

Merry Christmas
from the entire Arnold Family

Dear Friends,

Once again, we ask your prayers for the members of our Armed Forces and Coalition Allies protecting our freedom, at great cost to themselves and their families, under difficult circumstances with little support from a divided government here at home. God bless the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coastguardsmen and contractors of our country and Coalition and their families.

This has been a wonderful year. All in all we finished the year far better off than last year, a year which was very good in and of itself. One thing has not changed, we are still so very blessed and we all know it.

Uncle Jack is doing well, this year at the birthday of the Jacks, he was 94 and Little Jack (who is the taller of the two) was 14. Hap, Dru and Jack visit him on Saturdays, Sundays now being devoted to church. Uncle Jack is doing pretty well, though he would be even better if he would walk more.

The Silver Tipped Grizzlies (mostly retired Air Guard people) have been getting together now for a several years the third Saturday of each month at a local airport for breakfast. They call it breakfast, but Jack and Hap mostly eat hamburgers. It has been quite fun, Jack put together a website: <http://www.grzly.org>. Take a look and see what we have been up to. Better yet, join us. If you want to get on the mailing list, send a note to cmac@grzly.org. Speaking of CMac, Charlie retired from Boeing and is doing some well deserved resting before looking for further employment.

More Guard news, you might remember Jimmy Jet had to medically retire from the Guard and ended up an X-45 Test Pilot (the unmanned aircraft). Turns out Jimmy lead the way as the 163 Air Refueling Wing is now the 163 Something or Other Wing (163SOW) flying Predators. It was one thing to go from Fighters to Recces, then to the Tanker where you could get up, get a cup of coffee and hit the head. Now, you can ask someone else to take over the bird and kill a few targets while you go out to lunch. The good news is you can eat at home, the bad news is the bird goes cross country without you! Jimmy, by the way, had a small stroke recently, but seems to be recovering pretty well. Your prayers are appreciated.

No family vacation this year, but Dru and Jack managed two vacation trips. The first to visit Mrs. Kay, her son Paul, his wife Emma, little Jack and Evie in Australia, then later in the year they made a call on Shamin and Jana in Honolulu. Jack and Dru got to pet kangaroos and Jack even held a wombat. Quite a pair of trip, but worth every hour of the flight. Now that Hap has the EVDO card for his laptop, maybe we can all go next time.

The annual meeting of the Organization of Flying Adjusters (OFA) was at the beginning of October 2004 in Scottsdale at the Chaparral Resort, with Ken and Carol Harris hosting. We had a great time, Ken and Carol did a great job. OFA is like a family to us, we wish we got to see the people there more often, but at least we get together once a year.

In the fall, we went to the 91 Tactical Fighter Squadron Reunion in San Antonio. Five hours each way in the Aztec. It would have been non-stop, except for an oil leak. The 91 Squadron was Hap's first operational squadron. He was with the squadron at RAF Bentwaters in the UK from 1973 to 1977. Then flying F-4Ds, now disbanded, the 91 Squadron was quite a unit. No one was as good or as stupid as those boys remember they were, but what a fine group of people they sort of grew up to be. Cold War Bentwaters was a special place and it was a special time. Nice to see old friends again. Mike and Susan Penrod hosted the reunion. If you weren't there, you have no idea what a great job they did; if you were there you know. So, perhaps there is no point in telling you, but we will anyway. Mike and Susan put on an incredible get together. Thanks ever so much! To those of you who missed the party this year, 2009 is in Fort Worth, Sweet Beth volunteered.

No cars this year for the Arnolds. But... What about trucks? Yes, Alvan, the 1942 Ford GTB truck came to live with us. Alvan had been restored by Al Doty and his dad Alvan, for whom the truck is named. Sadly, Alvan Doty passed just before the truck was completed. Al decided he would like the truck to go to a new home and we got a new truck. We are grateful for a superb restoration to a very high standard by two men who obviously loved their work. The GTB is one of the rarest of the series production World War II vehicles with only about 6,000 having been made, and only 2,000 of those were cargo trucks like Alvan. Other than Alvan, the tactical fleet has not changed. The M601, GPW and Fire Truck were the parade vehicles this year.

We know this will be a major surprise to the reader, but our Cessna is still in pieces. God willing, it will fly before summer. Summer 2007, we hope. It is going to be pretty nice, 150hp or so, real radios and maybe even a wing leveler. Sure would like to fly it before Jack gets too big to sit in it. The Aztec is flying well and has been making its way around the country. Our friend Brian Smith has done a great paint scheme for the Aztec and it might get a paint job after a persistent turbo oil leak is fixed.

Jack is now in ninth grade. He is working at the office with Hap on Tuesday afternoons and Fridays, he has an Art/History class on Tuesdays and Guitar Class on Wednesday afternoons. His schoolwork is coming along well. He is doing very well in math. Dru is learning a lot of math she never quite got and learning to diagram sentences also.

We have been very busy helping build our new church, Alpine Anglican Church of the Blessed Trinity, under the umbrella of the Anglican Province of America. While we miss the closeness of the Thursday night service and the open weekend, the fellowship of Sunday morning worship free of the Episcopal Church of the United States is well worth it. We are pretty involved in the church. Jack is the Senior, and usually only, Acolyte and Scribe of the Vestry. Hap is the Beadle and member of the Vestry. Dru takes care of them both and keeps them in line.

We were pleasantly surprised when William walked into church this spring after having been away almost six years. He has been working as an off-road vehicle fabricator and has grown up quite a bit. He has his own area at Johnson's Bug Machine and is very in to the dune buggy field. His technical expertise has grown. He has joined us for church more Sundays than not since he walked through the door. He is working out what he wants to do, but he has decided what he doesn't want to do. It seems like he is on the right track and we would all appreciate your continuing to pray for him.

Sister Jacquie is still up in the Great White North trying to stay warm. Okay for those in Alaska, Oakland isn't that far north. She called the other day with amazing news, she won an iPod. No one in our family wins anything, except perhaps the Draft Lottery. Pretty cool.

Brother Bruce and wife Lorena seem to be very busy at work and at home. Their daughter, Megan, is doing quite well at La Jolla Country Day School. Once again we had Thanksgiving at their home, it is a beautiful place and the food was wonderful. As with last year Uncle Jack did not make it and most of Lorena's family were out of town. It was a great time to be together, but we missed the family. Lorena's grand parents came up from Chile for Christmas. We had dinner with her mom and dad, Francisco and Rebeca, as well as her grand parents, Carlos and Josephina. We love them dearly and enjoy their company, wish they did not live so far away.

Brother Tuck, wife Robie and daughter Alison keep working on their house. The past year Brother Tuck has been Captain of the El Cajon Mounted Police Unit and was asked by the unit and the department to serve a second term. Although this is unusual, he agreed and is having a great time with the unit. Robie seems to enjoy her job teaching Art at Valhalla High School. Ali is a senior in High School and is doing very well in school and sports.

Mrs. Kay Denton, our excellent friend from York, in the UK, is not doing as well as we would hope. She has been in and out of the hospital. She has neck deterioration problems, in addition to the heart and kidney problems, which require her to undergo dialysis. She visited her son Paul and his family, Emma, Jack and Eve in Australia this past February, where Dru and Jack joined up with her. When you talk to Mrs. Kay, you cannot help but be in awe of her attitude. She is the most grateful person on the face of this earth. She is a positive joy to talk to. Nonetheless, your prayers are appreciated.

You may remember last year's Friday after Thanksgiving Desert Shoot was postponed until just after Christmas, we actually made it. This year the Friday after Thanksgiving Desert Shoot had limited participation: Hap, Jack and Butch. But they had a great time. Hap got an electric trap. You would be surprised how quickly you can go through a case of 12 gauge shells. We have been so busy this year we have not done much cast bullet shooting at our backyard range. On the other hand, we are up to 208 ground squirrels since the squirrel relocation program began.

Unless it rains, we are going on a Jeep ride this New Year's Day. 0930 Show for a 1000 Go. About 1300 we should be back to BBQ some dead mammal. If you are what passes for local and have a 4WD, come join us. If you do not have a 4WD but want to go, we have spare seats. Heck, we have spare vehicles!

Please keep our family members in your prayers –Mrs. Kay, Jack Arnold and William Arnold

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, we look back over the past year. It is so clear how blessed we are. We have been blessed with health in soul, mind and body. Those of our family here on earth are all healthy and extremely happy. Once again, we have concrete evidence of just how kind God has been to us this year. As we look over our Christmas list, we think of our friends, some we have seen, most whom we have not, and a few no longer on the list. We think of years gone by, time spent together. We wish we could have spent more time together. May God be with you as He has made so clear He is with us.

Best wishes and Love,

Dru, Hap/Bill & Jackson, Mr. O, and all the Buddies

PS: If you would like to communicate with us: Telephone (619) 659-3608 or

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PS – It was actually snowing as we finished writing this. Not bad for Southern California!