

## Friends raise a can for John Grove

[Andrew Gant](#)

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HURLBURT FIELD - Air Force Maj. John Grove, for all the time and money he spent on charity missions here and abroad, didn't spend much on his beer.

For his celebration of life Saturday at Hurlburt Field's Soundside, drinks were "the last beer that John drank" - cans of Old Milwaukee Light, ice-packed in a canoe.

"We've been saving that beer for about 12 years, and it hasn't changed," Grove's friend Tommy Hull told visitors lining up at the door. "Nothing like an Old Milwaukee Light."

Grove, an Air Force special operations pilot, decorated combat veteran and an admired humanitarian in his retirement, died in December at his home in Fort Walton Beach. The Air Commando was 66.

Hundreds of people gathered at Soundside to remember Grove, many of them bringing cash for the memorial fund his granddaughter Heather has started.

Grove was an embellisher, friends said, and didn't let details get in the way of a good story.

Some of his best stories were simple. He took unsold donuts from Krispy Kreme in Destin and handed them out to the hungry and homeless. He also donated medical supplies and other essentials to nursing homes in the area.

But Grove's work reached across the world, too. He helped ship hundreds of school desks and clothes to poor areas in Central America and Southeast Asia.

Around Christmas, he collected kitchen and other household appliances to send to orphanages in Honduras. In Thailand, he helped establish fresh-water systems for a village.

Grove will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery in the spring.

### IN JOHN GROVE'S MEMORY

To make a donation to the John Grove Memorial Fund, call (727) 631-0088.



John Grove dismantles a donated school desk, the first in a pile, before shipping crates of supplies to Honduras and Guatemala in 2004. Grove, a decorated combat veteran and local humanitarian, died in December at the age of 66.

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