

Geodetic Survey Squadron/Group, Newsletter #22, 14 Jun 2013

Greetings on this Flag Day weekend, Fellow Veterans of the Geodetic Survey Squadron/Geodetic Survey Group!

June 14 is Flag Day and is also the Army's birthday---so haul up the flag and light 238 birthday candles. You'll need to take a *really deep* breath to blow out all 238 for the guys in green!

Actually, I can't say 'guys in green' anymore. Have you noticed that the Army Class A service uniform *is now BLUE*? The Army began this changeover in 2008 and will be completed by July 2014. (Take a peek at <http://www.army.mil/asu/>) Anyway, let's not forget that our Geodetic Survey Squadron/Group had a couple of squads of Army folks (and at least one Navy officer) among its proud ranks from the mid-1980s until the unit folded tents in 1993.

Sad News

Pat Wideman, wife of **Bob Wideman**, passed away of complications from pneumonia in April. She traveled with Bob from Orlando to Cheyenne and then to Det 1 at Vandenberg AFB, CA. Pat was with her daughter, Bobbie Sue, in Maryland when she passed away. Many GSS veterans knew the Widemans. We extend our condolences to Bob and family.

Our thanks go to **Dennis (Deeg) Warring**, long-serving military and civilian veteran of the Squadron and NGA and colleague of Bob at Det 1, for passing this news to us.

If you are aware of a deceased GSS veteran, military or civilian, whose name is not on our list of deceased veterans, please send us their name and any other supporting details, like an obituary or a link to one. (See <http://www.1381st-gss-freeservers.com/custom.html> for the list of deceased GSS/GSG veterans.)

Better News from Mike DaRonco

You have read on more than a few occasions in these newsletters about **Mike DaRonco** (Stellar Camera, 1967-70), who I have nicknamed the godfather and guiding spirit of all our GSS/GSG reunions. On the occasion of attending his son's graduation from an AF Tech School over thirty years after leaving the Squadron, Mike became *obsessed* with tracking down all of his old Squadron friends, their Squadron friends, and Squadron friends of their friends! Almost single-handedly, he eventually built a contact list of several hundred GSS veterans. In collaboration with **Dana Hannon** (Survey & Data Reduction, 1986-93), they both put together the first of these triennial reunions in 2003, and the rest, as they say, is history. We have met every three years since then.

However, due to a series of bad-luck turns, we haven't seen Mike at a reunion *since* that first one in 2003. More recently, because of a service-connected medical problem, Mike recently spent many months of frustrating time and effort trying to prove to the VA that he had been in Vietnam on official TDY orders from the Squadron. He had long ago lost his old orders, and his DD 214 discharge papers did not reflect his Vietnam TDY, so he went through a very grueling process to finally obtain VA recognition of his service-connected health issue. More than a few of you have suffered similar discouragement dealing with the VA, so Mike has documented the process that brought him his hard-won success and has generously asked to share it with all of you.

I have asked **Ron Nesti**, our able Webmaster, to place Mike's advice for dealing with the VA on our website, so it will be there for reference when needed by any of our other veterans.

NOTE: Ron lives close to the Black Forest area currently burning out of control in Colorado, just northeast of Colorado Springs. At last report, Ron, wife and home are safe, but too close for comfort! Says Ron:

"Thanks, we're fine. Fire is about 2 miles from the house, but not threatening us. Would take a lot to get it even close to us. Praying for the folks who have been affected. About 100 homes lost so far and it's far from over...We're leaving Saturday [to attend a graduation]...Will work the website when I get back."

We wish Ron and all our Colorado veterans in the vicinity of The Springs safe passage through this latest fiery ordeal.

More On Future Reunion Venues

We have not even begun planning in earnest for the 2015 reunion in Cheyenne, but we are still getting comments on the main contenders for our 2018 reunion! This time, the first to respond was **John Sarles** (Survey, Astro and Data Reduction, 1971-77 and 1984-91), who liked my suggestion to add St. Louis into the mix for consideration. Says John:

“St. Louis would be great - and it is definitely centrally located.”

He was seconded by **Chris Ellison** (FEW, 1981-94), who said,

“I'm game for a future reunion in the St. Louis area. Many of the folks I worked with from 1981 through 1993 are there. After the squadron shut down in 1993, many of the military folks took jobs as geodetic surveyors in St. Louis.”

Leroy Clark (Survey/Det 1, 1963-67) chimed in with equally weighted votes for several possible locations:

“Tucson or San Antonio or Ft Belvoir would be fantastic... Because of my work schedule, I could not make the last reunion in Cheyenne, but I if I'm still vertical, I will definitely make the next Cheyenne reunion.”

Well, I'm sure we have a few retired geodesists who could determine whether Leroy is vertical or *deflected* from the vertical when the time comes! Maybe they could even apply a Laplace correction, if necessary!

Meanwhile, send us your ideas on these future reunion locations, including additional places we have not yet considered. If you have ideas or suggested locations that you believe would make future reunions even better (2018 and beyond), please reply to this newsletter and let me know. I'll share your thoughts with our general audience and our planning committee for consideration. The main contenders right now are Orlando/Patrick AFB area, Ft Belvoir/DC area, San Antonio, St Louis and Tucson.

Another Veteran Added to Our Online Roster

It's time for my monthly nagging to twist a few more arms and get more of you to send in your full contact information...

I inflict this monthly punishment on you and myself because a high percentage of you reading these newsletters have provided only your e-mail address, and if that fails, there's no other way to reach you. I get bounced e-mails after every newsletter, so we need that extra information as back-up to keep you in the loop, and especially to continue to build our online roster of GSS/GSG veterans. Sending us your contact information is also your entrée to the hidden, protected information on our website that requires you to log in. ***If you want full access, you have to send me your contact information!***

The easiest way to tell if we have your contact information is to check out our website at

<http://www.1381st-gss.freesevers.com/>.

If your name is not listed among the veterans on our homepage, then we don't have your full contact information---even if you are receiving this newsletter!

The only price of admission to get your name on this distinguished list is to just copy and paste the following nine lines into a reply e-mail to me filled in with your:

NAME:

ADDRESS: (Include street or mailbox #, city, state and zip code)

PHONE:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

MILITARY or CIVILIAN: (Answer “both” if you served the unit in both capacities)

HIGHEST RANK or POSITION in GSS/GSG:

START/END DATES OF SERVICE IN GSS/GSG: (Multiple entries, if you had more than one assignment)

ORGS: (i.e., where you worked: Admin, Astro, Computing, Detachment #, Gravity, Logistics, Sat Tri, Stellar Camera, Survey, etc.)

OTHER: (Whatever else you want to share here about your time in the Squadron or since then.)

One more veteran has come out of the woodwork since the previous newsletter, so at this time we are pleased to add the following name to our online roster:

Harry Harris (1961-1989) is one of those veterans for whom we had only an e-mail address these many years, but has now sent us his full contact information. Harry served the Squadron long and well as a civilian in several different organizational elements, including Survey, Gravity, Data Reduction, Special Projects, Inertial Positioning System, and Detachments 1 and 4. Prior to that, he also served with another sister organization, the Inter-American Geodetic Survey, the source of several of our distinguished civilian geodesists and physical scientists. Welcome to the group, Harry!

Leroy Clark (mentioned above) also had other news to report:

“What I am actually writing you about ... is that I met and spoke with another 1381st fellow yesterday - **Ray Petre**. Ray was an NCO in Det. 2 for several years. Ray and I, by sheer coincidence, ended up with the same employer after our service in the 1381st. Ray knew about my interest in the reunions and yesterday asked whether I had attended the last one. This afternoon I printed out the newsletter and dropped it in the mail for Ray. Ray is a great guy and is over 80 now. Ray has some interesting and funny stories to tell about some of the places where he was stationed in the Army before switching to the Air Force and the 1381st. He mentioned working for Barron.” [NOTE: Larry Barron is on our Deceased List.]

I hope we hear from Ray very soon so we can add him to our roster of veterans. Leroy, please remind Ray to fill out the nine lines of contact info shown above and send it to me ASAP. If he does not do e-mail, have him snail-mail it to me:

Garrett R. Moore
6406 Stonehaven Ct
Clifton, VA 20124

If you have not sent us yours yet, or if you have updates to your locator information, please send us your current contact information right after you read this!

A user name and password protects your contact information, so only other Squadron veterans with user names and passwords will see it. (**Ron Nesti**, our Webmaster, will contact you with your user name and password when he loads your info on our GSS/GSG website.)

If there is anything you don't want posted, let me know, and I'll have Ron leave it off the website. Meanwhile, I personally would like to have all of your complete and up-to-date locator information, so that I can keep you informed about future reunions, what's happening among your old friends and colleagues and for back-up when e-mail fails. Having all of the requested information, like a phone number and street address, helps us to find you in case you change your e-mail address. Also, other details like *when* you served and *what you did* and with *whom you worked* can provide useful clues to help us find you, if e-mail no longer works.

Squadron Pilots

Last time I asked how many of you recall setting out on the first leg of a TDY on a flight out of Cheyenne in an old C-47 “Gooney Bird,” probably borrowed from the Wyoming Air National Guard, with a Squadron officer in the left-hand seat? I am trying to get a list of all the GSS officers who used to fly us to (or near) our US destinations in C-47s or C-54s. Some of the other officers who wore pilot wings include **Keith Heiniger**, **James LaRue**, **Lester Hosford** and the late **Vernon Connor**. LaRue and Hosford, unfortunately, are not on my mailing lists, so I need some help from anyone out there who may still be in contact with them. Last known address for Hosford was Phoenix, AZ, and for LaRue, Jackson, WY. Newcomer **Ron Knaus** (Admin/Personnel/Transportation, 1959-62), one of our original Squadron pilots, has volunteered to search through his old records to identify any names from the early Squadron years, including other pilots.

Thanks to **Bobby Walters** (Orlando, 1960-65; Det 2, 1969-72; Cheyenne, 1975-80), **Bob Nelson** (Data Reduction, Survey, Det 2 - Military: 1969-71, 1973-92; Civilian: 1992- 2008) and **Walt Blackmer**, we made some progress in identifying other Squadron pilots. Bobby identified **Merlin "Smitty" Smith** as one of our frequent pilots and also the late **Robert "Bob" Furry**. Smitty is on our active e-mail list and Bob is on our deceased list.

Nelson also provided some details and the name of the Squadron pilot who lost his life when he allegedly ditched his C-47 on a foggy night to avoid hitting housing on approach to Cheyenne's airport. Very oddly, the *Wyoming Tribune-Eagle*, Cheyenne's major daily, has nothing in its archives about the crash or the identities of those on board! We have some photos on our website of the wrecked Gooney Bird in storage behind a chain-link fence on FEW taken by **Gary Micheli** (Astro, 1969-73).

In a future newsletter, I'd like to do a tribute to all the Squadron pilots who used to 'get us there', so please help me with names and addresses, if you can. If any of you have contact info on Squadron pilots LaRue and Hosford (and any others I may have omitted), and if you have details about the crash in Cheyenne, please share them with me.

Lost & Found Department

Last time, we reported getting **Kevin Yates** back on our mailing list with a new e-mail address, and this time, we have **Werner & Patti Koslowski** back thanks to the swift action of **Walt Spita**, who tracked him down again. We had only one bounced e-mail last time, and that turned out to be a false alarm. However, we still have a long list of formerly good e-mail addresses that are no longer in service---**more evidence for why your full contact information is so important to us**. This list now includes no longer working e-mail addresses for the following:

Bob Arriola, Al Billups, Dale Burch, John Dudek, Richard C. Jones, Vic Kuchar, Hank Levi, Kirby Logan, Deborah Douglas Lowe, Clifton Lopert, Hector Matos, Dave Moulton, Joe Noel, Thomas Noonan, Jan Noppen, Wayne Phyllaier, Robert Quinn, Mike Scoggins, Robert Skolasky, Russ Taylor, Tom Thomason and Frank Veu.

If you know how to reach any of the people above, please let me know or forward this newsletter and tell them to contact me: garrettmoore@verizon.net.

Until the next newsletter...

Garrett

Field Survey & Astro

GSS/Cheyenne

April 1967 - May 1970 and January - December 1972

Nothing makes the Earth seem so spacious as to have friends at a distance—they make the latitudes and longitudes.

--Henry David Thoreau, Surveyor & Philosopher