

---

# VIEWS LETTER

Volume 75, Issue 1

AWD's Views, News & Items of Interest

November & December 2010

[www.TheViewsLetter.com](http://www.TheViewsLetter.com)

---

## Last Flight

*Mr. Witt was in Maryland on Feb. 16 to attend a Navy ceremony. As it so happened, his return flight from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles was also carrying the body of 1st Lieutenant Jared Landaker, a Marine helicopter pilot from Big Bear, California, whose helicopter was shot down in Iraq. Mr. Witt's commentary is written in the form of a diary, and although it is rough in places and contains a few technical terms familiar primarily to pilots and military personnel, I believe the sentiment behind what he has written will shine through. Here, then, is Stuart Witt's "Diary of a Last and Final Flight Home."*

\* \* \* \*

### Diary of a Last and Final Flight Home

Feb. 17, 2007, 0350: Curbside at 24th and M, Washington, D.C., Sixteen degrees with a light breeze. I was going home after my second week of freezing temps to my home in Southern California. Fly my aircraft, ride a horse, climb a mountain and get back to living. I'm tired of the cold.

0425: Paying the taxi fare at Dulles in front of the United Airlines counter, still cold.

0450: Engaging the self-serve ticket machine, and it delivers my ticket, baggage tag and boarding pass. Hmmm, that Marine is all dressed up early . . . ? Oh, maybe . . . hmm, "Good morning, Captain, you're looking sharp."

Pass security and to my gate for a quick decaf coffee and five hours sleep. A quick check of the flight status monitor. UA Flt 211 is on time, I'm up front, how bad can it be? Hmmm, that same Marine, he must be heading to Pendleton to see his lady at LAX for the long weekend all dressed up like that. Or maybe not?

"Attention in the boarding area, we will begin boarding in 10 minutes. We have some additional duties to attend to this morning, but we will have you out of here on time."

That Marine Captain now has five others with him. BINGO, I get it, he's not visiting his lady, he's an official escort. How I remember doing that once, CACO duty. I still remember the names of the victim and family, the Brunos in Mojave . . . all of them, wow, that was 24 years ago. I wonder if we will ever know who and why?

On board, 0600: "Good morning, folks this is the Captain. This morning, we have been attending to some additional duties, and I apologize for being ten minutes late for pushback; but believe me, we will be early to LAX. This morning, it is my sad pleasure to announce that 1st Lt. Jared Landaker, USMC, will be flying with us to his Big Bear home in Southern California. Jared lost his life over the skies of Iraq earlier this month, and today, we have the honor of returning him home along with his mother, father, brother and uncles. Please join me in making the journey comfortable for the Landaker family and their uniformed escort. Now sit back and enjoy our ride: We are not expecting any turbulence until we reach the Rocky Mountains; and at that time, we will do what we can to ensure a smooth ride. For those interested, you can listen in to our progress on button nine."

Up button nine: “Good morning, UA 211, you are cleared to taxi, takeoff and cleared to LAX as filed.” From the time we started rolling, we never stopped. First Lt. Landaker began receiving his due.

Four hours and 35 minutes later over Big Bear Mt., the AB320 makes a left roll and steep bank and then one to the right . . . Nice touch, Captain. Five minutes out from landing, the Captain says, “Ladies and gents, after landing I’m leaving the fasten seatbelt sign on, and I ask everyone in advance to yield to the Landaker family. Please remain seated until all members have departed the aircraft. Thank you for your patience. We are 20 minutes early.”

On roll out, I notice red lights, emergency vehicles everywhere. We are being escorted directly to our gate, no waiting anywhere, not even a pause. Out the left window, a dozen Marines in full dress blues, Highway Patrol, police, fire crews all in full dress with lights on. A true class act by everyone, down to a person from coast to coast. Way to go, United Airlines, for doing the little things RIGHT because they are the big things; air traffic control for getting the message, and to all law enforcement for your display of brotherhood.

When the family departed the aircraft, everyone sat silent. Then I heard a lady say, “God bless you and your family; thank you.” Then another, then another, then a somber round of applause. The Captain read a prepared note from Mrs. Landaker to the effect of, “Thank you all for your patience and heartfelt concern for us and our son. We sincerely appreciate the sentiment. It is nice to have Jared home.”

After they departed the aircraft, I found myself — along with 30 others from our flight — looking for a window. Not a dry eye in the craft. All of us were bawling like babies. It was one of the most emotional moments of my life. We all stood silent and watched as Jared was taken by his honor guard to a waiting hearse. Then the motorcade slowly made its way off the ramp.

I have finally seen the silent majority. It is deep within us all. Black, brown, white, yellow, red, purple: We are all children, parents, brothers, sisters, etc . . . we are an American family.

Early in our taxi out from the gate at Dulles, the gent next to me (a Fairfax city council member) and I were talking to the flight attendant and mentioned that we had sons serving on active duty. We commented, “What do you say? How tragic, they must be devastated.” The flight attendant said many of the passengers had told him the same thing, so somewhere in the flight he shared his tidbits with Mrs. Landaker. Our flight attendant had been struggling with what to say, to find the right words, so he told the Landaker family about passengers who were parents of service members who connected with their grief as parents.

After I collected myself, I stepped back to their row, two behind me, and introduced myself to Mr. Landaker (a veteran of Southeast Asia as a tanker) and Jared’s uncle and brother. What a somber moment. Their Marine Captain escort was a first-rate class act. He had been Jared’s tactics instructor and volunteered for this assignment. As he said, “Sir, it is the least I could do, he was my friend and a great stick. He absolutely loved to fly. It’s an honor to be here on his last flight.”

1115: On my connecting flight, my mind raced. How lucky I was to have had an opportunity to fly my father to Spain and ride the carrier USS John F. Kennedy home in 1981. The same year Jared was born. How lucky I was to have my father on the crow’s landing when I made my final cat shot in an F-14. Jared’s father never had that chance. Jared was at war, 10,000 miles away.

When Mr. Landaker and I were talking, he shared with me, “When Jared was born, he had no soft spot on his head and doctors feared he would be developmentally challenged. But, he became a physics major with honors, high school and college athlete, and graduated with distinction from naval aviation flight school! He was short in stature, but a Marine all the way.” Visit his life story on line at [bigbeargrizzly.net](http://bigbeargrizzly.net). Bring tissue.

Feb. 7, 2007, Anbar Province, Iraq. 1st Lt. Jared Landaker, United States Marine Corps, hero, from Big Bear, California, gave his life in service to his country. Fatally wounded when his CH-46 helicopter was shot down by enemy fire, Jared and his crew all perished. His life was the ultimate sacrifice of a grateful military family and nation. His death occurred at the same time as Anna Nicole Smith, a drug-using person with a 7th-grade education, of no pedigree, who dominated our news for two weeks while Jared became a number on CNN. And most unfortunately, Jared's death underscores a fact that we are a military at war, not a nation at war. Until we become a nation committed to winning the fight, and elect leaders with the spine to ask Americans to sacrifice in order to win, we shall remain committed to being a nation with a military at war, and nothing more. (And possibly no funding if Congress has its way!)

1st Lt. Landaker, a man I came to know in the skies over America on 17 Feb. 2007, from me to you, aviator to aviator, I am unbelievably humbled. It was my high honor to share your last flight. God bless you.

Semper Fi

---

## The issue is always the same: the government or the market. There is no third solution.

*~Ludwig Von Mises*

---

### Seeds

#### Chapter 3

**A**fter flying the C-185 they tied the aircraft down.

"Bill come on in the office and let's talk" Lisa shouted over the departure of another airplane.

"Sure, I'll be right in. Is there a wash room near?" I'd like to wash the 100-load-lead off my hands," he answered.

"There is one just inside, come on in."

"Okay." Bill replied. He knew from her reaction that his flying ability had exceeded her expectations. After splashing cold water in his face and taking a long drink at the water fountain he appeared in front of her desk in the small portable building made into a flight school. Her office was tiny with barely enough room for a small filing cabinet and her small desk with two chairs.

"Sit down Bill. Would you like a cup of coffee, a Coke or something?"

"No thank you, I just took a long drink of water and I'm fine, but thanks anyway."

She leaned back in the straight back oak chair with her foot on an open drawer and the other barley touching the vinyl tile floor. She was mannerly and feminine not at all masculine in her appearance or her actions, but she had been operating in a man's world for so long that she had acquired some of the mannerisms of the typical male pilot. She had short hair and a strong chin and jaw for a girl. Her lips were full and feminine as were her eyes. She was one hundred percent woman, adept at using her womanhood along with the look that she could cast with her dark brown eyes to make her point. She could be cool, warm or difficult, and she didn't seem to care if her moods and feelings were apparent. An attractive lady she was, but far from a pushover. She was very quick and smart and the final word was easy for her. If someone tried to abuse her openness and honesty, she would shoot them down and walk away never thinking about it or them again. She could make a strong man feel so small that he would typically say no more or make an about-face and never return. She could explain a technique to another instructor or a student in a way they could easily understand. This is a woman

you wanted on your side whether as a leader or follower she was an asset with high moral character and devout determination.

"Bill, you can fly very well, there is no doubt about that. You can have a job if you want it. If you do want the job, your job description will be to teach some of these people around here to fly. Most of the students can fly a little, but many of them only enough to get themselves killed. The flying up here is dangerous more so than back in North Texas where you've come from. If you know where to look you can find wrecked aircraft all over the countryside. The weather here is unpredictable a good portion of the time. There are tall rocks almost everywhere in this state. If you were where it is flat you would be hundreds of miles from here, and that too can be a danger. But for now, and hopefully for the next few months you will be operating at another airport near here, it's more remote with less traffic. Your title will be Instructor and you will be expected to instruct, and to follow the syllabus that we use. I know you can fly but the jury is still out as to whether you can instruct or not. I think you probably can, but we'll see. I've been disappointed more than once with some of the people that I have hired. I noticed that you have a single engine float plane rating. This can be useful. If you can instruct—we will get you checked out in the floatplanes and get them added to you instructor's certificate. I'm a designated examiner, and we have access to several planes on floats, from C-185s to a couple of Super Cubs and a Citabria each of them are already very busy. Bill do you have any questions for me?"

"Yes ma'am, I do have a few. First of all, what's the pay?"

"Thirty bucks an hour is the most I can pay a rookie instructor."

"Ms. Smooth, in all due respect, I'm not exactly a rookie—I have three years and more than a thousand hours of experience as an instructor."

"I understand that, and you have proven to me that you can fly, but like I said, you're not that familiar with this part of the country and the weather here can change in a heartbeat. I just don't know how you get along with people, above all, students. I haven't even had a look at your logbook yet. All I can afford is thirty bucks an hour for now. But, your pay clock starts the minute the student arrives and continues until the end of your post flight critique. You should spend a minimum of twenty minutes with each student in addition to the normal hour of flight time. As you probably already know; the more time you have their attention on the ground—the more about flying they will grasp in the air. That is better for them and you."

"Ms. Smooth, I can get the logbook in just a few minutes, it's somewhere in my truck. If you want, I'll get it right now."

"No, just bring it with you in the morning, but I will have another look at your certificates if you don't mind."

Bill dug his certificates out of his wallet once again and handed them to her. "What time do you want me here in the morning?"

"Sunup will be fine. We work from sunup until whenever we want to quit in the evening, as long as it's daylight. The earlier the sun comes up the earlier we show up until the sun starts to rise before five local, then we show up at five until the sun starts to rise later than that in the fall. As you probably know we have a lot of daylight here in the summer and a lot of night during the winter. So, we try to make up for the darkness when the sun shines. Sunup is 0700 in the morning. I'll expect to see you then and there are plenty of students. There will be one ready to go shortly after seven. Okay?"

"Yes Ma'am, I'll be here and ready to go. You need to know that the only experience that I have on floats is the time that was required to get the rating, and that's it. That won't be a problem will it?"

"No, Bill, that won't be a problem. Anymore questions?"

"One more question, if you don't mind."

"Shoot."

"What do you know about Jesus Christ?"

"Not a lot, He is the main character in the Christian Religion—I'm not a religious person. Why do you ask?"

"Great and honest answer. You need to know that I am a Christian. I'm not a holier-than-thou-type Christian, but I am evangelical. That is, that I try to mention Jesus Christ to everyone I meet, and if given the opportunity I'll tell anyone and everyone how much Jesus has done for me. Whether they are interested in Jesus



is important to me only that I will know how to pray for them, one way or the other. Their response will tell me what to pray for."

"Ms. Smooth do you still want to hire me?"

"Yes Bill, you're already hired. I'll see you in the morning. Call me Lisa from now on and don't waste your time praying for me. Okay?"

"Lisa, I won't waste my time, I promise."

Bill left the office with praises in his heart—he hadn't been in town long enough to find a place to stay and he already had a pretty good paying job with the possibility of gaining some floatplane experience. Wow, what a wonderful God, he thought.

He drove into town, and stopped at the first Diner he came to. He grabbed a local paper ordered a sandwich and a Coke, and started scanning the classifieds.

Bill was in constant prayer and at the present he was praying prayers of praise and thanksgiving for his new job and all of the possibilities that his Lord was providing.

Now if he could just find the right place to live. He needed an apartment.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ethel Dooly and Julie Wiles sat across from each other in a corner booth in the far back of the Denny's that was less than a mile from the Hospital. They were scanning their menus when the waitress arrived with two empty cups and a pot of coffee.

"Would yall like some coffee?" she asked in a deep southern drawl.

"Yes, please," both women answered.

The older waitress pored the coffee and walked away after taking their order.

"So, how's the coffee?" Ethel broke the short silence between them.

"It tastes good, much better than that emergency room stuff that I've been drinking all night."

"I'll bet you are exhausted."

"I don't feel exhausted, I guess I got more sleep than you would think possible in the ER waiting area. I feel pretty good actually."

"Good, but you look a little tired. I hope you don't mind me saying so."

"That's okay, I know that I must look terrible I haven't changed clothes in a couple days and I could use a bath." Julie started to tear up.

"Don't cry, you'll have me crying too, and what would that look like here in Denny's with a couple of women crying over their coffee on this beautiful Saturday morning?"

"Okay, I'll stop." she sniffled.

It wasn't long before the food arrived, and they sat quietly and ate.

Ethel Dooly had aged into a very attractive woman in her mid-to-late forties. She had olive complexion with dark green eyes that needed little to no makeup. She had a slight but athletic build. Bi-weekly visits with her hairdresser kept the gray away. Her hands indicated her true age, they were normal in size but the veins were showing slightly below the surface, but her nails were immaculate. Her husband of 25 years had passed away massive heart attack three years before and shortly after his passing her daughter had passed due to an over dose of drugs. Ethel was an only child and both her parents were dead. With no family before or after her, she was alone with the exception of friends. Since the passing of her daughter she had been a constant companion of young, troubled women. Ethel was trying hard to make up for the failures she felt about herself. Since the death of her daughter, Ethel had totally recommitted her life to Jesus and was walking with Him daily. She lived alone in a large four-bedroom brick home on the outskirts of Amarillo. She had the resources to have a maid come in three days a week and keep the place clean and the kitchen stocked. She had once been into the card game 'Bridge' and was a member of several Bridge clubs. Since the death of her daughter, she realized that there were more things to this life than her life, particularly playing card games three times a week. Now, she seldom accepted invitations to play and even to sub for her old Bridge Clubs.

After they finished off the meal, they sat drinking their coffee.

"So, tell me about yourself Julie. Where did you begin, and how did you get to where you are?" Ethel asked in a very direct way. So direct that once the words left her mouth she was surprised at her own question, but remained silent awaiting Julie's response.

"Mrs. Dooley, it is a long story and I don't know where to begin."

"Please call me Ethel—Mrs. Dooley sounds so old. Begin your story at the first thing you can remember. Okay?"

There was a long pause while Julie composed her thoughts, finally she said. "My first memory is hearing my mother and my father fighting, they were yelling and screaming at each other. My father angrily drove away from the little house where we lived and I haven't seen or heard from him since. I was around three or four years old. It was winter and very cold and we lived in the central part of Illinois in a small town between Springfield and Decatur. My mother was a waitress at a local Diner, and I think she is still working at the same place. Her mom and dad, which were my grandparents, took me in when I was seven and I lived with them until their death a little over a year ago. They were killed when a tornado came through the neighborhood and destroyed their home while they were sleeping. After that, I was staying with a girlfriend—we had just graduated from High School together and I was hanging out at a bar trying to get a job as a barmaid. That is when Art and I hooked up." She droned on as Ethel quietly listened.

"How old are you darlin?" Ethel asked.

"I just turned nineteen last week."

"Happy birthday, Julie! Now tell me about Art."

"Well, Art isn't perfect. But, who is? He was attracted to me and I to him but for probably two totally different reasons. We have been together for a year, and he takes care of me. I try to take care of him, however, having sex with him is probably the most important part of my purpose to him. Although, we have grown to really care about each other. At first I just needed someone to meet my physical needs and some emotional needs, too, I guess. We have become friends and that is good, isn't it?"

"Of course, having friends is very good. One of God's best gifts on this earth is friends."

"Ethel, it's strange that you mention God so easily, it reminds me of a brief encounter we had just yesterday with a man named Bill. That is all I know about him, but he told us about Jesus and he had a similar warmth that I feel from you. Remind me to tell you about that encounter."

"Okay, I'll remind you."

"About Art; he has a verbal relationship with both parents, although, they each have their own different families now and neither of them have much time for Art. They never had much time for him. And, I can understand the way Art feels about that. His closest relationship is with his brother who is just older and is an aircraft mechanic in Oakland, and he has a good job working for an Airline. That is where we were headed when we had the accident. First Modesto to see his parents, and then on over to Oakland to hookup with his brother for a few days."

"So, where have you two been and what have you done for the past year?"

"We have been all over America, north in the summer, and south in the winter, we have drank a lot of beer, smoked a lot of pot and spent our nights in cheap motels. We haven't missed too many meals and this pitiful lifestyle has been interesting to say the least. Art could be anything he wanted to be, but he is hooked on doing nothing and getting high. He is an admitted professional panhandler. We have been collecting from fifty to three or four hundred dollars a day in the parking lots of Wal-Marts all over America. He calls it fishing for cash. It's like in the song 'The Big Rock Candy Mountains' where it says 'handouts grow on bushes.' Well, that's the way it has been for Art and me for the past year or so."

"Julie, if I could, I would force you to come live with me for a while, but I can't, so I am asking you, please come and live with me, at least until Art gets better? Will you?"

"Are you sure?"

"Totally sure."

*Continued in a later issue of Viewsletter*

*~by Adverse Yaw*

**But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**

**All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The Virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" — which means, "God with us.**

*~Matthew 1:20-23*

**The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.**

*~Thomas Jefferson*

## **Around the House**

*By Barkley Doudney Schnauzer Dog*

Hunting has become old hat. There is some-thing that has to be figured out about the how-to and wherefores and once that is done it becomes as natural as breathing. You just do it. I have experienced the drama of the ambush, the excitement of the kill and the delightful feast of the Boat Tailed Grackle. It has become a normalcy in my life and now boring to think about, much less to write about.

Let me tell you about a trip that the Boss and Linda took. Usually I end up incarcerated during these trips, but for some reason unbeknown to me, I got to go. It was last July and it was hot and the mosquitoes were in abundance there in the Texas Panhandle. The drive wasn't so bad, I had to sit in Linda's lap which meant I was exposed to direct sunlight for a couple of hours. I don't like to be uncomfortably hot, and Linda did what she could to keep me shaded. She made sure that we had multiple potty breaks and plenty of cool water to drink.

The reason for the trip was to celebrate Linda's forty-fifth High School Reunion. She is a graduate and has hundreds of friends from this period of her life. The Boss loves to go because he isn't a graduate and that earlier part of his high school life is only a memory. But on the other hand, he has many memories of exciting times in the Army when most kids his age were studying the finer points of algebra, physics and chemistry, he was crawling under live machine gunfire in the infiltration range. Well, this is nice to know but it is superfluous to this story.

I know that I have mentioned the dog, Jacque Henslee Poodle Dog who comes to visit us here in Oklahoma ever so often. Well, this time, I went to visit him in Amarillo, and we had a wonderful time. Oh, there was the occasional scrap of meat that we would have a tussle over. This was always more noisy barking and growling than biting and pain. I was on medication for a digestion problem, and the food was to be separate for each of us. This presented a small challenge for Linda, but all went well and everyone survived.

I love their back yard, however, their doggie door is smaller than ours and I had to scrunch down to get through it. The Boss showed me how to do it by shoving me through it a couple of times. I caught on right away and had the run of the back yard at will. They have sprinklers, and their yard is twice the size of ours, and they have squirrels to chase. The air is so light compared to Mustang's, and the visibility is so clear. I'm with the Boss, I could live there because the climate makes you feel so good.

We were there four nights and the Boss and Linda were out late two of them. They came dragging in around one AM Sunday and Monday mornings. I didn't mind at all because my buddy, Jacque and I got along just fine.

I think that Jacque may have felt a little jealousy as I spent a lot of time in Homer's lap, a place where Jacque spent much of his idle time. While I was sitting there in Homer's lap, I noticed that Jacque looked our way with a little sadden stare on his fuzzy, little face. I didn't care at the time, but in retrospect I probably should have hopped down and relinquished the lap to him. Hindsight is always 20-20 is what the Boss always says. You can't change what already is, but I can be a little more compassionate in the future, and I intend to do just that.

The drive back to Mustang was uneventful. However, the Boss wore his head set and listened to his own I pod, while Linda slept except when the Boss would allow the car to go over the ribbed part of the road on the right-hand side. Linda would awaken and go into her grouchy mode and tell the Boss what he didn't hear because of his noise-canceling headset. It was so very typical of them. You never know the truth about exactly what it is that makes them the couple that they have become in the past 37 years of marriage.

I can't think of any other thing that is of significance. I just know that I wish I had some squirrels to chase in our back yard. I have seen one, but he never is on the ground, he is always in the trees or on the back fence or on top of the storage container. Jacque is not much bigger than the squirrel and would probably get whipped by one if he caught him. If I caught one, I know I could get a kill. Looks to me like he would make a fine meal if I could catch him. I'll give that some thought in the future.

Be sharp and stay warm, and keep pointed into the wind! *Barkley*

**My reading of history convinces me that most bad government  
results from too much government. ~Thomas Jefferson**



**Vedder Doudney Pit-bull Dog is moving to San Diego!  
She is happy about it notwithstanding her outward appearance.  
That's all Folks**