

REPORT & MINUTES OF THE 2010 4th ANNUAL 3973RD CDS LOS TOROS REUNION IN SAN DIEGO

Hello Los Toros!! Your San Diego Reunion Committee, Dianne Hughes, Dennis Galt and myself are pleased at the attendance and participation at the 2010 reunion September 15th-19th; all events and travel went smoothly; it appeared that everyone enjoyed the many sights of San Diego as Los Toros encountered other members at Mexican Village, the San Diego Zoo, Seaport Village, etc.

Our Reunion began with an informal 'Meet & Greet' registration cocktail social hour on Wednesday, Sept. 15th when several members assisted Dianne in stuffing greeting bags with agendas, maps, visitors' guides, name tags and the Reunion T-Shirts that were designed by Dennis. This is one of the most enjoyable times of the Reunion as we greeted friends that we have not seen since our 2009 Reunion; 'Meet & Greet' established a positive mood for the balance of our meeting.

The Meet & Greet attitude continued the next morning as it took a while for our enthusiastic group to take photos, exchange greetings and finally settle down----GOOD MORNING LOS TOROS!! was the greeting that initiated the first business meeting on Thursday morning, September 16th. It was noted that although SAC and 16th Air Force has completed their missions and no longer exist, although Moron Air Base is no longer a USAF air base-- the 3973rd Los Toros continues to reinforce their friendships through our Reunions.

There was a brief review of the Reunion agenda, of the military presence in San Diego and a review of the choice of venue for the Reunion that the membership voted for. San Diego's weather is particularly suited to Los Toros as Southern California has a temperate Mediterranean climate identical to that in Southern Spain. The San Diego Committee chose The Embassy Suites-San Diego Bay as it offered excellent social interaction opportunities, was in walking distance of our planned event venues and provided easy access to Seaport Village and its visitor trolley system. The conference rooms were well appointed and the perfect size for our group; Rosalie Foronda crafted table centerpieces which were decorated with the Los Toros' adopted logo-a Spanish Bull, the 3973rd CDS Shield and American Flags mounted in a field of blue; these centerpieces were also decorated our dinner tables aboard the USS Midway.

At the first 'business' meeting of our Reunion each member reviewed his time at Moron Air Base and his subsequent military and civilian careers. Included in these presentations are wonderful stories of members' families, it is a very special treat when spouses and other family members attend our Reunions. Two of our unit's former commanders also attended our event; former Base Deputy Commander for Security & Law Enforcement-Lt. Colonel (retired) David Wells and former 3973rd Combat Defense Squadron Commander-Captain (retired) Billy J. Mitchell and his wife; their attendance greatly enhanced our roll call. We welcomed a new member to our Reunion group; AFSFA member Jim Barcikowski and his wife; Jim arrived at the 3973rd in 1957 before there were aircraft assigned to the base! Jim's early tour reminded me of the 'Spanish Saga' Tiger Flight articles written by Tom Foster in 2006.

SAC's Moron Air Base was located approximately 30 miles from Sevilla, Spain. The beautiful city of Sevilla was the off-duty destination for all USAF Personnel stationed in the area. To help relive our time in Southern Spain we attended the Friday night Flamenco dinner/dance show at Cafe Sevilla which is located in the Gas Lamp District of San Diego; we enjoyed a boisterous evening of dining on Spanish food and wine. Eunice Hester even participated in a flamenco dance demonstration as the rest of the group assisted by keeping time with our flamenco hand-clapping. During the show the lead flamenco singer extended a welcome to "Los Toros de Moron de la Frontera! and our group responded with an enthusiastic cheer! The brief shuttle ride back to the hotel was also eventful, as Luis, the bus driver, turned on the bus' interior disco lights and played disco music at the highest possible volume!!

Saturday began with a business meeting which included brief reviews of finances and our website, with Rose Vaccone offering to assist with computer issues; also discussed was the introduction of a process for selecting our 2011 Reunion venue location. Lee Pinder suggested that each member submit to him a choice of location & brief description for that choice and time/season of the year for the Reunion. Lee has volunteered to compile the five most suggested locations, then research all aspects of each area: lodging, medical access, military and visitor attractions, etc. then distribute the five researched locations for our membership vote; that process was approved by our group. Please submit suggestions NO LATER than November 30th to: Lee Pinder: lpinder3@cfl.rr.com. or 549 Oliver Drive, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32168. Cell (386) 689-0136, Home (386) 402-7060.

'Los Toros de 3973rd' does not have a membership dues program; our sole source of income is the annual on-site raffle. Some raffle items were purchased from the Air Force Security Forces Association store, others are donated by individual members but most items are handcrafted by members' spouses. During the last year we lost our friend, Bob Taylor, to illness. But his support continued as Bob's wife, Sue, attended our Reunion and donated several knives and related items that had been handcrafted by Bob. A limited edition collectible USAF Buck knife was included in the raffle as were USAF themed bags, quilts, pillow shams, boxes and jewelry handcrafted by members' spouses Manuela Ellison, Esther Heath, Judi Mack and Eunice Hester. None of these crafters asks for cost of materials or compensation for their talent or for time worked; so all raffle funds result in direct donations to our treasury. Some Los Toros members who could not attend our Reunion mailed monies to purchase tickets and support the raffle; and our San Diego reunion attendees responded to our crafters' dedication by purchasing enough raffle tickets to result in our most successful Reunion raffle to date!! Many thanks to all of you for your support.

To complement our military reunion theme our final event on Saturday. September 18th included docent guided tours aboard the retired aircraft carrier and museum, the USS Midway. Three active US Navy aircraft carriers, the USS Reagan, USS Nimitz, USS Vincent and other active Navy ships were also in various berths in San Diego Harbor in preparation for San Diego's Fleet Week. The docents were veterans who reviewed the history and mission of the Midway and guided us throughout the ship including Captain's and Admiral's quarters, war conference room, engine room, bridge and the flight deck with it's complement of 25 US retired military aircraft and helicopters. We concluded the tours with an American Barbecue dinner which was served to our group on the Midway's sponson deck overlooking San Diego Bay. Our group does not pass up liquid refreshments so, after dinner, we

departed the Midway and walked to The Embassy Suites in time to enjoy the complimentary cocktail hour and continue socializing during our final evening together.

The Reunion in San Diego reminded us of the military service that binds us together while evoking memories of our experience of Spanish culture. Positive comments from our members show that we departed San Diego with good memories and a feeling that 'we are family' as we look forward to our 2011 Reunion---Viva Los Toros!!

Dan Foronda