



# ECHOES

Volume 12 Issue 1

February 2002

## Ben Vlassick

On Tuesday, 4 December, some AFTAC Alumni Association of Colorado (AAACO) members presented Ben Vlassick with a plaque in appreciation for all that he has done for the Alumni organization. Marianne Pierce initiated the idea of Ben's recognition at the Winter Social in November.



Earl presents the award to Ben

The Plaque reads:

*Ben Vlassick  
President  
1991 - 2001*

*Presented in Deep Appreciation and Gratitude for your  
Outstanding Leadership  
and your Friendship.*

*Colorado Chapter AFTAC Alumni Association.*



Jack Smith thanked Ben for all of his hard work. Jack is the newly elected president of the AAACO.

Ben passed away Christmas morning, and we will all miss him. He brought us all together for two reunions, one in 1996 and another in 2001. He demonstrated his commitment to camaraderie by coordinating annual picnics and winter socials. Ben set the standard for our gatherings. We all wish his wife Ginger, son Randy, and daughter Adriana our deepest sympathy.

Ginger sends:

Thank you all so much for the beautiful funeral spray.

Also we thank you all for the many cards, calls, e-mails, and all the caring shown Ben during his long battle.

Ginger and Family

(Continued on next page)

## Steering Committee Meeting Highlights

What Ben Vlassick called "the core group" met on 12 January to plan the next General Membership meeting and other AAACO events this year. Attendees were Jack Smith, Tom Miller, Bill Harris, Lonnie Gibbons, George Plunkard, Earl Pierce, Bill Schmied, Chuck Toner, and Bryce Dunn. After a good breakfast at the Plainsman III, the group decided to call the semiannual General Membership meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February at the Plainsman III. Other scheduled events include: a Golf Tournament and Picnic on 22 June, a gaming trip to Black Hawk on May 18<sup>th</sup> (tentative), and the annual Dinner Dance at the Buckley Camana Club on November 9<sup>th</sup> (also tentative). The group discussed publishing a Colorado recall roster and a general membership roster at the upcoming General Membership meeting. All participants agreed with the short notice decision to send flowers to Ben Vlassick's funeral. If any member wishes to send a contribution to reimburse AAACO for the flowers, contact Bill Schmied. Bill Harris agreed to publish the organization's calendar on the web page, [www.aftacco.org](http://www.aftacco.org).

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## Ben Vlassick (continued)

From Bill Schmied

Ben was taken on his final ride through the streets of Denver on Friday, 28 Dec 2001, to his resting place at Ft Logan National Cemetery. It was a long procession of cars and trucks filled with family and friends paying tribute to him and ended with a 21-gun salute and taps provided by the Buckley AFB Honor Guard. Although he is no longer with us, this alumni association is a living tribute to him. Ben started it with the first alumni national reunion here at the DoubleTree Hotel in 1989. In February 1991 we had our first official alumni breakfast meeting and started collecting dues from the membership. We followed that with the first alumni picnic in the summer of 1991, and since then we hosted another national reunion here in 1996 and a third last year in June 2001. The picnic has become an annual event and we have also had an annual fall evening social since 1998. We would not be a group of AFTAC alumni here in Colorado without Ben's efforts over the last 12 years and in November 2001 we recognized his contributions by presenting him a plaque at his home in Aurora with his family. Now we will continue on without him, but he will not be forgotten. May he rest in peace.

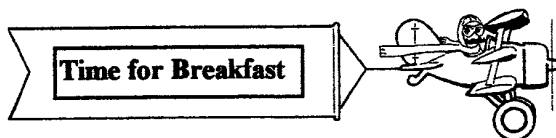
From Ben's Service:

*In Loving Memory Of*  
*Benjamin Paul Vlassick*  
*Entered Into Life May 27, 1936*  
*Entered Into Eternal Life December 25, 2001*

God saw he was getting tired, And a cure was not to be. So He put His arms around him, And whispered, "Come with me."  
With tearful eyes we watched him suffer And saw him fade away. Although we loved him dearly, We could not make him stay.  
A golden heart stopped beating, He is now at peaceful rest. God broke our hearts to prove to us, He only takes the best.

Horan & McConahy





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## General Membership Breakfast

Saturday 23 Feb 2002  
Where: Plainsman III  
Time: 0800 Hrs.

The Plainsman III is located on Smith Rd, just east of Chambers in Aurora, Co. Purpose of Breakfast is eat, just get together, and talk about year's activities. Please contact Jack Smith e-mail [coaftrmkt@aol.com](mailto:coaftrmkt@aol.com) or Ph 303-428-1812 or Bill Schmied 303-367-0625. Please contact by 19 Feb 02. Hope to see you there.

Jack Smith

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## From the Webmaster

From Bill Harris, our Webmaster:

### AFTAC Colorado Alumni Web Site is on line 24/7

Be sure to take a few minutes to visit the Colorado alumni Web site at

[www.aftacco.org](http://www.aftacco.org). You'll find the latest updates on association activities, lots of pictures of the June 2001 reunion in Denver and the fall social at Buckley AFB and links to other sites of interest to AFTAC alumni and active duty folks.

Just point that browser to [www.aftacco.org](http://www.aftacco.org) and you'll be 'connected'!

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## MAIL

Email from Ed McKenna

Good morning Bryce,

Not sure that this is newsworthy or not. After spending 23 1/2 years with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, on December 31st I took early retirement at age 62 to start up a consulting business.

Ed McKenna Consulting: Technical design and assistance on general instrumentation systems, feel that there is a market out there.

I'll see you at our next meeting, and encourage as many Colorado members as possible to attend.

Ed McKenna

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## 2002 Colorado Chapter Picnic

Mark your calendars. The annual picnic will be held at Buckley AFB, at the Williams Reservoir Cabin on 22 June.

This year Lonnie Gibbons volunteered to help put together a morning golf tournament at Spring Hill Golf Course (across from Buckley AFB), which will be followed by the picnic.

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## From the Florida Post-Monitor National Reunion 2003

According to the Post Monitor, a National Reunion is being planed for mid-year 2003 at AFTAC Headquarters, Patrick AFB, Florida.

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## From the West Coast Chapter – The Depot Fallout

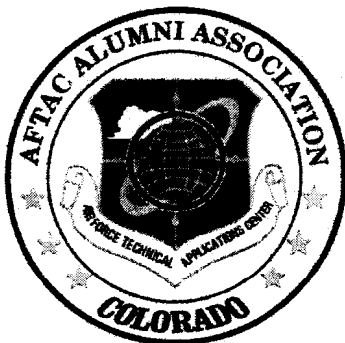
Frank Goodreau's E-mail: Hi all, Here is a book about AFTAC and related groups, if you are interested. It's been around since 1995, so you may have a copy. *Spying without Spies: Origins of America's Secret Nuclear Surveillance System* by Charles A. Ziegler and David Jacobson. Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road, Westport, Connecticut 06881, 1995, 242 pages. *Spying without Spies* deals with how the United States detected the first atomic explosion deep inside the Soviet Union in 1949—a subject that up until now has remained hidden from the American people. The Manhattan Engineer District ran the first rudimentary detection system on Germany in 1944 using A-26s with xenon-detection equipment. Manhattan Engineer District was the cover name assigned to the Army organization that designed, built, and tested the first atomic bombs. At the end of the war, no one was sure how or if the US could even detect atomic events deep inside the Soviet Union. This book tells how scientists, intelligence officials, Air Force officers, and commissioners of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) grappled with the problem. The book also provides an understanding of how national security decisions were made in the early postwar years.

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AFTAC Alumni Association of Colorado is a non-profit organization.

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Vice President: Earl Pierce, email [emxanadu@msn.com](mailto:emxanadu@msn.com)  
Treasurer: Bill Schmied, email [blschmied@aol.com](mailto:blschmied@aol.com)  
Webmaster: Bill Harris, email [bharris4@ix.netcom.com](mailto:bharris4@ix.netcom.com)  
News Editor: Bryce Dunn, email [bdunn@qadas.com](mailto:bdunn@qadas.com)

**AFTAC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF COLORADO**  
**c/o Bryce Dunn**



**MAIL FLORIDA DUES (\$10 PER YEAR or \$75 Lifetime)**

**TO: AFTAC Alumni Association**  
**P.O. Box 254892**  
**Patrick AFB, Florida 32925-0892**

**MAIL WEST COAST DUES (\$5 PER YEAR or \$50 Lifetime)**

**TO: AFTAC Alumni Association**  
**West Coast Chapter**  
**161 Southcreek Circle**  
**Folsom, CA 95630-1510**

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**FOR COLORADO DUES SUBMISSION  
OR ADDRESS CHANGE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Unless advised to the contrary, personal information listed above is  
releasable to other AFTAC members.

**DUES ARE \$5.00 PER 12-MONTH PERIOD PAYABLE DURING  
EXPIRATION MONTH. (SEE ADDRESS LABEL FOR INDIVIDUAL  
EXPIRATION MONTH).**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BILL SCHMIED.**

**MAIL TO: BILL SCHMIED, 2078 Kenton St., Aurora, CO 80010.**

**Membership questions may be directed to Bill Schmied at  
(303) 367-0625 or email [Blischmied@aol.com](mailto:Blischmied@aol.com)**

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