



AMTA SEMI-ANNUAL NEWS

Volume 1 Issue 5

July thru December 2006

From the AMTA President.....

A lot going on since the last AMTA Semi-Annual News release. The AMTA Reunion in September 2006, which was one of our best. The Omaha, Nebraska reunion was actually held at the Holiday Inn & Suites, Council Bluffs, Iowa. The reunion lasted three full days and the action was non-stop. The golf tournament was rained out but no one noticed as it permitted us to take an afternoon and catch our breath. John Hurst and his help did a great job and for those who attended, you know what I mean. I am sure the editor will fill you in on everything about the reunion. A few of us came home on Saturday and we departed for San Antonio, Texas the following Thursday to join our fellow AMT, Delano Jolly who was inducted into the FTVA Hall of Honor. We are proud of Del and he is more than deserving of the recognition. Del is our Vice-President and has been a crucial part in helping to promote the AMTA and keep in growing each year.

The AMTA membership continues to expand as we presently have 124 active members and twelve associate members. Fifteen new members joined in 2006. We have lost four members since the AMTA started in June 2004. I would encourage everyone to speak with their fellow AMT friends about

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Omaha 2006 AMTA Reunion...

The 2006 AMTA reunion is a thing of the past. All who attended seemed to have an enjoyable time and renewed old acquaintances. During the reunion we had more AMTs than before, but we are looking to do even better in 2007.

John Hurst and those who helped are to be commended for a job well done. The hotel and location were excellent. The golf outing was cancelled due to rain but not to worry as, the golfers still had a great time.

Larry Meade made arrangements for transportation for a tour of one of the RC-135's. We traveled about 50 miles west of Omaha for the aircraft tour. On the way back from the aircraft tour arrangements were made to stop at the SAC Aerospace Museum as it was on the way back to the hotel.

Retired Colonel Bill Grimes was our guest speaker at the banquet. Mr. Grimes spoke about the shoot down of the C-130 out of Turkey in September 1958 and the seventeen men that lost their lives that day. He spoke of being able to return to the site where the aircraft crashed and visiting with some of the local villagers.

Again this year we had a silent auction, with many beautiful pieces of



2006 Reunion Group Picture after the Aircraft and Museum tours....

craftsmanship. Many that Mike McLaughlin had made in his shop in Comfort, Texas. Several others donated items that they had made or had purchased to put into the silent auction.

For all of you that didn't get to attend this year there are many great pictures post on the AMTA website at www.amtassociation.org/index.htm go take a look. And those of you that did go you can still take a look and relive the great time that we had there.

Remember in 2007 the reunion will be held in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. We are all looking forward to having a bigger turn out than ever. Also remember that the 2007 reunion will be the last to be held until 2009. We will be having reunions only on odd number years starting in 2007.

Bill Wilson is the 2007 Reunion Chairman. I'm sure that Bill would appreciate any help that those of you that live in the area could offer. So if you are interested in getting involved and being part of putting together the biggest and best reunion yet. Contact Bill Wilson at fongow@yahoo.com.

*Jim Hargrove
Newsletter Editor*

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2006 AMTA guest speaker, Bill Grimes. He gave real insight on the shoot down of 60528

Airborne Maintenance Technicians, 905 Names! Where Are They???



Vice-President's Comments.....

Well the AMT reunion is over and the AIA and FTVA reunion and Hall of Honor induction is behind us. The AMTA reunion was a great success and I am looking forward to the next one in the DFW area next year.

During my induction to the Hall of Honor I was extremely nervous and thinking that there was so many of the AMTs who also deserve to be in this prestigious circle. A concerted effort will be made to get more AMTs in to the Hall of Honor.

I wish to extend my appreciation to you who had a part in helping me to be selected to the Hall of Honor. I was amazed and honored that I was selected. I thank Bill Wilson for the effort he put into compiling and submitting the information, also for being a supervisor that believed in me. I would be amiss if I did not include all AMTs who I

worked with over the years because that is what made this possible.

I cannot begin to name everyone; however, you know who you are. One especially is Olin Pendergrass. Olin assisted me when I was at NKP trying to get the QU 22 Pallet to operate on the C 130. I was in need of an antenna, just like the one on the helicopter his brother-in-law was working on and he got the part number and I was able to order the part and complete the test successfully.

Another one who was a great help to me was John V. Shaffer. When I was in Germany, John was my assistant shift leader and that really made my job much easier and contributed to my success.

Again I wish to express my sincere thanks to each of you who made this possible.

*Delano R. Jolly
VP AMT Association*



RC-135W Visited on the aircraft Tour

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the AMTA and our goal to help others.

The members voted to change the AMTA Bylaws and will have proxy voting for the AMTA Board members starting with the 2007 election. The seven board members currently serving have agreed to continue their service if re-elected. We encourage you to nominate other candidates as well so they can be added to the ballot. You can send your nominations to the AMTA Secretary, Mike McLaughlin either by regular mail or e-mail. You cannot do it by telephone. You must get the person you are nominating to send Mike an e-mail or letter accepting the nomination. This method will provide every member an opportunity to have influence on how the AMTA is run even if they cannot attend a reunion. Everyone who is an active member of the AMTA will receive a ballot via email (or U.S. Mail) sometime in early 2007 so if you have nominations to be added to the ballot get them in to Mike as soon as possible.

We will have the fourth AMTA reunion in the Dallas, Texas area in 2007, but we WILL NOT have a reunion in 2008. We will no longer have a reunion during the even numbered years unless the membership votes by a majority to have one on an even year.

The AMTA is strong and is one of the best organizations I have ever been associated with and it keeps getting better and the reason it is such a great organization is the members who provide such strong support. Thank you and I hope to see most everyone in Dallas next year.

*Johnnie Estes
President AMT Association*



Airborne Maintenance Technician Association

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78247

AMTA Board of Directors:

Johnnie Estes - President and Director
Del Jolly - Vice-Pres and Director
Mike McLaughlin - Secretary and Director
John Shaffer - Treasurer and Director
Bill Wilson - Director
Mervin Gross - Director
Jim Hargrove - Newsletter and Director

From the AMTA VSO...

I have put together a few items I think will be of interest or value to our members.

The Snowball Express: Hopefully, some of you AMTs scattered all across the county will be able to spread the word about this program in time to make some special kid's happier at Christmas.

Children of service members killed in Iraq and Afghanistan since Sept. 11 are invited to jump aboard the Snowball Express -- destination Disneyland, with a couple of fun stops along the way. Not an actual train, but a holiday experience for about 1,000 military children and their guardians, the Snowball Express is not full yet. "We're trying to get everybody registered by Nov. 15," according to Michael Kerr, the event's creator. Designed to let the children know their sacrifices aren't forgotten, the Dec. 15-17 event is free to participants. "They don't pay one penny," Kerr said. "They've already paid everything they need to pay to this country."

The M. Scott Kerr Foundation, founded by Kerr, is sponsoring the Snowball Express. When the group arrives in Orange County, Calif., they'll be treated to dinner and a viewing of "The Glory of Christmas." The non-denominational production will take place at the Crystal Cathedral, home base for an international ministry.

The next day, ... they'll be at the Oakley Corporation world headquarters. There, they'll get to talk to X-Games athletes, NASCAR and National Hot Rod Association and entertainers participating in the event. California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger also is scheduled to attend. They will be given an enormous amount of gifts at this event.

Quicksilver clothing company and Oakley, famous for sunglasses, will provide the children with clothing and

other gifts. Those items will be combined with what's donated to Snowball Express through toy drives; UPS will ship all of the gifts directly to the children's homes.

That goes for anything they buy that evening at the Irvine Spectrum Center, a high-end shopping center, as well. The kids will receive American Express gift cards to use at the retailers, many of which are offering the children a 50 percent discount. For those who'd rather play than shop, the center's ice rink will be open only to those with the Snowball Express. On Sunday, they go to Disneyland. The next morning it's time to re-board the Snowball Express and head for home to relive all the memories and await the UPS truck.

Kerr created the Snowball Express in Phoenix in 1997 to put a little holiday cheer into the lives of homeless and at-risk children. The events of Sept. 11 had curtailed the program until now. The program has been changed to include the children of our fallen heroes.

Related Sites:

Snowball Express
M. Scott Kerr Foundation
America Supports You

2. **Defense Highlights of the 2007 National Authorization Act:** The following are items of the act that are of interest to veterans and military retirees.

TRICARE FEES: Bars the DOD from increasing any TRICARE Prime or Standard fees, and pharmacy co pays.

TRICARE PHARMACY: Dropped a proposal to make it mandatory to use the mail-order pharmacy for all refills of maintenance medications. Dropped initiatives to eliminate co pays for most drugs dispensed through the mail-order system and require drug companies to give TRICARE equal price discounts through retail pharmacies.

MILITARY ID CARDS: Authorizes permanent ID cards for permanently

coverage to a child or children, if any. This effectively allows the survivor to receive both DIC from the VA and SBP from the military, without having the former deducted from the latter. However, transfer to the child is irrevocable, and eligibility is not restored to the spouse when the youngest child loses dependent status.

3. **Space "A" Travel:** Military retiree's and their dependent can travel Space A in the CONUS and overseas. Dependents can only travel Space A with their sponsor. For details on how to use Space A visit the following web sites: <http://www.glue.umd.edu/~oard/spacea/> for a lot of good and current information, click on "Web Chat Board" followed by clicking on "Space A Signup" for the form to use. This site has a great deal of useful information about the Space A system. For details on the rules of Space A travel from Air Mobility Command (AMC) go to <http://www.amc.af.mil>, then click on "Questions" along the top of the page followed by clicking on "Space Available Travel" in the main body of the page.

*John Hurst
AMTA Veterans' Service Officer*



Entering the Lobby of the Sac Museum



Stan, Del, Jim and Mike at the Sign In Desk

Official AMTA Yahoo Group:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AMTAssociation/>

AMTA Website:

www.amtassociation.org

Treasurer's Column.....

After paying for the 2006 AMTA Reunion and all bills settled with the hotel we had a deficit for the first time following a reunion.

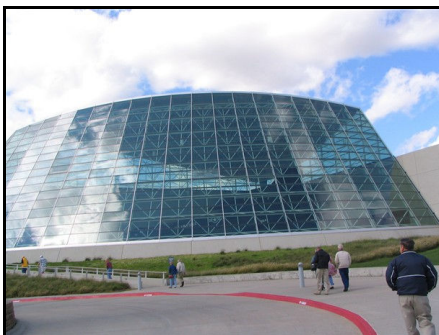
Thanks to a few AMTs making donations and the monies from the Silent Auction (thanks in large part to MBM Woodworks as items were donated at no charge) and the sale of the AMTA memorabilia the AMTA came out about even.

The AMTA's financial status remains strong enough to meet financial commitments such as the Enlisted Widows Home in Shalimar, FL. In the future we will evaluate the cost of the reunions before establishing a price or cost to each individual.

Everyone needs to be thinking of additional types of memorabilia before the next reunion in the Dallas area as the AMTA must come up with other ways to raise money. Membership dues play a small part as a huge number of our memberships are lifetime.

I truly appreciated the help I received in the Hospitality Room and with the Silent Auction and sale of memorabilia. The 2006 Reunion was a giant success.

*John V. Shaffer
Treasurer AMT Association*



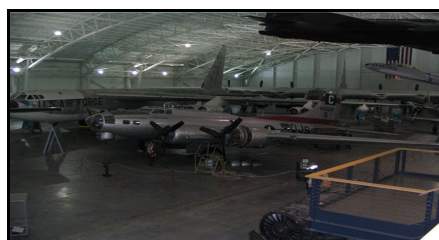
The outside of the SAC Museum as you walk up from the parking lot.

Chaplin's Corner...

A few days ago, we Americans exercised one of our most sacred rights under our constitution. We voted... we voted for the candidate of our choice at the local, state, and national level. We so take for granted this privilege, so much so that about 40% of Americans don't even participate. Not all are happy about the end result but many are. It is part of the process of democracy that so defines this great country and it takes place in America every two years in November.

November is also when Thanksgiving is celebrated. As Americans, we should always be grateful that God has so blessed us that we can live in freedom in this great land. We also are grateful for the privilege to wear the uniform of the United States of America and to have been a part of the men and women that have made this nation great. Freedom is never free. It has cost many their lives and to those families who have lost loved ones in the fight for freedom. I say "THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU". To the many who will read this that have served this nation so faithfully and with great honor I say "THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU", and to you that I have had the honor of serving with you both in my 20 plus years of active duty and also as your chaplain I say "THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU". As we look to the holiday season, I pray that your Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays will truly be blessed.

*Jeff Knisley
AMTA Chaplain*



Inside one wing of the SAC Museum

From the AMTA Secretary...

Another reunion has come and gone. It was great to see people from the previous reunions and some new faces. Not new faces, just some that I haven't seen for about 25 years.

Although the golf outing had to be cancelled, all in all it was a rewarding experience for all. The silent auction went well again this year. Not quite as much interest as previous auctions, but still brought in needed funds. The online store is no more. Sales were very low and continuing the store would have required we get into collecting sales tax and remitting it to the State. We did not have enough activity to warrant the additional effort. However, we do have memorabilia that will be given away to contributors.

The 2007 reunion (Dallas, Texas area) has a solid chance of being the best thus far. With the large number of AMTs and AMTA members in the area, I am hoping attendance will increase significantly. Hope to see many of you there.

*Michael B McLaughlin
AMTA Secretary*



One of the many items offered at the Silent Auction.



AMTA Semi-Annual Newsletter Staff:

Editor: Jim Hargrove

Publisher: Jim Hargrove

"It's your newsletter for use to communicate with other members."

Four More Added to The Hall of Honor



Maj. Gen. Craig Koziol stands with this year's Hall of Honor inductees; Mrs. Ann Fife who accepted the honor for her husband Col. William P. Fife (ret.), Col. James W. McLendon (ret.), Mr. Clay Swindell who accepted the honor on behalf of his family and his late father Chief Master Sgt. James C. Swindell (ret.), Master Sgt. Delano R. Jolly (ret.), and Chris Cook, FTVA vice president. (U.S. Air Force photo/Ted Koniares

11/1/2006 - LACKLAND AIR FORCE BASE, Texas --

The Air Intelligence Agency, along with the Freedom Through Vigilance Association, inducted four new members into the Hall of Honor during a ceremony held in Ardisana Courtyard at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas, Sept 30.

This year's inductees were retired Cols. William P. Fife and James W. McLendon, retired Chief Master Sgt. James C. Swindell, and retired Master Sgt. Delano R. Jolly.

Mrs. Ann Fife accepted the plaque and honor for her husband who was unable to attend the ceremony, and Mr. Clay Swindell accepted the honor on behalf of his family in honor of his late father.

"Today we are here to honor four men who are real true warriors and heroes," said Maj. Gen. Craig Koziol, AIA commander. "Their personal sacrifice and dedication to duty characterize their contributions to this command."

Colonel Fife was recognized for his accomplishments as the first to put receivers on an RB-49 and fly it against

the emerging Soviet threat, paving the way for what we recognize today as Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance or ISR.

Colonel McLendon was recognized for his accomplishments during his 38-year career spanning from his years as an enlisted analyst to commanding the Regional Security Operations Center at Medina Annex, Texas. He assisted with the formation and development of emerging missions such as Intelligence Support to Special Operations and the M R S O C .

Chief Swindell was a widely recognized expert in secure communications and was frequently called upon to conduct inter-service and national level presentations at Headquarters United States Air Force Security Service, Headquarters USAF, The Defense Communications Agency and the National Security Agency. The CMSgt. James C. Swindell Award, which originated in 1974, is presented annually to an AIA unit that is recognized as providing the best communications and information operations.

Sergeant Jolly was recognized for his many first time innovations for the logistics maintenance community. As a maintainer, he pioneered the first airborne operator-training simulator and modified the first C-47 for combat missions in Vietnam. He later played a pivotal role in modernizing field maintenance course instruction and implemented modifications to aircraft, which yielded dividends in reconnaissance capabilities then and now.

The four newest members to the Hall of Honor join 143 other members that have been inducted by AIA and FTVA throughout the past 23 years.

"Each of you have helped pave the way for making AIA the premier agency it is today," General Koziol said when addressing the inductees. "Each of you have my sincere admiration and on behalf of the men and women of AIA, I thank you and your families for being here."

by 2nd Lt. Malinda Singleton
Air Intelligence Agency Public Affairs

Maintainers Turn RIVET JOINT.....

by Staff Sgt. Francesca Popp
CENTAF-FWD News Team

SOUTHWEST ASIA (AFP) -- A sergeant sits at the end of a table reviewing maintenance records. In the background, Airmen play video games as a college football game blares on a television.

The call that the RC-135 Rivet Joint is 30 minutes out comes down, and in an instant everyone drops what they are doing. It's time to recover the aircraft after its long sortie. It can take the Airmen as little as two hours to recover the RC-135 if little or no maintenance is needed, or 10 hours or more if an overhaul or any particular part must be replaced.

"Our job doesn't get boring," said Staff Sgt. Steven Lantz, 379th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, 55th Aircraft Maintenance Unit dedicated crew chief. "Something different happens every day. Outside of when the aircraft takes off and lands, the team doesn't know what to expect."

To prepare for the aircraft's arrival, the team walks the tarmac looking for and picking up anything that could potentially damage an engine.

As the aircraft approaches, one of the five crew chiefs marshals it to a stop. Two other crew chiefs drag yellow wheel chocks and place them in front of and behind the tires. Simultaneously, other team members unravel jumbo power cords from a generator and hook them to the aircraft. The side of the aircraft opens and a maintenance stair stand is rolled in to place.

The inspection begins. The aircrew briefs the lead maintainers to let them know what systems on the aircraft didn't work properly in flight. The crew chiefs visually inspect every inch of the plane's exterior, looking for anything out of the ordinary like popped rivets or screws missing. They also re-insert "remove before flight" flags and

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Good Info for 2007

1. I guess it's not too early to remind everyone that the 2007 AMTA reunion will be held in the Dallas, Texas area. The exact location and dates will be determined later. I am the 2007 reunion chairman and will be assisted by John Dockins and perhaps others in the Dallas area. We will try to live up to the standards set by our previous reunion chairmen, John Shaffer, 2 times in San Antonio and John Hurst this year in Omaha. John Dockins and I will start our planning after the first of the year and updates will be placed on the AMTA website as soon as possible. Since we will be holding our reunion in the area where we have the most AMTA members our expectations are that we will have our biggest turnout yet. Plan to join us here in late September or early October 2007.

2. I had the honor of nominating Del Jolly to the FTVA hall of Honor this year where he was selected and inducted into the Hall. For those who have not witnessed the Hall of Honor induction ceremony, I strongly recommend that you do so if you have the opportunity. It is awesome. Del is just the 3rd AMTA to be inducted into the hall. My plan is to nominate someone one during the next selection period in 2007. I currently have a couple of names that I am hoping to work with and I am still looking for nominees. If anyone knows someone who deserves this honor please forward their names to me and I will contact the individual directly. If I get multiple nominees, the one that appears the strongest will be nominated. Forward names to me at fongow@yahoo.com.

*Bill Wilson
AMTA 2007 Reunion Chairman*



Snacks in the Hospitality Room

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ground the aircraft.

The 44-year-old reconnaissance aircraft, weighing nearly 150 tons carrying an extensive inventory of electronics and a manifest of 34 crew members, puts a lot of stress on its landing gear, tires and brakes each time it touches down.

The AMU, with less than 50 people, repaired more than 16,000 maintenance discrepancies in fiscal 2006.

Sergeant Lantz and the AMU team on duty, deployed from Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., pile into the truck and head to the ramp.

"My aircraft is one of the heavier flown out of the Offutt AFB fleet. When it flies, it's one of the most dependable there is," said Staff Sgt. James Parker, dedicated crew chief. However, "when it breaks it breaks hard."

In the year he's been a crew chief, Sergeant Parker has overhauled two main and one nose landing gear assemblies on the Rivet Joint.

In November, the Air Force added it newest RC-135 to the existing fleet of 16, which are owned and operated by the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB. Sergeant Lantz said each of these aircraft, no matter when they were built, can be "moody."

"Every jet has its own characteristics. For maintainers, it could be the fuel cell jet -- one that constantly leaks fuel, or the Code 1 jet, the one that always flies without any discrepancies," he said. "Everyone believes their (RC-135) is the best, it's all part of a competition between crew chiefs to have the best flying jet."

"This aircraft platform has so many different entities coming together to make one mission," Sergeant Lantz said. The front and back end maintainers, both military and civilian, the pilots and mission crews collectively keep the RC-135 joint flying.

As the buzz continues outside, Airmen inside from the AMU and 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron check to see if any fuses, wires or devices need to be replaced. The plane, configured with computer systems

stacked floor to ceiling and running the entire length of the plane, intercepts and translates every sound found in the radio frequency spectrum.

Senior Airman Kevin Tarwater, electronic warfare technician, is one of the many specialists in the AMU and ERS who repair the aircraft's sophisticated electronic equipment.

"Our system is integral to the RJ's mission," he said. "Whether we are finding surface-to-air missiles sites or intercepting a (roadside bomb) plot, we are right there stopping the enemy."

On average, it takes close to two years for these technicians to become 100 percent qualified to perform the 146 core tasks that are needed to maintain the planes sophisticated intelligence gathering hardware.

Sergeant Lantz added all RC-135 maintainers ensure the equipment can "gather intel to help commanders shape the battlefield and, hopefully, have a positive outcome for the Soldier in the field. Our mission has a direct impact for the troops on the ground."

(Master Sgt. Scott Wagers contributed to this story)



Bill Wilson heading up the line for the banquet meal



Mike and Bill's birthday party at the Prairie Mill Restaurant