



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

20 May 2018

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

[Special Issue Newsletter](#)

There's a considerable number of our Alumni members that are past due on their membership dues and we haven't heard from them in years. During the next several days I will be sending each of you this special issue newsletter as a roll call to see if you are well and alive. Please respond back to us even if you're unable to renew your membership. Renewal is \$5 per year or \$12 for 3 years. You may renew your account or join up with us by contacting our membership chair Linda Skillman, 7033 N. Kenwood Drive, Charleston SC 29406, (843) 553-5045, [Linda.Skillman@outlook.com](mailto:Linda.Skillman@outlook.com). Linda is not on Facebook. If you should prefer to contact me at [ddoxford@aol.com](mailto:ddoxford@aol.com) I will be more than glad to redirect your request to Linda.

Many of you are still around that came on board when we were activated back in 1969 as the 943<sup>rd</sup> Group and later the 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing. Many of us are getting on up there in years and are well up there into our seventies and eighties. I see your postings on Facebook on a daily basis and we know there will often be some of you that will be struggling with serious health issues. We understand and we're here for you. At this time I'm trying to make a last ditch effort to contact everyone that is reachable to band us together before our time comes to exit the planet. Great times are in the planning stages by the Alumni board and our directors. In 2019 we will be celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 315<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing all on the same day.

In the meantime, we have our quarterly Heritage Trust Sponsored Luncheons on Friday June the 8<sup>th</sup>, Friday September the 7<sup>th</sup>, and Friday November the 30<sup>th</sup> which is our Christmas Celebration Luncheon. This is like a mini reunion with 55 to 80 in attendance. The luncheon, always a seafood buffet, begins at 11:00 am at the Charleston Club, formerly the NCO Club. The luncheon is free to all members and if you are not a member you can sign in and join up or renew your dues for only \$5 per year or \$12 for 3 years. Prior to the luncheon there is an Alumni Board meeting that begins at 09:30 am in the club. All members of the Alumni are welcome and are encouraged to attend.

For those of you who haven't heard already, our beloved **Barbara Pack** passed at the age of 92 on April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 of a stroke. She was found unconscious in her home by her daughter Susan and taken to Trident Hospital and then to rehab the next day where she passed peacefully.

On Friday April 27<sup>th</sup>, I posted a newsletter with a brief history on Barbara's life. Only 3 days later on April 30<sup>th</sup> Barbara passed at 12:10 am. At that time I sent out a special news bulletin under the heading of *Special Fly-Bye* and it was posted on our official website at <http://www.315awaalumniassoc.com/> The same bulletin was also posted on all seven of the 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift wing web pages on Facebook and we received many responses.

The family does not have a date for us yet on when there may be a service for Barbara's friends and associates to celebrate her life. In the meantime, our President of the Alumni Association, Col Jim Roberts had this to say:

*Barbara may not be known to the younger troops, but most of us recognize her as one of the superstars of our community. Her bright spirit would always cause the room to light up a bit. I would like to hear from any of our members on potential ways to remember her and her contributions to the wing.*

*Jim*

Barbara's closest day to day friends from the 315<sup>th</sup> during her life time may have some suggestions on how we may celebrate her life. There's Marty, Brenda, Dee, Kay, Shirley Casey, Jo, Dick, Ray, Chigger, Chris Beiler and others. Let us hear from you. You may reach Jim at [jroberts1952@msn.com](mailto:jroberts1952@msn.com) Jim is on Facebook. Our next Alumni board meeting will be held at the Charleston Club at 09:30 am on Friday June 8<sup>th</sup> and we would like to have anyone's suggestions or recommendations by that time so that Jim can present them to the board. The quarterly luncheon will be held immediately after the board meeting beginning at 11:00 am.

Barbara had mentioned in the past that when she passed she would like her eulogy to be delivered by our 315<sup>th</sup> Wing Chaplain Lt Col (ret) Cliff Gilmore. I called Cliff only to find out that he has health issues that will prevent him from doing this for Barbara. Cliff said for me to say "hello" to all his friends that are retired from the wing and he sends his best wishes to everyone.

## *Eternally Aloft on Silvery Swept Back Wings*

This is a phrase we use sometimes when one of our aircrew members has flown west and is now no longer with us. We could define this any way we wish. My interpretation is that you are back up there in the blue clouds eternally in the bright sunshine where there is good flying weather every day. Darryl Brown of the 707<sup>th</sup> Squadron makes this statement on Facebook following a postings where one of our aircrew has passed. Some others have started doing the same. I asked Darryl at the quarterly luncheon if he knew where that may have come from. We thought it may have been taken out of the poem High Flight but it's not in there. I like this and may have it carved on my tomb stone when I fly west.

### Nose Art on the C-17s

Nose art has been applied on a few of the C-17s, but it's not like the nose art during World War II with pretty girls clad in swim suits painted on there. It's a professional looking unit insignia and they look great according to photos in the base newspaper the Patroit. Eventually they will be displayed on the entire C-17 inventory. The nose art is no longer painted on there like in the old days as they are placed on there with a durable vinyl that will hold up better and last longer.

### Veterans Build was first held November 10<sup>th</sup> 2017

The first event was designed to bring veterans together to build Habitat Homes. The 315<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association has been invited to help. No construction experience is needed. This is ongoing. There will be updated information on this in future newsletters.

*SMS Virginia W. Jamison, 315<sup>th</sup> AW Alumni Association & N. Charleston City Council*

### Derek Duke – City Council, Statesboro GA

Lt Col Derek Duke, former 300<sup>th</sup> Squadron pilot, was elected this past week to the city council in his hometown of Statesboro GA. In a Facebook posting yesterday, Derek said he was already out there knocking on doors getting the support of the community. Derek is also a big supporter of the 315<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association and he and his wife Pat have attended many of our quarterly luncheons sponsored by Heritage Trust.

### Wiley Johnson – Mayor of Summerville SC

Wiley Johnson, former 300<sup>th</sup> Squadron pilot and former airline pilot, has accepted my Facebook friend request. There are other 315<sup>th</sup> aircrew members on his Facebook page we all recognize. Mayor Johnson's job is very time consuming and difficult I'm sure, but he is more than welcome to attend any of our social functions at any time.

We are proud and honored by those of the 315<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association who give back to their communities.

**12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our attending the retirement of the last C-141, 66-0177**

Historically significant was the “Hanoi Taxi,” C-141, 66-0177 that was produced back in the sixties and was chosen for the special honor of airlifting the first POWs of the war to freedom from Gia Lam Airport in Hanoi on 12 February 1973. The “Hanoi Taxi” flew two missions into Hanoi, carrying out 78 POWs and two civilian returnees to the Phillipines and to the United States. One of those patients was US Navy Lieutenant Commander John McCain. Today the “Hanoi Taxi” is part of the historical aircraft and memorabilia on permanent display at the National Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB Ohio.

Many members of the 315<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association took a C-17 flight to Wright-Patterson to see the very last C-141, which was the Hanoi Taxi, take flight and land before retiring to the museum. This was the best opportunity for most of to see old friends that we had served with in our past. Maj General Bob Stevens, former 315<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander who was at CENTCOM during 9/11 met his old friend Lt Col Derek Duke of the 300<sup>th</sup> Squadron. They had flown 150 combat missions in Vietnam together. I met Captain Rick Kemble again from the 300<sup>th</sup> Squadron on the flight deck of the way up to Wright-Patterson as he was our pilot in command. Rick is now Brigadier General Kemble and he is currently the 94<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander at Dobbins Air Reserve Base GA. Prior to this he was the Vice Commander of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Air Force. I talked to him on the telephone two weeks ago and he’s going to try and make our quarterly luncheon on June the 8<sup>th</sup>. Also attending was my friend Bob Stewart, President of the Alumni Dick Fuller, and Chief Jim Newberry, our past President of the Alumni. There were numerous C-141 souvenirs and we all loaded up. Martin McKenzie, med tech of the 31<sup>st</sup> AES took numerous professional quality photos of everything there and shared them with us. I took 2 rolls of film, and I display the photos at our gatherings. We were up there for three days and this was certainly the most significant part of our Alumni history. I have it all well documented and filed in our history archives.

Several of you have contacted me wishing to talk on the telephone. That’s a great idea. We could exchange a few war stories and then do some catching up. I have everyone’s telephone number and I will look forward to talking.

Enjoy the nice weekend showers and stay in touch.

*MSG Del Oxford, Newsletter Editor & Historian* [ddoxford@aol.com](mailto:ddoxford@aol.com)