

NEW HAMPSHIRE SUNDAY NEWS

"LIVE FREE OR DIE" GEN. JOHN STARK

ES — 12 SECTIONS



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NEW HAMPSHIRE ★ REMEMBERS ★

The day President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated will never be forgotten by these two New Hampshire people. Indeed, how many of us can forget where we were and what we were doing when we heard the terrible news? Tomorrow The Union Leader will publish two full pages of your reminiscences.



PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY is slumped down in the backseat of his car after being shot Nov. 22, 1963.

I Sang in Boys Choir

By GARY J. BAKEWELL
Manchester

A FEW SENTENCES could not suffice to tell the story of meeting President Kennedy the morning of Nov. 22, 1963 and it's aftermath. Most people never knew or have forgotten that the President and Mrs. Kennedy spent the night of Nov. 21, 1963 at the Worth Hotel in Fort Worth, Texas. I
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He Piloted The Plane

By CAROL CARTER
Sunday News Correspondent

C ENTER HARBOR — Retired Air Force Col. Lewis C. Hanson will never forget the saddest flight of his career — flying the body of President John F. Kennedy from Dallas back to Washington, D.C.
"So much happened on Nov. 22, 1963. I often have difficulty keeping
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LETTER

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will never forget, for the morning of Nov. 22, 1963, I was one of 26 members of the Texas Boys Choir who sang two songs for the President, his wife and assembled dignitaries at a breakfast in their honor in a ballroom of the Hotel Texas that fateful morning.

One of the songs was "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You" and the name of the other has long since escaped me in the torrent of memories.

Out of kindness and enthusiasm, as opposed to showmanship or politicking, the President left the podium afterwards and came to the stage to thank us personally. He took the time to shake each boy's hand and say something different to each one of us.

Even at the age of nine and a half I knew this was something very extraordinary. I stumbled and stammered in awe of this great man to whom it seemed to me so very many people were obliging. I think I told him proudly that I was Catholic and he asked me what school I attended, and told me to study hard. Within a couple of hours I was back with my classmates in fourth grade studying with a newfound zeal. After all, a great individual had personally de-

creed it.

All at once the door in back of our little isolated classroom flew open and there stood an older girl, an eighth grader I think, and she was sobbing and screaming, "They shot the President!" Class was over for the day.

Having never been exposed to death, I was almost relieved to go home and find it was on television. I remember thinking, "Oh, it's just like the cowboy shows. It's fake. Everything's really O.K."

I guess in the sixties, 9- and 10-year olds weren't so familiar with death and shootings on the streets of our cities.

Years later the city of Dallas tried to come to terms with its collective shame and guilt. A memorial was to be dedicated to President Kennedy in Dealy Plaza.

Now in my mid-teens, and already a staunch Republican, I was nevertheless drawn to watch the dedication ceremonies, a tribute to a fallen hero, whose image and even administration was somehow already being tarnished by scandal and in some cases no more than innuendo.

I remember it was an outdoor ceremony, but I can't remember who was there, or even what the weather was like. It seems I couldn't see through my tears.

Rest in Peace Mr. President.

Shocked Pilot Thought It Was Bad Dream

PILOT

(Continued From 1A)

the events in their proper order." Hanson told Boston Globe reporter Richard W. O'Donnell six years after Kennedy's assassination.

Hanson — now a gentleman farmer and selectman in his native Center Harbor — still turns to that five-part newspaper series to help him remember the day an assassin's bullet killed the President.

Hanson, known as "Swede," was co-pilot with Col. James Swindal when Air Force One flew into Dallas' Love Field with the Presidential party.

Kennedy got a chuckle from crew members when he left the aircraft that day. They each received his thanks for a safe ride, then Kennedy made sure his clothes were neat before exiting the plane.

The crew always watched for Kennedy to perform a special ritual.

"As he was coming down the stairway, he'd always put his hands in his suit coat pockets. It was a small thing, but we always watched for it, and we always got a kick out of it when the hands went into the pockets." The neatly dressed, smiling

Kennedy reached into his pockets for the last time that day. Hours later, he was gunned down in a motorcade — an assassination that stunned the world.

"That was the last time I ever saw President Kennedy. He was happy and smiling that day. He seemed in a good mood as he drove away in that open car with his wife at his side. Who would have thought that in less than an hour he'd be a dead man," Hanson wondered.

Hanson was visiting his mother-in-law in Dallas when news of the assassination came on the television. He remembers he was shocked.

"My mind rejected the idea, as though it was some kind of bad dream," Hanson says.

He realized he had to get back to Love Field immediately. He jumped in his car and hit the accelerator, reaching speeds of 80 mph as he raced through the streets of Dallas.

"I remember how dead the city seemed. There were no cars on the road. No people either. It was like the calm before the storm," he says.

At the airport, the somber flight crew awaited instructions with ~~waiting~~ updates on the

radio. They were on standby for the President — only this time they were on standby for a new President, Hanson recalls thinking.

Eventually, Lyndon B. Johnson boarded the aircraft and took command. Johnson was the picture of calmness, Hanson remembers, though he seemed aware he was taking on the most powerful, difficult job in the world.

"I wonder how a lesser man would have behaved that afternoon. I know how Lyndon Johnson behaved. He was magnificent," Hanson says.

After Kennedy's body was brought aboard for the flight back to Washington, Jacqueline Kennedy stood by Johnson's side — her face etched with shock and disbelief — as he took the oath of office.

"I remember standing in the doorway as Judge Hughes administered the oath of office. Col. Swindal and I were jammed together in that doorway. We knew we were witnessing an historic event. But all we could see was the tops of heads. The compartment was jammed. All we could hear were vague voices. There was a new President. And there was sadness."

During Hanson's 17 years as a special missions pilot with the Air Force, he piloted for several Presidents, including Kennedy, Johnson and before them, Harry Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In 1963, Hanson and his crew set a flight record on a 5,000-mile trip from the United States to Moscow. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Glenn T. Seaborg was aboard for that nine-hour trip.

Over the years, Hanson flew many famous passengers, among them Winston Churchill, the Shah of Iran, Queen Frederika of Greece, Charles Lindbergh, Field Marshall Montgomery, the Aga Khan, Gen. Nathan Twining and more.

But Hanson insists that one passenger stood head and shoulders above the others.

"That was John F. Kennedy. By far, he was the greatest," Hanson says.