



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

12 January 2022, #1

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

You may view this newsletter and all previous issues at this website.

CMSGT Tom Clemmons, our webmaster, built this website after we were founded July 1994, and activated by our Jag Officer Lt Colonel Andy Savage September 1994. Best website we've ever seen. Check it out!!

History Newsletter, Issue #1

Introduction: The 943rd Military Airlift Group was activated on 3 October 1969. The first Commander was Colonel William Willis, 1969 – 1970. There was a First Anniversary celebration for the 943rd MAG and it was attended by Secretary Mickey Davis and Navigators Colonel's Jerry Yarchever and Ed Lusk. Later celebrations were held for the 300th and the 701st Squadrons. The conference room and auditorium in Building 51 was named the "Willis Room" in his honor.

A *Final Fly Bye* was held for Colonel William Willis September 2011.

I have seven pages of History of the 943rd MAS that are nicely colored and decorated with great photos. They will be filed in our Archives which is located in my office in my home at Summer Park, in The Forest, Ladson SC 29456.

I have nice new wood filing cabinets in my office with hanging files that have typewritten labels and contain all our history, newsletters, membership listings.

MSGT (ret) Robert E. "Bob" Stewart, 31 / 315 AES

I enlisted in the 943rd Medical Service Flight at Pope AFB NC October 1972. Captain Lewis Bartles was the Commander and MSgt Bob Stewart was the First Sergeant. I met Bob for the first time and we became life long friends until this day. My Recruiter was Lewis "Louie" Blackwell. He was up there on a staff visit along with SSGT, now Ret SMSGT Homer "Nelson" Bennett, Supervisor of Air Force Recruiting Service. That got my foot in the door, as I came off active duty as a flight engineer, but could not attend Flight Engineer School at Altus for the C-141 at the time. The Flight at Pope was deactivated. Bob and I had to find a home at Charleston AFB and we joined up with the 31st AES as med techs on flight status and we did not have to attend tech school. Worked out perfectly for us. Upon our arrival, we were met by SMSG/ART Jack Pinkerton, then the Commander Captain Raimy and he briefed us. Afterwards there were lots of double AFTPs to maintain our currency, trips to Panama, Germany and Spain, and the list goes on. Bob stayed on, but I joined up with Recruiting Service on active duty orders for the next 12 years under SMSGT Nelson Bennett and I moved into base housing with wife Mary and daughter Michelle. We met with Bob and his wife Joyce quite often for some good socializing. Currently they live in Fuquay-Varina NC and they have been to our quarterly luncheon with their daughter Samantha and had lunch with me and my daughter Michelle. Michelle met Jim Roberts and Tom Crawford at the luncheon.

Bob is the only 943rd/315th Alumni member that served in the Korean war 1952/1953. Bob was assigned to Detachment 7, 46th and the 67th at Kimph, K-14. They lived in tents and kept a fire going, careful not to let the tent catch fire. At that time the Bell 47 helicopter was used to extract troops from the battlefield, like the one on MASH on TV. There was only room for the pilot on the inside and the wounded troops from the battlefield were transported on the rail outside. They had to counterbalance the helicopter with sand bags on the opposite side.

Bob and Joyce said they would be attending one of our quarterly luncheon in 2022 and we look forward to seeing them.

MSGT (ret) Chris Beiler, 300th and 701th Airlift Squadrons

On 4 January 2022, Chris had this to say: I have been to every state and most countries of the world and all continents, including Antarctica, over 45 years of flight. Visiting all 50 states is something that all of us would love to do, but studies show that out of 50 states, 8 is the average number most people have visited. Many never leave the state in which they were born.

I was a former pilot in command at American International Airways, MD-80 First Officer, 727 First Officer, and CL-444 First Officer.

Chris was assigned to the 300th and the 707th Airlift Squadrons as Flight Engineer. He was a TSGT coming off active duty and a fully qualified C-141 Flight Engineer when he enlisted with us in late 1969. Chris arrived before Dick Fuller and Jimmy Vaughn. Dick and Jimmy were SSGT's and were assigned to the 780 section. Dick later served as Flight Engineer Chief in the 707th AS until his retirement, and Jimmy stayed in aircraft maintenance until his retirement.

Chris was assigned to Andrews AFB in Maryland the same time I served at the Pentagon with the JCS in Operations in the early sixties when he met his wife Joyce. Chris has always been a very active and supportive member of the 315th Alumni Association. Chris and Joyce reside in Ridgeville SC.

Lt Colonels Eileen and Jim Wilson, 31st AES and 701st AS

Note: Our membership roster indicates Jim was assigned to the 701st AS but in talking he was an Aircraft Maintenance Officer. Maybe he was both. I will clarify.

Eileen was a former US Navy nurse before joining us in the 31st / 315th AES as a Flight Nurse. Jim and Eileen reside in Cross SC where Jim owns and operates his own business, Crosswinds. Jim owns four aircraft, which he maintains and flies every day. Two years ago he built an aircraft from scratch. The following is an inventory of Jim's aircraft from the WW 1 and WW 2 era:

1930 Fairchild KR-21, 100 HP Kinner radial engine 5 cylinders, by-wing, open cockpit.

1936 Waco YKS-6, 275 HP Jacobs radial engine, standard cabin, electric starter. Jim and Eileen flew to Alaska in this one in 2005.

Piper L4-H, 85 HP Continental engine, pilot in front, one passenger in the rear seat. You have to spin the propeller to start the engine same as the KR-21.

1928 Travel Air D4D that Jim constructed from scratch two years ago. Open cockpit and Jim sent me a photo. 225 HP Wright Radial engine, hand crank inertial starter, nice looking medium blue color.

Years ago, Chief Dick Fuller, Alumni President, held our Alumni board meeting inside Jim's aircraft hangar during the month of October each year. Eileen would set up a long table for the meeting and she would have a pot of hot coffee and pastry for us. One year, Jim gave all of us in attendance a free flight over the local area in the L4-H. One year I brought my daughter Michelle and grandson Ethan and they got a flight in the L4-H as well as all others in attendance including myself. Jim flew over the Volvo plant and it covered a very huge area and was very scenic.

Major General Thomas M. Sadler, former 437th Wing Commander

Thomas M. Sadler started in the enlisted ranks as a B-29 tail gunner during World War II. He worked his way up through the ranks and became the 437th Wing Commander in the seventies when Col Bob Johnson was the 628th Group Commander. During this time frame I lived in base housing with my family and my spouse became a member of the Wives Club. Col Johnson's wife Buttons held the office of President and they became close friends. My spouse Mary volunteered to work at the refreshment stand on the 18th hole on the base golf course. Quiet often and my little girl Michelle tagged along to help out. I remember once in the late evening I took my spouse out for dancing at the Club and they had a really great drummer. I remember Tom Saddler taking the drum sticks from the drummer and he was really great on the drums! Saddler was a man of many talents and he was the most popular Commander in the 437th history. Sadler was reassigned as 21st Air Force Headquarters at McGuire AFB New Jersey. There he met Bob Strobel, our former 315th Chief of personnel, called the CBPO. Sadler made Major General in that position. When Saddler retired, he moved to Charlotte NC where he supported NASCAR and all the charity organizations they represent. He raised large sums of money for the organizations and he was well recognized in the news media. Sadler made it and he gave back in the end.

Saddler was very high profile and controversial. I have heard many different opinions about him. Personally, I don't take a stand. Recently I heard Chief Tom Clemons, our Webmaster, speak of him. General Sadler flew west ten years ago in Charlotte.

Forever aloft on silvery swept back wings, Sir.

When Col Jim Roberts took over the reins of President from Chief Dick Fuller, one of the first things he said was get some good human interest stories from the troops. Hopefully what we have here will be good for starters. Thanks to all those who took time out to provide all the necessary information to assure the stories are accurate and stimulating.

At this time I have my fireplace going and a cup of black java on the table waiting. Good night, don't let the bed bugs bite!

Del Oxford, Historian

