



KITSAP COUNTY ASSESSOR

Carol Belas

614 Division Street MS-22 • Port Orchard, Washington 98366 (360) 876-7160

Michael Eastman

Chief Deputy

January 24, 1996

The Honorable George Bush
P.O. Box 79798
Houston TX 77279

Dear President Bush:

I am writing to invite you and Barbara to a special ceremony honoring my son, who was killed in Desert Storm. I realize the probability of your being able to come is rather slim, but I wanted to invite you anyway.

After Lee's death, you wrote me a letter sending condolences, I wrote you back and you were kind enough to write a personal letter in return. (Both your letters are framed on my wall.) I hold you in high regard and agree with the Kuwaitis who commented during Operation Desert Peace, "We don't understand why the American people did not re-elect President Bush." So, when the captain at the Presidio of Monterey who is arranging the ceremony asked if I wanted anyone in particular to give a speech, I said, "Yes, President Bush". We both laughed at the unreality of my request, but I meant it - of all the people in the world, you would be the one I would want most to be there.

To refresh your memory, Lee was flying on a Blackhawk from Iraq to Kuwait with eight other soldiers when they were shot down by the Republican Guard. He was a linguist, and a dedicated soldier who truly believed in the cause for which they were fighting - the liberation of Kuwait. The Presidio of Monterey, where Lee studied Russian, has chosen to memorialize him by naming the new dining facility after him. The ceremony will be held at the Presidio on the fifth anniversary of Lee's death, February 27th, at 3:30 PM.

Captain Deborah L. Hanagan is the officer in charge of the ceremony. Her telephone number at the Presidio is (408) 242-5589, in case you would like further information.

God bless you both. Thank you for your kindness.

Sincerely,

Carol Belas
Assessor

pw

GEORGE BUSH

February 2, 1996

Dear Carol,

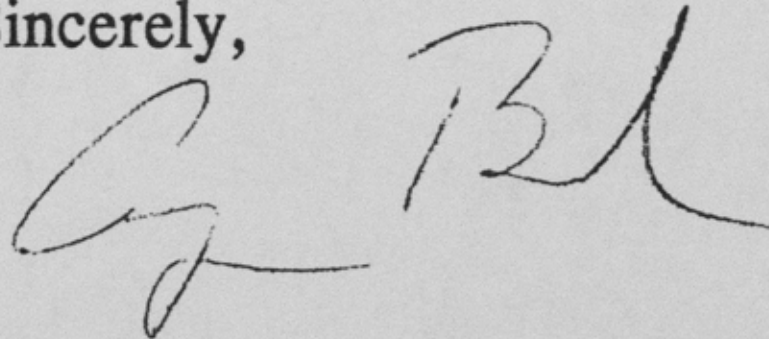
Unfortunately, Barbara and I cannot be with you on February 27 when The Presidio of Monterey properly pays tribute to your wonderful son, Lee. However, I would like to take this opportunity to join in saluting Lee for taking up the torch of freedom and answering his country's call to duty.

The members of the United States Armed Forces are heroes in the truest sense of the word, and their courage and sacrifices reflect the great spirit of which General MacArthur spoke at West Point: that of duty, honor, and country.

Sergeant Lee Arthur Belas rightly takes his place at history's table of glory, for he gave his life to defend the cause of liberty. We Bushes salute him and always will remember him in our prayers and with gratitude in our hearts.

With warmest personal regards to you and all your family,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be "G. Bush", written in a cursive style.

Mrs. Carol Belas
Port Orchard, Washington

P.O. Box 1268
Port Orchard, WA 98366
August 24, 1995

Colonel Vladimir Sobichevsky, Commander,
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center
Presidio of Monterey, CA 93944-5006

Dear Commander Sobichevsky:

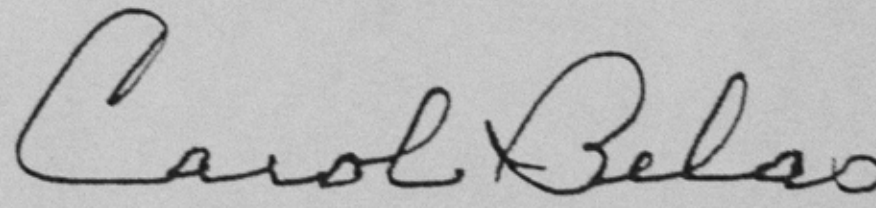
I am delighted to accept your request to memorialize the Russian dining Facility after my son, Lee.

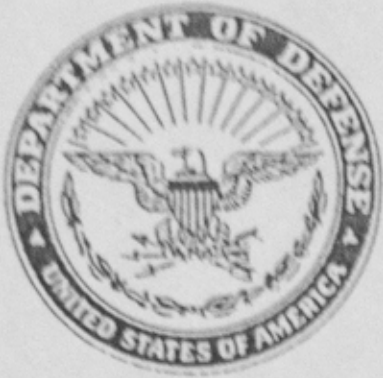
Studying at DLI in itself was an honor to Lee. He loved learning languages and becoming fluent in Russian was a milestone achievement for him. When he called home, he often talked about his classes, his teachers and how much he was enjoying "school". I remember the pride he exuded as he gave us a tour of the classrooms and various places at the Presidio. He was also excited to again take a language class from the Presidio in November, 1990, via satellite, to learn Arabic. He insisted that we see the classroom, how the TV setup worked, the equipment, as well as a demonstration of some of the things he had learned. So, I know that memorializing him in any way at DLI would have been a tremendous honor to him.

I received a copy of your letter from Peter Belas. Peter is no longer my husband, and, for the record, I am the sole next of kin for anything pertaining to Lee. Peter was not Lee's father by birth or adoption. (When Lee was 18, he legally changed his name to Belas to make things less confusing. There is no animosity between Peter and I, but I think it is important to avoid confusion by clarifying the situation. I know the Army is very careful about addressing communication, etc. to the appropriate next of kin.

Thank you again for this honor.

Very truly yours,


Carol Belas



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER
AND PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY
PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, CA 93944-5006



July 26, 1995

Office of the Installation Commander

Carol and Peter Belas
5802 Troon Avenue SW
Port Orchard, WA 98366

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Belas,

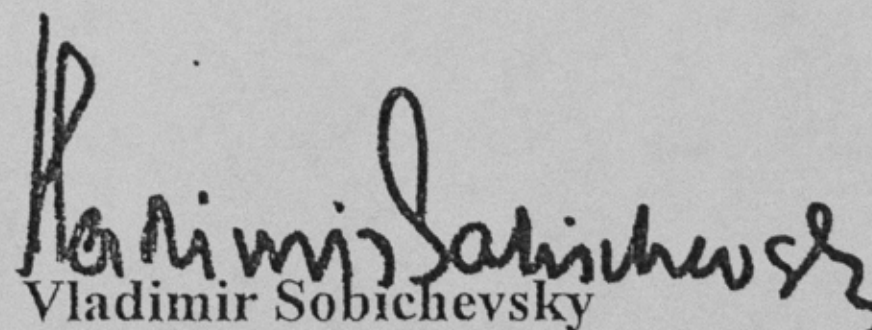
As Commander of the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center and Presidio of Monterey, I want to express to you my deep regret regarding the loss of your son, Sergeant Lee A. Belas during Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1991. Sergeant Belas was an outstanding soldier and excelled as a Russian linguist student while assigned to this command. We at the Defense Language Institute sympathize with your great loss and would like to honor him by commemorating our newest Dining Facility in his memory.

Memorialization of buildings on Army posts is a long-standing military custom. Such dedications honor soldiers who have paid the supreme sacrifice for their country and who stand as shining examples of courage and valor to the young soldiers of today.

Should you accept our request to memorialize the Russian Dining Facility after your son, we would be honored to bring you to the Presidio of Monterey at our expense to attend the dedication ceremony. We would like to conduct a simple ceremony in February 1996 with the current Russian students acting as an Honor Company. Additionally, a bronze plaque engraved with your son's profile and citation describing his military service will be placed on the building.

I hope that you will allow us to bestow this honor to your son with this memorialization. You may direct any questions to Captain Deborah Hanagan at (408) 242-5589.

Sincerely,


Vladimir Sobichevsky

Colonel, U. S. Army
Commander

SGT LEE ARTHUR BELAS BIOGRAPHY

Army Sgt. Lee Arthur Belas was born May 7, 1968 in Burbank, California and moved to Port Orchard, Washington with his family at age 10. Lee enjoyed his school years where he participated in swimming, drama and music. He excelled as a trumpet player, and, as a freshman, was given the Director's award for music student of the year.

Lee was honored to serve as a page for the Washington State House of Representatives, and was active in his church youth group. He graduated with honors from South Kitsap High School in 1986.

Lee was chosen as the first Port Orchard Rotary Youth Exchange student, and spent a year in Belgium. While there, he attained fluency in French, and studied German, Flemish and Latin as well. During this process, he discovered that he loved learning languages, and determined to learn as many languages as possible. He also enjoyed traveling and returned to Europe with his sister, Amy, the summer prior to his death.

On October 14, 1987, Lee joined the U.S. Army. He completed basic training at Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, and earned his airborne wings in January 1988 at Fort Benning, Georgia. Sgt. Belas received a diploma from the Defense Language Institute, Presidio of Monterey, after a 47-week course in Russian. He then trained for four months in Texas, and received his permanent assignment to the First Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. He completed NCO training and received his Sergeant stripes September 1, 1990.

While in Kansas, Lee volunteered to join Quick Fix, received Black Hawk helicopter training in Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and then served with the Fourth Aviation Battalion at Fort Riley. During his assignment in Kansas, Sgt. Belas pursued training during his "off" hours. He had an intense desire to become a Blackhawk pilot, but also wanted to try to go back to Monterey for further language studies.

When the line was drawn in the sand, Lee and his fellow team members were given training in Arabic, and then deployed to the Persian Gulf January 8, 1991. He was fully committed to the efforts there stating, "I know this war may cost me my life, but even if it does, it will be worth it."

Sgt. Belas was killed in action in Ash Shamiyah, Iraq, about 5:30 PM February 27, 1991 when the Blackhawk carrying Belas and 8 other soldiers was shot down by the Republican Guard.

THE DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

THE HISTORY OF THE DLI BEGAN IN 1941 AT THE BERKELEY CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AND IN AN OLD HANGAR AT CRISSY FIELD, SAN FRANCISCO. AMERICAN LEADERS SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT THE U.S. WAS ABOUT TO GO TO WAR WITH JAPAN WITH ALMOST NO JAPANESE LINGUISTS AVAILABLE.

THE ARMY AND NAVY COMMENCED INSTRUCTING A HANDFUL OF JAPANESE-AMERICAN DRAFTEES IN NOVEMBER. WHEN ALL OF THE JAPANESE-AMERICANS WERE FORCIBLY REMOVED FROM THE WEST COAST IN 1942, THE NAVY MOVED THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE SCHOOL TO THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, AND THE FOURTH ARMY INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL RENAMED THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE LANGUAGE SCHOOL, MOVED TO CAMP SAVAGE, MINNESOTA, AND LATER TO NEARBY FORT SNELLING.

AFTER THE WAR, AMERICA'S NEED FOR TRAINED MILITARY LINGUISTS CONTINUED. THE NAVY SCHOOL WAS COMBINED WITH THE NAVAL INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL AT ANACOSTIA, WASHINGTON D.C. THE ARMY SCHOOL MOVED TO THE PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY IN 1946 WHERE, AFTER EXPANDING TO OVER 20 LANGUAGES, IT BECAME THE ARMY LANGUAGE SCHOOL. AIR FORCE, MARINE CORPS, AND NAVY PERSONNEL WERE ALSO INSTRUCTED AT THE PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY.

THE DEFENSE LANGUAGE INSTITUTE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1963 TO COORDINATE ALL DOD LANGUAGE PROGRAMS UNDER THE ARMY AS THE EXECUTIVE AGENT, WITH HEADQUARTERS IN ANACOSTIA, WASHINGTON D.C. THE NAVY SCHOOL BECAME THE DLI EAST COAST BRANCH (DLIEC), AND THE PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY BECAME THE WEST COAST BRANCH (DLIWC).

IN 1973, DLI CAME UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND (TRADOC) AT FORT MONROE, VIRGINIA. A YEAR LATER, EAST AND WEST COAST HEADQUARTERS MERGED INTO ONE ORGANIZATION, LOCATED AT THE PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA, WHERE IT HAS REMAINED TO THIS DAY.



DEDICATION CEREMONY
SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

OFFICIAL PARTY ARRIVES

INVOCATION

OPENING SPEECH AND INTRODUCTION OF GUEST
SPEAKER: LTC W. JACK DEES

GUEST SPEAKER: COL MOWERY

GUEST SPEAKER: ELLIOTT WALLACH

UNVEILING OF PLAQUE

MEMORIAL PROCLAMATION

COMPANY RENDERS HONORS

PLAYING OF TAPS AND PRESENTATION OF FLAG

BENEDICTION

CONCLUSION OF CEREMONY

Sergeant Lee Arthur Belas
1968-1991

SGT Belas enlisted in the Army on October 14, 1987 and attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. Upon completion, he attended Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA, earning his airborne wings on January 22, 1988. He was then assigned to F Company, Troop Command, Defense Language Institute where he was a student in the Russian Basic Course from February 4, 1988 to February 16, 1989. When SGT Belas graduated, he had achieved a Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) score of 2/2+/2. His next assignment was at Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, TX where he attended Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Upon completion of his training he was awarded the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of 98G, Electronic Warfare Voice Interceptor. SGT Belas reported to his first duty assignment at Fort Riley, KS on June 2, 1989 and was assigned to A Company, 101st Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion, 1st Infantry Division (the "Big Red One") where he worked as a voice interceptor. On October 20, 1989, he was assigned to D Company, 1st Aviation Battalion (subsequently redesignated as D Company, 4th Battalion (Provisional), 1st Aviation Regiment, 1st Infantry Division) and from November 19 to December 15, 1989, he went to Fort Huachuca, AZ and completed the Flight Crew Training Course for the EH-60A Quickfix. In September he became an assistant team chief and served dual positions as a jamming team/crew member in both a Collection and Jamming Platoon (A Company, 101st MI Battalion) and the Quickfix Flight Platoon (D Company, 1st Aviation Battalion). With war looming in the Persian Gulf the fall of 1990, the linguists at Fort Riley received Basic Arabic language training via video tele-training in November. On January 8, 1991, SGT Belas deployed with his unit to South West Asia. While in country he worked on his Arabic language skills with Kuwaiti crew members to attain fluency. He logged more than 46 combat flight hours collecting vital intelligence on enemy actions for division and corps combat units. On February 27, 1991, SGT Belas was flying in a UH-60 Blackhawk with eight other soldiers, ferrying troops and supplies from one assembly area to another. While flying over enemy territory, at Ash Shamiyah, Iraq, his helicopter was shot down by Iraqi Republican Guard ground fire. All of the crew members were killed in the resulting crash. SGT Belas' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (posthumous), Purple Heart (posthumous), Air Medal (posthumous), Good Conduct Medal, Aircraft Crewman Badge and Parachutist Badge.

Colonel James L. Mowery, USA
Deputy Assistant Commandant, U.S. Army Aviation Center

Colonel Mowery enlisted in the Army in 1964. Initially assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division, he was subsequently admitted to the USMA Prep School and graduated from the United States Military Academy, receiving his commission in 1970. He began his career as an infantryman, serving in a variety of positions ranging from platoon leader, to company commander, to battalion S3 in the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st Cavalry Division from 1971 to 1980. Colonel Mowery attended the Air Command and Staff College in 1980 and was subsequently assigned to the 9th Infantry Division as a division staff officer, Aviation Battalion S3 and Aviation Brigade S3. In 1984, he was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany and served as an Aviation Battalion Commander, Aviation Brigade Commander, and Attack Helicopter Battalion Commander. Colonel Mowery was then assigned as Deputy C3, Combined Field Army (Korea) in 1988 and then deployed to South West Asia in 1990 as the 4th Brigade (Avn) Commander, 1st Infantry Division during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. From 1992-1993, Colonel Mowery deployed to Somalia as the Deputy J3, Joint Task Force Somalia and in 1994 he deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as J3, Joint Task Force 160. Colonel Mowery is currently the Deputy Assistant Commandant, U.S. Army Aviation Center, Fort Rucker, Alabama. Colonel Mowery received a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the United States Military Academy and a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Puget Sound. He is a graduate of the Infantry Basic and Advanced Courses, the Transportation and Armor Advanced Course, the Army Command and General Staff College and the Marine Command and Staff College, the Air Command and Staff College, the Senior Service School (Advanced Operational Studies Fellow), Ranger School, Pathfinder School, Jungle Warfare Training Courses and Flight School for UH-1, OH-58, UH-60, AH-1 and AH-64. Colonel Mowery's awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (1OLC), Bronze Star Medal (4OLC w/ V), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (4OLC), Air Medal (7 w/ V), and Army Commendation Medal (2OLC w/ V). He is a recipient of the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Aviator Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab and Pathfinder Badge.

Dining hall renamed to honor linguist

Story by Petty Officer 1st Class T.E.
"Scoop" Hansen

Some buildings receive periodic face lifts with new paint or wiring. Others become memorialized after a fallen hero from a global conflict. In a recent case, a former DLI Russian student paid the ultimate sacrifice and had a building named in his honor.

The former Russian Dining Hall was renamed Belas Hall Dining Facility after a dedication ceremony Feb. 27 in memory of the late Sgt. Lee Arthur Belas. The highlight of the event was Belas' father, mother, sister and best friend participating with about 50 soldiers from DLI's Foxtrot Company.

On Feb. 27, 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, Sgt. Belas was flying in a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter with eight other soldiers, ferrying troops and supplies from one assembly area to another. While flying over enemy territory, at Ash Shamiyah, Iraq, his helicopter was shot down by Iraqi Republican Guard ground fire. All of the crew members were killed in the resulting crash.

Sgt. Belas was born May 7, 1968, in Burbank, Calif., and moved with his family to Port Orchard, Wash., at the age of 10. He graduated with honors from South Kitsap High School in 1986.

After graduation, he was selected as the first Port Orchard Rotary Youth Exchange student and spent a year in Belgium.

While in country, he studied German, Flemish and Latin, and attained fluency in French. He discovered that he loved learning languages and decided to learn as many as possible. It was for this rea-

son that he opted to take Russian language training at DLI.

Belas enlisted Oct. 14, 1987, and attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Upon completion, he attended Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga., earning his airborne wings in January 1988.

He was then assigned to DLI's Foxtrot Company as a Basic Russian student from February 1988 to February 1989. When Belas graduated, he had achieved Defense Language Proficiency Test scores of 2/2+/2.

Follow-on training took him to Goodfellow Air Force Base, San Angelo, Texas, where he attended Advanced Individual Training from March to May 1989 and became an Electronic Warfare Voice Interceptor upon graduation.

Belas reported to his first duty assignment at Fort Riley, Kan., in June 1989 and was assigned to Alpha Company, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, 1st Infantry Division (the "Big Red One"), where he worked as a voice interceptor.

That October, he was assigned to Delta Company, 1st Aviation Battalion (later redesignated Delta Company, 4th Battalion (Provisional), 1st Aviation Regiment, 1st Infantry Division) and from November to December, he completed Flight Crew Training at Fort Huachuca, Ariz.

He attended Platoon Leaders Development Course at Fort Riley, Kan., from May to June 1990, and on Sept. 1 he was promoted from specialist to sergeant.

Later that month, he became an assistant team chief and served dual positions as a jamming team/crew member in both a Collection and Jamming Platoon (Alpha Company, 101st MI Battalion) and the Quickfix Flight Platoon (Delta Company, 1st Aviation Battalion).

U.S. Army photo



Sgt. Lee Arthur Belas was memorialized Feb. 27 when the dining hall at DLI's Russian Village was renamed Belas Hall Dining Facility. Belas was a crew member on board a helicopter shot down over Iraq during the Persian Gulf War exactly five years before the dedication ceremony.

With war looming in the Persian Gulf in the fall of 1990, the linguists at Fort Riley, Kan., received Basic Arabic language training via Video TeleTraining in November in preparation for deployment to the Middle East.

On Jan. 8, 1991, Belas deployed with his unit to Southwest Asia, where he worked on his Arabic language skills with Kuwaiti crew members to attain fluency. He logged more than 46 combat flight hours as a crew member collecting vital intelligence on enemy actions for combat units.

Sgt. Belas' awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal (posthumous), Purple Heart (posthumous), Air Medal (posthumous), Good Conduct Medal, Aircraft Crewman Badge and Parachutist Badge.