

Volume 9, Issue 3

September 2005

## Family Support

### **Attention Spouses, Parents, Siblings, Friends:**

Did your service member pass up deployment this year? And are you interested in being a deployment Beacon for families whose service member is being deployed? The 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing has experienced a good number of new unit members since the beginning of the new year, and therefore many families may be new to deployment separation and could use your occasional "well-being" check in. The Family Readiness Program is seeking BEACONS who volunteer 4 hours a month or less to email or make phone calls providing well-being checks to family members coping with deployment separation. If your spouse or son/daughter is not deploying this year, would you consider this heart-warming connection to provide encouragement and information, as necessary, to help them cope?

Contact Carolann Alconcher at (650) 603-9118 or email her at [familysupport@camoff.ang.af.mil](mailto:familysupport@camoff.ang.af.mil) to get more information or sign up to be a Beacon!

## Armed Forces Vacation Club Adds Nightly Getaways

The Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC), a vacation rental program offered to military personnel by RCI (Resort Condominiums International, LLC), has added the option of nightly rental opportunities as an expanded service to eligible participants.

Active duty and retired military personnel now have the option to rent a vacation condo either in seven day increments or choose to stay for one night or more, subject to availability.

Resort properties are available in the United States and Canada in daily and weekly increments. Nightly Getaway rates start as low as \$75 during peak season; with peak period weekly rates as low as \$199. Nightly Getaway reservations must be made within 60 days of travel. Weekly rentals can be made up to 12 months in advance, based on availability.

Rentals come in a variety of sizes: one bedroom and larger condos, studios and cottages. Many of the vacation properties come with fully equipped kitchen, washer and dryer, living room, dining area, swimming pool, hot tub, fitness center and handicapped accessibility features.

For Nightly Getaway reservations call 1-888-338-0970. For weekly reservations call 1-800-724-9988 or go to [www.afvclub.com](http://www.afvclub.com). To make any AFVC reservation, members will need their AFVC installation identification number obtainable from the following offices, depending on the military installation: **MWR** (Moral, Welfare & Recreation), **ITT** (Information, Tours & Tickets or Information, Tours & Travel) and **ITR** (Information, Tours & Recreation).

The Armed Forces Vacation Club is a space available program offering Department of Defense affiliated personnel the opportunity to take affordable vacations at resorts. The AFVC makes this possible by utilizing available inventory at timeshare resorts.

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## The Prez Sez

*The President's Column*

LTC Jesse Craddock (Ret.)

Where did the summer go?

Thanks to Col Bagdasarian for the opportunity at the Family Day Awards Formation to chat about the Association. During the picnic, the Association recruited five new Wing members. I enjoyed talking with a number of Association members who attended the annual Family Day event.

Ken Moore represented the Association at the retirement dinners for CMSgt Dusty Rhoads and LtCol Jim Rommelfanger, presenting them with an Association Aircraft Collage.

The Wing successfully completed the AFSOC administered ORI August 25<sup>th</sup>. The exercise was held in conjunction with the Wing's AEF deployment. The ORI flying phase will be scheduled next year.

Previously, the Association has manned a canteen during Wing deployments, but the ORI ground rules prohibited such a facility. The Wing leadership requested the Association consider providing a deployment bag containing snacks and other items the troops could utilize while in transit. Eleanor and Ken Moore held a barbeque and bag building party on August 6. The Board ladies - Bea Craddock, Eleanor Moore, Rose Boddington, and Lynda Fawcett - assembled 120 bags which were delivered to Col Bagdasarian for distribution. A second request for 80 bags was assembled by Lynda Fawcett. Special thanks to the ladies for their work and assistance in supporting the Wing.

Three Association members have volunteered to serve as Family Readiness Volunteers during the Wing AEF deployment. The Newsletter contains information on the program.

Regrettably, I must report the passing of MSgt Bob Denham; the Newsletter contains a bio piece.

If you are in contact with retired or separated 129<sup>TH</sup> members who are not Association members, how about forwarding a membership application? We are always looking for new members.

Please keep the Wing members participating in the AEF in your thoughts and prayers.

Enjoy the fall season! The Holidays can't be far off!!!!

*Jay*

## Museum of Aviation earns national accreditation

WARNER ROBINS, Ga. (AFPN) -- The Museum of Aviation here has been awarded national accreditation by the American Association of Museums.

The recognition places the museum in a group of only nine aviation museums in the nation that have met the AAM standards of achievement. Accreditation signifies excellence within the museum community, according to museum officials here.

"To say that I'm excited about achieving accreditation would be a gross understatement," said Paul Hibbitts, museum director. "This accreditation is the culmination of over two years of hard work by the museum staff. Accreditation is not just something that we set our sights on achieving, but it is a culmination of how our employees operate on a daily basis."

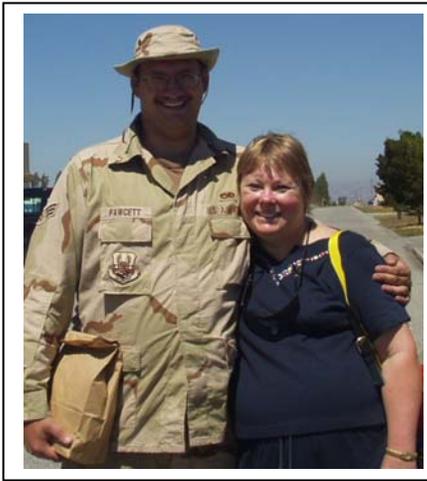
Mr. Hibbitts said it was a goal of the museum staff to voluntarily seek accreditation.

"We wanted AAM accreditation because we knew it would expand the museum's professional practices, and we believe that when Air Force field museum certification becomes a reality, we can pass the inspection by simply continuing to keep our present procedures current," Mr. Hibbitts said.

Situated on a 51-acre site, the museum is the largest Air Force field museum, displaying more than 100 aircraft and missiles. The education-based museum has grown into a significant exhibit, education and cultural center drawing more than 500,000 visitors annually.

Exhibits are designed to take visitors back in time to places like a "Flying Tigers" airfield in China in 1942, to India where C-47 transports flew over "the Hump" in the 1940s and to Italy in a replica of a B-17 on a bombing mission during World War II.

Other exhibits salute the Tuskegee Airmen and World War II ace Brig. Gen. Robert L. Scott Jr., author of "God is My Co-Pilot." The Museum of Aviation is located adjacent to Robins Air Force Base.



SrA Richard Casey "Tiny" Fawcett  
& the Mom  
Newsletter Editor Lynda Fawcett



Ken Moore & Jay Craddock  
The Bag Building Party



Bea Craddock  
Rose & Ed Boddington

# The 129<sup>th</sup> RQW Deploys



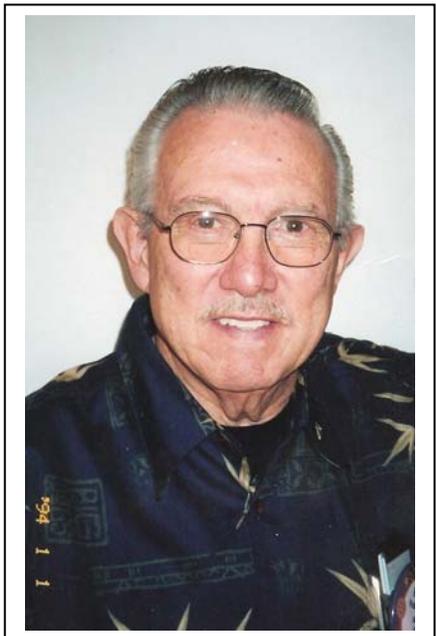
Jay Craddock  
Ed Boddinton  
Ken Moore  
John Ruppel  
Lynda Fawcett  
Rose Boddington  
Eleanor Moore  
Bea Craddock



Ken Moore & Bea Craddock

LtCol Lou Danner  
Jay Craddock  
Col Amos  
Bagdasarian  
Ken Moore  
Col Wayne Albright





## MSgt Robert William Denham

*06 April 1934 – 3 June 2005*

ROBERT "BOB" DENHAM, a six-year resident of Tracy, Calif., passed away June 3, 2005, at Sutter Tracy Community Hospital, at the age of 71. A former, longtime resident of Fremont, Calif., he was born in San Francisco on April 6, 1934. Mr. Denham is survived by his wife of 15 years, Jan Blanchard; his children, Mark Denham of San Francisco, Marian Denham of Fremont and Nichole Winter of Livermore; granddaughter Shari Winter of Livermore; and sister Jeannie Flaherty of Mesa, Ariz. He retired from Crocker National Bank as vice president and area market manager, and from the Air National Guard as a master sergeant. He attended Grace Baptist Church, and was a 43-year member and 25-year treasurer of Rotary National, with perfect attendance. As a Boy Scout, he was one merit badge shy of Eagle Scout and as a teenager he was a member of Sea Scouts in San Francisco. He loved bowling and watching war movies. He was a varsity swimmer at Mission High in San Francisco, and loved to travel, cook and entertain family and friends. He will be remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather and a great friend to many. A memorial service was held on Friday, June 10, at Grace Baptist Church, 1330 N. Tracy Blvd., Tracy, Calif. Interment was private. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the American Heart Association, 171 Gilbreth Rd., Burlingame, CA 94010.

# MIONIX

### **A very special thank you to Mr. Michael Cunha & Mionix Applied Innovations!**

Michael Cunha, working with Robert Sinex – a CitiBank co-worker of Newsletter Editor Lynda Fawcett – arranged for his company, Mionix Applied Innovations of Rocklin, CA, to donate 5 cases of antimicrobial wipes (nice fat packs of wipes!) and 10 cases of antimicrobial gel (8 ounce bottles!) to our deploying troops. The Association and the Wing are deeply grateful for this wonderful and generous support.

**Thanks, Michael & Robert!**

# Regarding an F-16 Fly-by

***From the Arizona Republic online.....***

***A complaint post, and the reply***

## ***Complaint:***

**A wake-up call from Luke's jets**

**June 23, 2005**

"Question of the day for Luke Air Force Base: Whom do we thank for the morning air show? Last Wednesday, at precisely 9:11 a.m., a tight formation of four F-16 jets made a low pass over Arrowhead Mall, continuing west over Bell Road at approximately 500 feet. Imagine our good fortune!

Do the Tom Cruise-wannabes feel we need this wake-up call, or were they trying to impress the cashiers at Mervyns' early-bird special?

Any response would be appreciated."

***The reply is classic, and a testament to the professionalism and heroism of the folks in the armed services.***

## ***The response:***

**Regarding "A wake-up call from Luke's jets" (Letters, Thursday):**

On June 15, at precisely 9:12 a.m., a perfectly timed four-ship of F-16s from the 63rd Fighter Squadron at Luke Air Force Base flew over the grave of Capt Jeremy Fresques.

Capt Fresques was an Air Force officer who was previously stationed at Luke Air Force Base and was killed in Iraq on May 30, Memorial Day. At 9 a.m. on June 15, his family and friends gathered at Sunland Memorial Park in Sun City to mourn the loss of a husband, son and friend.

Based on the letter writer's recount of the flyby, and because of the jet noise, I'm sure you didn't hear the 21-gun salute, the playing of taps, or my words to the widow and parents of Capt Fresques as I gave them their son's flag on behalf of the President of the United States and all those veterans and servicemen and women who understand the sacrifices they have endured.

A four-ship flyby is a display of respect the Air Force pays to those who give their lives in defense of freedom. We are professional aviators and take our jobs seriously, and on June 15 what the letter writer witnessed was four officers lining up to pay their ultimate respects.

The letter writer asks, "Whom do we thank for the morning air show?" The 56th Fighter Wing will call for you, and forward your thanks to the widow and parents of Capt Fresques, and thank them for you, for it was in their honor that my pilots flew the most honorable formation of their lives.

**Lt. Col. Scott Pleus  
CO 63rd Fighter Squadron  
Luke Air Force Base**

**129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing "Operation Ready Families" Form  
California Air National Guard Moffett Federal Airfield  
January 2005**

**Privacy Act Statement:**

The information on this form will be used by the Commander and Wing Family Readiness Program to ensure opportunity for family members to receive information authorized by the service member as indicated herein.

**Section I – Guard Member Information**

<b>Rank, Last, First Name</b>			
<b>Unit</b>		<i>Your Duty Extension</i>	
<b>Section Supervisor Name</b>		<i>Supervisor Extension</i>	
<b>Name of Civilian Employer &amp; Supervisor Contact # (if Traditional):</b>			
<b>Will you need ESGR information?</b>		<b>Date you verified Dependents enrolled in DEERS</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Single Parent household</b>		<b>AF Fm 357 – Dependent Family Care Plan Certified Current and maintained in my Orderly Room</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Dual Military household</b>			
<b>Date you reviewed your Dependent(s) ID Card, Power of Attorney and/or Will</b> (reviewed for expirations dates ending prior to deployment completion)		<b>Date: Expires</b>	<b>Date:</b>
		<b>POA/ Will</b>	<b>Date:</b>

If you do not want your family member contacted during any tours of deployment, recommend they receive Family Newsletters

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>I DO NOT want my family members contacted during any tours of deployment.</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>I AUTHORIZE e-Newsletters, flyers, or brochures regarding any family community event hosted by the Wing sent to the email address or mailing address listed below. I understand that if my family member does not have an email account, family readiness e-Newsletters will be forwarded to my unit email @ camoff.</b>

**Section II – Family Member Information**

I identify the following as my key adult family members or significant other managing my estate/property anytime I am deployed for AEF, training, or school.

<b>Relationship</b>		<b>Family Special Needs:</b> Any handicaps or family member hardship that may require our special attention while you are deployed.	
<b>Name</b>		<b>Relationship</b>	
<b>Mailing Address</b>		<b>Need/Concern:</b>	
<b>E-mail</b>			
<b>Home phone</b>			
<b>Cell phone</b>			
<b>Other</b>			

**Section IV – Single Military Member Deployment Considerations Reviewed**

Eldercare (complete Section II above)	
POV secured (insurance contacted re deployment)	
Financial Obligations (bill pay or designated person identified)	

## DoD announces one-year SBP open enrollment

The Department of Defense has announced that military retirees, who opted out of some or all their Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage, will have another opportunity to elect coverage during a one-year open enrollment period from Oct. 1, 2005 through Sept. 30, 2006.

Upon a retiree's death, SBP provides an annuity of up to 55 percent of the military retired pay. Until recently, the annuity for a surviving spouse age 62 or older was reduced to 35 percent to reflect the availability of Social Security benefits. This reduction will phase out by April 2008, and the full 55 percent benefit will be paid regardless of the spouse's age in accordance with the Fiscal 2005 National Defense Authorization Act.

Current non-participants will be able to elect any coverage they could have elected previously upon retiring from active service or upon receiving notification of eligibility for reserve retired pay at age 60.

If they have a reduced election, they may increase their coverage. A participant with child only coverage may add a spouse or former spouse to their coverage, and a member may add child coverage to spouse or former spouse coverage.

But those who took SBP coverage and later elected to terminate that coverage arbitrarily under the provisions of Public Law 105-85 (effective 17 May 98) are not eligible to make an open enrollment election.

Open enrollment elections require a lump sum buy-in premium as well as future monthly premiums. The lump sum equates to all back premiums, plus interest, from the date of original eligibility to make an election plus any amount needed to protect the Military Retirement Fund. The latter amount applies almost exclusively to those paying fewer than seven years of back payments.

The lump sum buy-in premium can be paid over a two-year period. Monthly premiums for spouse or former spouse coverage will be 6.5 percent of

## **SBP open enrollment (cont'd)**

the coverage elected, the same premium paid by those currently enrolled. Reserve component members under age 60 and not yet eligible for retired pay do not pay back premiums or interest, but must pay a monthly SBP premium "add-on" once their retired pay starts.

Elections are effective the first day of the month after the election is received, but no earlier than Oct. 1, 2005. An election is void if the retiree dies in the two years following an election and all premiums are refunded to the designated survivor.

To make an open enrollment election, a retiree must complete and submit a DD Form 2656-9, "Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan (RCSBP) Open Enrollment Election." The form is available electronically at [www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2656-9.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2656-9.pdf)

For assistance with the form, retired members should contact the office managing the SBP for their Service. Air Force retirees should call toll-free 1 (800) 531-7502 anytime between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Central Time, Monday through Friday except holidays.

The Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel, which will be mailed in September, will contain the form, instructions for filling out the form and other pertinent information. Those considering enrolling in SBP are urged to read all the Afterburner information and to have their latest retired pay statement at hand before calling for information.

SBP counselors at local military installations are not equipped or staffed to provide guidance.

Once completed, retirees need to mail the completed form to the address specified on the form. Applicants will be formally notified of their cost and have 30 days from the date of the notice to cancel the election by notifying the Defense Finance and Accounting Service or the reserve component, as applicable, in writing.

# Dondi's Mercantile Store

129<sup>th</sup> AHA Merchandise & Apparel

If you would like to order a 129<sup>th</sup> AHA jacket, you can start by purchasing a uniform windbreaker from Clothing Sales. We will then have the embroidery and patches applied for you.

Want to own a really unique & distinctive shirt or cap to show your affiliation with the 129<sup>th</sup> AHA? Dondi's Mercantile Store has a healthy stock of 129<sup>th</sup> AHA related items. Jackets are customized with your name and rank.

All merchandise can be ordered by phone or on-line. Items and prices are shown at right. Shipping and handling are EXTRA.

Order from Don Delucchi at:  
(925) 689-2683  
or online at [Dondi129@hotmail.com](mailto:Dondi129@hotmail.com)

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>SIZES</u>
Logo Jacket-1 ONLY!	\$70 - \$75	
Logo Polo Shirts	\$22	M, L, XL, & 2XL
Logo Baseball Cap w/ Embroidered Logo	\$10	
Logo Baseball Cap w/ Silk-screened Logo	\$5	
Large Jacket Patch	\$10	
Small Shirt / Hat Patch	\$5	
Logo Pin	\$5	
129 <sup>th</sup> Aircraft Collage	\$10	

All items can be shipped. Shipping and handling are EXTRA. All items are sent via U.S. Mail.

Have you moved? Know a former member of the 129<sup>th</sup> who isn't a member yet?

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / CHANGE OF INFORMATION FORM 2005 Dues \$10.00

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4: \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RANK: \_\_\_\_\_ 129<sup>TH</sup> SERVICE DATES FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the above information and mail to:  
129<sup>th</sup> Alumni & Heritage Association  
c/o Col John L. Ruppel, Jr. (ret)  
6718 Zerillo Dr.  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

**If your personal information has changed,  
PLEASE USE THIS FORM AND NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY!!**

## New to the Gang

*Our Newest Members*

*Capt Douglas Bawden  
TSgt Kit Boyce  
SSgt Kim Patrick Collins  
CMSgt Victor Ferrera  
MSgt Derek Frazier  
MSgt Chuck Larson  
MSgt Joseph C. Munar  
LtCol Mark Sheehy  
MSgt Mary Winfrey  
LtCol Steve Hussey*

## Welcome!

Do you know someone who has been affiliated with the 129<sup>th</sup> RQW or its predecessor organizations - and is not a member of the Association? Let's get them signed up!

## Final Flyby

In Memoriam

We bid farewell to our members who have departed on their final journey.

MSgt Robert William Denham



## Air Force Retiree News

[http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/AF\\_Retiree\\_News.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/AF_Retiree_News.htm)

The Air Force Retiree News Service (AFRNS) maintains a web site at the above internet address. Much information of interest to the Air Force Retiree Community is available at that site. Some of the current information available includes:

### VA activates surviving spouse web site

The Department of Veterans Affairs recently activated a new website aimed directly at surviving spouses of military members who died on active duty and surviving spouses of veterans who died after serving their country. The site, at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors>, not only has links to the VA pages describing survivor benefits but also to other government sites that may offer valuable information and assistance.

There is also a link to Frequently Asked Questions that answers most questions. For more specific questions, the site tells how to contact the VA directly. The main VA web site is at <http://www.va.gov/>

### Military retirees, annuitants overseas offered Direct Deposit

U.S. military retirees and annuitants living in certain overseas locations can have their monthly payments sent directly to their local banks through the Defense Finance and Accounting Services' (DFAS) International Direct Deposit program. The first phase of the program will begin Aug. 1 when enrollment packages are mailed to retirees and annuitants living in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, and Germany. DFAS officials plan to add more than 35 nations to the list soon. <http://www.dod.mil/dfas>

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AND  
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Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Are You Missing in Action?

### *Dead Letter Department*

Have you moved recently - or not so recently? Do we have your correct mail and e-mail addresses & phone number? Please let us know when you move.

The newsletter is mailed out with a request for address correction. The post office does not forward the newsletter to you. They return it to us - and charge us 37¢. Then we update your file, put your newsletter in an envelope, put a 37¢ stamp on the packet, and mail it out to you. Total additional cost to the association is nearly \$1.00 per returned newsletter.

Please take a moment to remember the 129<sup>th</sup> AHA when you notify your correspondents of your new address. A member information form is included in every issue.

Col. John L. Ruppel, Jr. (Ret.)  
6718 Zerillo Drive  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

E-mail: J-L.RUPPEL@WORLDNET.ATT.NET

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
RIVERBANK, CA  
PERMIT #20



# Safe Journey Safe Return

