

JOHN GROVE

1942-2008

A Life Worth Celebrating

WARRIOR
HUMANITARIAN
SON • BROTHER
FATHER
GRANDFATHER
FRIEND
GREAT AMERICAN

Just some of the impact of John's work around the globe:

- Thailand: Water Systems for Schools, \$14,200 (2007-8)
- Dominican Republic: Monthly medical equipment (2003-2004)
- VA Home at Tuskegee Home, [Panama City] (2003 - Current)
- Airman's Attic @ Eglin AFB: Household goods (ongoing)
- Dominica: 39,000 lbs, school equipment (2008)
- Montagnards in North Carolina: Clothing, Household goods - 2 Tractor Trailers (note: These peace-loving refugees were evacuated from the central highlands in Vietnam and resettled in the U.S. The Montagnards were the US's most distinguished and loyal ally in Southeast Asia during the '60s and 70s.) John began working with them when he was flying combat missions in Vietnam,.
- Guatemala: Medical Teams (1990's)



Shown above is the 2008 graduation class from John Grove High School in Honduras. This school, located in a remote, rural mountain area, offers these students their first chance at education that will deliver from a life of poverty so common in the area.

- Hati: Clothing and medical supplies (2000)
- Honduras: Christmas Wish (Ongoing since 1993): Multiple loads of C-130 cargo aircraft to orphanages. Clothing, school and medical supplies: (Ongoing since 1990) Ship approx. 8 SeaLand containers a year, each weighing 25,000 to 40,000 lbs, commercial value in excess of \$100,000 per container. Materials distributed to schools, hospitals, orphanages and mountain people.
- Peru: More than \$100,000 worth of Medical Equipment (2003-04)
- Appalachia: Winter clothing (ongoing)
- U.S Indians, S. Dakota: Clothing & medical supplies (1990s)



These pictures show one of the water systems that John raised funds for, installed in Thailand. These systems changed the lives of the communities they served, bringing fresh, clean water to villages and schools. John funded other projects for the schools, including building kitchens, computer labs and other construction, making dramatic improvements in the students' world.

THE LEGACY OF JOHN GROVE

"After a career of service in the Air Force as a helicopter pilot, he continued to serve our community, and beyond, in so many ways. He was extraordinary for his ability to recognize where need existed... and for his ability to help meet every need he discovered. From his humanitarian work in Southeast Asia, to the help he provided the needy here at home, to his work with *Operation Christmas Wish* all over the world, John was the finest example of how our community works and what it means to serve. He leaves a proud legacy that transcends any conventional expectation in scope, depth and meaning.

I suspect few heroes ever know the full extent of the good that they do, but I am certain that John shuffled off his mortal coil largely unaware of the true magnitude of his contributions.

He flew Jolly Greens as an Airman in Vietnam helping rescue those in desperate need... perhaps no less desperate a need than that felt by the children in Honduras he helped serve — in a place where a High School now bears his name.

So amazing was his reputation for making good use of things others discarded that the running joke at the local recycling center revolved around him. When the staff could find no use for certain donations, the saying was "place all that stuff in a pile, maybe John will take it and use it." As you might expect, John always did... discovering needs to meet with all of it.

As we reflect on our community here, and the larger Community of Airmen we all serve, we should remember the quiet heroism of John Grove and what it represents.

For this community served his needs in so many ways over the years, and he saw fit to give back in even greater measure.

That is why what each of you do is so important — service builds upon service, and giving builds upon giving, until the reach of your influence goes well beyond the immediate community, and reaches those in need around the world.

This is what it means to serve above self."

General Norton A. Schwartz
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

*In a speech given to civic leaders at the Emerald Coast Military Appreciation Ball
January 10, 2009 — Destin, Florida*



John Grove was a remarkable man...

Without him, multiple humanitarian efforts that thrive today simply would not exist. These range from school water projects in Thailand, hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of donations to Honduras communities, relief efforts in other parts of the world, and a major scholarship program that funds college for children of fallen warriors of the 20th Special Operations Squadron. And that only names a few.

From his earliest assignment to Military Assistance Command-Vietnam — Studies and Observations Group and the 21st Special Operations Squadron in Nakhon Phanom, Thailand, John flew CH-53C helicopters with valor and distinction in direct combat and alternately supported humanitarian relief, civic action, and medical assistance team activities. This personal involvement in war-fighting and peace-winning continued throughout his follow-on assignments to Hurlburt Field, flying MH-53 PAVE LOW helicopters, and planning and organizing countless joint Special Operations worldwide.

His Awards included:

3 Distinguished Flying Crosses awarded in Combat in Southeast Asia • 3 Air Medals awarded in Combat in Southeast Asia
3 Air Force Commendation Medals • Vietnam Service Medal
Air Force Achievement Medal • Multiple other awards

Under the auspices of the Air Commando Association and McCoskrie Threshold Foundation, John supported orphanages and oversaw construction of 22 elementary and vocational schools in Thailand. For each of the last 10 years, he organized, coordinated, and personally transported an average of 300,000 lbs of humanitarian goods and supplies to orphanages in Central America. John also aided and facilitated a large scale effort to re-locate and re-settle 1,100 stigmatized Vietnamese Montagnard tribesmen to the United States.

In summary, John Grove was an inspiration to all who knew him — a testimonial to the finest qualities of airmen and human beings. **One man truly made a difference.**

A Lifetime of Achievement

Just two months before his death, John was awarded a special Lifetime Achievement Award from the 20th Special Operations Squadron at Hurlburt Field, FL. The citation that accompanied the award included these words to describe John's impact on the world community he served:

John's life is reflective of the highest human endeavor and its enduring, ageless principle truth — each human life is sacred and of incalculable worth to its creator. John, through ceaseless efforts stemming from a strong desire to assist others in need, has made the world a better place and is worthy of the deepest respect of the men and women of the 20th Special Operations Squadron, the greater Pave Low community, and all who shall read these words.

"John Grove is a real hero. 20th SOS retired, Southeast Asia vet that flew the Pave Low as well as any guy that came down the pike — gold hands and ice water in his veins. Pure warrior, except for the big soft spot in his heart for children and the destitute of this hemisphere."

*Steve Connelly, Col (Ret) USAF
Long-time friend of John Grove*

*"Oh if a man tried
To take his time on earth
And prove before he died
What one man's life could be worth
I wonder what would happen to this world"*

*Harry Chapin
Singer, Songwriter, fellow Cornell Graduate*



JOHN GROVE
MEMORIAL FUND
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

HEATHER GROVE

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