

-AFTAC represents a unique NATIONAL asset; it performs critical missions for the nation that transcend its size and budget. It has been composed of a relatively small group of people—officer, enlisted, and civilian—who have contributed in a manner far disproportionate to their numbers. It is truly remarkable that it has carried out such complex, sensitive missions, on a world-wide basis, and done so with great distinction. Its people are magnificent. AFTAC seemed to attract and keep a higher percentage of high caliber people than just about any other military organization with whom I was associated.

2. *How did I feel about the job when I assumed command?*

-A combination of tremendous pride, exhilaration, and expectation. For whatever reason, I felt a special desire to do well, since I was the first non-scientific career officer to be assigned as commander. I was honored and humbled, but really didn't appreciate what a great job it was until I got into it.

3. *How did I feel about the job when I passed the flag to my successor?*

-I had mixed emotions; I was the commander not quite a year, so I felt as though I had so many more things I wanted to try to accomplish—but, at the same time, the reason I had been re-assigned was selection for promotion; even so, I wasn't too wild about going to Korea and "joining the Army" for two years (even though, that, too turned out to be an extremely rewarding assignment). On the other hand, I felt extremely good about passing the flag to Rich O'Lear, my closest friend, whom I had great faith would make AFTAC even better.

So, a mix of feelings.

4. *What were the greatest sources of satisfaction to me as Command. Your greatest frustrations?*

-We made a lot of changes—organizational, procedural, philosophical—during my time, and seeing the reaction of people in the command to these changes was very satisfying. I always got a tremendous sense of pride when I would visit field units, and see, time after time, the great job that our small bands of folks were doing in some pretty God-forsaken places—and in a completely positive, cheerful, can-do fashion. I suppose my greatest frustrations were (1) running out of time, and (2) the Command not getting the recognition it deserved from the Base. (These are apart, of course, from the standard complaints of not enough funding, not enough people to take on other projects.)

5. *Do I recall any vignettes that occurred during my tenure as commander that particularly stand out in my mind now—good or bad?*

-I remember visiting the Det at Sonseca, and then trying to set up a "school house" after I got back from the trip—scrounging up school supplies for our children there who were home taught.

-I remember a trip Frank Hall and I took to the Far East, and our belated realization that we were flying over Vietnam on the leg from Bangkok to Manila (not sure why that stands out, but it does; maybe it was just that traveling anywhere with Frank Hall was a memorable experience).

-I remember Tom Ciambrone cost me a small fortune when he got my son Andy into model trains. I remember the struggle to get the flag pole installed in front of the headquarters building. I really don't recall any "bad" vignettes—at least none that I'd feel comfortable including here!

AFTAC ALUMNI 2001 REUNION DENVER COLORADO

The Colorado Chapter of the AFTAC Alumni Association has decided to host the 2001 reunion at the Doubletree Hotel (formerly the Red Lion Inn) at the old Stapleton Airport. This is the same facility where we hosted the 1996 reunion. The dates are 14 through 17, June, 2001. The reunion reservation form is attached to this newsletter. If you plan on attending please get it in as soon as possible for a head count. During the 1996 reunion we had to cancel the golf tournament due to only 7 interested parties. Copies of the form should also be available in the Florida chapter Post Monitor and the AFTAC home page. You can also call Ben Vlassick at 303-690-1239 or email at "aftacco@aol.com". Hope to see you there.