



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

7 & 17 September 2020 Newsletter, #1 & #2

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Labor Day 2020

Everything is pretty much closed down and the streets are very quiet today. There are a record number of automobiles on the major highways today and no one's home. I have the neighborhood to myself. The kids are out there enjoying that last weekend before school starts tomorrow with on line classes.

Major US Cities Rocked by Violence

We took the oath of enlistment to support and defend the constitution of United States of America against all enemies foreign and domestic and to bear true faith and allegiance to the same. I served over 30 years in the military and another 20 in law enforcement. Our armed forces are the best in the history of the planet and they protect us from the foreign enemy. Law enforcement protects us from the enemy within and that's a very grave issue at this time with anarchy at the highest level in our history. At the age of 84, I can clearly distinguish the difference between right and wrong, plain old common sense and fantasy and make believe. Each of us are in charge of ourselves. You can either make the right choices, live by a set of rules so that you may enjoy an incredible life, or you can be complacent, addicted, have no structure and stir up trouble. It's your choice.

Many of us in the wing have many years of flying time and have logged thousands of hours.

We have seen the rest of world and compared it to what we have here at home. Some even kiss the ground when they get back home. We have seen lots of socialism. Accepting socialism in this country is basically admitting you can't compete with the real world. You're basically saying "I'm willing to give up my liberty, my religion, and my dreams as long as the state will take care of me." Accepting socialism is accepting failure. It's the complete opposite of America.

On the 4th of July, Col Jim Roberts, our Alumni President, spoke of higher things. This will certainly be worth repeating for Labor Day and the world we are living in today. He said it is not the Declaration of Independence with its grand vision of a free people with God given rights. It is not the Constitution which applied flesh and bones to vision. It is not the republic for which we stand. But, for most of us, those that wrote the blank check to the nation, those who served, those that wore the flag on our uniform, it is a significant symbol. It represents a "higher thing," something bigger than ourselves; something that transcends and sometimes ugly things of this life. The oath we took is a higher thing; the sacrifices we make for our children are high things. The love for friends that stirs us to freely lay down our lives for them is a high thing. All true heroes focus on high things.

Final Fly By

We lost another member of our 701st Airlift Squadron family, Bob Tipton. Bob was a flight engineer in the 701st for many years from the late seventies into the nineties when he retired. Funeral services were held Monday at 11:00 am to 1:00 pm at Bellamy Funeral Home in Hiram Chapel with Rev. Dennis Bellamy officiating. Interment was followed at the Paulding Memorial Gardens. The family received visitors Monday from 11:00 am – 01:00 pm.

25 July 2020, Tommy Peters, Flight Engineer 701st Airlift Squadron

Alumni Board Meeting Friday, 11 September 2020 at Senor Tequila

The luncheon will be held at 10:30 am followed by the Board Meeting at 11:00 am. We held our last meeting there and it worked out great for us. The Senor Tequila is located in the Wal-Mart Shopping Center on Dorchester Road. The address is 9730 Dorchester Road in Summerville.

Calendar of Future Events

The Octoberfest will go on as planned at the home of Barry Strauss during the month of October 2020

The 7 November 2020 Veterans Day Parade in downtown Charleston may be cancelled. Nothing yet.

The Heritage Trust Sponsored Christmas Luncheon for Friday, 4 December 2020 is on the agenda for now at the Charleston Club in the Rookies Bar. We have been hearing from the management of the Charleston Club for over one year saying they are unable to hold a luncheon because of kitchen renovations. We don't believe it. Jim Roberts will be checking with Dustin Haynes of Heritage Trust to see about sponsoring our luncheon again.

Future Social Events

Future social activity is in question at this time with all the restrictions going on with the virus. At some time in the near future, I will begin holding social gatherings at my home the way we did back in the old days before the Alumni Association. We lived in the Oaks of Archdale on Dorchester Road and held social gatherings on a regular basis. There was no Alumni Association back then. We would hold a keg party in our double car garage with a keg from the Radar Club. We held indoor gatherings many times and put out a nice spread for everyone. I believe most of you know we moved into our beautiful new home where live now when the love of my life of 35 years, Brenda, had an accidental fall and did not recover. She set up all these parties for us and now I'm on my own. Many of you are still around and remember all the good times we had. We will do it again. With the virus I will do this in small groups and we will comply with social distancing and be as safe as possible.

I live alone now and have plenty of time to publish the newsletters and keep all of us connected. I have been publishing newsletters for over 40 years for family, high school, college at NC State, and many units when I was active Air Force for many years and flew with the Strategic Air Command better known as SAC. Being alone now gives me more time in my fitness center at home and I am a vivid physical fitness buff. I work out on the chin up bar, tread mill, jump rope, pushups, lots of deep knee bends and I pump iron a few days per week on the weight bench. Been doing this since age 12 when I got my first set of weights. Also, I might add, I purchased a new Corvette, the sports car of my dreams, silver gray with stick shift, six speeds. I will bring it to the Alumni meeting on the 11th.

I have been in very deep grief and I have been really hurting like never before in my life. But I'm going to be okay. I have had numerous incredible friends from the 315th Wing in my corner, even many who did not even know us. I'm very grateful, and I mean that very sincerely. You're the best!!

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17 September 2020, Newsletter #2

9/11 Issue

A Special Message from the Editor

The 315th Alumni Association was established twenty six years ago. SMSgt Ray Ardis is a charter member. Ray established the first newsletter and he was our first secretary. Twenty two years ago Ray nominated me as the newsletter editor. Numerous changes have taken place within the Alumni Association over time and more recently in our country. The world has changed like we have never seen before. In recent months my own life has changed considerably. The love of my life of 35 years, Brenda E. Oxford, had an accidental fall in our beautiful new home and she did not recover. I live alone now in our new home and this puts me in a position where I will have a considerable amount of time to publish many more newsletters than in the past. This will also allow many of our membership to stay more closely connected and there will be more interaction among us. This is very important to us at this time as we are all in the same boat with all that's going on in our country and around the world.

My position in communications is to report all the news that would be of interest to everyone at all levels and post all that's going on. I also maintain a history file on those who served in the 943rd Group and the 315th Airlift Wing. Recently I discovered the Wing does not have a history file on us. I found this out when Colonel Gregory Gilmour was our Wing Commander. Col Gilmour took me to the history office and I discovered there are no records on file about our troops, no record of past wing commanders or senior enlisted advisors/command chiefs. However, the public affairs office has plaques on the wall of all of them but it is not complete as they do not have the first group commander's name out there, Colonel William Willis, 1969-1970. I checked with public affairs to see if they have a file set up. They do not maintain this type of information. If any of this is not true, then please let me know. It is not my intentions to cause a stir. I am now 84 years old and would like for our history to be passed along to the next generation before I go west. I talked with our Alumni President Col Jim Roberts about this at our alumni board meeting on September the 11th. The alumni board feels it would be in our best interest if these records were maintained by the wing. However, we understand current policy may not allow it. I have a special file box with our history that I have gathered over a twenty two year span. When I'm no longer around, these files will go to my daughter, Michelle Oxford Ritchie of Summerville for safe keeping.

Our current 315th Wing Commander

Recently I had the pleasure of meeting our current 315th Wing Commander, Colonel Adam B. Willis. We maintained a safe distance. I explained the 315th Alumni Association's purpose and our mission. Colonel Willis immediately put us on a first name basis.

Previously I met our Vice Wing Commander, Colonel Don L. Thigpen. Colonel Thigpen was busy at the time but took time out to talk for a few minutes.

After I left Colonel Willis's office, I paid a brief visit to one of my fist recruits and an old friend, Chief (ART) Deborah Cole of the 38th APS. I recruited Deborah 38 years ago when I was assigned to recruiting service and she was 17 years old. She took me around and introduced me to all her staff. She took numerous photos of all of us and she even took one out in the parking lot of my new Corvette. She posted all of the photos on my Facebook page and she did a really great write up. I got 54 comments and 225 had seen it but made no comment. Deb will be retiring on 31 March 2021 with 38 years of service. The retirement service will be held in one of the big hangers. I plan to attend and may wear my class a uniform. I will be keeping everyone posted. Deborah plans to become active again with the 315th Alumni Association. Colonel Jim Roberts and I will be asking her to work with me on the newsletter. She has great communication skills and would be a perfect fit for the newsletter editor. I'm 84 and still good so far but my time is certainly numbered.

9/11

08:46 – United Flight 93 struck the north tower. The pilot, John Ognawski , was a Major and a pilot in the 300th Airlift Squadron, 315th Airlift Wing. A one hour documentary was produced on his life and many of us have viewed this several times. On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, Chief Charlie Hall held a memorial in his honor at our annual membership meeting.

SMSgt Junius M. Sonny Cox

Sonny was the Flight Engineer Chief of the 701st Squadron. When I was assigned to recruiting service I would visit him often at his office. We enjoyed many good conversations about our many years of flying. After he retired he became active with the Alumni. He wrote two very nice letters explaining how he enjoyed the connection with us and how much it meant to him. I read the letters aloud to the Alumni board and then filed them in our history file. His wife Peggy became very ill and he eventually lost her. We talked several times afterwards and he was in a deep state of grief. I did not notice any signs of depression during our conversations. On 8 September 2016 Sonny took his own life. I did not see this coming. Since I lost my Brenda recently I often wonder what was going through his mind. Sonny had many of us in his corner and those same friends have been there for me also.

TSgt Delma V. Cole, 300th Squadron Loadmaster

Delma only missed two of our Heritage Trust Sponsored luncheons. He was always very quiet and we barely noticed him. Delma flew west on 8 September 2016. I mentioned this at our Alumni board meeting on the 11th. I was informed by Jim Roberts and others that Delma made a contribution to the Alumni Association before his passing. Delma will always be remembered as a good friend in word and deed.

Alumni Board meeting on 9/11

We held our board meeting at the Senor Tequila in the Wal-Mart shopping center on Dorchester Road, same as before, and we were in a private setting. Those attending were Col Jim Roberts, Linda Skillman & Tom, Ray Ardis and myself. The main players were in attendance and it was probably the most productive meeting ever.

Quote of the Day

Self control is strength, calmness is mastery. You have to get to a point where your mood doesn't shift based on the insignificant actions of someone else. Don't allow others to control the direction of your life. Don't allow your emotions to over power your intelligence.
Morgan Freeman

That's it for now folks. Be talking and be safe.

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