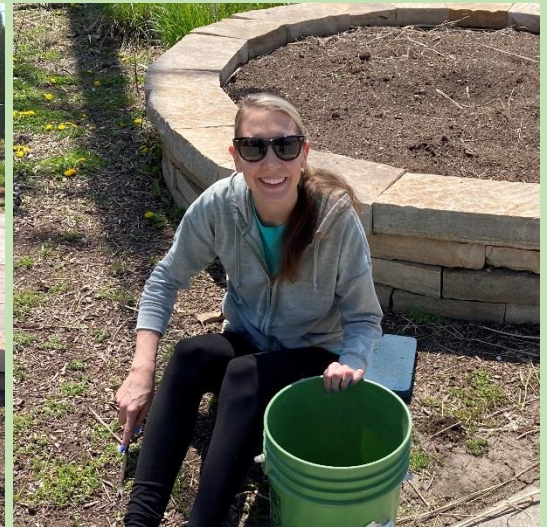


Sonia
Geenen
tackles
those
pesky
yellow
dandelions.



Judy Nordquist discards
weeds she removed.

Jim Moran helps load
weeds and brush into
the dumpster.



Avalon Thomas-Roebal took time
off work from Illinois Casualty Co.
to help with gardening chores.



Kevin Koski drew a tough job
removing old plants from hard



EARTH DAY AT THE BOTANICAL CENTER



Karen Phillips takes on one of the large planting areas.



Dan McNeil works to clear weeds from choking out flagged plants.



Kim Moran takes charge of this weed infested bed.



Jim Moran and Frank Lamber load heavy flagstone slabs.



Jim Nordquist & John Phillips remove plants That have spread out of their bed area.

Jim Moran hauls brush To the dumpster, while Frank Lambert uses the Pitchfork.



Rock Island Rotary Awards Luncheon

Tuesday, May 25th, 12:00 o'clock noon. The event will be in-person at the Quad City Botanical Center honoring outstanding members of our community, our club, and our schools. All awards other than the student awards are selected from nominations submitted by members of our club. It is critical that club members submit nominees for the various awards! **Time is short, so prepare and submit your nominations today!**

ROCK ISLAND ROTARY CLUB
2021 Awards Committee



Rock Island Rotary's annual Awards Luncheon is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 25th**. The Awards Committee seeks nominations for the following awards:

1. **Excellence:** Recognizes distinction or superiority in a field of endeavor. This can be for a single accomplishment or for achieving high standards of achievement or performance over a sustained period of time.
2. **Community Service:** Recognizes individuals or organizations who have worked effectively for the betterment of our community.
3. **The Luckenbill - Wray Excellence Award** Recognizes a current Rock Island Rotarian for outstanding service and dedication to our club over the past year.
4. **A.T. Peara Award for Service Above Self:** Recognizes the Rock Island Rotary member who has exhibited the dedicated service and faithful commitment to the ideals of Rotary that were personified by A.T. Peara, for whom the award is named after.

The first two awards are open to any individual or organization that has demonstrated excellence or worked for the betterment of the Rock Island community. The excellence award applies to all lines of work and to all ages.

The Luckenbill – Wray and A.T. Peara awards are limited to current members of Rock Island Rotary.

To ensure that our committee has adequate time to evaluate, consider, make the selections, and have awards prepared, the deadline for nominations is Tuesday, May 4th. Please consider making one or more nominations using the lower portion of this form. Additional copies are available if you need them. We greatly appreciate your participation and assistance.

Submit Nominations by email to Carrie Crossen: ccrossen@choosethechief.com

NOMINEE NAME: _____ **Your Name:** _____

EXCELLENCE AWARD COMMUNITY SERVICE LUCKENBILL-WRAY A.T. PEARA AWARD

Reasons in support of your Nomination:

[illegible]

SUMMARY OF FINES FILLING THE TAB

Total "Tab" for Individual Members. Showing what your balance was as of September 29, what your total was as of 12/29, what your total was pm February 23 when we last published totals, what fines have been incurred since then, and finally, what your total is going after today's meeting since we began fining in ZOOM meetings. **This does not take into considerations any fine payments you may have made.** What you owe as of today is the fifth column total MINUS any fine payments you have made since April 2020. Next week we resume in-person luncheon meetings. Those that care to "Pay the Piper" at that meeting will be given the opportunity! Make checks payable to the "Rotary Foundation".

ROTARIAN	As of 9/29/2020	As of 12/29/20	As of 2/23/21	New Since 2/23/21	<u>Total</u>
Rebecca Arnold	3	5	6	1	7
Steve Bahls			1		1
Howard Beck	1	3	4	21	25
Kim Calhoun	1	1	1	1	2
Angela Campbell	21	24	27	2	29
Sue Cassatt	2	2	3	20	23
Stan Coin	90	184	184	101	285
Sara Cross		1	1	1	2
Carrie Crossen	2	2	2		2
Pat Cunningham		100	100		100
Clarence Darrow		1	4		4
Jeff Dismer	3	3	3		3
Dave Geenen	1	1	1		1
Julie Gelaude		2	2		2
Linda Golden		3	4		4
Cindi Gramenz	8	10	13		13
Tom Hammar	3	4	4	3	7
Doug Hultquist	1	1	6	3	9
Jerry Jones		1	1		1
Kevin Koski	9	10	13	3	16
Reginald Lawrence	1	1	1		1
Ruth Lee	6	12	16	3	19
Kathy Lelonek		3	20		20
Chris Lemon	1	1	1		1
Mark Mayeski	4	16	16	33	49
Anne McGlynn	5	26	31	1	32
Dan McNeil	2	2	2		2
Fr. Mirabelli	1	1	1		1
Jim Moran		1	2	5	7
Steve Morenz			2		2
Jim Nordquist	1	43	44	1	45
John Oliger	1	190	190		190
Bruce Peterson	1	2	6	2	8
Justin Peterson		2	3	1	4
John Phillips	40	41	41	2	43
Bud Phillis	6	10	12		12
Monta Ponsetto	69	74	75	16	91
Sue Rector	7	11	16	7	23
Jeff Rose			2	90	92
Gary Rowe	6	13	16	3	19
Molly Shattuck	18	26	29	1	30
Tom Showalter		3	5	81	86
Holly Sparkman	2	3	3	1	4
Bill Stengel	1	1	1		1
Bob Swanson	50	56	60	4	64
Kai Swanson	6	11	14	2	16
Mike Thoms	1	1	1		1
Kathy Trone	19	20	20	2	22
Tammy Weikert	5	7	8	1	9
Pete Wessels	8	8	8		8
John Wetzel	8	17	25	11	36
Mark Zimmerman	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>		<u>6</u>
Total Tab Fines	\$415	\$966	\$1,057	\$423	\$1480

If you would like to see how the totals came about, see the weekly fine/happy/sad dollar report on [the following page.](#)

WEEKLY FINES From April 14, 2020 through April 27, 2021

April 14
Sue Rector
John Wetzel
Molly Shattuck
Ruth Lee
Jeff Dismar
Mike Thoms
Pete Wessels
Cindi Gramenz.

April 21
Pete Wessels
Mark Mayeski
Jeff Dismar
Kim Calhoun
Ruth Lee

April 28
Sue Cassatt
Kevin Koski
Gary Rowe

May 5
Ruth Lee
Holly Sparkman
Cindi Gramenz
Sue Cassatt

May 12
John Phillips
Bob Swanson
Molly Shattuck
Tammy Weikert
Sue Rector

May 19
Stan Coin
Kevin Koski
John Wetzel (2)
Monta Ponsetto (3)
Tom Hammar
Tammy Weikert

May 26
Cindy Gramenz

June 2
Gary Rowe
Kevin Koski
Bob Swanson (2)

June 9
Mark Mayeski
Ruth Lee
Kevin Koski
Kai Swanson (2)
Molly Shattuck
Dan McNeil

June 16
Cindi Gramenz
John Wetzel (2)
Rebecca Arnold
John Olinger

June 23
NONE
June 30
Jeff Dismar
Bud Phillis
John Wetzel
Tom Hammar

July 7
Cindi Gramenz
Gary Rowe
Angela Campbell
Mark Mayeski
Bob Swanson

July 14
None

July 21
Anne McGlynn
Tammy Weikert
Dan McNeil
John Wetzel
Ruth Lee
Kevin Koski

July 28
John Wetzel
Cindi Gramenz
Mark Zimmerman
Sue Rector (\$5)
Mark Mayeski
Molly Shattuck \$14
Jim Nordquist
Kevin Koski
Anne McGlynn
Holly Sparkman
All Member (not wearing pin)
All Member (book delivery)

August 4
Stan Coin \$2
Monta Ponsetto \$65
John Phillips
Bob Swanson
Anne McGlynn
Bud Phillis
Gary Rowe \$2
Howard Beck
Rebecca Arnold
Tammy Weikert
Cindi Gramenz

August 11
NONE

August 18
John Phillips \$2
Kevin Koski
Bruce Peterson \$2
Carrie Crossen
Monta Ponsetto
Bill Stengel
Bob Swanson \$42

August 25
Bud Phillis
Carrie Crossen
Molly Shattuck
Tom Hammar
Doug Hultquist
Ruth Lee

Sept 1
Angela Campbell \$20
Kai Swanson \$3
Rebecca Arnold
Gary Rowe
Kevin Koski

Bud Phillis
Anne McGlynn
Bob Swanson
John Wetzel

Sept 8
NONE

Sept 15
ALL – No pin
Reginald Lawrence
Dave Geenen
Cindi Gramenz
Stan Coin \$25
Bud Phillis
Bob Swanson

Sept 22
Stan Coin \$62
Kathy Trone \$19
Tammy Weikert

Sept 29
John Phillips \$36
Kevin Koski
Kai Swanson
Chris Lemon
Fr. Mirabelli
Bob Swanson
Bud Phillis
John Wetzel
Anne McGlynn
Molly Shattuck

October 6
Cindi Gramenz
Sue Rector
Kai Swanson
Ruth Lee

October 13
Ruth Lee
Bob Swanson
Kathy Trone
Justin Peterson
Kai Swanson
Bud Phillis

October 20
Monta Ponsetto \$2
Bob Swanson
Gary Rowe \$2
Jerry Jones
John Phillips
Tammy Weikert
John Olinger \$189

October 27
Clarence Darrow
Sara Cross
Sue Rector
Tammy Weikert
Stan Coin
Julie Gelaude
Mark Zimmerman \$2

November 3
Ruth Lee \$2
Bob Swanson
John Wetzel
Angela Campbell
Stand Coin \$91

November 10
Pat Cunningham \$100
Kevin Koski
Monta Ponsetto
John Wetzel
Mark Mayeski \$2

November 17
Howard Beck
Ruth Lee \$2
John Wetzel
Stan Coin
Bud Phillis
Kai Swanson \$2
Gary Rowe
Linda Golden
Justin Peterson

November 24
Bud Phillis
Kathy Lelonek
Holly Sparkman
Gary Rowe \$2
John Wetzel
Anne McGlynn
Molly Shattuck
Tom Hammar
Rebecca Arnold

December 1
Mark Mayeski \$10
Jim Nordquist \$42
Anne McGlynn \$20
Mark Zimmerman
Monta Ponsetto
Angela Campbell

December 8
Tom Showalter \$2
Kai Swanson
John Wetzel
Sue Rector
Gary Rowe
John Wetzel
Linda Golden
Rebecca Arnold

December 15
Mark Zimmerman \$2
Bob Swanson
Julie Gelaude
Molly Shattuck \$6
Kathy Lelonek \$2
Bruce Peterson

December 22
Tom Showalter
Bud Phillis
Gary Rowe
John Wetzel
Howard Beck
Bob Swanson
Cindi Gramenz
Molly Shattuck

December 29
Stan Coin
Sue Rector
John Wetzel \$2
Linda Golden
Bob Swanson
Monta Ponsetto

Angela Campbell
Jim Moran

January 5
Doug Hultquist
Sue Cassatt
John Wetzel \$2
Bud Phillis
Sue Rector \$2

January 11
No Fines

January 19
Howard Beck
Bruce Peterson \$2
Kai Swanson
Angela Campbell
Sue Rector \$2
Cindi Gramenz
Gary Rowe
Rebecca Arnold
John Wetzel
Bob Swanson
Doug Hultquist
Jim Moran
January 26
Tom Showalter
Clarence Darrow \$2
Tammy Weikert
Doug Hultquist
Angela Campbell
Steve Morenz

February 2
Anne McGlynn
Steve Bahls
Kai Swanson \$2
Doug Hultquist \$2
Ruth Lee \$2
Cindi Gramenz
Bob Swanson \$2
Kathy Lelonek \$17
Gary Rowe
Bud Phillis
Molly Shattuck \$3
Steve Morenz
February 9
Clarence Darrow
Sue Rector
Monta Ponsetto
Jeff Rose \$5
Angela Campbell
Cindi Gramenz

February 16
Anne McGlynn \$2
Kevin Koski \$2
Linda Golden
Jim Nordquist
Bruce Peterson \$2

February 23
Anne McGlynn \$2
Kevin Koski
Tom Showalter
John Wetzel \$5
Justin Peterson
Ruth Lee \$2
Bob Swanson
Gary Rowe

March 2
John Wetzel \$3
Jim Moran \$5
Bob Swanson \$2
Sue Cassatt \$20
Sue Rector \$5
Holly Sparkman

March 9
Angela Campbell
Tom Showalter
Ruth Lee
Gary Rowe
John Wetzel \$5
Kai Swanson
Sue Rector \$2
Bruce Peterson \$2
Tom Hammar \$3
Doug Hultquist \$3
Howard Beck
John Phillips
Bob Swanson
Kim Calhoun

March 16
Kevin Koski \$2
Gary Rowe
Stan Coin
Howard Beck
Rick Devinney
Jeff Dismar
Justin Peterson \$3

March 23
Jim Moran \$2
Gary Rowe \$2
Howard Beck \$10
Monta Ponsetto \$15
Rebecca Arnold
John Wetzel \$3
Jim Nordquist
Mark Mayeski \$2
March 30
Tom Showalter \$80
Monta Ponsetto
Bruce Peterson
Howard Beck \$10

April 6
Mark Mayeski \$31
Angela Campbell
Kathy Trone \$2
Sara Cross
Ruth Lee \$2
Tammy Weikert

April 13
Stan Coin

April 20
Bob Swanson
Kai Swanson
John Phillips

April 27
Jeff Rose \$90
Ann McGlynn
Kevin Koski
Stan Coin \$100
Molly Shattuck

The following article is a reprinted from the Airforce Magazine. It is about Capt. Stephen Phillis, a native of Rock Island, graduate of Alleman High School, and son of Rock Island Rotarian Bud and Diane Phillis. Thanks to Pete Wessels for forwarding the article to us so we could share it with you.

AIR FORCE MAGAZINE



Above and Beyond

By Brian W. Everstine
March 26, 2021

Three minutes and 45 seconds is an eternity when hundreds of angry people are trying to kill you.

Two A-10 pilots, flying together for the 30th time in Desert Storm on Feb. 15, 1991, attacked a massive formation of Iraqi armor in the deserts of Kuwait.

One pilot, a young first lieutenant named Robert Sweet, survived, and became a prisoner of war (POW). The mission commander of the flight, an experienced captain, who lingered above the site of the shoot down for three minutes and 45 seconds—intentionally drawing fire, attempting to help the search and rescue of his wingman, was ultimately shot down himself.

That pilot, Capt. Stephen R. Phillis, received the Silver Star posthumously for his actions that day.

Now, more than 30 years after the incident, a former U.S. Air Force Academy boxing buddy of Phillis, after years of research, is pressing for Phillis to receive a military award more befitting his sacrifice.

“You have a hard time explaining what heroics in an airplane looks like,” said Jim Demarest, a brigadier general in the Florida Air National Guard and himself a veteran of Desert Storm. “Steve’s heroics check all the boxes.”



Capt. Stephen Phillis was killed in action when his A-10 was shot down during Desert Storm.

Into 'Bad Guy Land'

On Feb. 15, two A-10s assigned to the 353rd Tactical Fighter Squadron, call sign Enfield Flight 3-7, had one tasking for the day. The attack jets were to take off from King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia, hit a refueling tanker, and head toward targets in the northern tip of Kuwait.

Then Sweet, the new guy in the squadron, was combat-paired with Phillis, who was the most experienced in the squadron and had been the weapons officer. Sweet had flown the most sorties of the squadron, one more than Phillis, by the time Feb. 15 rolled around.

"He was a little nervous," Sweet said of his wingman that day. "He was ... smarter than I was in a lot of ways."



1st Lt. Robert Sweet (left, with an unknown Airman) was a prisoner of war for 19 days during Operation Desert Storm. He did not know his wingman, Capt. Stephen Phillis, was also shot down—while trying to save him—until he gained his freedom. Courtesy After the A-10s hit the tanker, they were retasked to work with F-16s farther north into Iraq near Basra where there were some "pretty lucrative targets" near an oil field. The A-10s turned north, checked in, and heard multiple "breaks"—F-16s avoiding surface-to-air missiles (SAM) fired by Iraqis. The A-10s knew if the area was dangerous, they shouldn't hang out, and targets could be left to "the night guys"—bombers or other aircraft tasked to hit the targets after nightfall, Sweet said.

Phillis made the call to turn back and return to the first target. They moved back toward the Iraq-Kuwait border, which was "still bad guy land" at this time of the war.

The A-10s flew above a massive formation of the advanced 2nd Al Medina Armored Division—the elite formation of the Iraqi Republican Guard later made famous in the Battle of Medina Ridge, one of the largest tank battles in U.S. history.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi soldiers, columns of T-72 tanks and other armor, anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) batteries, and advanced Russian-made SA-13 surface-to-air missile systems were spread out over six miles in the sand below. U.S. bombing runs had damaged much of the Iraqi armored units, but the Medina was "pristine," Sweet said.

The sun began to dip low in the sky as the A-10s arrived and planned a couple of passes. Sweet, as he came off a pass, was shot at by a surface-to-air missile. Phillis radioed at his wingman "Chaff, flare! Chaff, flare!"

Sweet deployed flares. He saw this one, "and if you see it, you normally beat 'em, and I did."

If something on the ground shoots at you, it becomes a new target, and the A-10s turned to target the SAM position. Phillis did a gun pass over the SAM site, then radioed Sweet to turn in and do his own pass on the target.

As he was rolling, stick right at about a 60-degree bank, he was hit by another SAM from behind. The explosion blew his A-10 wing level at about 13,000 feet before it began to dive.

"I am hit, and I am heading south," Sweet said on the radio.

The explosion blew off part of the A-10's right wing, the aileron, the outboard flap, and took out the A-10s hydraulics. "Everything went into rapid mode," he said. As the Thunderbolt II went into a steep spiral, Sweet radioed, "I'm out," and punched out of the aircraft.

Phillis relayed the situation to the airborne warning and control system (AWACS) saying, "We got two SAM launches. My wingman is bag at this time. I have him in sight."

Dangling below a bright white and orange parachute, over an elite Iraqi armored division, Sweet saw .50 caliber guns and AAA fire in his direction.

"There was a rush, a little jolt, and I was hanging in the chute and it was all quiet," Sweet told People Magazine in 1991 about the ejection. "All that panic, throwing switches and bells going off, and then it was just dead quiet in the chute. Just a little breeze. Peaceful, almost. I threw off my mask, then looked down. I could see all the tanks and I was trying to steer away from them, but I knew I was going to hit close. That's when I said, "Oh, man, this is not looking good."

Above, Phillis switched into Sandy, or the A-10 search and rescue (SAR) mode. He radioed that he saw a good chute and marked the ejection site coordinates. He radioed the nearby E-3 Sentry AWACS that his wingman was down and asked for more aircraft to come and help the SAR effort.

These steps are the typical duty of a wingman in a downed aircraft situation—but Phillis stayed. Radio traffic showed confusion as incoming aircraft were not clear where to head.

Phillis flew an orbit over the armored division to draw fire away from Sweet as he parachuted down. He radioed incoming A-10s, trying to direct them to his position since the aircraft did not have radar.

The incoming A-10s could not spot him, so Phillis fired flares from his A-10—drawing the attention of both the Iraqis and the incoming help.

After repeated attempts to help the incoming aircraft locate him, Phillis realized the increased danger of the situation. An Iraqi SA-13 hit Phillis's A-10, lighting it on fire. He radioed to the incoming A-10s to leave, then radioed his own fate.

"Enfield 3-7 is bag as well," Phillis radioed to the AWACS with a calm tone.

With the aircraft on fire and disintegrating, Phillis turns south in an attempt to get away from the Iraqis and Sweet's ejection site. His A-10 ultimately crashed, cartwheeling through the Kuwaiti sand, and was totally destroyed.

As Sweet approached the ground, hundreds of Iraqi soldiers rushed to him. He injured his leg on landing, about 50 yards from a T-72 tank. "I stuck up my hands, but when they kept shooting, and I didn't know whether they were aiming at me, I bowed my head and covered my face with my arms," Sweet told People.

Sweet was beaten—"They were pissed off because I had just been dropping bombs on them"—and he was captured, a prisoner of war. He was ultimately moved to a prison at a Baathist Party security compound—the famous Baghdad Biltmore—that was targeted by F-117s on Feb. 23. He was then moved to a civilian prison. When other POWs arrived, Sweet learned that his wingman was shot down as well.

After the incident, U.S. forces only picked up one locator beacon. Knowing that both A-10s were shot down, the ultimate fates of Phillis and Sweet were not known until March 6, when the POWs were released, and a Red Cross plane flew them out of Baghdad. It wasn't until Sweet got off the plane—and Phillis did not—that his fate was known.

After U.S. forces liberated Kuwait and fought the Iraqi forces back, they located the wreckage of Phillis' A-10 and discovered his remains inside, along with evidence that the ejection seat was not fired.

'What Does a Pilot Have to Do?'

For Demarest, himself a USAF pilot and U.S. Air Force Academy graduate, the story of Phillis's bravery should not end there. Phillis received a Silver Star posthumously for his actions, and since his A-10 was a combat loss, there was not an extensive investigation. No Accident Investigation Board determined details of the incident.

Beginning about 1997, Demarest embarked on a mission to determine exactly what happened and to ensure that Phillis is recognized at a level he deserves. More than 20 years of research, interviews, records requests, and even a 65,000-word manuscript for a possible book, have resulted.

"I want the world to know Steve's story," Demarest said. His "forensic" review focused on the radio calls of the day, piecing together a timeline that was not extensively considered around the time of the crash.

Tech. Sgt. H.H. Deffner via National Archives

"No one took the time to analyze what happened," he said. "The three minutes and 45 seconds represent true heroics here."

Those three minutes and 45 seconds show that Phillis acted "above and beyond the call of duty." A seasoned flight leader would note the successful ejection, the good chute, and the approximate location of the landing. Phillis, however, stayed—he put himself in grave danger

repeatedly to protect Sweet as he parachuted to the ground. He made himself visible, including to the Iraqis, in an attempt to bring in search and rescue help, flying a dark green A-10 against a blue sky, orbiting "10,000 feet over 10,000 angry dudes."

"He earned his right to leave," Demarest said of Phillis. "But he stays three minutes and 45 seconds. To a pilot, it is an eternity."

After Phillis was hit, radioing he was bagged as calmly as if in a casual phone conversation, he then tried to follow Rule No. 1 of combat search and rescue by not becoming part of the search, leaving the dangerous area on his way down to try to let SAR concentrate on Sweet.

When Desert Storm ended, there was a large, public push to bring troops home quickly. Investigations and awards were not as important, Demarest contends. And in a combat situation, the push to account for what happened is not as urgent. "As soon as you confirm a KIA or a plane [crashes], the investigation stops. It's not part of the process. That's not a dig, it's just a fact," Demarest said.

Now, however, Demarest said the time is right for another look at Phillis's case. The Air Force just went through a large relook at its valor awards during the Global War on Terrorism, including upgrading the Air Force Cross for Master Sgt. John Chapman to the Medal of Honor—the only Airman to receive such an award for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Several other Silver Stars and Bronze Stars with Valor Device have also been upgraded.

"There's an appetite," he said. "I'm cautiously optimistic."



Thirty years after heroics as an A-10 pilot in Desert Storm earned him a Silver Star Medal, some are saying Capt. Stephen Phillis deserves an upgrade to the Medal of Honor.

The Air Force has, since the Vietnam War, been “stingy” on its awards, especially during Desert Storm, Demarest said. There was a sense that USAF in the Vietnam era inflated its awards, so, since then, the Air Force has been more conservative.

Demarest now is leading a push for Phillis to receive the Medal of Honor posthumously for his actions that day. He’s reaching out to political connections and officials in and out of the Air Force, sharing his findings and trying to make a case.

There are similar stories in USAF history. For example, the story of Lt. Col. Leo K. Thorsness. His wingman was shot down during a surface-to-air missile suppression mission in North Vietnam in 1967. Thorsness circled the descending parachutes, keeping them in sight to relay the position for search and rescue. During this, a nearby MiG-17 flew by and Thorsness shot it down and then left to find a tanker. When he was told there were more MiGs nearby threatening search and rescue helicopters, Thorsness returned to damage one and drive the others away, before landing at a forward operating base.

There’s the story of Col. William A. Jones III. In 1968 in North Vietnam, Jones was flying an A-1H Skyraider as an on-scene commander in an attempted rescue of a downed pilot. Jones was repeatedly hit by anti-aircraft fire but continued the search. In another pass, Jones was hit by multiple rounds of automatic weapons fire, igniting a rocket in the cockpit, and causing a fire in the fuselage. He jettisoned the canopy, as fire began to spread across his body. Despite this, he flew the crippled plane back to base to pass along information for the rescue before receiving medical assistance.

Phillis staying to help Sweet “is the definition of ‘gallantry beyond the call of duty’ given the intense anti-aircraft fire, the enemy’s awareness of his position, his lack of supporting aircraft, and his inability to safely escape because of his low altitude and the A-10’s lack of speed,” Demarest wrote in a document pressing the case. “Captain Stephen Richard Phillis’ conduct in the face of mortal danger with complete disregard for his personal safety was aimed at saving another. Is this not exactly what the Medal of Honor should recognize? What does a fighter pilot have to do to earn the Medal of Honor?”

Sweet agrees. Phillis “gave his life for his country,” and “he deserves the highest honor this country can give him,” Sweet said.

