

AFTAC Alumni Association

West Coast Chapter

Box 888, No.Highlands CA 95660

The Big Story

WFO - 1155th – TOD REUNION

SUBMITTED BY JACK ALLISON AND BOB FITZGERALD

The AFTAC reunion of 1999 was planned and organized as a joint effort of the Technical Operations Division (TOD) and the WFO-1155th-TOD Reunion Committee. In the early spring of '98 the Reunion Committee was engaged in planning its fourth reunion activity for the Sacramento area when we learned of the planned inactivation of the outfit. The Committee quickly decided to work with TOD to hold the reunion in concert with the TOD inactivation ceremonies. This would give all the alumni a chance to participate in both activities thereby enhancing the experience for everyone. Our previous West Coast reunions were held in Sacramento in 1981, 1985, 1994. (these dates were taken from Florida records)

We were fortunate to have selected the Holiday Inn Northeast as the site of the reunion activities. The Holiday Inn had completed most of its major renovation work and was in pristine condition. (The entrance road was still a bit rocky, but no one minded).

In December '98, we mailed out a newsletter and registration forms to over 3,800 alumni with a requested response deadline of February 1st. By February 15th we had received less than 200 reservations and were beginning to worry about the 400-500 estimate we had given the Hotel for the banquet. Not to worry though, because by the evening of the banquet, we already had a standby waiting list due to having maxed out the number of seats (496) available.

We opened registrations for the reunion on Wednesday evening in the hotel lobby and 'F Troop' used the Hospitality Suite for a mini-reunion. The first 'official' activity was the Golf Tournament at Lawrence Links on a rainy Thursday afternoon (see Cal Brown & Jim Esping's following article for details) followed Thursday evening with a wonderful cocktail party and buffet dinner which drew an unexpectedly large group of attendees. This provided an indication of what we were to expect for the banquet on Friday evening.

The Friday morning TOD Inactivation ceremonies in the Coast Guard Hangar at McClellan AFB were great. Col. Harold J. **Beatty**, AFTAC Commander, gave an inspiring and touching speech about the history and accomplishments of the WFO, 1155th Tech Ops and TOD units and the fantastic, talented people that were assigned to them over the years. TOD staff were impressive in formation for the ceremonies and had worked very hard to make sure the activity came off without a hitch, including the nice refreshments and transportation from the hotel.

Following the ceremonies, TOD provided bus transportation to an open house in the TOD Russell building. And 'open' doesn't begin to describe the experience. The TOD staff is to be commended for trying their best to provide something for everyone to see, but most of the equipment had already been boxed up awaiting shipment or had already left the building for another life somewhere else.

However, they gave a very interesting and informative slide presentation about the mission. The Russell building itself is a very nice facility and a giant leap from the old building 628 where a lot of us spent our time. Buses then took everyone back to the 'front' side of McClellan for a tour of the Aviation Museum and then back to the hotel.

The Friday evening Banquet Dinner and Dance tested the hotel facilities and staff to the limit. The banquet facilities will normally accommodate about 450 guests. We topped out at a few more than 500. Despite the somewhat crowded conditions, the hotel staff served a variety of fine foods efficiently.

The TOD staff presented a delightful program, including some rare and much appreciated video footage covering the history of the organization from its inception. The memories and insights provided by Lt. General (Ret.) **Clapper**, who was the AFTAC Commander in '84 and '85, were much appreciated. Following the TOD Commander, Colonel **Rhoads'** well-received closing comments, the John Skinner Big Band provided their excellent program of fine dance music.

Saturday was a day of leisure, reminiscing, touring Old Sacramento (via base vans provided by TOD'ers), and mini-reunions. Some of the 'original' WFO folks were talking it up in the Hospitality suite in one side room while Col. Franz (Herb) **Dettmer**, past Commander of Det 202, and a bunch of Det 202 folks (about 20 or more) were gathering in another side room of the Hospitality Suite.

Throughout the four days of festivities, which culminated with a delicious Sunday Brunch, the reminiscing and partying continued with little let-up in the Hospitality Suite. The Hospitality Subcommittee, particularly Lew **Milligan**, George **Thompson** (pictured) and Frank **Goodreau** did a magnificent job of keeping the suite properly supplied and the good times flowing from Wednesday evening all the way to Sunday noon.

And then it was over...these events were truly memorable, and sad at the same time. As we bid farewell to an important element of AFTAC, remembered its past and its mission, we did so with good friends and past partners in this critical work. Now we move forward in our own worlds and ways, knowing that AFTAC will be ever changed by this event, but will continue to be an important organization to our government and will continue to be graced with the 'best people on this earth.'

...AND THERE ARE STORIES TO PASS ON...

In the 'B'eginning

SUBMITTED BY JOE JOHNSON

In 1951 the 1009th Special Weapons Squadron selected 60 men which were the first group of 'blue suiters' trained for B (seismic) system operations. I was a member of that group and one of a few that completed 20 or more years active duty. The remaining majority finished a 4-year enlistment and returned to civilian life.

I was elated to find 10 of these 'four and out' men attending the 1999 Sacramento reunion. we relived the 'OLD days' and had a wonderful time refreshing long ago but not forgotten friendships. The presence of these men 45 plus years after leaving the service tends to prove that the 'outfit' was and is 'special.'

...and Other Important People Were There

JOE JOHNSON CONTINUES

Al, and Mrs. **Pavik**. Former TOD Commander...he has the honor of leading TOD for more years than any other Commander

The 1999 Reunion Golf Tournament

SUBMITTED BY CAL BROWN AND JIM ESPING

"The event that almost didn't happen"

The golf tournament on April 8th, 1999, was in jeopardy of being cancelled. We got up to a miserable, rainy morning. However, the storm front moved through at about 9:30 a.m. and we decided to go with the 12:30 p.m. shotgun start. All but four players showed up, one due to illness, and the others just didn't come. Indeed it was cold and windy with an occasional peek of the sun. The tournament was considered a success though.

Tom **Niquette** won closest to the pin and low net over the field. Betty Jo **Hinkle** won low net and Gloria **Houston** won low gross of the ladies. Sid **Roper** won 'A-Flight,' Jim **Smith** won 'B-Flight,' Richard **Pettitt** won 'C-Flight' and the 'Calloway Flight' was won by Joe **Celaya**. A good time was had by all. We thank all the 'dedicated' golfers who participated and congratulate the winners.

WORDS FROM THE PREZ' BY JOE JOHNSON

AS SPECIFIED BY THE WEST COAST CHAPTER AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION, THE FORMATION COMMITTEE MET ON APRIL 19TH AND ELECTED OFFICERS AND A DIRECTOR OF THE CHAPTER AS FOLLOWS: CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD: JACK ALLISON, DIRECTOR AT LARGE: HARM ANING, PRESIDENT (ALSO SERVES AS DIRECTOR): JOE JOHNSON, VICE PRESIDENT: GEORGE THOMPSON, SECRETARY: DALE KLUG, AND TREASURER: BART CARTER. THESE INDIVIDUALS WILL SERVE 2-YEAR TERMS AND THEIR REPLACEMENTS WILL BE ELECTED BY THE CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP.

AFTER WE REVIVED, RECHARGED, AND GOT OURSELVES BACK TOGETHER AFTER THE REUNION, WE HAD OUR INITIAL ORGANIZING MEETING ON AUGUST 2ND. HARM ANING VOLUNTEERED TO BE OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN AND DALE KLUG DECIDED TO TAKE A BITE AT BEING THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR.

SINCE AFTAC HAS A REUNION EVERY TWO YEARS, THE WEST COAST CHAPTER OFFICERS FELT WE SHOULD AT LEAST PLAN ONE SOCIAL EVENT IN THE YEAR BETWEEN REUNIONS. WE HOPE TO SCHEDULE AN EVENT IN APRIL OR MAY 2000. WE ARE LOOKING AT POSSIBLY HAVING A LUNCH OR DINNER CRUISE ON THE "CLEAR LAKE QUEEN" A PADDLEWHEELER ON CLEAR LAKE, THE LARGEST NATURAL LAKE IN CALIFORNIA WITH 127 MILES OF SHORELINE SURROUNDED WITH BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAINS. THIS IS ONLY ONE IDEA WE CAN PURSUE, AND WE WELCOME AND URGE YOUR INPUT AND ANY OTHER SUGGESTIONS .

TREASURER'S REPORT BY BART CARTER

OUR ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION REQUIRE THE PLANNING OF ACTIVITIES BE BASED ON HAVING FUNDING AS NEARLY EQUAL TO COSTS AS POSSIBLE. WELL, THE REUNION COMMITTEE WAS AMAZED AT THE SUCCESS OF THEIR EFFORTS. WE TOOK IN \$24,276.25 AND SPENT \$24,171.99, LEAVING AN EXCESS OF \$104.26. **YOU CAN UNDERSTAND IT IF WE PAT OURSELVES ON THE BACK.** WE HAVE DECIDED TO HOLD OFF APPLYING FOR NONPROFIT STATUS UNTIL WE HAVE MORE TIME TO STUDY THE ISSUES. THE GREATEST BENEFIT OF NONPROFIT STATUS IS THE SAVINGS IN POSTAL CHARGES. WE HAVE TO WEIGH ANY POSTAL SAVINGS AGAINST THE IRRITATION OF FILING ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WITH THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND THE IRS. DON'T FRET... WE HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO WORK ON THIS BEFORE THE NEXT REUNION.

TOD INACTIVATION CEREMONY BY BOB FITZGERALD

ON SEPTEMBER 15TH, AT 0900 IN THE TOD'S RUSSELL BUILDING LOBBY FOURTEEN TOD ACTIVE DUTY PERSONNEL AND SEVEN WFO/1155TH/TOD ALUMNI ATTENDED THE INACTIVATION CEREMONY. THE CEREMONY WAS SHORT, BUT VERY POIGNANT. A LOT OF THE ALUMNI WELLED UP A BIT AT THE PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM THAT STARTED OFF THE CEREMONIES.

ALL OF US STOOD PROUD WHILE CAPT. FRANCESCHI READ A PREPARED STATEMENT AND A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT CLINTON ACKNOWLEDGING THE GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS MADE BY OUR OUTFIT, THE CRITICAL ROLE WE PLAYED IN OUR NATION'S SECURITY, AND OUR ROLE IN BRINGING THE COLD WAR TO A CLOSE.

MOST OF US WELLED UP AGAIN WHEN THE TOD GUIDON WAS SHEATHED FOR THE LAST TIME BY THE COMMANDER, LTCOL KENNETH DENBLEYKER, AND FIRST SERGEANT, MSGT RICHARD PEREZ. AND, LASTLY, DURING THE REMARKS MADE BY LTCOL DENBLEYKER REGARDING THE LONG HONORABLE HISTORY OF THE WFO/1155TH/TOD ORGANIZATION THAT WAS BEING BROUGHT TO A CLOSE.

I'M SAD, BUT PROUD TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ATTEND THIS CEREMONY. ALL SEVEN OF US ALUMNI WHO ATTENDED ARE EVEN MORE PROUD TO HAVE BEEN A PART OF THIS WONDERFUL OUTFIT AND TO HAVE WORKED WITH SUCH A GREAT GROUP OF PROFESSIONALS. MAY GOD TAKE CARE GOOD CARE OF ALL OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN A PART OF "OUR" OUTFIT. **MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!**

EDITOR'S NOTE: ALUMNI ATTENDING THE CEREMONY WERE: HARM ANING, DALE KLUG, JOE JOHNSON, DENNIS NOLAN, GEORGE THOMPSON, ORVILLE PRICHARD, AND BOB FITZGERALD (PHOTOGRAPHER).

SCORE: AFTAC 0 ---- ALUMNI 1

WITH THE DEACTIVATION OF THE TECHNICAL OPERATIONS DIVISION IN SEPTEMBER 1999, CMSGT SPENCER ELECTED TO RETIRE AND JOIN THE ALUMNI. CMSGT SPENCER WAS AN OUTSTANDINGLY PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF OUR RECENT REUNION COMMITTEE. SHE ANTICIPATED PROBLEMS, PLANNED ACCORDINGLY, STATED HER POSITION, AGREED ON ACTIONS AND THEN GOT THE JOB DONE. COMMITTEE MEMBERS SAID AGAIN AND AGAIN "WHAT WOULD WE HAVE DONE WITHOUT SUE?" SPEAKING FOR MYSELF AND AS PRESIDENT OF THE WEST COAST CHAPTER, I SAY "SUE WE WISH YOU THE VERY BEST AS YOU JOIN OUR RANKS, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT MANY FUTURE REUNIONS." I'M CERTAIN THAT AFTAC WILL MISS CMSGT SPENCER AS THERE ARE FEW INDIVIDUALS THAT CAN MATCH HER TALENT AND DRIVE IN GETTING THINGS DONE.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

THE WEST COAST CHAPTER HAS 181 MEMBERS. THIS INCLUDES 38 LIFE MEMBERS. AS A REMINDER, APRIL IS THE RENEWAL MONTH FOR ANNUAL DUES. THE EXPIRATION DATE IS SHOWN ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. CHECKS SHOULD BE MAILED TO THE AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, WEST COAST CHAPTER, P. O. BOX 888, N. HIGHLANDS, CA 95660. AFTER THIS MAILING THE WEST COAST CHAPTER NEWSLETTER WILL BE MAILED ONLY TO THE CURRENT MEMBERSHIP, PLUS A COPY TO THE COLORADO AND FLORIDA CHAPTERS. WE EXTEND AN INVITATION TO ANY NON-MEMBER TO JOIN THE WEST COAST CHAPTER. DUES ARE \$5.00 PER YEAR OR \$50.00 FOR A LIFE MEMBERSHIP. MEMBERSHIP CARDS ARE INCLUDED IN THE NEWSLETTER. SORRY IF WE ARE SO LATE---SOME OF US OLD AFTACER'S ARE ALSO GOOD PROCRASTINATORS!!! IF WE MISSED SENDING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD LET US KNOW SO WE CAN GET YOUR CARD TO YOU.