

2009.09.RNO

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION

Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno, NV

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

15 September 2009

Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno, NV

President Jim Thomas called the meeting to order at 1610.

Directors present were: Thomas, VP Ricky McMahon, Secretary Max Moore, Historian Robb Hoover, Charles Waters, Bill Ernst, Joe Gyulavics, Don Griffin, Webmaster Jim Maloney, and George Ross. Reunion Chair Don Gurney was also present. Not present were: Sparky Adams, Sam Pizzo, Errol Hoberman, Treasurer Michael Cook, Dennis Haun, Larry Utley, Pete Glenboski, Fox Censullo, Kevin Todd.

Opening comments: The President passed out the printed agenda. It had previously been sent to all BoD members. He thanked everyone for attending. He also discussed current quorum rules as we are in a period of transition from the former to the revised Bylaws. He declared a quorum present without objection. There was none.

The president called on Secretary Moore for reading of the minutes from Board meetings held at the DC reunion in May 2008. Moore stated that all Board members had received the minutes after the last reunion, and they were posted on the Association web site. McMahon moved to dispense with the reading. Seconded by Ernst. Motion passed.

President's Report: A recap of the past year's events and actions was presented.

He touched upon how the financial situation was resolved after the DC reunion and recognized Reunion Chair McMahon for his dogged and successful efforts to rectify the issues with the hotel and bus company. Other events outlined were: the Tales, (for which we get superb support from the Wing); Hall of Fame and Award for Excellence selections; Birthday Ball participation; farewells to outgoing 55th Wing CC and Vice CC, BGen James Jones and Col Robert Maness, respectively; and the subsequent Association's welcoming dinner for new Wing CC, BGen John (Jack) Shanahan.

Pres Thomas commented on the Association's excellent rapport with the Wing senior staff, and that it is not unusual for the Command Section, the Wing Historian and Protocol personnel, et al., to call upon Association Board members for information or opinions. Those contributions are well known and appreciated.

He read a letter from BGen Shanahan expressing his personal comments to the Association and good wishes for a successful reunion. Those words will be read at the reunion banquet and published in the next issue of the newsletter.

Membership Report: Chairman Cook's prepared data was presented. Keeping the current members, reminding them to pay dues on time, and recapturing lapsed members and recruiting new ones is a continuing process of which all members need to be acutely aware. The Association's good relationship with the active Wing provides a source to build our membership for the future. Last January, 212 letters were sent to members whose dues had expired in 2008. Responses were received from 102 to renew.

McMahon stated he has an ongoing recruiting effort in the DC/Langley, VA, area where many 55th alumni reside and/or work. Moore commented that he has an on-going e-mail campaign to recoup delinquent members, as well. Others acknowledged similar contacts in their circles.

Treasurer's Report: Pres Thomas presented the treasurer's thorough data prepared by Treas Cook and gave with copies to all attendees. Bottom line is that with an established budget, incoming dues, etc, the treasury is stabilizing. The coming year's expenses and income were shown in detail.

Both Membership and Treasurer's reports will be on file with these minutes.

The president reminded the Board of its decision in October 2008 to donate \$500 to the Air Force Aid Society. An annual donation is necessary to satisfy requirement(s) of the IRS code to i.e., "...help wounded and disabled veterans and their dependents" to enable donors to the Association to deduct their donations. Again in July 2009, to satisfy this requirement, we made a \$500 donation (a gift from an unnamed donor) to the Fisher House Foundation. A discussion followed as to what we should do with remaining 2009 moneys budgeted to give to charity. It was agreed to hold over those moneys until 2010 unless a compelling reason came up to donate it.

Other Reports:

Historian Hoover mentioned some recent books (including a new one on the Cuban Missile Crisis), and reports (i.e.: a declassified translated debriefing of the Soviet pilot in the Palm RB-47 crew shoot down) that should be of general interest to Association members.

Webmaster Maloney gave a short report on the on the status of the Association web site; that it generates response from viewers who did not know the organization existed; those who ask for information on membership, lost comrades, etc. It is a solid resource that benefits the Association as a line of communication and connection.

Reunion Chairman Gurney reported that the festivities were off to a good start, and his primary concern was keeping the hospitality room adequately supplied. He reported there were about 150 attendees with the cancellations and late registrations balancing out. He did not anticipate any adverse financial issues.

Pres Thomas recognized Don and his wife, Barbara, for their outstanding work on accomplishing this reunion, especially after being 'drafted volunteers.'

Old Business: The president called upon Hoover, who had chaired the Bylaws revision committee. Hoover gave a recap of the process and the resulting new set of Bylaws. The details of the committee's work are in a Memo for Record, dated 4 August 2009, which was sent to all Board members and is posted on the web site.

Pres Thomas commended the committee, which included Mike Cook and Denny Haun, on their thorough work and a job well done. All members of the Board were party to the process.

The President gave details on the status of the *reclama* to the IRS concerning the deductibility of contributions to the Association. The action established with the IRS, to their satisfaction, that we are in fact an organization of veterans who qualify as war veterans. Furthermore, that at least 90% of our members are war veterans (actual: 97% members are war veterans) and satisfying the purpose requirements of Section 170 IRS code, donors should be allowed to deduct from their federal income tax any donations given to the Association. The IRS was contacted 14 Sept 2009. They stated that the action was complete and that our status had been changed by letter and that our action had been judged as requested. The actual approval letter (being rewritten that day for transmittal) would arrive on or about 25 September.

Once the actual approval letter arrives, notice to the membership will be provided by newsletter and our website.

New Business: Bill Ernst, the Nomination Committee Chair, announced that 18 of the incumbent BoD members had opted to run for election as per the revised Bylaws. Waters had indicated his desire to retire from the Board. Don Kelly, a former active duty rep (now retired), was nominated for the 19th position. The attending Board members concurred with the slate of nominees without objection. The slate was to be presented intact at the membership meeting the morning of 17 September. Moore stated that he would be nominating Kevin Todd as secretary at the BoD meeting after the membership meeting, but would remain as newsletter editor. (*See subsequent meeting minutes.*)

At this point, Pres Thomas acknowledged Waters' sustained dedicated service and leadership to the Association from its foundation days to what the organization is now. He presented Charlie with a rosewood box with a set of official Association coins recessed inside.

Outgoing Secretary Max Moore was also recognized for his diligent and dedicated service and myriad contributions during his many years on the Board. Pres Thomas then proposed Life Membership status for Moore. Ernst so moved, Maloney seconded, and passed unanimously. Don Griffin was given a set of photographs from his days at Shemya AFB, AK, 39 years ago that had been 'rescued' from the dusty recesses of the Wing's storage area.

Next Reunion(s): Greg Smith, a former Wing vice commander, now working in Greenville, TX, has volunteered to chair a reunion at the Holiday Inn in McKinney, TX, (near Dallas) in the spring of 2011. Looking beyond that one, Sandy Feldkamp has volunteered, assisted by her husband Alan, to run the reunion of fall 2012 in Colorado, Springs. The sites were to be presented at the membership meeting for approval.

Another item of new business was to approve changes to the Articles of Incorporation resulting from the revised Bylaws; correct two typos (in articles I and III), plus remove the second sentence of Article V as not relevant; and correct the organization title in Article XI from Air Force Aid Association (of which there is no such) to Society. This action was approved without objection from the Board attending. The outgoing secretary, Moore, will coordinate with Board member Hoberman to get the changes done in Florida where the Articles are registered. *Action pending.*

BoD Active Duty Members: Pres Thomas noted that 55th Wing Commander BGen Shanahan had nominated LtCols John Cooper (currently Deputy Ops Group CC), and Mo Krishna (343rd RS/CC) to represent the active duty personnel. He presented the bios of each to the BoD. Thomas stated they were stand-up troops who are eager to contribute to the Association and its relationship with the Wing. Ernst moved the appointments be approved by the BoD. Moore seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Budget: The president presented the 2010 budget prepared by the treasurer for approval Moore moved the budget be approved. Ernst seconded. Motion passed.

Thomas asked if there was any other new business to be brought before the Board or membership. Hoover suggested the idea of a potential changing of the name of the Association be brought before the membership meeting on the 17th as a topic for discussion only in order to gauge the reaction of the assembled, and to determine if further action should/could be pursued. It was the consensus of the Board that this should be done, with the caution that the lead-in (or preamble) by the president should be tactful and fully explained that this is an exploratory step, not a proposal for immediate action. There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1913.

Respectfully submitted,

(signed)

Max R. Moore

Secretary

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES 17 September 2009 Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno, NV

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Thomas at 0903. He stated that the meeting notification was in the April 2009 **Association** newsletter, and that a quorum was present. He made opening remarks welcoming the assemblage, among other general statements. He called upon Secretary Max Moore to read the minutes from the last membership meeting of 17 May 2008. Moore stated for the record that the subject minutes were published in the June 2008 issue of the *Videmus Omnia*, and were posted on the Association web site. Charles Waters moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes. Seconded by Bill Simon. Motion passed.

Pres Thomas then recapped **Association** business and Board actions since the last reunion in May of 2008. It was a busy 18 months with significant events. The financial issues resulting from the 2008 reunion in DC were resolved through the diligent efforts of Ricky McMahan, the

reunion chair. It took several months to settle the hotel and bus company charges, but all came out in the **Association's** favor and funds were returned to the treasury.

Thomas talked of the success of the *Tales of the 55th*, the 55th Wing Birthday Ball, the Wing Hall of Fame, and the **Association's** Award for Excellence (Winner: MSgt Bell of the 55th Security Police Sqd's Elite Guard). He iterated how the **Association's** involvement is a continuing source of positive exposure for the Association to the active duty Wing personnel. He told of how the **Association** Offutt-area members helped say farewell to the outgoing 55th Wing Commander, BGen James Jones, and his Vice, Colonel Rob Maness, this past summer. The members then continued the **Association** tradition of welcoming the newest wing commander, BGen John Shanahan, by hosting a dinner for him shortly after his arrival. The president recognized Bill Ernst, the Nomination Committee chair, to put forth the slate for election to the Board of Directors. Ernst explained that under the recently revised **Association** Bylaws, all the directors were now elected positions. He listed the nominees for the maximum 19 allowed slots as: Sparky Adams, Sam Pizzo, Don Griffin, Joe Gyulavics, Bill Ernst, Max Moore, Robb Hoover, Errol Hoberman, Jim Thomas, Michael Cook, Ricky McMahan, Dennis Haun, Larry Utley, Jim Maloney, George Ross, Fox Censullo, Pete Glenboski, Kevin Todd, and Don Kelly. (Charles Waters chose to retire from the Board.) *(Note: Kelly previously served on the BoD as an active duty rep when he was the Deputy Ops Group Commander)*

Waters moved the slate be accepted and that the nominations be closed. Seconded by many. The motion passed, and the nominees were elected by acclamation.

It was announced that the next reunion in the spring of 2011 would be headed up by Greg Smith, and be held at the Holiday Inn in McKinney, TX, near Dallas. Sandy Feldkamp has volunteered, with the help of her husband Alan, to run the reunion in the fall of 2012 in Colorado Springs, CO. A vote by the members in attendance approved the reunion sites. Pres Thomas recognized Don Gurney and his wife, Barbara, for their outstanding work in setting up and running this reunion. They were afforded a standing ovation.

He then gave the latest information on an in-progress action dealing with the tax status of the Association. IRS documentation, discovered in the run-up to our Omaha reunion, showed in that the IRS claimed that the Association did not qualify for donors to be able to deduct contributions made to our organization. Efforts to make administrative changes in operations, redefining our membership classes, codifying our purposes, rewriting our bylaws to document our compliance with the IRS rules were recently completed. As an association, we have for some years walked the walk of the IRS. We needed to document that and lockdown our administrative definitions to better show compliance. Contacts with the IRS indicated that our request for relief was favorably judged and that contributions made to, and for the use of the 55th SRW

Association, may be deducted for federal income tax purposes. The final approval letter is "in the mail" to arrive by 25 September. We will include specific details of the provisions and effects to the membership and Association in the upcoming newsletter.

Charlie Waters was recognized for his long and dedicated service to the organization, and for his leadership in laying the foundation for what the **55th SRW Association** has become. His wife Jane was praised for her support and service, as well.

Pres Thomas noted that outgoing secretary Max Moore had been awarded Life Membership for his dedicated service and many contributions to the success of the **Association**.

The president then presented some background information on the evolution of our association and the evolution from the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing with its Cold War mission to the new missions of the 55th Wing. He touched on the generational changes, multiple types of mission aircraft, changing and additional missions and growth to a wing with 30+ squadrons and permanent locations around the globe. It has been nearly 18 years since the Wing carried the distinguished handle of strategic reconnaissance. The Wing name now more generically reflects its multi-mission purposes. The president then initiated a discussion by posing a question to the membership: "Is it time for us to consider changing the name of

our association?" He was emphasized that this was an initial inquiry, an open discussion to gain the feelings of the membership present (70-80 present), and that there was no intent to put in play any eminent proposals.

There followed an open, civil, wide-ranging discussion as many members voiced their opinions, asked questions, gave suggestions, etc. It was acknowledged the **Association** needed to remain relevant to the present and current day relationship with the active duty Wing. Quotes such as 'survive...evolve...change or die', 'we need to continue to adapt', 'appeal to younger generations.....active duty', were expounded. It was noted that 'we' had been through the process before and changed the name in 1985 from the 55th ELINT Association to the current name in order to be more inclusive in membership.

Names suggested were: the generic 'The 55th Association'; 'The 55th Wing Association', as the present day 55th is designated; 'The *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* Association', which transcends and is inclusive of all generations of the Wing.

While no consensus was sought, no motions made, nor action taken, it can be stated that there was no overt opposition, nor open resistance to the idea of a name change. In fact Secretary Moore asked at the conclusion of the nearly hour-long discussion, if the following characterization could be used in these minutes to sum up the tenor of the assemblage:

"There was general acceptance of the prospect of changing the name of the **Association**".

There was tacit approval of that statement.

The membership will be kept apprised of any and all ensuing steps in this process, and it was conceded that a vote from the entire membership would be sought before any final action. Newsletter Editor Moore opened a general discussion on the **Association's** newsletter's (*Videmus Omnia*) purpose, content, publishing, etc., and encouraged any and all for articles and news input, and/or suggestions to make the issues more diverse, interesting, and relevant to the membership at large.

The meeting adjourned at 1028. Respectfully submitted,
Max R. Moore

Secretary

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

President Thomas called the meeting to order at 1048.

Directors present were: Jim Thomas, Ricky McMahon, Max Moore, Robb Hoover, Joe Gyulavics, Don Griffin, Jim Maloney, George Ross, Bill Ernst.

Moore made the composite motion that the following Directors be elected to the executive positions as indicated: Jim Thomas, President; Ricky McMahon, Vice President; Michael Cook, Treasurer; Kevin Todd, Secretary.

Motion seconded by Maloney. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting was adjourned at 1049.5

Additionally the following appointments were subsequently made:

Awards Chairman: Thomas

Historian: Hoover

Membership Chairman: Cook

Newsletter Editor: Moore

Webmaster: Maloney

Respectfully submitted,

(signed)

Max R. Moore

Outgoing Secretary

