

*An agonizing groaning sound which sends shivers up and down their spines.
He said the shape was human-like, but wasn't human*

The annual 74th ACS haunted woods offers a good scare here and there, but “true” ghost stories about places on Langley also exist. The base is old – very old. Established in 1916 it has earned its place in aviation history. But long before Eagles ruled the skies overhead there were eerie moans of ephemeral spirits of the dead.

What’s true? What’s fiction? Seems there can be a real mix of both when tales of Langley’s ghosts get told. One story of note is from a 1981 *Flyer* article entitled ‘Katy: Her ghostly spirit still roams.’ Located where the dental clinic now stands, was once a building called the Hayes House. From 1961 to 1964 Tactical Air Command required key civilian personnel to live on base, and that’s where George Hayes and his family lived. But the home was originally built in 1893 for the widow of General Samuel C. Armstrong, the founder of Hampton Institute (now University).

In the 1970s the house served as a rehearsal hall for a base theatre group. According to the story, Lesley Bomhoff and her fellow thespians took a break from rehearsing and started playing with a Ouija board. The glass marker moved repeatedly to K and T and the group concluded their spiritual friend was Katy.

“Gradually we learned Katy was the four year old daughter of the cook who lived in the Hayes House somewhere between 1850 and 1860.” Hmm. Unless there was a house there before 1893, just where did Katy live? This question remains unanswered however Bomhoff and her friends got quite a violent reaction on the board when the word “fire” was spelled out, leading them to speculate about her demise at such a youthful age. According to Bomhoff, the child was

a prankster, and liked the group's company, even locking them into the house for several minutes.

The clinic now has phantoms, but they're not little girls. Staff Sergeant Sharon Newton remembers the first time she went into the clinic's conference room and saw the picture of a lady hanging on the wall. The subject wasn't a military person, so she asked about the picture's relevance. "Oh, that's a picture of a lady who lived in a house that burned down here," she was told. Newton couldn't get the image and story out of her mind.

On call, and tasked to go into the clinic to retrieve an X-ray early one morning, she kept hearing noises, even though she was the sole living occupant in the building. "The X-ray machine makes its own noise – but that wasn't what I was hearing," Newton said. She started talking to herself. "Look lady, I'm not trying to bother you, I've just got a job to do." But fear gripped her heart and she ran out to her car until her nerves calmed down.

Newton is not the sole witness to the apparitions in the clinic. Senior Airman Kimber Sousa greeted a shadowy figure of a man with a cheery "good morning" when she opened the building up early one morning. She saw him in the conference room, but then realizing she should be the only person in the building, she looked back – and he was not there. "Everybody thought I was crazy when I told them," Sousa said. "But I did see that man."

Just behind the clinic is the oldest structure on the base. Originally part of a teaching farm belonging to Hampton Institute, it is now home for 1st Contracting Squadron. Barbara Herb, 1st Fighter Wing Safety, used to work in the large brown brick building, and has had her share of visits from specters.

"I do believe there are ghosts in the building," Herb says. "I'm not afraid of them – but they'll make contact if they want to." And how do these inhabitants of the netherworld make

contact? There are breezes when no windows are open. There are the sounds of water splashing in the bathroom when no one else is in there. And perhaps the most interesting ghosts sharing their dessert. “Sometimes everyone in the building will smell a cake baking in an oven; a warm, sweet smell,” even though no one was baking a cake.

So does this ghost have a name, like little Katy? According to legend, this spirit is named Natalie, and her tragic death is also fire-related. A psychic visited the building at night to sense the spirits who were there, and related the story of Natalie. She was most likely a Hampton Institute student, and there was a fire in the building. The student escaped the blaze but realized her friend hadn’t reached safety, so she re-entered the building, and died in the inferno.

The wavy antique glass in the building has even prompted second glances from some passersby. Seems at night, glimpses of faces in the windows have been seen.

Boo.

Wherever violent deaths occur, there is always the possibility that ghosts may roam an area. It seems that the violence associated with death and suddenness of their demise may trap these individuals in an earthbound plane of existence. They may not realize that they have died and will continue to plod along neither in this world or the next. Such may be the case for the Quesada Hall spirits.

Named for Lt. General Elwood Quesada, first TAC commander, the building is now Air Combat Command Public Affairs. According to Lt. Col. Joan Ferguson, murder and suicide may be the cause of the spooky goings-on in the building.

Back in the fall of 1981 Capt. Deanne Jaffee was leaving the building one Friday afternoon. She got in her car, and noticed her estranged husband was waving to get her attention. She rolled down her window and received a shotgun blast to her neck. His murderous task complete, he

then got into his vehicle, started to drive away, but his exit was blocked by an alert security policeman. Also in his arsenal was a pistol, which he placed in his mouth and fired.

Are these the ghosts who now occupy Quesada Hall? Ferguson also worked in the building back then – and she thinks they are. “The noises we hear are not violent – but they do make you feel kind of sad,” said Ferguson. “I sometimes wonder if she ever mended her relationship with her husband.”

Lyn Havener also works in ACC PA. Sometimes she has to stay late and she’s heard doors opening and closing, footsteps on the stairs, music and even the sounds of muffled voices and laughter. Does the laughter mean the Jaffees have made up? Why don’t you go over to Quesada Hall and ask them. Just make sure you do it Sunday, October 31, Halloween. And of course, go when it’s real dark.