

**Geodetic Survey Squadron/Group, Newsletter #17, 14 December 2012**

**Greetings and Happy Holidays, Fellow Veterans of the Geodetic Survey Squadron/Geodetic Survey Group!**

The holiday season is already upon us, so I wanted to get off one more newsletter to all of you before the end of this, our fourth reunion year.

I have been a little distracted lately. This fall brought a double-whammy of personal bad news. First, my dear old Dad, who turned 92 last August, shortly after our reunion, passed away suddenly in mid-September. He went quickly without pain or suffering, although he had been hospitalized overnight with symptoms of a stroke. I was told that just hours before he died, he was joking with the doctors and flirting with the nurses! That's the way I like to remember him, in full Irish-charm mode. Dad was a veteran of WWII and served in the Philippines, and later in Korea, right after Japan surrendered. He was a sterling example of what Tom Brokaw called "The Greatest Generation." They endured the Great Depression, did their duty during WWII without fuss or fanfare, defeated the Fascists and Nazis, contained the Communist empire, while building the greatest economy in the world, turning a powerful America into an enduring force for good. It was the generation that rebuilt Europe and Japan, made the Interstate Highway System, ended legal racism, and landed 12 men on the moon, living by the selfless standard, "Ask not what your country can do for you..."

Dad and his generation are sorely missed...

Then, just a few weeks ago, Bonnie, my darling blue-eyed wife of 40 years, was diagnosed with a very rare cancerous tumor---*inside her right eye!* We are pleased to report that we caught it early, got the radiation treatment, and she is now in recovery. There's a high probability that she will retain her eyesight in that eye and little likelihood of recurrence. We felt especially blessed this past Thanksgiving with that good news.

***Christmas Hope***

In this season of hope, fellow GSS alum, **Bob Tyszka** (1983-86), who is still working for NGA at Edwards AFB and has been since 1992, sent along a YouTube video clip recalling the many Christmases that Bob Hope spent entertaining the troops with his USO variety shows, often in combat zones and near the line of fire. I always appreciated what Bob Hope did for the troops, but even more so, since I got to see one of his shows in 1968, quite by accident, while on TDY in Thailand from Cheyenne. Our team---the late **Roy Herbst** (OIC), **Jim Peek**, **Roger Poe**, the late **Ken Havasi**, the late **Herb Matson** and the late **Charlie Cramer** and yours truly (NCOIC)---had just finished a grueling four months of geodetic and astro surveys in the jungles of Thailand, working 18-hour days, six-and-a-half days a week. We returned to Nakhon Phanom Air Base (NKP) exhausted and bedraggled on a hot and dusty mid-December Sunday afternoon. We got there just in time to catch the itinerant Bob Hope USO show already in progress. It was the usual Bob Hope vaudeville shtick---corny jokes, silly skits, soft-shoe dances, and mainly *lots* of beautiful women---but it was so great to have this wonderful touch of home so far away. Remarkably, Bob Hope was still serving the troops in his 80s, a genuinely heart-felt, generous effort that spanned the years from before Pearl Harbor to Desert Storm. He was one of a kind, and the troops all loved him for what he did for so many decades, especially those who were far from home and in harm's way. To Bob Hope we say, "Thanks for the memories..."

With a grateful salute to **Bob Tyszka** for passing this to us, here's that retrospective YouTube piece on Bob Hope's shows for your own holiday enjoyment. If you have a dry eye afterward, you're more stoic than I am: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-HeETwJSUc&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-HeETwJSUc&feature=player_embedded).

***Feedback from the Trenches***

After my last newsletter reporting on the reunion, I heard from a few veterans who did not attend. In general, many of our veterans cannot, or *choose* not to make it to the reunions in Cheyenne for various reasons, but a few folks asked to have future reunions located somewhere other than Cheyenne. In fact, just after my last newsletter, Orlando popped up as a preferred venue by two people quite independently.

It's too late for 2015, as we have already decided on Cheyenne by a nearly unanimous hand vote of the attendees. Ironically, the 2015 reunion actually will celebrate the Headquarters' move *from Orlando to Cheyenne!*

However, beginning with the 2018 reunion, we should seriously think about 'spreading the wealth' and consider rotating our reunions to locations that offer easier access to our East Coast, Southern and Mid-Continent brethren and more entertainment options for attendees. Orlando certainly would be ideal for that and has the added touch of being the Squadron's original home.

#### **Other Suggestions**

A number of other suggestions came from attendees during the reunion, but in the interest of fairness, I want to open up the suggestion box to everyone reading this e-mail, whether you attended the most recent reunion or not. If you have ideas that you believe would make future reunions even better, please reply to this newsletter and let me know. I'll share them with the general audience and our planning committee for consideration.

#### **Off-Year Volunteer Opportunities**

I'm absolutely certain that there are *hundreds* more GSS/GSG veterans out there who have fallen off our radar. **In fact, I'm finding out about retired GSS/GSG veterans, who live right in Cheyenne and don't come to the reunions, because they don't know about them!!** And that's *despite all our newsletters, our website, and publicity in national magazines and Cheyenne newspapers!* However, I was not so good about getting out snail mail or making phone calls this last go 'round to those who have not caught up with the digital age yet. So, we will need someone to pick up the responsibility to inform those on the snail-mail roster about upcoming reunions. Calling, and especially, sending snail-mail to the hundred or more veterans without e-mail can be time-consuming, frustrating and tedious, especially when contact information is old or incomplete. We will probably do it only once or twice after the details of the next reunion are settled. Even so, we need *everyone's* help to identify and locate veterans still missing from our rosters, and to inform them about future reunions by all available means---e-mail, phone call, social media, and yes, even snail-mail. **That's why it's so important for us to have your up-to-date contact information.** Let's strive to get *all GSS/GSG veterans* into our big tent! ***If you are a fan and user of Face Book, Linked-In, Twitter, or other social media, we need you to reach out and "friend" other GSS/GSG veterans and direct them to us and our website!***

#### **Reunion Photos**

**Ron Nesti**, our able Webmaster, has already posted some reunion photos on the GSS/GSG website, ***but we need yours too! I know a lot of you, like Jim Peek and Gary Micheli, took photos during the reunion, so PLEASE send them to Ron to post on our website.***

Ron recommends sending your photos in jpeg format and to reduce them to "Web Large" image size, so they take up less disk space. If you don't know how to do that, just send them as is, and Ron will edit them. Please include proposed captions and/or the names of the people in your photos, if you know them. **To further save disk space, send *ONLY* your best shots and take out the ones that show only people's backs!**

Send them to Ron at [ronnesti@q.com](mailto:ronnesti@q.com) or by snail-mail to:

Ron Nesti  
10180 Oak Knoll Terrace  
Colorado Springs, CO 80920

#### **GSS/GSG Coin Design Contest for 2015**

Our very first commemorative coin was an unqualified success and sold out by the end of last May. I shipped out many for those who could not attend the reunion and distributed all the others at the reunion. That coin was minted in a limited edition of 100 and will not be reordered. However, **a poll taken during the reunion indicated an enthusiastic interest in a new coin for the 2015 reunion.** Since there is an apparent pent-up demand for commemorative coins, we will likely mint the next coin in greater numbers.

The 2015 reunion already has a theme---celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Squadron Hq's move from Orlando to Cheyenne---so that suggests some ideas for an interesting new coin design reflecting that theme. **To make it more interesting, we have decided to have a coin-design contest!** It will be open to all interested GSS/GSG veterans and their families. The winner will receive a nice prize (still to be determined)---and a free coin of his or her own winning design!

**Gordon Barnes**, designer of our first coin and also the Photomapper coin, already has a design in mind for the 2015 reunion, and he advised that we should open the contest early enough to form a panel of judges, evaluate submissions, select a winner, and meet the Mint's production and delivery schedule well in advance of the reunion. All good advice, but it's still too early. More contest details will come during 2013.

#### ***Photomapper Coins***

Speaking of Gordon...

Those of you who participated in the reorder of the Photomapper coin received your coins a long time ago. The coins arrived earlier than expected, and Gordon shipped all of them shortly after Labor Day to all who ordered in advance. Gordon sold another 12 coins at the fall AF Photomapper Association reunion in Seattle, so, last time I checked, **there were only three more Photomapper coins available for any latecomers who want one or more.** (See colored images of the coin and read Gordon's story of how it came to be at [www.1370th.org/coin.html](http://www.1370th.org/coin.html) .) You may order by contacting Gordon directly at [glbjlb@charter.net](mailto:glbjlb@charter.net).

As promised, Gordon has generously donated **\$208.43** to us to help kick-start our next reunion. This is the amount over and above his costs for minting and mailing the latest round of Photomapper coins. **Gordon, from all of your fellow GSS/GSG veterans, many thanks for your generosity!!**

#### ***Two More GSS/GSG Veteran on Our Deceased List***

We received notice of the August 16<sup>th</sup> death of **Lynwood E. Smith**, a veteran civilian chief of Data Reduction in our unit from 1976 to 1990 and served in other parts of DMA for much of his career. Our thanks to **Merilou Miller** for forwarding this information. Read Lynwood's obituary by clicking here: <http://bruggerfuneralhomes.com/obituaries/8804>.

**Dale Zahn** also passed away just a few days ago on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Dale retired as a Master Sergeant and was living in Utah. Ron Nesti will post the names and obituaries on our website's Deceased List.

#### ***More Veterans Added to Our Online Roster***

**Ron Nesti's** handiwork maintaining our spiffy website at <http://www.1381st-gss.freesevers.com/> continues to reel in former veterans who discover us while surfing the net. Here's a big welcome to newcomers, **William 'Karl' Geibel, Bruce Hanson, James Kasprzak and Robert B. "Bob" Smith.**

Karl was with GSS in both Cheyenne and Det 1, 1972-1976. Says Karl,

While at Warren, traveled all over the West on launch site check surveys and to perform the accursed ALS checks (Azimuth Laying Sets – remember them?) at SAC missile bases.

At Vandenberg, we surveyed all over the West Coast and the Pacific (Kanton Island – now Kiribati – and Johnston Island, both now officially abandoned, plus Oahu and Guam) for radar site and tracking station check surveys...

One evening at Vandenberg while performing a check survey of a launch site, we observed a Minuteman test launch at the adjacent launch site, less than half a mile away. A very unique experience from that proximity.

Best regards,  
Karl

Bruce has been with the unit for a long time, starting with DMA, 1974-76, then Cheyenne, 1976-1979, and is still on the job at NGA, Patrick AFB, FL, since arriving in 1979.

James served in Cheyenne in the Stellar Camera Branch from 1967 through 1970, where he was a Ground Radio Repairman, setting up and operating the PC 1000 System at various locations worldwide. Says Jim,

When I checked off the letters TDY on my dream sheet in Tech School, I didn't know what they stood for- I sure found out when I got assigned to the 1381<sup>st</sup>!

Bob served with the 1381<sup>st</sup> in Orlando from 1962-64 and has since gone on to an academic career, where he holds the impressive titles of Distinguished Research Professor, Emeritus Professor of Geophysics and Director, Yellowstone Seismograph Network and Coordinating Scientist, Yellowstone Volcano Observatory, Dept. of Geology and Geophysics, University of Utah. *Not bad*, for a guy who got his start as a geodetic surveyor with us!!

Karl, Bruce, James and Bob sent us their contact information, and they soon will have their names entered on our homepage in our "Hall of Fame" of living GSS/GSG veterans---**BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU?!**

We're still waiting to hear back from so many of you---like **Truitt Sims, "C.D." Brown, Jack Quirk, John and Lottie Kemp, and Leo Knoblauch**---for whom we have only partial information, and so many others, for whom we have only an e-mail address!

Check out <http://www.1381st-gss.freeservers.com/>.

**If you don't see your name included in 'The List' on our homepage, it's because you haven't sent us your contact information yet! Get your name on the roster!** Just copy and paste the following nine lines into a reply e-mail to me, and fill them out with your

NAME:

ADDRESS: (Include street or mailbox #, city, state and zip code)

PHONE:

E-MAIL ADDRESS:

MILITARY or CIVILIAN: (Answer "both" if you served the unit in both capacities)

HIGHEST RANK or POSITION in GSS/GSG:

START/END DATES OF SERVICE IN GSS/GSG: (Multiple entries, if you had more than one tour of duty)

ORGs: (i.e., where you worked and what you did)

OTHER: (Whatever else you want to share here about your time in the Squadron or since then.)

Remember, your information is protected by user name and password, so only other Squadron veterans with IDs and passwords will see it. (Ron will contact you with your ID and password when he loads your info on the website.) If there is something you don't want posted, let me know and Ron will leave it off the website. Meanwhile, I need to have your complete and up-to-date locator information, so I can keep you informed about the next reunion and what's happening among your old friends and colleagues.

We also invite you to share your digitized photos, "war stories", and TDY adventures from your time in the Squadron, and Ron will add those to our collection. There's also a blog spot for communicating with or searching for old friends and colleagues.

#### **Other Friends and Associates**

No doubt, some of you who attended the last two reunions have met "**Geodetic John**" **Nolton** and **Fred Johnson**. John is an ex-Marine, geodetic surveyor, friend of many Squadron vets, and a geodetic instrument collector. Fred is likewise an avid instrument collector and owns *both* a T4 and DKM3A astro-positioning theodolite, among others. While neither ever served in our beloved unit, both fall into the category of what we may call Geodetic Survey Squadron Wannabees! We welcome both to our kinship and to our future reunions as kindred spirits.

This "GSS envy" is spreading! Just this past month I have become acquainted with two more kindred spirits and geodetic instrument collectors, both of whom are well acquainted with the Squadron mission and some of its members. We welcome **David Lee Ingram** and **Nathan Drummond** to our mailing list and to our next reunion. Dave is a practicing surveyor in Virginia and the proud owner of his own T3 and T4. Nathan is a Flight Test Engineer in Huntsville, Alabama, working for the Missile Defense Agency with prior experience with the Air Force at the Western Ranges---Holloman, White Sands, Edwards, etc. Nathan is also an avid geodetic instrument collector and owner of many Wild instruments.

For those of you unfamiliar with the DKM3A, T3 and T4, you may see images of them (and other instruments used by the Squadron) on our website by clicking the links below directly:

[http://www.1381st-gss.freeservers.com/photo\\_index.html](http://www.1381st-gss.freeservers.com/photo_index.html) and

[http://www.1381st-gss.freesevers.com/external\\_links.html](http://www.1381st-gss.freesevers.com/external_links.html).

*Adios, Amigos!*

That's all I have for now. I will continue to send out these newsletters on random occasions for the near term, then more often, as we get closer to the next reunion.

***Meanwhile, whatever occasion you celebrate this month, here's wishing you all a very Merry Christmas or a Happy (pick one) Hanukkah, December Solstice, Boxing Day or Kwanza---and best wishes for 2013!***

***Looking forward to seeing you all in 2015!***

**Garrett**

Survey & Astro Branches

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.*

*David Thoreau, Surveyor & Philosopher*

*--Henry*