



# 579<sup>th</sup> SMS NEWSLETTER

## Volume IV

Created by Fred Mortimer – Reunion Committee Board Chairman

Well, the 2008 579<sup>th</sup> SMS Reunion is history. It was, without a doubt, the largest reunion we have had. Over 100+ members, spouses, families, significant others, etc. were in attendance. We, (Judy and I) were so worn out we had to take another week off and just drive around New Mexico to recharge.

The reunion started out on **Thursday** afternoon with a lot of old friends just getting together and catching up on life after the 579<sup>th</sup>. Many attendees hadn't seen each other since 1965! Thursday evening was the reception dinner and a gathering at the hospitality suite.

**Friday** began with a business meeting to discuss the future plans and to decide how to structure the reunion committee. We also discussed how to finance the expenditures that lead up to the 2008 Reunion. (More on this below.)

Gary Baker, owner of Site 4, led field trips to several other sites. Gary provided access to Site 10 with the owner Keary Olson, and Site 5 as well as Site 4. (NOTE: Site 5 LCC is only accessible via the escape hatch.) While everyone was gallivanting about, Maurice Garifo and I were being interviewed at WSFX Radio to let the listeners know about the men of the 579<sup>th</sup> and their contribution to keeping the peace during the Cold War. A big 'THANKS' to Maurice for setting up the interview. (We have placed an audio copy of the interview on the website.) Friday night, many of us joined with friends and members of our crews for dinner.

**Saturday** was, by far, the busiest day of the Reunion. Thanks to the Reunion BRAT we were able to ride in luxury tour buses to our first event of the day, the presentation of the plaque to the City of Roswell.



The plaque was designed by me, with some technical assistance from Terry Karselis. Terry is an award winning sculptor and a former Squadron member. He also won the design award for the original patch.

The plaque was presented to the City, with Town Councilor Maples accepting the plaque. The City presented the squadron with a proclamation naming May 17, 2008, as The 579<sup>th</sup> Strategic Missile Squadron Day. Brigadier General D. Murray (Ret), surprised us by attending in uniform. A former Missileer, he is now Dean of Academics at the New Mexico Military Institute.

The plaque will be displayed in an alcove at the Roswell Air Terminal (formerly Flight Ops). The 579<sup>th</sup> SMS alcove will display the plaque, photos and memorabilia donated by members of the squadron. We

have selected an 'Atlas-F' launch photo and a crew hard hat was also donated. They plan to enclose the alcove with glass and will only be accessible by the airport personnel, but in view for the public.

A brief note about the photo we plan on displaying in the alcove. The picture (right) was taken at Vandenberg during a launch. The missile shown was one of the original Roswell birds and Albin Jaklic (EPPT Crew 57) was on the launch crew at the Vandenberg 'G' Site silo. (Many thanks to Gary and Al for bringing this fact to my attention.)



After the presentation of the plaque at the Air Terminal, we visited the hangar that was our old MAMS building. It has been 'gutted', all of the old partitions have been torn down and the entire bay area is completely open. It still brought back many memories for many people, especially to those who hadn't been back since the 60's. For those who weren't aware, the next hangar to the northwest is the supposed 'alien' storage hangar from the 1947 incident. Who knew??

Next stop was Site 4. Thanks to Gary Baker, we made a second presentation of a duplicate plaque to be placed at the site. Everyone had the opportunity to tour the renovated site and fortunately the weather held so we could enjoy the afternoon.



Plaque Presentation



Site Tour



Surprise Visitor

At the site presentation, we had a pleasant surprise by the appearance of an Officer/Airman (bars on the hard-hat and enlisted rank on the name tag!!) The uniform was complete with scarf, coveralls, aviator glasses and brief case. Many thanks to Les Hayles and Al Mauldin for putting this together. After the tour, it was back on the buses to head back to the hotel.

Saturday evening brought us all to the banquet hall. A cocktail hour complete with pictures of each member and guest. A REALLY BIG **'THANK YOU'** to Les and Dianna Hayles for organizing everyone and doing a great job of taking all of the pictures. Copies of the photos will be on the webpage soon. I introduced our special guests including Gary and Robyn Baker with daughter Lauren, Renee' Roach (Roswell P/R Director), City Councilor Robert Maples, MSgt. Mercedes Tabor Victory (our guest speaker), SSgt. Toye Grimes, Keary Olson (owner Site 10), Mike Currin (explorer of abandoned silos) and several others. We also recognized all of the individuals who contributed so much to the success of the reunion, including Al Mauldin, Les Hayles, Gary Baker, David Johnson (our webmaster), Claude Kitchens and most of all Judy (my bride of 41 years). Again, Thank you all !!

After dinner, Mike Currin told us about his adventures into the abandoned missile silos with several of his friends. Quite an undertaking when he was a teenager !! Master Sergeant Mercedes Victory (daughter of former SMSgt R. Tabor, BMAT, Crew 20), provided a great presentation of the service today. Mercedes was born at Walker Air Force Base during our assignment there. Thank You Both !



Fred Mortimer, Reunion Chairman (retired)



MSgt. Mercedes Victory

After the dinner and speakers, many of us retreated to the hospitality suite for more liquid refreshments and conversation, while the more sensible attendees went back to pack for the trip home. With few exceptions, everyone enjoyed the reunion and are looking forward to the reunion in 2010.

**Sunday** morning found most of us back in the banquet room for the farewell breakfast. While the hotel staff didn't seem up to the task, the reunion group didn't seem to mind (much!). Everyone that came up to me remarked that they were looking forward to the 2010 reunion and thanked us for a great time. I want to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU ALL for helping to make this our biggest reunion to-date and Judy and I are looking forward to seeing you all again.

By noon most everyone had departed for home or their next stop. For Judy and I, we headed to Carlsbad Caverns to take the tour and watch the bats fly. The next day we were on to Santa Fe by way of White Sands. The rest of the week we just chilled out and relaxed.

As you will read below in the business meeting notes, Judy and I will not be 'driving the boat' for the next reunion, but we want to take this opportunity to let you know what an honor it has been to be a key part of this organization, again, Thank You !

## Reunion Business Meeting

**Friday morning, 9:00 AM Meeting** called to order by F. Mortimer.

1. Hats – delivered with spelling error. Group decided to keep them along with the \$300 refund from the supplier to be used to cover the expenses.
2. Patches – F. Mortimer thanked Dick Ciampi and Glenn Beall for the loan of their patches used for creating the replicas that were presented to all attendees.
3. F. Mortimer expenses for the past 2 years – (minus early donations) \$1966.69; included plaques, patches, mailings, postcards, labels, etc. (a full accounting available on request, with receipts).
4. Donations collected at the reunion \$1400 plus refund for hats left about a \$250 deficit. F. Mortimer suggested that we offer the leftover hats and patches to non-attending members for cost plus S&H to make up the balance. Any net profit after the deficit will go towards the design of a squadron pin.- **approved by attendees.**
5. F. Mortimer stepped down as Reunion Chairman and asked for volunteers, Terry Doyle agreed to take the position – **approved by attendees**
6. Recommendation to form an interim Board of Directors – **agreed on by all attendees**
  - Board Chairman - Fred Mortimer - (fmortimer@tampabay.rr.com)
  - Board Members – Les Hayles - (retav8tr@yahoo.com)
  - Larry Hughes - (larry\_b\_hughes@alumni.utexas.net)
  - Claude Kitchens – (ckitchens@gmail.com)
  - Allen Mauldin – (mauldin3@juno.com)
  - Reunion Chairman – Terry Doyle - (terry.doyle@juno.com)
7. Recommendation to investigate non-profit status (501-3-C) to be checked by Terry Doyle
8. Recommendation for dues for the organization of \$25/yr – **No decision – further discussion**
9. Suggestions for next reunion – San Antonio, TX (Kelly AFB),  
Dayton OH, (A.F. Museum),  
Tucson, AZ (Davis Monthan AFB & Titan site museum)  
Rapid City, SD ?  
Combine with Air Force Missileers (L. Hughes to talk to C. Simpson? )  
Open for other suggestions?
10. Hats distributed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM

## Reunion Memorabilia

The remaining hats will be \$12.50; the patches will be \$3.50. Quantities are limited. Shipping for the hat is \$4.00 with or without patch. Shipping for the patch alone is \$1.00. Proceeds will help pay off the short fall from the reunion. Email me with any questions. FJM – (fmortimer@tampabay.rr.com)



## Miscellaneous Reunion Photos



Reception Dinner



Tech School Stars?



Mort, Gen. Murray, Les, Kitch



Jim West



One of these guys was on a crew?



Terry Karselis



Plaque Presentation – Air Terminal



Site 4 Visit



Chow Line



Just another alert tour ?



Ghost with Patricia Mauldin



What's with the HAT ???

Thanks to everyone who contributed photos. There are 400-500 photos and videos to review. I'm trying to get them organized and uploaded to the website. Let me know if there is anything I can do.