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## **Reconnecting With The Past**

Robinson to meet with sole survivor of crash that killed his father

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Just six days shy of the 40th anniversary of the deadly airplane crash that claimed his father's life, Daryl Robinson will meet the sole survivor of that crash — the last person who saw his father alive.

Robinson's father, Major Robert L. Robinson, Jr., was the pilot aboard a twin-engine transport plane May 4, 1970, with 13 other military personnel en route from Hamilton AFB near San Francisco, Calif., to Spokane, Wash.

About four minutes after takeoff, radio contact was lost when the aircraft suddenly experienced massive structural failure, and Major Robinson was killed instantly. The co-pilot attempted a crash-landing but was not successful.

"I was almost 10," Robinson said. "I do remember that day, very clearly."

Everyone on board perished except Captain George Burk, a decorated Vietnam veteran — but surviving the crash did not come without a price. Burk suffered severe burns over 65 percent of his body and multiple internal injuries. At the time of the crash, Robinson's father was 39 years old and less than three months from retirement, after which he planned to become a commercial pilot, Robinson said.

"He really loved to fly," he said.

After school that afternoon, Robinson's mother Renee' shared the devastating news of the accident with him and his 7-year-old brother. Already anticipating Major Robinson's retirement, his father had a job lined up in Denver and a contract on a home in Colorado. Renee' still moved her two boys to Colorado.

Robinson said they lost track of the survivor and didn't know whether or not he had died from his injuries. Robinson said when he was about 20, he asked his mother the survivor's name, and thought about him, but did not follow through in contacting him.

While doing some online research about the plane crash, Robinson said he came upon a Web site in January that belongs to the sole survivor of the same crash that killed his dad. He contacted Captain Burk and asked for information on the crash and his father, and they have since developed a continuous relationship.

"He did know him and flew with him several times," Robinson said. "It was a nice connection; he is the last person to see my dad alive."

Robinson said he looks forward to meeting Burk when he picks him up at DIA on Wednesday to speak at several engagements in Cañon City and Colorado Springs.

"I feel like I know him so well already," he said.

Robinson said many of the questions he had, have been answered through a book written by Burk, "The Bridge Never Crossed." However, there were a couple of things he did not know about that May 4 morning until he read the book.

"Dad was late arriving," he said, "because of traffic and fog. He almost missed the flight. In fact, they had started to taxi toward the runway and they stopped, and my dad got on and climbed into the cockpit."

Finding Burk did not open old wounds, Robinson said, but has helped in the healing process.

"I get to share this with someone else that went through what I went through," he said. "When you have that network of people who know what it's like, there's something about that, I think."

Robinson also has been in contact with some of the adult children of the other crash victims.

“You never truly get over the loss of someone you love,” he said.

Robinson said he cannot imagine what Burk went through on his journey to physical and emotional healing but said Burk not only survived the horrific crash, he is thriving. He is a motivational speaker and author of three books.

The two will visit Robinson’s father’s grave at Fort Logan National Cemetery before Burk addresses cadets at the Air Force Academy. Burk also will be the keynote speaker at a conference in Colorado Springs, as well as speak at two presentations in Cañon City.