

## Francis 'Red' Grandy

Good morning and thank you for being here with us today. For those of you I have not had the good fortune to meet, I'm Anne, Red's half sister. We were both blessed to share the same wonderful father. Looking back over the 96 years in the life of Francis 'Red' Grandy, I have elected not to spend time renewing the pinnacles of his career, as the media have spent sufficient time archiving his remarkable life. Everyone I am sure, is aware of his "I'll be Darned" famous photograph and his position with Stars & Stripes during a climactic time in history. I am instead, going to reflect on some of the lesser known events in his life.

'Red' and I both shared a delightful younger brother, who had Downs Syndrome affectionally called Johnny. In Johnny's eulogy, it was remembered that anytime Johnny happened by a piano, he would start pounding out a tuneless rendition of 'happy birthday' while singing at the top of his voice, 'Happy Birthday to Me.! If Red might have banged out a signature song, it might have been:. *"What a wonderful world." I see skies of blue...and clouds of white...the bright blessed day... and the dark sacred night...and I think to myself, what a wonderful world.*

Francis 'Red' Grandy, was born on the family farm in the middle of a cold wintry night in January of 1922... delivered for a fee of fifty cents. He was a self described 'free spirit' who worked hard and played hard throughout his life. He acquired the nickname of 'Chub' when he was younger, and in later years dubbed 'Red Dog'. Those of you who knew him, knew of his frugal nature, predictably reflected by his conservative wardrobe. It consisted of three suits.... a black suit for funerals, a gray suit for work, and a orange jump suit for retirement.

Lives are often shaped by the upheavals and tragedies of early life. Red's early years were filled with both heartache and discouragement, which undoubtedly served as an indelible blueprint for his later success's. During those younger years, a tenacious resiliency evolved which would later became his anchor. This self sufficient individuality provided him the hard knock foundation to which he often referred to as his good luck/bad luck life stories.



Early in life, he started journaling—or keeping a diary as he called it. Not sure why he began, perhaps Aunt Florice’s influence, but it became a habit he maintained throughout his life. So when he began writing his memoirs, he had logbooks of information. I am convinced after reading his autobiography that his life's story would make a fascinating movie.. While in the process of writing this eulogy, I was astounded.. not only by his achievements, but by the sheer number of his experiences. I am going to try to capture some of these memorable points-in-time, so get comfortable— its going to take awhile.

His was a persuasive, competitive personality fueled by a strong, focused work ethic. He only missed one deadline in his 35 year career. He had an instinctive intuitiveness that he relied on to capture the best possible exposures for his photos. He felt that he lived in paradise when he worked for Stars & Stripes, shooting feature stories with a different assignment every day. His endeavors often consisted of 19 hour days including the time it would take to relay his information back to Stars & Stripes. He used every variety of transportation available to achieve that mission. He flew in cargo planes and fighter jets, rode on motor boats, motor-cycles, and motor scooters... delivery trucks, buses, ski lifts, bicycles, and even on the back of farmers hay wagons to cover stories.

Despite his year long bout with rheumatic fever in his early 20’s, it never affected his physical abilities. Instead, he appeared to enjoy a strong, agile, athletic physique. He once climbed the Matterhorn Mountain in Switzerland which is the sixth highest summit in the Alps. He was a excellent skier and participated in numerous racing events ... a sport he continued to enjoy into his 90’s. He engaged and was quite proficient at playing tennis, golf and bowling... He qualified for his pilots license at age 49 and later, endured multiple pressure chamber tests which certified him to fly in high performance jet aircraft. He even won a jitterbug contest when he was 62

His most perilous adventures occurred on Germany’s highest summits. While riding on a ski-lift up the mountain, the cable to his T-bar broke, throwing him backwards down the incline at full speed.... During a giant slalom race he narrowly escaped with his life when the straps broke on his skis causing him to cartwheel down the entire length of the ski run. And one time he was thrown off his snowmobile while on a excursion up a steep mountain and tumbled 500 foot downward .. just ahead of his 600 pound machine.



His multiple other adventures include:...and this is just a partial list

He was arrested multiple times in different countries, the most frightening incident happened when apprehended in East Germany.

He was the first journalist to cover the F-105 Thunderchief Fighter-Bomber

He took the only picture of the Russian TU-144 "state of art" supersonic jet just before it blew up and crashed

He was once lowered via a cable-winch from a helicopter hovering over the deck of the JFK aircraft carrier.

He cruised the canals in Venice.

He rode in a rickshaw to the Ganges River to watch hundreds of Indians taking their holy baths.

He was the only journalist to fly with medical personnel 300 miles across the Bay of Benghazi, than driven 60 miles through the hills to reach the devastated area in Libya devastated by the 1963 earthquake.

He was once seated on the same PanAm flight with the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders (there you go Greg)

He hosted a radio show in Germany called "Camera Close Ups"

He judged multiple beauty contests ( Now, thats a surprise)

He fished for barracuda.

He once drove his VW bus to a chalet at the top of a mountain, through the narrow, treacherous Berninie Pass during a blinding snow storm.

He was spit on by an orangutan

And... he covered both the 1980 Winter Olympic historic game when the United States hockey team won against Russia and when our local Norwood Brass Band played at the Olympic Village in Sarajevo, Yugoslavia.

His work made necessary, now and again, the use of incentives to secure certain favors or venues. These encouragements included whatever seemed practical to the situation : chocolates, perfume, coffee, cigarettes, popcorn, chewing gum, Purina cat food, a half gallon of Jim Beam and 40 year old bottle of cognac. Bona-fide credentials were always a worry when traveling between countries, especially soviet bloc countries. And finding alternate directions through blocked off areas often required determination and shrewdness. On one occasion he recalls " sprinting through a maternity ward" to cover a candlelight pilgrimage at Our Lady in Lourdes in France".



Mention is also made frequently of the distribution and use of distilled spirits in his journals. He had a VW camper in Germany, referred to by his Stars & Stripes colleagues as 'the Great Whiskey Wagon'... as under one of the seats was a filled 5-gallon tank of mixed manhattans. There were also multiple references to other bottled varieties of sort: apricot brandy, cases of champagne, bourbon, vodka, beer, schnapps, gimlets cognac, scotch, and bourbon. I chuckled one day when he told me how he had answered his doctors question regarding alcohol consumption by confessing to "at most, a couple one or two times a week". Apparently, it never affected his health or his longevity!

During his years in Europe, he often made mention of an ongoing emotional bond to the North Country. Returning in 1985 after his retirement from Stripes, he orchestrated the building of a log cabin at Lazy River Playground. Over the next thirty-two years he gradually incorporated 'Forever Wild' values and accordingly stopped allowing hunting or timber cutting on his property. Through the long winters besides plowing his driveway, he fed the deer, birds and the squirrels. And on summer nights, Richard and I would often find him sitting on his 4-wheeler in his meadow listening to classical music while watching the sunset. He often reminisced about his boyhood life on the farm and of nights spent floating down the river under the stars and watching the trees drift by. And every spring, he diligently planted geraniums beside the graves of former family members and friends who had died during WWII.

I think that is was his desire when he moved back to the north country, to continue to live in the limelight and he found a captivating audience with his amphi car. He often rode through north country communities, drove in their parades and motorcades and cruised the local waterways. It created a lot of curiosity, especially when one happened to be ridding across a bridge only to look down and see a car driving through water below you. And he delighted throughout the years, inviting Lazy River guests into his home to view his display of photographs of famous known iconic personalities.... and to share with them, the stories behind the pictures.

He never seemed to lose his fascination with fireworks and continued to delight in all kinds of recreational activities. He established an annual Leek N Limburg party, providing entertainment for multiple ATV riders and their guests to an all day party of trail riding and feasting. And, his favorite game was a late night/early morning ATV version of 'Hide and Seek' with his willing side-kick grandsons, the Reczko brothers, Doug and Andy. One would be designated as 'It', the others were finders. 'It' would hide on 'Its' machine deep in the woods and wait to be found. During one unforgettable night, Doug and Red couldn't find Andy.... so, they simply left him in the woods, went home and went to bed!



Another lesser known entertaining story is noted in Red's diary entitled 'The Day Maggie Came Home Early'. The story unfolds casually enough with Red volunteering to help repair picnic tables at Lazy River. Mom had to leave Johnny for awhile in Red's care, which was quite compatible for both, as Johnny loved 'Cubby' as he called him and Red enjoyed Johnny's company. This comfortable, pleasant afternoon began to spiral downward when Johnny playfully threw a handful of sawdust at Cubby, and it turned categorically ugly when the second handful was thrown. An action plan initiated by Red to avoid any more interruptions, was to tie Johnny by the leg to a large tree, a distance away from the picnic tables. And then, Maggie came home!—--Red would have welcomed that day, to be returned to the East Germans!

He also loved playing pinochle...its our families card game of choice... but it was agonizing to play with him.... he was so slow. Just to pick up his cards took him five minutes. Driving behind was especially maddening, the fastest he drove was 40 mph—on a good day. Andy Davis, who lives on the Canton-Russell road, after looking out his window at a long line of slow moving vehicles, remarked to his wife Katie, "must be Uncle Red's on his way to Canton". And he was always..always... always...the very last player on the golf green in Canton when playing in the annual Knox golf tournaments.

I suspect that as the years unfolded, their probably were mixed moments of regrets and remorsefulness, disillusionment and discouragement, despite his full life.. He continued to enjoy the splendor of each day and of each season. He kept busy working on his autobiography, cutting wood, maintaining his equipment, and assuming the care and maintenance of Lazy River.

For those of you who weren't around when he died, Nancy summed his last days up in an email sent to family. It read: As most of you know, Red was admitted to Ogdensburg Hospital with sepsis, pneumonia and a UTI. Some days he seemed to be getting stronger (and demanding to go home), and then he would take a down-swing and tell the Physical Therapist to shuffle off...At age 96, we were all amazed at his resiliency. His grandson, Doug has been here since last week as well as his daughter, Kathy among other relatives and friends stopping in to see him. This morning we received a call from the hospital that Red had passed away at 6:00 AM. We are all feeling relief for his release from pain and his repeated stated desire to move on. I'm sure his brother, Uncle Lloyd was there to help him along the way and a joyful reunion is in progress.



Have you often wondered, such as I have, what in the world he is doing up there.... if indeed he had the proper credential to make it past St. Peter's Press Box..... . How is he passing his time? Or was how he lived his life all that was necessary?. Our relative Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote.....The purpose of life, after all, is to live it.... to taste experience to the utmost.... and to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experiences. That he did!

Jim Waterson once said to me "we will miss him". He was right!

**Reds final words to his daughter Kathy were "I did it my way". I offer the following reflection for his extraordinary life:**

**He did not choose to be a common man...It was his right to be uncommon... He sought opportunity, not security...nor did he wish to become a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the company look after him. He took the calculated risk of failure and found success and he refused to barter for less than life had to offer.**

**He preferred challenges to a life that guaranteed existence, the thrill of fulfillment to the state of calm or utopia. He did not trade his freedom for beneficence, nor dignity for a handout. It was his heritage to think and act for himself, to enjoy the benefit of his experiences and to face the world boldly and say "This I have done."**