

Hof Reunion Update #792

The month of November has a series of historical anniversaries:

Something we all remember, some perhaps perhaps with a bit of difficulty is the Germanic fete of Fasching. Started by tradition in the 14th or 15th century, as an extension of the older pagan holidays of spring which welcomed the coming warmer weather and the foolish behavior of Fasching was apparently sanctioned by the Churches of the day as compensation for the fasting expected during Lent. Traditionally it starts at 11:11AM on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year and continues until Fastnacht or the night that fasting begins before Ash Wednesday. In the Schweitzer-Deutsch areas of Pennsylvania today, “fastnachts”, large plain donuts are widely sold on the last day of Fasching.



The First World War, the “War to end All Wars” or the “Great War” with 9 million dead and millions more wounded, officially ended with the cessation of fighting between the warring parties at 11:11 AM on 11/11/1918. The actual Armistice had been signed earlier that morning. This year was the 101st anniversary of that even. The holiday named Armistice day then was to be a day of remembrance of all the war dead. Still called Armistice day in France, and Remembrance Day elsewhere in Europe and Canada, the holiday became Veteran's Day in the States in by act of Congress in 1954 to honor the veterans of all wars thru time.

The Fall of the Wall, AKA the Inner German Border and the beginning of the Soviet retreat from Eastern Europe on November 9th, 30 years ago. You can find a lot of the immediate result of that on YouTube with lines of Trabbies coming thru the open borders at Töpen just north of Hof and swarming into Altstadt and the continuous celebrations going on all over Germany and especially Berlin!

The official end of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 that began on October 16, 1962 and had the world on an actual brink of atomic war! If you were on active duty at the time, you probably remember exactly where you were and your involvement in the activities of the day the Armed Forces of the US went to DEFCON 3, (Oct 22'nd) and shortly after, DEFCON 2 (Oct 26'th) which put SAC on full alert and kept B-52's in the air, locked and loaded 24/7 and moved B-47's to Turkey and Europe. SAC was finally reduced to DEFCON 3 on Nov 20th with the rest of US forces going down to DEFCON 4.

Where were you in October/November 1962?

I was in Trabzon, Turkey on a cliff top named Boztepe on the Black Sea and 90 miles from the Soviet border at that time and on duty when the red light came on and the klaxon sounded. We had heard that sound before, but this was totally different and I think, totally unexpected. USAFSS had already scooped up anybody anywhere with any degree of Spanish ability and sent them off to sunny Florida but that was the only immediate impact I remember. I was out on the fence, on the inside with a loaded carbine AND ammo and a clip in the rifle. And passwords! There were always Turk Askeri guarding the outside of the fence and they communicated with whistles and they were amused to see us with our carbines on the inside (a first) and some of them knew what a .30 cal carbine bullet looked like which was also amusing to them. They were armed with W II 8mm Mausers which used a very big shell in comparison. 3 other facts thru aged fog memory: All the officers were downtown at the Turk officers club at a party of some kind that evening, and the only officer around anywhere was the chaplain who had (surprise) a green badge clearance. That was the first time I had seen him in the building! Our Ops officer (Max Gross, later a flight commander in Hof) was in really bad shape when he finally showed up! Flight commanders were E-6's who very apparently knew what to do, (burn all loose paper, thermite grenades on the racks, guards out, etc.). It was a totally clear night, and outside you could see the B-47 and 52 contrails overhead over Turk territory and out over the Black Sea contrails of what then were probably MIG-17's doing their ABA thing (Airborne alerts. Racetrack like formations, long ovals). In the morning there was a Soviet destroyer well offshore, just sitting there and easily visible with binoculars. When Brit and Ami destroyers made good will port calls into the Black Sea, they were always shadowed by the Soviets, but this morning was different for sure! Their big guns were all pointing inshore!

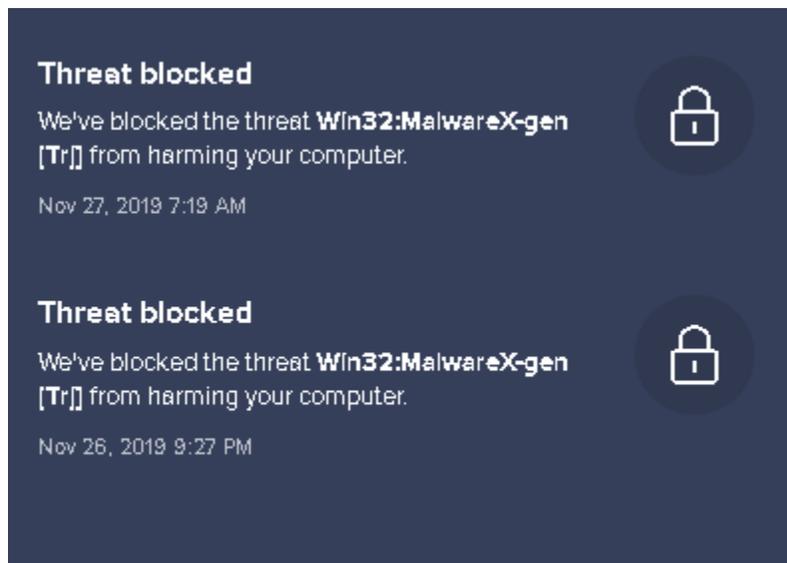
In November we celebrated the 399th anniversary of the original "Day of Feasting" at Plymouth Plantation in Massachusetts. That meal was per history, mostly venison supplied by the local tribe of Wappanoag Indians. The German version, called Erntedankfest, is described as normally a rural event held in early November and instead of turkey, a fat goose graces the table. The harvest feasts in Europe date back to well to before the "Current Era" or CE as the politically correct folks would have it.

Hopefully you all had a great Thanksgiving Day surrounded by family and friends!





From the computer corner: A couple of virus warnings..... Hopefully your anti-virus and anti-malware systems are installed, running and up to date! These threats were blocked two days in a row by Avast! the system that I use, and they continue almost daily. These came in on two different formats. One a note from Chase Manhattan that my account had been locked until I complete a form with my “information” and the other from Paypal concerning payment of my order/invoice thru Northern Tool. I don't have a Chase account and I have ordered zip from Northern Tool. Both of these gems contained the same virus in their payloads:



Hopefully all you recognize these threats immediately and delete these malware and virus attacks without triggering their payloads. A reminder: Your bank and your financial people and the Internet server all know your name and I doubt it is “Dear Sir or Madam” or “Dear” or “Dear Customer”! Also, I received a rather suspicious note from John Lamb the Board's Executive Advisor at my hofreunion@ptd.net address that said I “might be interested in this” [link]. I emailed John to see if he actually sent that short note and he did **not!** Since then I have received similar notes from two other people that I don't know, are not in my address book and are not on the roster. Most of these notes seem to be sent from all different and spoofed parts of the world.

If you ever wondered just how really smart people get trapped by this stunt, you might want to remember that John Podesta AND his technical chief were trapped (spearphished) by a similar message into divulging his Gmail password (POdesta) and all his emails are now available in Wikileaks. (Podesta was Hillary's campaign chief!)



Would you be eligible for a re-up bonus today?

<https://tinyurl.com/wxo3kdq>

I found it interesting that Russian and Chinese linguists, after being much less needed after the end of the Cold War are now back in demand! Says a lot about the current geo-political changes in the world!



Just in time for Black Friday and beyond!

Tax-Free shopping for ALL Honorably Discharged Reservists and Active Veterans is available thru the BX/PX system both by mail and on base.

Authorized Exchange Customers

The Catalog and Exchange Online Store are for the exclusive use of authorized Exchange customers throughout the world.

*This includes: Honorably Discharged Veterans**

If you can shop for retail merchandise at your local Exchange, you are authorized to order from the Catalog and Exchange Online Store.

If you have any questions about your eligibility, call toll free in the U.S. [1-800-527-2345](tel:1-800-527-2345).

*Honorably discharged Veterans of all United States Armed Forces and Reserves are authorized patrons of the Exchange online store. Veterans shopping in foreign countries need to have a valid APO/FPO/MPO/DPO address.

More detail here: <https://tinyurl.com/tyag68g>

You should be aware that they want you to give your SSN number. This fact alone has caused several local veterans to decide not to sign up.



The following ticket stub from Frankfort to Hof on the daily milchzug or milk train was recovered from Steve Lawrence's stack of stuff. Steve was the editor of the "Bavarian Sun" the base newspaper that, like the sun in Bavaria in winter, "came out once in a while" during the late 60's Steve wrote:

I finally got my Dumbphone to post a photo that I could capture and save into my Hof-Saale folder on my main PC.



Do you remember getting one of these tickets? Maybe having no idea what was written on it. Taking the trip in blind faith? The trip, about eight hours as I remember, and no food service, started off one way, then, in a few hours, seemed to reverse. Little did I know that it would be the beginning of many adventures and good times!

(ye ed:) No ticket in my stack and I personally don't remember all of that trip but even in my jetlag induced brain fog I remember a sense of apprehension as we BACKED out of the Bamberg Bahnhof. I knew we were somewhere near the Czech border, but I had no idea exactly where we were or where we were going next that cold snowy February night.



Mel Hamill is putting together a group of helpful travel hints for those heading for Hof2020. The following is the first in the series. Any input from others that can ease travel for all of us Seniors and

the occasional Boomer or Millennial are certainly welcome!

This is from the Transportation Security Administration. Our group might find it helpful.

<https://www.tsa.gov/>

and especially this next page might well be worth the 85\$?

<https://www.tsa.gov/precheck>

Staying with the Travel meme for a moment, Mel received the following from Rainer Krauß about the article in the last issue and German “unfriendly” cities where I mentioned that Hof did NOT make the list. Rainer mentions here that he was surprised that “only 4 of the cities are German” since the respondents were mostly German.

From: presse@stadt-hof.de <presse@stadt-hof.de>

Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2019 4:09 AM

To: hra@hofer1.com

Subject: WG: Hof Reunion Monthly Update

Hello Melvin,

greet from Hof. Thank you for the information. Concerning the article with the „unfriendliest Cities “I just want to add that „Travelbook “is a German magazine – so this result is pure statistics. Of course, because Germans spend the most time in Germany, they also have more bad experiences with German cities than with cities abroad. And nearly only Germans did this survey. In this context, I am surprised that among the ten most mentioned cities "only" four are German. ;-)

Some years ago the BBC did that worldwide survey: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22624104>

I hope not soooo much changed in these 6 years.

You are all very welcome in summer 2020!

Best regards / Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Rainer Krauß (Dipl.-Journ.)

Pressesprecher



Jerry Middendorf has done quite a service for the Reunion by submitting a FOIA request to the USAF for all information relating to the 6915th Security Squadron/Group which resulted in a small cache of pictures that many, perhaps none of us had ever seen before and a definitive history of the dates of changes to the Air Station. None of the pictures are dated but can be guessed at by changes to the Ops site on Hohensaas and Döbraberg. More on this in a dedicated issue coming soon.

To start with, a teaser! Legend has it that Mike Becker (D) was the designer of the 6915th Patch in 1963 or 4. The article shows that it was adopted 29 November 1967 but in February 1965 this unit patch was hanging outside the main gate when I arrived. Any earlier dates would be appreciated...

The following in all its heraldic linguistic glory is from Jerry's FOIA:

UNCLASSIFIED

Blazon: Per bend dancette argent and celeste, a mound arched fess-wise triparted gales, argent and art surmounted by a radar unit and listening device sable and of the first; in fess three bars wavy couped sable, overall a lightning flash issuing from the dome of each radar tower bendwise or, all within a diminished bordure of the last.

Cable Numbers of Colors:

White 45005

Yellow 70068 (AF Yellow)

Celeste 70211 (Bluebird)

Red 70042 (Pimento)

Green 70063 (Emerald)

Black 65018

Significance: The emblem is symbolic of the Group. The color blue alludes to the sky, the primary theater of Air Force operations, and yellow to the excellence of Air Force personnel in assigned duties. The antenna is symbolic of the equipment used for data collection; the lightning bolts and signal waves denote electronic, sound, and voice communications. The color red denotes Communism and green and white-freedom and peace.



6915 Security Group

Also included in the long file is this interesting photo that demonstrates the confusion that commonly happened along the Grenze. The 1 K zone was first established by the US Army along their “zone of influence” because the fenced border and the actual border did not always coincide as some of you have seen at Mödlareuth. The 1K zone eventually became a 5K zone and then reverted to the 1K zone. In the mid 60's in the British zone there were no such restrictions.



and much more to follow!

Publication dates fall between Channukah (Hanukkah), (Dec 22), Christmas the 25th, Kwanza the 26th and New Year's which is still I think on January 1. Orthodox Christmas comes on either December 25 or January 7th depending on the Julian or the Gregorian calendar in use.

But since Fasching is now in session, the traditional Weihnachtsmarkts are now open all over Europe, soon several varieties of Stollen will be on the shelves at Aldi's, I think it's safe to wish any and all, Hofers and non-Hofers of the world alike, a Happy set of Holidays of your choosing!

