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***Greetings, Fellow Veterans of the Geodetic Survey Squadron and Geodetic Survey Group!
And Happy Halloween!***

Goodness, it's the last day of October and over a month since I last sent out a newsletter! It has been a busy fall in our household: we left in mid-September for an extended visit with our kids and grandkids in California until mid-October. We left Sonoma County just as the terrible fires were devastating the beautiful wine country of Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino counties. The smoke and ash filled the air as far south as San Francisco and even beyond. Petaluma, where son Brad, his wife and our grandkids live, was an oasis of sorts for the more devastated areas near Santa Rosa and vicinity.

We were no sooner back in Virginia when we joined a couple dozen of our former colleagues from the *Air Force Photomapping Association* for their annual reunion, this time in Virginia Beach in Virginia's Tidewater region, where the Chesapeake Bay meets the Atlantic Ocean. The Association is made up of veterans of the 1370th Photo-Mapping Wing of which the 1381st GSS was a member squadron until 1972, before the unit became part of the Defense Mapping Agency. A good time was had by all!

I'm going to keep this newsletter short so I can get it out before we run out of October. First and foremost, I need to bring up a sore subject...

Reunion!

In the August and September newsletters I noted that our next reunion in Cheyenne is just about a year away! I also asked for a quick vote on the preferred date---

- Early August right after Cheyenne Frontier Days (CFD)
- Any other weekend in August
- Any weekend in September 2018

[After August I had received only 15 responses! After pleading for more replies in September, we now have fewer than 30!](#)

To void further delays, I am going to call off any more requests for input and just go with what I have.

Here are the results of the poll from those who responded:

EARLY AUGUST (right after CFD): 12
AUGUST (Any Weekend): 9
SEPTEMBER (Any Weekend): 11

NOTE: A few people made multiple choices for any weekend in either August or September creating some overlap in the vote count, but August was the clear favorite with a total of 21 votes vs. 11 for September. **Thus, our next reunion will be in August 2018.** The actual weekend date will depend on what we can arrange with the selected hotel---which brings up another point...

I was disappointed to learn that three of the Cheyenne-area volunteers who helped with the previous reunions in 2012 and 2015 are unable to attend or help out in 2018. **Merilou Miller** (Operations, Admin Office, FEW, 1969-77 & 1980-88) and **Anita Rakestraw** (Orderly Room, Personnel Office, FEW, 1978-87) are involved in their high school reunions next year and will not be available. Also, Merilou mentioned that **Liz Starr** (Budget Office, FEW, 1980-93) suffered a bad fall this year and is still recuperating. Says, Merilou: "Liz is still recuperating from a fall she took this summer (broke a vertebrae in her neck - by rights she should be paralyzed, but the good Lord was watching over her and she is healing). She just doesn't have the stamina to take on working on the reunion." We wish Liz well and for a complete recovery.

I made all the reunion arrangements by myself in 2009, but it makes no sense for me to manage such details from 1800 miles away, when there are so many able veterans right there in Cheyenne besides Merilou, Liz and Anita. I'm hoping someone in Cheyenne will step forward to negotiate arrangements with the Holiday Inn by just modifying our old contract. (I have a copy of the old contract.)

This is my last call for volunteers, especially for Cheyenne-area volunteers, to help with hotel, activity and contract arrangements. If no one steps up, we may not have a reunion!

In other disappointing news, I learned recently that the *Northwest Territorial Mint*, the company with which we dealt to produce our beautiful commemorative coins, no longer has an office in Northern Virginia. Worse yet, the mint filed for bankruptcy earlier this year, but is still in operation in Nevada with the Hq still in the Seattle area. It underwent a recent reorganization, but its prospects for surviving look iffy, with customers complaining of late delivery or non-delivery, mostly associated with the side of the business that deal in sale of gold and silver bullion for investment purposes. I will be monitoring their status while looking for an alternative mint for our next round of commemorative coins. More on that in a future newsletter...

For more details on the status of the mint, see:

<https://www.moneymetals.com/news/2016/05/23/northwest-territorial-mint-scandal-000870>

GSS/GSG Computing History

Due to my busy travel schedule in September and October, I have not had a chance to edit the final version of the GSS/GSG computing history. That will go on the back burner for a while until we get the reunion details squared away. Ultimately, we hope to document the Squadron's evolution in computing power between its start in 1959 and 1993, when the unit stood down. It will probably take me a while to assemble all the inputs, edit and arrange them into a timeline for publishing on our website.

A big thank-you to all who have contributed to this effort! I will still accept inputs from anyone who still want to contribute their personal knowledge and experience on this topic!

Photo Calibration Surveys

Likewise, my effort to consolidate the inputs received to document the important two-year survey in 1965-66 that established a network of photo calibration sites in various parts of the southwest and other regions, is on temporary hold. As you may recall, for the last few months we have been working an unusual request received from **Myke Dodge Weiskopf**, a Producer/Reporter from KCRW in Santa Monica, CA. Myke stumbled across some deteriorating Air Force photo resolution targets located in the Mojave Desert and wants to do a story on them. (Click this link to see images of some of these targets: <http://www.clui.org/newsletter/winter-2013/photo-calibration-targets>

Myke noticed a circular 1381st GSS brass survey marker embedded in the concrete pad of one of them, dated 1965, and that led him to our website. Myke wants to interview the members of the 1381st who were involved in setting these targets back in 1965.

We have since identified all the participants in this survey and received some wonderful and colorful stories from them. The survey lasted over two years, crossed into several states and had a much larger cast of participants than I originally thought. We now have plenty of material to send to Myke as background for his interviews with the surviving members.

The participants include **Bob Millians** (Survey & Det 1 Commander; Orlando, FEW, Det 1; 1963-83) who was OIC of the project, **Pat McDonough** (Survey, Orlando & FEW, 1962-66), **Joe Noel** (Survey, Orlando & FEW, 1964-67), **Ed Fincke** (Survey, Orlando, 1963-67), **Herb Guenther** (Survey, Orlando & FEW, 1964-67), **Jerome K. Jerome** (Survey, Advanced Technology, Program Management, Detachment; 1965-67 & 1979-82), **Bob Proett** (Survey, Orlando & FEW, 1962-66) and **Mike Hamilton**.

Other participants in this survey, who are known to be deceased, include:

Bobby O. Bishop, Howard Bowers, C. W. Long, Tom Perrott and Ed Rosser.

Mike Hamilton is not on any of our rosters and his status is currently unknown.

In addition to the story Myke puts together, we will also save the stories gathered by all the participants named above, along with the photos sent in by Joe Noel and Pat McDonough, on our own GSS/GSG website.

My next step is to consolidate all the inputs I have received and send them to Myke Weiskopf with the contact information of the participants for a prospective interview with Myke.

Unless I hear otherwise from you, I will assume that you are willing to be interviewed. If you do not want to be interviewed, please withdraw from participating by negative reply to me.

Also, if anyone knows the whereabouts or status of Mike Hamilton, please let me know!

Recent Losses and Roster Updates

No recent losses to report, but we received an update from **Thomas “Jerry” Reese** (Stellar Camera Division & Programs Division, FEW, 1965-69) who sent his change in contact information. Says Jerry:
“Thanks Garrett. To let you know, I have returned to South America, and I do not expect to return to the USA. But, please keep me informed about the 1381!
Please use my new email address in the future...”

We also heard from GSS veteran Rev. **Barry Alston** (Survey & Sat Tri, FEW, 1971-79) via Facebook Messenger, who made this request on behalf of prostate cancer sufferers:

“Hey my brother, would you join in trying to raise awareness for prostate cancer?”

Here’s a link that describes symptoms of this dread male disease and available tests and treatment options: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/prostate-cancer/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353093>

Your Contact Information and Profile

If you have not yet done so, please send me your contact information or your updates, including a brief profile of your time with the Squadron or Group; i.e., where you worked and what you did. That’s the only price of admission to what I call our GSS/GSG online Hall of Fame.

How do you know if you have or have not sent me *all* of your contact information? Please click this link <http://geodeticsurvey.mysite.com> and check the roster on our homepage. The home page has the alphabetical list of everyone who has sent his or her contact information.

If your name is not listed there, but you are reading this newsletter, then you are among those who have not yet sent me your **full** contact info and profile; i.e., all I have is your e-mail address. Please close the gap by sending me the rest of your contact information (or updates to your existing profile) using the format below. Just send me a separate e-mail 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: (List all dates, if you had more than one assignment to the GSS/GSG)

BASE ASSIGNED TO: (Orlando, FEW, or Detachment location and dates)

ORGANIZATIONAL ELEMENT: (i.e., where you worked: Admin, Astro, Computing, Data Reduction, Gravity, Inertial, Logistics, Operations, Orderly Room, Sat Tri, Stellar Camera, Survey, etc.)

OTHER: (Whatever else you want to share here about your time in the Squadron/Group or what you have been up to since then.)

Dick Winslow (Stellar Camera, FEW, 1966-70), our Webmaster, will contact you with your user name and password when he loads your info onto our GSS/GSG website. Only other Squadron veterans with user names and passwords will be able to see your profile or contact information, and you will be able to read theirs, when you log in with your user name and password.

Meanwhile, check us out at <http://geodeticsurvey.mysite.com/>.

In addition to the roster of all who have sent us their contact information, the homepage tells you what's new, what's coming, and has links to the list of our deceased veterans, photos and documents submitted by our members and lots of other interesting information, including links to "kindred organizations," such as the AF Photomapping Association, the Defense Mapping School Faculty/Staff Alumni, and the NGA Alumni Associations, East and West. There's also an archive of old newsletters in case you missed any. Please also send us your own photos of your time in the Squadron/Group. Send us your best, preferably in digitized form, annotated with the names of anyone in the photo and where the photo was taken.

There are, no doubt, *many more* GSS/GSG veterans out there who remain to be discovered. Recall your old friends, colleagues, roommates or office mates from your time with the Squadron or Group and check our online roster to see if their names are listed. (Be sure to include the list of deceased veterans, also on our website.) If you don't see their names there, please send me their names, and we'll try to track them down and add them to our growing list of rediscovered GSS/GSG veterans. If you have old orders with complete names and serial numbers or can recall any other details, like hometown, please share those too. That may help us narrow down our search.

If your name is already on our online roster, please log in to check your own profile and see if it's still current. If not, please send me your updates! If you have forgotten your user name and/or password, contact our Webmaster Dick Winslow <diskwy@gmail.com> to remind you or to reset it for you.

Final Notes:

Please let me know ASAP, especially if you live in Cheyenne, if you are ready, willing and able to volunteer to help with the next reunion!

It's Halloween, so look out for those little trick-or-treaters after sun down! They should have a nice, nearly full "waxing gibbous" moon to go about their trickery tonight, the little dears.

If you are on Facebook, I invite you to be my Facebook friend.

Find me at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100009342009837>

There is also a Facebook page for the Squadron/Group at

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

Garrett
Field Survey Branch & Astronomic Positioning Branch
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 and Philosopher

