

REPORT & MINUTES OF THE 2013 7th ANNUAL 3973RD CDS LOS TOROS REUNION IN SAN ANTONIO

At the Drury Hotel, Riverwalk on September 10th the 3973rd 2013 reunion began with our traditional 'meet and greet' session organized by members of the reunion committee; goody bags which included T-shirts, pins, name tags and agendas were distributed. 'Meet and greet' continued on Thursday morning with lively greetings and discussions as friendships were renewed with members we had not seen since our last reunions.

After the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag, a remembrance of members of our group who we lost during the last year was recited: John Cardinali, Curtis Elam and Dale Hunter. Mention was made that we served together at Moron Air Base about 50 years ago, it's a testament that we continue renewing our friendships at our annual reunions, so a brief history of when the concept of a 3973rd reunion was formed and how the first reunion was organized was reviewed:

Our military reunion was born of a family reunion. In 2005 the Tony Grace family conducted a family reunion that was attended by Dennis Galt, Bill Vickery and Willie Altemose. After that reunion the idea of contacting other Moron Air Base veterans was born. That idea developed over a period of years resulting in lots of dedicated and focused work. A brief article of the 2005 mini reunion was published in the Security Forces publication; Wayne (Sherlock) Hughart found many folks through internet searches; Otto Kosa developed and expanded the 3973rd website which also helped locate members and raise interest in a reunion.

Although enthusiasm for a Reunion was building no one was actually taking the lead in assembling one until Janicegail Slone, (and Larry) volunteered to help but was convinced by Bill Vickery not to 'help', but to organize the reunion. Janicegail then contacted Nona & Nolan Watson and enlisted their help. Janicegail spent hours contacting members by phone, conducting mailings and producing printed materials, the Watsons researched venue locations, hotels and reunion activities. After Savannah, Georgia was selected as our 2007 reunion venue; this first committee working with their own money, with no prior reunion experience, had only three months to complete the organization of the first and best attended of the 3973rd Reunions! Forty plus years had passed since we served together at Moron Air Base, two years had passed since that Grace family reunion in 2005!

That first committee and subsequent reunion committees have brought us to our seventh reunion and our second reunion in San Antonio both Lackland AFB tours were researched and organized by Dianne Hughes, who has assisted all subsequent reunion committees. Our group continues to grow with the participation of first time attendees: Oscar Gonzales, Mateo Salas and Fred & Michele Madden.

We enjoyed a catered Texas Longhorn BBQ lunch; the balance of Thursday's meeting was dedicated to our veterans who were invited to review his time at Moron Air Base, his military and civilian careers and the sharing of family stories, this is always a very informative and fun part of our gatherings. The meeting ended with a review of our agenda and a reminder of the Friday morning departure for our much anticipated tour of Lackland Air Force Base

The morning of Friday, September 13th our bus arrived at the Lackland AFB main gate; as we waited for clearance to enter we watched Security Forces in action as they searched and handcuffed a person and transported him away, we were not told the reason for his detention. Friday's are basic training graduation days; as we entered the base we could see a graduating basic training group marching at the parade ground.

We were escorted to the Security Forces Academy complex which is the largest training facility on the base. The Academy is so large that it now located at a separate location adjacent to the base proper. The Academy includes a large simulated alert aircraft ramp with several F-16 fighter aircraft for security training, a multiple story hotel with furnished rooms for urban security forces training and a furnished home for law enforcement home law enforcement training. We were greeted by a Lt. Colonel who was Director of the Security Forces Academy and a group of very professional and very friendly security forces personnel, the director cited the challenging nature of training for security in the current world and for unknown future challenges. By groups we participated in computerized simulated law enforcement/security situations that were projected on a large wall screen that required us to make quick decisions on whether to fire our weapons.

At the simulated aircraft ramp several K-9 personnel, male & female, using two vehicles demonstrated an arrest of suspects in a truck and a demonstration of dogs locating 20 lbs. of marijuana hidden in the wheel well of an aircraft.

After a great buffet style lunch at Lackland's Gateway Club we visited the Airman's Museum where Dianne had arranged for the curator to escort us through the museum's history and displays of training at Lackland Air Force Base. We also toured an old barracks which had been saved from demolition and was being restored as an addition of the Airman's museum. A visit to the large base PX store concluded an impressive day at Lackland, an Air Force facility we can be very proud of.

Saturday, September 14th was the final and a very important day of our reunion as it is the day we select the location of our 2014 reunion and when we conduct our fund raising raffle. Locations nominated for our next reunion were: Las Vegas, Savannah, New Orleans and Orlando. After assurances that ---"What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!"---Las Vegas was voted as the 2014 reunion location. Bob Allen, a long time Las Vegas resident, who had made a presentation on the Las Vegas area which could include tours of Hoover Dam and the Grand Canyon, volunteered to lead the 2014 reunion committee, Dan Foronda and Dennis Galt who reside in Southern California volunteered to participate as committee members. Viva Las Vegas!

After a group phone call to Nolan (and Nona) Watson to express a group "get well" message; our Raffle Committee conducted a lively and successful raffle. The 3973rd Los Toros does not have a dues program so our annual raffle is our sole fundraising event, these funds are used for various reunion expenses which may include bus transportation, lunches, goody bags, etc. Thanks to member donations and the efforts of our raffle committee we raised \$660.00 for our group funds.

The wonderful 2013 Reunion at San Antonio/Lackland was called to a close with free time to further enjoy fellowship and San Antonio's Riverwalk; thanks to Marie Katrancha for taking detailed notes during our meetings and activities; we all look forward to meeting again in Las Vegas, Nevada-----Viva Los Toros! ~ Dan Foronda