

# O'Grady endorses Christensen

Pilot shot down over Bosnia says to look at candidates' character

By ERIN GIBSON  
Staff Reporter

BELLEVUE — Capt. Scott O'Grady, a U.S. Air Force pilot shot down over Bosnia in 1994, urged participants at an election rally in Bellevue Sunday to support family values and reelect U.S. Rep. Jon Christensen.

"When you're looking for a candidate, look for issues, but also look for character and accountability," O'Grady said.

Character makes a hero, he said, and Americans are looking for a hero.

O'Grady said that although people call him a hero, he defines a hero as anyone who helps somebody else, including the young Marines who rescued him from enemy territory in Bosnia.

"But it doesn't take a 19-year-old kid to be a hero," O'Grady said. "We have heroes right here."

Doctors, teachers and parents who instill correct morals in children are heroes, he said, and so is Jon Christensen.

O'Grady met Christensen last May, when they both received one of the 10 Outstanding Young Americans Awards in Washington D.C.

O'Grady said he was happy Christensen asked him to travel to Nebraska and speak on his behalf.

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CAPT. SCOTT O'GRADY  
U.S. Air Force pilot

"He's been fighting battles in Washington D.C., and I think that's more of a dangerous battle than the one I fought in Bosnia," O'Grady said.

But O'Grady's battle dropped him 500 feet from a flaming cockpit deep into enemy territory in Bosnia.

He eluded capture for six days under the cover of sticks and leaves, he said, and was eating twigs, berries and insects, while praying someone would know he was still alive.

His battle began while flying over Bosnia during a peacekeeping mission in 1994, he said.

His mission was to enforce a "no-fly" zone, and to "prevent airplanes from flying overhead and dropping bombs on innocent people," he said.

But an unexpected missile turned his plane into a fireball, and he fell into the Bosnian woods after ejecting from

the cockpit, which O'Grady called a "flaming coffin in the sky."

It took 25 minutes for the young pilot to hit the ground.

"I did a lot of thinking in that time," he said. "My thought processes were going 1,000 miles-per-minute."

O'Grady then hid in the Bosnian wilderness for six days while he tried to make radio contact with American forces.

"I prayed that someone would know I was alive," he said. "The one thing I wanted to come home to was my family."

But he knew America was behind him, praying with him that he would survive, he said.

"We live in a beautiful country," he said. "We have more freedoms and privileges than any place else in the world."



DANIEL J. LUEDERT/DN

SCOTT O'GRADY spoke Sunday evening at a rally for Jon Christensen, the Republican nominee for Nebraska's 2nd District seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

## ACLU criticizes police for York High drug raid

YORK (AP) — The Nebraska chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union is criticizing state and local police for a surprise drug raid Wednesday at York High School.

The Nebraska State Patrol and York Police used drug-sniffing dogs to search lockers and vehicles for 45 minutes Wednesday morning as school officials kept students inside classrooms.

The search turned up a few marijuana seeds, ashes and empty drug-related containers, as well as one small concealed weapon that school officials said was neither a gun nor a knife.

"We are not in the business of hassling kids," principal Scott Koch said. "The message we want to send is first of all drugs are illegal, they are not

acceptable and they won't be tolerated in school."

But Executive Director of the Nebraska chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, Matt LeMieux, said the message being sent to students is that they have no personal rights.

"This is a classic case of where students lose their rights as soon as they enter the doors at school."

The courts say that before police and school officials can search a locker or vehicle they need reasonable suspicion that there is evidence of a crime or violation of school policy.

Koch insisted the search was legal and that students had been told that lockers and their vehicles on school property are subject to search.

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