



## **579th SMS NEWSLETTER**

### **Volume VIII**

Created by Fred Mortimer – Reunion Committee Board Chairman

May 21, 2016

I would like to start this newsletter by telling you that it has been our honor and privilege to lead the reunions for the 579th Strategic Missile Squadron over the past several years. We followed the lead of Gene Lamb who with 7-8 others started this in Las Vegas in 1998. Our reunions have taken us from the east coast (Cocoa Beach, FL & the Kennedy Space Center) to the west coast (Pismo Beach & Vandenberg A.F.B.). Somehow we always wound up in Roswell and our home for several years in the early '60's, the 'wonderful' Walker Air Force Base. It was only fitting that our last official reunion be held at Walker.

Judy and I started to assemble the many 'parts' of this reunion about 6 months ago. (For those who don't know Judy is my wonderful bride of nearly 49 years, my accountant and keeper of the books, my proofreader, and my sounding board for ideas, etc. I must also acknowledge the late Les Hayles, who passed away earlier this year, a good friend and his lovely wife Dianna, Terry Doyle and Sandy, as well as Al Mauldin. Les, Terry and Al were instrumental in many of our reunions, from calling, emailing, field trips to planned location reunion sites, reunion photos, etc. I can't thank these people enough!!

Judy and I started our journey to Roswell on April 21st (3 weeks after her cervical spine surgery !) We spent a few days with my brother and sister-in-law in Pueblo, CO and drove to Albuquerque on April 26th then on to Roswell on the 27th. After meetings with the hotel management and the restaurant, (plus stocking the hospitality suite) we began to prepare for the registration to start the next morning (Thurs., 4/28). We spent most of the evening assembling the 'goody' bags with the key chains, dinner cards, ID cards, etc. and organized them for each of the attendees (in alphabetical order.) We finished this 'chore' by 3:00 AM !!! Several members had arrived early and helped us set up the registration table in the hotel lobby and was manned by Judy almost all day. During the day Hallie Kitchens stepped in as needed. By 5:00 PM most of the members had been registered, visited the hospitality suite and shortly after 6:00 PM we adjourned to the assigned banquet hall for a great meal of fajitas and enchiladas. After dinner, everyone either went to the hospitality suite or bed for the evening.

Friday morning many of us travelled to Site 4, owned by Gary Baker, who hosted us to a tour of the LCC and view of the silo. After lunch we visited the Air Terminal on base (site of the old flight op building and then toured the original hangar that was the MAMS building for the 579th SMS. A tour of the hangar was provided by the general manager of AerSale Company (current tenants) which refurbishes commercial jets. The evening was open for individual preferences for dinner.

Saturday morning began with a business meeting to discuss the plans for the future of reunions, the distribution of the remaining funds, and other requests such as reordering of the 579th SMS hats that several members had requested. The decision was made that the funds be retained, based on the potential of relocating the 579th SMS museum to its own building near the Air Terminal. A request for



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the **579th hats** will be addressed at the end of this newsletter. (I have located a store that can duplicate the 'corrected' spelling version on the embroidery.) Also discussed was the interest in holding an informal reunion weekend in 2018 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Al Mauldin stated that he would pursue this with the venue to determine costs, and timing. He will publish an update when he has some numbers to share. After the meeting we travelled to Site 2, now owned by Dr. Steve Seegers. This was one of the sites that blew during a PLX exercise. The Doctor and his son Marcus attended our reunion and met with many of our members to discuss the details of operating the sites during the Cold War.



**Obi--Wan Moore holding court with the neophytes**

After lunch several members toured Site 10 owned by Keary Olson, who also attended our reunion and were met by Robert McCrea owner of Site 9. Site 9 is further west towards Ruidoso and is located on the 19,000 acre ranch also owned by Mr. McCrea. (Note: Robert McCrea is the grandson of the actor Joel McCrea.) All in all everyone who wanted to visit a site had many opportunities. Our thanks to Gary Baker, Keary Olson, and Dr. Seegers for allowing our group to visit.

Saturday evening was the Reunion Banquet. The meals were great, guests had their choice of sirloin or rib-eye steaks cooked to order, grilled chicken, fish, or a vegetable platter, plus a selection of potato or rice and cut green beans. An excellent selection of desserts was offered. Our speaker for the evening was U.S Representative Steve Pearce, (R-NM). Congressman Pearce is a longtime New Mexico resident and a former USAF pilot and Vietnam Veteran. Our thanks to Congressman Pearce for joining us and making a special stop in Roswell on his trip, specifically to address our group. His comments on the military and the Veterans Administration were to the point and he allowed us to have a question and answer period after his talk.



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Sunday morning found Judy and I in the breakfast bar before 7:00 AM to say good-by to the attendees who took the time to eat something before departing. Judy and I stayed in Roswell for one more day just to recuperate before driving to Tucson to visit Judy's sister and brother-in-law and for some well deserved R & R.



**US Rep. Steve Pearce - Keynote Speaker**

Again, it has been our pleasure to have served with such a fine group of individuals and our pleasure to host these reunions. We hope your trust in us has not been disappointing and we hope to see you in the years to come. Wishing all of you good health and happiness in the future... The Best Always....

**Fred & Judy Mortimer**

Chairman + Exec Administrator 579th Reunion Committee (Ret.)

## **HATS**

Many of the group have indicated that they were interested in purchasing a 579th SMS hat with the corrected spelling. I will place an order around the end of June for anyone wishing to buy one or more of these. It will be a one-time order for the total of the requests I receive. The cost is \$25.00 this includes the hat, the embroidery, the shipping box and the postage. Please let me know before June 30th so I can get the order placed, the lead time on these was about 2-3 weeks last time I bought them. I will pay for these and you can send me the money after you receive your hat. Thanks, Fred.

Email me at [fmortimer@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:fmortimer@tampabay.rr.com) or call me 727-420-4256 or mail me at 811 Moonlight Lane, Brooksville, FL 34601 .



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**Selected Photographs from the Banquet**  
(Some people did not wait for their photo to be taken)



Fred and Judy Mortimer



Allen and Patricia Mauldin



Bill and Sandy Riley



David Johnson



Edward "Smitty" Smith



Richard and Judith Keppler



Dick and Elvira Bergamaschi



Claude and Hallie Kitchens



Peter Cummings



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Richard Varney



Jack and Charity Tobey



John and Terri Greene



Phil and Donna Moore



Richard and Charlet Sterling



Paul and Kay Kronsted



Dennis and Carol Chamberlain



Jim and Lana West



Frank Plute, Glen Wegworth & Jerrill Jones



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Rudy and Juanita Burd



Gary Baker & Date



Gene Lamb and Janice Trygstad



Ken and Sherry Neubauer



Rob and Bob Olmstead



Olive, Albin and Marie, Brendan Jaklic



Seth and Luella with James Shaw