



the WIRE BENDER

Volume 5 Issue 2

July through December 2013

FROM THE AMTA PRESIDENT

This year for the Airborne Maintenance Technician Association (AMTA) has been busy and pretty much a fun year. We had an election for AMTA board members and elected three outstanding members to serve on the AMTA Board of Directors. Larry Meade of Papillion, Nebraska was elected and while Larry has always been a strong supporter of the AMTA and has done so much to ensure the success of the AMTA this is his first time to actually serve as a board member. We already knew what to expect from Larry and he is working very nicely with the other board members. Obviously the AMTA board would not be the same without Mike McLaughlin, Comfort, Texas as the AMTA Secretary. Mike was re-elected for the fourth straight time as a board member and as the AMTA Secretary. Mike is the second longest serving board member and he has done, and continues to do, a great job. He definitely knows what is required of the AMTA Secretary. Randy Holt, Kiefer, Oklahoma was elected during a regular cycle for board members as he was elected the first time in the middle of an election cycle due to a vacancy on the AMTA Board. Randy has worked well with everyone and he continues to strongly support the AMTA and the members.

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Drury Plaza Hotel San Antonio North

On a sad note, the AMTA Chaplain, Henry Leupp, Minot, North Dakota resigned. Henry has done a great job as the AMTA chaplain for more than four years and we will miss him as the chaplain, but due to some things that went totally against Henry's faith he did not want to continue serving as the AMTA chaplain. Henry still supports the AMTA and his words are that he will keep all AMTA members in his prayers.

The 2013 AMTA reunion was held in San Antonio at the Drury Plaza Hotel and everyone in attendance said the same thing, "we have NEVER been treated so well by any hotel staff and the hotel was immaculate". The cost of the hotel for members as well as the AMTA was extremely competitive. The hot breakfast which was included, and the kickback snacks at the end of the day, another great bonus at no extra cost. We had a smaller turnout than in the past but if you missed this reunion you missed a good one. The "would be" golfers played in the FTVA golf tournament and everyone had a great time. John Hurst suggested in the form of

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FROM THE AMTA TREASURER

This year has passed quickly. Just in September we had the Seventh AMTA reunion. We had a new meeting location at the Drury Plaza Hotel and all seemed to go well. The weather held out and every one had a great time. To date, twenty two memberships have been renewed, nine being lifetime memberships. The AMTA made donations to: Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Music Fund, St Jude Children's Research Hospital, and Air Force Enlisted Village. The bulk of our funds come from memberships, private donations, silent auctions and memorabilia. Without the constant support of our members, it would be hard to maintain our efforts. In general the AMTA financial status remains healthy. The AMTA's primary financial commitment remains the Enlisted Widows Home in Shalimar, FL. This Christmas season the AMTA elected to donate to the "USO" that continually supports our servicemen and women of the military. Individuals in our membership have donated \$1780.00

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FROM THE AMTA SECRETARY

I hope this holiday season is marked by good times and treasured memories for all of you. Our church handed out Christmas buttons today that we can wear to let people know it is okay for them to greet us with "Merry Christmas". I am getting very tired of seeing happy holidays in the majority of stores, restaurants, etc. This political correctness has gone way too far. By the way, our forefathers would be greatly disappointed if they could see where we have gone as a nation. Too many Americans search for all those good deals and spend themselves into a hole. In a few months the newness has worn off, but the bills keep coming. As I grow older, not necessarily smarter, I have come to remember that Christmas is for gathering with family and sharing the joys of the season. I find no joy in battling crowds at the mall or getting in line at 5:00 am to snag a great deal on something I probably don't need and could well do without. I am not bashing capitalism as it has served our nation well most of the time. But far too much commercialization and imposed political correctness has actually muted the Christmas spirit as retailers prime focus is on the bottom line. I guess I am getting to the age where I care even less than I did before on being politically correct. I close with; "Jesus is the reason for the season". Happy New Year to all and I hope to see many of you in Las Vegas in 2014.

Michael McLaughlin
Secretary



FROM THE AMTA VSO

Burial allowances are partial reimbursements of an eligible Veteran's burial and funeral costs. When the cause of death is not service related, the reimbursements are generally described as two payments: (1) a burial and funeral expense allowance, and (2) a plot or interment allowance.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

You may be eligible for a VA burial allowance if:

You paid for a Veteran's burial or funeral,

AND you have not been reimbursed by another government agency or some other source, such as the deceased Veteran's employer,

AND the Veteran was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. In addition, at least one of the following conditions must be met:

The Veteran died because of a service related disability.

OR the Veteran was receiving VA pension or compensation at the time of death,

OR the Veteran was entitled to receive VA pension or compensation, but decided not to reduce his/her military retirement or disability pay,

OR the Veteran died while hospitalized by VA, or while receiving care under VA contract at a non-VA facility,

OR the Veteran died while traveling under proper authorization and at VA expense to or from a specified place for the purpose of examination, treatment, or care,

OR the Veteran had an original or reopened claim pending at the time of death and has been found entitled to compensation or pension from a date prior to the date of death,

OR the Veteran died on or after October 9, 1996, while a patient at a VA approved state nursing home.

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FROM AN AMTA BOARD MEMBER

I live outside of Quitman, Texas in a gated community. We have a number of Veterans here and after talking to a few of them I realized that many were unaware of some of the benefits available to them. I decided to organize them and hold meetings so we could share information about benefits with those that did not know. At our first organizational meeting we had sixteen men and two women attend. I have met with the Wood County and the Rains County Veterans Representatives and will have them out to speak to the group. Scheduled to speak first is Gary Thomas, the VA Rep from Rains County, on November 13th and the Woods County VA Rep at a later date.

On Veterans Day we are having a "bring a dish" get together at my house for the group and families. We are also looking into forming an Honor Guard since there is not one close by. We feel we have a need for the Veterans to unite in order to help each other in a time of need and to share information with each other.

James Hargrove
Director

Editor's Note:

Excellent Jim. A great example of realizing a problem exists and taking action to help our fellow military brothers.

Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.

-----Helen Keller



the WIREBENDER
Staff:

Editor: Whitey Gross

Publisher: Whitey Gross

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

**AIRBORNE MAINTENANCE TECHICIANS,
1017 NAMES! WHERE ARE THEY???**



(PRESIDENT Continued from page 1)

a motion at the general membership meeting (GMM) that we have an informal reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada and the members voted unanimously to accept John's suggestion (motion). I am presently working with my stepson who knows over half the people in Las Vegas about getting things set up for a reunion here in Vegas during the 1st or 2nd week of October 2014 as we do not want to interfere with the FTVA or PWG. We will put out information as it becomes available and we are looking forward to seeing a whole bunch of people in Las Vegas this fall. Be safe and stay healthy this coming year.

*Johnnie Estes
President*



Editor's Note:
The Pike Ladies singing our National Anthem to start off our banquet has become a reunion fixture. We all appreciate it ladies. Thank you.

**FROM THE AMTA
MEMBERSHIP CHAIR**

A new year, 2014, is here and my prayer is that each fellow AMT has a great year. The following quote says it better that I ever can:

"I wish you health so you may enjoy each day in comfort.

I wish you the love of friends and family and peace within your heart.

I wish you the beauty of nature that you may enjoy the work of God.

I wish you wisdom to choose priorities for those things that really matter in life.

I wish you generosity so you may share all good things that come to you.

I wish you the best of everything that you so well deserve."

We know and have names for 1017 AMTs. We are finding a few additional names as we work on finding AMTs that we had failed to enter in

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**Airborne Maintenance
Technician**

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and a check was sent to the USO. The USO is a worthy cause and by donating to the USO we are supporting those who proudly serve our country. Thanks to all of our members that supported this effort. We are seeing a decline in our overall membership. I believe this is in part to the age of the membership. We need new blood, younger members to continue our cause. Yet again, it's an endless task and a special thanks to Tom Joines for his efforts locating past and new AMTs. We appreciate everyone's assistance in spreading the word about the AMTA. We urge all potential members to check out our website and contact one of the Directors. Any Director will be delighted to answer questions from past and potential members.

The 2013 AMTA reunion is history, now we are looking forward to the 2014 unofficial reunion in Las Vegas. A tad down the road, but I urge all AMTs to plan early and join us again in Las Vegas. Due to being out of San Antonio, this should be a little out of the ordinary and fun for all of the members and their families. Overall details and schedule for the reunion will be coming in the near future. We are looking forward to everyone's companionship again in Las Vegas. I wish you and your family a wonderful holiday season. God bless our members, our military and our great country.

*Robert J. White
Treasurer*

Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the president or any other public official.

--- Theodore Roosevelt

AMTA Board of Directors:

- Johnnie Estes - President, Director
- Mervin Gross - Vice-Pres, Dir, Newsletter
- Mike McLaughlin - Secretary and Director
- Robert White - Treasurer, Director
- Jim Hargrove - Director
- Joe Jesty - Director
- Bill Wilson - Director (Permanent)
- Del Jolly - Director (Permanent)

AMTA Yahoo Group:
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/AMTAssociation/>

AMTA Website:
www.amtassociation.org

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HOW MUCH DOES VA PAY?

Service-Related Death. VA will pay up to \$2,000 toward burial expenses for deaths on or after September 11, 2001. VA will pay up to \$1,500 for deaths prior to September 10, 2001. If the Veteran is buried in a VA national cemetery, some of all of the cost of transporting the deceased may be reimbursed.

Non-service-Related Death. For deaths on or after October 1, 2011, VA will pay up to \$700.00 toward burial and funeral expenses (if hospitalized by VA at time of death), or \$300 toward burial and funeral expenses (if not hospitalized by VA at time of death), and a \$700.00 plot-interment allowance (if not buried in a national cemetery).

For deaths on or after December 1, 2001, but before October 1, 2011, VA will pay up to \$300.00 toward burial and funeral expenses and a \$300.00 plot-interment allowance. The plot-interment allowance is \$150.00 for deaths prior to December 1, 2001. If the death happened while the Veteran was in a VA hospital or under VA contracted nursing home care, some of all of the costs for transporting the Veteran's remains may be reimbursed. An annual increase in burial and plot allowances, for deaths occurring after October 1, 2011, begins in fiscal year 2013 based on the Consumer Price Index for the preceding 12-month period.

HOW CAN YOU APPLY?

You can apply by filling out VA Form 21-530, Application for Burial Benefits. You should attach a copy of the Veteran's military discharge document (DD 214 or equivalent), death certificate, funeral and burial bills. They should show that you have paid them in full. You may go here for more information and to download the form <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/>

*John Hurst
AMTA VSO*

the data base originally. Our goal is to have data on every AMT that did the job in the Air Force as an Airborne Maintenance Technician and have them as members of the AMTA. We have already lost 137 fellow AMTs that have passed on. Our numbers are decreasing every year. The AMTA has been an outstanding organization for me and I have enjoyed the camaraderie since it was conceived. I ask you to consider becoming a member of the organization. The dues are very reasonable and every dime is used for your benefit and help for others. All the dues go to charities such as The Enlisted Widows home at Eglin AFB, Fla., and the USO. We have helped military and civilian personnel that were in need after some of the natural disasters that have occurred in recent years. Join the AMTA and be a part of us and what we try to do. One of my favorite benefits has been the reunions and a list of all the friends that I served with and being able to keep up with how life is treating them. At this time we have 159 members and by the time we have the "get-together" in Las Vegas later this year, would love to see us add a lot more to the membership. Plan now to join AMTA and be with us in Las Vegas in 2014.

*Thomas Joines
Membership Chairman*



Left to right: Whitey, Dan, Tom. The AMTA's wannabe golfers. After the first hole, they were out of the running. LOL

FROM THE AMTA VICE PRESIDENT



Happy after Reunion! Those not attending definitely missed a good one. I would like to give a BIG THANK YOU to our guest speaker Lt Col Carl Washburn pictured above, for an excellent presentation. His talk was on his Air Force and Security Service career, and I found it extremely interesting to think back to where I was in the AF and USAFSS during the same time frame. An excellent speaker and an interesting person to talk with. Another Thank You needs to go out to the hotel and its staff. We were treated royally. Very professional and friendly.

Let us now set our sights on an informal get together in Las Vegas, Nevada later in the year. Have heard a rumor that we are looking at the October time frame. As soon as planning gets to a more solid state am sure more solid and reliable information will be forthcoming. All the best to you in this new year.

*Mervin A.. "Whitey" Gross
Vice President*