



ECHOES

Volume 13 Issue 2

June 2003

Annual Alumni Picnic – 21 June

The 13th annual AFTAC Alumni Association of Colorado (AAACO) picnic will be held on 21 June at the Pavilion recreation facility on Buckley AFB. The pavilion area is located just inside the 6th Avenue gate to the right.

We would like to stress that participation in alumni events do not require you to be a paid member. Anyone and/or their family that have been associated with AFTAC are welcome (this especially includes active-duty AFTACers).

Due to an inadvertent double booking by recreational services, we agreed to move this year's picnic from the lake to the main recreation area, which includes a large gazebo-like pavilion, horseshoe pits, volleyball area, and two ball fields.

The ball fields cannot be reserved, they are first come first served. Any suggestions for using the Ball fields (over 50 vs. under 50??, Det versus Det?). The menu includes brats, hamburgers, hot dogs, salads, chips, and refreshments. The food should be ready by 1100. Come on out and swap war stories, pitch some horseshoes or play some softball. Cost is \$4 per adult and \$2 per child. A registration form is included in this newsletter. Hope to see you there.

Please RSVP to Bill Schmied as soon as you can so that we can get an approximate headcount. Also for those without a military ID or base decal, contact Bill Schmied (303-367-0625).

November Dinner Dance

We are in the early stages of planning our annual dinner dance social. We usually have it in November, close to Veteran's day, at the Buckley AFB CAMANA club. Since the club is under new management, we are checking to see if we can have the function there again this year. If you have a good idea on where to hold this function, please contact Jack Smith or Earl Pierce.

AFTAC Alumni Association of Colorado is a non-profit organization.
President: Jack Smith, email COAFTRMKT@aol.com
Vice President: Earl Pierce, email emxanadu@msn.com
Treasurer: Bill Schmied, email bilschmied@aol.com
Webmaster: Bill Harris, email bharris4@ix.netcom.com
Newsletter: Bryce Dunn, email bdunn@qadas.com

On the Web

Your Alumni Web Site Awaits You!

Have you been to www.aftacco.org lately? You'll find information about upcoming events throughout the year, such as the upcoming picnic on Buckley Air Force Base in June. Be sure to RSVP to Bill Schmied. There's a photo "Quick Tour of the Wings Over The Rockies museum located on the former Lowry AFB grounds. If you didn't receive your 'Echoes' newsletter like this one in the past, we've begun an archive of previous issues you can review whenever you like.

Stay in touch and be informed. Visit www.aftacco.org anytime!

Good Health Wishes

Good health wishes to Bill Braukman, Mayme Gailey, Frank Hall, and Eunice Harris.

Godspeed to Jerri Toner and family, we share the joy of your recovery.

Buckley AFB Contacts

For your convenience, here are some contact numbers at Buckley AFB:

Buckley Pharmacy: 303-677-7455.
Buckley ID and DEERS: 303-677-9159
Federal Credit Union: 303-360-8200
Buckley Air Force Aid Society: 303-677-6718
Base Exchange: 303-340-1100
Buckley Barber Shop: 720-859-0933
CAMANA Club: 303-677-9840
Casualty Assistance: 303-677-6123
Chaplain Services: 303-677-6411
Commissary: 303-677-7100
Pass and Vehicle Registration: 303-677-9381
Outdoor Recreation: 303-677-6101
Retiree Affairs Office: 303-677-6693
TRICARE Service Center: 303-676-3400
Buckley Operator: 303-677-9011

From the Florida Post-Monitor

John & Chris Horsch, editors. send your inputs to chrisjohn@juno.com.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

LRD FAMILIES OVER THE YEARS

PREPARED FROM READER INPUTS. Some families have served the mission over several generations. With this column we ask those families to share that history. Forward to us at 'chrisjohn@juno.com' or ATTN Family Affair column, to the FLORIDA Alumni Address - we will publish them in the order received and as soon as we can. Thanks for your help.

A Father Responds, Frank Calenda

After publishing Tony's article in the last Post-Monitor, we asked his dad, Frank, to share his reactions.

I waited breathlessly at the mailbox last December, eagerly awaiting my latest issue of the "Post-Monitor". It finally came and I rushed home with thoughts of reading about old friends, old stories and just a lot of old stuff in general.

Can one imagine my surprise when I opened to page 8 of that issue and saw the name Tony Calenda. Hey! I know that guy. He's the one that traveled all over the world with Edna and me while we were dutifully caring for our AFTAC assigned duties. He's the one that played golf while I had to answer ZYA calls on the teletype. This is the kid that worried more about his bike and surfboard than where good ole dad might be at any given time. The same kid that always was trying to find out what I did when I went to work.

Whut thu guldarn heck is he doing writing an article in the Post-Monitor? Being an AFTAC trained killer, I read the entire article. Fully reading everything that was put in front of you back then was one of the prerequisites of belonging to the outfit. I don't think they have to do that anymore. Oh well, times do change. I was really surprised that he would even hint of the fact that I pulled strings to get him into the outfit. Even his wife Val is convinced of that. Well, I'm here to go on record to say I never, I repeat, never pulled a single string. Hell, on the contrary, it cost me lots of money to get it done. It was worth it though, because it got him out of the house and under somebody else's care and concern. Finally for once in my career, Edna and I enjoyed a semblance of peace and tranquility... and he thought I was doing it for him. Well, actually my initial conversation was with Mr. Otto, that good ole guy up in training. Our conversation that day I called him went something like this. "Hi Mr. Otto, this is Frank Calenda, how's it going?" He said, "Oh hi Frank, what do you want?" I told him I was looking to do a favor for AFTAC and he might be able to help. "I'd like to know what it would take to get my son, Tony into the outfit". He kind of snickered and said, "Oh, you're trying to get rid of him like **Vlassick** and **Miner** are doing with their boys, right?" Actually, that's a downright manifestation of my imagination (sometimes called a lie). What Mr. Otto did say was that he would

have him interviewed at basic training. IF he "fit the mold" and IF he could pass the necessary tests that would be required, and IF he showed a positive interest in it, the organization would do what it could to get him on-board. It all worked out, and Tony was headed to Denver for school. Being out of sequence with the course schedule for AFTAC, Tony was informed that he would have to undergo the dreaded self-study/self-help electronics course and get a significant passing grade to continue on to the AFTAC courses. This, my dear readers, was not a "gimmie" experience. Tony worked hard and long getting himself up to speed and made the grade with honors, an accomplishment that made his mother and I proud beyond even what he realizes to this day. After his schooling he, like the other 2nd generation troops, had to put up with the, "Hey, aren't you Frank Calenda's son?" questions. Actually, while Tony was going through school, I had sent an 'all det/headquarters' message telling people to ask him this question. Didn't want him to think we forgot about him.

I take no responsibility for his treatment by my former subordinates. We all have our crosses to bear. And that remark about me retiring because of an upcoming remote and Chief McClellan having to take it needs to be cleared up once and for all. I couldn't have thought of a better man for it to happen to. Actually, when I signed the papers, I didn't even know that assignment was in the works. Of course, I KNOW everybody believes that, so what am I gonna do?

Although AFTAC has it's share of up's and down's, there is one thing that Tony said that I fully agree with. "The people, the closeness, and the camaraderie of the AFTAC family" was an unforgettable experience. I joined the AFTAC family in June 1965 and, to this day, retain many of the friends that were made in my career. Edna and I are the better for that and always will be.

As for Tony...when he and his brother were young and I would come home from a long days hard work (at AFTAC?) , they would jump on my knee and say, "Daddy, what do you do at work?" I would always reply, "Come on boys, you know I can't tell you."

Just the other day, I asked Tony, "What new and exciting projects is the outfit starting?" I'll leave it up to you to guess what he replied... guess what goes around comes around.

Thanks Tony for a heart warming story in that issue of the Post-Monitor. It brought back a wealth of fond memories. Ones that we'll never forget, Dad

Outstanding to the both of you...thanks again Tony for your story, and Frank, thanks for 'bein' a sport' and giving us the 'Father's' side.

AFTAC Display, Encampment WY, Museum

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY BILL BRAUKMAN

Another command 'sight to see,' if you are out west, is a small museum in southern Wyoming near the Colorado border. It is located in a town that has gone through several metamorphosis, having been a coal town of 80,000, to being nearly a ghost town of about 50 year round residents, to what it is today - a logging town of 600 people with a museum well worth visiting. Therein you will find the work of Bill **Braukman** and the Colorado alumni - they have saved a piece of AFTAC in this small town.

They began working on this when Bill visited (he had been stationed there in '51-'53) in April '90 and saw the town's small museum. Through good horse trading, some twisting of arms and contributions from Teledyne and former detachment personnel, he was able to come up with an original 'big' Benioff (400 lbs), an equipment rack, a helicorder, amplifiers, develocorder, etc., to place in this museum. An AFT AC Worldwide Directory is also maintained and well used by visiting alumni. Dedication ceremonies were in the spring of '91 and attracted ranchers, town folks and former AFTACers.

Be sure to pay the museum and the AFT AC exhibit a visit if you're ever in the area, and enjoy what Bill Braukman and the others have assembled here.

From the West Coast Chapter – The Depot Fallout

E-mail Dale Klug at klugdale@juno.com for West Coast Information.

Congratulations to John Horsch. He guessed the name of the Alumni member in the last publication of the ECHOS and won a coveted AFTAC ALUMNI 2001 Reunion Golf Ball.

Thanks to Rick Phillips for being a good sport.

Least We Forget

MSGT George E. Plunkard (member Colorado AFTAC Alumni) USAF Retired. Passed away April 18, 2003 in Aurora, Colorado. October of 2002, George was diagnosed with terminal Lung Cancer. He served in the Air Force for 23 years. Late 60's he was NCOIC of Air OPS Center, Headquarters, Alexandria, Virginia. Donations may be made to the American Cancer Society in his name.

Ed: See the attached letter from George's family. We will surely miss him.

Francis Carter Cobb

EXTRACTED FROM FLORIDA TODAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2003

Colonel Francis Carter Cobb, USAF Retired, died February 18, 2003 concluding a 23-year battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Lou Gehrig's disease.

Following his graduation from the US Military Academy at West Point, Col. Cobb served 26 years with the US Air Force as a jet pilot, nuclear physicist, and researcher and was AFTAC's Vice-Commander at the time of his retirement, Sept. '80. During his service, he earned his masters degree from NC State. He was awarded the Bronze Star, Air Force Commendation Medal and the Legion of Merit. Medically retired in 1980, Col. Cobb continued his service and research for the AF, testing early computerized and infrared communication devices.

Col. Cobb is survived by his wife of 49 years, Barbara Gray Cobb; his children, Anne Etoile Cobb, Lawrence Gregory Cobb, Andrew Carter Cobb, and Kirsten Gray Bojanowski; four grandchildren, Courtney Gaither, Carter, Travis and Texas Cobb; his brother, Col. James Cobb; and his nieces and nephews.

Entombment was at Florida Memorial Gardens in Rockledge, with full military honors. Donations may be made to the ALS Association, 2700 Agoura Road, Suite 150, Calabasas Hills, CA 91301. Col Cobb donated his body to ALSA for on- going research. Despite death, his quest for answers continues.



Headquarters AFTAC (from Bill Harris' picture gallery at www.aftacco.org)

We are always looking for something of interest to include in the newsletter. Please send stories, messages, pictures, etc. via email to Bryce Dunn, bdunn@qadas.com. See the return address on this newsletter for snailmail. Thanks.

April 21, 2003

Relatives, Friends and Acquaintances of George E. Plunkard:

It is with a heavy heart that we are informing you that our father passed away on April 18, 2003 after struggling with cancer for several months. He was told in November 2002 that he had terminal lung cancer and had only six months to live. He fought as hard as he could but the dreadful disease won. He was a comfort to so many of his friends who suffered terminal illnesses in their last days and knew full well what he was in for. He was comforted by his children, grand children, brothers, sisters and many friends over the past months and was so appreciative of your love and kindness.

He was married to Violet Plunkard, whom he met in England, for 38 years. Violet died in 1998 from lung cancer. He is survived by his son, Stephen Plunkard of Cavendish, Vermont and his daughter Diana Lambert of Strasburg, Colorado, three grandsons and one granddaughter. He was dearly loved by his family and will be particularly missed by his two sisters Grace Hauver and Emily Firor of Thurmont, Maryland and his three brothers Clyde, Franklin and Felix of Hagerstown, Frederick and Woodsboro, Maryland respectively. He was predeceased by his sisters Louise Mae Plunkard, Mildred Crawford, Anna and Dorothy Sears. His heart was as big as his family.

Our father lived a full life with distinguished careers in the Air Force (23 years) and for the City and County of Denver (21 years). He was awarded the Bronze Star and several other medals for his tour of duty in Vietnam. He retired as the Maintenance Supervisor at Stapleton Airport in August of 1992. During his military career he traveled around the world several times over visiting 38 countries. Most recently he visited Ireland with his loving companion Jeannette (Jan) Patchak to see his family's ancestral home and have some fun.

He was an amazing athlete winning numerous awards in baseball, softball and bowling. He loved playing cards with his friends and swapping stories about his days in the military. His life ended in much the same way he lived it – with a deep love for his family and friends, a generous heart and a zest for living not dying.

Just before he died he told us, "That he had found strength in his Christian faith and had lived a rich and productive life. He had loved, and been blessed by two wonderful women, our mother Violet and his dear friend Jan. He was ready to move on, and in fact, was looking forward to seeing his new place in Heaven."

In the "spirit of how our dad lived," remember him by calling a family member or friend, helping someone in need and living life to the fullest. God bless you all.

Stephen P. Plunkard

Stephen P. Plunkard

Diana Mae Lambert

Diana M. Lambert