

Red Eagles

Christmas Newsletter



December 25, 2011
Issue 12

Fellow Red Eagles: Red Eagles Reunion

Reunion 2011

For the person stepping up to the plate for the next reunion, whenever and wherever it may be, I offer the following debriefing.

Reunion planning began about one year out. The first priority was settling on a date and then locking in a hotel. October was chosen because it generally has some of the mildest weather of the year. Of course, hundreds of conventions and thousands of tourists pick October for the same reason—it is the busiest month of the year in Las Vegas. We initially picked the Flamingo Hilton and the weekend of Oct 21-22. As it turned out, the Flamingo was a little too pricey and the 21-22 dates conflicted with previous commitments by members of the reunion committee. The Boulder Station Hotel and Oct 28-29 was a lock—and we began the process.

It takes a crowd to plan and execute a reunion. Our crowd included: Tom Boma, Bob Breault, Mike Cleveland, Doug Daulton, Bob Drabant, Dan Futryk, Ben and Melody Galloway, Neil Henderson, Larry Mason, John Nelson, Gail Peck, Mike Scott, and Phil Young. One of the first tasks was getting the word out to all former members of the 4477th. Ben started with the Spring 2011 newsletter where he provided the basic details—time, place and costs. Ben also established a web link to the hotel to reserve rooms directly. We had reserved 50 rooms and as summer arrived we became worried that there might be more reunion committee members attending than the rest of the Red Eagles. The sign up was very slow!

Almost half of the 500+ names on the master Red Eagle roster were missing



(no email, mailing address or phone number). Throughout the spring and summer we made a concerted effort to locate the missing Red Eagles, and thereby gained a healthy respect for the monumental job Ben and Bro have been doing for the last few years keeping the roster current.

We had decided that we needed to pad the costs of the activities by about \$5 to cover the cost of “free” giveaways in the welcome packets. The easiest activity to do this was the Friday night golf course function. The cost quote from the golf course was \$10 per person for heavy hors d’oeuvres and free beer and wine, so we added \$5 to that activity. As it turned out, the booze consumption went over (surprise, surprise) and we ended up having to pass the hat Saturday night to recover the additional expenses. For a similar function in the future it should be planned for \$20 per person. The “free” giveaways were a Red Eagle coin and a Red Eagle decal.

We also took on ordering Red Eagle shirts. We didn’t want to be “at risk” for the shirt costs, so we chose to invite individuals to custom order color and size ahead of time and mail them out prior to the reunion. It became an all-consuming job of ordering and mailing shirts throughout the summer and right up to the reunion. A total of 144 shirts were ordered and mailed.

Neil Henderson and Doug Daulton (a photographer friend) took on the job of video taping interviews of former Red Eagles during the convention to preserve memories of such a unique organization. Boulder Station provided a quiet, cozy conference room on the second floor. With the Friday function



Editor’s Christmas Column:

These are my guidelines for Christmas:

- Peace on earth starts with your family. Put aside hard feeling and disagreements on this one special day.
- Spend this day with family and friends and let them know how much they mean to you. Say “I love you” to those special people in your life. Make that phone call on Christmas day.
- Treat each gift you receive as if it cost the giver a fortune. It doesn’t matter so much about the gift as the thought behind it.
- Think of your past Christmases and try to make this one the best. This is a time for giving, not just gifts but of yourself.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
Ben Galloway
3732 Bar 10 Road
Calhan, CO 80808



on base at Nellis, Saturday and Sunday were the only opportunities for scheduling interviews. We chose to schedule only out-of-town attendees for those two days, intending to interview locals at a late date. On Friday night Neil and Doug did roving interviews at the golf club house with only marginal success. The background crowd noise severely degraded the audio quality. If a similar effort is attempted in the future the interviews should be done in a separate room away from the crowd. After the holidays we intend to interview as many locals as possible. The intent is to market all of the resulting videos to *The History Channel* or *The Military Channel* for a story on the Red Eagles.

Registration at the golf course clubhouse on Friday afternoon was where the reunion officially began. It was where we got a finally head count, collected monies for all activities from those who hadn't prepaid, and passed out shirts to those who had ordered late in the cycle. Since there were only 100 or so guests attending on Friday night we assumed we could handle the registration with two people. We were quickly overwhelmed with multiple tasks—mainly new shirt orders. Luckily Melody jumped in to help (as she did again on Saturday night). In the future it would be best to have at least three and perhaps four people for the registration.

The Saturday registration simply re-emphasized the need for more than two people. Besides the new shirt orders, people wanted to order additional coins. Paco Geisler had volunteered to emcee the night's activity and he was a real hit. My wife and I had tears in our eyes during most of his stories—and I had heard a goodly number of them before. The group photo sessions up on the stage was an afterthought—one we wished we had anticipated and planned for. We had large 4477th banners, including one in my car, which never made the front pages, and would have been most appropriate for the photo sessions.

All in all, the reunion was a great success, thanks to the hard work of about 15 people. I look forward to the next one when the band of brothers meet again.

Earl (Obiwan) Henderson



Board News

Red Eagles, it's the Holidays – a great time for reflection on both the past and one's hopes for the future. So let's discuss a couple of past and future issues.

Concerning the past, those of you who were able to make October's reunion know you were part of an outstanding event - the bar it set is high and will be hard to match. You also know that a number of folks helped make it happen, but, you may not know that the leader of the pack was Earl 'Obi' Henderson. That is my fault – I should have acknowledged that fact at the reunion – at any rate – thanks, Obi! Some other issues resulted from the reunion – they follow.

Red Eagle Alumni Association (REAA). A meeting was held with a permanent association being established. The initial Board of Directors includes elected members Phil Young (VP), Larry Mason (Sec), Jim Keys, Ike Crawley, Rob Zettel and Mike Scott (Pres) as elected members; permanent members John Nelson (Treas), and Ben Galloway and Bob Breault (Co-Comm/Editors). The preceding are voting members. Subsequent to the meeting, the President (me) appointed two additional non-voting members: Gail Peck (Historian) and Earl Henderson (Director Emeritus).

Future Reunions. The success of the reunion combined with numerous requests to make it obvious that we actually like to meet with each other! Some want the meetings frequently while others thought some time in between would make them more 'special'! So, after some email communications, we have come up with the following: Phil Young has taken the lead for "get together" type events (golf outings, Bar-b-ques, etc) that will take place on a frequent basis (defined as at least once a year). Rob Zettel will be the honcho for non-Las Vegas opportunities (museum events, aircraft dedications, other functions, etc) that may pop-up. And we will have another big reunion in three years (2014) – I have that for action.

Membership/Dues. Jim Keys, John Nelson and Earl Henderson comprise the Membership Committee. Currently, the Rules, Regulations and Procedures document (RRPs) that we passed at the reunion meeting restricts membership in two ways: 1) to those assigned to the 4477th TEF/ TES from inception (1 April 1977) until deactivation (31 Mar 1988); and 2) who also pay annual dues (currently, \$25). The methodology for paying your dues is addressed in a separate section in this newsletter. The REAA acknowledges that there are many who do not meet the assignment criteria, but are still 'Red Eagle folks'. Correspond-



ingly, the RRP's also authorize an *Associate Membership* category. Additionally, there is interest in a *Lifetime Dues* capability. Both issues are being worked by the Membership Committee and once some legal/financial details have been ironed out, the "how to" information will be disseminated. Concerning the lifetime dues - annual dues for 2012 will be deducted from the cost, so please do not let that issue slow you down from paying your 2012 dues!

Memorabilia. Many of you asked about the possibility of establishing some type of 'store' or other like venue for purchasing Red Eagle stuff. We've discussed the issue - Phil Young has taken that project on and will be exploring the numerous possibilities. Stay tuned.

Volunteering. The reunion revealed that some of you might like to get involved - Board conversations revealed that additional involvement will be appreciated! So, how do you do it? Simple - Get in touch with any Board Member and indicate your desire. If you don't have contact information, send me an email - mikebonscott@cox.net - I'll make the contact (privacy concerns preclude me from listing all the Board Members contact info).

Although this article is a bit longer than initially intended, I hope it gets/keeps you in the loop in the REAA. Have a great Holiday Season and a wonderful New Year!

Mike (Scotty) Scott

Editors Note:

After the first of the year, make out your dues check payable to John Nelson, mark on the bottom of the check in the "For" space "Red Eagle Alumni Association" and send to:

John Nelson

4016 Spring Crest Lane

Las Vegas, NV 89129



At the reunion there was a tribute to our Red Eagles brothers who have passed away.

Editor's Note

I was able to attend the first full fledged Red Eagles reunion in Las Vegas this year. This has been a long road for us to make this a reality. My hat's off to Earl Henderson and all the members of the reunion committee for taking up this task and seeing it through to it's very successful completion.

When Bob Breault and I took over the roster a couple of years ago, we could only hope and imagine that some day in the future we would be able to get the guys together for a reunion. It was a dream come true for me personally to see a gathering of Red Eagles to celebrate the work we did and to see old friends again. I was able to make new friends as well and put faces to the emails I have received over the past two years.

Stand tall my friends because we are America's MiG Squadron, we are the Red Eagles.

Ben Galloway



This is the Red Eagles coin, both sides, that were given to those attending the reunion this year. Future plans may make this coin available to be ordered.



The Red Eagles reunion photos, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 28th and 29th, 2011



Initial Cadre, Gail Peck's watch and before.



Red Eagles pilots.



Red Eagles enlisted members.



Red Eagles 2011 reunion group photo.

Red Eagles Web Sites of Interest

Here are some web sites that you may find of interest. Just click on the link to take you to that site.

Red Eagles Facebook page. This site is maintained by Bob Breault and myself. We currently have 51 members. Please feel free to request to join the group:

<http://www.fbis.facebook.com/group.php?gid=75655098950&ref=nf>

Military.com, this is listed as the 4477th Test Squadron. We currently have 43 members listed.

<http://unitpages.military.com/unitpages/unit.do?id=600794>