

'A Desperate Land' is Peoria man's 4th novel

Retired Navy pilot's military know-how spices thriller

By Charles Kelly

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Peoria resident Mike Basford, 74, a former U.S. Navy jet pilot and Vietnam War veteran, recently came out with his fourth novel, *A Desperate Land*.

In the novel, the United States is being run by a military dictatorship that took over after the country was plagued by widespread crime and violence, a decaying school system and a corrupt federal government.

Now the country destabilizes as military factions struggle against each other, ultrarightists try to defuse rebellion by distributing a drug to pacify rebels, and soldiers from foreign countries invade.

"It's futuristic, but the credibility is there because I set the stage," Basford said.

Despite the horrific events, things turn out all right.

Basford's three previous books also dealt with thrilling events set on an international stage, much like



Mike Basford

enemy missile "locked on" his plane, and he had to take evasive action to escape. During his career, he flew 135 combat missions, winning four Distinguished Flying Crosses, and carried out nearly 1,000 landings on the pitching decks of aircraft carriers.

When Basford retired in 1993, he took up an active life of golfing, working out, reading voraciously and writing novels. Quadruple-bypass surgery in April slowed him for a while, but now he's well into writing his fifth novel, to be called *The New Dynasty*.

He has brought his knowledge of

war, political maneuvering and the military.

After making an attack on a missile field in Hanoi, Basford dodged bullets from two MiG fighter pilots. On a mission over Hai-phong, an enemy missile "locked on" his plane, and he had to take evasive action to escape. During his career, he flew 135 combat missions, winning four Distinguished Flying Crosses, and carried out nearly 1,000 landings on the pitching decks of aircraft carriers.

Though his books are filled with scary scenarios, Basford says they ultimately show his faith in America.

"It's a philosophy that the country's got problems, but we've had a lot of problems before, and they are all solvable, with the right people," he said. "There's always somebody stepping up."

To get information about Basford's books or to order one or more, visit www.mikebasford.com. Or call him at (623) 566-1975. *America First* is \$13.95. *The Phoenix Affair* is \$12.95. *SS America Affair* is \$9.95. *A Desperate Land* is \$13.95.

Mike Basford

Age: 74.

Residence: Peoria.

Military service: U.S. Navy, 1954-1980. Retired with the rank of captain. Served as a carrier jet pilot. Held three aviation commands. Was responsible for planning the naval aviation budget for the Pentagon and for providing information to aid in lobbying Congress, 1975-78. Commander of the Navy's Training Wing One, 1978-1980.

Military honors: Four Distinguished Flying Crosses, Legion of Merit, 15 Air Medals and numerous other decorations.

Civilian business career: Worked with McDonnell-Douglas from 1981-1993, serving as general manager and president of McDonnell-Douglas Training Systems Inc., Dallas.

Education: Bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., 1954. Did graduate-level work at American University, Washington, D.C., specializing in Far East studies. Studied systems management at the University of California, Los Angeles. Attended Army Staff College and National War College.