



Depot Fallout



AFTAC Alumni Association West Coast Chapter
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LOOK US UP AT:
www.AFTACWest.org

SPRING PICNIC POTLUCK - 17 MAY 2008

by Charlie Penn

The warm weather is almost here so it is time for the 4th Annual AFTAC Spring Picnic, where burgers are dropped but wiped off clean and the dogs are wagging their tails. The past picnics have been a huge success with the food undercooked or burnt but the camaraderie second to none. The Association will provide the burgers, dogs, condiments, paper plates, soft drinks and water. (Adult beverages will not be provided, but you may certainly bring your own; we will have ice chests for your beverages). You're asked to provide the desserts, side dishes and chips & dips and to sign up for this festive event so we know how many Roloids to provide. The venue is covered and will accommodate over 100 hungry, belligerent folks. Bring your war stories, appetite, pot-luck dish, camera and some sort of decorum for this once-a-year extravaganza. (If you are a no-show you will be badmouthed). See you there!!! ***Note: Sign-up requested so we know how much to buy.**

So what are the vitals on this gala event?

WHEN: 17 May, 2008

WHERE: Same place as last year, **Foothill Community Park** (*Directions are below*)

ADDRESS: 5510 Diablo Way, Sacramento

HOURS: 11:00 am - 3:00 pm

COST: Nada (*If you'd like to help defray the costs, donations will be gratefully accepted at the site.*)

DIRECTIONS: From I-80 take exit #98 (Elkhorn Blvd) west. Turn right on Diablo (within one block of I-80). There are 3 park entrances park on the right side of Diablo. Take the second entrance into the big parking lot. We'll be under the big pavilion in back of the parking area.

***Important: We need a head count, so if you plan to attend please do one of the following:**

1. Copy or just cut out the form on the last page, fill it out & **mail it by May 9th** to:

AFTAC Alumni - West Coast Chapter, P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974;

or

2. You can go to our website www.AFTACwest.org, 'Forms' page, get the signup form and mail it in as mentioned above or copy it and Email it (by **May 11th**) to Picnic Co-Chairmen, Butch Kemna (jklk@mindsync.com) and Charlie Penn (chaspenn@sbcglobal.net).

or

3. You can call Butch (916-722-8509), or Charlie (916-624-1067) by **May 11th** with the info.

Ed. Note: You'll find the Picnic Sign-up Form on last page of this issue.

AFTAC AIRBORNE REUNION UPDATE

The Tropicana Hotel will be the venue for the AFTAC Airborne Reunion. One hundred rooms have been reserved and final arrangement for the banquet, hospitality room and reservation instructions are pending. There will be a Nevada Test Site tour on Friday, Nov 7th for those interested and the Aviation Nation Air Show on Saturday. All past & present Airborne folks (SEOs, F-Troop, & Lab Airborne) are invited to the reunion in Las Vegas, November 6 - 9, 2008 to coincide with the Aviation Nation Air Show. We plan to have a formal banquet and other events such as golf, Boulder Dam tours, etc. or other activities that "you" decide should be included. We have about 150 probable attendees at this time. If you have any experience in setting up this type of function please volunteer your expertise. We'll soon be asking for deposits. Please spread the word to anyone who might be interested, as the more "green baggers" the better. Our <http://chaspenn.tripod.com/> website is dedicated to reunion updates. **Please check the website for updates, make sure your information is correct. Contact Charlie Penn, 916-624-1067 (chaspenn@sbcglobal.net) or 'Butch' Kemna, 916-722-8509 (jklk@mindsync.com), for questions, information & comments.**

E-MAIL ADDRESS UPDATES NEEDED

by Joe Johnson

Sometimes we need to send information to as many alumni as possible in the shortest time possible. So we would like you to keep us updated on your e-mail addresses. **If yours should change, please send your current e-mail address to: d1price@pacbell.com and ga9jo8ro7ca@hotmail.com.** We will acknowledge your message and ensure our roster is corrected. **Thank You Very Much!**

DO AFTACERS REALLY "WALK ON WATER"?

Pictures are worth a thousand words.



Of the three individuals above, which is the non AFTACer, the long-time AFTACer & the AFTACer on OJT?

DEPOT & FALLOUT NEWSLETTER

by Joe Johnson

We need your help! Please consider receiving your Depot Fallout newsletter via email. It now costs the association nearly \$1.00 per copy to furnish you the newsletter via regular USPS snail-mail. We now have 50 members on the email distribution list and these people are saving your association about \$400.00 yearly. How about increasing that savings to \$1000.00? Those selecting the email option enjoy several advantages. They receive the newsletter days, if not a week, before mailed copies get delivered. They get copies in full color; great for viewing the many photographs in the newsletter. You can read your email copy online anywhere in the world when you are not at home. You can choose to print or not print your copy.

To subscribe to the "Depot eFallout" contact us at ga9jo8ro7ca@hotmail.com.

This may not be advantageous for you, but it frees up a fellow member from printing, folding, stapling, stamping and posting over 100 newsletters. I wish all of you a Healthy and Happy Springtime! *Joe Johnson*

WAY BACK WHEN

by Dale Klug, Editor

We're running a series of articles called "WAY BACK WHEN". They are patterned after the Florida Chapter's series in the Post Monitor called "B.S. (Barely Substantiated) TALES". We're inviting everyone to submit articles or pictures with stories from days-gone-by at Detachments, OLs, Depot, Squadrons, Headquarters or TDYs. **Crank up your "WAYBACK machines" and send us an article.** Remember to keep all the inputs unclassified. E-mail all proposed articles to me at: FalloutEditor@AFTACwest.org or snail-mail to: AFTAC Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974. **Editor's Note: Well, we have two submissions for this quarter's newsletter. I'm guessing you all got tired of my old pictures!**

'88 FLOODS JUST ONE FOND MEMORY FOR CENTRE'S YANKEE.

by Daniel Burk Haslett

Sir,- The two and a half years that I lived in the Alice represent some of the most exciting and enjoyable years of my life. I have many fond memories of the friends, food, and sites that I left behind when I returned to the United States. I was assigned to Detachment 421, known locally as "The Det", back in October of 1987. I flew into town with virtually no information about Alice Springs. Sure, I had read all about this cattle town in the middle of the outback and seen the pictures, but the materials that I was reading dated back to 1977 and 1967 respectively! Since I had just spent the last eight months on US Air Force installations in the States, the idea of being transferred to a remote detachment, where you don't even wear uniforms seemed exciting and full of mystery. The assignment description said that I would have to "live off the local economy" and buy and cook my own food, and I relished the opportunity. Would I have to buy myself a washer? Rent an apartment? Every picture seemed to show a bright red, dirt road: based on this information, I sold my Chevy Camaro, thinking that everyone in the Alice must surely use four-wheel drive!

When I got off the airplane at the Alice Springs Airport, I was met by most of the whole detachment: Colonel David Ebersole, Harold Hughes, Dan Thompson, and Ray Baney, just to name a few. Detachment 421, located just across the street from the RSL club, is also known amongst the Australian government as the Joint Geological and Geophysical Research Station (JGGRS). This seismic station is a joint venture between the United States and Australia, and the data from the seismic array located just north east of Alice Springs is sent real-time via satellite to both Canberra, and to Cocoa Beach, Florida. The primary mission was the detection of underground nuclear explosions. The Australian Bureau of Mineral Resources (BMR) had a small office that used their seismic stations for the detection of underground nuclear tests, as did the Americans. The US government assigned the mission of detecting these explosions to the US Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC). AFTAC has the charge of monitoring safeguard "D" of the 1963 limited test ban treaty. AFTAC monitors the planet to watch for any nuclear explosions in order to see if any of the cooperating countries violate the treaty. Australia did the same thing through the BMR, through its own seismic stations as well as JGGRS in Alice Springs. The Det was established in Alice Springs in 1955, and US personnel assigned there have always been encouraged to take a positive and active role in the community. My job was that of station operator. I was one of the team members that actually studied the seismographic data. I analyzed the data and catalogued the earthquakes.

Alice Springs sits atop a large, rocky plate that is very stable. As such, it is a nice place to put a seismic station for the purposes of studying regional seismic events. The station can pick up earthquakes from all over the world. About once every 15 minutes or so, a small earthquake would emanate from the Fiji island area. Well over 99 per cent of all small earthquakes occur deep enough in the earth that no one ever feels them. Yet, sometimes these earthquakes occur near the surface, and people feel them. Back in early 1988, an earthquake occurred about 25 km southwest of Tennant Creek. We were sitting around the Det when it hit. A low, swaying sensation went through the building and our sensors went mad. Seismometers are designed to pick up minute ground motion generated by earthquakes from the other side of the world, not by earthquakes that are essentially in your back yard. It is somewhat akin to shouting into your doctor's stethoscope! Thus, our station was absolutely swamped by the seismic waves. Most of us were in the back of the recreational center, and as soon as we realized that an earthquake had passed through, we headed to the office. When you are logging an earthquake series, you become very busy indeed. Later on in the month, I took a trip with the pastor of the Alice Springs Lutheran Church to Tennant Creek. Pastor Peter Thamm had a parish that spread across most of the Territory. Since I was then attending the Lutheran Church, I tagged along and met some of his parishioners. We stopped by the seismic fault line on the way back and saw where the quake had kinked up a high-pressure natural gas line. It's a wonder and a credit to the welders and engineers that the line did not explode! Gas workers dug up the line, and painstakingly placed it on sand bags so that any subsequent aftershocks wouldn't cause additional damage.

Then, there was that flood. I've only seen rain like that once before: eight or nine inches in 24 hours. Nearly an entire season's worth of rain for the Alice. When I looked out my window in the morning, I could see the Charles River cresting the banks and creeping onto the detachment grounds. When the water reached our staff house a couple of hours later, I decided it was time to move the motorcycle and the car. Well, I put the car, a white 1970 Ford Fairlane, up behind the RSL: since I didn't want to inconvenience anyone, I moved it off the bitumen and onto the dirt. That was a mistake. That red dirt had turned to quicksand, and the car sunk practically to the floorboards! Oh well. At least it'd stay put that way. The Charles and Todd rivers became a raging torrent and they crested at the same time. Our detachment was at ground zero, where the two rivers meet. The river carried away anything that was not lashed down. It destroyed the fence, and deposited half a meter of sand on top of the lawn in places. It was quite an adventure, I must say. Our staff house was filled with water, but the overall damage was minimal. When the flood was finished, there were many people a lot worse off than us.

Something that I really cherished about Alice Springs was the sense of freedom: I used to lash a blanket and a bottle of water to the motorcycle, and just drive out of town, usually at night. We'd drive 15, 20 miles or so, turn left, and drive out into the bush. We'd lay down the blanket, and look up at the stars. One of my most favorite places to go at night was the rock carvings south of town. There was this claypan to the north of the rock carvings, and late at night, the moon would shine off the dried clay as if it were covered with water. You could listen for hours and not hear, nor see, any other sign of human activity. It was like being in your own private world. The 10,000 year old carvings added a sense of mystery to the site, and the stars above gave you a sense of space. I'd lay the blanket either on the claypan surface, or at the base of the rock. I would lay on the blanket, wide awake at 2am, and stare at the stars. The stars in the southern hemisphere are

most striking. There is nothing that parallels it in the northern hemisphere, except maybe the northern lights. Once in a while you could even see a satellite go whizzing by. That would be about the only sign of mankind I would see when out there. It was very peaceful, and I have never experienced anything like it since.

These are just some of my memories of the Alice. I hope some day that I can return with my family and share these experiences with them. Daniel Burk Haslett, Michigan, USA

DEPOT STORY FROM THE 60's

by Frank Calenda

I'm SMSgt Frank Calenda, Retired. I recently was provided a web version of your newsletter. I was stationed at Depot in 1966, working in the Q System Shop. Much of my assignment there involved traveling to exotic places (??) for surveys and installing the Q machines. I worked for Mike Sepelyac and Bill Sears during that time.

This tale may be considered B.S. (barely substantiated) but I can tell you it's true. Cross my heart and hope to die.

This story is really about a young airman by the name of Brad Golithon, who began his AFTAC career in the airborne system there at Sacramento. He was a filter changer, but I never knew him, or even knew of him, until one morning when I reported to work. There was Brad, sitting in front of my desk, with a smile that I would see many more times and come to understand that this particular smile usually meant something not very good had happened.

It seems that the previous day, Airman Golithon was called and asked to, "Grab his brief case containing the filter papers, and get to the flight line for an immediate mission". Being the totally clear minded, dedicated AFTAC killer that he was, he did just that, and from what he told me that morning, he arrived at the plane in record time. Off they went and flew for whatever time it took them to get over their area of interest. Once there the flight commander radioed back that Brad could start his work. Upon opening his brief case, one of two identicals he owned, he found that the one he had grabbed contained the remnants of the previous days lunch along with a Playboy magazine or two. Immediately upon realizing that these items wouldn't accomplish his very important mission, he called back to the pilot and said, "Sir, you won't believe this, but....." Evidentially the pilot did believe him because Brad related to me that the aircraft took an immediate banking action and, deep down inside himself, he felt that they might be returning to Sacramento. He also told me that there were no additional conversations between him and the flight commander, or by any of the other crew for that matter. He continued his story by telling me that once landed, the pilot promptly left the plane and proceeded to the nearest phone where he placed something more than a courtesy call to the base commander. The gist of the conversation was something like, "I never want to see, talk or know anything more about Airman Golithon again".

I guess the commander realized the validity of the pilot's request because the next day, Brad was assigned to me in the Q shop. Good Lord, did that ever start a series of B.S. tale happenings. Brad worked for me for the rest of my stay at depot. He provided me with at least four more stories that immediately come to mind and I'll more than likely share them with you in the near future. Good old Brad left the military and became a Fremont police officer and a small aircraft pilot himself, but he never messed with filter papers again. Sadly, a sickness did him in a number of years ago and he's no longer with us. I can, on any one day, sit back with a cold beer and think of him and all the happy, funny things he did when he was alive. He was really quite a guy. Frank

Who Said That??

by Dale Klug, Editor

- >> The more I go through parenting, the more I say I owe my mother an apology.
- >> Ask your child what he wants for dinner only if he's buying.
- >> Kids. They're not easy. But there has to be some penalty for sex.

**Do you think you know who the above quotes came from? Send your best guess to: FalloutEditor@AFTACwest.org
First WCC member to send in all three correct answers gets a free adult beverage at our next function.**

January's quotes were from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Dave Berry & WC Fields. No one got all three correct.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

by Dave Price, Membership Chairman)

As of 4 March 2008: Active Members = 154 Life Members = 129

Welcome to **David Baker & Art Lebermann**, our new life members.

Annual membership fee of \$5.⁰⁰ is due by 01 Jan each year. **Check your mailing label for an expiration date.** *Your last newsletter will be the one following your expiration date.* Life memberships are available for \$50.⁰⁰ and include a laminated membership card. You can use the Membership application/roster update on the last page of this newsletter or the one on our web site to send with your dues. Don't let your membership lapse. **Several alumni who have not yet paid their 2008 membership dues have been dropped from the "active" roster and newsletter distribution list.**

EVENTS CALENDAR

- Business/Member meetings are 1st Tuesdays quarterly at the LionsGate Restaurant at McClellan Park:
3 Jun 2008 - 2 Sep 2008 - 2 Dec 2008
(Call ahead to our President, to confirm time & place. Or check our 'Events' page at <www.AFTACwest.org>.)
- 17 May 2008, 11 am – 3 pm, Spring Picnic Potluck at Foothill Community Park.
- 06-09 Nov 2008 Airborne Personnel REUNION in Las Vegas.

MAIL CALL

Don't forget our E-mail address: TOD.Alumni@bigfoot.com

Kevin Anderson Email: 23 Dec 2007. Hi All, I hope you're all enjoying the holiday season. I received a letter from Jane at the orphanage (Chechon, Korea) and she said Camp Long is closing next year (no one told me) but the Det will stay but there will no longer be a commander, Jane is doing fine and has no health issues at the moment. She is 70 plus now and she is still pretty much working full time. Heck, she built another three-story building on her property. Cheers all... Boomer boomerkja@yahoo.com **Editor's Note: Those of you who would like a copy of Jane's Christmas newsletter, just email me.**

Jan McKeel Email: 7 Mar 2008. This is going to be tuff for me, but I must inform you that George died this morning (3/7/08) at 2:31 a.m. in Yuma. Apparently he had respiratory failure. The cause of death will be determined after an autopsy this afternoon. I'm going to have him cremated (per his wishes) but will hold a Memorial in Paradise at the Moose Lodge and the VFW in North Highlands at a later date. I'll be leaving Yuma around the 16th of this month (maybe sooner) so I can get his affairs (and mine) in order. If you could spread the unfortunate news to people that knew George -- and I have no way of contacting -- I would be greatly appreciated. He was cantankerous, but loveable. I'll miss him.... Jan

In Memory Of

McKEEL, George M, of Magalia, CA, died while on vacation in Yuma, AZ, on Friday, March 7, 2008.

Born June 19,1934 to George and Martha McKeel in Monaca, PA, he was 73 years young. George enlisted in the Air Force in 1953 and retired in 1977 as Master Sergeant. While on duty he was stationed at many Air Force bases in the United States and around the world. He belonged to the Wieser, ID Elks Lodge; Spaulding (Eagle Lake), CA. American Legion; life member of North Highlands, CA., VFW Post 4647; Paradise Eagles Aerie 2960, and was Governor of the Paradise Moose Lodge 2227, 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, where he obtained his Fellowship Degree. He enjoyed RVing, especially with the Moose Lodge RV Club and becoming a snowbird in Yuma, riding his Vulcan Classic motorcycle and meeting new friends.

He is survived by his wife Jan of Magalia; daughter Annette Alberti, son-in-law Dave and grandsons Daniel and Nathan of Elverta, CA; son Mike McKeel, daughter-in-law Miyuki and granddaughter Emily Grace of Roseville, and many, many friends who knew and loved him.

A Memorial (or as George would like to say "Happy Hour") will be held at the VFW Post 4647, North Highlands, on Sat. April 19, 2008 at 1 p.m. and the Paradise Moose Lodge 2227 on Sat. May 3 at 3 p.m.

Published in the Paradise Post from 3/26/2008 - 3/28/2008.

(cut here & mail or copy the form & e-mail it) ----- **Picnic Sign-up Form** ----- *(cut here & mail or copy the form & e-mail it)*

MAY 17TH SPRING PICNIC POTLUCK SIGN-UP FORM

We need a head count by May 9th, so if you plan to attend please fill out this form* and mail right away it to: AFTAC Alumni Assoc., West Coast Chapter, P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974. (*Note: If you have access to the internet, instead of mailing this form you can email this info to us by going to our web site, www.AFTACwest.org, and to our "Forms" page and click on the "2008 Spring Picnic" link to create an email note that you can send to us.)

(Please print)

NAME: _____ SPOUSE/GUEST: _____

Add'l Guest(s): _____

Total Number Attending [____]

I/We will bring for the potluck:

Salad [] Side Dish [] Dessert [] Other _____

Your Ph#: _____ - _____ - _____ Email Addr: _____

[From DEPOT FALLOUT Newsletter]



AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WEST COAST CHAPTER

P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974
Email: TOD.Alumni@bigfoot.com



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / ROSTER UPDATE

Annual membership fee of \$5.⁰⁰ is due by 01 January each year. Check your mailing label for expiration date. Your last newsletter will be the one following your expiration date. Life memberships are available for \$50.⁰⁰ and include a laminated membership card.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____
Last, First MI Last Rank Held Nickname Name of Spouse

Addr: _____
Street, Apt #, etc. City State Zip Code

() - _____
Home Phone Work Phone Email Addr

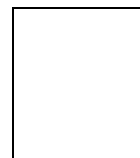
Active Duty: _____
Branch of Service From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy Branch of Service From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy

AFTAC Dates: _____
From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy

Support Your West Coast Chapter: Please pass a copy of this form to your AFTAC Alumni friends. *[From the Depot Fallout]*

CHECK OUR WEBSITE AT www.AFTACwest.org FOR THE LATEST WCC NEWS & PHOTOS

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