

THUNDERROLLS



Spring 2011
Volume 18

Alumnus Shares Ironman Crown



Maj. Scott Poteet speeds by the crowd after transitioning from the 2.4-mile swim to the 112-mile bike race while competing in the 2010 Ironman World Championship at Kona, Hawaii. (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young)

Former Thunderbirds Slot Pilot (2007-08) Maj. Scott Poteet teamed with another Air Force officer to push the envelope of mental and physical toughness and claimed the 2010 Ironman World Championship Kona Military Division on a 140.6-mile grueling course.

Poteet and his partner combined for a 20:27:36 time to claim this year's top honors for the Armed Forces. Currently assigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy, he finished the course in a few ticks over nine and a half hours at 9:39:05, placing second to the U.S. Army's competitor.

The Airmen were part of a special group at this Mecca of triathlons. Nine individuals were handpicked from each of the services, including the Coast Guard, who took physical fitness and mental toughness to new lengths.

They started their day with a 2.4-mile swim in the choppy salt waters of Kona Bay. They climbed from its waves to begin a 112-mile bike ride through the heat-emitting lava fields along the Kona and Kohala coastlines. The marathon of 26.2 miles ran along the same path as the bike ride, the Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway.

"This is a very unforgiving environment, especially once you get out on the highway," Poteet said. "There's no hiding from the elements. One of the biggest challenges is the sun and unforgiving heat radiating off the lava fields."

Poteet's finishing times were: 2.4-mile swim, 1:06:12; 112-mile bike, 5:09:42; 26.2-mile run, 3:18:19; overall, 9:39:05.

Planning Under Way for 2011 Reunion Nov. 17-19

Thunderbirds alumni will again gather at the South Point Hotel in Las Vegas Nov. 17-19 for Reunion and to celebrate the end of the team's 58th season.

Thunderbirds Reunion Golf Tournament is Thursday, Nov. 17, at Sunrise Vista Golf Course on Nellis Air Force Base.

Thunderbirds Reunion Hangar Lunch/Reception/Airshow is Friday, Nov. 18.

Thunderbirds Reunion Perch Party will take place at the South Point Hotel Friday, Nov. 18. Winners of the golf tournament will be announced at the event.

The TBAA Reunion Annual Business Meeting will be held Saturday morning, Nov. 19, at the South Point Hotel.

The Reunion Banquet will start Saturday evening with cocktails, then dinner and entertainment.

The South Point Hotel is offering discounted room rates at \$59 on Sunday through Thursday nights and \$89 on Friday and Saturday nights.

Look for more details and updates in the May and September issues of *ThunderRolls*.

Annual Dues Payment Due March 31

Alumni who pay dues on an annual basis are reminded that the \$30 payment for 2011 is due March 31 to remain a member in good standing. Individuals can also become life members two ways – send a one-time payment of \$300 or \$50 per month for six months. Payments should be sent to: Doris Wilson, TBAA Administrative Secretary, 7661 Angel Crest Circle, Las Vegas, NV 89117.

From the Chairman

Brother and Sister Birds, welcome to 2011 and your latest *ThunderRolls*.

As we say farewell to another year, we turn our attention to planning for our Reunion this coming November. Once again, the venue will be at the South Point Hotel & Casino.

We've expanded the agenda to provide for a full day of golf, as well as our other activities. We want to hear from you; so if you have suggestions or ways to improve the event – please send them to us.

Our goal is to provide you the best value and venue to interact with your former teammates and the rest of the alumni and active team.

Secondly, we have a large turnover in the Board of Directors this year. The voting for new directors will take place in advance of the Reunion Annual Business Meeting, with the results announced at the Reunion so you can speak directly with the new directors while there.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving, please let me know. Positions coming open: Chairman, Vice Chairman and three Directors.

Lastly, since “Take an E to Dinner” was such an outstanding success in 2009, we will continue the program to assist the active enlisted in attending the 2011 Reunion. Every dollar collected will go to the Team to defray the cost of enlisted attendance at the banquet.

I'm sure we can exceed our 2009 performance where we paid for banquet tickets for all the enlisted with some money left over – to be used this year.

My 2009 personal challenge to the former Commander/Leaders and G.O.s stands, but any donation in any amount will be greatly appreciated.

Stay tuned . . . besides *ThunderRolls*, we have the eNewsletter and an expanded website – plus we are now on Facebook – all to better serve you. I hope you enjoy this issue of *ThunderRolls*.



Steve Andersen (1994-95)
Chairman



From the Boss



Greetings, Thunderbirds! Things are cooking along at Nellis this training season, and we're looking forward to getting back on the road in early March for the 2011 show season.

We'll start the season at Luke AFB from March 19–20 and end the season with the hopes of seeing many of you at the Reunion show at Nellis Nov. 18. This year we will be traveling to Europe for the 2011 European Tour – the Team is extremely excited for the opportunity to showcase the red, white and

blue to our friends across the Atlantic. A trip to Finland will put one more flag on the Thunderbird flag panel.

This Team focuses every single day on living and holding ourselves to the highest standards of integrity, service and excellence. Among other reasons, we do this because we are keenly aware that, as Thunderbirds, we have the incredible responsibility of representing those Airmen who serve all over this nation and across the globe.

Of a force that is almost 700,000 strong, nearly 219,000 Airmen are currently supporting combatant commander requirements from their

home stations in the continental U.S., Europe and the Pacific. These Airmen operate the nation's space and missile forces, process and exploit remotely collected ISR, provide national intelligence support, protect American airspace and actively engage with our allies and partners. Additionally, nearly 40,000 Airmen are deployed to 263 locations across the globe with almost 16,000 on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Next season, we'll travel to 39 different locations to showcase the pride, precision and professionalism with which America's Airmen conduct their vital missions every single day. Along the way, we aim to inspire the next generation of great American Airmen who will bravely and selflessly follow in their footsteps.

With pride in our heritage and confidence in our future, your 2011 Thunderbirds are looking forward to an awesome 2011 show season. All the best to all of you and hope to see you out on the road!



Lt. Col. Case Cunningham
USAFADS Commander/Leader (2010-11)

Benchstock

Congratulations to **Staff Sgt. Jeremy Jackson**, crew chief for Thunderbird #8, the 2010 Fitzgerald Award recipient.

Promotion Selections

Congratulations are in order for a number of Thunderbirds alumni who received promotions this past year.

Former Right Wing (#3) **John Posner** pinned on his second star. He is currently serving as the deputy commander, Combined Air Operations Center 7, Component Command-Air Izmir, Allied Command Operations (NATO), Larissa, Greece.

Former Slot (#4) **Lance Undhjem** also pinned on his second star. He is currently the mobilization assistant to the commander, Air University, Maxwell AFB, Ala.

Former Right Wing (#3) **Col. Robert P. "Snort" Givens** has been nominated for promotion to the grade of brigadier general. He is currently serving as the deputy assistant chief of staff, J3, Air Force Element, U.S. Forces Korea, Yong San AIN, Korea.

Recent selections for master sergeant included: **Rob Clanin, Barry Collins, Ron Eckman, Jeff Fessler, Marissa Flores, Scott Grabham, Lori Hayworth, Justin McCormick, Joe Michel, Jason Owens, Kenny Stull, Scotty Harris and Ray Moose.**

Well done to **Kati (Garcia) Grabham** who received a Stripes for Exceptional Performers (STEP) promotion to master sergeant.

The ranks of Thunderbirds alumni grew by more than 40 people at the end of the 2010 demonstration season. The TBAA welcomes **Lt. Col. Derek Routt; Maj. John Baum, Rick Goodman, Sean Gustafson, Dave Lemery and Anthony Mulhare; Capts. Petrina Hanson and Jason McCree; Senior Master Sgt. Robin Brooks; Master Sgts. Michael Daugherty, Troy Ingraham, Dan Lawson, John Pinksaw, Lora Schmeltz, James Stackable and Donna Vargas; Tech. Sgts. Timothy Brown, Gregory Delacruz, Matthew Doney, Gavin Douglas, Lori Hayworth, Matthew Inman, Adam Light, Patrick Mahoney, Michael Manalo, James Martin, Christopher Mason, Christopher McClure, Harvey McReynolds, Bradley Pokora, Phillip Sawin, Robert Thompson and Brian West; Staff Sgts. John Accurso, Robbin Bailon, Adam Beal, Brandon Bingham, Jason Butts, Joshua Gorniak, Daniel Grotte, Walter Jenkins, John Lebold, Joseph Leeman, Carlos Obregon, Alex Pangan, Johnathan Pennington, Anthony Stewart, Mark Stovernik and Reynaldo Ulibarri.**

Congratulations to former Commander/Leader **Col. Kevin J. Robbins** who has been tapped to assume command of the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB, Va. He is currently deployed.

Retired **Master Sgt. Benny Davenport**, a Thunderbirds crew chief (1958-60) has been diagnosed with terminal cancer. He'd appreciate hearing from former teammates. Anyone who wants to send a card or note can do so by sending it to: Benny C. Davenport, 1817 Valley Drive, St. Charles, MO 63303.

Volunteers Sought for Board Vacancies

The Thunderbirds Alumni Association will have a large turnover on the Board of Directors this year, and volunteers are needed to fill these positions.

Voting for new directors will take place in advance of the Reunion Annual Business Meeting. Election results will be announced at the Reunion so members can speak directly with the outgoing, returning and new directors while there.

Chairman Steve Andersen, Vice Chairman Brian Bishop and Directors Jason "Cliffy" Haag, Matt "Mods" Modleski and "Scar" Scarbrough will step down after completing their terms at the end of the year.

"We are asking former Bosses, Line Chiefs and Sleeves to help the TBAA/Board by getting involved in this process," said Scarbrough, Nominations/Elections Chairman. "As leaders during your time on the team, your influence on getting new blood on the Board would really help. We need your help in contacting old teammates to get those nominations forwarded sooner rather than later."

Individuals can be nominated by a brother/sister Bird or as a self-nominate. Basic requirements are that the nominee must be either a lifetime member or a fully paid-up annual dues-paying member with a desire to serve.

"Those interested in serving need to submit a short biography which includes years and positions held while on the Team and a statement of why they want to serve on the board," Scarbrough added. Biographies should be e-mailed or mailed to Doe Wilson, Administrative Secretary, at: doewilson@aol.com or mailed to her at: 7661 Angel Crest Circle, Las Vegas, NV 89117. Deadline is April 1, 2011.

Biographies and ballots will appear in the May issue of *ThunderRolls*. Members will have the option of mailing in their ballot or saving the cost of a stamp by e-mailing their selections. Only current dues-paying members are eligible to vote.

Thunderbirds 2011 Calendars Available Online

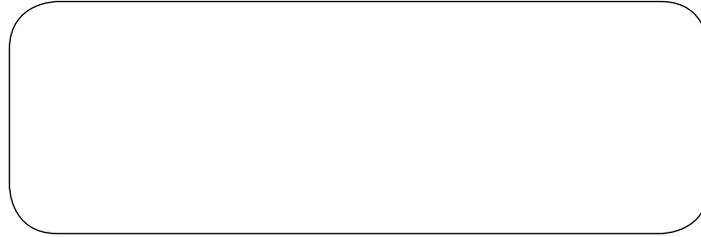
There's still time to get the official 2011 United States Air Force Thunderbirds calendar. The 11x17-inch (when open), full-color, 12-month calendar features a different photo of the team in action each month as well as holiday dates. The cost is \$14.50 plus \$3.95 for mailing. A portion of the calendar proceeds benefits the TBAA. You can order a calendar online at: http://cgi.ebay.com/USAF-Thunderbirds-2011-12-Month-Calendar/250714910349?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item3a5fc5ee8d.

Gone But Not Forgotten

Mrs. Linda G. Catledge, wife of the late retired Maj. Gen. Richard C. "Smokey" Catledge (Commander/Leader 1953-55), died Dec. 7, 2010. Her remains will be interred alongside her husband at Arlington National Cemetery during a private ceremony at a later date.

Mrs. Pat Hosmer, wife of retired Col. William J. Hosmer (Left Wing 1961-63), died Aug. 26. Condolences can be sent to Colonel Hosmer at: 5167 East Timrod Street, Tucson, AZ 85711 or email: hozndaz7@yahoo.com

Retired Tech. Sgt. Ronald "Ron" Mihalko (Egress 1991-92) passed away peacefully Dec. 15, 2010. Ron was born Dec. 25, 1953, in Pennsylvania, and was a 21-year resident of Las Vegas, Nev. He is survived by his wife, Diane L. Mihalko; daughter, Misty (Neil) Ward; mother, Audrey A. Mihalko; sister, Carol A. Mathews; and brother, Mark F. Mihalko. Private services with honor guard were held in Pennsylvania.



7661 Angel Crest Circle
Las Vegas, NV 89117-3220



THUNDERROLLS

THE USAF THUNDERBIRDS ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

ThunderRolls

ThunderRolls will be printed in February, May and September 2011 for members of the Thunderbirds Alumni Association. The deadline for submissions is April 1 for the May issue and Aug. 1 for the September issue. Submissions (including high-resolution photos in .jpg format) may be e-mailed to: al.eakle@gmail.com. Submission does not guarantee publication, and editorial staff may edit for style and content.

Submit any change of address to: Doe Wilson, TBAA Administrative Secretary, 7661 Angel Crest Circle, Las Vegas, NV 89117; by phone, 702-871-7079; or by e-mail to DoeWilson@aol.com.

Thunderbirds Alumni Association Board of Directors

Steve Andersen (1994-95), Chairman
 Brian Bishop (1998-99), Vice Chairman
 Sarah Johnson-Robles (1974-76), Secretary
 R. D. Evans (1979-81), Treasurer
 Joe Barron (1995-98), Reunion Chairman
 Mike Byrne (1999-2000), Director
 Al Eakle (1989-91), Communications Chair/*ThunderRolls* Editor
 Jason Haag (1998-2002), Director
 Matt Modleski (1996-97), Director
 Scar Scarbrough (1977-79), Nominating/Election Chairman
 Bruce Voigt (1997-2000), Director
 Doe Wilson, Administrative Secretary
 Carol Knott, Historian

The Thunderbirds Alumni Association thanks Lockheed Martin for its continued support of *ThunderRolls* and the TBAA.

Graphic Design

Kevin Gray, Lockheed Martin, Fort Worth, Texas

LOOK FOR . . .

Official TBAA Website

www.thunderbirdsalumni.org

eNewsletter

Subscribe via link on TBAA website

Facebook Page

Thunderbird Alumni (TBAA emblem on opening page)