

## **2011.05.Texas**

### **55<sup>th</sup> WING ASSOCIATION**

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**18 May 2011**

**Marriott Courtyard Hotel, Allen, TX**

**President Jim Thomas called the meeting to order at 1605.**

**Directors present were: Thomas, VP Ricky McMahon, Historian Robb Hoover, Bill Ernst, Webmaster Jim Maloney, Errol Hoberman, Treasurer Michael Cook, Fox Censullo and George Ross. Reunion Chair Greg Smith was also present. Not present were: Max Moore, Don Kelly, Sam Pizzo, Dennis Haun, Larry Utley, Pete Glenboski, Secretary Kevin Todd and Don Griffin. Also not present were the two active duty representatives: LtCol John Cooper and LtCol Mo Krishna. Mo has been deployed for most of the past year and Coop left this month for Naval War College.**

**Opening comments: The President asked for the acting secretary to confirm the number of Board of Directors present to insure we had a quorum to conduct business. He declared a quorum present without objection. There was none. When it was confirmed he passed out the printed agenda which had previously been sent to all BoD members. Jim then proceeded to thank those in attendance and introduce Greg Smith as the host for the 2011 reunion.**

**The president called on Acting Secretary George Ross for reading of the minutes from Board meetings held at the Reno reunion in September 2009. Thomas stated that all Board members had received the minutes after the last reunion, and they were posted on the Association web site. Ricky McMahon moved to dispense with the reading. The motion was 2nd by Bill Ernst. MOTION CARRIED.**

**President's Report: A recap of the 18 month's events and actions was presented. Jim Thomas started by addressing the name change which was approved in January 2010 and went over the voting results. Once the discussion was completed Mike Cook asked for a motion to destroy the paper ballots from the membership and to only maintain a memo for record summarizing the totals. The BOD determined a motion was not necessary and the committee agreed unanimously to destroy the ballots. Jim also stated that a thorough discussion should take place later in the meeting concerning the attendance shortfalls from both the Reno reunion and the current Allen, TX, event. 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, farewell to the outgoing 55<sup>th</sup> Wing CC, BGen John (Jack) Shanahan; and the subsequent Association's welcoming dinner for new Wing CC, BGen Don Bacon. Jim then discussed the part the association had in the Doolittle Raiders Reunion held at the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing and Patriot Club during one day of the reunion.**

**Pres Thomas commented on how good it is to have a former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW member as the wing commander. He also stated that General Bacon personally requested to give the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Unit Mission Briefing during the membership meeting on Saturday morning.**

**Jim introduced the three new Hall of Fame members to the board; Max Moore, Robb Hoover and Mike Cook. All are highly respected for the years of service as well as their outstanding credentials.**

**He then read an excerpt from the letter that was presented at the Birthday Ball announcing SRA Enrick Earle as the Award of Excellence recipient for 2010.**

**The Tales of the 55th was another success on March 25th. This year included talks on 55th historic symbology; RC-135 encounters in the 1980s with Libya's "Line of Death" in the Gulf of Sidra; a joint RC-135, SR-71, and RAF Nimrod mission in the Baltic Sea in 1981; and a review**

of the 55<sup>th</sup> DC-130 missions in southwest Asia. In addition Association members from the Offutt area attended a Doolittle Raiders Reunion Luncheon held April 15th at the Patriot Club which included a re-dedication of 'Raiders Lounge.' Dick Cole, Jimmy Doolittle's copilot, was the senior Raider at age 95 who attended. Earlier that month at the Club several Association members attended a Birthday Tribute to the Royal Air Force.

**Membership Report:** Chairman Mike Cook presented data on the membership numbers. We currently have 631 members in good standing. Mike also reminded us that, after multiple attempts to make contact to rectify the shortfall, 81 members had been removed from the rolls for lack of participation and delinquent membership dues. Much discussion ensued with a recommendation by Bill Ernst that we make another attempt to contact those folks before dropping them. Bill volunteered to do most of the legwork to generate a letter to each urging them to continue their membership. It was agreed that a letter would be written to each and Bill Ernst, Jim Thomas and Mike Cook would collaborate to send a package with both the letter and a self-addressed return envelope. A motion was made by Bill Ernst to have the letters generated and sent. The motion was seconded by Mike Cook. Motion carried.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mike Cook informed the board that he would send out the 2012 budget in early December. The budget will include two new line items; one to fund the printing of invitations to the annual Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup> (\$250) and a seconded to cover 45<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, 664 Memorial (\$250).

Jim Thomas informed the board that all the paperwork had been filed and approved by the State of Texas to give us tax free status for this reunion. This has no bearing on the tax that is charged by the hotel for each room.

The Treasurers report will be given at the regular membership meeting scheduled for Saturday morning May 21<sup>st</sup>. Mike Cook did state that we are in good shape and outlined the number of dues he is expecting to receive over the next several years.

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

#### **Other Reports:**

Historian Robb Hoover mentioned that we have four 55th participants (all Electronic Warfare Officers) attending this Reunion who were part of the 1956 missions called "Operation Homerun." This now-declassified operation involved several RB-47 over flights of the Soviet Union.

He also commented that George Back had written a letter to the editor in the May Air Force Magazine which pointed out the 55th's substantial Cold War role in "Spying on the MIGs", an earlier article in that magazine. That 55th role had gone un-noted in the original story.

Robb also said that Captain Payne, a member of the 338th squadron, is writing a Command and Staff term paper on the RC-135.

Webmaster Jim Maloney gave a short report on the status of the Association web site; everyone is pleased with the site and most find it easy to navigate through.

Reunion Chairman: Jim Thomas introduced Greg Smith, the reunion chairman, and presented him with a bottle of scotch in appreciation of all the work he and his wife Julie had done to make this a successful event. Greg immediately uncorked the bottle and passed it around for all to enjoy—this may be the prelude to a new BOD meeting tradition for future consideration. Greg stated that we are well short for the expected participation and, therefore, are looking as a shortfall of approximately \$12,300. After several adjustments were made to the food and beverage contract and once the hotel credited to our shortfall the pay-as-you-go bar that shortfall has been reduced to approximately \$3000. The number used to estimate attendees was 250 which was derived from data collected over the past 8-10 reunions (excluding the

Wright- Patterson and Reno events). Greg then broke the numbers down to show that our current registration of 160 alumni failed to generate the total contracted room occupancy nights and necessitated some changes to the contract. He was still working with the hotel to resolve some of the shortfalls. Bill Ernst asked for a little more detail on where the costs were coming from and, after getting that information from Greg Smith stated that he would make a few telephone calls to try to help offset those costs with outside contributions. Any contributions would be helpful to our cause.

**Old Business:** The president stated that the articles of incorporation had been filed under the new association name. Additionally, the Association name change had been approved by the IRS.

A motion was made by Mike Cook and seconded by Errol Hoberman to make the Fisher House the official charity of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association. Motion carried.

Bill Ernst will donate a brick for the previous Wing Commander, BGen Shanahan.

**New Business:** Election of Board of Directors. Bill Ernst, the Nomination Committee Chair, announced that all 17 of the incumbent BoD members had opted to run for election as per the revised Bylaws. The attending Board members concurred with the slate of nominees without objection. The slate will be presented intact at the membership meeting the morning of 21 May 2011.

The annual Award of Excellence Trophy will need to have a new tag made to change the name to the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association. The BOD approved this action.

A new flag with the name changed will have to be made to replace our old one. Bill Ernst will look into procuring a new flag and report back to the president. If that doesn't work out, Jim Thomas will work thru the 82RS at Kadena to get one made.

We will add a 13<sup>th</sup> position (to the exulted dues free 12 Wing positions) which will be the Deputy Operations Commander for Intelligence, Ops Group CD1. Motion made by Jim Maloney, seconded by Fox Censullo. Motion Carried.

**Next Reunion:** Al and Sandy Feldkamp will host the next reunion (September 5-9, 2012) in Colorado Springs.

We discussed why we thought the numbers were down. It was agreed not to schedule any future reunions between 1 May and 15 June and agreed that the numbers will always be a risk factor. Jim Thomas will carry forward this discussion to an open discussion at the membership meeting on Saturday to try to do a little early fact-finding. One suggestion is to have the reunion in 2014 be held in conjunction with the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball. This will need to be worked in the next year to try to determine if it is feasible and, if so when to have the unique events for our association. If we do have the event in Omaha, Don Kelly had volunteered to be the chairman.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 1900.

Respectfully submitted,

George A. Ross

Acting Secretary

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55<sup>th</sup> WING ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES 21 May 2011

Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, Allen, TX

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Thomas at 0905. He stated that the meeting notification was in the February 2011 Association newsletter, and that a quorum was

present. He made opening remarks welcoming the assemblage, among other general statements.

He called upon Acting Secretary George Ross to read the minutes from the last membership meeting of 17 September 2009. George stated for the record that the subject minutes were published in the November 2009 issue of the *Videmus Omnia*, and were posted on the Association web site. Bill Ernst moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes; the motion was seconded by Jim Maloney. Motion passed.

Pres Thomas then showed a map with the location of all the current 55Wing Association membership.

Jim then introduced BGen Don "Bits" Bacon, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander who told those present how proud he was to again be a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing. He shared his joy when he was notified that the Bacon family was being transferred to Omaha, NE. General Bacon proceeded to give the 55<sup>th</sup> Unit Mission Briefing. The 55<sup>th</sup> has continually supported the SW Asian Theater for 21 consecutive years. "The sun truly never sets on the Fightin' 55<sup>th</sup>!" Bill Lewis asked to speak to the membership to deliver a message from Gen Jack Shotts (former 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force Commander). His message was that during General Shott's tenure as 15<sup>th</sup> AF CC, he always considered the 55<sup>th</sup> as the "Crown Jewel" of the Air Force.

Mike Cook, Association Treasurer, gave a brief summary of our current membership status and recapped our financial status. We have 631 current and paid up members. We also carry as Newsletter Recipients-Widow (NLR-W) 170 widows. The association has approximately \$25,000 in the bank. This is a three year layout as dues can be paid for a three year period.

Jim Thomas then recapped the Association actions since the last reunion in 2009. It was a busy 18 months with many significant events.

Thomas talked about the Association name change, the Change of Command, the success of the *Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>*, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball, the Wing Hall of Fame, and the Association's Award for Excellence (Winner: SR Airman Enrick Earl a Medical Technician in the 55<sup>th</sup> Medical Group). Jim gave a summary of the vote count for the name change. He told of how the Association Offutt-area members helped say farewell to the outgoing 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, BGen Shanahan. The Omaha board members then continued the Association tradition of welcoming the new wing commander, BGen Bacon, by hosting a dinner for him shortly after his arrival.

Jim then talked about the Heritage Week activities which included Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>, the Hall of Fame announcement (Those selected were Max Moore, Robb Hoover, and Mike Cook) and the Birthday Ball. Jim then talked about the part the Association played in coordinating the 69<sup>th</sup> Doolittle Raider reunion which only has 5 remaining participants, one of which attended this reunion. Next 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 17 nominees as: Sam Pizzo, Don Griffin, 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.

Robb Hoover moved the slate be accepted and that the nominations be closed and seconded by Jim Maloney. The motion passed, and the nominees were elected by acclamation.

Jim Thomas introduced Al and Sandy Feldkamp who will chair the next reunion from September 5–9, 2012 in Colorado Springs, CO. Al gave a brief overview of the Colorado Springs reunion along with the many attractions and encouraged everyone to plan to attend. A vote by the membership was not required because the site was approved at the Reno reunion in 2009.

Pres Thomas recognized Greg Smith and his wife, Julie, for their outstanding work in setting up and running this reunion.

The Association was designated a 501c (19) tax exempt, veterans organization in 1995. In September 2009, additional information was provided the IRS about the membership and purposes and activities of the organization. Due to these changes in our membership makeup, activities and purposes, the IRS acknowledged that we are an organization of war veterans, well over 90%, and our activities and purposes qualify us under the provisions of Section 170 of the code so that donations to the Association are deductible for the purposes of federal income tax. Examples of these donations recently are cash donations from members who include extra money along with a dues payment (extra is deductible, not the dues) and donations given to the Association in memory of Joe Gyulavics and other corporate donations pending.

The second topic centered on trying to understand why we had a smaller turnout than normally expected for this year's reunion. Several ideas were openly discussed and ranged from "too many activities occur in May each year" to "the location did not have enough attractions to draw many members" to "the hotel was too expensive"; the list goes on. No solutions were reached but the membership did discuss combining a reunion with the 55<sup>th</sup> Birthday Ball in the spring of 2014 and making Omaha a permanent location for every other reunion (those scheduled for the spring time). These ideas, although favorably accepted, seemed to have as many issues as solutions and will be looked into further in the months to come. As of now we do not have a location selected for the spring 2014 reunion.

Reg Urschler introduced the cadre of 55<sup>th</sup> members in attendance who were part of the 55<sup>th</sup> when it was located at Forbes.

The meeting ended with Jim Thomas thanking everyone for attending.

The meeting adjourned at 1055.

Respectfully submitted,

George A. Ross

Acting Secretary

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(no record of following BOD Meeting)