



AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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Chairman, Board of Trustees

CMSgt. (Ret.) David E. Milsten, USAF
1303 Dolphin Street
Orange Park, FL 32073

April 29, 1998

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Dear Sir,

Greetings from the Airmen Memorial Museum. Enclosed you will find our most recent publication, *William H. Pitsenbarger, Air Force Enlisted Hero*. The short military biography focuses on the training and pararescue career of Bill Pitsenbarger with attention paid to his final mission on April 11, 1966. The Museum's publications aim to educate the military community and larger public by exploring enlisted Air Force history and the contributions of countless enlisted heroes and pioneers.

The response to Pitsenbarger's story has been overwhelming. Recently a group including Pitsenbarger's father, Air Force veterans, pararescuers, current enlisted leaders and members of the public, started an effort to have Pitsenbarger reconsidered for the Medal of Honor. Pitsenbarger was the third enlisted recipient of the Air Force Cross and was awarded the decoration posthumously. Preliminary research suggests that more information now exists than was originally gathered and considered when the Medal of Honor recommendation was downgraded.

The determined group has approached the Airmen Memorial Museum to provide assistance in the next stage of this project. We are redoubling our research efforts in an attempt to sort out the events of April 11 & 12, 1966.

The mission report, attached for your information, notes that you served as Pararescue on the primary aircraft, Pedro 97, on the April 11th mission when Pitsenbarger was killed. Due to your involvement in the mission, we would be grateful if you could read through the enclosed information, noting your comments and recollections as you see fit.

We are attempting to determine who recommended Pitsenbarger for the Medal of Honor

originally and, likewise, who in the chain of command, endorsed the recommendation. Any information concerning Pitsenbarger's role in the events or information about the action itself would be significant in helping us reach our goal. Please write or call with any questions or suggestions you might have. Your support, no matter what form it takes, is crucial to our success. If you choose not to assist us, just let us know. We will respect that decision and refrain from contacting you further. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "W. Parker Hayes Jr." in a cursive style.

W. Parker Hayes Jr.
Curator

P.S. We were unable to locate the address or whereabouts of the individual who served as your Co-Pilot, Raymond L. Murdon. We are having similar difficulties locating Pedro 97's hoist-operator, Thomas C. Story. Did you keep in touch with any of these individuals or others involved in the mission.

HA STATOR / HA HAYES
Staton



AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

James D. Staton
Chairman, Board of Trustees

CMSgt. (Ret.) David E. Milsten, USAF
1303 Dolphin Street
Orange Park, FL 32073

10/7/98

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Dear Sir,

Hello again from the Airmen Memorial Museum. Since we last spoke in June the William H. Pitsenbarger Medal of Honor reconsideration project has gained considerable momentum. At that time you were assembling some information including; a transcript of interviews with Navarro and O'Beirne, slides of Pitsenbarger you took from the air during the action in question, and correspondence between the Bien Hoa AB Office of Information and the ARS historian. This information is critical to the success of our project and to the completion of our Pitsenbarger Archival Collection. We would be more than willing to pay to have all of the items copied, shipped etc.

Through a number of resources the Museum has located rare video footage, audio interviews and contacted over two dozen Air Force and Army veterans who have pledged to advance our efforts. Air Force individuals who are on board include Dale Potter, Harry O'Beirne, Roy Boudreaux, Hal Salem, Thomas Story, Allison Brooks and many others. I also have secured the support of Charlie Company veterans, Martin Kroah and John Libs. The next step toward achieving our goal is organizing this new information into a coherent narrative that will accompany the Medal of Honor reconsideration package.

The strength of the narrative and entire reconsideration package will be built upon the statements of eyewitnesses, as well as, individuals who can comment on the climate and context of the events of April 1966. It is evident, as the project's support group prepares to move forward toward its next set of goals, that the time has come to begin gathering concrete testimony. Within in the next month we would like to record these critical statements about Pitsenbarger and his actions.

Most significantly, this is an attempt to determine who will provide Pitsenbarger's cause with statements of support and recollections of the events. Nothing received by the Airmen Memorial Museum will be considered a final draft and everyone involved will have the opportunity to revise their statements before they are included in the final version of the Medal of Honor reconsideration package. I would like to have the package assembled by the end of the year and submit the application sometime in the Spring.

Statements should be less than one page in length, but certainly can be longer if the writer desires. If possible, a type-written statement would be the most useful format for the project. The statement should include, who you are, a simple description of what you know about the events and Pitsenbarger's role in them, how you knew Pitsenbarger (if you did) and felt about him and his actions. Finally, the statement should include your opinions about whether Pitsenbarger earned the Medal of Honor. Many have already addressed these difficult subjects with me by written correspondence or during phone conversations. Unfortunately, the requirements of the reconsideration process make these formal type of written statements a necessity.

For those who would rather not make a personal statement of support please inform us of this decision. If you only would consider signing a group letter to be submitted with the reconsideration package please inform us of this preference. If you have any further contacts or new information that should be included in the package, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thanks once again for your time and commitment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "W. Parker Hayes Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

W. Parker Hayes Jr.
Curator and Director of Operations



AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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Chairman, Board of Trustees

CMSgt. (Ret.) David E. Milsten, USAF
1303 Dolphin Street
Orange Park, FL 32073

1/5/99

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Dear Sir,

Hello from the Airmen Memorial Museum. I hope you enjoyed the holidays. I recently received word from my boss, CMSgt. (Ret.) James Staton, that the climate at the Pentagon is receptive toward a Medal of Honor proposal for Pits. We must act **quickly**.

I know the holidays were very busy and you probably have not had time to write your statement. We are entering the "now or never" stage in this undertaking. Not only might the Pentagon's window of opportunity close but Pitsenbarger's father, Frank, does not deserve to wait another year for recognition of his son's deeds.

I will need all statements of support by February 5, 1999, to include them in the Medal of Honor proposal submitted to our contacts in the Pentagon. I was also hoping you might be able to forward copies of the materials we spoke about previously relating to the event.

I only have one completed statement of support in the proposal binder and I'll need at least ten to make the package formidable. Needless to say, your statement is crucial to this project. If you don't have access to a computer or typewriter, write out your statement by hand. Our staff will type it and forward it back to you for

signature and approval. Please let me know if there is anything delaying the process I can be assistance with. Please call me on the Museum's 1-800 number ASAP.

Sincerely,

W. Parker Hayes Jr., Curator and Director of Operations

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM
HONORING 50 YEARS

CMSgt. (Ret.) Dave Milsten, USAF
1303 Dolphin St.
Orange Park, FL 32073

October 7, 1999

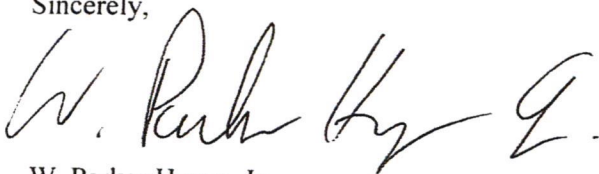
Dear Chief Milsten,

A big hello from Washington. I just wanted to write and say how great it was to finally meet both you and your family. I hope I did not wear out my "adopted" status. As winter arrives I'm sure I will feel the need to perform some volunteer labor on a certain clam farm in sunny Florida. Hearing about your exploits and experiences as a pararescueman, with colorful vociferations from Lt. Col. O'Beirne, is a memory I will hold on to for a very long time. I've read your statement and correspondence concerning Bill Pitsenbarger's final actions many times in the past year or so. Listening to you speak at the dedication was like being introduced to the events again for the very first time. I thank you for remaining committed to the Medal of Honor recommendation process.

I have included the addresses of other supporters I promised to send. I do need the three statements you borrowed in New Mexico. When I receive them I will forward a copy of the entire package to you. Harry O'Beirne has also requested a copy of the information which I will send as soon as I get everything back together. I spoke with Capt. Salem earlier this week. He is in close communication with James Staton at AFSA and Senator John McCain's Chief of Staff, Chris Paul. Please contact Salem at your convenience to hear the latest news on the Medal of Honor recommendation. I have not contacted any of the media "moguls" we met in New Mexico, but I plan on writing those I have addresses for ASAP. If anyone has any inquiries you feel I should handle, feel free to forward them to me.

I hope we all will have the opportunity to get together again soon. A Medal of Honor ceremony here in DC still seems more like a dream than reality. I was, however, encouraged by our discussion with Paul Miller. For Mr. Pitsenbarger's sake I hope that it all happens sooner than later. Please contact me if there is anything I can do. All my best.

Sincerely,



W. Parker Hayes, Jr.

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*(CMSgt Paul Miller -
Pararescueman assigned to
the Pentagon)*