



# THE TAOS NEWS

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## My Turn

### On saying 'nuts' to the Air Force

Donald R. Baucom

When I finished reading the Nov. 4 My Turn "Nuts to the Air Force," I was scratching my head. The writer used about 240 of his 310 words to tell us that Brigadier Gen. Anthony McAuliffe replied "nuts" when the Germans demanded the surrender of his command at Bastogne. Where is the parallel between McAuliffe's desperate situation and the one we face with the Air Force here in Taos?

McAuliffe and his paratroopers were surrounded by a powerful German Panzer Army that posed a serious threat to all their lives. However, McAuliffe realized that the fall of Bastogne, a key road hub, could open the way to the Belgian port of Antwerp. The fall of Antwerp would jeopardize the entire Allied invasion of western Germany and at least prolong World War II in Europe.

The possibility of stopping the Germans made the risk of death worth taking.

Taosenos face an Air Force that, in accordance with environmental regulations, is essentially petitioning people for permission to fly low-level training missions over our region.

No one in Taos will die for saying "nuts" to the Air Force.

No one is expected to die as a result of these missions, which are to avoid heavily populated areas. Such missions, one or two a day, are surely no more of a threat to our lives than the 50 (estimate) commercial jetliners that fly over Taos each day or the occasional private jet that rumbles over my house en route to the Taos airport.

There is, however, one relevant facet of the Battle of Bastogne that the writer overlooks. McAuliffe's reply to the Germans was given on Dec. 22, 1944. The next day, a history of the war tells, "the skies cleared and waves of cargo planes began to resupply the beleaguered troops in Bastogne."

Perhaps in the future a unit of U.S. soldiers might become surrounded in a mountain valley in Afghanistan. Among them might be a soldier from Questa or Taos. They are in desperate need of supplies.

Only Air Force C-130s have the capacity for the job, and the drop has to be made from low-altitude in rough terrain.

Hopefully, the crews, which might include personnel from New Mexico and Colorado, will have the training they need to do the job. Given the nature of the war in Afghanistan, surrounded American soldiers will probably not be given a chance to say "nuts" to their foes.

*Donald R. Baucom says he is a concerned citizen living in El Prado.*