

It's time to make plans! The 548<sup>th</sup> SMS will hold it's  
1st reunion, August 27 to 31, 2003 in Topeka, KS

### Reunion Planning Progresses!

**The dates and events are set!**

On November 30<sup>th</sup> the reunion planning committee (Lt. Tom Musson DMCCC at Forbes/Colonel USAF retired and Don Peoples A1c MMT Operations training at Forbes) met for their first in person reunion planning meeting. The meeting was held at the Angler's restaurant and marina in Kent Narrows, MD.

The Angler's was selected mainly due to the fact that it was at the midway point between our locations and their web page made a good impression. Were we surprised! For those wondering, no the association did not pick up the tab. We shared views on which date would be best for a start date and the number of days that we would need for activities. Tom shared his plans for the History/Biography booklet. We compared notes on our methods of contacting members and highlights of some of those phone conversations. One very important topic discussed was the number of vacant seats on the reunion committee. This is your reunion and everyone is welcome to step up and handle a small portion of the work to make this a fun and memorable event.

At this time the planning is well underway, some of the plans are tentative and others are firming up, we have made a firm commitment with the hotel.

The 548<sup>th</sup> SMS Association has a block of rooms with a special rate of \$79.00 (for 1 or 2 people). **You must make your hotel reservations directly with the hotel.** *Note! If you have sent in a deposit to the association, that money will be applied to your reunion registration & banquet costs. It has nothing to do with the hotel reservations.*

Register early with the hotel, to be assured of availability at the special rate. When registering specify that you are with the 548<sup>th</sup> SMS Association reunion, Code 54SM. Hotel reservations may also be placed online at:

**[www.capitolplazahoteltopeka.com](http://www.capitolplazahoteltopeka.com)**

Capitol Plaza Hotel

1717 SW Topeka Blvd.

Topeka, KS 66612

1-800-579-7937 or 1-785-431-7200

### REUNION ACTIVITIES:

Here is a schedule of our reunion activities; the times are susceptible to change.

- Registration: Wed 8/27, 3 to 9 PM, Thurs. 8/28, 6 to 9 PM and Friday 5 to 8 PM.
- Hospitality suite will be open most evenings, days as the schedule permits.
- Tour of 190<sup>th</sup> ARFW at Forbes, KC-135 Tankers, early Thursday morning.
- Picnic at Lake Shawnee Thursday afternoon.
- Depart Topeka 9 AM Friday via Motorcoach to site #3 and site #6, with a stop for a box lunch, returning about 4:00 PM.

- Tour of site #9, Saturday morning travel by personal vehicle.
- Banquet at the hotel Saturday evening.
- Sunday breakfast buffet in the hotel restaurant followed by a brief business meeting.
- Combat Air Museum may be best visited during periods of free time.
- Not a lot of interest in the casino trip if that changes we may be able to work something out.

### Banquet entertainment:

The banquet, entertainment package that we are organizing should in itself make this reunion memorable. A picture slide show on CD will be presented and will be available for purchase for \$5.00 after the banquet, the sale of which will be used to cover some of the reunion expenses.

#### *Speaking of expenses!*

Does anyone who is planning to attend the reunion have a LCD/Video projector that can be connected to a laptop for this CD presentation? If they are willing to bring it along for use with this presentation it will save us a substantial rental charge from the hotel.

### 548<sup>th</sup> Pictures

I would like to obtain the following pictures if anyone has them available. If you send photos I will scan them and return the originals. If you can e-mail them to me that would be great.

1. The main gate at Forbes.
2. The missile assembly building inside or out.
3. Any of the sites during construction, while operational or during deactivation.
4. Maintenance teams.
5. Launch crews.
6. Missile in transit.
7. Barracks area.

### VOLUNTEERS:

Volunteers are needed for the following positions:

1. Registration Chairperson, who will coordinate volunteer coverage of the registration desk.
2. Hospitality Chairperson, coordinate the volunteer monitors of the food and beverage in the hospitality room.

3. To work 1 or 2 hours at registration or hospitality.
4. To write strategically timed press releases to the Topeka media.
5. Someone in the Topeka area to act as a coordinator as the reunion approaches.
6. Picnic chairperson.
7. Is there an attorney in the group that could review our paper work to protect our interests.

If you are willing to help and can fill any of these positions, please let me know either email at: [njpeeps@att.net](mailto:njpeeps@att.net) or phone 609-587-6487.

### Association Finances

Finances as of February 22, 2003	
32 Reunion deposits @ \$50.00 ea.	\$1600.00
Donations from 10 generous members	300.00
Interest	<u>1.02</u>
Total Income	\$1901.02
Expenses:	
Office supplies	\$31.63
Postage including this newsletter	<u>\$201.10</u>
BALANCE	\$1668.29

Up to this point in time our printing has been donated but we will incur printing cost, which are not included in the above expenses, starting with this newsletter. Therefore everyone who has an e-mail address will receive their newsletter electronically to help keep costs down

### December Complex 6 Visit

The day after Christmas, Don Peoples (MMT)



and Clayton Weekes (EPPT) who worked together on site 5 for a short time while on Captain Robert Manning's crew, made a visit

to site 6 in Dover, KS. Site 6 is the home of Ed and Dianna Peden.

who very much enjoyed hearing the personalized descriptions of how certain areas of the complex were originally



configured. Clay described the power room

(pictured above) as though he was working in there last year. The next photo should bring back memories to all of you MCCC's and DMCCC's, after all of the hours that you spent monitoring the launch console. How many indicators or components on the console can you name?

I also had the opportunity to wander through part of the MAB (Missile Assembly building). The large bays house a tractor trailer repair facility. In another area a company manufacturers specialized vehicles. When I was there they were just finishing up a truck that was ordered by a water company. Their parts room was the old production control room where I had worked for a period of time with Ed Graham.

### PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY Reminder

We would like to have the History/Bio booklet available at the reunion. To provide ample time for editing and printing please provide a brief personal biography at your earliest convenience. Begin with the position that you held while in the 548<sup>th</sup>. Include in the Bio the duty stations where you served since leaving Forbes, whether you left the Air Force or retired from the service. Are you retired now or are you actively working in a civilian career. Following the format suggested below will provide uniformity and aid in the assembly of the booklet. If you prefer not to have your information published please make a notation to that affect.

- Name & Rank while at Forbes
- Current mailing address
- Phone number and email address
- Family info: spouse, number of children, grandchildren, great grandchildren
- Your biography.

Send your completed bio to:

Tom Musson  
5817 Queens Gate Ct.  
Alexandria, VA 22303  
Or email to: [tmusson@att.net](mailto:tmusson@att.net)

We plan to make this 548<sup>th</sup> History/Bio booklet available to all members of the association. Those who will be unable to attend the reunion will receive a booklet in the mail, therefore all members should send in their Bio. Of course the financial stability of the organization will probably be the determining factor as to whether we can afford the printing and mailing costs.

### Members Contacted:

We have made great progress on locating members in the past year. Up to this point in time we have made contact with 361 members or members of their family. The states leading in the latest count of members are: Texas is in the lead with 36, Kansas & Florida are even at 24 each, California is next with 19, Virginia 14 & Missouri 11.

On a more somber note, as we all know, time marches on and with the passage of time people pass on, unfortunately we have found 53 of our group who are no longer with us. Perhaps they'll be watching the reunion activities from above. Last spring while phoning members, I was told that several years ago someone in California was trying to gather information on the 548<sup>th</sup>. A few months later I was forwarded a copy of the following letter penned by one of our departed brothers.

*Dear Sir;*

*As a former member of the 548<sup>th</sup> SMS, it was my pleasure to take part in the recent launch of the last Atlas "E" in the inventory. I was surprised to learn that this particular Atlas was also a former member of the 548<sup>th</sup>, having been delivered new in 1961 to Forbes AFB. Missile history has become a subject of great interest here in the Vandenberg area and with the demise of the Strategic Air Command, much of this history may have been lost. My donation to this effort is to compile as much information on the 548<sup>th</sup> as possible, after all these years.*

*I have started a list of personnel from memory and a few sets of old orders. Please add any information that you recall from the 548<sup>th</sup>. Any copies of orders, pictures, maps etc. will be of great value. The individual ranks I have listed are circa 1961. Where first names and middle initials are missing it is because I do not have them. Please feel free to make your own copies of this list, then use my list to annotate additions and additional info and return it in this postage paid envelope.*

*Because I was in maintenance, I will need all the help I can get in sorting out the operations side of the house. If anyone can help me get in touch with someone who was in operations, please send addresses.*

*Sincerely,  
Ken Padgett*

Ed Note: As a result of Ken's letter we have been made aware that 45-E was involved in 2 historical events 3 decades apart. Rather than scraping the surplus Atlas ICBM's the Air Force put 141 of them in storage at Norton AFB. They were later refurbished for use in the space program. The last Atlas "45-E" was launched March 24, 1995 to place a Defense Meteorological Satellite Program space vehicle into a 458-nautical-mile polar orbit. Ken's list added about 70 more names to those that I had already gathered, bringing it to a total of 811 names.



### Complex Facts:

Even though most of our missile sites have been dormant for almost 40 years some are still receiving media attention. The Peden's home site #6 by Dover is routinely featured in the press and on film. In January it was one of the featured homes on HGTV's Subterranean Homes.

[http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/remodeling/article/01797.HGTV\\_3659\\_1641541.00.html](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/remodeling/article/01797.HGTV_3659_1641541.00.html) Illegal



activities and environmental contamination situations bring on notoriety of the others. Site 7 (below) is being examined because

of (TCE) Trichlorethylene contamination in several Wamego area wells. If you remember the engines were flushed with TCE after a propellant loading exercise. During the month of February there has been an ongoing trial in Federal court in Topeka. Two men have been accused of manufacturing LSD in site 7 at Wamego. For those who have Internet access and would like to read current news stories about the events go to: [www.cjonline.com](http://www.cjonline.com) in the search box type in LSD or missile. You will be able to catch up on the latest news. A few years ago the owner of site 5 was convicted of shooting a young man to death, who was trespassing on the property.

### "T" Shirt Design

Following is the proposed design for the reunion "T" shirt. The design will be B/W and will be as large as the printer can reasonably make it and the shirt still look good. The shirt will be delivered to you at the reunion. Size Small to XL \$10.00, XXL is \$1.50 extra. Those unable to make it to Topeka and would like to order a shirt, we will ship your shirt for an additional \$1.50 for postage. Place your order on the registration form and mail to Don Peoples.

### 548<sup>th</sup> SMS "ATLAS" ICBM

We were in TOPEKA with a job to do!



CUBAN CRISIS 1962

---

### POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Topeka Kansas, August 27, 2003
- Get your reservations in early; August 27<sup>th</sup> is fast approaching. By the time you read this newsletter our reunion will be less than 6 months away.
- Anyone attending the reunion alone and would like to share a room contact me. I may be able to put you in touch with another single.
- At this time it looks like we have about 60 people planning to attend.
- A **special gift** for the person sending in the 1<sup>st</sup> reunion registration form, another for the 20<sup>th</sup> and another gift for the 40th registration received.
- Don't forget your Bio.

See You in August!

548<sup>th</sup> Reunion Committee