

Geodetic Survey Squadron/Group, Newsletter #47, 27 September 2015, Distribution

Greetings, Fellow Veterans of the Geodetic Survey Squadron and Geodetic Survey Group!

And Happy Autumn! It seems we were just kicking off summertime, and now fall is just round the corner.

It has been nearly three months since I sent out a newsletter. At that time we were just about to have our fifth triennial reunion in Cheyenne. The reunion went off very well and we had nearly 100 veterans and their family members attend. I thought I should provide a summary of the highlights, especially for those who could not attend. I also want to mention new plans for the next reunion. We want to do something very different for the next one, so stay tuned!

Highlights of Reunion 2015

Our crew of volunteers had everything well planned in advance, but there were a few last-minute glitches. Mark "Ty" Warner had to leave just before the reunion on urgent family business in New England, so we had to forego the trip to the Missile Training Facility. The FEW Heritage Museum also could not accommodate us on the weekend without incurring overtime pay for our tour guide, which was a no-go. Most of us quickly found alternative options in town and had a fine time. The Saturday evening Wine & Cheese Social was once again a great success. We were highly gratified that several of our guests brought along children and even grandchildren, who seemed to have a great time among all the old veterans telling war stories and lies to one another!

We also had two special guests: one, **Al Walcker**, a senior gentleman, who is *not* a GSS veteran, but a veteran of one of our Squadron's predecessors, which became part of our parent 1370th Photo-Mapping Wing. Al participated in numerous aerial HIRAN/SHORAN surveys and brought along several albums and books for display. His archive of photos can also be seen on the Air Force Photo-Mapper's website here: <http://www.1370th.org/55srw/AW/AW.html>.

We were also pleased to have among us **Charles "Chuck" Finley** (Astro & Gravity, Orlando, 1959-61), who came with his daughter, son and grandchildren. Chuck was one of the original members of the 1381st in Orlando when the Squadron stood up in 1959. He helped establish the Squadron's Astronomy and Gravity operations.

During the Saturday luncheon, I was given a gag gift by my former Astro colleague and long-time friend, **Gary Micheli** (Astro, FEW, 1969-73). It was a life-sized cardboard cutout of Captain America, who proceeded to photo-bomb all the pictures taken during the rest of the reunion! The joke was that long ago (1969-70) fellow barracks mate, **Jim Siler** (Data Reduction, FEW, 1969-71) had nick-named me 'Captain America' for reasons that remain obscure. (Must have been my strapping physique and reputation for being hell on Nazis---LOL!) It caught on and stuck among my closest friends and Captain America has remained my avatar and alter ego to this day!

On the last day of the reunion after Sunday Brunch, I presented certificates of appreciation to all the reunion volunteers and others, like **Ron Nesti** (Survey, Det 3, 1964-68) and **Dick Winslow** (Stellar Camera, FEW, 1966-70), who have maintained our GSS/GSG website. We also presented **Chuck Finley** with a gift set of our 2015 commemorative coins.

We were pleased to see so many old friends, like **John DePuy** and **John Sarles**, including some who had not attended recent reunions, like **Mike Szyhowski**, **Bob Santana**, **Dave Perkins**, **Rick Rogers** and **Woody Woodard**, plus a few of the old faithful, who have not missed any reunions, like **Bob & Bev Millians**, **Larry & Lela Hootman**, **Gus & Mary Guliuzza**, **Jim & Coni Edwards**, **Paul & Brenda Schilinski**, **Bob & Rose Carlson**, **Dave & Janet Stout**, **Bob & Geneva Weaver** and **Herb & Cathy Stoughton** among many others.

Reunion Photos

Rick Eckhardt (Data Reduction, FEW, 1981-82) graciously acted as our official photographer for the reunion with the able assistance of his wife **Kathy Eckhardt**, who is also a GSS veteran. Rick

has set up a new photo page for the Squadron on Shutterfly. To see the 2015 reunion photos that have been uploaded, click here <[Shutterfly](#)> to access the reunion photos. The link is also provided on the GSS/GSG website homepage.

If you took photos at the reunion and want to get them on Shutterfly for fellow veterans to see, please select your best ones, and send them to Dick Winslow (diskwy@gmail.com) or Rick Eckhardt (scouter.eckhardt@gmail.com) to load them for you.

GSS Commemorative Coins Completely Sold Out

My former classmate and GSS colleague, **Herb Guenther** (Survey, Orlando & FEW, 1964-67) bought the last 2015 GSS/GSG Commemorative coin just prior to the reunion. Herb and I, along with a few other GSS veterans, learned how to be surveyors at the (then) Army Engineer School's Department of Topography in 1964. During the reunion, after accounting for costs vs. revenue, I was able to present a check in the Squadron's name for \$100 to **Fran Friehauf**, the widow of the late **Fritz Friehauf**. Fritz, a former GSS Commander, passed away last March. He had been an avid baseball fan and was once a contender for the major leagues after college. Fran passed the check to the American Legion Post 6 Baseball Program, which has a *Fritz Friehauf Memorial Fund* to benefit kids' baseball. Fran and Post 6 thank all of you who bought coins to help make this donation possible.

Soliciting Information from Stellar Camera/Sat Tri Veterans

In the last few newsletters we mentioned that author **David Stumpf**, who has written about the Regulus and Titan missiles, is planning another book on the Minuteman. He wants to be sure to include the role the Squadron (and others) played in making the trajectory of the Minuteman as accurate as possible, given the various geophysical and payload error-budget considerations. David was unable to attend the reunion, but has interviewed a number of our veterans and is plugging away on the draft.

Since then, a side topic has come up, for which I solicit information, especially from the Stellar Camera/Sat Tri veterans. It has to do with possible GSS surveys near Pitcairn and other island groups in the South Pacific for the purpose of assessing the accuracy of Minuteman tests. The Minuteman went through periodic tests to check how well it could place a dummy warhead on a specified target. **Gordon Barnes** (Acting Commander and Deputy for Ops, FEW, 1975-78) is seeking this information as input for David's book.

Here is Gordon's actual message:

"If you have been reading Garrett's recent Newsletters, you are aware that a Military Historian named Dr. David Stumpf is currently writing what he hopes to be the definitive book on the Minuteman Missile Systems. He previously established his credibility by writing widely acclaimed similar books on the Regulus and Titan missiles. Unlike in his previous books, in his Minuteman book he is going to address the G&G [Geodesy & Geophysics] aspects of missile targeting. He has interviewed some of us and at one time was going to come to your recent reunion to interview others, but I think some required surgery changed those plans.

Anyway, what he is presently addressing is how the target coordinates at the various missile test terminal areas were established. At least one Minuteman shot used Oeno Island (also known as Holiday Island) in the Pitcairn Island Group as the terminal area. This shot was in May of 1978. I am aware that the GSS did work on Pitcairn so it would seem logical that they also could have positioned Oeno at the same time, as it lies only about 90 miles to the Northwest of Pitcairn. In one article I found on the Internet it says that the U.S. Air Force used Oeno as a satellite observation station in 1969 and 1970. It is not impossible that this refers to GSS personnel or, if it was other Air Force personnel, that we positioned their observation site.

Could you shed any light on any of this? I would be interested in timeframes and what

instrumentation was used to do the positioning. Was it Stellar Cameras? I assume it was if done in 1969 and 1970. Or was it Geoceivers? I think we started using Geoceivers operationally about 1971 didn't we? Or was it both at different times? Or didn't we get involved in this at all?

I would greatly appreciate anything you could provide on this subject. We want to be sure Dr. Stumpf's book is as complete and accurate as it can be concerning the Geodesy & Geophysics support we provided. Thanks in advance!!"

If any of you GSS veterans have information on, or participated in, GSS surveys of terminal areas (where dummy warheads were targeted for Minuteman tests), please reply directly to me. If you would rather reply to Gordon, his e-mail address is: glbjlb@charter.net

Deceased Members Update

One of the things we learned at the reunion, based on information that **Bob Santana** (Gravity, FEW, 1967-71) provided, is that **Tom Oliver** longtime Gravity Branch veteran, passed away in 2008. We couldn't find an actual newspaper notice, but did find a State of Nevada Record of Death. Tom died 28 August 2008 in Tonopah, at the age of 76. Tom had a son, **Grady Oliver**, who is also a GSS veteran. If any of you know how to reach Grady, please send him our way! Our thanks go to Bob and **John DePuy** for this update on Tom. **Dick Winslow**, our Webmaster, will add Tom's name to our list of deceased GSS/GSG veterans.

Next Reunion: Where Will It Be?

Although we just had Reunion 2015 this past summer, it's not too early to think about the next one in 2018, assuming we keep to the schedule of meeting every three years. As I mentioned in the July newsletter, there has been a groundswell of interest to move the reunion to a different location to provide an alternate choice to our veterans, who for one reason or another don't like coming to Cheyenne. In future newsletters I will open it up for discussion to solicit fresh suggestions, and ultimately, we'll poll our newsletter audience to vote on the next reunion site and also whether we want to continue the three-year cycle or make it more frequent or less frequent. So, those of you who have held off coming to Cheyenne will now have a renewed voice in choosing a different location. We will also consider hiring a professional reunion planner to do the heavy lifting and make all the arrangements for hotels and related package deals, and then pass those options on to you. ***Please hold off sending me your ideas until I request them in a future newsletter.***

Final Notes:

This is for all you former astro observers out there and anyone else interested in astronomy: If it's clear tonight where you live, go outside to view tonight's full moon. This is the annual Harvest Moon, but it's a special one, because it is also a rare "super moon," so called, because this full moon occurs in the part of its elliptical orbit that brings it closest to the Earth. On top of that, we also get an eclipse of the moon tonight. The moon will pass through the Earth's shadow reaching totality between 10 and 10:30 pm Eastern Daylight Time. As I close out this newsletter, it's already in progress with a big chunk missing from the moon's eastern limb---spectacular!

Please look for me on LinkedIn here:

https://www.linkedin.com/profile/preview?locale=en_US&trk=prof-0-sb-preview-primary-button

...and Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009342009837>

...and the GSS/GSG Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/1381GeodeticSurveySquadron?fref=ts> .

Take it slow!!

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.