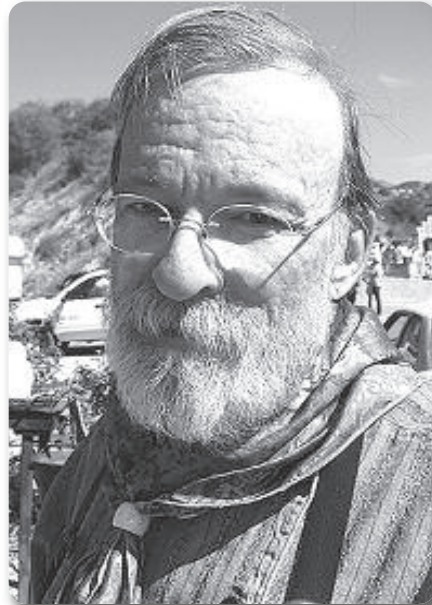




**Buckaroo Bubba, SASS #66861**

# THE MAN BEHIND THE BADGE

By *Buckaroo Bubba, SASS #66861*



**Mild Bill Hiccup will long be remembered for his caring ways. He was one "to ride the river with ..."**



**Mild Bill's badges were only the beginning of his story ...**

As I sat at my computer one night in June browsing around eBay, I stumbled upon an auction for three Cowboy Badges—a badge from Buffalo Bill's Summer Range 2003 in Cody, Wyoming, a British Western Shooting Society badge, and the most interesting, as it turns out, an old Single Action Shooting Society badge. At the time the member number on the badge didn't mean a thing to me. When I looked at it the next day, it was number 358. When I joined SASS, I emailed my number to Pineywoodsplace.com so it could be added to the list of known aliases. I decided to check this list to find out who this badge belonged to. That began a very interesting journey.

I discovered the badge belonged to a shooter whose alias was Mild Bill Hiccup. I thought the fastest way to find out any information about this shooter was go straight to my fellow shooters on the SASS



**Friends returned the favor when Mild Bill was ailing by showing their love and support during his convalescence.**

Wire. Cliff Hanger, SASS #3720, clued me into the shooter's real name, Dale Constantine. He was from St. George, Utah and had passed away in March of 2008. Mr. Constantine retired to Utah in 2006. I then wanted to know more about the man who wore this badge.

Mild Bill Hiccup had shot for many years with the Panorama Sportsman Club in California.

In my next post on the SASS Wire I asked my fellow shooters if anyone knew him that would have any thoughts, memories, or photos of Mild Bill Hiccup. Ranger Sgt. Jake McCandless, SASS #336, pointed me toward Utah Bob's Angels Site where I found Mild Bill Hiccup's obituary that had been published in a St. George, Utah newspaper. It reads as follows:

*"Dale Edward Constantine, Son of Philip and Loraine Constantine, died at the age of 62 on March 10<sup>th</sup>, of complications following heart transplant surgery.*

*A database analyst who started out as a high school biology teacher,*

*then retired to St. George, Utah in 2006 after a long career in aerospace, banking, and health services that included responsibility for the first system to manage the inventory of protective tiles that cover the space shuttle.*

*He was a Vietnam Veteran and later became an enthusiastic marks-*

*man and gun collector known in shooting circles as Mild Bill Hiccup, the handle under which he participated in cowboy-action shooting meets. He was a long-time supporter of the Single Action Shooting Society and became a member of the local club, the Dixie Desperados, after moving to Utah.*

*In St. George, he joined the Shepherd of the Hills Church, where he made a wide circle of friends and became known for his good cookies and his good humor. After a massive heart attack left him dependent on an implanted heart-assist pump, he remained active with the loving aid of his church friends, participating in church events, attending shooting meets, and proudly becoming the first such patient to receive a driver's license. He is survived by an older sister, Karen, and her children, Lorinda, William Robert, and Paul, and by a brother, Larry, and his children, Joy, Heather, Devan, and Tovah."*

*Mokaac Kid from the Dixie Desperado's Club in Utah contacted me and said Mild Bill was very fond of all of the members of their club. In his will he requested his ashes be spread over their new range and his guns and gear be sold and the money donated to the club. Mokaac Kid and the other members did so at their annual "Ruckus at Red Rocks" Shoot in April of 2008. They also put a cross*  
*(Continued on next page)*



**Mild Bill Hiccup used his computer science skills to provide scoring services for Cowboy Action clubs. And, he always looked great!**

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with "Lazarus" inscribed on it in their Boot Hill. After his heart attack, he had changed his alias to Lazarus. According to William Waddy of the Dixie Desperados, "Mild Bill, like the biblical Lazarus, felt he had been effectively raised from the dead."

After reading my post on the SASS Wire, Tex, SASS #4, and Cat Ballou, SASS #55, contacted me. Tex knew Mild Bill Hiccup very well. Turns out Tex had worked with him for some years in aerospace at Hughes Aircraft in Orange County, California. Tex was the one who got Mild Bill interested in Cowboy Action Shooting™. They shot together quite often in matches throughout Southern California in the early days of SASS. Tex remembers Dale as a "Mild Bill." Cat Ballou commented, "Mild Bill was a very nice, rather shy guy, who epitomized his alias, 'Mild Bill Hiccup.' He loved SASS and Cowboy Action Shooting™."

Then I turned my focus to Mild Bill's involvement with his home club, the Panorama Sportsman Club. On their website [www.psc-northfield.org](http://www.psc-northfield.org) I ran across numerous accounts in their monthly newsletters where Mild Bill was mentioned for helping out with their scoring program and the timelines of Mild Bill Hiccup's condition as he dealt with his heart issues. In July of 2007, they make note of Mild Bill making a return trip to California to shoot with them and made it known he changed his alias to Lazarus. In the August 2007 edition of their newsletter, it tells about Mild Bill receiving his heart transplant. Then again on a sad note, in the March 2008 Northfield Gazette, they published an obituary for Mild Bill Hiccup which reads as follows:

*"On a sad note, Mild Bill Hiccup (Dale Constantine) former head of Panorama's Cowboy Program and until recently our scorekeeper, passed away on Monday March 10<sup>th</sup> in St. George, Utah. The last time we saw him, he had changed his Cowboy Handle to Lazarus. Even though he was connected to an external heart machine, he still shot the match. We were hopeful, when he got a heart transplant, that he'd be back shooting with us, but after a long battle, he just didn't make it. Dale was a hard working, dedicated, and generous member of our club and will be sorely missed."*

I contacted Leadgiver who takes care of their club's webpage, and he shared this story about Mild Bill Hiccup. In 1997 Mild Bill was the head of the Cowboy Committee. During a shoot Leadgiver's

girlfriend was hit by a ricochet bullet and received a cut lip and needed a few stitches. Mild Bill organized a bouquet of flowers that was sent to Leadgiver's girlfriend on behalf of the Cowboy Club. He took on many responsibilities as Club Leader and really built up the cowboy monthlies and the annual shoot to be among the best in Southern California. Even after Mild Bill stepped down from the Cowboy Committee chair, he continued to be a strong voice and solid supporter for the club.

The Dixie Desperados of Utah was Mild Bill's home away from home. Member William Waddy shared his memories of Mild Bill. Mild Bill joined their club when he retired to Utah in 2006. After Mild Bill's heart attack, a temporary pump had been placed in his heart that required him to be hooked up to a battery. In that condition he was not permitted by his doctors to travel without someone being with him. It was one of his last requests to return to California and shoot with his old cowboy friends. William Waddy drove him back to California to the Panorama Sportsman Club in June 2007. They had to stop on occasion along the way so Mild Bill could change batteries to keep his heart going. Mild Bill had a great time at the shoot even though he shot the match hooked up to the battery! That turned out to be the last time Mild Bill shot a match.

I stumbled upon his church's website, The Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church in St. George, Utah and emailed the church. They put me in touch with a very nice lady, Ms. K. Didion. As they were hiking, Mild Bill complained about being short of breath and asked that they cut the hike short. As they headed back to the car, Mild Bill began having extreme chest pains and was complaining about numbness in his arm. She called 911, but the signal was lost. However, emergency services were able to lock onto the GPS on her cell phone and arrangements were made to meet Life Flight in the parking lot, but they still needed to get him off the mountain. The Park Ranger sent a newly formed trail rescue squad to carry him down the mountain. In the Emergency Room, it was determined Mild Bill was in complete heart blockage. Ms. Didion said, "as luck would have it or divine intervention, the cardiologist was on call." By-pass surgery was done and Mild Bill did well for about 24 hours before he went into renal failure and eventually total system failure. He was then again Life Flighted to Salt Lake City to have

an experimental Left Ventricle Assistant Device (LVAD) put in.

Ms. Didion traveled to and from Salt Lake City on the weekends to visit with Dale and help with rehabilitation, and it became a church and community commitment to eventually bring him back to St. George. The Shepherd of the Hills congregation formed the Community of Caring, a combination of church members, neighbors at his Sun River community, and volunteers that provided everything from sterile dressing changes twice a day, to meals and transportation to and from doctor's appointments, and therapy. Most of all they provided their friendship.

Mild Bill prayed for a heart transplant and finally got the call on August 21<sup>st</sup> 2007. The transplant went well, but he had a stroke shortly after coming off the pump. He had gotten his new heart, but his brain and the rest of his body were not functioning. He went into renal failure and spent months in ICU, and eventually was moved to a St. George nursing home, as he required total care. It was his ultimate goal to return home, but it was not to be. He collapsed while riding an exercise bike in physical therapy and died instantly of a massive stroke.

Ms. Didion shared her memories of Mild Bill. One day at church she was having a bad day, as her mother had recently died. A friend asked if there was anything she could do, and she said she felt like a small child that just wanted some milk and cookies. Mild Bill overheard the comment and then brought milk and cookies to her home and they sat and talked for hours about everything and nothing.

She said he loved good food and wine, music, and theater. He was an avid reader and collected movies of every type, and obviously, he enjoyed westerns. She commented on his delightful sense of humor and his love for cooking. He

was strong in his faith in God and touched the lives of many.

Mild Bill's best friend in Utah was Panuco Bob, SASS #51084—both were members of the Dixie Desperados. After Dale received his artificial heart he took Bob to the Cowboy range so he could at least have the environment. Dale got to shoot a brand new set of revolvers he had purchased prior to his heart issues. One of the most important things I took from Bob was this, "Dale was a life member of SASS and wore that gold badge with HONOR." According to Bob, Dale wasn't the greatest shooter but he won numerous awards for "Best Dressed Cowboy."

Reverend Clarence O. Harrington, the pastor at Shepherd of the Hills United Methodist Church also contacted me. He remembers Dale as a wonderful part of the church. He pointed out Dale was the head of the Staff/Parish Relations Committee. Rev. Harrington said Dale was dedicated to his friends and to his church.

Another idea I had while researching Mild Bill was to take another look on eBay to see if there was anything else of his up for auction. Low and behold there was. I found an auction for two more badges. One was a Brass Sheriff's badge. The other badge was a name badge for END of TRAIL in 1997 with "Mild Bill Hiccup" engraved on it. Of course I had to make sure I won it as well. I now have a nice collection of five badges that belonged to Mild Bill Hiccup.

For what initially was just going to be an addition to my Cowboy Action Shooting™ Collection, turned out to be a very rewarding, interesting journey about a great man. After talking to numerous people that were close to Dale, it has become very clear how caring, loving, thoughtful, and genuine he was. Turns out, this was less about the badge and everything about the man behind the badge. 🤠



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