

A few of the many memories of Steve:

In preparation for life in the 'Real Air Force' Steve ventured down to Lubbock, TX with two other Campus Radicals: Bob Decker and Craig MacPherson over Memorial Day weekend 1973 to check out the apartment scene in Lubbock. Steve realized he was in for a cultural experience. We stopped in Amarillo, TX, at the Golden Arches for a quick bite. Bob was behind Steve in line. When it came to the time for Steve to fork over the money, in a nasal, high octane West Texas drawl, the young lady told him what he owed.

"What?" Steve responded.

She repeated the amount. After a third time being told his cost, he turned around to me, the look of confusion on his face.

"It's three-ninety-nine," Bob translated for him. "Pay the young lady."

"Geez, I'm never going to make it down here. I don't even speak the language!"

The irony? Steve did not spend one year in West Texas; he spent about six years.



1971: Steve (bottom right in yellow) with the Campus Radical All Star Baseball team



1975: Bob and Joanne's Wedding

One year was spent fighting to earn another UPT slot after the flight surgeon at Reese rejected his knee-injury medical waiver the Academy doctors had given him. It took another year after another knee surgery at Texas Tech Med School and receiving a second waiver. (His Tech surgeon had studied under the Orthopedic Surgeon who operated on Joe Namath.) His waiver came after rehab and a final "ops check" demanded by the Reese flight surgeon. Steve had to hold the brakes on a T-38 in full burners. He passed it, and he soon received the waiver. I believe (cannot recall with certainty) we raised a few glasses that night.

When Steve reentered pilot training, he ended up in the same class as another Campus Radical, Kelly McCullar who had just started after a year at UCLA. Kelly shares these memories of their time at Reese: He kept the class laughing with his irreverent sense of humor. Two memories that stand out for me were Steve flying with the IP when I re-took my formation test flight in T-38's; then, on one of those rare calm days in Lubbock, Steve and I were greasing our touch and go landings, flying the only 2 aircraft in the pattern that fine morning - successive "Perfect Touchdown" calls from the spotter.

Steve's final years in Lubbock, where he did learn the language, were spent as a T-38 IP.

Fast forward to the fall of 1979, Bob caught up to Steve again in Turkey as where Steve was a command post controller. During Bob's two-week mini-rote to Turkey, they had many dinners together outside the VOQ's where the rote crews used the BBQ grills to fix meat and potatoes. Steve's assignment to Turkey resulted from his excellent negotiating skills. He relayed that when he bargained with Personnel for his next assignment, the threat of a KC-135 assignment loomed. He said he thought he had the winning argument during that period when pilots were leaving the Air Force in droves. "Give me a 135," he promised, "and I'll put in my separation papers." He received a KC-135 assignment. He put in his papers. Since he had a year left on his commitment, his assignment was changed to Turkey for a 12-month remote. Yet, he laughed at the result.



Steve and Jill Hessney, 2008 Reunion next to Bruce Wright and Eric Anderson



Steve (white hat) at AF/Navy Football at Falcon Stadium, 2 Oct 10 with Paul Motley, Craig MacPherson and Dale Birch...Good news Falcons won. Sadly, Steve passed away 8 days later October 10, and his impact lives on.