

the **HOF CONNECTION** newsletter

Jan 2005

¡BACK TO BILOXI – 2004!

The reports are in, and it was another great reunion. Forty-some (or so) years ago, none of us would've thought Biloxi could be fun; either we've lowered the bar, our memory has gone bad or Biloxi has really improved. Go figure. The weather was great, just after a notable hurricane, it was comfortably warm, even if you went outside, and there wasn't any real storm damage that required work crews climbing all over the place with chainsaws and chippers and running amok with dump trucks and other galump. Another noticeable change - they showed their "Southern Hospitality" this time, we weren't criticized for our haircuts being too long or shoeshines not being very shiny, we didn't get yelled at if we stood around with our hands in our pockets or didn't have a hat on, and we could slouch too, that is, unless the wives said something. Life is good.

Tom Bryson, Executive Advisory Board, has this firsthand report:

Greetings, fellow Hofers. If you didn't get to Biloxi, you missed a great event. The home of Keesler Air Force Base was no stranger to many of us returnees. But the Keesler of today is a far cry from what everyone remembered of their stays there in the '50s and '60s. It's a totally modern facility with a golf course, modern gymnasiums, shopping facilities and so forth; it's probably one of the most upscale neighborhoods in Mississippi.

Biloxi itself has also changed, even though it's still tucked up in the northeastern tip of the Mississippi Sound (not the Gulf of Mexico), it offered a variety of laid back, comfortable casinos, twenty-six miles of gorgeous, man-made beaches and every kind and style of seafood you could imagine. It is also only about eighty miles from the French Quarter of New Orleans, for those inclined to visit "The Big Easy."

Check-in at the hotel was quick, the staff was courteous, the rooms were spacious and comfortable. The facilities were well maintained and our Hospitality Suite was cozy and intimate. All of the activities were well attended and gratifying to those who participated.

Once again, we all enjoyed an occasion that fulfilled the purpose of reunions in every way: to renew old friendships, to perpetuate the memory of our service in West Germany, to promote fellowship and friendship among all of us interested in the Association and to educate dependents and relatives as to the importance of our time in the East/West border area during the Cold War.

Our next get together will be in Nashville, TN, easy driving from almost everywhere (east of the Mississippi- Ed). Do your best to get there. With mortality breathing down our necks, an opportunity to meet and party with old friends should never be passed up.

Hospitality Suite Action - Every year the first step to having a great time is finding the Hospitality Suite and this year was no exception. Tom Nickerson, Dick Obidinski and Jim Riffin headed up a group of faithful volunteers to make this the "Hub" activity, there aren't any schedules, no agenda, no attendance records being kept other than having to register and pick up our "member packages" with any T-shirts and/or hats that may have been ordered. The dress code is pretty accommodating (don't even think about wearing a tie!), as this is where we put out our scrapbooks, set ourselves down, have a beer and a donut, and retell all of the old lies. This is "Activity Central," the location of the Squadron Bulletin Board; posting the schedule of events, the tour rosters, table seating, all the stuff you need to know.

This is where we also need the most help, **Don Riverkamp**, our 2nd VP, explains:

Fellow Hofers and Association Members - Every year the Hof Reunion Association depends tremendously on the work of many volunteers to help make our yearly reunion the wonderful success that it has been and will be in the future.

The past two years, I have volunteered in the hospitality suite, working with the registration, passing out T-shirts that people ordered, and this past year I even worked with the committee on the banquet seating arrangements. We are always looking for people who would love to volunteer their services for at least a couple of hours during the initial registration, and later, when the

hospitality room is open for all the members to socialize. The tasks are not physically demanding nor mentally challenging, but they are fun. I can tell you from experience, volunteering during registration and in the hospitality room IS the best way to see everyone coming to the reunion, you'll have first shot at meeting old friends and making new ones.

As a new association officer this year, I'm extending an early offer for volunteers to help with the 2005 Nashville reunion. I guess this is also a commitment on me being there.

I promise that anyone volunteering will NOT be disappointed, it is truly amazing how many people you get to meet, have fun, and help out the association all at the same time. We are not asking for all day, like many of the board members spent this past year in Biloxi, but only a couple of hours on one day of the reunion – of course, some of the volunteers DO like to work the long hours for the reasons stated above. It's fun!

Danke Schön mein fellow Hofers!!

Now, once you cleared through the Hospitality Suite, you check the bulletin board for other activities, and the next one on our official agenda was the afternoon Business Meeting. Listed below is the new roster of officers and board members, and further back are the minutes for the meeting so you can follow all of the intrigue and back room dealing involved in organizing a nefarious group like this.

New Executive Board: President: Dick Obidinski, V.P.: Jim Riggan, 2nd V.P.: Don Riverkamp, 3rd V.P.: Bobby "Stu" Sturdevant, Secretary: Jerry Mangas, Treasurer: Nathan Sparks, Membership chairman: C.A. Russell.

The Executive Committee is now comprised of: Thomas Bryson, Tom Nickerson and Jim Patterson.

The events were arranged to "ramp up" with Tuesday evening's activity being the Social Buffet Reception, casual dress and a very nice buffet to occupy us, followed by some introductory speeches and activity announcements. We adjourned early so we could hit the slots, the tables, or retreat to the lounges for further planning of critical strategies. Wednesday's activity(s) were a series of lunches and dinners of smaller groups, arranged by the years of service and the organizations the members served in. It worked great!

Then came the BIG evening event on Thursday, the Banquet Dinner. This is where the guys get to show off their new necktie (the one without the gravy stain) and the ladies get to show off their nice dresses. This is the sit-down meal with all the trimmings: speakers, entertainment, and door prizes. The program commenced with the Color Guard from Keesler AFB, Traudl Riggan singing the Star Spangled Banner and Brenda Emery singing America the Beautiful, both of them doing an excellent job. An invocation by Rev. Norman Gunther. Chaplain Francis Fukumoto organized a memorial "The Final Inspection," with Chuck and June Parnell, and the reading of names from the Final Flyby List assisted by Tom Bryson, Bob Alekson, Jerry Middendorf, Stan Heath, Brent Scott, Larry Shriver, Jerry Sommers, Eddie Crump, Bill Toni and Henry Quarterman.

There were several speakers to be thanked, LtCol Jimmy Johnson, Gail Norvell (widow of Robert) and Britt Albritton, for their informative insights. On the more serious side; our guest speaker, James Binnicker, Ninth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (Ret), accompanied by his wife Jan, explained to us the history and the workings of the Enlisted Widows Village and how they are helping hundreds of widows that would otherwise be in difficult situations. This is definitely a worthwhile charitable organization and he was quite appreciative of our donation. For those that would like to provide a one time Memorial Gift of \$50 or \$100, or those that can make a monthly contribution of \$5, \$10, or \$20 (or more), contact Anna Skelton, Secretary, Tel 850-651-3766, or email skelton@afenlistedfoundation.org. For more information check their website: www.afenlistedwidows.org. CMSAF Binnicker expressed his amazement that we could organize a reunion group this large just from the people stationed at one location in Europe. Maybe we are different.

President **Dick Obidinski** reports on the entertainment, and beyond:

I first want to thank all those who participated in the Hof Reunion - Biloxi 2004. It was a fine affair and all the hard work has paid off again. Great job!

The Banquet Dinner was a great occasion, great food, and some great entertainment coming from within, in the form of Traudl and Tanja Riggan. We always expect great music from Traudl, but this time we were also delighted by their lovely daughter, Tanja. Jim was there too but I can't remember if he did anything. How are Jim and Traudl Riggan going to outdo this year's entertainment? Well, this question is asked every year and every year they make it better. Jim will explain a little bit further on.

And maybe, just maybe, we can we get those high-stepping "Hofer Top Hatters" to perform again. Great legs, great moves and timing – they had it all! HA HA.

Of course there were a few glitches that had to be addressed, but all in all, everyone had a good time.

We elected a few new officers; we're up to full strength now as we head for Nashville, TN, for the 2005 Hofer Reunion. We are expecting an even greater turnout in Nashville and plan on having a fun event that we can all enjoy as the committee is working diligently to offer an interesting and fulfilling program.

We keep asking for assistance in locating old friends of Hof and getting them to experience the camaraderie of our reunions. Please keep searching and talking our friends into meeting with us again. It's fun. And remember the 2006 reunion will be back in Hof/Saale, Germany.

Looking forward to seeing you all in Nashville so we can talk about the Germany trip!!! God Bless ya'all

Dick and Evi Obidinski

Following dinner, the entertainment commenced with Dick Obidinski and Jim Riggin handling the introductions. For the prize give away portion of the evening, Tom Nickerson and Dick Barry teamed up to hand out the loot. We did pretty well in this area. For starters, several association members generously donated door prizes. Authors Elizabeth Jung, Dr. Mike Helfert and Gary Schilling donated autographed copies of their wonderful books. Lonnie Henderson donated two lathe-turned, wooden bowls he turned, also autographed. Brenda Emery and Don Riverkamp donated travel bags, Hilde Middendorf and Rita Bennit donated artwork, and Tom and Monika Nickerson donated two bottles of Piersporter wine. We thank you all for your generosity. Those prizes and the other couple dozen prizes made a few people carry a lot of things out that they didn't know how to pack in their luggage. There was one area though, where the prizes didn't represent any packing problems – the 50/50 Raffle. We'll let **Jim Patterson**, Executive Advisory Board, explain:

The Raffle is a great way of making a little extra money for our use at the Reunions. About 2/3 of the money collected was divided into smaller amounts then raffled back to the Membership, and nobody complained about having to find room to pack it. The other third was used to buy snacks, beverages, and other items for our Hospitality Suites. Any excess is turned over to the Treasurer and usually ends up as part of our donations to Charitable Organizations. So your donation large or small touches a lot of people and we all have a good time doing it. Also some of us go home with some really nice gifts. It works out well.

And the results of the drawing left 6 members with \$100 cash prizes and the big one, of \$200, went to Gary Cherpes. Not too bad at all.

Although it's a little early to provide a definitive entertainment program for Nashville, **Jim Riggin**, Vice President, has a handle on this tentative plan.

For the Nashville Tuesday evening show, we are planning to take the folks back in time with music, old songs, country & western, some dance performances and clean comedy. We plan to bring Tanja back next year, Traudl will sing a couple songs, and we are still looking for volunteers to perform. Start thinking about what you would like to do, you do not have to be professional. Please do not wait until the last minute, last minute songs are expensive to have recorded for use during the show, cost is more than \$30.00 for a CD. We can have 5-6 songs recorded for \$30.00. Talks and comedians will be very limited, no more than three for the show and limited to 3-5 minutes, strictly enforced, at 5 minutes the plug will be pulled and the offender taken out and beat up. We are taking requests for songs, let us know what you would like to hear, and let us know early, we are always open for suggestions.

Thanks,
Jim and Traudl Riggin

Again, we all thank the Riggins for the many hours of preparation and the work they have so unselfishly done for us, the enjoyment they have brought to us all through the years. They have become our very own "von Trapp Family!"

During the daylight hours there were other diversions from the casinos. There were a few tours arranged for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: a visit to Keesler AFB, some historical sites, including Beauvoir, Jefferson Davis' Home and Library, the Seafood Museum and then off to New Orleans. I didn't hear any complaints except a few folks saying they didn't get enough exercise and they ate too much again.

One of the things that make the reunions a success is the members themselves. We've always found our members to be accommodating, willing to reach out to strangers, make new friends and enjoy our times together. And here's a little overall commentary from **Bob Alekson & Tony Donofrio**, Sergeant(s) at Arms,

Can you believe it... our Biloxi reunion is history! We must admit that our group is a well-disciplined bunch. Why we say that is because during our recent get together we all adhered to wearing our nametags to functions requiring them which certainly helped in controlling entry to these events. We try to be helpful to all of our group and their spouses and cannot say enough on how understanding everyone is. It really shows... the respect we have for each other and the pride we have in being a "Hofer".

Come on Nashville...

So, how do we keep the spirit alive between reunions? Well, let **Bobby "Stu" Sturdevant**, 3rd V.P., explain a method.

Let me pass on what the members of the Air Police/Security Police and assorted friends are doing. First of all we sent our digital pictures of the Biloxi Reunion to Tom Mikloiche who produced an outstanding CD with music and captions. Now, our initial intent is to send a copy to each of our old friends, with proven addresses, that didn't show up in Biloxi. After they see the proof in the pudding they will be motivated to make plans to go to Nashville, TN, next year. There were a number of our police friends that couldn't make it due to health reasons, prior commitments, budget or work commitments, and this is our way of showing them what they missed. They say a picture is worth a thousand words - well we have over 200,000 words headed their way - we sincerely hope this will help motivate them to attend next year in Nashville. We also plan to continue an email campaign keeping our friends informed. And if anyone else would be interested in the CD, contact Tom, I'm sure he could figure out a way to accommodate them.

I challenge everyone to use the Master Hof Roster to find just one more "missing" person, locate them and pass that info on to the Membership Committee and/or the Air Police friends so we can correspond with them. We can then mail them a copy of the CD to show them what happens at a Hof Reunion

Although it seems like it's all fun 'n' games, here's a few words from the guy that has to pay the piper, **Nathan Sparks**, our treasurer.

It has been a great pleasure working with the officers and members of the Hof Reunion Association this past year. A check for \$1500.00 was presented to the Air Force Enlisted Village, which was accepted by CMSAF James C. Binnicker at the Reunion Banquet in Biloxi. The Air Force Enlisted Foundation provides surviving spouses, requiring financial assistance, a place to live among peers, sharing memories of Air Force life without the stigma normally associated with subsidized housing. A charitable donation of \$350.00 was mailed to the TEE Tournament of Blinded Veterans, Iowa City, Iowa as voted on by the reunion attendees. The mission of the TEE (Training, Exposure, Experience) Tournament is to give legally blind veterans an opportunity to develop new physical skills and strengthen their self-esteem in golfing and bowling events. We also have received a letter from the TEE Tournament Committee thanking the Hof membership for the donation. The bills relating to Biloxi Reunion have been paid and our balance as of December 2004 is \$12,253.25. The greatest costs to the association are the printing and postage of the semiannual newsletter, the quarterly Master Roster and costs of planning the Nashville Reunion. The officers of the association are working diligently to reduce the expenses where possible.

One of the changes for this year is a new Secretary; if you're on the email list you've already seen some of his handiwork with the weekly "Updates," if you're just a Newsletter shut-in, then here is his introduction. He is a very important part of keeping the spirit alive during the rest of the year.

First, "Grüß Gott" and "Hofergrüß" to all from myself, **Jerry Mangas**, at Hof 65-68, 6915th OPN. I am the new Association Secretary, trying hard to fill the size 40 (43 EE. Ed.) shoes that Chuck Wilson has left behind for me to wear. Chuck remains very active with the Board of Directors and the Association in general, and continues to supply us with his expertise and experience. He is also working daily with CA Russell on the Membership Committee and we are in constant communication thanks to the wonders of the WEB.

We are slowly but surely moving business from <www.hofreunion@aol.com> to <www.hofreunion@fast.net> but both addresses will stay active. The phone number and website are unchanged and will remain so. As will the Reunion Post Office mailbox. Newsletter publishing will be moved to PA from CA, and due to cost improvements available here in PA we should be able to produce a bigger, badder, bolder, bi-annual, newsletter for our members. Phil Murray remains ye Editor of the newsletter. Just the production site is moving. And NO, Pennsylvania is not considered offshore. (PA is covered by the NAFTA agreement. Ed)

One of the more challenging parts of the Secretary's function for me is the production of the Weekly Hof Connection email update, Currently at #170 or so and growing. Some members are already contributing and I urge everybody with tidbits, trivia, factoids, questions, old legends and gossip, or identified, or perhaps unidentified pictures (Who IS that masked man?) to send

them along to <hofreunion@fast.net> or to my membership roster USPS address for consideration and inclusion. Anything you send by USPS, and wish returned, will be sent back ASAP. Names and sources can be protected if needed if you are bashful or just plain guilty. We are also including Kreis Hof area websites in the weekly update from time to time which can offer quite a glimpse into the Hof region if you have not been back, and a tour down memory lane for all.

One of the major parts of my contribution to the next mid year edition of the newsletter will be a complete history of 2nd Lt Brian Kingsley, USAAF, MOH, the namesake or "Patron" as the Germans call it of the Kaserne from 1948 to 1985 and the "rest of the story". Once you see the complete details you will agree that it is quite amazing. Hopefully and most fitting, right around Memorial Day.

I am looking forward to another exciting year with the Group as we continue to grow into one of the LARGEST active reunion associations in the Air Force.

Chuck Wilson, now the Vice Secretary, is still taking care of business.

Minutes of the General Membership Meeting, 25 October 2004
Imperial Palace Hotel, Biloxi, MS

4:10pm Association President Jim Patterson called the Hof Reunion General Membership Meeting to order. Jim informed attendees that in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws, and previous announcements, only one member per family was permitted to attend the G.M. meeting. After allowing time for some spouses to leave, Jim gave a brief overview of the Meeting Agenda.

4:15pm Treasurer Nathan Sparks provided a financial report. He informed all members in attendance that the books would remain open and available for the next 2 days if anybody would like to review or audit the Association financial record. Tom Mikloiche made a motion that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as read. Jim Riffin seconded the motion. Accepted by voice vote.

4:20pm Secretary Chuck Wilson was prepared to read minutes from the Las Vegas G.M. Meeting that appeared in the January 04, Hof Connection Newsletter. Tom Nickerson made a motion that the minutes be accepted as they appeared in the Association Newsletter. Tony Donofrio seconded the motion. The motion was carried by voice vote.

Old Business:

4:23pm Jim Patterson requested three different teams composed of members at large to conduct an official tally of 2005 Reunion Location ballots that had been returned to the Association Secretary by US Mail. The official count was announced as 86 Nashville, 77 Branson, and 75 Atlantic City. Jim then requested members confirm the vote by a show of hands. Nashville, TN, received a clear majority. Jim announced that the 2005 Reunion would be held in Nashville.

New Business:

4:30pm Jim Patterson thanked the Association Membership for their support over the past year and turned the gavel over to incoming President Dick Obidinski who, due to Bruce Orr's untimely death, moved from 2nd V.P. to President.

Dick Obidinski opened the floor for nomination to 2nd Vice President. Ken Putman nominated Don Riverkamp. Seconded by Don Fields. Tom Bryson made a motion that nominations for 2 V.P. be closed, seconded by Bob Alekson. Don was elected by acclamation.

Dick then opened the floor for nomination to 3rd V.P. Tom Mikloiche nominated Bobby "Stu" Sturdevant. Dave Dickson quickly seconded the nomination. Tony Donofrio made a motion that nominations be closed, Seconded by Ken Putman. Bobby "Stu" Sturdevant was elected by acclamation.

Dick then opened the floor for nomination to Secretary. Chuck Wilson nominated Jerry Mangas. Seconded by Tom Nickerson. Dan Scanny made a motion that nominations be closed, seconded by Don Riverkamp. Jerry Mangas was elected by acclamation

Dick then opened the floor for nomination to Treasurer. Jim Patterson nominated Nathan Sparks, seconded by Tom Nickerson. Chuck Wilson made a motion that nominations be closed, seconded by Phil Murray. Nate Sparks was reelected to Treasurer by acclamation.

The floor was opened for nomination for Membership Chairman. Chuck Wilson nominated C.A. Russell and was quickly seconded by Tom Nickerson. Larry Shriver made a motion that nominations be closed. Seconded by Bennie Hopper. C.A. was reelected by acclamation.

4:43pm Dick Obidinski then introduced Robert Hörath. Robert told the Association membership that Hof would be ready for a

reunion in 2006. He recommended July so participants could participate in the Volksparade. He also stated that he would work on possible tours to Potsdam and Berlin. Dresden could be given consideration also. After Robert finished speaking, Dick asked for a show of hands of those that were in favor of returning to Hof for the 2006 Reunion. The Show of hands was about 90% of those in attendance. Some folks mentioned that July would be very expensive for travel. We will go to Hof in 2006 but the month of travel will be decided in Nashville when more information is available.

CA Russell made a motion that the meeting be adjourned, Seconded by Tom Nickerson. Motion Carried.

And, speaking of our returning Membership Chairman, **C.A. Russell**, our delegated sleuth and tracker of lost persons has a few words.

Many of our members have made a genuine effort to assist us in building the Master Hof Roster by mailing in copies of old orders, rosters, bulletins, and other documents that contain a few names of former colleagues. We appreciate your support. We also know that we have a lot of members out there that have not taken the time to dig into their storage closet or old record jacket that has been stored for years. Even the old address book may be a source for coming up with a few names that are not on the Master Hof Roster (MHR). At present we have more than 2900 in the found or missing category, more than 300 on the Final Flyby List (FFL) and about 60 spouses on the Ladies Serving in Heaven List. If every member would take a little time and make that extra effort to provide us with copies of their Hof Documents, we could grow the roster to 4500 and find more of our missing colleagues. I think it is time to ask the ladies to step in and provide more of this valuable information source. That's one way we'll get the job done and done right. Well ladies, can you help us out? Send copies of the old orders, rosters, bulletins and what have you to:

C.A. Russell, 1206 Achord Rd, Dublin, GA 31021-0715

Our Webmaster, **Barry Springsteen**, has a few comments on recent improvements.

New Roster Page Change

The roster page of the association web site is going to take on a slightly different look. Currently we have the name, date and type of affiliation with Hof of only active members listed. The new page will expand the online roster to include the names of missing and non-active personnel as well. It is our hope that this will aid in locating additional people and providing them with the opportunity to renew old friendships.

The page will retain its basic look but will have several buttons added. You will be able to select and display a specific category of personnel by clicking on the corresponding button. Additional search and sort features will be reviewed and if they prove to be feasible, they will also be included.

Comments about the current web site, suggestions for improvements or a description of a new feature can be E-Mailed to hofreunion@att.net.

Editor note: If you haven't taken a look at the website recently, you'll be pleasantly surprised. Barry has done an excellent job making the site user friendly. The screens and menus are informative and efficient. He's had a little help from Gary Dempsey and Jerry Mangas, but he's the NCOIC and it's lookin' good. Check it out! I hate to say that everyone should have a computer (myself included), but if you're interested in the association and the time spent in Hof, our website can almost justify the purchase.

A historical suggestion from **Gary Dempsey**, Historian.

As we hang a new calendar on the wall and think about all the years that have already flown by, this is a good time to send your memories of your "Hof Days" (Hof Daze??) to the Association website, to share with others. It's real easy to do. Just go to <http://hofreunion.com/home.html> and when you get there, click on the "Bulletin Board" button on the side of the page. This will take you to a page where you can select the "history" forum to drop off your recollections. At the history forum you can either add to a topic that's already being discussed, or you can start your own topic.

We have our big Reunion just once a year, as you know, and the History forum is a good way to maybe continue a story that you started telling in person, or to get info about what happened when... You can even ask if the other members know "whatever happened to Charley, or Mike, or Joe?"

And, since one picture is worth a thousand keystrokes on your computer, if you have some old pictures gathering dust on the top shelf of your coat closet, drag them down and contact the Association's Webmaster at <hofreunion@att.net> for info on how to submit them for everybody to see.

I'll also be doing my best to keep adding little tidbits as they come to my attention. And, finally, let's all give a huge THANK YOU to Jerry Mangas for the terrific job he's always doing on the research end. The origin of the Kingsley Kaserne name was a heckuva good story.

Current association email addresses

As of 1 January there are three in use:

hofreunion@aol.com is the Membership committee and financial center address

hofreunion@att.net is the website center address

hofreunion@fast.net is the "connection update", Nashville Reunion and Secretary address

And another piece of Hofer History from **Jerry Mangas**, perhaps a few remember this plan.

What were they thinking?

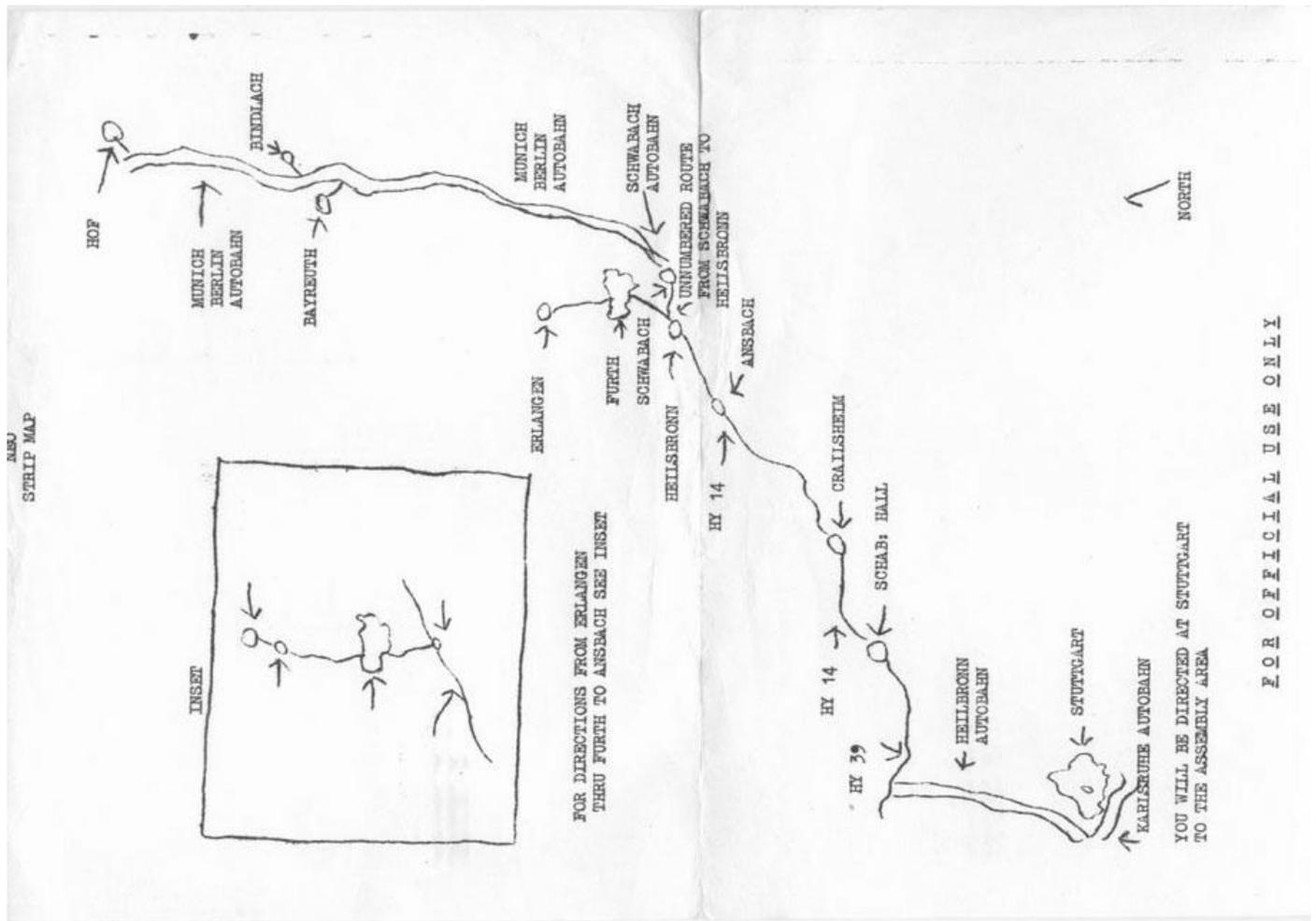
Consider the political and cold war times we lived in, in Hof/Saale. Words like "MAD" were in common use along with multi-multi megaton atomic weapons. We were well beyond the days of duck and cover and had survived the Cuban crisis with our collective butts intact, and even came out ahead. We knew about DEFCON 5's and the stress that went with it.

But here we are, or there we were, 5 kilometers or so from Soviet forces, closer probably than any other air base or station in the world to the red hordes of GSFG with their Tank, Guards and Shock Armies. While we were keeping track of the Air Armies in both East Germany and Czechoslovakia, and the rest of the Warsaw Pact, we have our families, our "dependents", with us and we lived there in the so-called "border lands".

The powers that were decided, in their wisdom, that a plan should be made to evacuate non-combatants if the going ever got tough and things got *real* in a hurry. The answer was the "NEO." There are a couple of interpretations of "NEO;" one is "Nuclear Evacuation Order" and the other is "Non-combatant Evacuation Order". Either way, the plan was simply to alert the dependents via a "tree" system, since phones were not in general use, and warn them to "Get out of Dodge!"

After receiving this warning, the "dependents" (read moms, generally with kids from babes in arms to teen-agers) were to gather up the kids, grab the "NEO-kits", toss everybody into the family car (if they had one to toss things into), grab their "NEO map" and USA windshield sticker and head out, generally south, down the E-5 Autobahn, for what would have been a five hour plus ride through hell following the attached hand-drawn, "Official Use Only," U.S. Government issue map down "un-numbered" roads.

In looking at this map today, I can only shake my head and wonder at the confusion, consternation, tears and fear that would have erupted somewhere about Bindlach or Bayreuth. It is not a situation I would have wanted to put my wife and son or anybody else's wife and kids through. I am constantly and forever thankful that "NEO" was an exercise that we never had to participate in.



The "Official NEO Map"

Listing of Biloxi Participants – Would you believe 376?

Britt Albritton, Peggy (Cicutto) Adams, Johnnie & Wilma Adams, Bob Alekson, Jim & Jan Binnicker, Chuck Babcock, Jim Bair, Freddy & Helga Bales, Sam Barr, Carole Barron, Dick & Jean Barry, Charles Batte, Gabi Becker, Ron Becker, Rose Becker, Don Fogell, Bob & Rita Bennett, Jim & Gertrude Berry, John & Christa Bienko, Hurley & Mary Blackmon, Gisela Blankenship, Anna Flamos, Ruth Blumenstein, Sam & Sylvia Brady, Kirby & Audrey Braud, Silas & Earthlynn Brewer, Robert & Christa Brock, Tom & Denise Bryson, Hanah Bryson, Len & Marianne Bundra, J.C. Campbell, Ken & Marianne Cash, Gary & Sandra Cherpes, Barbara Chapman, Dallas & Sue Churchill, Jerry & Ina Coleman, Tom & Alba Collucci, Eddie Crump, Don & Ursula Daniels, Carl & Barbara Davino, Jerry & Ellen Decker, Robert Dellacca, Gary & Kay Dempsey, Joe & Carolyn Derringer, Christa Devine, Rees & Susan Dews, David & Karen Dickson, Alois & Rosalinde Dietz, Tony & Joan Donofrio, Rick & Sonja Douthit, Greek Dunigan, Roger & Evie Durdin, Joe Eberhardt, Tom Emerson, Archie & Brenda Emery, Dan & Dee Engelken, George & Christa Fahrback, Don & Toot Fields, Jan Streetman, Bob & Jean Finch, John & Bertha Fontes, Jack & Judith Foster, Gene & Pat Frank, Al & Mary Freddie, John Frivance, Francis & JoAnn Fukumoto, Sid & Gayle Futrell, Bill & MaryAlice Gladis, Norman & Sande Gunther, Marty & Alice Habecker, Deborah Grierson, Ken & Judy Hager, Bill & Karin Hall, Charlie & Susan Hall, Smiley & Elaine Hansberger, Bernie & Lisa Harland, Howard & Marianna Hatcher, Jack Hayes, Stan & Pat Heath, Jim & Dee Helfer, Mike & Kathleen Helfert, Lonnie & Hazel Henderson, Norm & Ursula Hines, Tom & Carolyn Hodgson, Robert & Hanna Hörath, Dan & Darlene Holden, Bill & Susan Holloway, Bennie Hopper & Yolanda Grady, Tom & Jan Hughes, George Jackson, Bob & Marilyn Jarboe, David & Jeannette Johnson, Jim & JayDell Johnson, Paul"PD"Jones, Stuart & Martha Jumper, Elizabeth Jung, Jimmy Kay, Herb & Barbara Kaempff, Ellis & Traudi Holland, John Karnstedt, Otha & Nelda Kennedy, Paul"Tank"Kernan, Karin Kingsley, Pat Kuhlemeier, Lois Neiman, Joe & Dolores Kessler, Ken & Gay Kielbania, Tom & Donna Knight, Greg & Sandy Krcma, Dick & Doris Kreuzer, Ivan I Jane Kukafka, Paul & Erika Laven, Marianne Lengel, Cliff & Shelvia Link, Bill & Karleene Little, Tom & Linda Litzak, Jerry & Pat Mangas, Charles & Renate Mattice, Helga Marrone & Kristina Villafan, Jim McGovern, Tom & Ingrid Mikloiche, Gerlinde Miller, Sonja Wonderlich, Jerry & Peggy Minnich, Doris Moss, Russ Moyer, Walt & Shirley Murch, Steve & Donna Murphrey, Phil & Jo Murray, Art Nichol, Tom & Monika Nickerson, Erich Dunne, Ron & Pat Nigg, Robert & Bonnie Norman, Gail Norvell, Wade

& Phyllis Nottingham, Harry Nowinski, Roy Benifield, Dick & Evi Obidinski, Heidi Pouch, Bruce & Esther Orr, Chuck & June Parnell, John & Aggie Pace, Jim & Eadie Patterson, Pete & Marget Payne, Lance & Kay Peterson, Phyllis Phipps, Jerry & Ginnie Piehl, Keith & Gail Pitchford, Vic & Margaret PoPovitch, Heide Marie Prince, Claude & Doris Proctor, Ken & Kay Putman, Henry & Eleanor Quarterman, Bill & Carol Quednow, Rose Marie Queen, Don Ridgeway, Jack & Pat Rief, Jim & Traudl Riggin, Don Riverkamp, Jerry & Gudrun Robinson, Lou Rocha & Fern Bordlemay, Robert & Mary Rodamer, E.T. & Vera Row, Harry & Jerry Rupperecht, C.A. & Jody Russell, Phil & Rosalie Ruth, Howard & Irmgard Samuelson, Danny & Brigitte Sandifer, Jack Saren & Nancy Morgan, Dan & Carol Scanny, Gary & Eris Sessions, Mike Shanahan, Aubrey & Sandra Shaw, Walt & Virginia Shifflett, Larry & Mary Lou Shriver, Jack Sinagra, Jack A & Madeline Signagra, Chuck & Jackie Sinesh, Ray Sleeper, John & Eva Marie Slutz, Jerry & Helen Sommer, Nathan & Ute Sparks, Claude & Myrtle Spicer, Barry & Sue Springsteen, Jim & Susan Starrs, Raymond Startz, Bobby "Stu" & Marsha Sturdevant, Ron & Marilyn Suriano, Ray & Mary Szyperski, Al & Sally Tews, Dean & Shirley Thompson, Roy & Claudia Tiller, Bill & Helen Toni, Walt & Margot Tribble, Bob & Maggie Trojanowski, Ken & Debbie Underwood, Russ & Pat Vandermartin, Bill & Edith Ward, Art & Karin Weatherwalks, David & Darene Weaver, John & Judy Weckerly, Gene Wetzal, John Wible, Billy Wicker, John & Lottie Williams, Chuck & Monika Wilson, Ursula Wilson, Ethel Burgett, Frank & Shirley Wright, Marty Wright & Judy Gambrell, David Wymard, Jim Yarbrough, Rip & Jean Yarnell.

Some closing words from **Jim Patterson**, Executive Board Advisor:

I would like to thank you all for your Prayers, Cards, E-mails and kind words during my illness. I'm taking Antibiotics to fight an infection but feeling much better than I have in quite some time.

With Biloxi now behind us and Nashville slowly coming into focus, it's time we start making our individual preparations. These Reunions just seem to be getting better and better with each one surpassing the last so I don't think that Nashville is going to be the one to miss.

We are about the largest Veteran's Reunion Group in the Country but compared to our dues paying membership our reunions are small. A great many of our members have yet to attend their first reunion. Let's get out the word about all these good times we have and of the camaraderie we share. Lets make every effort to get a new face to Nashville. Once we get them there we will show them that a few days with the Hofers sure beats getting old and sitting at home waiting for the undertaker. When that dude shows up all your good times are gone forever. Nashville is a much better choice.

THE MEMBER'S FORUM

Biloxi Testimonial

This reunion was the best one we have attended, first because there were at least 11 people we hadn't seen in over 36 years, and second, because there were a lot of repeat attendees and other new folks that we took great pleasure in seeing. It was also great because of all the hard work and effort that everyone, especially Peggy Adams, put into making this event possible, and for her efforts scheduling our Group Dinner for 30 plus. There were more tears of Joy, hearty laughs and stories from long ago than I can possibly tell you but I can honestly say that once I got over the shock of the seeing the 6 & 7 year old girls, Inga babysat, that are now 41 & 42 and remembered so many things that happened long ago, I truly could never ever have a better reunion and I have tons of pictures to prove it!! "Thank you" to ALL

Mick & Inga Mikloiche

Two Cheers for Nashville

Based on genealogical research, Elvis Presley and I were distant cousins whose last names became slightly misspelled over the years. Our family originally came from Hochstadt, Germany, and our common ancestor, Valentine Pressler, immigrated from Hochstadt to New York City in 1792.

I was delighted to learn that the next reunion will be held in Nashville. My wife and I will definitely attend that reunion. We met while we were graduate students at Vanderbilt University in 1969, and I proposed to her while we were students. I'm a native Tennessean and plan to spend some extra time after the reunion revisiting my hometown near Memphis and looking up old friends while there.

Roger Preslar

So, ihr lieben Leute we close out the first Newsletter of the 2005. I want to add my danke's to all that worked so hard to make

this happen and made it happen in a great way. It's amazing that it takes less than five seconds at the reunion to change a person you have never seen before into an acquaintance that shares many of the old memories. I, like many others, led the sheltered life as "trick trash," associating with your trick chums and not many more beyond that. OK, there were the steady personnel that you had to know, Annie in the Snack Bar Newsstand, Karl at the Blick and Jake at Erika's, maybe a few more. But these reunions have given me exposure to those that were on other tricks, day workers that you'd see once a year and forget about in two weeks, those assigned to different organizations or those stationed in a detached area. It's been great running into you, swapping our stories and having a great time. I can honestly say that the Frau und I have really come away from these events feeling good about it and say that even if you go there thinking you don't know anyone, you'll run into a lot of friends. Ein Prosit der Gemütlichkeit! – Phil Murray, Editor.

A Prayer for the Nation from our Chaplain, **Francis Fukumoto**.

With the season of Advent just behind us, remind us dear God that you are a God of Peace and Goodwill. With the season of Advent, in your transforming grace, transform your broken world, transform us to be peacemakers and that we may become instruments of thy Peace. With the season of Advent we pray for your presence among our troops, our men and women in harms way. Keep watch, oh Lord, keep watch. Help us dear Lord that our prayers have a deep desire for peace that dwells within our hearts, our land, and our world. As we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child may the love of God surround us and the joy fill our lives as we celebrate the birth of the One who came that we know Peace.

Amen

The Hof Reunion Association
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 Jim Patterson

German Affairs Repr: Robert Hörath

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 2ndV.P. Don Riverkamp
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NOTE

If you have an Internet Provider and are not receiving the Association weekly email Update, we probably don't have your current email address. Please contact <HofReunion@aol.com> to see what the problem may be. Please provide your name and correct email address. Your attention to this matter will assure that you receive all the weekly email updates.

Hof Reunion Association

P.O. Box 276883

Sacramento, CA 95827-6883

All association work is accomplished by volunteers. No salary or wages are paid to any member.

The Hof Reunion Association operates on a fiscal year that runs from 1 October to 31 September of the following year.

The Hof Connection Newsletter is mailed to members in good standing 2 times each year (January and July).

There is a provision in the Association Constitution and By-laws that allow the Executive Board to grant a FREE membership in situations where the \$15 membership dues will create a financial hardship. Free membership must be requested.

Free membership is provided to widows (widowers) of previous members in good standing and they are entitled to all the privileges of membership except the paying of dues, voting and holding office. We ask that Widows complete and return the Membership Renewal form for the purpose of maintaining records and to assure a new Master Hof Roster is mailed to you. Failure to return the form could result in your name being removed from the roster.

If your spouse is from Hof/Saale or Oberfranken, please include maiden name. This information will assist the ladies from Kreis Hof in their quest to locate former friends.

PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THE FOLLOWING FORM & RETURN TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS

----- cut along line -----

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL for FISCAL YEAR 2005

Last Name: _____ First: _____

Spouse: _____

Email Address: _____
(You may use the email address of a relative or friend)

Street Address: _____ Tel. No.: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
(Nine-Digit Zip Code Please)

Years stationed at Hof: 19____ to 19____ Organization: _____

PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

____ Enclosed is a check for \$15.00 made out to: Hof Reunion Association. I understand the Association operates on a FY, which is from October 1 thru September 30 of the following year.

____ I am a widow (widower) of a previous member in good standing and want to continue my membership in the Association.

____ I am no longer interested in the Hof Reunion Association. Please remove my name from the email and US Postal listing.

**HOF REUNION ASSOCIATION
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**A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
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