

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

by Douglas Sherman

FREEDOM!

I hope that you and your families had a great holiday season. With everything that is happening in the world and in our communities today, our family and loved ones become increasingly important in our lives.

To start off the New Year right I decided to make some life changes. As you think back over the past ARPOC's – for the last 5-8 years, that guy who was hobbling around with a severe limp was me! Each year ARPOC was more important than the pain in my hip, and I vowed to take care of it later. December 1st, 2006 became the later. On December 1st I signed up for total right hip replacement. My existing CRPOA right hip was OK, but just worn out from all the walking. I think San Jose ARPOC did me in, and everything since then was just icing on the cake.

I don't want to bore you with the details but some of them were really interesting. With any major surgery you get concerned with what will happen, how, and what if! One of the first things I did is call Papa John, our Historian, and asked for the assistance of his prayer team. (Patton had his reverend for good weather; I have Papa John.) Since Papa John also doubles for Santa Claus in December I felt it was a two for one deal. As always, Papa John was eager to help.

It was still dark when I left for the hospital, having gotten up early to wash with special soap. I was admitted, medicated, and prepped for surgery. I was the first operation of the day, and my doctor appeared to be full of the dickens, as usual. He joked with my wife and son, and said the operation should take 2-3 hours.

When they wheeled me in the operating room it appeared to be a scene from 2001, A Space Odyssey. The room was cold, small, with lots of stainless steel filters, and full of individuals in full space suits. It could have been my medication, but all appeared to be moving slow, and stationed in different areas. My police training immediately kicked in, and tried to determine who in this group might give me trouble. A quick analysis of this gang revealed one individual who did not match, and appeared to be guarding something. He was standing at attention, in front of a table in the rear of the room. I then introduced myself to the group, and said: "Hi, my name is Doug, and I will be your patient today!" There were only a couple of laughs in the room. This was a tough crowd.!

I was moved onto the table, and noted that this same guy was watching me like a hawk. I felt I had seen him somewhere before, and after noting what was behind him on the table it came to me. Think back to the Braveheart movie, and the confessions judge who peeled back the cover on his table to reveal the instruments that would be used on William Wallace to gain his confession. Behind this man in a space suit was a like table, full of sawzalls, drills, hammers, chisels, and construction instruments. All were in pairs, in stainless steel, with no trade names. I was hoping they were Dewalt at least!

Noting that he was standing guard in front of this table I addressed him. I asked how he could work inside that outfit, with limited visibility. He replied that he was in "air conditioned comfort" inside there, and grinned. This did not put me more at ease!

My mind started to wonder at that moment, and I started to think about the tools, table, and what happened to William Wallace. The anesthesia team behind me then put a mask over my face, and asked that I take a few deep breaths. As I was just about to yell out "FREEDOM", I drifted off to a place without dreams, noise, or air conditioned comfort. I awoke 3+ hours later in recovery and felt like a truck had hit me on my right side.

During that time, the doctor had come out after the operation and spoke with my wife, son, and in-laws. He said that the operation had gone well, and that special thanks were due the tiny nurse who had to hold my right leg up for over 45 minutes. The leg was quite heavy! I wish I could have thanked her also, as it appears I was nearly disconnected from it for some time!

The remaining 4 days before discharge were as eventful as you might think. Drugs, pain, physical therapy, great dreams, bondage, and everything you look forward to during your hospital stay. Did I mention the exceptional hospital food, and questioning without your attorney present every 2 hours?

I am now at home, working on ARPOC 2007 in San Diego. Currently in a walker, I get physical therapy 3 times a week, and look forward to a cane and then normal walking. Everyone says that these operations are a no-brainer, but no one warned my body about that. It appears I will have about 90 days of precautions, and then should see some limited improvement. If I mess up anywhere in-between, the hip pops out, and I get to start over!

So, in this article I wanted to give thanks to the doctor, operating team, the guy who guarded the tools table, the small nurse, and my family members and in-laws who attended to give me support! A special thanks to Papa John and his prayer team: As Patton said: "This guy is in good with the Lord!"

My fondest Holiday Season wishes go out to all the CRPOA members, and I hope to see you all in San Diego for ARPOC 2007. With any luck, and God's help, I will be the one walking without a limp!

Doug is a retired Reserve Commander of the Chula Vista Police Department, President of CRPOA and the Conference Chairman for ARPOC 2005 and 2007. Doug welcomes questions and comments from you. You can email him at sherman@crpoa.org.