

Tribute – Charles Della Peruta

I thought Charlie won the final argument as to loyalty by being buried at the Air Force Academy. But Charlie's stone monument at the Air Force Academy reads:

**LCOL CHARLES DELLA PERUTA USAF
21 OCTOBER, 2014
USNA 1960**

How many AF pukes are buried at the Naval Academy Cemetery?

God love you Charlie One Eye. I surely did. Traitor that you turned out to be, you were the best pilot of our Class.

One has to admit that the Air Force has some strange customs, and at the grave site, routine proved it. After the distinguished ceremony, Greg passed out nickels to all in attendance and one by one we all threw them into the small hole wherein Charlie's cremains were interred. As it seemed to be the thing to do, Wendy and I tossed ours. But being somewhat confused, I wrote Greg, and he informed me that it was a tradition the result of a Korean War vintage AF song that went:

**I was cruising down the Yalu,
Doing six and twenty four,
When a call from a major,
"Oh won't you save me sir!"**

**"My oil pressure is zero, and tanks ain't got no gas.
Mayday, mayday, mayday!
I've six MIGs on my ass!"**

**SING ALLELUIA, SING ALLELUIA
THROW A NICKLE ON THE GRASS
SAVE A FIGHTER PILOT'S ASS.
SING ALLELUIA, SING ALLELUIA
AND YOU'LL BE SAVED.**

Ted Parsons, '60