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1 message

Garrett Moore <garrettmoore@verizon.net>

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To: garrettmoore@verizon.net

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

And Happy New Year, Groundhog Day and Presidents Day (in advance)!

Somehow January got past me without sending a newsletter, so, no---you didn't miss one: I did!

It's Super Bowl Sunday, as I write. I don't know if you have any dog in this hunt, but having been born and bred in Massachusetts, Bonnie & I are going with the Patriots and Tom Brady again this year. I left Massachusetts for military service nearly 55 years ago and have lived many other places in this world, some places for a few weeks, some for many months at a time. In fact, Bonnie & I have been living in Virginia for more years than we ever lived in Massachusetts, and yet the "auld sod" in New England still calls to us...

Anyway, may the best team win, and may you all enjoy the game, no matter for whom you are cheering!

Reunion Good News!

Some good news arrived in January. As you may recall, **Jack Studley** (Gravity, FEW, 1971-75) has stepped up to coordinate our hotel arrangements for this summer's reunion. Jack is not only a veteran of GSS and a resident of Cheyenne, but also *the official Cheyenne City Surveyor!* Jack has sent me some great news:

"UPDATE: We are tentatively scheduled for August 3, 4 & 5, 2018 with the Radisson Hotel (former Holiday Inn). Judy will have numbers and a draft contract ready for me on Wednesday next week [Jan 24]..."

So far, I have not received any updates on this transaction, but Jack is "on the case." He has the previous contract, and the new one should be very close to that. I will share the details and the planned main events, as they become firm, as well as details on how to register for your room at a special rate and how to order and pay for the events you plan to attend.

Thank you, Jack!

Update on Commemorative Coins

I recently received this e-mail out of the blue from my old contact at Northwest Territorial Mint, our contractor for the previous commemorative coin. It has some familiar bad news and some surprising good news:

"Good afternoon,

Brenda here with your custom coins! Happy New Year!

Long story short, Northwest Territorial Mint filed for bankruptcy in April 2016 and has since then not been able to work its way out, this is all public knowledge on the Internet. Unfortunately, Northwest Territorial Mint shut down on 12/29, doors are closed and all systems are shut down; THE GREAT NEWS is your designs are still on file and you have the ability to continue to work with me under a new company that has all the same capabilities, quality and even faster turnaround times! I would be happy to continue working with you. If you'd like, please call or email me at anytime if there is anything I can do for you. Please be sure to email me at this email address, the previous email has been shut down and deactivated.

Brenda

[703-597-1288](tel:703-597-1288)"

I have already e-mailed Brenda and will also call her this coming week. If she has a local office and I can be assured of the viability of this new arrangement, I will use this new company for our next batch of coins, especially since they have our previous design on file. More on this in the next newsletter...

As you may recall, we decided last time to mint coins that commemorate the Squadron's various designations during its history from July 1959 to October 1993. Our unit went by five different designations, and consequently, had five different emblems:

- 1381st Geodetic Survey Squadron (Missile), 1959-64
- 1381st Geodetic Survey Squadron, 1964-68
- 1st Geodetic Survey Squadron, 1968-72
- Geodetic Survey Squadron, 1972-89
- Geodetic Survey Group, 1989-93

We already minted the first version (Missile) and sold all of them before the 2015 reunion. My plan is to mint the next four coins at the minimum order for each.

Please hold off ordering coins until I have finalized arrangements and make a general announcement in a future newsletter with details on which coins are available and how to order them!

Recent Gains and Losses:

We are pleased to add **William "Bill" Woodward** (Survey & Gravity, FEW, 1975-79) to our online roster of veterans. Bill says he found our website while indulging in a bit of nostalgia about his service time. Bill adds:

"I was on extensive TDY---gravity for missile sites at Whiteman, Warren, Ellsworth, and Malmstrom, in addition to gravity studies in Nevada, Arizona, & New Mexico for the initial MX missile mobile deployment plan. Also positioning surveys for the radar and radot sites in Kwajalein."

By the way, if that acronym "RADOT" is unfamiliar to you, it is another type of tracking system. The original RADOT tracking systems were developed for use at the United States Army Kwajalein Missile Range (USAKMR).

Dick Winslow (Stellar Camera, FEW, 1966-70), our Webmaster, has added Bill's name to our online roster.

Welcome to the group, Bill!

On a sadder note we learned of the recent passing of **Merlin "Smitty" Smith**. Smitty had been in failing health for some time. Elizabeth, his wife of over 50 years, sent this brief message in January:

"Dear Garrett, My beloved husband, Merlin, aka "Smitty," transcended to his Heavenly Home on Friday, January 12, 2018 at 11:07 am at Cornerstone Nursing Home where he resided for a year & one month. His Wake (Viewing) is Monday, the 15th & funeral Tuesday, the 16th at Walters Funeral Home in Lafayette, LA. He will be cremated & his ashes transported to Arlington National Cemetery at a later date."

Rest in peace, Smitty...

More Messages from the Field:

In the December newsletter I shared some of the feedback I get from our veterans. I always appreciate your comments, suggestions and things you like to share. Here are some additional ones I received following the December newsletter.

Last time, **Pat Church** (Astro, Orlando & FEW, 1964-68) wondered how many of our veterans are over 80 years old:

"Hi, I just read your newsletter and got to wondering, since I just turned 88 on the 20th, how many my age are

left standing? All I kept in touch with are gone. Have a nice Thanksgiving. - Pat”

I recalled a few names, but just got this update off Facebook from one of the early members of the 1381st in Orlando, **Darwin Abby** (Survey, Orlando, 1960-63). His son David showed several nice photos of Darwin on his bike participating in a bike rally near Yuma, AZ. David reports:

“Dad's first cycling event, 15 miles. Oh yeah.... he's 80 and still going strong.”

And last, I also received this note from a veteran of one of the GSS/GSG's predecessors from the old Army Air Force, the 7th Geodetic Squadron:

“Garrett, I'm **Pete Gessner** from the old 7th Geodetic Sqdn., the one you never thought existed. My wife and I attended a meeting in 2015, I believe. Talking about age, I will be ninety come Feb. 12, 2018. I'm feeling great and doing well. Happy Holidays.”

Congratulations, Peter—and happy birthday in advance!

And another note from one of the veterans of the original Orlando crew, **John D. Allen** (Survey, Astro, Gravity; Orlando; 1959-63):

“To Pat Church, I'm not over 80 yet. I will be in 6 months. - John D Allen”

This one's from **Allan Barlis** (Survey; Orlando, Minot and Grand Forks Detachments; 1961-65):

“Garrett, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and may God Bless. Soon to be a young 80, (June 12). I treasure my Missile Coin. Forever 1381st. – Allan”

And this one from “**Boe**” **Borchardt**, not a GSS veteran, but well known to many GSS surveyors: “Dear Mr G,

In several news letters back you asked for a listing of people 80 years or older. I believe I fit that category. I will be 81 years young on March 16. It has been 59 years since I joined the Air Force. It has been 54 years since I stepped into beautiful Vietnam, and it is almost 42 years since Bonnie baked me a cake and brought it to our Advanced Geodetic Surveying (AGS) class. Many Thanks for that and very many Thanks for being my friend all these years. God Bless you both.

Much love from Linda & Boe”

Yes, Boe attended that AGS course at Ft Belvoir while I was an instructor in the mid-1970s, and my wife really did bake him a birthday cake! It was a long time ago!

How many other octogenarians or nanogenerians are reading this newsletter now? We all would like to hear from you, but especially Pat Church!

More Sad News:

Near the holidays I received word from Paul Herring, son of Major **John “Jack” Herring** (Sat Tri & Data Reduction, FEW, 1965-69). Jack's wife, Jerry, passed away last April 2017. Paul Adds:

“My Name is Paul Herring. My father is John (Jack) Herring, Retired Major - USAF. Just wanted to provide an update:

My mother Jerry Herring passed away this past April. A few months before that Jack had been diagnosed with Parkinson's and dementia. He had been mildly struggling for a few years; but none of us were sure what was going on. He's gone downhill quite a bit in over the past 18 months or so, and now resides in a memory care facility (fortunately a nice one where is quite well-cared for). My sister and I see him often (me once a week, and her almost everyday). It is very sad to see one's father is such a condition; but we can always manage to get a chuckle out of him. I know that my parents' fondest military memories were at Warren, as well as some of the saddest due to the [Vietnam War] losses that occurred during that timeframe. They maintained lifelong

friendships with families such as the Beers and Lampings. Anyway, I just wanted to let you know why he has not been at any of the reunions over the past few years, and why you have not received other correspondence from him.

Did you know my dad personally/professionally? If so, I'd love to hear any memories you, or others that you know of, might have from the service days."

Jack's own notes from a few years ago provide some background on his career.

"[After leaving GSS] from 1969 to 1973 I was a Geodetic Officer at Air Force Cambridge Research Lab (AFCRL) and my last assignment was to the Defense Mapping School at Ft. Belvoir, VA, where I was Chief of the Department of Survey. I retired from the USAF at the end of May 1977. I spent the next 18 years developing a Geographic Information System for the City of Salem and Marion Co. Oregon."

Per son Paul's request, if you have any memories, stories or comments you'd like to share about Jack Herring, please send to me by reply to this newsletter, and I will forward them to him.

And the last tidbit from the field, I have also been hearing fairly often from Major **Ron Lecki**. Those of you who also had staff or faculty assignments at the Defense Mapping School, Ft. Belvoir, may also recall Ron as the Chief of the Department of Survey in the mid-to-late 1980s from which he retired.

On Recalling the Late MSgt Thomas Schreck:

We also had some feedback on an unusual request for information about MSgt **Thomas Schreck** from his grandson, Jason. Here's what we have learned so far.

First, from **Maryann Kerr Hanlon** (Admin, FEW, 1964):

"Hi, I was stationed at GSS from from spring '64. I was the admin officer, Maryann Kerr,,,,and I remember MSgt Schreck very well. I was a very young and inadequate admin person, having no experience or expertise in that job. MSgt Schreck was so very kind to me and was just a great guy. He was very highly regarded by many of us who knew him, so RIP. - Maryann (Kerr) Hanlon"

And this from **James Rolan** (Data Reduction, Orlando, 1961-64):

Garrett - I joined the 1381st in June 1961 and was assigned to the Data Reduction Division. At that time MSgt Schreck was the top NCO within the Division, which was charged with survey data computations and production of related reports for the Squadron. I believe he remained in that capacity for at least a couple of years during my time in the unit. I remember him as a personable and well respected leader.

Hope this helps. Best, Jim"

And this, from **Werner Koslowski**, who is both a military and civilian veteran of the unit (Military: 31 December 1963 to 26 May 1967; Civilian: June 1967 – January 2003; Computing, Orlando and FEW; Geodetic Technician (Gravity), and Geodesist, Data Reduction at FEW, 1967-91; DMA, St Louis, 1991-97, Det 4 Patrick AFB, 1997-2003):

"Hello, I remember him (1963-1965) @ Orlando AFB and recall Tom worked in a Production Management position. He was quiet, efficient and an all around nice man. I do not recall that Tom was in Cheyenne at FEW AFB. Regards, Werner E. Koslowski"

Does anyone else recall working with MSgt Thomas Schreck in either Orlando or Cheyenne in the mid-1960s? If so, please reply to me: garrettmoore@verizon.net .

Speaking of Werner...

Werner has contacted me with a bang-up idea for an off-year reunion in Orlando, FL.

Next year will mark the 60th anniversary of the founding of the original 1381st GSS on 1 July 1959 at the now deactivated Orlando AFB, FL. This reunion may appeal more to East Coast and Gulf Coast veterans, few of whom

seldom make it to the customary triennial reunions in Cheyenne. We have many veterans East of the Mississippi who fall into that category, but of course, if it happens, every veteran is welcome to attend.

Werner has some proposed some big ideas:

“Hello, I thought we may consider the 2019 event be held in Orlando, since it would be 60 years since GSS was established in 1959 at Orlando AFB, please kick this around with our many folks,,,warm regards

Hello again: I'm thinking of contacting my US Congressman, Bill Posey, for a possible political angle to the 60th reunion here in FL, to see what he thinks of the idea AND a potential event having President Trump as a speaker at the 60th. Just a thought, that may, could, spark some interest among our vets! The pres would certainly be interested in 2019 since FL is critical in elections. Let's talk later,,, Werner K”

Well, what do you all think? Any interest? I realize that another reunion in 2019 follows less than a year after our August 2018 reunion, but Orlando has lots to offer, especially as the place where it all began for us. Even if the president does not show up, there's the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, Disney and Universal---and the NGA Geodetic Support Team at Patrick AFB, the former Det 4, whose staff might be persuaded to give us a tour or brief us on their current activities.

ACTION ITEM: Let me know as soon as possible about your interest in having an off-year reunion in 2019 in Orlando to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Squadron.

And speaking of more reunions...

Proposed Reunion for 100th Anniversary of Defense Mapping School:

A number of our GSS/GSG veterans also are veterans of the staff and teaching faculty of the former Defense Mapping School (DMS), Ft. Belvoir, VA. (The school is now called the National Geospatial-Intelligence College and has moved from its former site on Belvoir's South Post to the secure facilities of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency – Campus East at the former location of the Army Engineer Proving Grounds. This coming May will mark the 100th anniversary of the school and its antecedent, the Army Engineer School's Department of Topography (“D/Topo”). **Jack Batt**, long-time Army and civilian veteran of the schoolhouse known to many of you, has been inquiring as to any interest among the joint-service faculty and staff in having a reunion to celebrate the occasion. Says Jack:

“I am starting this email with a repeat repeat request... this coming May will be the 100th Anniversary of our beloved school's arrival on Fort Belvoir. I asked last year and again last month how many of you would be interested in a 100th Celebration reunion. So far I have twenty-nine 'yes' and only a couple of 'no' replies. I also asked for date preference. By a large margin, we are at the weekend of 11 May 2018, which will be the actual 100th anniversary time frame. I don't know what the minimum number of attendees we would need to warrant a catering at either the O'Club or Community Club on Fort Belvoir or what the cost would be. I have a query in on that. Our web site master guru, Ray Chapman, said he would find out what the cost would be. He also is going to check to see if the post has anything at all planned considering it is their 100th Anniversary as well...I'm also looking into an Agency [NGA-East]-sponsored tour of their facilities. A tour of our old campus [Bagley Hall, Wheeler Hall] is also possible...”

Jack's note goes on to specify a list of things he needs, but for now, the most urgent thing is to assess community interest. The reunion will most likely take place in mid-May on or near Ft. Belvoir, VA. That's less than three months away from our own GSS/GSG reunion in Cheyenne, so it might be a stretch to attend both reunions, except for veterans in the neighborhood of Ft Belvoir. At the moment, the proposed reunion is just for former staff and faculty, but if you were a student who got your geodetic surveying, geodetic computing, MC&G Officer or other training (cartography, construction surveying or drafting, offset printing, instrument repair, terrain analysis, etc.) at Ft. Belvoir, you may also let me know if you would like to attend.

I have sent Jack a list of the names and contact info of all the Army and Air Force staff and faculty veterans I could recall, who are also GSS/GSG veterans, but in case I missed any, please let me know if you are also a veteran staff or faculty member of DMS.

ACTION ITEM: DMS veterans receiving this newsletter, please let me know your interest in attending an 11 May 2018 weekend reunion at Ft Belvoir and identify yourself as staff, faculty or former student. Thanks!

Final Notes:

That's all for this newsletter.

This year started off with two super moons (January 1st and 30th), the most recent of which was also a "blue" moon that featured a lunar eclipse---a rare "hat trick" of coincident events! I hope some of you got to see that---the eclipse was clouded out in the DC metro area. There will be another super moon in early March and another "blue" moon in late March. A super moon is a full moon that occurs when the moon is at or near its closest approach to Earth in its elliptical orbit. It makes the moon appear bigger and brighter. A blue moon is a second full moon that occurs in the same month. It happens---wait for it---only "once in a blue moon!" (GROAN!)

For more on these phenomena, see: <https://www.space.com/34515-supermoon-guide.html>

Even so, it has been a tough winter, so far, all over the country, and tough in many unexpected places--- snow in Texas?! Freezing in Florida?! Winter hurricanes along the East Coast?! Mud slides in California! And let's not forget the flu!

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a warning that [this year's H3N2 strain is especially dangerous](#). Unfortunately, due to the nature of this year's strain, the flu shot is less effective than usual --- but the vaccine is still recommended as beneficial, because it can potentially [make your symptoms less severe](#) if you do come down with the flu. Stay well, my friends!

To escape from all this, Bonnie & I are taking a Valentine's Day cruise to Cuba with friends this month. Now I can scratch off another bucket list item---smoking a genuine Cuban cigar in downtown Havana, while wetting my whistle on a genuine Cuban mojito! We will also be squired around in some of those colorful 1950s-era cars so lovingly maintained in Cuba for over 50 years. Woohoo!

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/>

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*