



FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION SORTIE

Vol. II, No. I

P.O. Box 15, March Air Force Base, CA 92518

January 1983

1983 Celebration Dates Change



NEW EXECUTIVE Director, Ben Franklin, discusses plans for the coming 40th Anniversary Celebration with Col. Tommy Harrison, Director of Fifteenth Air Force Aircraft Maintenance.

Franklin Named Executive Director

Charles E. "Ben" Franklin, Jr., has been named Executive Director of the Fifteenth Air Force Association.

Franklin, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel, assumed his new duties on October 20 and has opened an Association office at March AFB, Calif. He can be contacted by writing to Fifteenth Air Force Association, P.O. Box 15, March AFB, CA. 92518, or by calling (714) 655-3603.

The new executive director served nearly 28 years in the United States Air Force before retiring in 1981. Franklin entered the Air Force as an aviation cadet in 1953 and later was commissioned and received his navigator wings at James Connally AFB, Texas, in 1955.

During his Air Force career, he flew in C-119, B-47, and B-52 aircraft but says "I spent my whole Air Force

(Cont. on Page 8)

Multiple Lodging Facilities Available for Members

The 40th Anniversary Celebration planning is on track, but the dates have changed to Nov. 10-13, 1983 to insure participation by the Air Force Thunderbirds and other celebrities.

There will be a golf tournament, banquet, memorial service at the national cemetery, air show, and aerospace industrial displays. Also, aircraft displays to include hopefully, a B-1 bomber, visits to the very excellent March Field Museum with their displays of 35 vintage aircraft which include a B-17G, B-24J, B-25, B-26, B-29, P-40, P-51 and B-52.

Time for visits to the area's substantial tourist attractions will be available and opportunities for individual units to reunion and meet separately.

There is no single hotel facility in convenient distance to the base which can accommodate all attendees and provide the normal reunion services. Event officials, however, are confident that the advantages offered by being near the base and Fifteenth Air Force headquarters outweigh the disadvantage of using multiple motels in the area to house reunion participants. Recreational Vehicle (RV) parking on base will be provided but there will be no base billeting available. Activities will be centered at the base.

A reunion package will be mailed in sufficient time to allow members to make reservations and complete pre-registration.

'Sortie' Selected To Replace 'News'

Readers may note that the "News" is no longer the "News." Many outstanding suggestions were received, in fact too many to acknowledge. Thanks to all who took the time to respond. The board chose "Sortie" for historical continuity.

Bud Markel, president of the 461st and 484th Bomb Groups Association, submitted the winning entry with the explanation that "Sortie" was the name of a Fifteenth Air Force paper published in Italy in the spring of 1945. Anybody have a copy that they could loan us? A return to roots!

Happy New Year!

Small Talk by The Director

We hope that our attempt to expand the newsletter meets with your approval. Our Association is committed to the preservation of our heritage and we believe that we best accomplish that goal when we publish your record of distinguished achievement. As many of you know, there is an incredible shortage of printed material about our early years. War correspondents must have preferred England. On a recent night, your director read 36 copies of *Yank* magazine and extracted only enough Fifteenth Air Force material to fill one small page! We have no reporters. We depend on you to provide us with the accounts and stories of our history. Please send us material that we have permission to publish or is sufficiently identified to permit us to secure publishing approval. We will, of course, give proper attribution.

We continue to have a problem keeping track of our

Keep the Flame Burning in '83

Our membership spans the many battles of freedom where airpower demonstrated its effectiveness and its airmen their courage and skill. The calendar years of those battles are history now, replaced by a new year of new hope, and always by a new breed of airmen, each equal to the monumental task of maintaining the peace.

The year 1982 passes and our air pioneers of yesterday carry on the heritage and lessons of their own era into 1983. The Fifteenth Air Force Association also enters its third year, dedicated to keeping the flame of that heritage kindled, recognizing that no one desires peace more than those who have fought the battle, and that peace often prevails when a potential adversary considers it unwise to engage an opponent both strong and prepared. These are lessons of our heritage – they are the direction of our dedication.

To our Association, then, to its members and their families, and to those who wish our nation well, a healthy, prosperous Happy New Year!

mobile membership. Many newsletters are returned with no forwarding address available. Please keep us posted when you move. If you will send us a permanent home address, we can always re-establish contact.

Many of our major goals can only be realized by expanding the membership base and being successful in our renewal efforts. Our 1983 membership cards will be mailed in the next few weeks. If you have not sent your 1983 dues, *please* do so now – we need you and your support. Pass our newsletter around the office and encourage others to get on board!

Our 40th Anniversary Celebration planning is on schedule. Note that the dates have changed to insure participation by the Air Force Thunderbirds and other celebrities. Mark the date on your calendar. We are all getting a little older and opportunities to see our comrades again are slipping by faster than many realize. Don't miss this one!

We are trying to be responsive to your requests. We have the beginnings of a clearing house file and are expanding as info is received. There are now almost 1,300 members and some weeks, the mail overwhelms us. Please be patient with us if we are sometimes slow in answering – we are trying.

Our Board of Directors recently established a policy which provides honorary life membership to the surviving widow of any deceased member. In the future we hope that we can be of comfort and service to these honored members.

By Ben Franklin

Time is Now For Membership Renewal, 1983

New applications for Fifteenth Air Force Association membership are flowing in at a steady pace, due largely to the efforts of enthusiastic members who have passed the word, and copies of their newsletter, to those who had not yet heard of the Association's birth.

With this welcome growth taking place, it becomes even more important that each member who has not already done so, protect that base strength by renewing his or her own membership for 1983.

Renewal forms are on page 8. Annual memberships are \$10 and Life Memberships may be obtained for \$150.



FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
SORTIE

The Sortie is published quarterly on behalf of members of the Fifteenth Air Force Association, P.O. Box 15, March AFB, CA 92518, a non-profit organization dedicated to the furtherance of the heritage, legacy and traditions of Fifteenth Air Force. Contributions are welcome.

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Ben Franklin (714) 655-3603
- EDITOR Bruce Allsen (714) 653-7842
- CO-EDITOR, WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER Lt. Col. Wayne Corbett (714) 655-4226



General Nathan F. Twining

Sergeant Shares 1944 Letter from General

In September 1944, TSgt. Lucien G. Fugere received a very special letter from Maj. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, then Commander of Fifteenth Air Force.

General Twining, who died last year, later went on to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

When Sergeant Fugere sent in his original Fifteenth Air Force Association membership application from his home in Colorado Springs, Colo., he enclosed a copy of that letter which is reprinted here in its entirety.

Fifteenth Air Force
Office of the Commanding General
A. P. O. 520

7 September 1944

Technical Sergeant Lucien G. Fugere
Hq. Fifteenth Air Force
APO 520, U.S. Army

Dear Sergeant Fugere:

You are going home. With you will go the thanks and admiration of the Fifteenth Air Force for a superb and heroic performance. You are the returning heroes of the Battle of Ploesti. You will be greeted and treated as such by your loved ones, and by a grateful American public. They are proud of you.

Your safe return to my command marked the culmination of an outstanding campaign in the annals of American military history. The

(Cont. on Page 8)

Downed Pilot's Son Seeks Dad's Friends

William L. Goin, Jr., Chief Pilot for the Raymond International Builders, Inc., Houston, Texas, attended the 451st Bomb Group's 1982 reunion in search of those who knew his father, William Lowell Goin.

Bill's father was a pilot in the 727th Bomb Squadron and lost his life along with the rest of his crew on Oct. 13, 1944 while on a bombing mission over Vienna, Austria. He was flying the "WACO WENCH" (B-24J) out of Castelluccia di Sauri, Italy when attacked by fighters enroute to the target. With number two engine shot out, the plane went into a wide spiral, and while in view of his formation, no chutes were sighted.

Bill never knew his dad and wants to receive information from those who did in order to draw a clearer picture of his dad and the times in which he lived and died. Association members are urged to dust off their old "memory bin," check out photo albums and see what can be produced for this son of a gallant comrade.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Extracted from the Fall 1982 edition of the 451st Bomb Group's outstanding newsletter, AD-LIB. You can write Bill in care of the Association and we will forward to him. The 15AFA joins our friends in the 451st in offering Bill an honorary membership.

Fifteenth Air Force Wins Doolittle Trophy

Fifteenth Air Force won the Doolittle Trophy for the outstanding performance of its bomber crews during the 1982 Strategic Air Command Bombing and Navigation Competition at Barksdale AFB, La. in November.

Lt. Gen. John J. Murphy, Commander of Fifteenth Air Force, accepted the trophy from Gen. Bennie L. Davis, Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Air Command during ceremonies at Barksdale.

The trophy, named for the famed flyer and first commander of Fifteenth Air Force, Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle, is presented annually to the SAC numbered air force whose B-52 bomber aircraft units compile the best overall results in low level bombing and short range attack missile performance during the competition.

"Our crews did a super job," said General Murphy. "Their proficiency and professionalism are the key ingredients of America's strategic deterrent strength. Their performance in this SAC Bombing and Navigation Competition is proof positive to the world that our deterrent strength is very real."

* * *

Editor:

I was a member of the 353rd Bomb Squadron of the 301st Bomb Group stationed at Foggia, Italy. Please let me know if you have had inquiries from any service men of the 353rd Squadron. If so I plan to attend the 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Lewis Norman
Leonard, Minn.



SOMEWHERE IN ITALY, CIRCA 1944, fire fighters of the Air Service Command jump to their posts in a "three alarm" tradition as fire rises from the right wing of a Fifteenth Air Force B-17 (Flying Fortress). The fire of unknown origin came as the airplane was landing, but despite heavy damage to the wing, the Fort was destined to fly again. (U.S. Air Force Photo)

Those Early Days in Italy

Optimists

When a Liberator crashed on the runway of a Fifteenth AAF base in Italy, pessimists Lt. Harry Langham and TSgt. Vernon Shaffer waited for another crash and left the wreck untouched. A month later, a second B-24 smashed up nearby. Optimists Langham and Shaffer built a new plane out of the two wrecks. And it flew. Tail numbers were not readable in the pictures that accompanied the article. Did anybody out there fly the rebuilt Lib?

Bronc Busting

Italy went to the Wild West for its horseplay. When the Fifteenth Air Force staged a rodeo, GIs came from the fighting fronts in the north and from the southern supply zones to try their skill. The three-day show included everything from races to bronc busting. WAC Pvt. Dorothy Wood, an Arizona girl, was queen of the rodeo. She's the only one mentioned by name in the photo layout. Are any of you cowboys still around? Let's hear from you!

Wounded Cartoon

Special Award. "Bugs Bunny" wears the Purple Heart, bestowed on him by Lt. Howard J. Blum, a navigator in the Fifteenth Air Force. "Bugs," adorning the side of a Flying Fort, got shot up by a Nazi fighter plane. "Bugs Bunny" crew, where are you?

Gunner Decorated

Decoration Day. Maj. Gen. Nathan Twining pins the Distinguished Flying Cross on Fortress gunner Gregory

Mangin at a Fifteenth AAF base in Italy. Mangin, one-time Davis Cup star, also wears the Purple Heart. Anybody know Greg?

Mama Mia!

How do you like American airmen? *Yank's* inquisitive reporter Sgt. George Aarons asked the question of five Italian girls. Here are their answers:

Maria Troyse, 19, answered: Some too fresh, others not so bad. Bad ones are bad because they pester girls too much but all of them look pretty good to a girl like me."

Yole Sperra, 16, minced no words. "They are the most wonderful boys I ever see," she said. "I love 'em all, but one in particular I love the most. I'm going to marry him."

Lili Crovato, 18, said: "Mama mia, they are excellent soldiers but they do guzzle cognac! Papa smells their breath and only lets me go out with the ones who are sober."

Maria Gemita, 19, said: "Americano okay-dokey in every respect. They are lovely and perfect gentlemen. My best boy friend has promised me jeep for after the war."

Diana Bressy, 22, declared she "liked Americanos very very much because they do not act superior. One boy will send me ticket to America after the war. I think I marry him."

EDITORS NOTE: Okay, who promised the jeep! For our readers' information, all of the above were extracted from 1944 editions of *Yank* magazine.

Minuteman: 20 Years of Deterrence

By Captain Dennis A. Pierson
10th Strategic Missile Squadron
Malmstrom AFB, Montana

(On Oct. 26, 1962 the first Minuteman missile went on operational alert status in the 10th Strategic Missile Squadron. Twenty years later, 200 Minuteman missiles of the 341st Strategic Missile Wing, Malmstrom, AFB, Montana, stand alert as part of the nation's intercontinental ballistic missile force).

"If this country is going to continue to back up its principles with action, it will need weapons with the capability for deterring aggression"

These were the insightful words used 20 years ago by Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Gerrity, then Deputy Chief of Staff for Systems and Logistics, Headquarters USAF.

He was speaking at the dedication ceremonies at Malmstrom AFB for a weapon system that was destined to forever change the concept of deterrence and the international balance of power.

This giant step into the technological age – the Minuteman Intercontinental Ballistic Missile system – exceeded all expectations and is now celebrating its 20th anniversary.

The milestone is especially significant for the 10th Strategic Missile Squadron for its Alfa Flight – consisting of a launch control center and 10 ICBMS – was the nation's first on alert Minuteman unit.

Alfa's arrival as an operational unit two decades ago could not have occurred at a more opportune time. In the cold reality of that brisk October in 1962, America stood eyeball to eyeball with the Soviets as President John F. Kennedy led the nation through the Cuban missile crisis.

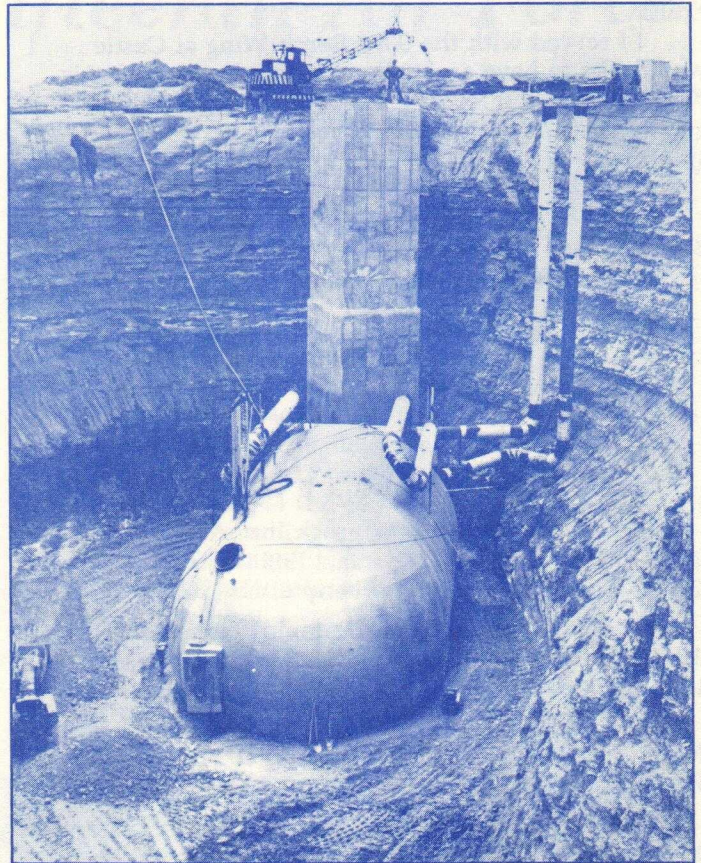
In the midst of the crisis, President Kennedy held a press conference during which he referred to the 10th's new Minuteman missiles as the nation's "Ace in the hole."

On October 28, just 48 hours after Alfa assumed alert status, Soviet Premier Khrushchev agreed to U.S. demands and the missiles of October were soon removed.

There was little doubt that 10 Minuteman missiles sitting alert near Montana's Little Belt Mountains played a decisive role in eliciting the desired Soviet response.

Such was the auspicious beginning of a weapon system that would permanently alter the course of modern weapon system development and the concept of what deters.

Twenty years later, Minuteman still stands as the center piece of our nation's strategic deterrent posture – a symbol of peace in a troubled world . . . the quiet guardian of our way of life as free and independent people.



ALFA LAUNCH CONTROL Facility gets finishing touches before the site was covered. The round "capsule" is where Minuteman crews pull alerts today.

(U.S. Air Force Photo)



Can anybody identify this B-17 crew? We think one of the crew members was named Bill Lewis but we

don't know for sure. If you can identify this crew please write to us at P.O. Box 15, March AFB, CA 92518.

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

. . . I served with the 93rd Bomb Wing at Castle . . . I would like to have an application to join the 15th Air Force Association . . .

SSgt. Joseph P. Nilo
McGuire AFB, N.J.

* * *

Editor:

. . . Please send information about the 15th Air Force

Bulletin Board

Reunion Notices

99TH BOMB GROUP, Winrock Inn, Albuquerque, N.M., May 13-15, 1983. Contact: 99th Historical Society, 2908 Aliso Drive NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110.

2ND BOMB GROUP, San Antonio, Texas, Oct. 6-9, 1983. Contact: Dr. L.E. Ihle, 346 W. Mariposa, San Antonio, Texas.

461ST AND 484TH BOMB GROUP, Williamsburg, Va, May 27-29, 1983. Contact: Bud Markel, 1122 Ysabelt St., Redondo Beach, Ca 90277.

485TH BOMB GROUP, Chicago area, August 5-7, 1983. Contact: Howard Woodyard, 3539 Butternut Drive, Lambertville, Mich 48144, Telephone: 313-856-1776.

Our Life Members

We make special recognition of our life members and thank them for their support at a time when we need it the most.

Lt. Gen. James H. Doolittle
Gen. James P. Mullins
Gen. Leon W. Johnson
Gen. Jack J. Catton
Gen. Paul K. Carlton
Lt. Gen. Archie J. Old, Jr.
Lt. Gen. William K. Martin
Lt. Gen. William F. Pitts
Lt. Gen. Bryan M. Shotts
Lt. Gen. John J. Murphy
Maj. Gen. John A. Brashear
Brig. Gen. Murray A. Bywater
Brig. Gen. William M. Constantine
Col. Barrie S. Davis
Col. Martin E. Plocher

Revis G. Sirmon
Col. John S. Fairchild
Paul R. Schulz
SSgt. Louis E. Cook
Col. David G. Wells
TSgt. Ernest J. Pellington
Max A. Dosland
Archie Piirainen
Lt. Col. John E. Fernsler
Sherwood D. Johnson
Maj. Lawrence Langlois
Col. Robert E. Kimmel
Maj. I.W. Boswell
Lt. Col. Alfred M. Janssen

Taps

In memory of our comrades who now rest in honored glory.

Lt. Col. Earnest E. Dryer
Maj. John W. Ford
Frederick P. McLoud

Our heartfelt sympathy to their families and friends.

Anniversary Celebration. I was radio-gunner with the 760th Squadron, 460th Group, 55th Wing.

William C. Dale
Red Bluff, Calif.

* * *

Editor:

Am interested in 15th Air Force Anniversary Celebration. Please send complete information . . . I was with Headquarters of 12th and 15th in Caserta, Italy.

Don M. Harris
Fair Oaks, Calif.

* * *

Editor:

I am conducting research into a bombing mission which was conducted by the Fifteenth Air Force on May 26, 1944. The specific units involved were the 459th and 454th Bombardment Groups of the 304th Bomber Wing escorted by the 1st Fighter Group of the 306th Wing. The aircraft flown here were B-24 Liberators and P-38 Lightnings. The mission's target was the marshalling yards at Chambery, France. I would like to contact members of these units which participated in this mission . . .

Garrett Anderson
5478G Kelly Street
Fort Knox, Ky. 40121

* * *

Editor:

My heartiest congratulations to whomever undertook the monumental task of organizing and operating the Fifteenth Air Force Association. My application is enclosed. I became a Fifteenth Air Force bombardier in 1943 and I believe I was a charter member (see photo below) . . .

Joe Ford
Tucson



AIRCREW PHOTO: BACK ROW (left to right) Joseph P. Ford, Elmer F. Danko, James R. Adams, Ferris M. Stout. Front Row: George Fowler, Marshall D. Collins, Bernard S. Buschard, Ludger J. Bossley, Raymond D. Blum, and an unidentified crew member.

(Photo courtesy of Joe Ford)

Part II

The Heritage of Fifteenth Air Force

Fifteenth Air Force's initial commander was Maj. Gen. James H. Doolittle of the Tokyo Raid fame. His first headquarters was a large, modern school building in Tunis, Tunisia, the Lycee Carnot.

The U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe (USSAF), stationed in England (and later France), eventually exercised some operational control over the new air force as well as continuing jurisdiction over the older Eighth Air Force. More directly, Fifteenth became a strategic component along with the British Royal Air Force's 205th Group in the reorganized Mediterranean Allied Air Force. This bombing force came into existence to take advantage of the strategic bombing possibilities offered by the "soft underbelly" of Europe, to use a Churchillian phrase.

Although Fifteenth was the newest numbered air force at the time (1943), it was initially composed of veteran units such as the 96th and 301st Bomb Groups, both of which had initially been assigned to Eighth and later to General Doolittle's previous command, the Twelfth, during the North African campaign. Thus, Fifteenth started

its existence with experienced heavy and medium bomber units of the 1942-1943 period, with both Twelfth and the Ninth contributing groups. It was assigned four B-17 (Flying Fortress) groups and two B-24 (Liberator) groups. For a brief time at the beginning, it also had two B-25 (Mitchell) groups and three B-26 (Marauder) groups. To protect this armada, three escort fighter groups with P-38s (Lightning) and one P-47 (Thunderbolt) group were assigned. This was soon increased by three more units with P-47s which later converted to P-51s (Mustang). Eventually, a photo reconnaissance group with F-5s joined the command. Intermediate supervision between Fifteenth and its units was exercised by eight wings. From activation to June 1944 the command gained a number of units, eventually reaching a strength of 21 bomb groups (6 B-17 and 15 B-24) and seven fighter groups (3 P-38, 3 P-51, 1 P-47). Fifteenth thus became second only in size to Eighth Air Force among overseas air commands. (To be continued).

EDITORS NOTE: This series is an extraction from THE HERITAGE OF FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE 1943-1980, published by the Directorate of Public Affairs, Headquarters Fifteenth Air Force, March AFB, Calif.).

Association Thanks Benefactors

The Association acknowledges with deep gratitude the outstanding support by John Sherman, vice president and manager of the Riverside, Calif. office of Paine Webber. Through his generosity, the new Association office at March AFB has been completely furnished.

To the March Federal Credit Union, its Board of Directors, and its General Manager, Col. Bob Smith, (USAF, Ret.), the Association is greatly indebted for a copy machine and supplies, significantly expanding the capability to serve the membership. They also provide the facilities to hold the Association's monthly board meetings.



THE AIR PLAN, "Operation Strangle," had worked since Feb. 18, 1944 to choke off all means of transporting supplies to the Huns on the Anzio and Cassino fronts. Combat crews here are briefed on weather, formation information and on flak and enemy fighters to be expected on a particular mission.

(U.S. Air Force Photo)

Twining . . .

(Cont. from Page 3)

German war machines' disintegration on all fronts is being caused, to a large extent, by their lack of oil - oil that you took from them.

I have only one regret on this jubilant occasion. I wish it had been possible to bring out of Roumania every officer and man who went down in that battle. Unfortunately there are some who will never return. The memory of their sacrifice is an inspiration to the all of us.

One of the memories of my life will be the thrill I experienced as the B-17s came into view, circled, landed, and I saw you unloading. It was impossible for me to greet each of you and it will be impossible for me to say "Good-bye" to each of you before you return to the States. However, I do want you to know my thoughts and those of your fellow soldiers are with you.

Best of luck and Godspeed.

N.F. TWINING
Major General, USA
Commanding

Franklin . . .

(Cont. from Page 1)

career back in a vault" alluding to his many years experience in operations plans.

Franklin served the final eight years of his Air Force career at Fifteenth Air Force Headquarters. At the time of his retirement, he was Deputy Director of Operations Plans.

While he has many goals and ideas, Franklin said that "basically I want to be responsive to and serve the members of the Association!

"We cannot let people forget the contribution of the people who served their country in Fifteenth Air Force during the past 40 years," Franklin said emphatically.

"Nor can we forget the need to recognize the people serving in Fifteenth today - the missileman, the bomber crew members, the support people."

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

PRESENT CARD NO. _____

DATE _____

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____
Number/Street City/State Zip Code

CHECK ENCLOSED (\$10) FOR 1983 MEMBERSHIP (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)

LIFE MEMBERSHIP (\$150) CHECK ENCLOSED (TAX DEDUCTIBLE)
(Make checks payable to 15th Air Force Association)

My present plans for the 40th Reunion at March AFB in November 1983:

Definitely Attend Probably Attend Can't Attend Uncertain

Mail check and renewal to: Fifteenth Air Force Association, P.O. Box 15,
March AFB, Calif. 92518

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 15
MARCH AIR FORCE BASE, CA 92518

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