

## Winter 2012 FC Past President's Final Notes

Well another reunion has come and gone and by all accounts it was a very good reunion. We had a full agenda for all 4 days of the reunion. Thursday night started out with authentic Thai food at the local Bangkok House.

**Friday morning the 18th Flight Test Squadron (FLTS) hosted us.** We were picked up by bus and taken to Hurlburt Field for a tour of their facilities. A briefing and a tour of the new Gunships on the Flight Line were also conducted. After a BBQ lunch provided by the 18th, we were taken to the Base Air Park where the 'Shadow' and 'Stinger' Monuments are located for a small memorial for our fallen hero's. The word from our participants was that "we were treated with much respect, the men and women of the 18th FLTS were professional and dedicated, and they went out of their way to make us feel welcome and appreciated."

The **Friday Meet & Greet** was a house full with plenty of food for all, and Stormin' Norman providing the music.

Saturday was also a full day starting with our **Membership Meeting** in the morning. Although we did get 12 New Gunshippers to come to this reunion our membership is getting smaller. A new Board was elected and a change to our DOC's was made to make room for more board members. We added 3 new members-at-large and changed the Board Member-at-Large position to a Past President position, creating a total of 8 board members. Your new **Association President is Wayne Laessig, Vice President; Bob LaRosa, Past President; Gus Sininger, Secretary; Mike Drzyzga, Treasurer; Doug Wohlgamuth, and the 3 Members- at-Large are Jim Dunn; Joe Goryl and Jim Mattison.**

Additionally, A VA representative gave a briefing on benefits for the spouses and us.

We then all car-pooled to a local field for the **flight of the AC-119K model gunship.** The model was originally built by John Hupe back in 1972, briefly flew then crashed. He shipped it home with the idea of rebuilding it some day, but as we all know things get in the way of best laid plans. So with the reunion in Fort Walton this year Lee Kyser thought it would be great to see it fly again. Lee made contact with John and convinced him to bring it to Fort Walton before the reunion after making contact with a Radio Control Model Club to see if they would help rebuild the plane. They said they would and they did just that. With all of us holding our breath, John got to participate in the flying demonstration by using dual controls. He was able to fly it and bring it in for a successful landing. After the flight, John said he would donate the model to the 18th FLTS for display in their building entrance.

Saturday evening was **Banquet night at the Elk's Club** just down from the Hotel. With no guest speaker this year we announced our new Board Members and held a raffle. Association member Ron Soderquist donated a new, customized, Competition Match AR-15 rifle. The AR-15, which was on display, will be raffled off at our reunion in San Antonio, Texas in 2013.

I gave out three awards, two **Above and Beyond Awards for outstanding contributions,** and one Magellan award. One Above and Beyond Award was given to **Ron Soderquist,** which was delayed from last year, as he was not at that reunion. One was also given to **Tony "Pakman" Pakutinski.** The **Magellan Award** is given to the one that travels the farthest to get to our reunions, and that one went to **Henry "Buck" Buchanan.**

Sunday was Golf day but I think they got rained on and I don't know who won it. The Gulf Shrimp Broil had to be held in the Breakfast area of the Hotel, but boy was it good.

All in all it was a moving reunion, with everything coming off without a hitch. It was very gratifying for me to see another successful get-together.

Although I'm no longer your Association President, I am still on the Board and in the mix of things as always. And as always, I look forward to seeing you all at **Reunion XIV, in San Antonio.**

**P.S. In this newsletter there is more information on the AR-15 Raffle!**

*Yours in the Brotherhood*

**Gus Sininger, Past President.**