

Just wanted to tell the addressed friends of mine from the Class of '63 how much Chris and I enjoyed chatting with you ... no matter how short or long the conversation. Each of you and I had an interaction at some point during our stay at AFA, and I appreciated being able to renew the friendships. Wyman and I have exchanged adventure travel logs over the years, and I misplaced the fact that wife Gay is from Decatur, Illinois, (Steve Sutton's home) only 30 miles west of my hometown. That has been remedied. At times I feel I suffer from acute memory hypoxia, but events and cadet memories all come flooding back at these reunions.

I was acutely aware that Leo Thomas wasn't with us anymore. Leo was from Kentucky, the same hometown as Capt. Kelly Cook. As coordinators of the Cadet Club in the old Antlers Hotel basement Leo and I presented BG William T Seawell with his saber inscribed "To The Best Damn Commandant Ever." Pretty bold words to a General in those days. Seawell as you recall took over Pan-American World Airways and had a comfortable office (always open) near the top of the Pan-Am Building in Manhattan. What a guy!

Had the opportunity to say a few words at Greg Halley's memorial service a couple of months ago...and spoke with Donna Himmelberger after Rod's passing ... also had an exchange with Jon Nehring, John's son. John and I attended a Church together in downtown Colorado Springs. It seems we become 'Scouts' at different times and different places, never knowing where or when, why or how. The Lord knows.

You may remember English professor, Major Kelly Cook. He left the AFA with his wife and 8 children in '62 to become the basketball coach at Cranwell in England. He was such a great officer, even kind to cadets, inviting them and their friends into their family Quarters in Douglass Valley for weekend meals. Later I met now-Colonel Cook in DaNang in 1967. He was the DO of the F4 Wing there. We had a steak in the DOOM Club. I left for an initial flight to Khe Sanh the next day, both promising to do the steak thing 10 days hence. Arriving back in DaNang I found yellow tape around his trailer. The AF was having premature detonation problems with ordnance at that point in the war. Leading a Radar-Skyspot mission over the North, both planes had simultaneously disappeared off the radar scopes at bomb release. Jo Cook is in her 80's and still lives in C. Springs. Several of his children keep in contact, asking me questions about the Dad they hardly knew. My #3 son's middle name is "Kelly."

Captain Grover G.D. Schock Jr., a physiology professor from E. St. Louis was another favorite of mine. An admitted rascal, he always said "if the world ever needed an enema, it would start in E. St. Louis." But Grover was Kittinger's 2nd-in-command of the ManHigh Project where Joe Kittinger jumped out of a balloon at 102,000 feet and lived the downfall ... Google both for info on the officers and the project. Grover had a prior emergency with Kittinger when their balloon made an unexpected free-fall into a field in Minnesota. An ambulance just happened to be driving parallel to the horizontal path of the balloon when it hit. Schock was in immediate medical hands, but was severely injured and never took a balloon flight again. Schock also worked with Col. John Stapp at Kirkland AFB where the rocket ejection seat was perfected. I was too young to appreciate all of their accomplishments at the time, just hoping to graduate and get to pilot training at some point down the road. Grover loved the Wind River Mountains in Wyoming. That's where he and his family moved after retirement. He died in the Wind Rivers, camping, fishing, and hunting. Wife Mary Lou still lives on Big Horn Street in Rock Springs. Captain Schock's Aviation Physiology class was the only class I never studied for. I taped every class, put the reel-to-reel instrument beneath my golden-blanketed bed at night and turned it on. Must have absorbed "stuff" during the sleeping hours because I think it was one of the few classes I managed an "A" in.

Col. Maurice McNabb – OIC of Mitchell Hall during our stay. Was fortunate enough to have "friends" stay with the McNabbs too. Maurice was assigned to a unit in New Orleans following the Academy. Returning a C-130 from Naha, Okinawa, to St. Petersburg, FL for fuel tank corrosion control in 1966, I had New Orleans Approach Control dial Maurice and Dona's number about 2 a.m. in the morning to tell them I would be visiting a few days hence. In-range on a Delta flight the pilots were kind enough to relay my/our ETA to the Colonel's office. He was waiting for me and said, "you know I had a dream the other night that you were going to be passing through!" I didn't tell him differently. He later became Chief of Food Services for the

Georgia Mental Institutions complex in Milledgeville. It was a harrowing visit a few years later. He laughed as I cringed walking through the groups of off-balance patients...like something out of a Hollywood movie. But Maurice was ever hopeful and accepted the challenge just like he had accepted the challenge of feeding 4,000 cadets three times a day in 35 minutes flat, each meal, for 4 years. Maurice was a smoker and passed away a decade ago, but Dona still lives in Florida, Ocala at last contact, and is a strict Republican. She ran for Mayor of Ocala a few years back. Both their son and daughter graduated from the AFAcademy in later years. I don't know the daughter's name now; she married an FBI agent at some point.

I'm not sure many or any of you were aware, but I researched the subject last year and found that Susan Young and I had the first graduate wedding in the Protestant Chapel in December '63. A '62'er was the first married in the Catholic Chapel. Jay Miller, Jim Martin, Rod Himelberger, Mike Harley, and Joe Tkac were among the participants on that unrealized but now known, semi-historic occasion. Have also been back a 2nd time for a marriage there in 1982, with Chris, now in our 27th year as husband and wife. BTW, all children and both wives get along extremely well, and for that I'm thankful. Had contact with Jack and JoAnn McTasney when he was at the Pentagon and myself on the Johns Hopkins faculty in Baltimore. I remember picnics in Columbia, Maryland at the Performing Arts Center and I think our families may have visited Williamsburg together. Am I right Jack? After memorable times with Jeanne and Jim Martin in Kansas, I finally got to play the role of best man at their wedding. We found Jim playing golf near Monterey on an afternoon years ago...and saw him again while he was puttering around Denver with a fast-mover 4-engine Convair jet for NASA. Dick R. and I had families in Ft. Walton Beach together about 1969-70 or so...and had a similar interest in MATS, at least Scott AFB. Nice to know the Rader's home is standing tall and firm once more on Pensacola Bay after it was literally flattened by a hurricane several years ago.

I told Butch Verdier about getting weathered out of Khe Sanh during the monsoon in '67, flying to the alternate in NKP Thailand and subsequently attending the Bob Hope USO show that evening. Our Officer's Club OIC in Okinawa in 1966 was now the O-Club OIC at NKP. He invited this trashed-out, no-insignia, dirty flight suit M-16-carrying grub to a reception after the show with Miss World (from India), Racquel Welch, Les Brown's band, and Barbara McNair, a popular singer who was as friendly and genuine as Welch was to the contrary. Hope actually remembered the occasion of putting on a show in Arnold Hall in which the Cadet Chorale (me 'n Butch were members) sang a song. Still have pictures of that event in a scrapbook somewhere.

Of course, Bob Winegar, Jim Thyng, John and Sara Patton, roommate and MGen Loran Schnaidt, Phil Tate, Bryant Culberson and I, among others, toughed it out together at Reese in Lubbock. The base isn't functioning anymore. Chris and I took a detour through Lubbock last year. Nice runways still, but towers, buildings, and commercial ventures have taken over. We were the "Kings of Crosswinds" on the Caprock however...good practice for post-pilot training. In fact, one of our old instructors, Upton Officer, lives several blocks from us here in Humble, TX. Who can't remember that name!? His home is on my bike circuit. Upton retired from the City of Houston and is living a quiet life with his wife of 60+ years. "Murph" and Loretta Heights-grad Ronnie (maiden name begins with 'U' and is the longest word in the English language to be typed solely with the right hand)...It was great to see you both as well as Denny King and Bob Hayes! Really appreciated the work Bob and Denny did in the past year to make the Reunion a memorable one!! Truly spectacular and well-planned. And JJ Kennedy, every time I see old photos of those beautiful Technicolor Braniff airplanes, I think of your swimming skills in water polo. Don't ask me why. You are the only person I know who consistently beats me into the Concierge Lounge at Marriott Hotels in the morning! And maybe it's because it was an Aqua Braniff 720 that snatched me out of Cam Rahn Bay in 1968 for the long, but wonderful trip home from SE Asia.

Had some memorable experiences with other graduates too – Bob Kellock ('61) was a mentor on Okinawa. Took Dick Klass ('62) for several O-2 rides over Laos and "points north." Spent some quality time with Tom Pattie ('61). Well it was quality time for me. Pattie had an Army commission and was terribly burned when the O-1E he was riding in got shot down on a fire-support mission. I was living with some Army MASH surgeons in Nha Trang at the time. Those guys liked me because I had a jeep of my own and could/might drive them around. I liked them because they, being shorthanded, allowed me to scrub-in on surgeries. (I had medical school goals like Bob W. at the time) When Pattie was brought in, no one could recognize him. We didn't think he was going to make it, but he held on for weeks, and after some magic

potion was brought in from a Texas Burn Unit, he made a miraculous comeback. Visited him practically every day in the burn unit and was there when he opened his eyes and squeezed a finger for the first time. Saw him some years later where he lived near Washington, D.C. There were still physical and mental marks, but he survived. Ran into Bob Brickey ('61) in Hong Kong one evening. He was flying for Pan-Am and had half-a-dozen "stewardesses" with him waiting to take the Star Ferry over to Hong Kong Island. He told me he flew the Pacific – the first 10 days of the first month; took the next 40 days off, and flew the last 10 days of the 2nd month. Pretty neat, huh? Guess who took that lesson to heart? Later, spending summer camp with the Maryland Air Guard and a dozen United pilots didn't deter from that first exposure to airline flying either. Rosie Cler, Class of 1960's scribe, is also from the flatlands within 20 miles of Steve Sutton's and my home towns. Oh yes, I can see why Ron F. became Chief of Staff. He always had a car and driver waiting for the CO ANG T-43 crews when the Cadets came to visit at Hill and D-Monahan...Mr. Personality deserved the post and did a fine job in the assignment. Mike Stollings ('73) has had an extraordinary career...after my own heart...nice meeting you.

Who doesn't remember Summer Squadron 32 in 1959...honored Class scribe and flag bearer (if I remember correctly...front row at the very least during marching practice) Skip Lee and Eldon DeVere Henderson...DeVere pumping out hundreds of pushups on the Parade Ground one late afternoon until the upperclassman got tired of telling him to do more. Ron Kos and I are from Illinois and I enjoyed talking to him at the fb game. The Dancing Stars of Seagram Seventh, Bob and Shirley Hall, are still dancing and look as alive as they always have. Howie Kraye and Bill, sorry...JOHN Newhouse are the same intelligent rocks as they were 45 years ago. Howie and his Dad provided my first 35mm camera to take on the Southern European Field Trip. Thanks again, Howie. The picture business has gotten out of hand, but I love photography because of that Zeiss-Ikon. Jack Martines (ABQ) and I have some spiritual commonalities; call either of us for further information. Jim Hannam still has such a positive attitude and a smiling, intelligent manner. No wonder he graduated so high in the class. Charlie Parker. It was great to see you are still in Quarterback shape, still professionally employed at Hill, in Utah no less. An uncle taught English at Ogden (UT) High School and my Dad graduated from Ogden High School (in Illinois however). And I spent a year in a C-124 outfit at Hill AFB while in grad school at the UofUtah. Best unit in my career. I graduated and entered the Maryland Air Guard the day that Hill AFB unit got their first F-105 – can you imagine? -124's to F-105's. Bet we had better times flying to Hickam for 3-4 days than the fighter jocks did being compressed up and down in their G suits on the ranges thereafter.

Well, I didn't mean to start a historical perspective of our post '59-'63 years together, but it's out of my system now, and I don't regret it. Time to go watch the McCain-Obama debate. God Help Us! Over and Out...

John

One last item: Colonel JF Frakes, Head of the Department of Athletics at AFA during our time -- now nearly 90 years old, living with Francis his wife, in Greenville, Alabama. "Tut" graduated from West Point in 3 years, married Miss America, and promptly recognized the potential of a flying career, x-ferring into the AAF. A few years ago, he honcho'd the effort to plunk a memorial right in the midst of the Wu-Pu campus ... to the West Pointers who had enough sense to move into the AF. Went to a few parties with his daughter LaRue (now 64 herself) who was the epitome of a bright military brat. Those were the best you know...had to make friends immediately because of the many transfers of military life, and had been everywhere, spoke a different language or two, and had been exposed to every situation under the sun. LaRue's Mom died from a heart problem, and she and Steve, her brother who just retired from Delta but still pushes an opulent B-757 around for professional athletic teams, were essentially raised by the Colonel in Senior Officers Quarters 4156A in the uplands of Douglass Valley. Steve used to spy on his sister and report any false moves to the Colonel. He was despised then, but turned out to be a tall, handsome, square-jawed Texas father just like his Dad. The Colonel has a beautiful vacation villa on Ono Island, on the Gulf southwest of Pensacola where I've spent some beautiful days. Tut is a brave "dude" as we say here in 'Tessus with some medical problems only a man of his stature could weather over the years.