



Southwest Florida Chapter
Destroyer Escort Sailors Association

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SEASONS GREETINGS!

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OUTSTANDING NOVEMBER SPEAKER

Attendees at the November luncheon were treated to an excellent presentation by Jim DeVoss, a former Viet Nam fighter pilot whose dramatic rescue from behind enemy lines became the subject of an official Air Force film. Jim has spoken widely of his experience and is an outspoken advocate for the outstanding rescue division of our armed forces.



Ed Eastman, Jim DeVoss and Bob Hemenway

Jim had a love of aircraft from a very early age, culminating in qualification as a pilot of the F105 Thunderbird fighter (nick-named the "Thud") in Viet Nam, after a year of intensive training. A great deal of emphasis during training was placed on responding to emergencies, training which, along with daring rescue personnel, he credits with saving his life. Part of that training was survival school where he was taught to "eat anything that flies, swims or crawls," but thankfully he didn't have to apply that part of his training.

He flew 70 and a half missions in six months over Laos, and was regularly shot at. After one mission there were 267 bullet holes in his aircraft. In June of 1969 he was shot down 130 miles behind enemy lines. When his plane was struck, it took out the hydraulic system. After following all the emergency procedures he was forced to eject at a speed of over 600 knots--over 720 mph. Ejecting at speeds over 250 mph can cause bodily injury or death, and the 5 lb. TNT charge that fires the ejection seat can cause serious spinal damage. Jim was fortunate in that he "only" received a broken arm and two broken legs. He still must wear a brace on one leg, but considers himself lucky to just be alive.

He was able to maintain radio contact with the rescue team throughout the ordeal, and the actual rescue was filmed and used in the Air Force documentary film Faces of Rescue, which Jim showed at the luncheon. The "Jolly Green Giant" helicopter rescue team arrived within hours and plucked Jim from the jungle. (continued on p. 2)

photo by Ed Eastman