



## *Alumni Association News Letter*

Apr 09

# The Installer

**\*\* EST. PAY DATE:\*\* AS SOON AS YOU TURN 60!**

**\*\*Dates are subject to change\*\* so quit whining**

Upcoming UTA's for 2009

4 – 5 Apr 2009

2 – 3 May 2009

**216<sup>TH</sup> ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

10110 Scotch Pine Rd  
Klamath Falls, OR 97603  
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## Alumni Association Notes

**NEWS LETTERS:** It's been a long time since we published a news letter. I apologize for that. Dana and I went home to Flagstaff a couple of days after the retirement party in August and packed up and moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Shortly after we moved in to our new house I proceeded to tear it apart. We have now remodeled every room in the house. So, I guess I didn't really retire, I just changed jobs. Now I work for Dana. Now that we are wrapping up the work on the house I should be able to get back into the Alumni Association and continue the history project. Again, I apologize for not keeping up with the Alumni Association better. Hopefully I can devote more time to it now.

**NOT GETTING A LOT OF NEWS:** I guess since our members have not heard much from us, we have not heard much from them. I haven't got a lot of news to report. Please let us know when you have something that you would like to see included in the news letter or the web site. At the very least let us know what you've been up to.

**PROMOTIONS:** I'm sure some of you have been promoted and we would like to acknowledge those accomplishments. If you have been promoted or know of someone who has please let Ben or I know.

**RETIREMENT PARTY:** I want to thank everyone for the great send-off for Marcus and I at the Moose Lodge. It was a great party! I only wish there had been more time to visit and share some of those lies (TDY stories) we all have. I look forward to the reunions that will be more about the party and visiting with each other and less about ceremony.

**HISTORY PROJECT:** I'm looking forward to getting back into the history project. Now that we have everything unpacked and I actually have somewhat of an office/work-space set up I should be able to make some progress. I will pass on more information about that as it goes. Dana and I plan to spend part of July and most of August in California. I plan to visit the California History Museum and see what progress has been made to catalog our documents and make sure we still have access to them. The best source of documenting the history of the 216<sup>th</sup> is from those members who served in the unit. Please send me any information (pictures, documents, stories) you have. We're looking at combining the history in a form that we all can see.

Jack Davis, CMSGT (retired)  
216<sup>th</sup> Alumni Association

## A message from SMS Benjamin Quen Retired

As Jack pointed out, being retired isn't what it's thought to be. This is what I've been up to since the last Installer went out. I'm still heavily involved with Search and Rescue as is Bill Foster. There have been several new members join, so much of my efforts have been directed at training. July of last year I was elected President of Mt. Calvary Catholic Cemetery located in Klamath Falls. With that I've been spending a great deal of time correcting 80 years of cemetery records and doing fundraising projects for completion of a Cemetery Chapel. I was able to use the skills learned from working on the Alumni web site to create a web site for the cemetery. The cemetery is creating a lot of work, but truly a rewarding effort. Last August, Karen and I spent a month at St. Maurus Abbey in Hanga, Tanzania. We were invited as representatives of our Catholic Parish to attend the 50 year Jubilee of St. Maurus as an Abbey. In addition we were there to view all the projects they are involved in and see what is needed. Since that visit we have become members of their Board of Directors. As a result we've done many presentations about our trip in the hopes that others will donate to the projects as well as visit the Abbey. I've included a picture below of us delivering donated balls to one of the four schools run by the Benedictine Monks. Beside these items we still do other volunteer work at Church and the community. I seem to be using a daily planner more today than I ever have. One of these days I'll retire!!



# PROJECT FAST RACE

Below, are excerpts from a document that Chief Gessell (215 EIS) sent me. This is a project that was done back in late 1966 and early 1967. I thought it might be interesting reading for you on our unit history. The document details the projects done by all units. I copied the 216<sup>th</sup> portion (Laon AB, France) below. The entire document is posted on the unit history page of the web site. **Please let me know if anyone has any details on who participated in this project. I would like to capture the names for our unit history.**

Jack Davis

## PROJECT FAST RACE

Project FAST RACE was that portion of FRELOC which removed the communications-electronics-meterological (C-E-M) equipment from those French bases scheduled to close by 1 April 1967. This report covers the GEEIA Air National Guard participation in Project Fast Race during the period 15 July 66 to 15 February 67.

FAST RACE was the first time ANG/GEEIA forces from each of the 17 squadrons were used as combined teams, with rank dictating command --- not unit of origin. The officers and airmen of the GEEIA Guard proved that they were highly mobile, qualified and capable of performing C-E-M tasks anywhere in the world. These teams removed items such as TACAN, GCA, telephone central offices, steel towers, microwave, UHF and VHF radio, control towers and radar.

The ANG/GEEIA Squadrons became involved in this program because extremely time and date conscious "one-time shot" workload almost unsolvable problems for GEEIA, due to great demands being made by other high priority commitments around the globe. The ANG/GEEIA organizations were approached to determine if the use of their people on a volunteer basis would be practical. Calls were made to thirteen states in which the 17 ANG units were located to determine if enough volunteers could be mustered. Four hundred thirty-three personnel answered, volunteering for periods ranging from 31 days to the maximum of 89 days. Armed with this information, a request for approval to use ANG/GEEIA troops directed through AFLC to the National Guard Bureau. This approval was received at Headquarters GEEIA on 26 September 1966.

All project data was compiled, logistical and administrative support for the ANG was arranged and pre-removal surveys were completed by the 2874<sup>th</sup> GEEIA Squadron, Ramstein AB, Germany. An ANG Project Office was established at European GEEIA Region, Wiesbaden AB, Germany.

Lt Col Paul D. Kerr, Commander of the 205<sup>th</sup> ANG/GEEIA Squadron, Oklahoma City, was the initial officer in charge. This first ANG contingent, two officers and three NCO's arrived at European GEEIA Region on 2 November 1966. Between 2-15 November, this team established the final procedures to accomplish payrolls, TDY, vouchers and transportation within Europe.

#### LAON AB, FRANCE

Under the guidance of SMSGT James L. Shearer, team NCOIC, assisted by TSGT William R. Pinkston, both of the 216<sup>th</sup> GEEIA Squadron, California ANG, Hayward, California, the entire job was completed ahead of schedule. This 19 man team of 60 and 89 day people was plagued by severe icing problems which, on many occasions caused complete cessation of work. In addition to the normal base dismantling work, this team, with the assistance of TSGT Bobby F. Malone, 205<sup>th</sup> GEEIA Sq, Oklahoma, removed an entire American type telephone central office in record time, plus two microwave sites south of Laon. Two thousand one hundred fifty-two man-hours were expended. Active duty was from 15 November 1966 to 11 February 1967.

# Web Site Updates

Changed the appearance of the Home page to list most recent web site updates at the top of the page

Pictures page updated 12 Apr 09: Mildenhall Project (1995), Castro Valley Parade and 1982 EI Shoot Out.

History page updated 17 Apr: Added document that details project Fast Race

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## *First Annual Reunion*

I would like to get some feed-back from our members about a reunion this year. Here are my thoughts.

I think we should have one this year (August) but keep it simple... and cheap. We need to test the water to see how many people show up and we can discuss the reunions as a group (in person) the next time we get together. We should take the opportunity at reunions to get input and feedback from our members when we all get together. The Alumni Association belongs to the members and everyone should have a voice in how it's run and how we hold reunions.

I vote that we see about having it at the same Moose Lodge in Castro Valley (if it's not too expensive to rent the hall). I don't think we should have a dinner. We can put out a bunch of food to snack on while we party.

Let's hear your thoughts.

Jack Davis

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## PROMOTIONS:



Many of you know Greg Gessell at the 215 EIS. Greg has worked with us on a lot of projects over the years. His unit was the lead on the Hickam project that several of our members participated in a couple of years ago. Since our last news letter back in August Greg was promoted to Chief. He has been the Workloader at the 215<sup>th</sup> for several years. Congratulations Greg!



As I go through the history files and run across pictures I will include a few in the new letters. This is a picture our Engineering staff that was taken shortly before the unit closed.