



Veteran of the Month April 2004

Congratulations to Mike Beason!



In partnership with the Veterans Coordination Commission, I am pleased to present the April, 2004 Veteran of the Month, Mike Beason.

Mike Beason originally from Lakefield, Minnesota, began his military career with the R.O.T.C. program at SDSU. After graduating with a civil engineering degree, he attended Air Force's Pilot Training Program at Williams AFB, Arizona, followed by his own pilot training with three years as a T-37 Instructor Pilot. Mike began his training in the F-4 Phantom Fighter Aircraft at McDill AFB in Florida. He was sent to Ramstein AB, Germany, and his first three years were flying the F-4, with two and one-half additional years at HQ -USAFE (Headquarters, United States Air Force Europe Command), in the War Planning Department. Returning to the United States to Seymour-Johnson AFB, North Carolina, Mike served for two years as Flight Commander of the 4th Fighter Wing. Mike was sent on a remote tour to Osan AB, Korea where he served as Chief of War Planning for the local Wing.

Another three year stint followed back at Ramstein AB with the HQ-USAFE. Mike then spent the next 18 months working on deploying new aircraft to various European bases, and another few years reporting to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, specifically on base closures planning in Europe. Mike's last overseas assignment took him to a German Air Force Base, Buechel AB where he served as the American Squadron Commander for two years of a munitions squadron. Mike's final assignment at Shaw AFB, South Carolina, was spent working in War Planning, but this time for the 9th Air Force.

Given the choice to either deploy to Saudi Arabia or retire, he and his wife made the decision that after 20 years of active military service, Mike would retire. Mike and June, his wife of 30 years, had previously visited Rapid City and decided that this would be the right place to make their permanent home, for them and their only daughter, Jamie. Since moving to Rapid City, Mike has become very involved in our community. The Beason's are active members of Faith Lutheran Church, where Mike is the Director of the Handbell Choir and a member of the "Bells of the Hills" community bell choir. Mike is an active member of the Rapid City Westside Kiwanis Club, the American Legion Post 320, and Leadership Rapid City, Class of 1998. Mike is an active member of the Ambassador's Committee in the Chamber of Commerce, having served as a past Chairperson.

Mike is best known for his work with the South Dakota Civil Air Patrol, where he is the current State Director of Operations. He served nine years as the local squadron Deputy Commander, with three of those years doing double-duty as the Squadron Commander, and as a direct result of his leadership, the unit was selected as "Top Squadron" in South Dakota for two consecutive years.

Mike is currently employed as a Corporate Pilot and Auditor for the Riddles Jewelry Company. We congratulate Mike for his continuing service to the citizens of South Dakota and specifically his adopted home of Rapid City.