



# Depot Fallout

AFTAC Alumni Association - West Coast Chapter  
P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974  
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**JULY 2012 EDITION**

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**LOOK US UP AT**  
**[www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org)**

## **A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*by Dave Tarquino, WCC President*

Mark your calendars! We have firm dates for our Fall Social on 10 November, 2012; and the 2013 Reunion 14-15 June, 2013. Hope to see you there.

The AFTAC Alumni of **Colorado will host the 2013 Worldwide AFTAC-Long Range Detection Alumni Association Reunion** at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Denver-Aurora, which is located at the southwest corner of I-225 and Iliff Avenue in Aurora. (The actual address is: 13696 East Iliff Place, Aurora, CO 80014). The reunion reception will be held on **Friday evening, 14 June, Flag Day, and the reunion banquet will be Saturday evening, 15 June**. Other possibilities include a golf tournament on Friday and a tour of Detachment 45 at Buckley AFB on Saturday.

--also being planned is a **Detachment 418 alumni reunion event possibly on Thursday, 13 June, in conjunction** with the worldwide reunion on Friday and Saturday. (courtesy of Bill Schmied CO Chapter Treasurer)

## **ONE OF OUR OWN**

*Compiled & edited from the AWRA Website by Dale Klug, WCC*

It is right and good that we take a moment to remember the people who have died while serving in AFTAC. The sacrifice of their families is no less important. Never forget **TSgt Richard K. Brown, Special Equipment Operator**.

The aircraft involved was tail number 49-315. This converted SAC bomber was one of the first WB-50s to arrive in Alaska at the 58th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron. It flew its first operational weather flight in early June of 1956. On Saturday, 9 June 1956, the plane was christened "The Golden Heart". It was named after the nearby city of Fairbanks, Alaska. Fairbanks was proud to be known as the Golden Heart of Alaska.

By 1956, weather reconnaissance already had an extensive history in Alaska. The first post World War II squadron to be equipped with the B-29 was the 59th Reconnaissance Squadron (VLR) Weather. The 59th moved to Ladd Field, AK in 1947. In March of that year, the squadron flew the first "Ptarmigan" weather mission to the North Pole. In October of 1947, the 59th was "replaced" by the 375th Recon Squadron and in Feb 1951, the squadron became the 58th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron Medium Weather. In 1954, the now familiar "Weather Reconnaissance Squadron" designation was adopted. Over this period, the Alaska squadron had moved several times between Ladd Field and Eielson AFB, both just outside Fairbanks.

Besides the well publicized mission of gathering critical meteorological data in areas without land based stations, the weather reconnaissance units had another very important national mission. They carried special filters that could collect concentrated particulate debris from the air. These filters, located in boxes protruding from the upper fuselage of WB-29 and WB-50, were changed at regular intervals and analyzed after each flight. The boxes were known to the crews as the "Bugcatcher". The goal of this effort was to detect radioactive debris from Soviet nuclear tests.

In 1956, the 58th was operating two missions each day. The "Ptarmigan" and the "Loon Echo" were designed to intercept air masses that departed the Soviet Union and were most likely to contain the particulate evidence of Russian tests. It was very important to the 58th that these missions be complete. Extra aircraft were readied each day, and additional "alert" crews stood by in case a mission turned back early. The harsh arctic conditions, personnel turnover, and other factors made the 100% completion goal a real challenge. On occasion, the 58th was tasked with additional

missions. Often these were the result of a previous "hot" collection, or possibly looking for an air mass that had been found by one of two sister units in the Pacific Rim.

Sometime on 30 August 1956, the 58th was tasked to fly a third operational sortie on the 31st. This mission, designated a "Loon Special", would take off about 2:00 A.M. local time and head south over Anchorage before going out into the Gulf of Alaska. The mission would then fly west to parallel to the Aleutian Islands. They would return at a second altitude along the same track. As originally drawn up, the track would take almost 15 hours to complete. Coordinating with the mission customer, the 58th operations planners managed to shorten the track to a planned 12 hour mission.

The 58th WRS was working with a minimum number of crews in August 1956. After looking over the schedule, the squadron operations folks decided to use a crew previously been identified to back up the regular missions on the 31st. This crew consisted of: Capt Leonard N. Chapman Jr, Aircraft Commander; Maj Dale Richardson, Co-Pilot; Capt Everett E Dyson, Navigator; 2Lt William W Faustlin, Navigator; 1Lt William J Wolters, Jr., Weather Observer; MSgt Fred T Gregg Jr, Flight Engineer; **TSgt Richard K Brown**, Auxiliary Crew Member; SSgt Ronald R Ragland, Dropsonde Operator; A2C Melvin O Lindsey, Radio Operator; A2C Elijah Spencer, Radio Operator; and A3C Douglas W Maxon, Crew Chief

**TSgt Brown** was listed on the crew orders as an Auxiliary Crew Member. He was a Special Equipment Operator (SEO), belonging to a unit known as Team 202, which was part of the 1009th Special Weapons Squadron. An SEO did not go on all 58th missions, but were often along on the special taskings to help identify if the actual debris cloud was found. In 1959 the 1009th SWS administratively morphed into the Air Force Technical Applications Center, or AFTAC. A generation of air sampling crews simply knew AFTAC as "the customer".

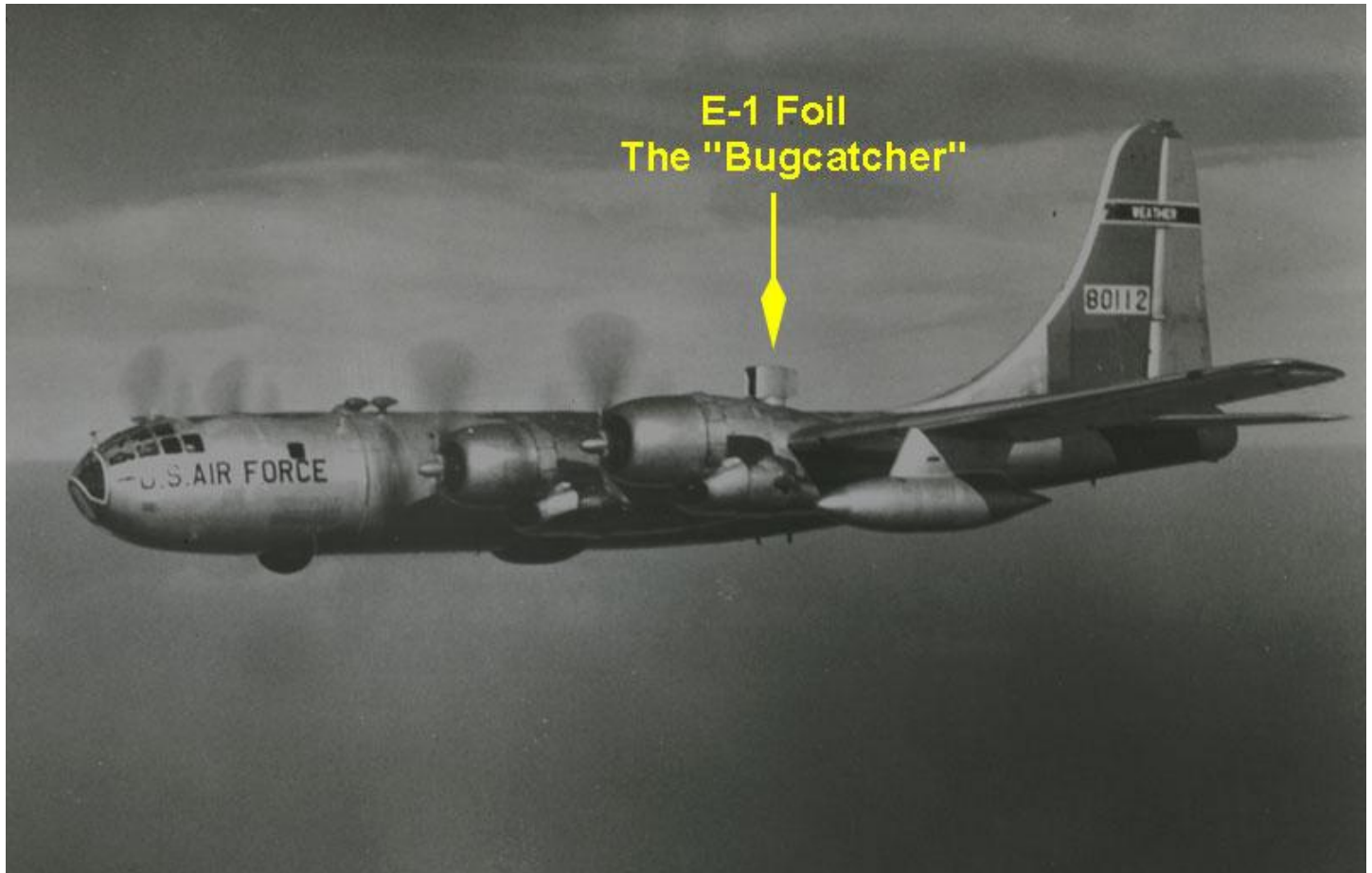
According to the 58th WRS History for July-December 1956, the "Golden Heart" took off as scheduled shortly after 2:00 A.M. All proceeded normally for about an hour. Regular radio calls indicated no trouble. A radar station in Anchorage saw the aircraft until about 3:08 A.M. when it suddenly disappeared. Shortly after this, Air Traffic Control attempted to contact the aircraft with no success. The Alaskan Air Rescue Center was notified and a search was begun at daylight. Shortly before 9:00 A.M., the crash site was located on a group of small islands in the Susitna River, very near where it had disappeared from radar.

Subsequent investigation showed that the "Golden Heart" had crashed nose first, in a near vertical attitude. Most of the plane was destroyed by the crash and subsequent fire. All that remained intact was a section of the aft fuselage and tail that broke off on impact. Despite a full investigation, no cause for this crash was ever determined. It took several days to locate and identify remains of all 11 of the crewmembers.

Because the accident happened overseas (remember Alaska wasn't even a state yet) the families were quickly processed to return to the Zone of the Interior, as the lower 48 states were known. Three of the families elected to have their loved ones interred at Arlington National Cemetery. Their flag-draped coffins arrived together by train weeks later. To illustrate the tight operational constraints that the 58th was experiencing during the conversion from the WB-29 to the WB-50, Air Weather Service immediately dispatched an additional aircraft and two crews to augment the squadron after the loss of 49-315. One crew came from the 55th WRS at McClellan AFB, CA, and the second from the 57th WRS at Hickam AFB, HI.

On 2 September, 2006, after an eventful jet boat trip up the Susitna River, Doug Wolters, son of 1Lt William J. Wolters, Jr, the flight's Weather Observer, reached the place where his father died. There still remains a large piece of the WB-50D tail section and you still can see flecks of the red paint that covered much of the tail and horizontal surfaces. Doug attached a memorial plaque to the plane. He would later read this roll call of the crew at the Arlington memorial ceremony.





## WB-50D

flown by Air Weather Service 1956- 1965

Official Air Force photograph, courtesy of Air Force Weather History Office

### NEWS REQUEST

*by Don King, WCC Newsletter Editor*

Please feel free to submit neat things that you do now. Remember that we are a fraternity! There must be a lot of untold stories out there and some interesting photos. They need not be humorous, just something interesting for AFTAC insiders. Don't be paranoid about the classified issues. I will sanitize it based upon advice from knowledgeable advisors.

### Who Said That??

*by Dale Klug, Editor Emeritus*

- >> Dogs look up to you; cats look down on you; pigs treat you as an equal.
- >> Cats are intended to teach us that not everything in nature has a purpose.
- >> Dogs come when they are called; cats take a message and get back to you later.
- >> Don't accept your dog's admiration as conclusive evidence that you are wonderful.

**Do you think you know who the above quotes came from? Send your best guess to: [dkconsulting@juno.com](mailto:dkconsulting@juno.com)  
First WCC member to send in all four correct answers gets an "Attaboy" or "Attagirl" in the next edition of the newsletter.**

April 2012's quotes were from Theodore Isaac Rubin, A. J. Liebling, Ed Crankshaft and Gen. Norman Schwarzkoff. The coveted "Attaboy", once again goes to **Bob Baker**. However, Bob & I differ on the author of the second quote. I got the quote from the comic strip "Crankshaft" and Bob says it was Ned Flanders from the animated TV show "The Simpsons". Since we both could be overlooking the actual flesh & blood source (although I couldn't find one) I'm giving Bob credit for that one. Personally, I think Ned Flanders' best line is "Gosh darn it! Am I that pre-diddly-ictable?"



## In Memory Of

by Dale Klug, Editor Emeritus

### **WHEELER, Bruce H, Colonel, USAF, Retired**



Colonel Bruce Hanson Wheeler, USAF (Ret.) passed away on February 3, 2012. He was a resident of Albuquerque since 1972. He was born on May 25, 1925 in Olamon Village, Township of Greenbush, Maine – the eldest son of Ernest D. and Helen H. Wheeler. He graduated with honors from Higgins Classical Institute in Charleston, Maine and received a degree in Engineering Physics from the University of Maine in 1949. Drafted by the US Army Air Force on July 30, 1943, he was assigned to the 7th Air Force in the Central Pacific Theater. He flew combat missions as a B-24 Flight Engineer. Following discharge as a Technical Sergeant in 1946, he was employed as a steam locomotive fireman by the Maine Central Railroad. Accepted for Officer Candidate School in 1949 at Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas, he received

**MORAN, Michael J (Jerry) Lt. Col. USAF, Retired** Michael J. (Jerry) Moran, 68, passed away on Aug. 29, 2009, at the home of daughter, Colleen, in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, after a courageous battle with Gastric cancer.

Jerry was born on Aug. 10, 1941, to Aggie (Sheehan) and James E. (Bud) Moran in Butte. He attended St. Patrick's grade school and graduated in 1959 from Boys' Central High. In 1963, he received his Bachelor of Science in chemistry from Montana State College along with his ROTC commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force. He received a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Cincinnati in 1972, and was a graduate of the Defense Systems Management College.

his commission as 2nd Lieutenant in 1950. He was selected to attend Squadron Officers School in 1953 and attended Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama in 1963. His Air Force career consisted mostly of assignments in Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Technology, and Special Intelligence. In 1974, he was assigned to the Defense Nuclear Agency as Test Directorate and in 1975 to the Air Force Weapons Laboratory as Director of Nuclear Technology. He retired from the Air Force as a full Colonel in 1979, having been awarded the Legion of Merit, Air Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with Cluster, Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal. Following his Air Force retirement in June, 1979, he was employed as a Technical Writer with Tech Reps, Inc. and as an Engineer with Science Engineering Associates in Albuquerque. His interests and hobbies included gun collecting, western history, and WWII aviation. Colonel Wheeler was predeceased by his wife, Marianne, in 2006. He is survived by two sons: David and his wife, Vickie, of Denver, CO and Stephen and his wife, Robin of Stockton, CA; a daughter, Carol Wheeler of Sacramento, CA; six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. A Memorial Service will be held Thursday, February 9, 2012, 1:00 p.m., at French - Wyoming Chapel, 7121 Wyoming Blvd. FRENCH, NE. Visit guestbook at [www.RememberTheirStory.com](http://www.RememberTheirStory.com) **Editor's Note: Col. Wheeler was also assigned to the 1155<sup>th</sup> Technical Operations Squadron, McClellan Central Laboratory.**

In 1965, he married Kathy Costello of Billings and together they raised three wonderful daughters, Mary, Katie and Colleen. They were the joy of his life. **Jerry had a wonderful sense of humor and a strong dedication to his family and his country.**

During his 20-year career with the Air Force, he served at the United States Air Force Academy as associate professor of biochemistry and associate air officer commander for the Cadet Wing during induction of women into the Academy. Other assignments included: launch control officer with the Atlas "ABRES" Program; analytical chemist and chief of the Chemistry Division at the USAF Materials Lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio; **chief of nuclear chemistry, 1155<sup>th</sup> Tech Operations Squadron, McClellan Air Force Base CA;** deputy director at the Shuttle Activation Task

Force at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. He earned the Senior Missile Badge, the Senior Space Badge and the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters. He retired in October, 1986 and began a career in environmental engineering, working with military installations in the United States and Guam.

Michael (Jerry) was preceded in death by his parents; his daughter, Mary; and his grandson, Mikie. He is survived by Kathy Costello Moran of Seal Beach, Calif.; daughter, Colleen Moran, of Kailua-Kona; daughter and son-in-law, Katie and Joe DeCastro and granddaughters, Cassie and Mikayla DeCastro of Lake Ridge, Va.; his siblings;

Jim (Kay) Moran of Corvallis, Ore., Jon Moran of Seattle, Judy (Bill) Edwards of St. Regis and Father Joe Pat Moran of Missoula; his aunts and uncle, Harriet Neier of Tucson, Ariz., and Phil (Hazel) Moran of Tigard, Ore.; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins in Montana, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Alaska and Nevada.

Memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society or to a charity of the donor's choice. A private family service was held. **Editor's Note: We only recently found out about Jerry's passing when the email address we had for him bounced back & our April newsletter was returned by the US Postal Service.**

## **Membership News**

*by Dave Price, Membership Chairman*

**As of 11 June 2012:**

**Welcome to new life member, Richard DiMeola**

**Total Active Members = 154 Life Members = 135**

New members are **John Taylor** and **Frank Romano** and reinstatement of **Bill Johnson** and **Richard Anderson**.

**Annual membership fee of \$10 is due by 01 Jan** each year. Check your mailing label, or check the "WCC Roster" from our website "Forms" page. Life memberships are available for \$75. You can use the "Membership Application/Roster Update" form on the last page of this newsletter or the one from our web site "Forms" page to send with your dues. Don't let your membership lapse. **Those alumni who are not current with their membership dues will be dropped from the "active" roster along with our newsletter distribution & email notification lists.** (See our web site "Forms" page, "WCC Roster" link to check your status.)

## **Events Calendar**

- Business/Member meetings are now the **2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays** quarterly at the Lions Gate Restaurant, McClellan. (Always check our 'Events' page at [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org) or call ahead to our President to confirm time & place.)  
**10 Sep 2012 - 10 Dec 2012**

## **AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOC. – WEST COAST CHAPTER**

### **Fall Social**

**Saturday, 10 November 2012 – 11:30 - ~ 2:30PM**

**At the China Buffet – Banquet Room**

**5623 Sunrise Blvd, Citrus Heights, Ca 95610 (916) 961-6888**

**COST: \$13.00/person**

**(SIGNUP FORM on the last page)**

### **Scrapbook**

**AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOC. – WEST COAST CHAPTER**

**02 Jun, Sat. 11am-3pm: Annual Picnic BBQ & Potluck**

**A great time of tall tales, super food and fellowship!**

**Photos are on the next page.**





**Super BBQ Chefs:  
George McAlister, Dave Tarquino & Dennis Nolan**



**Lots of good food to share with good friends on a beautiful June day. It don't get much better!**



**John Miner & Charlie Penn  
Charlie: "You did what?"**



**Bob & Carol Morrison, Virginia Chamberlain,  
Peggy Armintrout, Alice & Cal Brown,  
Irene Goodreau, Laura Horne**



**Ewan Roden (the Giordano's Grandson),  
Matt Winters, Judie & Jim Giordano**



**Butch & Laurie Kemna with  
Steve & Donna Fritts**



**Susan & Tom Wentz with guest:  
Chaplain, Bill Sassman**



**Shirley Cox (the Bridges' daughter), Dorothy &  
John Lanigan, Bill & Lillian Bridges**



**Charlie Penn, Joe Johnson &  
George Thompson**



**Suki & Dave Tarquino, Chum & Dennis Nolan,  
George McAlister, Bob & Tommie Baker**



**Dave Price, Darlene & Bob Fitzgerald,  
Susan Chamberlain with Dad, Don Marler**



**Don Taylor, Bill Johnson, Rose & Dale Klug,  
John & Corrine Miner, Jean Charles, Rose Lee  
Dunn**



**Rod & Betty Jo Hinkle & Laurie Kemna**



**Darlene & Bob Fitzgerald  
(with an heirloom tomato plant given by Virginia Chamberlain)**



**Joe Johnson & Irene Goodreau**



**New WCC Members: John Taylor, Bill Johnson &  
Frank Romano with George, Charlie & Butch**



**Group toast to the memory  
← of Marge Iske**



**Photos by Judie Giordano and  
Bob Fitzgerald. See more in full  
color at: [www.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org)**



# AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOC. – WEST COAST CHAPTER

## Fall Social

Saturday, 10 November 2012 – 11:30 - ~ 2:30PM

At the China Buffet – Banquet Room

5623 Sunrise Blvd, Citrus Heights, Ca 95610 (916) 961-6888

COST: \$13.00/person

Our Fall Social will be at the China Buffet, 5623 Sunrise Blvd., Citrus Heights, Ca (between Marie Calendars and El Torito). Cost will be \$13.00 per person and includes the buffet with coffee, tea or soda. Beer and wine is available if you wish to purchase separately. Dress is casual. Join us for lunch on November 10<sup>th</sup> and bring your stories and a friend to kick off the Holiday Season. Please fill out the form included in this newsletter and on our website and your reminder portion, then mail the form and your check to us before Wednesday, Nov. 7th. Questions? Email Dave Tarquino, [dtarquino@surewest.net](mailto:dtarquino@surewest.net) or call him at 916-723-7634.

*Keep this part as your reminder of what was on your reservation form:*

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

My Check # \_\_\_\_\_ for \$ \_\_\_\_\_. was made out to “AFTAC-WCC”

and I mailed the reservation form on \_\_\_/\_\_\_/2012 to:

AFTAC Alumni Assoc.-WCC, P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974

[Save the above] (Cut off here, fill out and mail the following form with your check before 7 November 2012)

AFTAC Alumni Assoc. - West Coast Chapter

### Fall Social Reservation Sign-up Form

Saturday, 10 November 2012, 11:30 - ~ 2:30pm

China Buffet Restaurant Banquet Room

5623 Sunrise Blvd, Citrus Heights, CA 95610

(Please Print Clearly)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Total # Meals: \_\_\_\_ x \$13.00 each = \$\_\_\_\_.

Make your check payable to “AFTAC-WCC” and mail it before 7 Nov 2012 along with this form to: AFTAC-WCC, P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974



# AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WEST COAST CHAPTER

P.O. Box 3974, Citrus Heights, CA 95611-3974  
Email: [TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org](mailto:TOD.Alumni@AFTACWCC.org)



## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / ROSTER UPDATE

Annual membership fee of \$10.<sup>00</sup> 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 \$75.<sup>00</sup>.

**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*

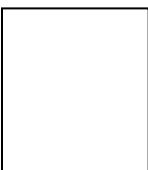
AFTAC Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
*From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy From: mm/yyyy - To: mm/yyyy*

**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.AFTACWCC.org](http://www.AFTACWCC.org) FOR THE LATEST WCC NEWS & PHOTOS



== FIRST CLASS MAIL ==



RETURN ADDRESS:  
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