



*315th Airlift Wing Alumni Association
315th Airlift Wing Excellence over the Years
Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina*

28 February 2017, #5

Visit our website at: <http://www.315awaalumniassoc.com/>

Status of the 315th Airlift Wing Alumni Association

Every reunion organization runs the same course, and they are all pretty much the same. Someone initiates the idea, and then you start to organize a small group to get things going. You start getting names together and others will help you do this. When you get enough people, you start to organize activities that will be stimulating and interesting. Before you do this, you will need to nominate your leadership. A president, sometimes called the reunion planner/coordinator, will be appointed to maintain the organization. This is followed by a treasurer to handle the monies collected to cover expenses. To get things started before your first reunion, you will need to select a volunteer to serve as the newsletter editor and put the word out about your first reunion. The editor will continue to stay in contact with everyone to maintain their interest in the organization. Websites will be set up, both world wide (www) and the social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Books may be written, and someone may become a historian and write about the history or the genealogy. All this is basic to any reunion organization.

The 315th Airlift Wing Alumni Association was established 23 years ago. The first charter meeting was held on 9 July 1994, at 9:30 am in Bldg 171. Our current Vice President, SMS Ray Ardis, was at that first meeting. He began writing the newsletter and became our secretary.

There are three phases to any organization. They are the past, the present, and the future.

The Past

During the early years of the Alumni, the newsletters were published on a typewriter and copies were ran off on a copy machine and mailed out by regular US Mail service. They were published by Ray Ardis. Computers were not effectively in service yet. Ray was the editor until 1999. At that time I was nominated by Ray to be the new editor. During this time our membership was less than 300. Ray continued to be there when needed. Many newsletters, flyers and brochures were sent out about our numerous activities. Special Alumni reunions each year were held and known as annual membership meetings. There were golfing events, burger burns, fish fries by CMS Jim "James Earl" Newberry (Jim once served as our Alumni President). There orientation flights to North Field on both the C-141 and C-17, and Capt Rick Kemble of the 300th Squadron was our pilot on all the C-17 flights (Rick currently holds the rank of Colonel and Vice Commander of the 22nd Air Force). Rick also flew members of the Alumni to Wright-Patterson AFB Ohio to see the last C-141 take flight and land, a great 3 day event for us. I talked to Col Kemble recently, and he still remembers inviting me up to the flight deck for the duration of the flight. I took photos. We had a 90th birthday bash to honor Barbara Pack. We invited all the wait staff, all of them came, and were rounded up by our favorite server at the bar, Doris McGowan. Doris made sure our main lady that put up with us, Shirley, was present. Major General Bob Stephens was the main speaker at many of our reunion events, and he was motivational and inspirational. Many have said they could listen to him all day. Bob was the former Commander of the 707th Squadron, our 315th Wing Commander, and assigned to the US Central Command during 9/11. Our first President of the Alumni, Colonel Tom Alton (former Deputy Commander of Maintenance) put together a special "UTA" event get together where we could wear our uniforms, utility or flying suits, have the Alumni board meeting followed by a dinner. Our former 315th Commander of over 8 years and former President of the Alumni, Colonel Billy Henderson, was instrumental in putting together *Fishing Buddies*, where we could all take our fishing boats to Short Stay and get in a little fishing time. Anyone not fishing was welcome to join the party. Col Henderson passed away several years ago, but Dick Fuller is keeping it going for us.

The Present

Currently we hold seven Alumni board meetings each year and four Heritage Trust sponsored luncheons. The primary purpose of the board meetings are to conduct our business and keep the organization running effectively.

Board meetings for year 2017 are scheduled for 3 March, 9 May, 2 June, 8 Sept, 7 Nov and 1 Dec. and they will be held at the Charleston Club at 09:30 am.

Heritage Trust sponsored luncheons are scheduled for 3 March, 2 June, 8 Sept, and 1 Dec and they are held at the Charleston Club beginning at 11:00 am. This is like a mini reunion and it gives us the best opportunity possible to see many old friends on a regular basis. President Dick Fuller and Vice President Ray Ardis make announcements of interest, and anyone is welcome to stand and share anything with us they wish. We always have some brief

activities to keep things lively and entertaining and we have a good bunch to make this happen. The best part of all is that our great seafood buffet is FREE to all members, spouses and significant others. If you're not a member, Linda Skillman, our membership chair, will sign you up for \$5 per year or \$12.00 for three years.

The Future

We have been around for almost 24 years. Our future depends on maintaining our membership role and a good line of communication. Our front line of communication is the newsletter. We no longer have the resources to send the newsletter to each member individually like we did in the old days with our ever increasing membership numbers. You can now get the newsletter on our website at <http://www.315awaalumniassoc.com/> Chief Tom Clemmons is our webmaster and he has did a great job setting this up for us. Tom has been very creative with lots of nice art work and nice backgrounds to display our current events, our members that are deceased, (known as the *Final-Fly Bye*), videos, selected previous newsletters dating back to 1999 when I sent out the newsletters using a typewriter. We also propose adding a history section. Members without computers and the internet will continue to receive them by regular US Mail service.

There are six Facebook pages set up that enhances our membership and they offer a further line of communication among us. Web pages on Facebook have been set up for the 300th, 701st, 707th, 31/315AES, 315MAW/AW Alumni, and Lt Col Ed Hernandez, 701st & 707th pilot, recently set up one up called 315th Airlift Wing Friends. All this has already been explained in detail in previous newsletters and it will be published once again.

Another important factor that will contribute to our future success will be our elected officers and our board members. Currently we have the following board members actively serving us:

CMS Dick Fuller, President

SMS Ray Ardis, Vice President

The Treasurer position is currently vacant. We need a volunteer.

Civ Linda Skillman, Secretary & Membership Chairman

CMS Sam Brock, Events & Activities

LT COL Eileen Wilson, Benevolence Chairman

CMS Tom Clemmons, Webmaster

MSG Del Oxford, Newsletter Editor & Historian

Currently we're at a great level with our Alumni leadership. However, the age process is setting in for some and they may not wish to continue on long term. This will be a subject of discussion between now and election time when we will nominate new officers.

Enjoy the great early spring time!

MSG Del Oxford, Newsletter Editor & Historian ddoxford@aol.com

