

COMMANDER'S RECALL

Background: In light of the ongoing process that is AFTAC, a desire to record the impressions of this "from the top" and the notion we are nearing the end of a millenium, we asked previous AFTAC commanders (for whom we had addresses) to give us a synopsis of their time with the command. So far we have the following positive responses: Gen's Silliman, Gordon, Clapper, O'Lear, Bingham and Shaffer and Col's Meisenheimer, Wigington and Beatty. We thank these gentlemen for agreeing and hope that others will "reCall" and "jump on-board."

We feature replies (one an issue) in the chronological order of their time of command - reCalls in previous issues, Gen (Ret) Silliman, Gen (Ret) Gordon, Col (Ret) Meisenheimer, Gen's (Ret) Clapper, O'Lear and Bingham...at this time we feature...



GLEN D. SHAFFER
BGEN, USAF
COMMANDER
JUL '94- AUG '96

GEN SHAFFER CHOSE THE QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT FOR HIS INPUT

1. How would you characterize AFTAC as an institution? Its people? Its contributions? No doubt it is a National Treasure, one-of-a-kind in the world organization...how else could you characterize it? It has a superb national and international reputation. It has an unequalled alumni organization. It has never let the nation down.

2. How did you feel about the job when you assumed command? Honored, mostly, that I was following in some great footsteps; honored that I was being entrusted with such a significant capability; humbled by all the smart, dedicated people who were so much more experienced and capable than I yet willing to be commanded by me. All I knew about AFTAC when I reported in was what was in the Patrick AFB phone book description. Every day I went to work at AFTAC I pinched myself to be sure it was true.

3. How did you feel about the job when you passed the flag to your successor? Very proud, proud of AFTAC's past AND its future, proud of its remarkable people. I regretted leaving the job more then any I ever left. I also hated to leave Florida! But, one of my favorite moments at AFTAC was in my last day there- when at the end of the change of command ceremony I watched the entire uniformed command march off the ramp...they looked so good

and so proud of being in the USAF.

4. What were the greatest sources of satisfaction to you as commander? Your greatest frustrations? SATISFACTION:... was greatest in working with the people who cared so much for the mission and each other...in the great world-wide locations I was able to visit...in living at Patrick! Satisfaction in helping to re-instill a sense of belonging in the Air Force, satisfaction in helping to open new operational doors, satisfaction in unit pride...

THE BIGGEST SOURCE OF SATISFACTION WAS IN THE PEOPLE OF AFTAC. MCA-B was a thrill to watch and be part of. Same with many others, too many to mention. Consolidating the ops center...WINDOWS in the ops center. Tearing down walls-even though I know this was unpopular. Just walking around was a sheer joy.

FRUSTRATIONS; mostly when people bickered with each other...usually because of historic inter-departmental 'feuds.' Frustration also in me never getting a good handle on the science! Frustration I never learned to play golf. Frustration I never got off the ground in a WC 135. Toughest decision was closing TOD--- and still have never seen a more selfless organizational response to change than those at TOD showed through the decision and execution process. Ever.

5. Do you recall any vignettes that occurred during your tenure as Commander that particularly stand out in your mind now--good and bad? When it dawned on me just how hard it is to do what AFTAC does! This usually happened once a day!

--Being 'out lasted' by Frank Pilotte in any late night social engagements

--How well AFTACers took to formation runs, open ranks inspections and retreats, 'militarizing' of AFTAC

--Seeing our Detachment in uniform at the formal hand-over ceremonies in Sonseca...historic!

--Chiefs/Eagles Volleyball (ouch!)

--Beach formation runs

--Two hurricane evacs; one hit, one miss, one totaled POV

--Climbing mountains for a hat, exciting helo rides, tapas, treks, great people and hosts at our dets.

--Fridays at the Outback

6. Any additional comments you would like to add: Just that one of AFTAC's greatest strengths is its alumni that serve it so well and preserve its heritage.

I Remember...

AFTAC History by those who were there

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

This is a letter Bill **Braukman** sent us following the 'Buster Jangle' reunion in May. If you recall, Jerry **Collins** wrote a very fine article with background on the reunion and gave us the details of the celebration. At the time of writing, Bill did not know Jerry was submitting an article and thus wrote one of his own. Having done that, he did not really feel it was necessary to publish his letter. However, we implored to his good nature believing he has emphasized certain things, and recalled certain equipment detail, that make it a very interesting 'I Remember' article and adds to the history of AFTAC - besides, who can read 'too much' about important events (we have attempted to extract any duplicate information that Jerry already covered).

Fond memories; Fifty years ago some six hundred young basics entered electronics training at Keesler AFB, MS. Nine months later the top 10% were selected to become part of a new organization known as the 1009th Special Weapons Squadron. We were sent to Washington DC. and then to the Naval Ordnance Laboratory, Silver Spring MD, for training in the construction of "soup can" seismometers and the operation of "wind -up" clocks (Ulysses Narden Chronometers \$600.00 ea.), Perkin-Elmer DC amplifiers and Esterline Angus Paper recorders.

After about three months of living in tents and eating Marine Corp. leftovers we were loaded on a couple of C46 transports and flown to San Bernadino, CA. There we were issued a W.W.II weapons carrier, a tent, radio, transmitter, and either one vertical or three "soup cans," vertical and two horizontal home made seismometers. Generators, gas cans, water jugs etc. implied that we were not going to Hollywood. Since most of the Top Secret clearances had been approved on an interim basis we were briefed that we were on our way to the Nevada Test Site. Some 40 sites had been picked to locate our instruments on a north-south line from Kingman, AZ, to Reno, NV.

The test series was code named Buster Jangle. Only the news media, Life magazine and the rest of the world were privy to these "secret tests." We were told not to write home about our adventures. The series was seven atmospheric blasts, 5 air-drops and two tower shots.

Recently we decided to have a mini reunion and return to what is now known as Camp Mercury, Nevada Test Site, operated by the Department of Energy. Thanks to the efforts of several members,

plans were completed and in spite of the "red tape" imposed by the government, an all day tour was arranged for attendees and wives.

The Nevada Test Site consists of over 1,000 square miles. No firearms, cameras, binoculars or recording equipment were allowed on the tour. In 1951, during the actual tests, we could take all the pictures we wanted! Today the site is being maintained "just in case" we decide to resume testing (?) and probably more than a thousand people still work there and it obviously involves mega-bucks today. All in all an outstanding time was had by all.

A BS (Barely Substantiated) Tale!

PREPARED FROM YOUR INPUTS. We solicit **unclassified humorous** stories about AFTAC 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 as soon as we can. Thanks for your help.

No input this issue

Where are ya?!!!

PREPARED FROM YOUR INPUTS. Where we attempt to get you, the alumni reader, to let us know "where ya are" and "what'cha been doin'" - Forward these updates to us at 'chrisjohn@juno.com' or ATTN Updates column to the Alumni Address (see left column, page 2) - we will publish them as soon as we can. Thanks for your help.

Colorado Springs, CO

00.10.26

In the course of many events in my recent life, I have now realized that we have lost touch with AFTAC Alumni and also that I haven't sent in dues for some time. This letter is written to inform you of my current address and to enclose a check to cover some back dues.

I did attend the 50th reunion at Patrick several years back, but sorta fell by the wayside since. I did see there my former boss, Dr. Carl Romney, and his wife along with several alumni from the time I spent in AFTAC during 1960-65. My R&D work ended up primarily in the VELA-Uniform B-Systems research. In retrospect, I have missed receipt of your Post-Monitor. I'd like to receive any recent issues you may have on hand.

My retirements from the Air Force and The Aerospace Corporation career were major events in our lives. Both of these long periods bring back many good memories. In fact, though, in recent years we have dealt with my wife, Barbara, going through a bout with lymphoma cancer. She is in full remission for almost two years, now having

Remainder of this article not available