

435 APS 2007 REUNION
September 21 - 24, 2007
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

The 2007 reunion is history. We gathered at the Lauderdale Beach Hotel in Lauderdale By The Sea, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on Friday, September 21. The reunion was organized and hosted by Kristen Collett and Joe Berardino, and we thank them for their hard work and keeping us on track for a wonderful reunion.

The person who travelled furthest for the reunion was Tabitha Neville. She returned from Iraq only the day before the reunion, picked up her husband Mike on the way, and showed up at the reunion. Within Conus I believe Arthur and Stella Bell won the furthest travelled award, having flown in from Tacoma, Washington. I had not previously met either of the above members of our group, so it was great to meet and get to know them.

Joe and Kristen had planned several activities, and some attendees did play golf, etc., but most seemed to want to visit and become updated on what others had been doing, and meeting and learning about those we had not previously met. And then of course there was food. We pretty much ate our way through Lauderdale By The Sea. We had marvelous dinners at Aruba, Mai-Kai and even had dinner in the hotel restaurant the first night. We enjoyed breakfast at Denny's, and probably spent two or three hours just talking, laughing and trading stories. I think the Denny's staff was ready for us to leave because one waitress inquired if we wanted dinner menus!

We had breakfast one morning at The Village Grill, on the beach, and pretty well dominated several tables there for most of the morning. I later understood the waitress was unhappy with us because we just walked into the sidewalk portion and occupied tables without going through her. Oh well..... Maybe next time.

Kristen's boss, Lenore Nolin-Ryan, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, came by the hotel and welcomed us to Lauderdale By The Sea. She also arranged for Cindy Geesley of the local newspaper, ByTheSeaFuture, to come by the hotel, interview those who were there, and make a photo. That article and photo was published after we departed, but a copy of both have been included here for your info:



Veterans Reunion: front row: Wayne Taylor, Kristen Collett, Tabitha Neville, Jean Brewer; 2nd row: Fred Norton, Joe Bernadino, Art Bell, Don Brewer, Sam Louie, Bill Palczewski, Mike Neville

“VETERANS REUNITE IN LBTS

By Cindy Geesey

A special group of Air Force veterans and their spouses recently held their annual reunion in LBTS at the Lauderdale Beach Hotel. Officers and enlisted folks came from all over the states and Europe to enjoy friends they hadn't seen for many years and to make new friends. Golf, the beach, and good restaurants were just pluses.

They were all veterans of the 435th Aerial Port Squadron of Rhein Main Air Base in Germany, the group that operates military airports. Reunions started in 1999, and this one was organized by local Kristen Collett, a chef at Lenore Nolan-Ryan's catering business, and by former Commander Joe Bernadino of Pembroke

Pines.

Don and Jean Brewer have traveled from Huntsville, Alabama to a number of reunion locations over the years, and Don has been instrumental in their planning. Don said, "LBTS made me feel like I was back in Hawaii where I was once stationed. It's like Waikiki in south Florida."

Art and Stella Bell came from Tacoma, Washington, "to see some good friends, comrades of our profession, and see what their lives have been like since we left Germany 17 years ago." Art added, "I won't miss another reunion."

Two attendees just returned to the states recently. Tabitha Neville from Myrtle Beach was on active duty for 5 ½ years and has served in the reserves for 8 years. She traveled straight from Iraq to LBTS for the reunion and to visit some family in Stuart. According to Tabitha, "I've been looking forward to a party. I haven't had a beer in 4 ½ months!"

Sam Louie of Dover, Delaware, has been home from Iraq for just a couple of months. He came to the reunion "because of Mike Neville who I haven't seen for ten years. It's an awesome opportunity."

All the veterans expressed their appreciation to the LBTS Chamber of Commerce and its members Lenore Nolan-Ryan, Lauderdale Beachside Hotel, The Village Grille, Aruba Beach Café, Shooters, and Jan's Homemade Candies. As one veteran said, "It's nice to know people appreciate what we've done."

You're welcome in LBTS any time, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for serving."

At a gathering of the attendees on the last evening of the reunion we discussed a location for the 2008 reunion. Most wanted to do that in San Antonio, Texas. Several people are working on starting the process of developing plans. More will be published at the website as such plans develop.

Don Brewer