

COMMANDER'S RECALL

Background: In light of the ongoing process that is the command, a desire to record the impressions of this "from the top" and the notion we are entering a new millenium, we asked previous commanders to give us a synopsis of their time with the command. We received positive responses from almost every commander to include Gen's **Silliman, Gordon, Clapper, O'Lear, Bingham** and **Shaffer** and Col's **Meisenheimer**, and **Wigington**. We thank these gentlemen for taking the time and effort to share their enlightening remembrances.

We have respectfully requested inputs from AFTAC's two most recent 'past' Commanders, Col's Beatty and Dettmer. We feel confident they will reply as they find the opportunity in their busy active-duty lives.

We look forward to being able to pass on their 'Commander's reCall' ...

I REMEMBER...

LRD HISTORY BY THOSE WHO WERE THERE

PREPARED FROM READER INPUTS We solicit your **unclassified** memories of your career (events, people, etc.). Forward these to us at 'chrisjohn@juno.com' or ATTN Remembrances column, to the Alumni Address (see left column, page 2) - we will publish them as in the order received and as soon as we can. Thanks for your help.

No Inputs Received

BS (BARELY SUBSTANTIATED) TALES!

PREPARED FROM READER INPUTS. We solicit **unclassified humorous** tales about LRD events and people - recognizing these anecdotes may be Barely Substantiated (BS). Forward your BS to us at 'chrisjohn@juno.com' or ATTN BS column, to the Alumni Address (see left column, page 2) - we will publish them in the order received and as soon as we can. Thanks for your help.

Frank Calenda

EMAIL, 3/27/02

In the mind of the average person, AFTAC's 'cold places' conjures up images of gently formed snowdrifts, icebergs, and the rosy cheeks of the Eskimo peering out from within his furry hood. Eskimos everywhere it's cold? Well some people really do think that.

When I received notification of my impending assignment (it was the day after I returned from a 4 month TDY out of the 1155th), it conjured up images of a frozen nose, frostbit toes and cold, wet, clammy clothes. I didn't even like the sound of the word 'cold.' Somewhere in my hazy mind, it was also mentioned that it was a remote tour. All I could think of was that I finally was going to experience that cold day in hell that everyone talks about.

SSgt **Bill Bridges** was there at the airport to pick me up. I called it an airport but it more resembled major road construction. More like a mud path surrounded by more mud. The control tower was a little hut that one det person would go to on plane-day. The pilot would radio in when he was about a half hour away

and ask for a current weather report. It would go something like this, "Misty Mountain tower, this is Air Force One Fiver Three, over." "Go ahead One Fiver Three." "Please report on local conditions for a 30 minute arrival."

At this point, the door to the hut would be opened and the individual would stick his head out and review the, "local conditions". "Air Force One Fiver Three, this is Misty Mountain tower." "Go ahead tower." "One Fiver Three, right now I can't see beyond the door, we're having a little snow storm." "Right tower, should I return to home base?" "Hell no, Sir. You should be able to make it." "Tower, what's the wind reading?" "About 65 knots crosswind, One Fiver Three." "Still think I can make it?" "Sure." And so it went, with the plane nosing sideways at a 45 degree angle and the final touch-down where the wheels never spun, they just kind of slid to the end of the mudway. Welcome to our site.

At this point, I stuck my head out the door of the plane and was introduced to something called a white-out. It's kind of like looking at absolutely nothing. How the pilot found this place still causes me to lie in bed at night wondering.

That was 25 years ago. Bill took pity on me once we were comfortably seated in the det vehicle with the broken heater. I think his words were, "Don't worry Frank, it only gets worse." It was October and winter was coming on. I couldn't wait! Bill couldn't get the smile off his face; I was to be his replacement.

We headed for the station, which was aptly named Misty Mountain. God, what a sight to behold. God, this land was so diverse and intimidating. GOD, what am I doing here? Did I get You mad or something?

Arriving at the top, we passed the recording station and continued straight for the central complex. I noticed large telephone poles spaced about 50 yards from each other running from our station to the complex. My frozen brain only slightly registered the fact that there appeared to be a thick rope about 15 feet above the ground (mud) running from pole to pole. That's certainly not unusual, is it?

I settled into a certain routine and almost found myself enjoying the diverse and interesting life in a virtual no-man's-land. We had comfortable, well appointed rooms. A pool table. A fully equipped dark room. A small HAM radio station and a fully stocked club and bar facility. I said, "almost." We had to co-exist with the Navy. Well, there goes our little touch of heaven.

Snow stayed away for about two weeks. Then one morning when I attempted to leave the complex to walk to work, the door in the foyer wouldn't open. As I stood there cussing the Navy facility maintenance man, Bill came walking down the hall. He asked what my problem was. I told him the damn door was stuck closed. He still had that smile on his face when he pointed to the top of the foyer. It occurred to me that he wanted me to climb the little ladder, that I hadn't

ever noticed before and push up the little door at the top. As I peered out, I saw an endless stretch of white, smooth snow, and, facing towards the station, I saw the reason for those poles with the ropes. The ropes were now about arm-pit level and if one would take the time to don a pair of snowshoes and follow those ropes, they would lead right to the recording station.

As I remember, I called in sick that day! Only 11 months, 14 days, 18 hours, 27 minutes and 15 seconds before I can go home.

Jon Kempe
'The Missing Plug'

In the early 1970's our research arm thought we could improve our seismic capability using instruments designed for bore holes or wells. The short period type of seismometer designed for the borehole had been used very successfully. We now were going to use the "instrument from hell"; a long period tri-axis bore hole seismometer.

Geotech, our main supplier for this type equipment, just happened to have designed these "things" and would sell them to our organization for a pittance. The best place in the world to field test an array of these things would be in Korea, close to manufacture support, many available skilled technicians, easy communication, etc. The complete package consisted of three instrument modules (orientated in a 120 degrees array), a hole lock and cable connector modules. The whole package was 10' long, 12" in diameter and weighed around 250 lbs. To raise and lower this monster into a bore 150' deep required a bi-pod, portable electric hoist or a hand hoist, a portable generator (MiteLite) and a bunch of ten foot aluminum connecting rods. I, little Jon, and **Hartshorn** from Squadron, **Watwood** from Depot and several of the Detachment folks were enjoying raising/lowering these things over a period of several months attempting to get this system operational.

One day, I happened to be in the detachment building when we got a radio call from ROF "C", indicating that the instrument was installed and the three bags of pith balls (pea sized Styrofoam balls) did not fill the hole to the top. Watwood inquired, 'how far did you push the plug in?' What plug, was the answer. We tried everything to get the instrument package back out, but the pith balls and the cable assembly would jam everything tight in the borehole. OLE Watwood (to whom I owe many beers) came up with the idea to flood the bore with water and float the balls out of the way. It worked!

After retiring from the USAF, I worked for the US Geological Survey (USGS) for a number of years which allowed me to use many surplus AFTAC items in the USGS earthquake research programs. The USGS scientific staff did spot some of these long period seismometers on a surplus list - boy, did I ever

express opinions on why we should not think about using this type of instrument, even if we can get them for free.

WEST COAST CHAPTER

DEPOT FALLOUT

Email: TOD.Alumni@bigfoot.com

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Elected: Chairman of the Board, **Rodney Hinkle**

President, **Al Pavik**-Vice, **Joe Johnson**

Director At Large, **Orv Pritchard**

Secretary, **Marge Iske**-Treasurer/Membership, **Bart Carter**

Appointed: Newsletter Editor, **Dale Klug**

Assistant Treasurer, **Frank Goodreau**

Winter Social - What a Turnout!

DEPOT FALLOUT NEWSLETTER, APRIL (VIA EMAIL, 4/15/02), DALE KLUG

What a turnout we had at the Luau Gardens in February for our Winter Social. Fifty-seven of us attended. This was the second time we went there and the food and service was just as good as before. A few of the regular attendees weren't there, but we had a number of familiar people we hadn't seen in quite a while. Walt and Judy **Siemiller** came from Fallon, Nevada, and Jim and Colleen **Reed** from Santa Rosa. A special thanks to Al/Ann **Pavik** for planning and setting this up.

COLORADO CHAPTER

ECHOES

Email: bdunn@qadas.com

CHAPTER OFFICERS

President, **Jack Smith**-Vice President, **Earl Pierce**-Treasurer,
Bill Schmied-Newsletter Editor, **Bryce Dunn**

Letters

Mary Welch writes: Heart-broken to read about the loss of Ben in your latest newsletter. I moved to the mid-West in November, and had not gotten the news until the Newsletter reached me at the end of February. He will be missed.

(Mary now lives in Rapid City, South Dakota. I would have to say that's a part of the real West and not too far from Denver. Welcome and hope you can make it down here for our picnic in June.)

Dick and Gayla Platt write: Greetings from Booger Woods (a.k.a. Corsicana), Texas. We sure do miss Denver but we are really enjoying things like less people, less traffic, and less noise. We are still renting in town while our retirement home is built out on Lake Richard Chambers. The lake is over 44,000 acres of water with a 300 mile shoreline and is still in the early stages of development. Lot preparation is going slow but we hope to be in by the end of August. We are tentatively planning a trip back to Denver in June to include the AFTAC picnic.

Ya'll come and see us, hear. We'll treat you so many ways, you're bound to like one of them.