



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

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

You may review all past newsletters & special news bulletins and our history

2020

Santa Clause has come to town and the ball has been dropped at Times Square

Now we can get on about business as usual as we enter a new decade. We look back at 2019 when we held our **50th Anniversary recognition of the 315th Airlift Wing and our 25th Anniversary Celebration of the 315th Airlift Wing Alumni Association**. Our President of the Alumni Col Jim Robert gave it all he had to ensure that our celebrations would be the best. Our Secretary and Membership Chair Linda Skillman designed some great looking invitations and other specifics designed correspondence to be sure everyone was informed about what was going on. We were all set to go but ran into some setbacks. The Club on base was unable to accommodate us for our dinner as planned so Linda quickly got us set up at the Navy Weapons Station's Dive Bar. Jim Roberts had us all set for a big outdoor event at Lt Col (Ret) Barry Strauss's home which was carefully

planned out and would be the biggest and best ever. A big tropical storm moved in with heavy blowing rain so Jim quickly moved it to a big warehouse very nearby.

Now we fast forward to year **2020** and life goes on. Our next luncheon will be on **Friday, 20 March 2020, beginning at 11:00 at the Charleston Club on base.** Prior to that time we will hold our Alumni Board meeting at 09:00 and it will probably be held at the Rookies Bar at the club.

2020 Alumni Board Meetings & Heritage Trust Sponsored Luncheon Schedule

Friday, 20 March 2020 @ 09:00, Alumni Board meeting followed by the luncheon at 11:00 am

At 12:00 noon, we will hold the election of the 315th Alumni Association Board Members. The ballots have already been sent out to you and they were attached to the 11 November 2019 newsletter. I will send the ballots out once again prior to the day of the election scheduled for **20 March 2020.**

Friday, 5 June 2020 @ 09:00, Alumni Board meeting followed by the luncheon at 11:00 am

Friday, 11 September 2020 @ 09:00, Alumni Board Meeting followed by the luncheon at 11:00 am

Friday, 4 December 2020 @ 09:00, Alumni Board Meeting followed by the Special Christmas luncheon at 11:00

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend if your schedule and your health issues permit. We have noticed that our attendance numbers are down as the age process catches up with us and many of our comrades have passed on recently. At a recent board meeting I asked the question, how long do you think the Alumni will be around? The correct answer is we don't know. Jim Roberts had the best answer; "we will have fun with it as long as it lasts." Currently we have an Alumni Board with considerable experience and leadership ability. The same goes for those holding active membership status. Many of us are well into our eighties and our time on the planet may very well be getting shorter, but for right now we expect to be around a little while longer.

Activities

At this time no activities are planned by the 315th Alumni Association until our quarterly luncheon is held on **20 March 2020**. Our last activity was the 315th Alumni Association 25th Anniversary celebration back in October 2019. Now we can go back to what we were doing back in the old days. We can plan our own parties in our homes or elsewhere. Let's look at a few examples from the past: Lt Col (ret) Andy J. Savage held the biggest party anyone has ever seen at his home. Lt Col (ret) Barry Strauss has been holding an Oktoberfest with a record attendance at his home for the past 25 years & it's provided by the 300th Squadron. We have held numerous keg parties and special celebrations at our home over the years and I have taken at least 50 photos that are in an album. Chief Dick Fuller held a Christmas party for everyone in his home for many years. We have held fish fries for many years at the picnic area and Chief Jim Newberry was our grill master. I have a full book of photographs. There's nothing saying we can't start doing this again. I'll start us out by having a social hour at the Duck and Dog in Summerville on Old Trolley Road. I'm choosing this location as a numerous number of you have been there already and it's a big favorite for us for some time. I have been there already to check it out and talked to the management. They have an outdoor bar with seating for dining, and they have a large dining area inside with another bar. In the back is seating for 48 and there is a private door entrance. I have this on my Facebook page if you would like to check it out. I will be checking this out with those who have been there already and see what the interest level would be and then get back with everyone.

Change of Command, 315th Airlift Wing Commander

I spoke with the Vice Wing Commander Col Don L. Thigpen, II, at his office recently and he had assumed the duties of Commander until the new Wing Commander was to come on board on 28 December 2019. The new and current commander is Colonel Willis and he comes to us from Wight-Patterson AFB Ohio. The outgoing Wing Commander was Colonel Gregory Gilmour, a former US Navy pilot assigned to a Sea Hawk Helicopter, same as the Black Hawk. I talked to Colonel Gilmour over the years at his office and he was always receptive and cordial. I had my last conversation with Colonel Gilmour the day before he left office and wished him the best in his retirement. I watched him getting a splash down as he made his last flight on the C-17.

Final Fly-Bye

MSgt (ret) Jack Webster, Sr., 707th Airlift Squadron Loadmaster, passed at the age of 87 on 17 December 2019 of a heart attack. I talked with his son Chief Jack Webster Jr to get details about the arrangements. Jack said there would be no arrangements at the time, as the family would keep his ashes until his spouse passed and then they would be laid to rest together in

Beaufort, SC. I flew with Jack several times back in the early seventies. He sure was a fun type of guy to be around always and he was highly efficient in every respect as a dedicated air crew member. That's the way we will always remember Jack and that will be his legend.

Forever aloft on Silver Swept Back Wings.

TSgt Earl L. Brooks, 81st Aerial Port Squadron passed on 21 July 2019. Sergeant Brooks is survived by his spouse Shelly and he has always been an active member of the 315th Airlift Wing Alumni Association. Earl and Shelly lived at 2806 Nursery Road, Conway SC 29526. (Information provided by secretary and membership chair Linda Skillman)

John Whitten, passed on 29 August 2019 of congestive heart failure and sepsis. (Information provided by alumni member Audrey Cheney, spouse of Chief Wade Cheney)

Lt Colonel Don Moore, 315th AES Chief of Standard Evaluation passed quietly on 5 January 2020. I will get more information about Colonel Moore from Martin McKenzie.

The Past & Future of the 315th AWAA Newsletter

The first two newsletters were written on a typewriter 25 years ago and copies were ran off on a copy machine. Chief Don Bluer wrote the first one and Chief Darryl Eidem wrote the second one and I have both of them on file. SMSgt Ray Ardis, charter member of the Alumni, became the first newsletter editor. Twenty one years ago Ray requested that I began publishing the newsletter so that he could attend to other duties.

There were few computers around and I printed the newsletter on a dot matrix printer, one that uses a ribbon and not a cartridge. I ran them off on a copier and had lots of photos in there. Chief Tom Clemons, our webmaster, has placed those newsletters on our website at <http://www.315awaalumniassoc.com/> if you should wish to check it out. In those early years all newsletters were sent out by regular US Mail Service. We had almost 300 members. I printed out address labels on my printer, placed them on the envelopes with a postage stamp, wet the flap on the envelope after folding the newsletter and placing it inside. It took my spouse and I two days to get them out. Today we would never have that much time. However, we still have a few members without computers or smart phones. I have asked them to find one of the hundreds of people we all see all around us every day with phones and ask one of them to pull up "315th Alumni Association", click the newsletter button and it comes right up. I have already checked it out several times and it always works. Today, we live in a very different world and I will be making many changes so that we will be in step with the times. I will be outlining those changes in the next newsletter. In the meantime keep family and friends close.

Del Oxford, Communications

