



# the WIRE BENDER

Volume 9 Issue 2

July through December 2017

## AMTA PRESIDENT'S CORNER

September 27, 2017 the AMTA had another successful reunion. It was our 12<sup>th</sup> reunion in the last 14 years. Mike McLaughlin and Bob White did a great job putting everything together and the Marriott Hotel personnel went above and beyond to ensure everything was to our satisfaction. The food for the banquet was very good except the steak required a little extra work when chewing it. As one person said to me, he would not have to exercise after eating as he was getting his workout by the chewing exercise.

Not a great deal has happened since the last newsletter in July 2017, but we did elect one new board member and re-elected two others. AMTA board member, Randy Holt, Assistant AMTA Chaplain decided not to run again as he is being kept very busy as he still works and helps with the chaplain's duties. Mike McLaughlin and Larry Meade were re-elected to the AMTA board of directors and Joe Jesty, a previous board member was elected to take Randy's position. We had three AMTs from a younger gen-

*(Continued on page 2)*

### Inside This Issue

AMTA Chaplain.....	Pg 2
AMTA VSO .....	Pg 3
Remember the 153.....	Pg 3
AMTA VP.....	Pg 4
Perspective.....	Pg 4

## SECRETARY'S LATEST

Another year is nearly over. Time has a way of slipping by without much fanfare. Time recently ran out on two AMTA members and friends. Unfortunately it sometimes takes occasions like that for us to stop and look closely in the mirror. We are getting older whether it is easy to admit or not. I have been making too many flag boxes recently; both for AMTA members that have passed or for members of our church that have passed. One of my flag boxes went to Denmark last week with the daughter of a former Marine Captain.

The 2017 reunion location was very nice with many helpful members of the staff not to mention all the help I received from other AMTA members and spouses. From setting up the audio/visual for the banquet, making coffee, replenishing table snacks, and also keeping the hospitality room neat--they really pitched in to make is a great time. I would be remiss if I did not mention the great job the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) Honor Guard did. Another class act as always.

The hotel has offered a contract for the 2019 reunion and I will be talking to them after the first of the year.

I wish all a happy new year and looking forward to seeing many of you at the 2019 reunion—do not

*(Continued on page 3)*



Reunion Speaker BGen (Ret) Grover Jackson and Wife Anita.

An excellent presentation. He knew what we did.

## TREASURER'S FINANCIAL INPUT

2017 was an abundant year! The AMTA financial status was ample to meet our financial obligation to the Air Force Enlisted Village Home in Shalimar, Florida. In addition we donated twice to the St. Jude Children's Hospital in memory of two AMTA members that departed. Once again our members elected to donate to the USO Christmas assistance programs that continually supports our servicemen and women. Individuals in our association donated **\$1695.00** to the USO.

*(Continued on page 4)*

*(President Continued from page 1)*

eration accept the nomination to run for a board position, but none of them were elected. We get comfortable voting for those who have maintained a board position and we do not appear to want to take a chance on one of the younger generation. The three who ran are outstanding and have always been strong supporters of the AMTA. All three are LIFETIME AMTA members. Bob Romero, Severn, Maryland; David Leslie, Austin, Texas; and Rick Sluder, Yulee, Florida. These are fine young men willing to help and ensure the longevity of the Airborne Maintenance Technician Association. Between now and the election in 2019 when we will be electing four board members we need to be thinking about younger men and women to serve on the AMTA board of directors.

Our next reunion will be in 2019 in San Antonio, but it does not necessarily have to be in San Antonio. In accordance with the AMTA Articles and Bylaws we can have our reunion anywhere the AMTA membership chooses. It may be time for everyone to start giving this some thought. A timeline you need to think about is in early 2019 Mike McLaughlin will be preparing to have the reunion in San Antonio, so if you wish to suggest a different location NOW is the time to bring it up and wherever you suggest you need to think of a reunion chairman located within the area you wish to have a reunion. You must make sure the person is willing to accept the job as it is a lot of work and time consuming.

Thank you to all AMTs, ASEs, IMTs and especially the AMTA members. I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas

and I hope 2018 is your best year ever. God bless everyone.

*Johnnie Estes  
President*

## CHAPLAIN'S IMPORTANT WORDS

**W**hen the Holidays are on the wane, will we forget the reason we celebrated, I think not. The AMTA members have been through and/or seen enough that they will never forget the awesome power that uplifts and sustains us all. Throughout history our military has served with honor and valor in all World Wars, Police Actions and many other battles with many names and afterwards there is always a group formed to continue relationships. The AMTA has that invisible cord binding us together as comrades, we must continue the Holiday Spirit and broaden it to every member. After our last reunion some members drove many miles out of their way to visit with some who could not come to the reunion. Sometimes we forget those who are absent, take time to call or write a member; just pick one even if you didn't serve together. God sheds his Grace on us all. The website has a list or if you ask you can get a hard copy. Let's keep that reunion spirit going until our next reunion, I'm sure we all think about people we love and miss from time to time so pick up the phone. A call is not an invasion of privacy but it may be storming the beaches of depression. I hope the coming year brings peace and happiness to all.

*Frank Jordan  
Chaplain*

## AMTA'S FACEBOOK GROUP

COMMUNICATE

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**T**he Facebook group is still active and I have noticed that many at least read the inputs. That is great. At least the word is getting around. People need to provide inputs of interest so we can make sure folks are staying on top of those areas we are all interested in. Health and welfare are important items to many of us. Let us know how your life is going, good and bad. We are Wirebenders but we are also members of a group of flyers and our interests cover other people, places, and things that we can spread the information about.

We still have quite a few people that have requested to join the group but do not answer the message I send them requesting database information. We have 153 members in the group but well over 73 that requested to join have not sent me data or answered my message. We have added several new members to the group and some of them have joined the AMTA or at least shown and interest to join. If you know of someone that is a past or present AMT, IMT, or ASE let them know about the Facebook group.

Also, keep in mind the Associate membership. If a person has worked closely with us in any forum they can become

*(Continued on page 3)*



**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???**

# 153 DECEASED

Let's Locate  
Others  
To Help  
Remember  
**THEM!**

**VSO'S WORDS OF  
WISDOM**

**V** A Burial Benefits Spouse Rule Change

Veterans and their spouses qualify for burial in Department of Veterans Affairs cemeteries nationwide. But thanks to bureaucratic rules, making arrangements for yourself ahead of time has been absolutely impossible. Literally. That's because in the past, the VA required that applications for VA burial eligibility be sent in "at the time of need" — in other words, after you're already dead. Now can you say exactly how much paperwork were you planning to fill out after you die? That's what Military.com's Spouse Buzz thought. Which meant the whole thing has to be sorted out by family members. Now a new rule change means that your veteran can take care of the eligibility part of the VA burial benefits ahead of time. And since most of us want to be buried near our husbands or wives, it means we can take care of it for ourselves, too.

First note, this is for those who have left service only — not for active duty. Also, this system will not let you choose exactly which cemetery you are buried in. Instead, they let you state a preference. Actual location will depend on availability at "time of need" and still must be applied for by your family or through your funeral home. Here's what the VA burial benefits change does: The rule change allows veterans on their own behalf (or a designated agent) apply for burial benefits before they are actually needed, under a process known as pre-determination. You can read all about

*(Continued on page 4)*

- 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
  - Larry Meade - Director
  - Bill Wilson – Director (Permanent)
  - Del Jolly - Director (Permanent)

*(Facebook Continued from page 2)*  
 an Associate Member by sending a request to join as an Associate Member to the President or any member of the Board of Directors. They should (must) include when, why, where, and any important qualifications. Board of Directors must vote on the request and agree unanimously and then the request is presented to the AMTA membership for a vote. We have several Associate Members that followed that process. Questions? Send an email to a member of the Board of Directors.

*John Brown*  
Facebook



The Pikes , still singing great

*(Secretary Continued from page 1)*  
 let the next one get by you and miss the chance to visit with life-long dear friends.

*Michael McLaughlin*  
Secretary



2017 AMTA Tee Shirt

Freedom is the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.  
 George Orwell

**Airborne Maintenance  
Technician Association**

288 Stone Trail  
 CASTROVILLE, TEXAS 78009

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

AMTA Website:  
[www.amtassociation.org](http://www.amtassociation.org)

## A WORD FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

Sadly I must inform those that do not already know, that we lost two great AMTs in 2017. They are Michael Gareri on 27 July and Tom Fowler on 10 October. They will be remembered as two highly respected and highly skilled AMTs. May they rest in peace.

Not to beat a dead horse, but if you didn't attend the AMTA Reunion this past September, you missed another good one. A good time was had by all. Although as the golfers that participated in the FTVA golf tournament can attest, we had a SOGGY time! Fairways with WATER, WATER, everywhere and hardly a dry spot to hit the ball from. Sure kept the balls clean though. The great part of the tourney for me was winning a new Putter on a door prize drawing. Have been using it and am glad to report, it works. Been putting lights out! Which brings me to this bit of wisdom. "A good golf partner is one who's always slightly worse than you are. That's why I get so many calls to play with friends."

Happy New Year to all.

*Mervin "Whitey" Gross  
 Vice President*

Compassion is language the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

~Mark Twain~

## PERSPECTIVE

I am getting older these days, aren't we all, and thinking back on history and my life. We all had fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, and siblings that we can pass on information and history. This is a result of remembering my father and his life.

He was a football player in high school and college and quite good. He made All American at Perdue University and was drafted by the Green Bay Packers in 1939. Yes, the football Green Bay Packers but World War II interrupted his football ambitions and career. He joined the Navy and became a pilot. During his training he was asked to volunteer for the Marines. He did and following his training in the F4U Corsair he was sent to the south Pacific and joined Gregory "Pappy" Boyington. He remained in the Marine Corps Reserve until his first heart attack at the age of 35. I joined the Air Force before I had a chance to talk with him about his college days or his time flying in WW II. While I have some books that tell of some of his days in the war, that is all I have.

Here is the part of the story that you should take away. He died at the age of 55 so we didn't have the time to talk about those days or remember his deeds in life. I joined the Air Force out of high school and he died during my first tour. My mother died 5 years after my father. Now I am sorry that we didn't take the time to talk about those early days. Many of us can't talk about our Air Force career and

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(VSO Continued from page 3)*

veteran burial pre-determination by going to <http://www.military.com/dailynews/2016/12/09/va-to-let-vets-preselect-cemetery-burials-before-death.html>.

But spouses aren't left behind on this one. Spouses qualify to be buried at a VA cemetery based off their veteran's eligibility. That means if your veteran can be buried there, so can you. VA officials said spouses can turn in an eligibility pre-determination form at the same time as their veteran — no need to wait for the veteran to be given the OK first. That means the spouse and their veteran can take care of all of your paperwork at the same time on the same day. Planning for the inevitable is a good idea. You can find the VA burial benefits form for pre-determination at <http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/VA40-10007.pdf>. [Source:.com]

*John Hurst  
 VSO*

*(Treasurer Continued from page 1)*

I'm deeply grateful for our membership support and generosity.

Just as a reminder, the majority of our funds are derived from memberships, donations, silent auctions and memorabilia. In 2017 we had eleven memberships renewed. Five memberships were for three years and six members were upgraded to life. As you can see individual donations and silent auctions are becoming very important. Without the continuous support of our members, it would be tough to continue our efforts.

The 2017 AMTA reunion was another success. Believe everyone had a great time and departed the event pleased. Although the golfers did have a little wet condition. Eventually everyone finally dried out. I'm totally grateful for the support of our entire membership, thank you.

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Perspective Continued from page 4)*

what we did or where we flew. But there are things we can pass along to educate our kids and grandkids on our lives. As we get older, do not let those memories go away. Talk to your kids, grandkids, nieces and nephews. Take a look at those pictures you have in those scrap books and tell them what they mean. Good and bad. Talk about those aircraft. Talk about the places you have been and what it was like there.

*John Brown*

Editor's Note: I agree with John. Talk to your relatives about your service days so history isn't lost. And by all means, tell your family members "I love you" as you depart them for your next life experience. I often wonder if I told my mother and father "I love you" enough before they passed. I feel my answer was no. I now make sure I end all conversations with my family with those words.

*(Treasurer Continued from page 4)*

Without you we would not have the AMTA. I'm already looking forward to our next reunion in sharing countless memories. Time is passing quickly, let us cherish all that we can.

*Robert J. White  
Treasurer*

Jenny kissed me when we met  
Jumping from the chair she sat in;  
Time, you thief, who loves to get  
Sweets into your list, put that in:  
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,  
Say that health and wealth have  
missed me,  
Say I'm growing old, but add,  
Jenny kissed me.  
James Henry Leigh Hunt  
1784 - 1859



The Group



AMTA President Johnnie, center, with our exceptional Honor Guard from the University of Texas at San Antonio. This unit has consistently provided us a quality Honor Guard for our reunions over the years. Pictured with the AMTA President: Cadets Isel LaGuardian, Benjamin LaGuardian, Leoncio Longoria, and Donovan Medina.