

# CANDOER News



A quarterly Newsletter dedicated to Communicators AND Others Enjoying Retirement

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Welcome to the latest issue of a Newsletter dedicated to the **CANDOERS** (Communicators **AND** Others **Enjoying Retirement**). This newsletter will be distributed quarterly. New issues will be posted on the Web for viewing on or about, January 15, April 15, July 15, and October 15.

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*The success of this newsletter depends on you. I need contributors.* Do you have an interesting article, a nostalgia item, or a real life story you would like to share with others? If you do, send it to me at the following e-mail address: [candoercat@gmail.com](mailto:candoercat@gmail.com)

or to my snail-mail address:

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**Life is like a roll of toilet paper ... the closer it gets to the end, the faster it goes ... so have fun, think good thoughts only, learn to laugh at yourself, and count your blessings.**

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### Cat's Corner

Shortly after the spring issue was published I learned from Don Clayton, systems operations branch chief at Warrenton, that the training center was closing down as of December 31, 2009. Don asked if the **CANDOERS** would be interested in attending a ceremony or luncheon to mark that closing. The response has been outstanding.

In the Letters to the Editor section of this issue I have included several of the responses to my request to the **CANDOERS** asking if they would be interested in attending.

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**Why do they put pictures of criminals up in the Post Office? What are we supposed to do, write to them? Why don't they just put their pictures on the postage stamps so the mailmen can look for them while they deliver the mail?**

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### Letters to the Editor

**CANDOERS,**

I installed a circuit that went from Amembassy Remington to Beltsville, through STARS and back to Amembassy Culpepper. The circuit allowed students the opportunity to open, process live-message traffic, and close a circuit just as they would at post. Any message originating from the training center classrooms sent to a different RI was supposed to be flagged at BIMC and

forwarded to Remington or Culpepper only.

The first telegram sent through this brand-new system was addressed to Amembassy Mexico. The subject line was "Greetings down there in Taco Land". You guessed it. The original message made it to Mexico and everywhere else it was addressed. I still have that original telegram. If there is any kind of a memorabilia display about Warrenton, perhaps this original telegram belongs there.

As for my memories of Warrenton? In no particular order: Don Spiker, Jim and Buella McClure, Jane Durr, Pat Condon, Don Kennedy, Jim Pittington, Les Probst, Len Fenner, Pete Gouldman, Jimmie and Yvonne Black, Mike McCaffery, Sandy Muench, John and Annette Cramer, Floyd Hagopian, Tim Lawson, Robert Allen, Keith Hauk, Peter Capo, Jim Norton, and the students. Each and every one pops into my head and manage to bring a smile, a fond memory, even an emotion or two.

Just so you all know I still have my collection of whacky ties that made me famous (or infamous) but have not worn one since leaving the training center; they are retired. Maybe a favorite could be brought out for a closing ceremony. Keep me posted.

Warmest Regards,

Rich Patonai  
Salt Lake City, Utah

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Cat,

I am very interested in attending a training center closing ceremony.

I was Chief of OC/TR and participated in the site search and planning for the training center. It

was very close to not being built at its present location.

Very shortly after I replaced Bob Ribera as Chief of OC/TR an offer from the agency was made to view a site at Buzzards Point. Bob Ribera, Stu Branch, an agency representative, and I visited the site. Stu was DASC at that time. This would have been in the early 80s. We decided against this location, most of our opposition was based on logistics. We continued looking and discussing various locations including a facility beneath the shopping mall at Tyson's Corner.

While pursuing other locations our hope was to end up at the present site; however, politics and turf issues were a stumbling block.

We finally received the green light, after numerous meetings that the Warrenton site was a go; however, our excitement and enthusiasm to break ground were short lived. It was during an RCO conference in Washington that the bubble burst; RCOs from around the globe were present as were OC staff members; each division and section was responsible for giving a presentation. I gave the OC/TR presentation. When it was my turn I moved to the head table arranged my notes which were mainly about our plans for the training center. Before I could begin DASC Stu Branch stopped me and announced that he had some news, good news it wasn't.

Stu advised that word had just come down from the Assistant Secretary for Administration's office that the final documents for the site had not been signed and the deal was off. I laid my notes down and said that concludes my presentation. Having said that I proceeded to give a where we were, where we are, and where we were going scenario about training ending by

saying that hopefully our wishes for an off site training facility would become a reality.

We finally made it. Negotiations continued at the Assistant Secretary's level and politics being what it is I am sure there was a lot of horse trading going on; but the bottom line was there would be a training facility at the Warrenton site.

I never saw the completion of the training center as I was transferred to Paris as CPO. Paris was to be my last assignment, after some thirty years in the Foreign Service; I retired from Paris January 1985. However, this was not my last association with the training center, I went back to work with the Department as a contractor and some of my work caused me to spend time at the training center. I was very impressed with how well the facility turned out.

Related subject - In Rich Patonia's e-mail he mentioned the simulated operations training at Warrenton, which brought to mind the following story.

Sometime between 1963 and 1965 when I was CPO in Beirut we had a visit from DASC Jack Coffey. During a conversation we got to talking about training and Mr. Coffey asked me if I had any ideas. I suggested setting up a simulated operations class. As I recall we discussed the subject for a long time. I never thought much about the conversation after he left Beirut. After I completed my tour in Beirut I learned that my next assignment was to OC/TR where we set up simulated operations. It took three rooms, two were tribs and one was the relay. Without going into a lot of detail it all worked like the real thing. That was the beginning of simulated operations for OC/TR.

Training has come a long way since I joined the Foreign Service in 1955. The training room was located in a U.S. Navy World War II Quonset hut on the Washington Mall. We trained on rotors, pad, strip, M-14 and M-17 teletype. We've come a long way and the end of the road is not in sight.

Paul Del Giudice

Dear CANDOER Colleagues,

As I completed an earlier email to Bob Catlin thanking him and Don Clayton for their special efforts in pulling together people and ideas to help commemorate the official closing of the training center this coming December, my thoughts returned to those early "Training Center pioneers" who, in addition to the fine folks Rich Patonai previously highlighted, made such a profound impact for the training center, its staff and especially its students. Indeed, in many ways, Warrenton's demise, as sad for many of us as that may be, can also be seen as validation of a true organizational victory by some very special and dedicated Department employees.

In the earliest days of our new training center, the Foreign Service, Civil Service, and select Department Contract personnel highlighted below faced not just the management challenge of opening the new training center (no easy task itself to be certain) but also the equally important objective for the creation of an entirely new set of program curriculums, methodologies as well as a complete "training doctrine" that could directly support the Department's goal of a new, Foreign Service "Communicator of the Future." You see, our brand new training center was not the only new dynamic in

late 1984 and early 1985. The time also marked a watershed point in OC history where our long-held reliance on fundamental communications knowledge, skills and provided as a result of former military service, while still valuable, was rapidly giving way to a new era of communications and technology, one where increasing numbers of new OC officers joining the Foreign Service came to us without the traditional military background and absent the typical "commo training." Indeed, beginning in early 1985 the training center would become home to a new focus of training specifically designed to meet this new challenge. Radically innovative, enhanced and greatly strengthened training facility-wide became the rallying cry. Senior officials in the Department and at FSI (then located at Rosslyn) took serious note. Warrenton was in fact building the "Communicator of the Future." OC now had the state-of-the-art training facility it needed for the job and there was clearly a job to be accomplished. But most important the senior OC leadership, personnel talent and staff energy was effectively unified to realize the goal. The cadre of OC and OC/TR officers that I recall from those early Warrenton days include (and I think that I have missed one or two here, I can clearly see them but cannot recall the names now---sorry) to the very best of my memory: Bob Caffrey (DAS & former Training Chief), John Hughs (Training Chief), Lamonte Smith (successor to Hughs), Manny Valdez, Len Fenner, Jerry Lester, Floyd Hagopian, Dennis Thatcher, Cliff Thomas, Steve Newberg, Jim Norton, Guy O'Brien, Jim Pittington, Jim McClure, Red Axtell, Carl Matthews, Art Crowley, George Jacobsen, Jake Kocher, Mick Douglass, and Marvin Breuer.



While it's easy to observe that "sometimes the end of one thing can mean the beginning of another," it is oh so rare and special when we find it to be purpose-driven. The doors to the training center being closed forever this coming December 31st will be closed by those who once were envisioned as "Communicators of the Future." Based on that, it almost seems like closing the training center is the right and logical thing to do. More important it is clear that our colleagues above and all those who followed in their footsteps achieved a very rare and special thing. Class dismissed.

Best regards,

Tim Lawson

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Hi **CANDOERS**,

Let us not forget Don Woelert (Who I and many others think built the place), Bob Ribera (who was DAS in 1985), and Joe Hazewski, among others.

Regards,

Brad Ham

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Cat,

Thank you for the training center closing info. I remember taking CW training out at Warrenton back in June of 1979 in preparation of heading off to the Sinai Field Mission for a year. (Because of the Army, I thought I was fast on a code key, but I was put in my place out there!) Warrenton was much different back then, of course. A training center was talked about often. A lot of the "old timers" like Lindsay (can't recall his first name) always made fun of the concept

for some reason. I was a new-bee, and kind of looked forward to training out in the country, away from all the city hype and Dept. hallway distractions! A lot of those certificates we earned over the years for graduating the training classes had valid college credit points down on the corner of them - I never used the points, and now they may be more of a moot point! Also remember a bunch of students crowding around a PC back in '96 hooked up to something called..."the internet"...no more code classes anywhere to be seen (at least at Warrenton).

All the best,

Steve Auldridge

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The following letter was received from Bernie Weinstein, in reference to an article written by Will Naeher several issues ago having to do with the installation of the ATS computer system at Main State in the late 60's.

Hi Bob,

As to the article written by WEN, it seems to be quite lacking. Some People not mentioned or not enough:

1. Ray Harris ITT Program manager.

He put the implementation team together and made some very good moves as well as bad ones.

Some of the good things were to adopt a good benefits program for travel, use of Schementi for system design and getting rid of Schementi after the famous M. Frishman memo.

Some bad moves were to have too many personnel on the project, reluctance to send people home (when they were not productive), coming to DC and holding long meetings which prevented people from working. He also

had too much faith in Harmon Maher and Dave Kinnaman after being told of their deficiencies. Also, he was a novice when trying to negotiate with Will Naeher, which often caused more problems than he solved.

2. Louis Zervakos, Dave Kinnaman (?), Mike Schementi, Tony Orlando, Tasso the troublemaker, Frank Kerner, Willie Gotthardt and what's-his-name (Bill) who had to go home and wash clothes. Some of these men produced quite a bit to the project, while others were sent back to NJ by Mr. Frishman.

3. John Bordi caused a great deal of trouble during cut-over due to his awful recovery program. Later, he was kept in Washington because the then Section Head felt it was important to have someone on the team who could update System Masters.

4. Ed Barret was the one person who listened to good advice and was eventually responsible for ridding the project of Ray Harris. He also put Herb Charmers in charge of the cut-over and replaced Kinnaman with the finest possible Section Head. Without Ed's numerous interventions, the project would have languished through most of 1967.

5. Zervakos was one of the three key programmers who were most responsible for the eventual system cutover.

He was very sensible and steered the new Section Head into making some good decisions. Finally he was able to get the section message feature working.

6. Marv Frishman was technically a superior Programmer. At the very start of system design he began to be convinced that the then existing Output Program was not conceived properly. Against prevailing design conventions he went his own way and was proven correct as development ensued. He also

backed the revolutionary concept of input character assembly, in and out of priority. His backing convinced Ray Harris that the new Input Program concept was the way to go. This method is what is used in modern systems to this day. He could also recognize when a Programmer was excess surplus and was quick to act in sending them home.

This helped to allow the System debugging to be more efficient and helped keep costs down. This also allowed for showing a profit was possible on the project.

7. It is curious that the report grouped Mr. Berger and Mr. Aikin with Edna Gonsk.

Was this how State perceived them?

I feel they were better than to be grouped with her.

8. Denis Combs was not involved in the cutover. In Paris, he was a member of the maintenance team who stayed on for a year or so after cutover.

The programming team in Paris was:

1. J Connolly - Somewhat arrogant and maker of a couple of mistakes.

2. V. Mazzone - A truly fine programmer in his early days.

3. B. Weinstein - Also a member of the ATS cutover team. Never had a loser thanks to his association with M Frishman, R Nivella, D Combs, etc.

4. D Halliblian - Maintenance type - but less serious

5. J Finch - Lead Engineer on site

6. D Smith - Conservative type but a bulldog in the finding hardware problems

7. S Pelosi - Government rep for the State Department. He was a Captain assigned by US Army. He was instrumental in seeing that the System performed as specified.

8. The System was a replacement for the STRAD (an ITT hardware switch which had become unworkable)

Bernie Weinstein

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**There are worse things than getting a call for a wrong number at 4 a.m. -- it could be a right number.**

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### Memories of Oman

1982-84

by Charles Christian

#### Part II of II

Work for all of us was always to do what you can, as fast as you can and as much as you can, before you have had it and close up shop. Breaks were only a few minutes here and there during the day. At times I had to take outgoing routines, that I felt should have been pouched, and put a DTG and message number on them and return the proper copies. It might be as long as a few days before they went out.

Sometimes we received a perk for our work for DOD. There were joint maneuvers once that required a good 100 hours of OT for PCC personnel. At the end of the exercise the Commanding General of the U.S. Central Command sent the Charge d' Affairs a "Letter of Commendation" with our names on it. It was greatly appreciated.

Another time the various members of the mission, up to a maximum of 20 from the 13 U.S. agencies we supported in county, were invited to a day aboard the USS Midway about 175 miles out to sea. The embassy office that provided the most assistance to DOD was not to be included. This was the PCC. I was again A/CPO at the time and I sent off a

strong protest memo to the Ambassador. Two ranking wives were removed from the list and two of us were selected to go. I was one. If I had to complain again, I would. We flew out in a C-2 COD transport sitting backward wearing cranials with our feet up against the seats in the back during the abrupt stop of the landing. We had a fantastic briefing by the R/Admiral and then were broken up in two groups and had tours of the whole ship. I asked for and received an unclassified tour of the communications centers. Then the senior man in our group, I think it was the Col. of Engineers who vouched for me. The Admiral told the Communication Officer to go back and show me everything. There were two things that stood out in my mind during that tour. First, it is true that the USN always has the best and latest communications equipment. The other was that when a compartment door was opened and there sat two old radio operators, who were both CPOs, sitting at a table drinking their coffee with CW equipment nearby. I thought I saw cobwebs on the men and their radios. They and the equipment were on standby. CW will work if all else ever fails. I met R/Admiral Tom Brown again ten years later when he was the keynote speaker for a luncheon at the O Club at Alameda NAS, CA. He remembered me, but not my name, as I had given him a classified message verbally that day for him only from our DAO, Col. Tom Hall, USAF. It concerned the new classified communications link between the fleet and the Omani military that was shortly to be activated.

After five hours, and a great lunch, it was time to leave. The catapult experience was awesome. Takes the high steam setting to get the transport off the deck and we actually dropped when

airborne until we picked up more airspeed. We all cheered when we knew it was a successful "shot." I was over 50 at the time and I think that was why my health then started to decline. LOL. It was a bigger jolt than anything you get on the rides at the amusement park.

The embassy was located in a bowl with high and rocky crags all around the old city with narrow strips along the coast to the west and east that had roads out of the bowl. One side of the PCC, in the restroom, was actually a rocky side of a crag. We had a dipole on the roof for the use of the Gulf Net and the emergency VHF net and most embassy personnel had Motorola portables of the old large size to use in case of emergency. Almost no one could get them to work as the signals would not get out of the bowl to the distant areas where almost everyone lived.

Once when I was A/CPO I tried to do something. I had a friend who had a connection with a local communications firm. He arranged for the business to check out the units. Most of them had bad crystals. All of them were then corrected to the right freq and I arranged to also get some help to move our VHF repeater up on a hill top above the embassy area. The units then worked fine with the remote members of the post at their residences.

We did have the Gulf Net in CPU using the old trusty Collins KWM-2A Transceiver that many of us remember. Weekly we would have a test with Kuwait being the N.C.S. Not everyone could always hear the others. At least that was true with Muscat which would often not hear others or know if we were heard. We do know that it worked from the embassy straight out to sea through the little harbor that old Muscat was in. The two sides of the harbor at the far points

of land had 1500's Portuguese forts that were under restoration at the time. Prior to my departure they looked probably like they did when they were new.

When I first arrived at post we had a US Navy transceiver that would also encipher. We wanted it for secure voice contact with the naval units out to sea in case of any emergency. Every week we spent time we did not have testing it. We could get out to a ship at sea but we never could go in uppers due to the crags. I gave up and got permission to get rid of it. I had it crated up and I drove it out to the airport and put it directly on a P-3 patrol plane from Diego Garcia. The USN ran them up several times a week on submarine patrol in the Indian Ocean. To further the low profile the crew would change into civilian clothes aboard the plane and spend the night in the big Intercontinental Hotel in the new housing area by the sea. They were not allowed to leave the hotel. Every so often I would treat myself to some expensive drinking in their bar and have some fellow Americans to drink with.

I decided we needed something even if it was an "in the clear" capability. How can we do that? Add the fleet to our weekly voice Gulf Net as we could always reach out to the seaward direction. I went through the ROC, to the Department and then to the USN. Finally it was approved and I assigned a code name to the fleet for use on the Net. It worked fine and they were always there every week afterwards until I left.

We were also available to help out in times of need for U.S. concerns other than the US. official family. The Arabian Sea would in winter get typhoons that came up from the Indian Ocean. There was a U.S. company with oil derricks and barges off the coast of Pakistan. During a



typhoon in November 1982 one of the barges with 200 people aboard was being towed in 70-90 mph winds and was in distress. The company's office in Dubai asked for help from Emb/Abu Dubai. They knew we had good direct radio contact with the fleet. They telephoned us to have us seek the help. The Collins was down for maintenance for some reason, so I sent a Flash message to the fleet through our channels. They came back with the news that the cruiser, USS Bainbridge, was headed to help. She got there about 20 hours later and found the derrick in fairly safe circumstances with only a small loss of life and injury. We then received grateful thanks from the McDermott Company in Dubai and from Emb/Abu Dhabi.

One of the many TDY'ers, "Sandy" Smith, was from Emb/Moscow. She was part Cherokee and an attractive young lady. She stayed at the Al Falaj Hotel in the new part of Muscat about four miles away. The hotel manager was a Greek. I had established a friendship with him which gave my wife a free membership in their swimming pool club the summer she was with me. Having been in Athens for three years, and also Cyprus, gave me some Greek knowledge and language skills which also helped. I guess Sandy made a hit with him as when she was ready to return to Moscow he said he would throw a free dinner party for her with up to 20 guests. She asked me who to invite. I told her to start with me, then invite some folks from the embassy that she liked, the good Omani friend of mine and his wife who knew Sandy and had also befriended her during her off time with some sightseeing and souk shopping, the new TDY'er and his wife from Saana, Yemen, the Adm Officer and his wife. It was a feast of the first class

and only the best of everything in food and drink. We shared many stories and the manager told how his family was wealthy Egyptians with 52 years in Egypt until Nasser came to power. They then lost everything, were thrown out of the country, and had to go back to the old family home in the Cyclades Islands with only \$13. His father did not go with them as he died two days after Nasser came to power and had taken all his assets.

Communicators, secretaries, and MSG's seemed to always form a small clique and if you were liked you got invited to the annual Marine Corps ball, financed at great expense solely by the members of the unit at post. It was always a pleasure and honor to be invited, so I always made sure to get on the good side of those guys. It was held in the garden area of that new hotel by the sea. There was almost a whole beef plus a lamb on the spits, an elaborate bar, and a band. May we also never forget the pleasures of the Marine House open house bars on Friday or a Wednesday in the Muslim countries. With a lack of watering holes in a dry country it was a much looked forward to affair even after our TGIW bar hours in the Embassy. Living close to the embassy I often presided over those until closing time and then drove way out to the Marine House. Brits working in the county threw great parties. I remember mostly the contract workers from Airwork Ltd who maintained the ground to air Rapier missiles that guarded the Sultan's air bases. They had their own compound on a military base with a club-bar and always refreshments flowed to great excess at their parties. You made points if you could play darts. I never seemed to double out and was an undesirable teammate.

My daughter and I were invited to

a British Trafalgar Day beach picnic, and not being much of a drinker, she still played a drinking game with our Marines. Being of a very strong spirit she wanted to be a good contestant. I was pleased that they were able to carry her up the cliff to my car afterwards.

Life off duty also included preparing most of my dinners alone. I took \$2,000 worth of dry and canned goods in my HHE from Ho-Ho's in Springfield, VA when I went over. I also bought a case (120) of NY strip steaks and a case of a zillion hot dogs from one of the supply ships and put them in the freezer. Too many even for two years. Often we would take an order from the post personnel and send it to the fleet and it would all be ready to off load when the ship came in. The local vegetable and fruit souks were not only full of many choices and reasonable in price, but it was all inspected for wholeness and sanitary reasons by the local government inspectors. These items were still soaked in a solution of British Miltons for 15 minutes at home. The tap water was supposed to be good but we still boiled it in a big aluminum pot for 15 minutes and then ran it through our issued Bombay filters. For those not familiar with the Bombay filters, they had two clay tubes inside the unit where the water dripped through down to the bottom part with the spigot. The tubes broke easy and were also replaced with use. There was a frozen food/meat outlet, a liquor store for foreigners only with a permit. The few hotels of any note had bars for foreigners only, but tended to be expensive even for the area. We had the ERA alcohol outlet and we received these goods from Copenhagen using unused HHE allowances of the post staff. One time I was sure I would not need any more of mine and placed a large order. It was

\$1700 of inexpensive cases of the very best. Upon the arrival of the crate, the FSN's (all Indians or Paks) came and told me there were no bottles inside, just blocks of concrete. The crooks in Denmark stole it! Peter Justesens in Copenhagen replaced it for free and that crate arrived o.k.

Just at the end of my tour I was breaking in the new Comm/Econ Officer and his wife in the use of the boat. Suddenly I felt like I was passing out and fell to the bottom of the front cockpit. I was able to verbally get him to operate the boat and get through the small safe passage into the club cove past the under water rocks and fishing pot areas. I had him beach the boat and go for help. Brits carried me to a Land Rover and took me to one of the hospitals. I was later moved to another hospital where I stayed for five days before I could return to my apartment and never went back to work. The poor TDY'er had to work CPU by himself for a few weeks before my replacement came in. The men's ward had about 50 or more locals in it. We were all in cubicles with the walls about waist high. Every man had a male relative or friend from his village sleeping under his bed. Two of our wives were RN's and they ran our Health Unit. They saw to it that I received all I needed, as no toilet articles, towels, and etc. were provided by the hospital. The food was brought into each cubicle in cauldrons containing a stew like matter, Arab flat bread, tea, bad looking fruit, and maybe others items at times that I don't remember. To my knowledge every one in the embassy from FSN's to the Ambassador came to visit. No one had heard of a European being in a hospital before. The MD's were all Paks. The nurses from the P.I. They had me down for a mini-stroke. When I was up to it a

few weeks later one of the RN's escorted me to SFO for HL/AL with a day's layover in London to rest. Often she would take my BP during the flight home which caused an impression upon the nearby passengers. No circulatory problem was found with the specialist at home. I did recover some and felt good enough to ask for and received a two week TDY to help out at the new improvised Embassy at Grenada shortly after the invasion. I then went on to the next post after being in the first class at the training center. It took me six months before I was much good mentally and I had a hard time understanding new methods. After retirement, three years later, my Internist found that I was a diabetic and probably had a bad attack that could have been fatal in Muscat.

What I had thought was going to be a rough haul turned out to be a sleeper post. The unique sea shell collecting, swimming, camping, picnics, boating, ocean fishing, trips to remote old forts and villages, including many in the very high mountains, where you always had coffee with the village sheik, camel races, souk shopping for reasonable priced 18-21 caret gold jewelry, an active social life including many "must-go's", the enjoyable people, housing, R & R leave after one year of a two year tour. Today our new modern embassy is out by that great housing area by the sea.

It would not be the same now for as Thomas Wolfe said, "You can't go home again," except in our minds.

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**YOU, make it a great day!**

**Lord, please keep Your arm around my shoulders and Your hand over my mouth.**

**Amen**

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**Take care and be safe!**