

# Halos & Heroes



## 2012

“Honoring Those Who  
Nobly Serve”



# Old Glory and a Golden Knight



Golden Knight Mike Elliot jumps in the Stars and Stripes. All eyes were looking up to see the spectacular feat. Mike jumped from a Robinson R-44 helicopter donated by USAA and flown by Dave Hynes of Hampton Roads Helicopter.



Here is Mike with American Airlines Capt. Jim Palmersheim, director of the Veterans Initiative that made possible the partnership with Air Compassion for Veterans to uplift wounded veterans and their families.

## A Mustang called “Double Trouble”



We were also treated to a flight demonstration of the P-51 Mustang, flown by Mike Spalding, chief pilot at the Virginia Beach Airport and Military Aviation Museum. This plane is said to be one of the best aircraft ever flown and is among the many beautiful vintage planes restored and displayed at the airport, which is owned by Gerald Yagen.





# Feeling Proud To Be Americans



As they have in years past, Tidewater Pipes and Drums piped a rousing accompaniment to the Color Guard, adding flair to the evening with their colorful kilts and grand, swelling notes.



Members of JEB Little Creek-Ft. Story Color Guard gave their time and talent to make us feel proud to be Americans.

# Vietnam Hero Sets the Stage for the Night



Randy Brandt is a member of the ACV board and a Vietnam war hero who was a member of the elite tactical squadron known as the “Night Owls.” The retired Air Force colonel miraculously survived following his F-4 Phantom’s crash in the jungle. Randy served as emcee for the first part of the Halos and Heroes program and also gave the invocation:

*“Dear Lord, we thank you for this beautiful day to gather together to celebrate the gift of life by giving to and serving one another. We thank you for this wonderful facility and the hospitality of the Military Air Museum and Mr. Yagen. We especially thank you for Ed Boyer and the wonderful staff of Mercy Medical Airlift who show us what it means to serve others through Air Compassion for Veterans and their other charities. We thank you for our Angel Flight pilots who so willingly give of their pilot skills, aircraft and flying time to get patients and family members where they need to go for medical treatment.*

*Most of all we thank you for the men and women who serve our country in the armed forces and more oft than not find themselves in harm’s way. We are most grateful for the Wounded Warriors that gave so much of themselves in serving us and are with us today through your mercy and grace.*

*We ask you Lord now to bless this meal and our time together to celebrate the gift of life you have given each of us in this great country. And we ask this in the name of your son, Jesus. Amen!”*



# Wounded Warriors Inspire Us All



MSGT Jessey and Maria Baca came from Albuquerque, NM, to enjoy meeting the Mercy Medical Airlift staff and to add a note of inspiration and courage through their personal battles. Jessey was exposed to toxic burn pits when he served in Iraq with the New Mexico Air National Guard and now suffers from a range of serious medical conditions.



Medal of Honor recipient Paul Bucha and MSGT Baca faced the horrors of war with inconceivable courage.



Leila, her husband, Doug, and her service dog, Ezra, were special guests with a special story. Medically retired from the Navy, Leila's illness was seriously compromising her daily life—until she received a free flight from ACV to obtain her faithful new friend.



*Wayne Rhodes*

## Screaming Eagles—A Band of Brothers



It was a privilege to have the great American heroes known as the Screaming Eagles as our guests. These members of the 101st Airborne Division L to R, standing, are Jim Shamblen, Joe Nowlan, Paul (Buddy) Bucha, Norwood Thomas. L to R, kneeling, are Clint Hayes and Chuck Payne.

Norwood Thomas served in the 101st Airborne in WWII from the parachute drop into Normandy, to the drop in Holland, to Bastogne in Belgium, and through to final victory. Jim Shamblen, Joe Nowlan and Chuck Payne served in the 101st Abn in the Vietnam War. Clint Hayes served in the 101st Abn after Vietnam but before Desert Storm.

### AMVETS HELPS HEROES

Beryl W. Love, National Program Director for AMVETS, presents MMA head Ed Boyer with a generous check made out to Air Compassion for Veterans. He also offered congratulations to Boyer for the Silver Helmet Award given by AMVETS last spring for the CEO's work in rehabilitating wounded warriors.





## BBQ, Brisket, Brownies—Yum!



High Tide Caterers of Virginia Beach prepared and served dinner to around 150 people, including board members, staff, Angel Flight pilots, friends, family members, sponsors and veterans.



# Medal of Honor Recipient: Back from the Abyss

Robert F. Jerome serves on the executive council of the Medal of Honor (MOH) Foundation and is a former managing director with Morgan Stanley Smith Barney.

After showing the audience an intensely moving video featuring a number of MOH recipients, Jerome introduced the main speaker, Captain Paul (“Buddy”) Bucha.

This segment was structured as a David Frost-styled interview with the Vietnam war hero answering questions posed to him by Mr. Jerome.



Paul Bucha is a retired US Army captain who served in the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. In 1968 in South Vietnam, Bucha’s company was caught in a surprise attack, with his men outnumbered by the enemy. He directed the defense effort, calling for reinforcements to help the lead element.

A Medal of Honor Foundation publication explains that “Bucha single-handedly destroyed the bunker with grenades. He was wounded. When human-wave assaults were launched against his men, Bucha directed an unparalleled defense, ultimately decimating the numerically superior enemy force.”

During the interview, Bucha told us that years later, after an out-of-character display of temper, he realized he needed help for Post Traumatic Stress condition. Specifically, he had “gone to the abyss” over losing 12 of his men after promising them he would make sure they all returned safely home. “This Medal is for them,” he said.

# 4Troops Rocks the Hangar for a Grand Finale



We fell in love with 4Troops when they did a concert for us at last year's Halos and Heroes. Their harmonies are beautiful, and this year the band added drums and a bass guitar to entertain us with such favorites as "In the Arms of an Angel" and "For Freedom." With "God Bless the USA," we were instantly on our feet.

These four young military veterans are not only talented musicians and singers, but also heroes for our country. 4TROOPS are U.S. combat veterans – three young men and one woman who served on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan. While overseas, music played a crucial and very personal role in all of their lives. They sang at large military events and intimate settings. They also sang at somber occasions like memorial services, to remember those that had been lost. 4TROOPS now come together for a singular purpose: to sing on behalf of all troops, to honor their sacrifices and to create awareness for their needs.

The members of the group are Sgt. First Class April Boucher, Sgt. Daniel Jens, Staff Sgt. (Ret.) Ron Henry and Former Sgt. David Clemo.

4Troops has been featured on Good Morning America and USA Today. You can order their latest CD online at [4TroopsMusic.com](http://4TroopsMusic.com).



To all of our generous sponsors, we want to say “Thank you” for making Halos and Heroes such a special, memorable evening.

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*See you next year!*



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