



## **Tempe Chamber of Commerce's Military Affairs Committee**

Presents

### **The annual Copper 5 Honor Event, featuring the Plough - Young Awards**

161<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Wing, Goldwater Air National Guard Base, Phoenix AZ

#### **The saga of the flight of Copper 5**

On March 13, 1982 a KC-135 air fueling tanker, from the 161st Air Refueling Wing, Phoenix, call sign "Copper 5", collided with a small civilian aircraft and crashed near Luke AFB in Maricopa County, Arizona killing the tanker's 4-man aircrew. The aircrew was Lt Col James Nick Floor, 53; Lt Col Theodore Lester Beam, 40; Major add Truman Young, Jr. 48; and, TSgt Donald Plough 47. The pilot and passenger of the civilian plane, who were from California, also perished.

In subsequent years the Tempe Chamber of Commerce developed its Military Affairs Committee (MAC), designed to honor outstanding members of Phoenix area military units. In cooperation with the Arizona Air National Guard, the Tempe MAC has been holding an annual event to honor one outstanding officer and one outstanding enlisted member on duty with the 161<sup>st</sup> Air Refueling Wing at the newly named Barry Goldwater Air National Guard Base at Sky Harbor Airport in Phoenix, Arizona to commemorate the Copper 5 crew. These are known as the Plough and Young Awards.

Fast forwarding to present times, it turns out that the Arizona State University Alumni Association's Veterans Alumni Committee completed an outstanding honor wall project on the campus of ASU at Tempe in the Memorial Union to honor its alumni students (Sun Devils) who died in military service to the United States. The honor wall contains over 130 names verified through extensive research. That research recently revealed that Copper 5 crew members Theodore Lester Beam and Truman Richards Young were ASU alumni, classes of 1955 and 1971. Their names were just added to the honor wall. Also, though Find A Grave, it was learned that LT Col James Nick Floor is buried in the Greenwood memory Lawn Cemetery in Phoenix.

When this new information came to light discussions were held to change the name of the Plough-Young Awards to the *Copper 5 Honor Event-Featuring the Plough-Young Awards*. This new name thus honors the entire crew but retains the original officer and enlisted annual awards.