

Memoir 3: Sketches of UMUC/UMGC Asia and Adelphi, 1998-2006

Stephen P. Holowenzak

August 2020

Overview

Asia 1998- 2006. UMUC Asia “Calling Holowenzak” Overseas Assignments and Outreach: Korea and Japan.

It was a long-time desire to experience Asia, explore the cultures of Japan and Korea and understand the situations of our soldiers in their work to preserve freedom.

Sketch 2.1. 1998-1999. Orders to Go. Seoul, South Korea, Yongsan Base

My military orders read - instruct classes offered to U.S. military through the Armed Forces Education Program first in South Korea and then Japan.

From Stateside, UMUC Adelphi, MD., my Asian Division global journeys began. On August 8, 1998, I, along with 15 other faculty members became UMUC traveling portable professors and flew to Asia.

After landing at Narita International Airport, Japan, we were welcomed by the UMUC Asia headquarters team: Joe Arden, Vice President, Director, Asia, Dr. Lorraine Suzuki, Vice Provost and staff members. They delivered memorable week-long orientation events and activities at the New Sanno Hotel in downtown Tokyo, including adaptation to Japanese culture and sights. Then on to Yokota Air Base, and the historic Asian Division home office.

On August 15, 1998, some of us flew to South Korea to meet our new Area Director for Korea, Dr. Gary Hunt, who had a sign made that read, “Welcome to Korea, University of Maryland Faculty.” He drove us to Yongsan Base for an orientation to South Korean life and culture, an overview of military installations throughout South Korea including the DMZ sites. Let the journey of outreach and immersion begin.

“Outreach” is a word that I use to describe my teaching for Maryland at whichever global site I was assigned. It meant for me, bringing my support, ability and resources to the military community where I’m stationed, In other words, extending myself in a positive manner, as much as possible, to my classes of military students, in this case, the UMUC South Korean operation, the military commands, base community chapel and people.

“Immersion” on the other hand, was the word used whenever I would reach into the lives of troops in each military command, Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines connecting to their culture, events and chapel communities. I had been actively involved with our U. S. Forces - 15 countries and 125 military facilities in

UMUC Europe: Bosnia, Egypt (Sinai), Germany, Iceland, Italy, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Spain, Turkey and the United Kingdom. And now I'll do the same for my UMUC Asia assignments in South Korea and Japan.

Over the years I kept my BDUs, duffle bag and camera at the ready when I was on location at sites in the field with the troops (e. g. Multi-National Force and Observers Forces, skills completion exercises, North Camp, Sinai, (1995). I shared my photo collections with UMUC and the military commands including events and activities. I wanted to show through the camera lens their works and service, capturing their "spirit, of patriotism" and what their "Love for America" meant.

Outreach: a 1998 example. The summer floods of South Korea affected most US bases, West Camp Casey, the Quonset hut Army Learning Center, and our office space. UMUC classrooms filled with computers were spared by just 2 inches. Flood waters and debris everywhere. Clean-up imminent!

We all worked under difficult circumstances but kept our priorities clear: save the computer lab, get the classrooms ready, and teach as scheduled. This happened with a massive cleanup effort. Classes started and finished on time and the most students successfully completed the course.

Sketch 2.2 1999. The flight from Kimpo Airport South Korea to Fukuoka, Japan was uneventful. It beat "rock and roller coaster" rides on some military flights, dropping thousands of feet, or straight dives and oxygen mask dropping down. (I used rosary beads on some flights.) We UMUCers learn to deal with this kind of challenge and others at the destination.

Sketch 2.3. 1999. U.S. Naval Forces, Kyushu, Japan, Sasebo Naval Base

July. 1999. Assignment Fleet Activities, Sasebo Naval Base.

I like to be active in the military communities that I'm in, to go out and about and see what's happening, with camera in-hand. And so, I did that very special day in August! From a distance I saw a sign "Welcome Home USS Dubuque - 8/17/1999" read the sign. Yes! Real reunions between sailors and their families were about to happen.

What an event to witness, the USS. Dubuque returning to home port after a long deployment to the Middle East. Fire boats shooting streams of water overhead while the USS. Dubuque passed under and later moored dockside. Sailors standing topside in their Navy white attire surrounding the ship's perimeter. Families (spouses, babies in arm - sometimes, kids) and friends dockside, all overjoyed by the return of their loved-ones. I and my daughter, Amy, were there to meet and greet some.

Now, camera in hand I introduced myself, gave many greeters my card, asked them if they would like to have a family reunion picture taken and that they could pick them up in one week at our UMUC Offices in the Sasebo Education Center – they would find the photos on the display board to pick-up. Many came

and were very happy to have the picture as a take- away keepsake of their families' and friends' reunions. Some would take a UMUC course or two before their next deployment.

Sketch 2.4. 1999-2006. Asia – Japan.

Japan. U.S. Air Force, Yokota Air Base, was and is the historic site of UMUC Asian Division offices (1956 vintage). At the first UMUC Commencement in Tokyo (1957) the Commencement speaker, General Lyman L. Lemnitzer, observed: "University of Maryland... possesses the most extensive and unusual campus in the world. It can be said that the sun never sets on the University of Maryland)." This comment is still as true today (in 2020 for the University of Maryland Global Campus), as it was then.

1999. As the Academic Director and Professor, Education for Teacher Preparation & Student Teaching Services, I was responsible for teaching and administering courses to active duty members and dependents aspiring to be teachers stateside or with DoDs School (after being discharged from U.S. military service). They needed to take required courses (in elementary or secondary education), complete student teaching (in an elementary, middle, or high school) at select US military bases.

Once all the required courses were completed and the B.A. degree was conferred the graduate could seek certification to teach from the Maryland State Department of Education that had reciprocal teaching agreements with other US State Educational Agencies and the Department of Defense Department Education Activities.

From 1999- 2006, Seventy –three students took the required education courses and successfully completed their student teaching under the supervision of a certified DoDDs elementary or secondary master teacher. Once having earned their UMUC degree, passing the state certification exams, and certified by the State Department of Education the teacher could be hired by a local education agency for a teaching position at some elementary, middle school or high school in the jurisdiction.

Sketch 2.5. 2003. SPED 403 Orientation to Special Education.

One of the important education courses to take in the education sequence was SPED 403 Orientation to Special Education. Here, both my teaching of this course and Yokota Base Special Olympics Committee experience came together when I invited each student and member to "Come Join the World of Winners! - Get involved and make a difference in the lives of Special Olympians."

In brief, Special Olympians go to school and train for months to gain the strength to give it their all when the time comes for their event, and each has an indomitable will to overcome and win! The special Olympians

who participate in the games are from 22 special Japanese schools and Department of Defense Education Activity Base Schools. To my Maryland students I said, here is the assignment: complete this activity and submit a corresponding report. It will be a major part of the course, learning about children, youth and adults with special needs.

The Kanto Plains Special Olympics (KPSP) hosts the games annually at Yokota Air Base - a wonderful cross-cultural communication between the United States and Japan – It is called a “Tomadachi (Friends), and “Friendship is Universal.” As it happened, I served this Friendship event six years as UMUC representative to participate, plan, organize and deliver a Japanese – American Kanto Plains Special Olympics.



Photo compliments of S. Holowenzak
(Top center) Yokota A. B. Special Olympics Committee

I gave my class the Annual Kanto Plains Special Olympics Program, walked them through the games and handed them a base map to put things in perspective and find each event’s location. I suggested they pick out those events they most wanted to assist with and be at the event site one half hour before the start of the event.

On opening day, my SPED 403 class became part of an estimated 1,500 volunteers at the Olympic Games. Each volunteer registered for the two days of event. Each SPED 403 student signed up, assist where possible the athletes, and cheered the athletes on to victory during the games and after at the Winners Circle areas.

From the beginning the class was energized, embracing first the sights of the Special Olympians: Parade of hope, opening ceremonies, lighting of the Olympic Torch, and opening of the games.



(Top center): SPED 493 Students with Dr. H. at the Special Olympics Torch - 2003

Their involvement was at two days of outdoor track events such as (200, 400, 1500 meter runs) and field events (long jump, softball throw and indoor competition, such as, swimming, and bowling) that led up to the closing final ceremonies. My class added a great deal of practical experience to the academic content, and I was proud of them for participating in every aspect of these Special Olympics.

Sketch 2.6. September 2001. Dealing with the terrorist attacks on American soil – Overseas.

I remember the shock that filled evening hours, after return from class when I heard and saw on a split- TV screen the September 11 attacks (New York City and the Pentagon). I wanted to be transported back to America be there (right then) to help out; however, there was no way to do that! I wanted to honor our heroes in some way, had an idea, spoke to Joe Arden who said, “Let’s do it!”

I remember buying more - than 100 American Flags – one for each of the members at UMUC Asia headquarters – I put them in a box in the break room inviting our UMUC Asia people to take one and display them in their work area as a way to honoring those who perished in the terrorists attacks of 9/11.

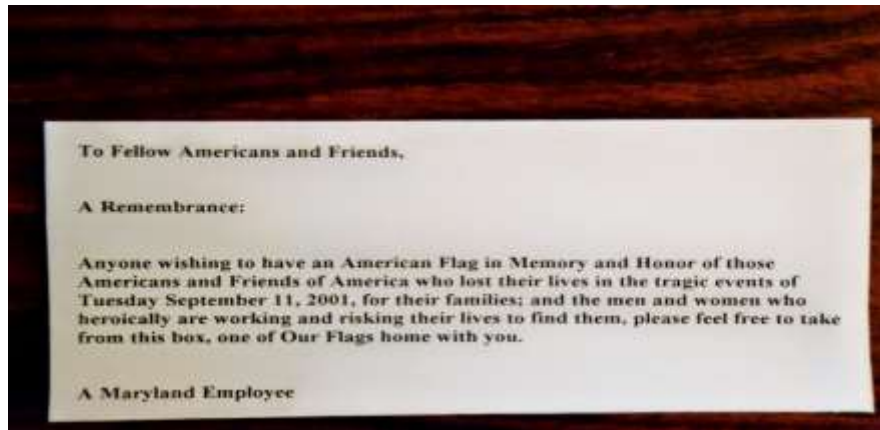


(Top left) 9/11/2001 Remembrance We will never Forget!
100 + American flags for UMUC Headquarters employees



(Top right): American flag in employee breakroom
Yokota A.B. UMUC Headquarters

My note on the box filled with America Flags reads as follows”



Over the next few days – the flags were gone! I remembered walking through the Maryland office halls, entering the work areas, and being touched to see that each office and cubicles had the American flag displayed in a show of solidarity, support and patriotism.

Years later, just before coming back to the UMUC stateside program, I could still see some of those same flags still displayed proudly in our UMUC Asian Division offices.

Sketch 2.7 Patriotism. *9/11 World Trade in Center Twin Towers in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and Somerset County, Pennsylvania.*

July 2005. Fast Forward, So, when I returned to the States, UMUC Adelphi, I wanted to have more involvement in supporting our troops and families through Wounded Warriors Programs and 9/11 Memorial activities.

Sketch 3.0. Return to America UMGC Adelphi Offices and the New Largo location, 2006-2010

In addition to teaching, I joined UMUC's support of the Wounded Warriors and their families in "Operation Appreciation" at Walter Reed Medical Center Malone House and participated in the dedication of the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial.

Sketch 3.1 Remembering 9 | 11: A Tribute to Heroes.

2008. As a UMUC representative on-site, where I saw and photographed for UMUC Stateside and Overseas Program the National 9 | 11 Pentagon Memorial Dedication event. What a day it was!

Outside tribute. People walked the Pentagon Memorial Dedication (PMD) field of 2,976 American flags - remembering those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001 in the New York, Arlington, and

Pennsylvania attacks and crashes, (photo below center) and fly-over the Pentagon Memorial Patriotic motto. (Photo below left).

Inside tribute. Thousands of people witnessed President George W. Bush, dignitaries and military officers dedicate Pentagon Memorial in addresses, the uncovering of identical heroes' benches on the sacred ground, the silence of precious moment in time and the salute viewed by a nation honoring the heroes and their families. (Photo below right). - I was humbled, grateful and proud to have been part of this global tribute to the victims (heroes), their families and our country here and each year in my life journey.



"We Will Never Forget"



Pentagon Field of 2,976 American flags



Pentagon Memorial Dedication area

Sketch 3.2. 2010-Present. After retirement, I joined the Overseas Marylanders Association (OMA) and attended two major OMA Gatherings (G-1 and G-2).

G-1. President Javier Miyares' Tribute to UMUC President T. Benjamin Massey, (1978-1998) at an OMA Gathering Adelphi.



OMA members with UMUC President Javier Miyares (standing center row two) welcomed more than 60 former overseas faculty, staff and guests, including T. Benjamin Massey (seated, center, row one).

G-2. All our UMUC lifelong endeavors, paths and journeys on a unique enduring mission converged again as part of the UMGC 70 years Anniversary in Adelphi MD. (June 2019). I was grateful to have the honor of also being part of the historic UMUC heritage at its 60th and 50th Anniversaries.



Photo above: UMGC President Javier Miyares (center) joins visiting Members of the Overseas Marylanders Association in Adelphi, Maryland, June 2019

POSTSCRIPT.

Your history and mine.

We're active players in history, you and me. Together, here and now, and those who passed: We envisioned the future that became a reality, through its UMGC "Spirit," tenacity, unique configurations of excellent administrators and "Portable Professors," "the Academic Foreign Legionnaires," and the "Gypsy Scholars of the Overseas Marylander Association. UMGC becoming the legend in its decades from 1949 to America's finest military services, and today leaving the unchallenged legacies of excellence for generations to active duty military service, family members, adult learners to come.

We did it to make America strong through higher education, delivered globally!

Wherever we drove, sailed, or flew and taught: We always stood tall, and stand proud for our UMGC heritage, spirit, customs and innovations for our adult students, graduates, in the global community. To be sure, each OMA brother and sister (past and present – each unique in their own right in a common mission) is a wonderful creation designed in the heart of "The Father," and fashioned by His loving hands to teach some time at UMGC in their own life journey and in turn, affecting the lives of millions of students, who before and now are, leaders in their own ways in life to others - in service to honor those who serve, have served and their families and building our civilization of American democracy.

I believe that our greatest achievement is marked by the success of the students we taught - wherever we served -wherever they served America and the free world. This is the day the Lord has made: our past, present and future belongs to God alone!

Although we are now apart, the Holowenzak Spirit is with you!



With every good wish filled with abundant blessings!

S .K. Stephen (Steve) Holowenzak,

Your colleague: faithfully and patriotically yours!

Thanks for the UMGC and OMA Memories!