

68 Classmates:

This is a February 20, 2017 update on the reunion planning, complete with a fairly long list of frequently asked questions. Since my last message we have held our first complete organizing meeting and at least three committees are already reporting accomplishments.

Probably the most significant developments are the selection of a reunion date and hotel and the selection of a class gift. Our 50<sup>th</sup> reunion will be the weekend of October 6, 2018 at the Double Tree Hotel in Colorado Springs. In the FAQs below I explain the reasoning behind that decision. The class gift and status of fundraising are reported in separate documents released by the gift committee.

I've divided FAQs into categories of questions. To help you find a specific question I'll begin with a kind of index. The categories are:

1. The objectives and criteria for the reunion? This includes a listing of activities to be included in the reunion.
2. Reunion date and hotel
3. Duration of reunion
4. Size of reunion – how many people do we think will attend
5. Why are we working with the AOG?
6. Schedule flexibility
7. When did work on the reunion begin?
8. Committees
9. Request for volunteers and input

### **What are the objectives and criteria for the reunion?**

The objective is very simple – To maximize attendance by classmates, families of classmates, families of deceased classmates and those who began the Academy with the class of '68 but did not graduate. Carl Janssen and Neal Starkey are working to find our "lost souls" as well as families of deceased classmates.

In order to maximize attendance we are incorporating criteria that the class has identified. Those criteria come from 45<sup>th</sup> reunion after action reports, a survey of classmates and numerous messages from classmates. Those criteria are summarized below:

The vast majority of our classmates want us to include opportunities for INFORMAL interaction with classmates and a memorial service.

A significant majority of our classmates want us to include an opportunity to attend a football game and an opportunity to visit the cadet area

At least half of our classmates want to include an activity like golf or a pheasant hunt on Thursday and an increased involvement for families and spouses.

A significant majority of our classmates want to AVOID an expensive

reunion, particularly an expensive hotel, a formal program at the banquet, and a senior staff briefing.

### **Reunion date and hotel**

The reunion will be the weekend of October 6, 2018 probably at the Double Tree Hotel in Colorado Springs.

The date was less chosen than imposed. The Academy itself (NOT the AOG) will only support reunions in 2018 on three weekends of their choosing. Those dates will all be on weekends of home football games. In order to provide the opportunity to attend a football game and the opportunity to tour the cadet area that most of our classmates want, we must pick one of those three weekends. Further, the 2018 football schedule will not be released until March of 2018 and the time of the games (from Thursday through Saturday) will not be finalized until 10 days before the game. It is impossible to schedule hotels, banquets and other events without knowing the schedule. The one exception to all this is the Navy game whose date is set by a long term contract with the Naval Academy. The Navy game will be Saturday, October 6, 2018 so the reunion committee has committed to that date.

The hotel selection was based on visits by the hotel and venue committee to literally every hotel in Colorado Springs that has facilities large enough to accommodate our class. From that group, the Double Tree was best able to meet our concern for cost and provide facilities for all our events.

### **Duration of Reunion**

So far events are being planned for Thursday, October 4 through Sunday, October 7. However, our contract with the hotel will permit guests to arrive up to three days before the reunion and to remain as much as three days after the reunion and still pay the reunion room rate.

### **Size of reunion**

Based on the number of people who have attended past 50<sup>th</sup> reunions, the number who attended our 45<sup>th</sup> reunion and other data from the AOG and convention planning, we anticipate we will need about 165 hotel rooms and that about 500 people will register for our reunion.

### **AOG involvement**

Simply put, it is impossible to hold the reunion without the AOG's support. There are several reasons but the four most important are:

1. As a class we do not have the legal authority to form contracts. We cannot book hotels, contract with caterers etc. without the support of a legal entity like the AOG.
2. The AOG coordinates with the Academy for access to the cadet area and stadium. The AOG also helps organize parking, transportation and meals at the Academy.

3. The AOG gives us advice and negotiating power. They book caterers, transportation, hotels etc. for nine reunions, parents weekend a homecomings and other events every year. That gives them negotiating power we do not have without them. In addition, they have mailing lists of classmates, are familiar with local vendors, and have access to the Academy structure we do not have.
4. The AOG holds our class agency fund and has the ability to help us subsidize costs, pay deposits etc. Their involvement will actually cut our cost.

### **Schedule flexibility**

Many of you have suggested moving reunion events like: holding the golf tournament on Monday or moving the Cadet Area tour to Saturday or Sunday. Unfortunately most of those changes are not possible. The cost of a reunion to the Academy is very large. Among other things, they have to add security and reschedule cadet activities for every reunion. In order to make those adjustments they have to limit the number of reunions, the available dates of reunions and the flexibility of reunion schedules. Bottom line, our options are very limited.

### **When did work on the 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion begin?**

Literally before the 45<sup>th</sup> ended Al Bloomberg, who chaired the 45<sup>th</sup>, started gathering information, complaints and preferences.

Other data gathering includes a survey of all classmates for whom the AOG has contact information on July 13, 2015 and has continued since.

The first committee to begin detailed work was the class gift committee. It began work in November of 2015.

### **Existing committees**

Chair and Assistant Chair

Mike Parkinson

Gary Hoffman

Hotel and Venue Committee

Al Bloomberg

Bob Denny

Gary Hoffman

Mike Parkinson

Bill Sasz

Bill Crimmel (banquet)

Bill Wood (banquet)

Class Gift Committee

Bill Maywhort (Chair)

Bill Beggert

Garry Dudley  
Bill Eckert  
Gary Hoffman  
Steve McPhail  
Mike Parkinson  
Alan Price

Contact search/lost souls  
Carl Janssen  
Neal Starkey

Memorial Service  
Dale Oderman (Chair)  
Garry Dudley  
Bob Denny  
Ed Leonard

Class Merchandise  
Bill Eckert  
Vince Rusinak  
Bill Wood

Golf Tournament  
Al Blumberg  
Barney Mills

Golf Alternative (Pheasant hunt, fly fishing or other)  
Doug Wilson  
Bill Wood

Family/Spouse Involvement – NEED VOLUNTEER(S)

Colorado Springs retirement options - Information on retiring in or moving  
to COS

Nancy Rusinak

Football Coordination - Tailgate, Tickets, Seating etc. – NEED  
VOLUNTEER(S)

Tour of USAFA Airfield –NEED VOLUNTEER(S)

Tour of Falcon Stadium  
Neal Starkey

WWII Flying Museum Tour  
Vince Rusinak

Blue and Silver Club – Tour or football attendance alternative  
Vince Rusinak

Alternate to Football (meet in private lounge etc.)  
Gary Hoffman

Transportation – movement within Academy AND from hotel to Academy  
or alternate activities  
Mike Parkinson

Sunday open house  
Carl & Debbie Janssen

Name Tags (arranging cadet photos on name tags) –NEED  
VOLUNTEER(S)

**Request for volunteers and input**

If you have suggestions or other input or if you would like to volunteer for  
any committee, please

Contact Mike Parkinson  
Michael.parkinson@ttu.edu