



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

21 November 2018

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

You may view the current issue of the newsletter and all back issues as well.

Veterans Day 2018

There were many great celebrations on Veterans Day and I received many inspiring stories from our membership about their experiences in peace and in war. Let us recognize those who have been a great inspiration to us and made major contributions to our association.

Lt Colonel Andrew J. Savage

Andy was our legal officer and he handled the legal procedures for the establishment of the 315th Alumni Association 24 years ago. Today Andy is a prominent attorney. He takes on high profile cases and we see him on the local media quite often. Often we hear people say if you're in a lot of deep trouble you will want Andy to represent you. Each time I send an issue of the newsletter, Andy always responds with a sincere compliment. Andy had this to say about the last issue on 31 October:

"Good morning Del,

I just had a chance to read your October 2018 315AWAA update. It is always the height of my day to catch up on the news of those with whom I spent so many good times with. All in accord with our love for this wonderful country. It is disturbing for me to watch the news and to see and hear so much animosity exchanged among our fellow Americans, to see the hateful murders and threats against our fellow citizens. But it warms my heart to think of the good men and women I spent so much time with in uniform. They represent the soul of America." *(This is only the first portion of Andy's letter)*

Best,
Andy

Chief Richard "Dick" Fuller

Dick was the Chief Flight Engineer of the 707th Squadron. During his tenure of the 943rd Group & the 315th Wing, he coached several youth sport teams on base and planned many of our social activities. After he retired, we had hoped he would continue to lead us in the 315th Wing's activities and he did. He held the position of President of the 315th Alumni Association for ten years and it has certainly been a pleasure working with him in publishing the newsletter. During those ten years he organized teams to plan and organize all our special reunions, golfing events, C-141 & C-17 orientation flights, burger burns, fish fries, and the list goes on and on. It was his life and he put everything he had into it. What I have admired most about Dick is when one of our alumni members passes away, he is always there to assist and comfort the family, put the word out, and often he would help make the funeral arrangements especially when he would see things beginning to fall apart. When any of us become hospitalized, he is always there to visit and comfort us and comfort the family as well. I remember when I was in a rehab facility, Dick was there every day and spent time with me, and even brought in my favorite candy bar. I sure would like to go on here all day telling about all of Dick's good deeds to the wing and the 315th Alumni Association. All of you out there know Dick and you've read my newsletters about him over the past twenty years of my tenure as newsletter editor and the historian. Like all of us, the age process has set in for him. He can no longer carry the heavy load and we all understand, by all means. We deeply appreciate the ten years of his life that he has given us. We have elected a new President, Col Jim Roberts who is perfect as Dick's replacement. Then we elected the best possible Vice-President Colonel Gary Cook, our former 315th Wing Commander to replace SMSgt Ray Ardis. Col Cook worked closely with Dick in putting together the 315th float for the Veterans Day Parade in downtown Charleston after Dick had done much of the heavy lifting according to Col Cook. Dick is still hanging in there with us. He continues to be a big player in the ESGR, active in sport activities and still enjoys his work at the North Charleston City Hall.

Lt Colonel Bill Valentine

Colonel Bill Valentine was our 315th Airlift Wing Air Operations Officer for many years before his retirement. During the Vietnam conflict Bill flew 49 direct combat missions in the OV-10 with his weapons control officer in the back seat position. I just posted a photo of him with his OV-10 Bronco on my Facebook page along with a message. According to a one hour documentary with actual combat footage I watched last week, the OV-10 took out enemy positions by strafing and it was a very dangerous mission. I'm sure there are many stories Bill could tell us about his air combat experiences and I will post that information in the next newsletter with his consent. Bill is very active with the Alumni Association and we look forward to seeing him at the Christmas luncheon on Friday November 30th.

Lt Colonel Derek Duke

Colonel Duke's was a pilot in the 300th Squadron before his retirement. Derek flew in Vietnam, Panama, Desert Shield and Desert Storm I and II. Derek retired as a Lt Colonel with over 250 combat missions. In Vietnam he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and countless others. He and his best friend, Major General Bob Stevens were the only two who survived the war from their USAF flight class. I also have a photo of Derek climbing into a T-38 for a training mission on my Facebook page. Under his photo these words were written: "This amazing jet is still training American Vets—from brake release plus 12 seconds you are at 600 mph, pull back to 45 degrees, nose up and in one minute total you are at Delta Airlines cruising altitude!" We look forward to seeing you Nov 30th.

A message from Ray

Every Airman, however close or far from the flight line, is working toward one singular goal, generating, executing and sustaining combat air power. Each Airman on the installation does that differently by performing the duties required by his or her Air Force specialty. The mission could not be accomplished effectively without every organization working in sync without all the others. We, the 315th Airlift Wing (Associate) Alumni Association are proud to be in sync with our compatriots.

*Ray Ardis, SMS Retired
Director*

The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program through Delta Dental
ENDS DECEMBER 31, 2018!

I received this information from Defense Health Agency, 7700 Arlington Blvd, Falls Church VA 22042. I'm sure all of you received this information but just in case some of you may not have received your notice through the mail or you have overlooked it, I'm enclosing the information here to be sure. You MUST take action if you want to have dental insurance on January 1, 2019. You and your eligible family members can enroll in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). If you want FEDVIP dental coverage, you must enroll during the Federal Benefits Open Season, which runs from November 12 to December 10, 2018. Your FEDVIP coverage will begin on January 1, 2019. If you do not enroll during the Federal Benefits Open Season, you will not have federal dental insurance coverage for calendar year 2019.

Go to BENEFITS.com to compare dental plans. You can also enroll in vision insurance through FEDVIP. Online resources are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. The BENEFITS team can help with any enrollment questions you may have. Representatives are available during Open Season, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 9 pm EST at 1-877-888-3377; TTY 1-877-889-5680. Enrollment agents cannot recommend a plan or discuss benefits.

This looks mighty cumbersome. Good luck.

On a much brighter side, Friday November the 30th is our annual **Christmas Social** and our quarterly Heritage Trust Sponsored luncheon, to be held at the Charleston Club at 11:00 am. Prior to that time the Alumni Board will meet at 9:00 am. All members and nonmembers are welcome and are encouraged to attend. After the Thanksgiving holidays, I will publish another newsletter with further details which will be posted on our website by Tom Clemmons and on the social media by Tommy Peters of the 701st Squadron.

Happy Thanksgiving Everyone. May you enjoy this special season by a warm fireplace and a big dinner table with your family and special friends!

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