



556 SMS ASSOCIATION OCTOBER 2006 NEWSLETTER

Greetings to members of the greatest Strategic Missile Squadron there ever will be. Bar none. This is our after reunion newsletter as is our custom.

For the many that missed the reunion in Cheyenne you missed a great time as we joined the AAFM group once again. Here is a brief recap:

Most of us arrived on Wednesday and enjoyed the welcome reception that evening in the dining hall. Many were there as it was the largest turn out for the AAFM meeting ever. Still, there was plenty of room to meet and greet each other.

On Thursday we had the tour of Warren AFB including a briefing by, I believe, the Operations Commander. The highlight, at least for me was the training silos for the Minuteman and Peacekeeper missiles. Kind of took us back to the days at Plattsburgh and going down in the "hole". That evening was dinner at the hotel. Since Edie and I did not attend I cannot comment except that the cuisine was Mexican.

Friday was the tour of Cheyenne. It included among other things a tour of the Historic Governors Mansion, the Capitol and lunch at the historic Plains hotel. We then were free to visit the train station and wander about town and go back to the hotel not later than 1500. That evening was the Dinner at the Museum of the West. This was another event I did not attend but heard it was enjoyable from those who did.

Saturday was the business meetings in the morning and the Atlas Tour in the afternoon. This was the one SNAFU of the reunion. The AAFM general membership meeting ran over and since many of our group went on the Atlas tour we had to hurry our business meeting. We did get through the agenda though. The key points of the meeting were that Al Matazat agreed to become the new VP. Thanks Al. And we agreed to meet again with the AAFM in two years. I think with more time we would have looked at different options but with trying to get through the agenda and only about 20 plus there we determined this to be the best option. One note, we were glad to have in attendance Col Kretzschmar. His wife Suzanne and sons were there with him.

One note on the Treasurer's report: The expenses for the reunion were \$667.44. This included \$192.35 for pens and \$475.09 for Custom Design Note pads. Each member at the business meeting was given two pads and two pens. The note pads have our patch at the top with "556 SMS Association Reunion 2006 Cheyenne, Wyoming" next to it. Because of the low turnout for the reunion we are offering the pads and pens to members for the low amount of \$5.00 plus \$1.50 postage etc. They are nice mementos of the reunion and we have plenty to sell. If you would like a set send me the costs and I will have Melvin mail them out to you. At the same time you may want to include your annual dues of \$6.00 if you need to.

Once again if you could, please send me your correct address, phone number, email address and job title while in the 556th. Several email addresses I have are incorrect and I keep getting rejects when I email info to you. We will try to squeeze all info on the membership list.

Thanks to all for your support through the years.

Bruce Raleigh
Sec/Treasurer

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PS For those who asked about what happened to my physical condition, here is an excerpt from our last Christmas family newsletter which explains it:

"This has been an eventful year for the Raleigh house. Bruce had taken up running a couple of years ago and competed in several 5K and 8K races. Last winter he started noticing tightness around the knees and thought it was due to the running. It progressed to the point he was having trouble walking. In June our physician sent him to the U of M emergency room because it had progressed and she was very concerned. After 7 days, 4 MRs and a 6-hour spinal angiogram they diagnosed a very rare condition: dural AV fistula which in lay-speak is a malformation of the blood vessels feeding his spinal cord. He had surgery July 13 and has had a very long road to recovery. We

are told it will take a year and a half before we know how much better he will get. He still walks very stiffly with a cane, and has numbness below the waist. (Sometimes that is the most irritating effect- not being able to feel ones' seat on the chair or feet in the shoes!) We have so much to thank the Lord for - my entire list would be very long! We are grateful for a sharp family doctor, for being directed to an expert in this condition, for a relatively early diagnosis (some people spend years going from one doctor to another and end up paraplegic!), and much, much more."

THOUGHTS FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT'S DESK.

Sounds impressive, huh? But I am proud to be the incoming president and hope that we all have a successful two years,

First, I want to thank Fred Crytzer for his tour as president of our association for the last two years, and Bruce Raleigh for his continuing work as our full-time, in-office-for-life work as our secretary and treasurer.

Our Cheyenne reunion was successful and enjoyable. Cheyenne, WY isn't on the most popular and well-traveled tourist route in America, but those who made the trip were welcomed as part of the Association of Air Force Missileers (AAFM). A couple other former Atlas and Titan squadrons attended, also keeping their identities.

This is the second time, I think, that we joined the AAFM guys (youngsters?), and I was at first not all that much in favor of joining them for our reunions. But after seeing the benefits of their very much larger group, the influence they have in the Air Force, (and letting that organization do all the logistics of putting on a reunion), I am a big fan of continuing to trailer them. We, the 556th troops attending, voted to join the AAFM for ours and their 2008 reunion. First choice for location appears to be the Washington, D.C. area. We will have more on that as the plans develop.

Talking to the president of the AAFM, Charlie Simpson, I learned that his contacts and AAFM influence can get much better hotel and touring accommodations than we could on our own: for instance, he said he could get the same hotel rates in the Washington, D.C. area as he got in Cheyenne, WY!! In addition, because of the influence of the retired and active duty members of the AAFM, he can get very high level briefings on the status and activities of our Air Force in our world today. With our smaller number of members, and attendees, the economic clout of their numbers will save us a good deal in hotel costs, get us "extra goodies" that we could not negotiate on our own. And I doubt we could get a current four-star MAJCOM commander, former astronaut, to be the guest speaker at our 556th-only banquet. So, I am now convinced that joining the AAFM is a positive to our program and pocketbooks, and look forward to what we might expect if we can get the next reunion in Washington, D.C.!!

I hope that all of you will begin thinking about attending our 2008 reunion. We can retain our squadron identity, have our own meetings, our own tables at the banquet, even our own hospitality room for BSing about whatever.

Here's to a good two years for all of you. If you have thoughts about anything that Bruce Raleigh and I do, please let us hear from you.

God Bless America, Our Troops, and Our Commander-in-Chief.

Melvin Driskill/MCCC, Crew R-65.
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OK, here's the drill! The above newsletter went to Col Kretzchmar. This note goes to everyone else. When you are out next time stop and get a birthday card. Make a note to send it to Col K on the 15th of November. Because on the 18th of November he will be having his "94th" birthday. Let's make it a great one for him by swamping him with cards. I know he would be thrilled if we did.

LTC Elmer Kretzschmar
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Thanks in advance.