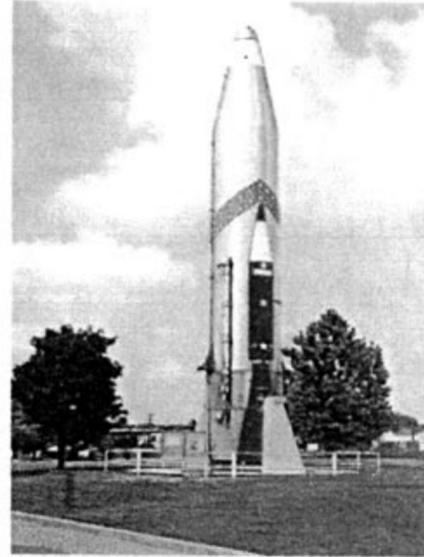


556 SMS ASSOCIATION FALL 2007 NEWSLETTER



Greetings fellow members of the 556 SMS Association.

For all those who have not sent in their 2007 dues now would be a good time. There are only 2 months or so left to do so and it is only \$6.00. Always a good way to start the newsletter.

The main purpose of this newsletter is to get everyone thinking about the next reunion and about what to do for the one after the next. The president, VP and I have been discussing it via emails. Here are the things to be considered at the next business meeting, with comments by your president in parentheses.

1. Have our own separate reunion of the 556th SMS Association. All of the areas of the country would be considered.

2. Have the reunion at Plattsburgh and see the old area one more time.

"I think we should go back to Plattsburgh before all of us die off. Visiting the old haunts might be good for our gang again. What do you two think?"

3. Continue meeting with the AAFM but have one of our own on an odd year so we could gather by ourselves to talk about the Plattsburgh days.

"Being with the AAFMs is convenient and easy to pull off, and we get some "intelligence briefings" that we could never get on our own. But how important is that to our members? I suspect that sitting around and BSing is more enjoyable and of more interest to our guys and gals than those fancy briefings. What do you think? This is a reversal of my thinking back in Cheyenne, but it has been on my mind, so I thought I'd suggest it to you troops."

4. All other suggestions will be considered.

From President Melvin Driskill:

“WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.”

Veterans are encouraged to wear their ribbons, decorations and awards while attending civilian functions.

Any members who also served in a TAC outfit? In case you didn't know it there is an organization for you called “TAC Missileers”. You can contact them by writing:

**Max Butler
3270 Bufkin Springfield Road
Mt Vernon, IN 47620**

Their web site is www.tacmissileers.homestead.com/missileer.HTML

TAPS

I have been informed of the passing of the following 556ers:

Glenn “Ray” Martin	John “Red” Brodison	William “Bill” Billar
3 Apr 2007	13 May 2007	28 August 2007

Ralph Paugh	Charles Roegge
? ? ?	? ? ?

More Good Deeds by our 556er's

KENT AND CAROL VAN METER “GOOD CITIZEN’ WORK.

(Kent Van Meter was a DMCCC on Crews 9 and 23 during his stay at Plattsburgh. After finishing his commitment to the Air Force, he was a pilot for American Airlines until his retirement in the mid-90s. He and his wife Carol split their time between their primary home in McKinney, TX and their retreat in Winter Park, CO.)

Kent retired as a captain for American Airlines after 32 years of service. He needed to have a productive effort while spending his time in Winter Park during the winter. Being a ski buff, he volunteered with the National Sports Center for the Disabled, an ongoing organization that's been operating in Winter Park, CO since 1977. In his first year, he was placed in a group of ski instructors dealing with students with brain injuries. Following an intensive six-day training session, he was assigned a student, along with another instructor, to instruct and assist in the student learning how to ski using a “sit-ski”. The sit-ski comes in many forms, from a basic toboggan type to a seat mounted on two skis, with the ultimate being a single ski, which is called a mono-ski.

The student uses outriggers, which are ski poles with small skis that are articulated and strapped to each arm. The function of the instructors is to not only instruct the student in the use of the equipment, but to be there to place them on the ski lift and pick them up when they may have fallen down.

The instructor is not always lucky enough to have the same student. One day he may have a 200-pound man, and the next time a 65-year-old lady with no legs.

The program is very rewarding for both the student and the instructor. For the instructor, it's that great feeling of knowing that he has made something available to a person who would otherwise never have the great feeling of leaving a wheelchair or walker and feeling the freedom that comes from enjoying the great outdoors. As my favorite student told me, he really "loved the freedom and the speed that he would never attain in a wheelchair".

Kent hung up his instructor skis a couple of years ago after six years in the system. He thought getting himself injured once a year or so on the sit-ski was taking a toll, so he "retired" and left the rewarding efforts to younger and stronger guys.

Kent also volunteers as a member of his hometown McKinney Kiwanis club in the building of wheelchair ramps for the needy and low income folks in his area, as well as delivering Meals on Wheels.

While Kent worked with his disabled students, Carol worked in the equipment room handing out the handicapped ski stuff. After a couple of years there, she switched to the Coffee & Tea shop. Kent and friends liked that place because of Carol--they got their drinks at "normal" price (1/2 off), normal for any place but a ski area.

If there are any more of you former 556ers out there who have done "good deeds" work since leaving the Air Force, please send us a few paragraphs for inclusion in our next newsletter.

**Melvin Driskill
President**

**Al Matzat
Vice President**

**Bruce Raleigh
Secretary/Treasurer**

HOT PS

Per the latest issue of AAFM Newsletter space may be limited for the 2008 reunion. So, use the enclosed form if you plan in attending. You do not have to be a member of AAFM to use the form to attend. If something should happen and you cannot attend you have until 9 Sept. 2008 to receive a refund. More info specific to our 556 SMS Assn. later