



Pilot Who Survived War Is Shot Down in ...

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Pilot Who Survived War Is Shot Down in Peacetime

EVAN PEREZ September 14, 1995

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From the Suez Canal crisis of 1956, when his plane was shot down by Egyptian forces, to jungle warfare in Southeast Asia, ``he was always where the trouble was," said his wife, Caroline.

On Tuesday, the retired aviator was killed when his sport balloon was shot down by the Belarussian military during an international race.

``Ever since he was old enough to fly he did," Mrs. Stuart-Jervis said Thursday in a telephone interview from her home in Naples. ``If he had to go, I know in my heart this is the way he would want to go."

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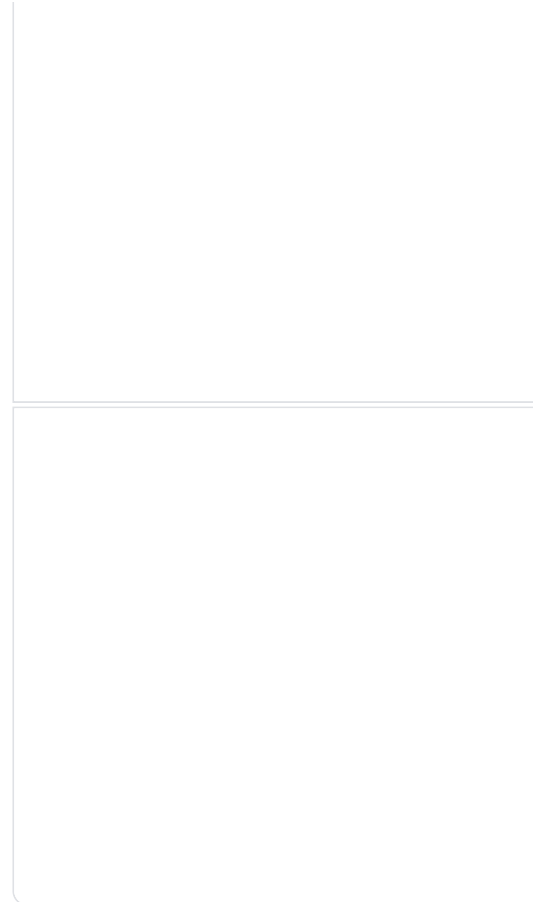
Fraenckel, 55, both of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, were killed.

Belarussian authorities said the balloonists failed to respond to warning shots and to radio demands for identification. Another balloon landed safely, and its occupants, also Americans, were taken into custody by the Belarussians.

Mrs. Stuart-Jervis said she doesn't believe the Belarussian explanation. ``They shot down defenseless people," she said.

``They owe the world an apology. They owe all the balloonists in this world an apology," Fraenckel's cousin Rebecca Dale said in Scotia, N.Y., where Fraenckel's father lives.

Stuart-Jervis and Fraenckel were representing the U.S. Virgin Islands in the annual Gordon Bennett gas balloon



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for 27 years.

“He flew competitive events whenever he could. He arranged his flight schedule with airplanes so he could be home to go to the events,” said balloonist Frank Bowlander, who lived near Fraenckel’s second home in Ballston Lake, north of Albany.

Mrs. Stuart-Jervis said her husband took up ballooning six years ago as an extension of his love of flying. Although she didn’t share his passion for flying, the fact he was a pilot sealed her love for him.

“Flyboys are always so romantic,” she said.

She said her husband fought in Malay and Borneo after World War II and later Vietnam. After his plane was shot down over Egypt in 1956, he ejected from his aircraft and landed in the water, where

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The two were married in 1959, and she nervously watched him go off to various dangerous assignments around the world until he retired from the British Navy in 1968. They moved to the United States a year later.

Stuart-Jervis lived at their home in St. Croix so he could represent the islands in the race, while she temporarily moved to Naples to work as a real estate agent since the market was depressed on the islands.

He owned Commercial Brokerage, a real estate firm in St. Croix. His wife said he also gave flying lessons, and did search-and-rescue missions in the Virgin Islands.

Mrs. Stuart-Jervis said her husband had told her his race in Europe would be his last. He said his arthritis was forcing

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