

# the **HOF CONNECTION** newsletter

January 2003

## **THE STARDUST RESORT/CASINO IN LAS VEGAS TO HOST 2003 REUNION**

The Hof Reunion Association's Board of Directors have accepted the Stardust Hotel Casino's offer to host the Association's 2003 reunion to be held October 6<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>, 2003. The Stardust Resort occupies 62 acres on the famous Las Vegas Strip. Home of the Wayne Newton Theater, the Stardust offers quality entertainment nightly, and the Starlight Lounge rocks until dawn's early light. The Stardust offers great dining in five restaurants (William B's, Tony Roma's, Sushi King, Island Paradise Café, & Coco Palms Eatery) and has six cocktail lounges/bars. The Stardust has 2 large Pools, a 24 hour fitness center, Shopping Mall, free parking, free valet parking service, safes in all rooms, safety deposit boxes, guest fax service, free Ice on every floor, and first run television movies.

The Stardust will provide rooms for Association members in the Deluxe West Tower for \$55.00 per night, October 6<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> (\$105.00 Fri/Sat). Spa Suites will be available for \$90.00 (\$140.00 Fri/Sat). The Las Vegas Reunion itinerary, instructions for making room reservations and registration will be mailed to members the first week of July.

### TENATIVE REUNION ITINERARY

The hospitality suite will be on the ground floor located approximately 40 feet from the outdoor swimming pool. Tables and chairs will be on the patio and grass area adjacent to the patio.

October 6<sup>th</sup> Registration, Hospitality Suite, Pictures, Meeting  
October 7<sup>th</sup> Afternoon reception/social, Buffet, Open Bar  
October 8<sup>th</sup> Tour, Group Dinners (Dutch), Showtime  
October 9<sup>th</sup> Banquet Dinner (Open Bar) followed by Live German Dance Music  
October 10<sup>th</sup> 8am Auf Wiedersehen Breakfast.

It is important that you complete the attached questionnaire and **return** it before **February 10<sup>TH</sup>**. Check the Hof Reunion website, there is additional information available with photos of the Stardust and maps and transportation information about Las Vegas and the "Strip". There will be additional information and updates as they occur in the regular "Update" email newsletters.

## THE 2002 HOFER REUNION

BY TOM BRYSON - Retired President - Executive Board Advisor

The Reunion in Hof was an experience that is certain to be treasured in the memories of those of us fortunate enough to attend. A great deal of "behind the scenes" work had gone into this event, and it clearly paid off in a terrific, week-long party filled with camaraderie, new experiences (field trip to Prague), good food and overall fun.

With lots of free time, we could see that although the 21<sup>st</sup> century had arrived in the form of cell phones, more cars, new German words (Die Faxcopie) and so forth, Hof was still very much the same; as charming and European as ever. However, many one-way streets and pedestrian malls did cause some navigational problems for those of us with cars. But thanks to what seemed to be a general awareness and appreciation of our "invasion" no citations were issued although I should have gotten several myself.

The Mayor of Hof granted us an audience and was very personable and gracious. He spoke about our contribution to the protection of Hof during the Cold War and later had his picture taken with my daughter and anyone who wanted to be photographed with him. Each participant was presented a coffee mug with "Hof in Bayern Ganz Oben" printed on the side. After the session with the Mayor we were all treated to Champagne, Beer and Bratwurst.

Later in the Day, we gathered at Fernweh Park (the sign post forest) for pictures and an informal ceremony. City signs from across this Great Country were presented to Klaus Beer, the Curator of Fernweh-Park. Some pictures appeared in the Frankenpost, Franken Blick and Hofer Anzeiger. Many pictures are posted on the Internet. You can also visit the Associations Website to view the pictures.

Manfred Koehler and the ladies of the Pro Hof Club (Chamber of Commerce) then invited all reunion participants to the "Teddy Bear Museum" for coffee and cake. The "Teddy Bear Museum" was moved from Berlin to Hof in 2001. A beautifully decorated 10,000 Sq. Ft. facility, with marble floors and lighted display cases, the museum is underground in Old Hof. The museum is home to more than 5000 teddy bears. The largest collection of teddy bears in the world. The nicely decorated Café serves lunch, coffee, and deserts. If you ever visit Hof, allow approximately two hours to tour the magnificent Teddy Bear Museum.

Overall, we seemed to be welcomed. The staff at the hotel had to learn about ice in drinks among other things but seemed to get a kick out of us. I heard the phrase "Amis" a number of times all over the place but never in a derogatory sense. Everyone seemed to enjoy having us around, and we got great write-up in the local Newspaper.

The day spent with the German Air Force was very special. We were given a briefing in the old Chapel where an area is dedicated to the memory of our service in Hof, and got to see the Intercept Site at a distance and several new antenna fields for that site. At Doebraberg, they allowed us to go where we wanted and photograph whatever we

wanted except the interior of their Radar ops. We could go in, however, and it was interesting.

Later, we were served lunch at our old Mess Hall by young German Airmen and allowed to roam. We were able to visit our old barracks and even look into the rooms if nobody was there. German Airmen are as sloppy as we were. Although the rooms were newer, they looked the same. Underwear and fatigues hanging on chairs, cases of beer in the corner, posters of Beer and Women on the walls etc. Soldiers never change. We could have walked right into those rooms and taken up housekeeping. It was refreshing. Another word on the Bundeswehr, they really cleaned up their act since we the Sixties. The greasy, ill fitting fatigues and jackboots are gone and now they look like our own Marines. Hats off to the Bundeswehr, they have become a sharp and military outfit that would make anyone proud.

The tour to the Porcelain Factory in Tettau gave everybody an opportunity to see how fine porcelain is produced and pick up a few souvenirs. After a wonderful lunch, we boarded the busses and proceeded to the Hummel Factory and Museum in Roedental near Coburg. The 110 tour participants were divided into small groups for the purpose of touring and shopping.

The Reunion Banquet was held in the Buergergesellschaft. Tables were arranged for 12 people to set around each of the 15 tables. A Franconian Dance Team performed and German Music encouraged everybody to end the evening dancing. After our formal dinner, we had the pleasure of hearing Jim Taylor (the Valkyries) and a tremendous group of gospel singers perform several old standbys in their own style. It was a tremendous performance. Jim, by the way, has been in Germany for over thirty years, living in Munich then again back in Hof. It was great to see him and he hasn't changed a bit.

These are just a few of the marvelous highlights of an event that was marvelous in itself. I was lucky enough to be small part of the planning and construction of this Reunion as well as an attendee. The result has been extremely rewarding and I urge anyone who has the opportunity to do whatever possible to contribute to the leadership, entertainment, activities, preparation and execution of our next great event in Las Vegas, the playground of America.

## HOF/SAALE MEMORIAL SERVICE

Deceased Colleagues were honored at the reunion banquet

The Service began with a Prayer from Francis Fukumoto, the Association Chaplain. Francis was assisted by Tom Bryson, Dick Barry, Bob Blanchard, Ken Putman, Tom Nickerson and Bill Toni. Each Assistant was provided with an alphabetical list of approximately 30 names of deceased colleagues.

As an assistant would step forward and read his list of names honored, the audience was requested to stand if they recognized an honored person's name and were asked to remain standing until the person reading the list departed the stage. At the end of each list, Francis would sing a verse from, "End of the Road." The Assistant would then salute and depart the stage. The Service was beautiful and a worthy recognition of those participating in spirit only.

Here is a listing of those that attended the Reunion in Hof/Saale, their attendance and enthusiasm is what made this marvelous event the success that it was. And a special Dankeschoen for our Hofer hosts that made us feel welcome and at ease.

Bob Alekson, Mike & Ursula Assenmacher, Larry & Jackie August, Richard & Jean Barry, Jim & Sue Beard, Klaus & Erika Beer, Adolp, Ursula & Uwe Berbhuber, Bernd & Petra Berbhuber, James & Gertrude Berry, Robert Blanchard, Else Brietfelder, Tom, Denise, & Hanna Bryson, Robert Butler, Hilde Calisti, Jay C. Campbell III & Mary Roth, Barbara Chapman, Gary & Sandra Cherpes, Mark & Peggy Clemons, Bill & Marcia Combs, George & Irmgard Coursey, Eddie Crump & Dot Little, Jerry & Ellen Decker, Gary, Kay and Greg Dempsey, Christa Devine, Tony & Joan Donofrio, George & Christa Fahrback, Francis & JoAnn Fukumoto, Bill & Siegrid Fuller, Sid & Gale Futrell, Ralph & JoAn Glover, Milton & Virginia Gibbs, Marty & Alice Habecker, Volker Hartmann, Norman & Ursula Hines, Robert & Hanna Hoerath, Bennie Hopper & Sophye Pullen, Margit Jensen, Jimmy & JayDell Johnson, Karl & Melanie Kaiser, Paul & Erika Laven, Jerry & Erika Librizzo, Ursula Luszczak, Jerry & Pat Mangas, Chuck & Renate Mattice, Tim & Ina Meyer, Bob & Barbara Mollahan, Russ Moyer, Anna Mueller, Steve & Donna Murphrey, Tom & Monika Nickerson, Danny Noble, Chelle Nyberg, Dick & Evelyn Obidinski, Joe & Carol Olenik, Arnol & Mable Oelke, Bruce & Esther Orr, Erwin & Marianne Pade, John & Eagnes Pace, Bill & Gale Partridge, Jim & Eadie Patterson, Gerhart & Nana Plier, Heidi Pouch, Ken & Kay Putman, Otto & Ella Riedel, Jim & Traudl Riggin, Harold & Helga Robinson, Norbert & Sylvia Robish, Heinz Rockelmann, Michael Rockelmann, Leo & Ilse Root, Donn Ross, Juergen Ruppert, C.A. Russell, Phil & Rosalie Ruth, Dan & Carol Scanny, Adolph & Jane Schaller, Harvey & Suzanne Schmit, Horace & Gradie Schnabel, Heinz Schneider, Bob & Lilo Sherwood, Jim & Peggy Slothower, John & Eva Marie Slutz, Jim & Elfriede Smith, Karli & Sanja Spahn, Jerry & Cha-hee Standfield, Jim Taylor, Dean & Shirley Thompson, Bill & Helen Toni, Anja Wachter, Ernst Von Waldenfels, Klaus Walter, Bill & Edith Ward, Eura & Elisabeth Wilhelm, Helga Wuerlinger, Juergen & Petra Wettengle, Ollie & Linda White, John Wible, Billy & Irmgard Wicker, Chuck & Monika Wilson, Rip & Jeanie Yarnall, Ron (son) & Lorraine Zobrak.

Here are testimonials from three members

Dear Chuck & Monika, Association Officers, Planners and Participants.

Traudl and I wish to thank all you folks for the wonderful September 15-22 reunion in Hof. The week was well planned and there was never a dull moment. You did a lot of

work to put this reunion together and it could not have been better. There were three buses for the Prague Tour. We thank you for putting the "Old Timers" on the same bus. We had a blast. Our bus driver said he had never had such a good time. The best load of people he had ever driven anywhere. We are looking forward to the reunion in Las Vegas, but nothing will ever compare to the Hof Reunion. Those that missed this reunion do not know what they missed. This was a once in a lifetime experience. After the reunion we went to Augsburg four days and the Oktoberfest in Muenchen, and the spent three days in Berchtesgaden with the Obidinskis. We must say, this was the best vacation we have ever had. Again, thanks a million. Jim & Traudl Riggin

My wife and I enjoyed the Hof Reunion very much. I've never seen a group that large gel as one so quickly. Thank you to everyone involved for making it a great experience. My wife and I have already decided, If there's another reunion in Hof, we're going. We found some old friends and made many new ones. Of course, I'm going to have to eat a lot of salads to make up for all the good food and beer. What a wonderful trip this was. A Big Thank You to all that participated. Jim Beard

I just had one of the greatest experiences of my life. I went home to Hof with a lot of my fellow GIs. It was the best reunion I have attended. There has been much change in Hof over those 43 years that I've been gone, but I could still feel the closeness between us and our German allies. Chuck and Monika, as always, have done an outstanding job again. I also want to thank all of you who contributed to and attended this reunion. You are what makes these things click. We love you all. Looking forward to our Lost Wages Reunion in 03. Jim and Eadie Patterson

## **Executive Board and Officer Commentary**

### **President: Tom Nickerson**

The Las Vegas Reunion is on the horizon and now is the time to start making plans to participate in the October 2003 function. Thanks to a maximum effort by many people working behind the scene, this get-together in the entertainment & gambling capital of the world promises to be the finest reunion ever. Monika and I are proud to say that we were part of the fabulist 2002 Hof/Saale Reunion. When we departed Hof, we knew we had participated in the greatest military reunion ever. Now that we have had a glimpse of the plans for Las Vegas, we think "the best" is on the horizon. We are all getting up there in age and this may be our last opportunity to visit and celebrate with colleagues that we served with while directly contributing to the U.S. Cold War Victory. My hat is off to the volunteers that are putting the Las Vegas Reunion together. We would love to see a 100% participation by the membership at large. Let's all demonstrate our support for the Hof Reunion Association with a toast at the October 9<sup>th</sup> Banquet.

## **1<sup>ST</sup> Vice President: Jim Patterson**

The membership renewal form is mailed to each member with the July issue of the Hof Connection Newsletter. The association's fiscal year runs from October 1 thru Sept 31 so we ask all members to renew their membership as early as possible and beat the Sept 31 deadline. By doing this, you will lighten the load on our Secretary. The Secretary can update the Master Hof Roster and with a large bulk reproduction order, reduce cost. He can then bulk mail the updated roster to renewing members. Please remember; this guy works for FREE! It is a labor of love on his behalf, so your assistance is encouraged. Mail that membership renewal in around the middle of August (or earlier) to help ease the crunch.

The Las Vegas Reunion planning is well underway. A hard to beat deal has been negotiated with the Stardust and Wayne Newton's people. The October 6<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup> Reunion will be an occasion you won't want to miss. The Hof reunion was outstanding, but I predict, this one will be the "MOTHER OF ALL REUNIONS." Don't get left out on this one. Looking forward to seeing you in Vegas.

## **Treasurer : Nathan Sparks**

I want to thank the membership for your vote of confidence in electing me Association Treasurer at the 2002 Hof Reunion General Membership meeting. Having recently retired from Defense Accounting and Finance with 40 years service, I feel adequately qualified to assume the Association Treasurer responsibilities. The Association's finances are in excellent condition with more than \$5000.00 in our Association bank account, however, we are confronted with some heavy expenses in the near future. I hereby pledge to continue the faithful stewardship of Association funds established by predecessors Sam Suber and Chuck Wilson. I am looking forward to meeting all of you at the October Reunion in Las Vegas.

## **Secretary: Chuck and Monika**

CHANGE OF EMAIL ADDRESS? **Help us serve you.** Send any change of email address to < [CWilson940@aol.com](mailto:CWilson940@aol.com) > or < [HofReunion@aol.com](mailto:HofReunion@aol.com) > We want to email you the Association updates. If we receive 3 consecutive bounces, the email address is removed from the Association address book. If you do not receive an update for a month or so, please send an email to one of the above addresses so we can check the email address book for an error.

HOF REUNION WEBSITE. A reminder that it is up and doing well, Barry Springsteen is doing a great job. To get there and check it out enter into your browser : "Hof Reunion Association, Home" or < <http://hofreunion.home.att.net/> >

CHECK UP ON YOUR VETERANS MEDICAL BENEFITS. Veterans are encouraged to go to the VA Web Site: < [http://www.va.gov/health\\_benefits/](http://www.va.gov/health_benefits/) > or call 1-877-222-8387 to find out if you are eligible for benefits, how to apply and what VA Medical Treatment will cost. Get enrolled now folks. Don't wait.

NATIONAL AWARD. We have been informed that Mark Clemons was selected as National Career Tech Teacher for the year 2002. He and his wife Peggy traveled from Oklahoma to Las Vegas where this award was presented to him by the Association of Career Technical Educators at their annual convention in December. It's comforting to know we have people like that in our midst. Congratulations Mark.

An additional note: "THE PRICE OF VIGILANCE" is a well written and informative assessment of Cold War history of attacks on American Surveillance Flights by Larry Tart and Robert Keefe. A thriller about the deadly cat and mouse game of which many of you hold a first hand knowledge. An excellent history of events that will hold a special meaning to many Hof Reunion Association members. Place this real life adventure on your "must read" list.

### **Membership Chairman: CA Russell**

Although we have accounted for well over 200 Hof Vets in the past 9 months, there are still many out there that we haven't found, and a lot we don't have on our roster yet. We would appreciate membership participation by sending us copies of any old orders you might have, as middle initials and serial numbers are crucial in location of our friends. Send in U.S. Mail to C. A. Russell, 1206 Achord Road, Dublin, GA 31021, or email to < [russca@bellsouth.net](mailto:russca@bellsouth.net) >. Overall, we have over 2/3 of our roster accounted for and with your help, we can do better. A big thank you to all of you that have already made a contribution by providing orders, names, and addresses.

### **Publicity Chairman: Ted Bey**

Reunions are one of the things many local newspapers will often report for FREE for organizations such as ours. Publicizing the reunions helps get our name out to "lost" potential members. Any member of our organization, who has not already done so, is encouraged to send me the name and email contact of their local/regional newspaper. Because I have tightened up the access of incoming emails on my subject line of : Hof Reunion Contact" or something similar, so that I can quickly pick it out and distinguish it from the volumes of junk mail that seems to inundate us all. I can be reached at < [tedbey@hotmail.com](mailto:tedbey@hotmail.com) >.

Editor's Note: A great article was sent to us by Jerry Mangas. His local paper had a very nice write-up and a photograph of Jerry and Pat delivering a "Brecknock Township" road sign to Klaus Beer at Hofer Fernweh-Park. Check with Jerry and Pat, they would probably email you a copy of the article.

## **Webmaster:** Barry Springsteen

The Hof Reunion Web site was initially created to establish a presence on the Internet and help locate and attract new members. That phase of the development is now complete and it is time to move on to the next phase, member services. What services does the general membership need and want? That's a question that can best be answered by the general membership. A poll will be available on our web site in January 2003 to help shape the direction of the web site. Please complete the poll once it becomes available so your voice will be heard.

Accessing the "Polling Booth":

- On the HOME PAGE
- Click on SPECIAL FEATURES
- Click on TAKE A POLL Button
- Complete the Poll
- Click on SUBMIT Button
- Click on HOME Button

## **Photomaster:** Mike Becker

Many additional Photos have been added to the *CLUBPHOTO* site and many more will be added in the near future. Check the Album with the Bier Coaster and also the 2002 Reunion in *HOF ALBUM*.

Please scan and send any Hof related photos, especially pictures taken during the Hof 2002 Reunion and GERMAN/EUROPEAN Bier Coaster and Bier related items to:

< TheBeh@attbi.com >

So far, just a few people are sending the majority of the pictures. Please contribute and share what you have.

There will be more albums coming but most of the military stuff is online now. You can access all of these albums by going to:

<http://members16.clubphoto.com/mike657304/guest-1.phtml> .

Many of the 2002 Reunion pictures can be viewed by going to one of the following addresses.

<http://members16.clubphoto.com/mike657304/1018902/guest.phtml>

<http://members16.clubphoto.com/mike657304/1018902/owner-2ecc.phtml>

Past reunion pictures can be viewed by going to the following address:

<http://members16.clubphoto.com/mike657304/1023025/guest.phtml>

If you do not have a personal computer , show this article to one of your friends, children or relatives and perhaps they can assist you. Your local Librarian can also provide assistance



## Hof Reunion Association Officers and Staff

Permanent Executive Board Advisor: Tom Bryson

### Executive Board:

President	Tom Nickerson
1stV.P.	Jim Patterson
2ndV.P.	Bruce Orr
3rdV.P.	Dick Obidinski
Treasurer	Nathan Sparks
Secretary	Chuck Wilson
Membership Chairman	C A Russell

### Other Officers:

Publicity Chairman	Ted Bey
Newsletter Editor	Phil Murray
Web Master	Barry Springsteen
Photo Site	Mike Becker
Chaplain	Francis Fukumoto
Sergeant at Arms	Bob Alekson
	Tony Donofrio

### Reunion Site Committee

Bennie Hopper  
Jim Patterson  
Jim Beard

### Las Vegas Reunion Committee:

Leo & Ilse Root  
Eulice & Vera Row  
John Orr