

Soldier, Actor, Politician



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Story by MCC Mike Miller

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Control is one of the core concepts of Communism. Control over goods, control over the economy – and, maybe most importantly – control over the way people think. Communist Party leaders have historically used any means necessary to spread the concepts of communism to help gain sympathizers.

Near the end of World War II, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover feared a communist infiltration of the motion picture industry to manipulate public opinion against the U.S. By using the world's largest producer of motion pictures as a messaging vehicle, Hoover thought, Communists could creatively plant propaganda furthering the party's cause in America. To battle this, Hoover created an operation named the "Communist Infiltration of the Motion-Picture Industry," or COMPIC, and it had two primary goals: to identify the extent of communist infiltration in the industry and to identify communist-sympathizing screenwriters, actors, directors, executives, etc.

Ronald Reagan himself was one of many being closely watched by COMPIC as he was outspoken politically following his military service. He even unknowingly sponsored groups being watched by COMPIC for communist tendencies. In 1946, Reagan was elected to the executive council of the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions (HICCASP). By then, an FBI report had already identified the group as one of key Communist influence.

"It is a powerful political pressure group and using the motion picture industry and its prestige as a base will be the dominating factor in the coming primary elections in the State of California," the report said. "Every endorsement for public office made by this organization coincides exactly with that made by the Communist Party of the state."

While identifying HICCASP as a potential communist cover, Hoover's FBI underestimated Reagan's patriotism and devotion to the American cause. As the COMPIC investigation carried on, Hoover learned that not only was Reagan a proud American patriot, but he also had a friendly contact in the FBI.

"WE HAVE SOME INFORMATION WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL TO YOU, WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE SOME INFORMATION HELPFUL TO US."

Charles Browning, Jr. was Reagan's college fraternity brothers who became an FBI agent. Learning this, Hoover directed Browning to provide Reagan's contact information to the FBI's Los Angeles field office.

One night in 1946, FBI agents arrived at Reagan's home in Hollywood where they presented official identification before he welcomed them in. Reagan recalled this night in his 1981 autobiography "Where's the Rest of Me?"

"We have some information which might be useful to you," one agent said as Reagan served them coffee. "We thought you might have some information helpful to us."

At the time, Reagan wasn't the famed conservative he's known as today. Then, he largely adopted his father's democratic loyalties built under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"Instinctively, my old liberal reaction popped up before I could think," Reagan recalled. "I found myself saying, 'Now look, I don't go in for Red-baiting.'"

The agents assured Reagan that their focus was based around National Security – not baiting.

"You served with the Army Air Corps," one agent responded. "You know what spies and saboteurs are. We thought someone the Communists hated as much as they hate you might be willing to help us."

That put the hook in Reagan. He was fascinated hearing Communists loathed him and that he was a topic of discussion. They began talking about how Reagan could help the American cause against Communism.

"I came to admire these men," Reagan later wrote in his book "An American Life." "They never accused anyone of being a Communist unless they had every last bit of evidence which would stand up against the most vicious court assault. They were very thorough, very patient and very accurate."

The agents went on to explain how their investigations not only showed the Communist Party trying to gain control of the Hollywood workforce, but also trying to influence the content of movies through party-sympathizing writers and actors.

"They asked if they could meet with me periodically to discuss some of the things that were going on in Hollywood," said Reagan. "I said of course they could."

In an effort to test the FBI waters, and possibly out of fear that the agents he met were correct about HICCASP,

Reagan decided to take action to sniff out Communists within his organization.

"I suggested that we propose a resolution to the executive committee with language that we knew a Communist couldn't accept," said Reagan. "We reaffirm belief in free enterprise and the democratic system and repudiate Communism as desirable for the United States."

By the time of the next HICCASP meeting, members were in an uproar over the motion. It caused a flurry of debates, disdain and out-right arguments. Reagan's motion was promptly and decisively voted down.

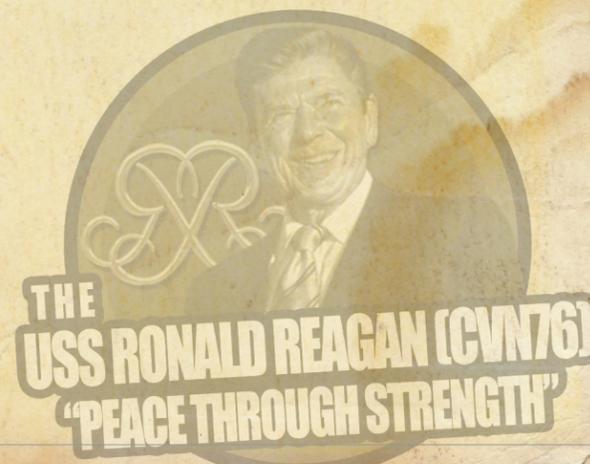
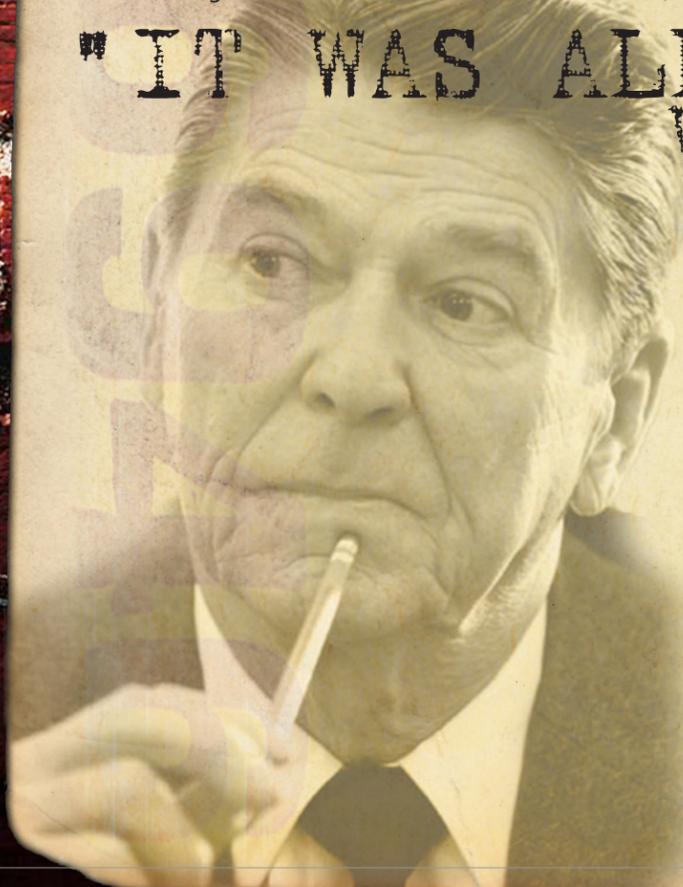
"It was all the proof we needed," said Reagan. "HICCASP had become a Communist front organization, hiding behind a few well-intentioned Hollywood celebrities to give it credibility."

Before quitting the organization, Reagan collected a number of internal records from HICCASP which he turned in to his FBI contacts – many of which later helped the Bureau dismantle the Communist organization.

For years to follow, Reagan would use similar tactics to help infiltrate and disrupt Communist organizations aimed at controlling the Hollywood film industry. He became one of the biggest assets to the FBI in stopping the Communist cause in Hollywood.

"More than anything else," Reagan wrote, "it was the Communists' attempted takeover of Hollywood and its worldwide weekly audience of more than five hundred million people that led me to accept a nomination to serve as president of the Screen Actors Guild and, indirectly at least, set me on the road that would lead me into politics."

"IT WAS ALL THE PROOF WE NEEDED."





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“Poised for Greatness” Drawing Shipboard Motivation from Ronald Reagan’s Inaugural Speech

*By MCC Mike Miller
(Published in the January issue of “The 76er”)*

On Monday January 21st , President Barack Obama was sworn in for a second term and delivered his second inaugural address. Twenty-eight years ago from that very day, President Ronald Reagan gave his second inaugural address from inside the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

The country then, much like today, was climbing out of demanding fiscal challenges and faced with cautious optimism looking ahead. His speech was laced with ambitions of growing, improving and achieving the grandest of goals. For political junkies and pundits alike, presidential speeches are an eager time to micro-analyze policy, politics and partisan divisiveness. But from a less biased perspective and using a careful ear, nuggets of inspiration and optimism can be pulled from the moment and applied to life’s current hand. As we meet our goals of completing the Docked Planned Incremental Availability (DPIA) and return to San Diego, we can look to the speech by our ship’s namesake for focused inspiration.

“My fellow citizens, our nation is poised for greatness,” said Reagan. “We must do what we know is right and do it with all our might.”

Our ship is also poised for greatness. We have a clean slate. Our paint is new and our crew is young. Chatter about “Sunny San Diego” fills the mess decks, and that energy drives us to finish DPIA strong. We look forward to the days beyond Level of Knowledge exams, where the salt of a wave’s crest tickles our noses. But we must stay focused on the days and challenges at hand to return the ship to her sea-born glory. Reagan’s speech captured this mindset of harnessing momentum and continuing to improve.

“We believed there are no limits to growth and human progress when men and women are free to follow their dreams,” he said. “From new freedom will spring new opportunities for growth, a more productive, fulfilled and united people, and a stronger America.”

His use of the term “freedom” was in the grandest national sense, but I think the term can easily apply to us on board this ship – here and now. We have a unique opportunity to leave our mark on this command. At the end of DPIA, getting the ship underway leaves behind the days where we can point fingers at what was left for us. The moment is ours. The ship is ours. Our work centers, divisions and departments will all get underway soon for the first time in 15 months. We have the opportunity to set a fresh standard, rhythm and heartbeat for the mighty Reagan.

DPIA has been a unique work environment and a challenge all its own. A challenge we have met together. In Reagan’s speech, he quoted a letter from Thomas Jefferson to John Adams where they reminisce about challenges in days past as necessary to achieve a greater good.

“Beset with difficulties and dangers, we were fellow laborers in the same cause, struggling for what is most valuable to man, his right to self-government,” Jefferson wrote. “Laboring always at the same oar, with some wave ever ahead threatening to overwhelm us, and yet passing harmless ... we rode through the storm with heart and hand.”

Our challenges have been both varied and alike, but through it we are all Sailors with a simple, reachable goal: accomplish each mission with excellence and return home swiftly and safely to our families and loved ones. This, of the grandest scope, is what we all strive for each time we go to sea.

Reagan’s speech was an overture aiming to capture a magic and energy in the air. It was a challenge to the American people to not stall, but to continue to grow and improve instead. There is a similar energy throughout our ship right now. Magic is in the air. We just have to grab it, and use it to get the ship back to its core operational mission of supporting the embarked air wing as they put weapons on target.

As Reagan said: “If not us, who? And if not now, when?”

Ronald Reagan, Star Wars & Russia

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the February issue of "The 76er")

Thirty years ago the United States and Russia were both heavily involved in an international arms race. Tensions were high in the U.S. under fear of a nuclear attack. Both nations were anxiously watching each other strategically; each hoping the other would flinch first.

For years, both nations' defense strategies were built upon a Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) concept – a national defense policy in which full-scale use of weapons of mass destruction by two opposing sides would result in complete annihilation of each nation and their defense assets.

President Ronald Reagan aimed to change that defense mentality by proposing the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). SDI came to life on March 23, 1983 as part of a bold announcement by Reagan to use ground and space-based systems to protect the U.S. from attacks by nuclear ballistic missiles – shooting them out of the sky from both land and space.

“Let us turn to the very strengths in technology that spawned our great industrial base and that have given us the quality of life we enjoy today,” said Reagan in his address to the nation proposing the program.

The SDI outlined a strategy for developing space-based missile defense systems that would be capable of eliminating any intercontinental ballistic missile threats to America.

The initiative was met with skepticism by many, with the media calling it a “Star Wars” initiative. They compared the lofty ambitions of firing weapons from space to the popular George Lucas film. Some concepts for the initiative actually included using satellites to destroy objects with lasers.

Beyond the rhetoric and media spin was a tactical shift in defense thinking by Reagan. He was moving policy away from the strategy of MAD to a more proactive, defense-based plan.

“What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our own soil or that of our allies,” Reagan asked. “Isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is.”

Reagan's SDI not only sent a message to the American people, but also to Russia. Reagan's initiative put the American people more at ease knowing the government is establishing a defense against nuclear attacks, even if they thought the government was over reaching their capabilities. It also showed Russia that America was ready for any attack and wouldn't back

down. Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev demanded that the U.S. commit to never deploy the SDI, and Reagan refused.

“Everything was negotiable except two things: our freedom and our future,” said Reagan. The Cold War ended just a few years later with the reconstruction of Russia.

“Reagan’s vision of missile defense surely helped accelerate our victory in the Cold War,” said former Vice President Richard Cheney. “There is still a great deal yet to accomplish in the field of missile defense, but we’re a lot farther along than we would have been if Ronald Reagan hadn’t set this effort in motion years ago.”

Reagan’s SDI was so forward thinking that people saw it as ridiculous. Our enemies were in fear of us accomplishing it, and our allies were hoping we could make it happen. Reagan saw an opportunity to harness the technical and tactical proficiency of a growing military to build the bold program.

In 1993, under President Bill Clinton, SDI was renamed the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization and, to this day, maintains some of the core concepts of Reagan’s original plan.

The Great Communicator

How the 40th President Inspired a Nation

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the March issue of "The 76er")

Nicknames have a funny way of identifying people. They're aimed at capturing the personality and character traits of a person and usually with a sense of humor. Some are endearing; others, not so much.

President Ronald Reagan was given many nicknames: The Gipper, Ronnie, The Jelly Bean Man, Dutch and maybe most famously – The Great Communicator.

Deep inside Reagan was, in fact, a skilled communicator – with a strong resume to boot. Before his successful career as an actor, Reagan spent many years as a radio staff announcer and a play-by-play radio sportscaster for the Chicago Cubs.

But nowhere were his famed communications skills on better display than during his rise in presidential politics. In the fall of 1964, Reagan delivered an endorsement speech to Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater which would become known as the "Time for Choosing" speech. This would propel Reagan onto the national political stage. The speech, like many of Reagan's, had a remarkable ability to remain inspirational yet blunt; articulate yet humble.

"You and I are told increasingly we have to choose between a left or right. Well I'd like to suggest there is no such thing as a left or right," said Reagan. "There's only an up or down —up man's old-aged dream, the ultimate in individual freedom consistent with law and order, or down to the ant heap of totalitarianism. And regardless of their sincerity, their humanitarian motives, those who would trade our freedom for security have embarked on this downward course."

Ironically, one of Reagan's most moving speeches was not in victory – but in a full endorsement of his political rival. In 1976, after losing the Presidential nomination to Gerald Ford, Reagan gave an endorsement speech at the Republican National Convention that resulted in both tears and thunderous applause.

"This is our challenge; and this is why here in this hall tonight, better than we have ever done before," said Reagan. "We have got to quit talking to each other and about each other and go out and communicate to the world that we may be fewer in numbers than we have ever been, but we carry the message they are waiting for."

Reagan had a unique and famous ability to relate to people, through both conversation and speeches, on a very personal level. Former U.S. Senator Fred Thompson, and actor-turned-politician himself, attributes Reagan's grounded nature to his success as a communicator.

“Not all actors make good politicians, and certainly the reverse is true as well,” Thompson said. “More than most Presidents, Reagan’s success was tied directly to his ability to not just speak to the American people, but to communicate with them.”

In 1980, Reagan accepted his party’s nomination for President. In prime Reagan fashion, he used the opportunity to paint a grand picture of his vision for America with the simple motivation of a boy from Illinois.

“Let us pledge to restore, in our time, the American spirit of voluntary service, of cooperation, of private and community initiative,” he said. “A spirit that flows like a deep and mighty river through the history of our nation.”

The campaign against President Jimmy Carter could have easily been wrought with negativity and political attacks – but not with Reagan. In the book “Ronald Reagan 100 Years,” the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation explains Reagan’s success in bringing a strong political fight to Carter but with a positive and motivational tone.

“The Reagan campaign maintained a careful balance between pointing out the shortcomings of the Carter presidency by outlining specific solutions to the myriad of problems the country faced and providing an inspiring and positive vision of what a new administration could mean for the country.”

At 69, Reagan was the oldest President ever elected to that office but may have been the most youthful at heart. He maintained an energetic optimism far gone from typical political punditry and inspired those who crossed his path.

“He was moving, but he was moving not because of the way he said things, he was moving because of what he said,” said Peggy Noonan, one of Reagan’s speechwriters. “He didn’t say things in a big way, he said big things.”

His communications skills were an overt effort to simplify the overly complex language of national politics and government. He did so by talking with people, not to them, and he was always grounded in humility. Even though he was a famous actor, Reagan never really enjoyed the spotlight. Not even the most endearing of nicknames. He would always skillfully redirect attention towards his love of country and the American people.

“I never thought it was my style or the words I used that made a difference, it was the content,” said Reagan in his farewell address. “I wasn’t a great communicator, but I communicated great things, and they didn’t spring full bloom from my brow, they came from the heart of a great nation – from our experience, our wisdom, and our belief in principles that have guided us for two centuries.”

Rancho del Cielo: A Home, An Institution, A Monument

*By MCC Mike Miller
(Published in the April issue of "The 76er")*

Northwest of Santa Barbara, Calif., atop the Santa Ynez Mountain range sits an adobe ranch house settled by descendants of Mexican explorers in 1871. A little more than a century later, it would become a home and retreat for an American legend.

Rancho del Cielo, or "Ranch in the Sky," is a 688-acre ranch bought by President Ronald Reagan and his wife Nancy in 1974 near the end of his second term as Governor of California. It was his refuge as he prepared to run for president and during his two terms as President. For the Reagans, it was love at first sight.

"From the first day we saw it, Rancho del Cielo cast a spell over us," said Reagan. "No place before or since has given Nancy and me the joy and serenity it does."

Rancho del Cielo was to Ronald Reagan what Monticello was to Thomas Jefferson, and Mount Vernon was to George Washington. Reagan, a Westerner at heart, felt most at home at the ranch – far more so than in the hectic bustle of Washington.

"There's such a sense of seclusion," said Reagan. "I suppose it's the scriptural line that, 'I look to the hills from whence cometh my strength.'"

Serving primarily as a retreat house for the Reagans during his presidential years, the ranch also became an iconic symbol of Western freedom and democracy for the 40th President, and it served as the Western White House from 1981 to 1989. During the eight years he was president, Ronald Reagan spent about 350 days — almost 1/8th of his presidency — at Rancho del Cielo. Reagan signed the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981 at the ranch and at various times hosted foreign dignitaries of all levels. He even hosted a barbecue for U.S. Navy Seabees there in 1981 – the very Seabees who built temporary security structures on the property which transformed it into the Western White House.

Visitors are usually surprised by its modesty and simplicity. It is no Hollywood designer house. The estate contains a pond called Lake Lucky, stables and a barn for horses, and a 1,500 square-ft. house decorated with 1970s-era furniture. It retains a rustic feel to this day, heated by one fireplace in the den and another in the living room. Often it is chillier in the house than in the sun outside. Even in its modesty, the home became a must-see for visiting dignitaries and heads of state.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip visited the ranch in March 1983. The day of the Royal visit was very rainy and the winding road to the mountaintop retreat was barely passable, yet the

Queen insisted on making the journey. The visit was spent indoors by the warmth of the fireplace stoked with wood that Reagan himself had cut.

On a foggy day in February 1993 following the celebration of the President's birthday at the Reagan Presidential Library the previous evening, Lady Margaret Thatcher, the 71st Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, visited the Reagans at the Ranch. Thatcher was gracious as she toured the humble ranch home and paused in front of the fireplace to express her joy at finally being able to visit Reagan's beloved presidential retreat. As they chatted about the weather, the Reagans apologized for the foggy conditions, to which she remarked, "I love the fog."

In famed Reagan humility, the President simply saw these visits as hosting guests at his home. He constantly downplayed the ranch's role in international diplomacy. Reagan biographer Lou Cannon insisted that the 40th president never called Rancho del Cielo the Western White House. That's what the media dubbed it. Reagan once told Cannon, "There's only one White House, and that's in Washington, D.C."

On August 15, 1995 Reagan made his final visit to Rancho del Cielo during the hot days of late August. Where he had previously enjoyed physical activities such as horseback riding, cutting brush and fixing what needed to be fixed, the activities he could do with ease became fewer and fewer as the President battled Alzheimer's Disease. Since he could no longer enjoy ranch activities as he once did, the time had come to say farewell to his beloved 'old friend' that had served him well for more than 20 historic years, spanning his governorship to his post-presidency.

Today Rancho del Cielo is owned and maintained by the Young America's Foundation, which takes great effort to preserve the ranch just as the Reagans left it. USS Ronald Reagan Chief Petty Officers have participated in work weekends at the ranch as well, as the ship's CPO Mess is named after the ranch.

Leadership by Example

How Ronald Reagan Led with Hope

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the May issue of "The 76er")

When a given leader is characterized as "leading by example," it almost always means they will not task those under their charge with anything they will not be willing to do themselves. Sometimes that task is a tangible list of instructions, other times it's an attitude and a mindset expected of both leaders and subordinates alike.

For Ronald Reagan, all he ever asked of the American people was to believe in what was possible for America. To most historians, Reagan was more than a charismatic and likeable politician, he honestly had an unmatched affection and love for his country.

Born in an apartment on the second floor of an Illinois commercial building in 1911, Reagan began his life with humble roots. He was the son of a salesman father and a stay-at-home mother, raised throughout Illinois. Going from the son of a storekeeper to a well-to-do actor and national politician, it's easy to see how Reagan's love of country and the American Dream was born.

"Someone once said that the difference between an American and any other kind of person is that an American lives in anticipation of the future because he knows it will be a great place. Other people fear the future as just a repetition of past failures," said Reagan. "There's a lot of truth in that. If there is one thing we are sure of, it is that history need not be relived; that nothing is impossible and that man is capable of improving his circumstances beyond what we are told is fact."

When Reagan took the oath of office as the 40th President, the country and its citizens were down on their luck. The economy was not faring well and the nation's global status was questioned by many. The task before him was, if nothing else, intimidating.

"In his lifetime, Ronald Reagan was such a cheerful and invigorating presence that it was easy to forget what daunting historic tasks he set himself," said Lady Margaret Thatcher of Reagan. "He sought to mend America's wounded spirit, to restore the strength of the free world and to free the slaves of Communism."

In 1981, a lingering recession kept unemployment rates higher than normal at 7.5%. It was the worst recession since the Great Depression. Many businesses could not seem to find a way to compete against more agile and quality-conscious competitors from Japan. To many Americans it had seemed we had lost our way, especially in the wake of the Iranian hostage crisis.

Reagan knew the challenge that lay before him. But he believed in what he was doing and he believed in the ability of the American people to overcome. And that, essentially, was all he expected of the American people as his leader – to believe.

“It is up to us, however we may disagree on policies, to work together for progress and humanity so that our grandchildren, when they look back on us, can say we not only preserved the flame of freedom, but cast its warmth and light further than those who came before us,” he said.

Reagan’s leadership model was simple. Surround yourself with smart minds, lay out your expectations and then stand back and watch them work with the quiet confidence they’ll get the job done.

“Set clear goals and appoint good people to help you achieve them,” said Reagan. “As long as they are doing what you have in mind, don’t interfere, but if someone drops the ball, intervene and make a change.”

And things did improve. By the end of Reagan’s presidency, he had ended the Cold War, cut tax rates, eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons and created nearly 16 million new jobs. And even with these achievements on the grandest scale, he strived to inspire Americans to continue to improve; to continue to believe.

“After all our struggles to restore America, to revive confidence in our country, hope for our future, after our hard-won victories earned through the patience and courage of every citizen, we cannot, must not, and will not turn back,” Reagan said in his 1988 State of the Union address to congress. “We will finish our job. How could we do less? We’re Americans.”

Reagan’s leadership by example was more a spirit than anything else. His love affair of the grand possibilities in this country was his core expectation of each citizen. He planted the seed of optimism through his own famous positivity and grand, yet achievable goals. It is a mindset that has been lauded by leaders for years.

“Our friend was strong and gentle. He believed in America so he made it his shining city on a hill. He believed in freedom so he acted on behalf of its values and ideals. He believed in tomorrow so the great communicator became the great liberator,” said former President George H. W. Bush of Reagan. “He came to office with great hopes for America. And more than hopes...Ronald Reagan matched an optimistic temperament with bold, persistent action.”

“Tear Down This Wall”

The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Cold War

By MCC Mike Miller
(Published in the June issue of “The 76er”)

Following the end of World War II, Germany was a country divided – both ideologically and in a literal physical sense. What remained of the pre-war Germany was divided into four occupation zones. The United States, Britain and France occupied zones largely located in the West, while the Soviet Union maintained communist control over the east. It would later become known as the “Eastern Bloc.”

The divide in policy and idealism became starker and more polarizing as the years went on. While Western Germany was flourishing with a social market economy and a democratic parliamentary government, East Germany was nationalizing industry and forcing Marxism-Leninism into school criteria. Punishment for citizens defiant to the communist ideals included imprisonment, torture and even death.

This oppression led to massive migrations of German citizens from the communist Eastern Bloc to the democratic West Germany. At the peak, 331,000 German citizens left the Eastern Bloc in 1953. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin was infuriated by this defection, calling the situation “intolerable.”

"The demarcation line between East and West Germany should be considered a border—and not just any border, but a dangerous one," said Stalin. "The Germans will guard the line of defense with their lives."

And a border is exactly what he created within the divided country. In 1952, Stalin went from imposing harsh travel restrictions to those going between the two zones to erecting a barbed-wire fence in what became known as the Inner German Border. The border had actually caused an unintended increase in East/West travel due to the border in Berlin being managed by all four occupying powers, including the democratic governments of the West, instead of solely by the communist state.

By 1961, nearly 3.5 million East Germans had left for the freedom of West Germany – 20% of the population. Aiming to stop the defections, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev signed the order to close the border and to erect a wall.

Travel halted to a standstill. For years families were separated and torn apart, while wall sentries were issued “shooting orders” to help stop attempting defectors. Hundreds died attempting to cross the wall by jumping, tunneling or even charging checkpoints. The wall gave rise to a widespread sense of desperation and oppression in East Berlin.

In 1978, before accepting his party's nomination for President, Ronald Reagan visited West Berlin where he was told the story of Peter Fechter, an East German teenager who was killed attempting to cross the wall. He was left unattended for an hour while he bled to death. This, among the long dark history of the wall, angered Reagan.

"Reagan just gritted his teeth," said Peter Hannaford, a longtime aide who was with him in Berlin. "You could tell from the set of his jaw and his look that ... he was very, very determined that this was something that had to go."

Reagan spent years during the early part of his presidency attempting to build a relationship with the hardened leaders of the Soviet Union to help ease tensions between them and the United States. Stunningly, the Soviet Union transitioned through four leaders in five years – most dying shortly after taking office. Perhaps in an attempt to avoid anointing another elderly and unhealthy principal, the Soviet high command chose a younger man as their next leader: Mikhail Gorbachev.

It was Gorbachev with whom Reagan would build a strong new relationship, leading to lessened tensions between Washington and Moscow, and perhaps helping Reagan obtain the goal of freeing East Germany from a state of communism. For years, their talks and meetings focused heavily on eliminating weapons in a hope to achieve mutual peace. The two leaders mostly met eye to eye, and any disagreements were matched with a mutual love of their homelands and an overarching desire for worldwide peace.

In an attempt to further understand the stark contrast in lifestyle and political systems, Reagan traveled once again to West Berlin. On one side of the wall, citizens were held captive by a failed and corrupt government; while on the other side, freedom and prosperity were strongly flourishing.

Capitalizing on the confidence and strength built with Gorbachev, Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate on June 12, 1987, and boldly delivered one of the most famous speeches in Presidential history.

"We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace," said Reagan. "General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

By the end of that year, Reagan and Gorbachev met in the East Room of the White House to sign a historic treaty eliminating all nuclear-armed-ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,000 kilometers. The signing of this treaty is widely credited as the first major step in ending the Cold War.

By November 1989, guards were ordered to stand down along the Berlin Wall and to allow safe passage across the once hostile border.

There is no one moment or event credited to Reagan for the fall of the Berlin Wall, but rather a grander attribution towards his fearless decisiveness in bridging a gap between the United States and the Soviet Union. He simply aimed to build a mutual trust between two leaders in the hope that their respective nations would follow suit. Neither country, nor the world, would ever be the same.

Commander-In-Chief

Ronald Reagan's Investment in the U.S. Military

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the July issue of "The 76er")

In the mid-1970s the U.S. government was recovering from the financial strain of the Vietnam War. In that decade alone, the country endured two national recessions and the highest unemployment rate since the Great Depression. Military spending was at the lowest level since the end of World War II, and many critics labeled the military as under-paid, under-funded and under-trained.

At that time, communism was still a fear in the minds of many Americans and the Cold War was growingly tense as Russia continued to grow their military presence and status worldwide. America's government and military status internationally was questioned by many following the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979, which included a failed rescue mission launched from the USS Nimitz (CVN 68) resulting in the death of eight U.S. service members.

By the time President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, the national unemployment level continued to grow, peaking at 10.8 percent in 1982. The year of Reagan's inauguration, the U.S. defense budget was \$317 billion – more than \$100 billion dollars less than when the U.S. was at peace post-WWII. When Reagan took on the challenges of boosting America's economic status and ending the Cold War – the strength and capability of the U.S. military were directly in his sights.

"We're in greater danger today that we were the day after Pearl Harbor," said Reagan. "Our military is absolutely incapable of defending this country."

Reagan knew, in as early as his Presidential campaign years, that one of the biggest tools to combat the Russians during the Cold War was the simple show of force. By growing a robust military, it was Reagan's hope to establish "Peace Through Strength" against the Soviet Union. But Reagan's approach was unique in that his plan to boost the U.S. military was not in a provocative or offensive nature, but rather defensive.

"Our defense policy is based on a very simple premise: The United States will not start fights. We will not be the first to use aggression. We will not seek to occupy other lands or control other peoples," Reagan said. "Our strategy is defensive; our aim is to protect the peace by ensuring that no adversaries ever conclude they could best us in a war of their choosing."

Possibly Reagan's most famous embodiment of this idea was his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) – a high-tech defense system aimed at destroying international ballistic missiles as they're being launched and before they reach American soil. The program gained much press, both good and bad, for its lofty and futuristic nature. But another defense-growing idea that was just

as grand but less ridiculed centered on the U.S. Navy, where he announced during his Presidential campaign the goal of growing to a 600-ship fleet. The plan appealed to many Americans who felt defense spending was too low to adequately protect the nation from communism and the Cold War.

It centered around four key but smaller goals: re-commission Iowa-class battleships; keep older ships in service longer; implement a large new ship construction program and increase production of Nimitz-class aircraft carriers.

Iowa-class battleships, built in the 1940s, were all re-commissioned and refitted with RGM-84 Harpoon, BGM-109 Tomahawk, and Phalanx CIWS system capabilities, plus their armor plating would be more resilient against anti-ship missiles.

Construction of Nimitz-class carriers and Los Angeles-class attack submarines were both increased, while also constructing the first-ever Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine. Additionally, multiple new weapons systems debuted during the era including the Aegis combat systems and Harpoon, Tomahawk and AGM-88 HARM missiles making their shipboard debuts.

The benefits of the growing fleet did not end with the surface and sub-surface Navy, as naval aviation reaped many benefits as well. The growth included the introduction of the F/A-18 Hornet along with improved versions of the EA-6 Prowler, A-6 Intruder and F-14 Tomcat. Even across other services, Reagan revived programs such as the B-1 bomber and deployments of the Abrams main battle tanks and Bradley armored fighting vehicles.

In the end, Reagan's overall goal was to build a military large enough to wear down the Soviets in what would be the final years of the Cold War. By the end of his second term, Reagan had expanded the U.S. military budget to a staggering 43% increase over the total expenditure during the height of the Vietnam War. The Soviet Union was battling economic woes and ultimately could not keep up with programs like SDI and an expanded fleet.

His projection of power ultimately kept the U.S. out of a major war for nearly a decade, truly embodying the ethos "Peace Through Strength." To this day, much of the nation's current firepower is a legacy of the Reagan years.

Leading Man: From Actor to Politician

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the August issue of "The 76er")

Comparing actors and politicians isn't hard to do. They are both extremely public figures, easily recognizable by most people. Both are skilled at inspiring people through both their actions and words. In fact, there have been many actors-turned-politicians through the years. Television star Fred Thompson, who played the New York district attorney on "Law and Order," served as a Tennessee Senator for 10 years. Action movie star Jesse Ventura served as Governor of Minnesota. Maybe most famously, actor Arnold Schwarzenegger went from "The Terminator" to "The Governator" when he was elected as Governor of California.

Ronald Reagan also made the same transition, but from very humble beginnings. In the 1930s, Reagan was a sportscaster for an NBC radio station – WHO in Des Moines, Iowa. Among the many sports Reagan covered was Chicago Cubs' baseball. During the winter, the Cubs trained on Catalina Island, just off the Southern California coast. Reagan, who had lifelong hopes of becoming an actor, convinced the station to let him use his vacation time to go with the team for their winter training sessions, as long as WHO paid his travel expenses.

On his third trip to Catalina, he was finally able to make a side trip to Hollywood. While there, he looked up an old WHO friend who was also trying to get into acting, Joy Hodges. She was able to set up a meeting with an agent. The meeting, and Reagan's now-famous smile and charm, earned him a screen test with Warner Bros. Studios.

By the late 1940s, Reagan had been in a number of "B" list films for Warner Bros. It was steady work, but Reagan wanted to make the "A" list – and had an idea on how to do just that. For years, Reagan was interested in the life of Knute Rockne, the Notre Dame Football coach who revolutionized the game of football and later died in a plane crash. Reagan thought Rockne's story was perfect for film. Pat O'Brien would be perfect in the role of Rockne, and Reagan would play the role of George Gipp, better known as the Gipper, the legendary Notre Dame player, who died two weeks after his final game. Reagan shared this idea with as many people as possible and even began working on a screenplay.

Not too much later, Reagan read in a Hollywood trade paper that Warner Bros. was planning a movie based on the life story of Rockne, starring none other than Pat O'Brien. To make matters even worse, Reagan learned that the studio had already screen-tested a selection of other actors to play the role of George Gipp. Reagan couldn't believe the news. He found the movie's producer and insisted that they consider him for the role of Gipp. The producer looked at Reagan's build and told him that he didn't look the part of a legendary college football player – that he was too small. Reagan protested, saying that he actually weighed more than Gipp when he had played for Notre Dame. The producer didn't budge.

Reagan refused to give up. Remembering something a cameraman once told him – producers need to see it themselves to believe it – Reagan sped home and searched through old photo albums to find a picture of him in his college football uniform. He raced back to the producer's office and gave him the photo – but the producer didn't even give the slightest hint of a reaction. Reagan left the studio later that day not knowing what would happen. Not even an hour later, Reagan received a call telling him to be back at the studio early the next day to test for the role of George Gipp – a role that he would not only win, but it would become one of the most famous roles of Reagan's legacy.

As the years passed, Reagan continued to land roles in a combination of film and television. By the mid-1950s, he was hired by General Electric to star in a weekly dramatic anthology called General Electric Theater. It made Ronald Reagan even more of a household name. It was during this time that Reagan also increased his political activism, a cause he had been passionate about for many years. He would make regular speeches endorsing candidates at varying levels of politics.

In 1964, Reagan had campaigned heavily for Barry Goldwater's run for president. That year he delivered his famous "Rendezvous with Destiny" speech for Goldwater, which received national acclaim. In attendance was a wealthy California car dealer, Homles Tuttle. In the spring of 1965, Tuttle and a few friends asked if they could meet with Reagan, which he obliged. They wanted him to run for governor of California in 1966 – to which Reagan was not interested in the slightest. Undeterred, the group insisted that he was the only one who could defeat the incumbent Governor Pat Brown. Reagan refused. For months, supporters pressed and he continued to decline.

Reagan began to see that his refusal to run was actually making things worse for the Californian Republican Party, as it was painting a picture of divided indecisiveness, which upset him. To help pacify the persistent followers and to help stop the damage to his party, Reagan began making speeches again throughout California, but only under the expectation that he could find other candidates to run instead. He never found that person. After only six months, it was clear that Tuttle and his group of supporters were right, and Reagan was convinced as well. He announced his candidacy for Governor of California on January 4, 1966, and thus began one of the most famous political careers in history.

“Trust, But Verify”

Empowering Leadership While Upholding Standards

*By MCC Mike Miller
(Published in the September issue of “The 76er”)*

“Doveryai, no proveryai.”

It’s a rhyming Russian proverb that translates to “Trust, but verify.”

This simple phrase, made famous by President Ronald Reagan, became a hallmark of US/Russian relations at the end of the cold war and still resonates today as a sound leadership model.

In the second half of the 1980s, Reagan had worked tirelessly building a strong relationship with Russian General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. Reagan aimed to end the Cold War by eliminating weapons between the two countries thus achieving mutual peace. One of the largest strides towards that end came in late 1987 when Gorbachev travelled to the White House to sign the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

For years leading up to the INF Treaty signing, Reagan had met repeatedly with Suzanne Massie, a writer who focused on Russia.

“The Russians like to speak in proverbs,” she told Reagan. “You should learn a few. You are an actor; you can learn them very quickly.”

She taught him “trust, but verify,” and it immediately resonated with Reagan. From then on, Reagan would famously use the phrase at just about every meeting with Gorbachev. By the time of the INF Treaty signing, Reagan had used the phrase so much that Gorbachev took note.

“You repeat that at every meeting,” Gorbachev said to Reagan.

“I like it,” Reagan replied.

Fittingly, and almost ironically, the spirit of that phrase was embodied in the INF Treaty. The two nations would give each other the benefit of the doubt – within reason – that they were eliminating intermediate and short-range missiles. But the treaty included specifications allowing inspectors within both countries to validate that they were keeping to their promises.

Each nation was exercising the phrase. Trust, but verify.

The saying, in just a few words, captured the tension between the two nations – on the most grand and national scale. But Reagan, even as a manager and leader, exercised that same leadership tenet in his daily routine. He famously surrounded himself with smart minds and laid

out clear expectations. He let those under his charge do what he tasked them to do – and didn't step in unless he had to.

“Set clear goals and appoint good people to help you achieve them,” said Reagan. “As long as they are doing what you have in mind, don't interfere, but if someone drops the ball, intervene and make a change.”

Certainly unknowingly, we as Sailors develop the same sense of responsibility among both leaders and subordinates today. On a daily basis, the Navy requires us to provide clear, well thought-out directions. It's how we avoid mishaps and proactively tackle problems. As we grow as individuals and leaders, we're always making room for those under us to step up into our duties. Daily, everyday Sailors are training and striving to step up and perform duties normally above their current pay grade. It's how we empower our teams and grow the next generation of leaders – albeit with a watchful eye. We trust their ability, but verify their work.

A simple Russian rhyme transformed into the hallmark statement of a relationship between two nations and has since become a reference and compass for the everyday leaders of today.

Soldier, Actor, Politician...FBI Informant

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the October issue of "The 76er")

Control is one of the core concepts of Communism. Control over goods, control over the economy – and maybe most importantly – control over the way people think. Communist Party leaders have historically used any means necessary to spread the concepts of communism to help gain sympathizers.

Near the end of World War II, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover feared a communist infiltration of the motion picture industry to manipulate public opinion against America. By using the world's largest producer of motion pictures as a messaging vehicle, Hoover thought, Communists could creatively plant propaganda furthering the party's cause in America. To battle this, Hoover created an operation named the "Communist Infiltration of the Motion-Picture Industry" or COMPIC, and it had two primary goals: to identify the extent of communist infiltration in the industry and to identify communist-sympathizing screenwriters, actors, directors, executives, etc.

Ronald Reagan himself was one of many being closely watched by COMPIC as he was outspoken politically following his military service. He even unknowingly sponsored groups being watched by COMPIC for communist tendencies. In 1946, Reagan was elected to the executive council of the Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions (HICCASP). By then, an FBI report had already identified the group as one of key Communist influence.

"It is a powerful political pressure group, and using the motion picture industry and its prestige as a base will be the dominating factor in the coming primary elections in the State of California," the report said. "Every endorsement for public office made by this organization coincides exactly with that made by the Communist Party of the state."

While identifying HICCASP as a potential communist cover, Hoover's FBI underestimated Reagan's patriotism and devotion to the American cause. As the COMPIC investigation carried on, Hoover learned that not only was Reagan a proud American patriot, but he also had a friendly contact in the FBI.

Charles Browning, Jr. was Reagan's college fraternity brother who became an FBI agent. Learning this, Hoover directed Browning to provide Reagan's contact information to the FBI's Los Angeles field office.

One night in 1946, FBI agents arrived at Reagan's home in Hollywood where they presented official identification before he welcomed them in. Reagan recalled this night in his 1981 autobiography "Where's the Rest of Me?"

“We have some information which might be useful to you,” one agent said as Reagan served them coffee. “We thought you might have some information helpful to us.”

At the time, Reagan wasn't the famed conservative he's known as today. Then, he largely adopted his father's democratic loyalties built under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

“Instinctively, my old liberal reaction popped up before I could think,” Reagan recalled. “I found myself saying, ‘Now look, I don't go in for Red-baiting.’”

The agents assured Reagan that their focus was based around National Security – not baiting.

“You served with the Army Air Corps,” one agent responded. “You know what spies and saboteurs are. We thought someone the Communists hated as much as they hate you might be willing to help us.”

That put the hook in Reagan. He was fascinated hearing Communists loathed him and that he was a topic of discussion. They began talking about how Reagan could help the American cause against Communism.

“I came to admire these men,” Reagan later wrote in his book “An American Life.” “They never accused anyone of being a Communist unless they had every last bit of evidence which would stand up against the most vicious court assault. They were very thorough, very patient and very accurate.”

The agents went on to explain how their investigations not only showed the Communist Party trying to gain control of the Hollywood workforce, but also trying to influence the content of movies through party-sympathizing writers and actors.

“They asked if they could meet with me periodically to discuss some of the things that were going on in Hollywood,” said Reagan. “I said of course they could.”

In an effort to test the FBI waters, and possibly out of fear that the agents he met were correct about HICCASP, Reagan decided to take action to sniff out Communists within his organization.

“I suggested that we propose a resolution to the executive committee with language that we knew a Communist couldn't accept,” said Reagan. “We reaffirm belief in free enterprise and the democratic system and repudiate Communism as desirable for the United States.”

By the time of the next HICCASP meeting, members were in an uproar over the motion. It caused a flurry of debates, disdain and out-right arguments. Reagan's motion was promptly and decisively voted down.

“It was all the proof we needed,” said Reagan. “HICCASP had become a Communist front organization, hiding behind a few well-intentioned Hollywood celebrities to give it credibility.”

Before quitting the organization, Reagan collected a number of internal records from HICCASP which he turned in to his FBI contacts – many of which later helped the Bureau dismantle the Communist organization.

For years to follow, Reagan would use similar tactics to help infiltrate and disrupt Communist organizations aimed at controlling the Hollywood film industry. He became one of the biggest assets to the FBI in stopping the Communist cause in Hollywood.

“More than anything else,” Reagan wrote, “it was the Communists’ attempted takeover of Hollywood and its worldwide weekly audience of more than five hundred million people that led me to accept a nomination to serve as president of the Screen Actors Guild and, indirectly at least, set me on the road that would lead me into politics.”

An Airstrip, A Coup & An Invasion: “Operation Urgent Fury”

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the November issue of “The 76er”)

In the Southeastern Caribbean Sea, not far from the northern coast of South America, is the island country of Grenada – the smallest independent country in the Western Hemisphere. From 1649 to 1974 the island was a colony under French and then British rule before gaining independence in 1974 – constantly wrought with conflict and civil unrest. These constant civil uprisings culminated in the 1970s & 1980s, with a bloody battle for independence and ultimately a dominant invasion by the U.S. military.

After gaining independence from Britain in 1974, the nation was still in turmoil. The New Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education and Liberation (JEWEL) Movement, a communist-sympathizing Marxist-Leninist political party, launched paramilitary attacks on the new government, deposed the elected Prime Minister and installed their own revolutionary government under young Grenadian lawyer Maurice Bishop. The New JEWEL Movement’s (NJM) National Liberation Army held militant control of government, radio stations and military/police forces across the country.

Throughout the next few years the NJM-installed government would turn to Cuba for assistance. The country had been refused aid elsewhere, and Cuban militants were brought in to assist in the construction of a new international airport, while also providing assistance to Grenada’s militant police force. The violent communist overthrow of the government alone was enough to grab the attention of President Ronald Reagan, but the new infusion of communist logistical influence spurred action by Reagan.

For Reagan, like most American’s, the lingering fear from the Cuban Missile Crisis was still a fresh point of contention. The installation of a satellite-communist military armed to launch local, all-out ballistic missile attacks on the U.S. was a possibility the Reagan administration could not let happen again.

The airport is what really caught Reagan’s attention. The presence of Cuban construction workers and military personnel building a large, 9,000-foot airstrip seemed odd. Even Bishop attempted to ward off worrying eyes by saying the new airstrip was to allow larger commercial jets to land – bringing a boost to the local economy. While the original airport was aging, Reagan and his national security team knew the construction of a long and reinforced runway was to land heavy, Russian military transport planes like the AN-12, AN-22 and AN-124 – all designed to transport large-scale military hardware.

Partially due to talks with the Reagan administration and the reassurance by Bishop that Grenada was not becoming a satellite communist state, the NJM decided that Bishop was not “hardline”

enough and needed to step down from power. NJM military leaders placed Bishop under house-arrest. When Bishop was free to leave his house and attempted to resume power, he was captured and executed.

This military coup combined with the buildup of a military-grade airfield wasn't all that had Reagan concerned; Grenada also hosted 800 American medical students in the country's St. George's School of Medicine. Following the coup there was uncontrollable violence and anarchy, and with martial law and a "shoot-on-site" curfew in effect, Reagan knew he needed to take action.

On Friday, October 21, 1983, Reagan gave the order for an invasion of Grenada. While including forces from eight Caribbean nations, including Jamaica and Barbados, "Operation Urgent Fury" was largely a U.S. military operation, comprised of more than 7,000 U.S. troops.

The invading force met light resistance, including a small cadre of Cuban soldiers and laborers building the controversial airstrip. The administration's concerns over the airstrip were proven valid, as U.S. forces uncovered a cache of weapons on the island that could arm a 10,000-man army. They found automatic rifles, machine guns, rocket launchers, antiaircraft guns, howitzers, cannons, armored vehicles and coastal patrol boats.

"Everything is going well in Grenada," Reagan wrote in his diary. "We discovered a Cuban base, barracks, H.Q. and a warehouse full of weapons. They (Cubans) were really going to move in and take over."

Out of 800 Cubans, 25 were killed and 59 were wounded, and the rest were returned to Havana upon surrender. U.S. forces sustained 19 casualties, including eight U.S. Army Rangers and four U.S. Navy SEALs. Operation Urgent Fury was the largest U.S. military operation since the Vietnam War and was an overwhelming success. By the end of the following year, Grenada held the nation's first successful democratic elections.

A Game of Federal Chicken: Ronald Reagan & A Union Strike

By MCC Mike Miller

(Published in the December issue of "The 76er")

Domestic air travel in the U.S. grows regularly at a staggering rate. With more flights becoming more available to more people each year – the demand will continue to grow. The Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates there are between 25,000 and 30,000 domestic flights in the U.S. every day. The growing hunger for travel throughout the years has meant not only an increase in passengers and aircraft – but a stark growth in air traffic as well.

In 1968, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) was founded by attorney and pilot F. Lee Bailey. The organization's roots were planted around the concept of defending air traffic controllers' rights and helping to keep domestic flight, via traffic management, as safe as possible. Later designated a "trade union" by the U.S. Civil Service Commission, PATCO would go on to fight vigorously for the rights of air traffic controllers nation-wide.

In 1980, PATCO refused to back President Jimmy Carter in his bid for re-election and instead chose to endorse Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan. PATCO's mood on Carter soured from bad relations with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), who employed PATCO members. The organization's support of Reagan also coincided with his endorsement of their union and their struggle for better working conditions.

By 1981, the continual growth of American flight was placing greater and greater pressure on air traffic controllers. Many felt over worked and underpaid. In February of that year, new contract negotiations would open between PATCO and the FAA, which employs the air-traffic controllers. Citing safety concerns, PATCO called for a reduced 32-hour work week, a \$10,000 pay increase for all air-traffic controllers and a better benefits package for retirement. Contract negotiations with the FAA would stall.

After months of no progress, PATCO members were fed up. On August 3, 1981, about 13,000 members went on strike after unsuccessful contract negotiations. In doing so, the union technically violated a 1955 law (5 U.S.C. (Supp. III 1956) 188p.) that banned strikes by any government union. At the time, many considered the law archaic, and as such would never be enforced. While sympathetic to their pursuance of better working conditions, Reagan defied them breaking the law to meet that end.

"They are in violation of the law," President Ronald Reagan said of the striking PATCO members in a press conference the same day. "If they do not report for work within 48 hours, they have forfeited their jobs and will be terminated."

About 1,300 members heeded the warning and returned to work. At the same time, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis began organizing for replacements and planned contingencies for the loss in manpower. He began prioritizing and cutting flights severely. About 7,000 flights were cancelled.

On August 5, Reagan fired the remaining 11,345 striking air traffic controllers who ignored the order and banned them from federal service for life. This action sent a very strong message to unions and federal workers alike nationwide.

“The President invoked the law that striking government employees forfeit their jobs, an action that unsettled those who cynically believed no President would ever uphold the law,” said Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, speaking on the legacy of Reagan. “His action gave weight to the legal right of private employers, previously not fully exercised, to use their own discretion to both hire and discharge workers.”

The FAA began filling the lost positions as quickly and as safely as they could. Initially, they used nonparticipating controllers, supervisors, staff personnel and even military air traffic controllers until replacements could be made. The FAA initially claimed that staffing levels would be restored within two years; however, it would take closer to ten years before the overall staffing levels returned to normal.

“When the President said no, American business leaders were given a lesson in managerial leadership that they could not and did not ignore,” said Donald J. Devine, Reagan’s director of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. “Many private sector executives have told me that they were able to cut the fat from their organizations and adopt more competitive work practices because of what the government did in those days.”

By October of that year, PATCO was de-certified as a trade union by the Federal Labor Relations Authority and was eventually disbanded. Later, new-hire air traffic controllers would establish a new union to represent them – the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, which still exists to this day.

In August of 1993, President Bill Clinton ended the prohibition on rehiring any air traffic controllers who went on strike in 1981. Of the more than 11,000 who were fired by Reagan, about 850 returned to work when the ban was lifted.