

## **2018 Tucson Reunion and Treasurer's Report by William Cathey**

For those who were unable to attend the 2018 Tucson Reunion, you missed a memorable event. From the time attendees began registering on Wednesday afternoon, 4 April 2018, through goodbyes on Sunday morning, the activities, events, and the venue itself provided a backdrop for reminiscing with squadron mates (some not seen since our days in Vietnam) and making new friends with 12<sup>th</sup> TFW veterans and their spouses with whom we have so much in common.

Thanks go to so many for making the 2018 Tucson the success that it was. A total of 168 members, non-members, and guests registered at Tucson. Attendees came from as far as Australia (RAAF Gp. Capt Lindsay Naylor, 389<sup>th</sup> TFS) and Vietnam (Bill Harris, 12<sup>th</sup> SPS). Predecessor wings to the 12<sup>th</sup> TFW had representation in Brig Gen Tim Boddie (12<sup>th</sup> SFW) and Wayne Johnson (12<sup>th</sup> FEW). We were also joined by 19 active duty guests from: 12<sup>th</sup> FTW at JBSA-Randolph, TX; 389<sup>th</sup> FS at Mountain Home AFB, ID; 79<sup>th</sup> RQS at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ; and 912<sup>th</sup> ARS at March AFB, CA.

Thursday, attendees visited the world class Pima Air & Space Museum with one of our own (Col John Miller, 559<sup>th</sup> TFS) as one of the docent tour guides. In lieu of the Pima, 18 attendees visited the nearby Mission San Xavier del Bac for a guided tour of the "Sistine Chapel of the Southwest". After lunch at Davis-Monthan's Club Ironwood, the group enjoyed a very informative tour of the AMARG "Boneyard" before returning to the Radisson Suites Hotel with its inviting courtyards and the Group's spacious and well-stocked Hospitality Room.

Friday morning provided an opportunity for authors to display and introduce their books; and for two pilots, Don Browning and Ron Flake, to share the details of aircraft mishaps that affected their lives and squadron mates. Due to the 355<sup>th</sup> FW undergoing an IG inspection, Friday's events at Davis-Monthan were slipped to the afternoon and truncated to visit only the A-10 Weapons Load Barn. To be precise, we visited two facilities when our tour guides dropped the group off at a fighter squadron that was involved in a practice deployment "bag drag", bringing back a few memories. Those that participated Friday had the opportunity to ask all the questions that they wanted and witnessed a practice load of an AIM-9 air-to-air missile on an A-10 "Warthog".

Bidding for Silent Auction items turned frenzied before its closeout before dinner Friday. The Radisson provided a great dinner and MC E.J. Sherwood kept the gathering entertained with banter and drawings. Guest speaker Col Jupe Etheridge (12<sup>th</sup> Ops Gp/CC) spoke about the pilot shortage challenges faced by the Air Force and strategies to address the problem—just one of many readiness issues caused by budgetary sequestration during the Obama Administration.

Saturday morning, outgoing Assoc President, Skip Blanchard, conducted a moving Memorial Service honoring 12<sup>th</sup> TFW members lost at MacDill and in Vietnam. Following the Business Meeting, 389<sup>th</sup> FS aircrews briefed members on their missions flying the F-15E Strike Eagle and their part in rolling back ISIS during the last two years.

Saturday evening, the Radisson served another excellent dinner with Col Bill Wojciechowski presiding as MC. The Davis-Monthan AFB Honor Guard's presentation of Colors and the POW/MIA Ceremony were an impressive start to a memorable evening. Our Banquet speaker Lt Col Al "GAR" Rose (558<sup>th</sup> TFS) shared a very moving story of his shutdown in 1972, time as a POW, and re-patriation. We hope to have his presentation on the website for you to see. A very heartfelt "Thank You" from all of us to "GAR" for your bravery and for sharing your story with our Group.

A special thanks goes to all those who volunteered to make it all happen: E.J. Sherwood: registration and MC for the Friday Dinner; Jim Mindak and Sherif Lepi: tending bar in the Hospitality Room; Skip Blanchard: the Memorial Service; Bill Wojciewkowski, MC for the Saturday Banquet; Mike Murphy and Kay Cathey: photography; John Delore: video; Diane Blanchard: Silent Auction; Kay Cathey and helpers Vicki Fenstermaker and Joann Wiggs for serving at the Wednesday Reception and thereafter; "CB" de Vogel for the 50/50 auction and "Doc" Daugherty: Room Night Auction and both for the Silent Auction; and Lena Sherwood: donation of the bonus raffle prize. Thanks also go to Col John Miller for recruiting our AMARG "Boneyard" tour guides and Bill Wojciechowski's "boots-on-the-ground" coordination with Davis-Monthan Public Affairs in setting up AMARG and 355th FW tours. Also, John Newman's and E.J. Sherwood's efforts to design and procure reunion ball caps and coffee mugs, deserve special recognition—classy reminders of time well spent in Tucson.

Next reunion, we will make the time to introduce all new members at the Friday dinner.

The 2018 Tucson Reunion was a financial success thanks to higher than expected registration when fees were set last fall. As a bonus, our group received a \$625 Visit Tucson C&VB incentive for bookings exceeding 100 rooms/night; and both buses sold out both days. Highly successful Silent Auction, Room Night Raffle, and 50/50 Raffle events added to the financial success for the Association. Thanks go to those who brought all those quality items to the Silent Auction, the bidders, and raffle participants.

The Association booked a net profit of \$1,941 on registration fees less expenses, or about 7.5% profit on gross registration fees

The Silent Auction, Room Night Raffle, 50/50 Raffle, other donations, and donations of registration refunds generated an additional \$3,855 in revenue to the Assoc Treasury.

At the Business Meeting, with the approval of a \$30 Life Membership, members voted to approve the Board's motion to offer rebates on paid-in-advance dues or Life Memberships with an option to designate as donations to the Treasury\* or to the Treasury earmarked for a monument at the NM of the USAF at Dayton, OH. The same was done with Reunion registration refunds.

**Members Donating Paid-in-Advance Dues/Life Membership Rebates:**

Bates, David \$45; Dubuc, Norm \$90; Hopkins, Ron \$30; Lepi, Sherif \$90; Malone, Mike \$60; Miller, John \$30; Pinkerton, Harlan \$90; Black, David \$70\*; Braswell, Wayne \$70; Cafarelle, Ralph \$70; Delore, John \$70; DeBello, Ed \$70; Daugherty, "Doc" \$70; Davis, Jerry \$70; Fenstermaker, Denny \$70; Fidler, Joe \$70; Fraizer, Patrick \$70; Harris, William \$70; Laskey, Franklin \$70; Littlefield, Max \$70; Lowery, Craig \$70; Marston, Tucker \$70; Miller, Kenneth \$70; Mulhausen, James \$70; Mumma, Morton III \$70; Reep, Charles \$70; Sannes, Gene \$70; Staley, Kenneth \$70\*; Strazzere, Lou \$70; Thomas, James \$70; Thompson, Donald \$70; Vaspory, Richard \$70\*; Wagner, Gene \$70; Walters, Alan \$70; Wojciechowski, Bill \$70. TOTAL \$2,325

**Cash Donations:** Lepi, Sherif \$50; Mindak, Jim \$300\* TOTAL \$ 350

**Members Donating Registration Refunds:**

Blanchard, Skip \$30; Brownlee, Joe \$15; Daugherty, "Doc" \$25; Elliot, Dale \$15; Flake, Ron \$25\*; Golas, Mike \$24; Goodenough, Russ \$115; Hawes, Gerry \$15; Hedditch \$58; Hurtado, Art \$37; Kennedy, Bill \$15; Kerzie, Dave \$50; Kovach, Jerry \$25; Lepi, Sherif \$90; Littlefield, Max \$9; Malayney, Norman \$9; Malone, Mike \$25; Matsuda, Ron \$50; Mescheter, Chuck \$47; Mindak, Jim \$25\*; Mulhausen, Jim \$40; Rhynard, Mike \$50; Sherwood, E.J. \$50\*; Solli, George \$95; Swanson, Gregg \$30; Wagner, Gene \$10 TOTAL \$1,119

**Looking forward to seeing you in Dayton, OH for the 2020 Reunion.**

**Bill Cathey**