



## Silver Eagles Newsletter

June 2018

**Silver Eagles,**

We have one new member this month! We, the Board, has a loss of one of its legal team, but we and the Air Force have gained! Ted tells a harrowing story in the Paris subway with Ron as the hero!

**New Member:**

**Shannon Bennett** (see contact list)

**Board News:**

This from **Dinh-Zarr Bella** through **Lorenda**:

Dear Colleagues,

I'm proud to announce that **Shannon Bennett** has been selected to serve in the General Counsel's Office for the Secretary of the United States Air Force. She will be working on high level strategic decision-making for the Air Force as a whole, and I can think of no one better to work on this important mission for the safety of our nation. She will begin her new position in late May or early June.

Although it will be a great loss for both my office and our entire agency, I am delighted that Shannon will be continuing her impressive career in public service. After graduating with a degree in Mechanical Engineering (high honors) and a J.D. (cum laude), Shannon served 11 years on active duty in the Air Force where she litigated over 100 felony-level criminal cases as both prosecutor and defense counsel and then served as the head of recruiting for Air Force judge advocates (JAG) hiring 525 new attorneys for the Air Force. Shannon then served in the NTSB's Office of General Counsel for five years as Assistant General Counsel where she provided legal support to the modal offices on accident investigations as well as being the agency legal advisor on ethics and employee/labor relations issues. For the past 3 years, Shannon has been an extraordinarily capable and dedicated Special Assistant (while still serving in the Air Force

Reserves as a Lieutenant Colonel) in my office. Shannon has always been motivated by selfless service to a noble mission.

At our agency, I have heard stories of Shannon helping quietly in a myriad of ways, from skillfully providing legal advice and mediation at an accident scene to even picking up trash to help clean up in preparation for a press event! Stories like these don't surprise me, though, because that is who Shannon is – smart, capable, a team player, and always humble. She always has the agency's best interest at heart and has protected our agency and its mission in countless ways. Whenever someone mentions seeing me on the news after an accident or at a board meeting or making a speech, I always remember it was Shannon standing behind me (sometimes in the cold and rain, as in recent launches) to help me - and our agency - to advance safety, without thought to herself.

Shannon and I have been to many places together – we've been on pilot boats (see attached photo) and observed cargo ships in Virginia, we've met with grieving families during our first Go Team launch together for El Faro, we've flown over pipe lines in the far reaches of Alaska, and we've geeked out with automotive engineers in Arizona (ok, that was mostly Shannon). Wherever we have been, I have had the benefit of Shannon's brilliant mind, strong legal knowledge, and exceptional communication skills, but I also feel very lucky to have had the pleasure of getting to know a loyal, funny, generous, and gracious person.



At this agency, we all work in the serious business of preventing accidents and saving lives. It is colleagues like Shannon who help us accomplish our mission as well as enjoy what we do every day. She is a true class act.

Thank you, Shannon, for all you have done for our office, our agency, and our nation. We will miss you, but I feel both pride and comfort thinking of you in your new role at the Air Force. Congratulations, Shannon!

## Member News:

This report from **Ted Lopatkiewicz**, “In May, my wife **Drucie Andersen** and I, and **Ron Battocchi** (all of us Silver Eagles) and Ron's wife Mary Bell (not a Silver Eagle but she has to put up with all our war stories repeatedly) took an 11 day vacation to France. We spent three nights in Paris to begin with at the Prince de Galles hotel near the Champs Elysees. We then moved to a Viking River Cruise ship that added two more days in Paris before setting sail. We saw all the major sites and then ended our visit in Paris with an unfortunate incident that fortunately turned out all right.

We had repeatedly been warned about pickpockets and we minded the warning well. On our last day in Paris, the 4 of us were part of a group of 10 Viking passengers and our guide to the Montmarte district, which is quaint but a little dodgy. As we were boarding the Metro train to leave, someone dropped his cell phone on the floor of the car and, rather than trying to retrieve his phone, he began feeling up Ron's leg. Ron immediately realized this was a ploy used by pickpockets. This guy picked the wrong target. Ron immediately kicked him in his head and we all got off the train immediately to regather ourselves. None of us was hurt nor did we lose anything. The pickpocket and his partner also left the train. We all boarded the next train, including the pickpockets who were talking to each other on their cell phones. We made it clear that we knew who they were and had our eyes on them. They got off at the next station and the pickpocket approached us menacingly before the doors closed but all he could do is yell. I think he was surprised that someone fought back. Ron was the hero of this incident; I don't know if any of the rest of us would have reacted so quickly or decisively. Ironically, when we got off the train and headed for the exit for the last time in our visit, what appeared to be a husband/wife combo inserted themselves among us (separately, which was a clue they were up to no good) and we stopped to allow them to pass lest we have another incident. They appeared surprised we were on to them and walked ahead.

I don't want to leave the impression that Paris is an unsafe city. They have a lot of obvious security presence all over the city, with well-armed army personnel that were not intrusive but as far as I was concerned were comforting. However, the big exception to this is the Paris Metro. In the five days we rode the system, we never saw one policeman. Although they have public announcements warning passengers about pickpockets, they appear to have abandoned policing the Metro system, which gives these miscreants free rein to prey on people with little fear of consequence.

The Viking cruise was great. We cruised down the Seine from Paris to Rouen and then back to Paris in 8 days. Highlights along the way were Giverny, the gardens of Claude Monet that were immortalized in his paintings, and a full day visiting the landing beaches, primarily Omaha, and the American Cemetery there.

We didn't let the pickpocket incident ruin our vacation, and anyone who hasn't been to Paris should visit at least once, and definitely everyone should visit our National Cemetery above Omaha Beach.”

Ted later added: “When we were taking a walking tour of Vernon, France, more than 100 miles from the D-Day beaches, a woman who we later learned was 86 years old (old enough to remember life during the war) opened her second floor window and waved the three flags of the US, Canada and Great Britain, saying “thank you” repeatedly as she was doing so. We were told she does this when any tour group from one of those countries passes by. It was a wonderful

reminder that 74 years after the landing, the sacrifices made by Allied troops are still appreciated by those most directly affected by the German occupation.” (See Ted photos)



I, **Jim Henderson**, and my wife Cindy ran into **Kathleen Silbaugh**, the Board’s current General Counsel, and her two sons at Pomodoros in Fairfax, VA. I suspect that this was just random, and that she didn’t know that my wife and I had made Sunday our date night at Pomodoros since before I retired – more than 10 years. So, if you’re ever in the neighborhood from 6 to 7 on almost any given Sunday... (Don’t go out of your way, our son, and free Sunday concerts have been known to distract us.)

**Katherine Andrea Lemos** updated her contact info. (*Apparently she hadn’t reviewed it for a while. Others of you may wish to do the same.*) (see contact list)

#### **Miscellaneous:**

World Cup again! Be happy that I got plenty of news this month! Only a quick note: Germany, my favorite again, did not play like a team in their first game. Although if you happen to watch them play, then keep an eye out for Kimmick. I’ve been following him since U20s (under 20 yrs old) He plays like I used to think that I played. Steady, solid, supporting – not a superstar but always in the mix when solid goals and solid defense is needed. Keep the news coming – or – well... I’ll put you to sleep with WC news! Hobbies, Workshops? Volunteer work? Little things – big adventures! Please! Please! for your own sanity! LOL!

Don’t forget the Silver Eagle Website: [www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html](http://www.precisionwrite.com/SilverEagles.html)

Have a sparkling 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

Jim Henderson