



Donors

Steve Chitty, Brian McDonald, Gwendolyn Mollison, Mike Yates

LT. COL. DOUGLAS A. MOLLISON
April 26, 1925 – July 7, 1974

On a warm, balmy morning early in October, 1958, Captain Jack cut the single engine of the tiny three-car ferry, and glided silently into the slip. My dream-like reflections of ten years of falcon trapping on the barren barrier island of Assateague we now approached were halted when I noticed a station wagon on shore. It was positioned at the front of a line of cars which waited to board the ferry for the return trip to the mainland. Perched atop the hood was a fellow in his early thirties, clean-cut, square-jawed, with dark, wavy yet close-cut hair topping a well-tanned face. His broad mouth was set in a grin which spread, it appeared, from ear to ear.

Even before an assessment of the equipment in and on the wagon identified him as a fellow falcon-seeker, the energy, friendliness and air of sincerity and moral strength about him produced an immediate liking for him before we ever spoke. This, my first impression of Doug Mollison, reinforced through the following years of our friendship, personified his personality and character. One did not have to probe extensively to feel Doug's friendship and sincerity. It was as unrestricted as portrayed in his face those many years ago.

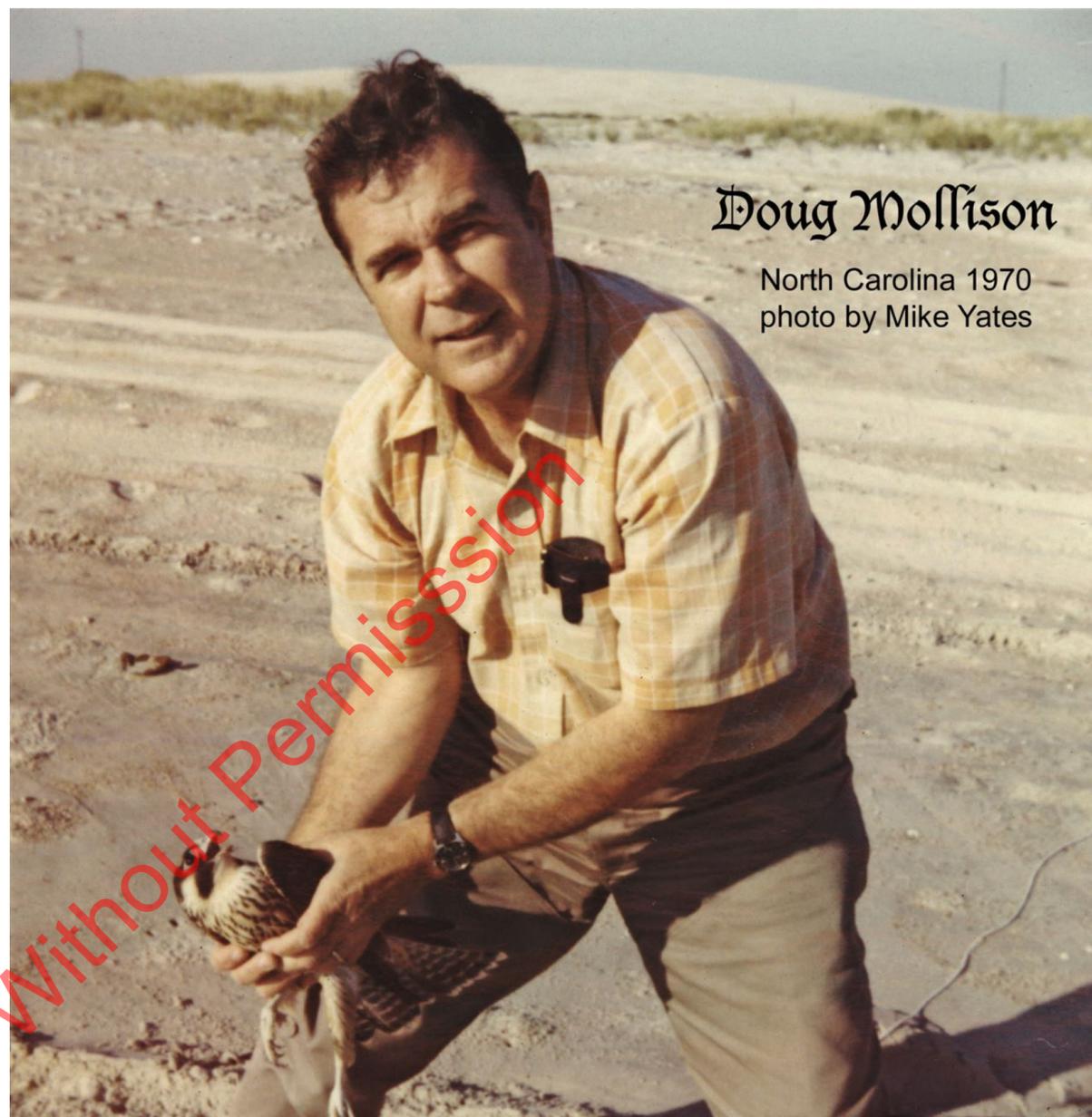
As we pulled down the ramp, I noticed that the wagon had left its place of prominence in the line waiting to board the ferry and pulled to the side. As we bled air from our tires, preparing to "hit the beach", Doug approached us, hand outstretched, his face still in a broad, friendly grin. It was here that I first learned of another of Doug's ingrained characteristics: nothing was ever so important that it could keep him from making a new friend. He truly cared more about people than anything else. After introducing my wife and myself, we affirmed that falcons were the reason for our mutu-

al presence. Doug told us that he was a captain in the U.S. Army, newly arrived from a tour of duty on Taiwan, and a family man with five children. He was presently stationed at the Pentagon and lived not too far from our home. This initial conversation led us into a deep friendship that was to endure until Doug's tragic and untimely death in July of 1974.

A short time later we were pleased that Doug paid us a visit, bringing with him his three daughters and two sons. It was immediately apparent to Joanne and me (recent newlyweds with no children of our own) that these children were a pleasure to be with and enjoy. Their brightness, good manners, sense of joy, humor and friendliness confirmed the environment of good character in their home. In the years to come some or all of them joined us in trapping, hunting and eyrie exploration trips. The fun and excitement their presence provided has never been forgotten. I join them in remembrance of Doug's larder of hard-boiled eggs and saltines for the four mile trek up the face of Jump Mountain to the eyrie thereon.

Following Doug's graduation from high school in July, 1943, he enlisted in the Army and in 1946 was assigned to Europe. During his tour in Europe, his interest in falconry became intense, probably as a result of the friendships he established with German and Austrian falconers. It was about this time that he began to collect falconry-related books and equipment. He returned to the U.S. in 1947 and was honorably discharged.

He attended the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Washington D.C. in 1947-48, and was commissioned 2nd Lt., Infantry, in 1948. In 1950 he volunteered for combat duty



Doug Mollison

North Carolina 1970
photo by Mike Yates

Photo by Mike Yates

in Korea, where he served as an infantry platoon leader and company commander. Doug told me of being in foxhole positions during lulls in close combat high in the hills of North Korea and of watching and counting the migrating hawks and falcons as they made their way south. When Doug returned to California in 1952, he entered the U.S. Army language school at the Presidio, studying Mandarin Chinese. He then went to the Graduate School for Far Eastern Studies at Yale University. In 1954 he attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. All during this very active period in his military career he maintained his avid interest in falconry although active practice of the sport was difficult.

From 1955 to 1957, Doug served as a foreign area specialist on the staff of the U.S. Army Attaché in Taipei, Taiwan, and traveled extensively in the Far East. Doug said that although the travel during this period prohibited his active participation in falconry, it only served to sharpen his ardor for the sport.

And so it was that, immediately following this period in Doug's career, it became my good fortune to meet him that day on the sandy shores of Assateague. For the next four years he and I spent countless hours trapping, training and hunting with falcons. We talked, ate, breathed and slept falconry. Now free to pursue his lifelong interest in the sport, Doug threw himself wholeheartedly into the fray.

There were wonderful fall and winter trapping trips on the Carolina coast (by then Assateague was declining due to human encroachment and government restriction). There were the countless spring trips to literally scores of Eastern eyrie sites in vain attempts to locate remnant nesting anatums. There were the hours and hours of falcon flying on the open park spaces opposite Washington, D.C. and adjacent to Doug's quarters at Fort Myer, Virginia. Due to lack of mews facilities on post, Doug bought an old station wagon and turned



it into a mews. He blacked out the windows and parked it in his reserved space outside his apartment.

About this time a small group of area falconers met on the porch of Alva Nye's home in McLean, Virginia. The Potomac Falconers Association was born, and Doug Mollison was in the thick of it, a most ardent supporter and worker. For several years he served as its Secretary. During this period Doug also volunteered his services to put on youth lectures in raptor conservation and falconry for the U.S. Park Service.

Doug accomplished much for the sport of falconry, considering the demands of his professional career, and much of his success was due to the kind of a man he was: a gentleman always with other falconers, soft spoken, yet firm in his convictions, but always aware that people came first.

In 1962 Doug met and married his second wife, Gwendolyn, who shared his interest in the pursuit of falconry and wildlife, his love of music, prose and poetry, and his devotion to home and family. They spent three years in Hawaii, then returned to the D.C. area, renewing old friendships with the members of the Potomac Falconers Association. He continued his active participation in the group to the day of his passing. Doug will long be remembered by all.

Doug's country recognized his deep love and devotion to his country by awarding him, among his many decorations, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and the Meritorious Service Medal. Doug's devotion to and belief in the Almighty Creator are best conveyed in his own words:

A POEM OF FAITH by D. A. Mollison

It is strength and goodness of spirit
That adds to the measure of life.
It is genuine love and affection
That bolsters the meeting of strife.
It is fellowship warm and enduring
That insures all frictions will cease.
But we must turn humble eyes toward
heaven
For life's meaning and beauty and peace.

—by Brian B. McDonald
Hawk Chalk, Vol. XIV, No. 2, August 1975