

USAF

Combat Camera



e-Blast

April 2018

President's Comments:

From President and Board of Officers

The Board of Officers held a conference call on 15 March. Topics of discussion included status of the San Diego reunion, preliminary review of our Las Vegas reunion hotel options and progress on a couple of museum issues.

D.J. Diomedes briefed that another partial payment is due soon toward our San Diego hotel food and beverage minimums. We have enough in the bank to cover this, but strongly encourage everyone who plans on attending to register as soon as possible. We realize that all can not commit fully at this time, however, to make hotel reservations costs nothing and can be cancelled 3 days in advance with no penalty. Making hotel reservations will help our organizers make some important preparation decisions prior to the actual registration numbers and monies are in. We are only 6 months away so please make your hotel reservations.

Herb Cintron presented a preliminary review of one of our hotel options in Las Vegas for the 2019 reunion. The board liked the images provided and some of the amenities offered but requested Herb research one or two more options.

Pat Knowles contacted the Norton museum curator regarding the large combat Camera medallions from the front of the old AAVS building. The object of the call was to offer a contribution to help fund the refurbishment of the faded artifacts. Valley Community College has offered to do the rehab of the signs but no charges for the project have been discussed. We offered a donation from our group in the event of any charges from Valley. Additionally, we offered to pay the whole cost if we could procure the medallions for any of our other museum projects but that request was denied. There was no update on the San Antonio museum

exhibit.

Pat will be looking for a few volunteers to do a couple of hours each of hosting the hospitality room during the reunion. Barb and Renee have taken the responsibility on for the last several and will still do the set up and supply of the goodies, but we need to give them a break from having to monitor the room so that they may enjoy some leisure time the rest of us have.

The next conference will be held sometime in May. Any concerns from the general membership may be addressed to Pat. gppjk.8@gmail.com

Hotel Information

Hi Friends,

Here are the notes from tonight's call. They may not be totally accurate since Happy Hour has followed since then.

My agreement was to host only the hotel portion of the reunion with volunteers covering the other assignments.

As the liaison between our group and hotel management, duties include negotiating group room rates and amenities, including arrangements for the reception and banquet, hospitality and meeting room, head count and menu, food and beverage, deposits and final payment.

The purchase of snacks, beverages and supplies for the hospitality room, and the photo wall (again) will be supervised by Pat Knowles.

The POW table and the program for the banquet including speakers will be handled by Mario.

Renee has name tag material from last year and will cover that duty.

I suggest the location for the group photo be at the hotel, or at the grassy circle area close by. If other locations are suggested be aware no

transportation is provided. We need someone to follow up with processing, printing, envelopes...

Since the registration fee is \$175, a harbor cruise (\$25/person) could be included with that price. However individual transportation, (taxi, Uber) would need to be arranged. It was suggested that we wait until a later time to offer this provided that funds are available after covering expenses.

This cruise would be on Friday following the group photo.

The annual meeting would be on Saturday morning.

F&B min is \$5000, \$6300 with tax and tip.

A \$3150 deposit is needed by 6/20, \$1075 by 7/20, and \$1575 by 8/20.

A total of 105 room nights has been estimated with cancellation of 36 allowed by 8/20/18.

Group rate is \$150/night plus tax, with free parking, wi-fi, and breakfast included.

That rate is available 3 days prior and 3 days after the reunion.

I think that covers it. I'll be heading there for a walk through with management in the near future.

Thanks everyone for continuing to do great work with our reunions. Please feel free to offer additional suggestions and input.

I hope I have the correct emails for the group. If not, please forward.

Sincerely,

D.J.

Tele-Conference Notes from Pat Nugent

Combat Camera Conference Call Notes Thursday, March 15, 2018

Taken by Pat Nugent

Attendees: Pat Knowles, Mario Candia, Pat Nugent, Renee Tyron, Barb Zimmerman, DJ Diomedes and Herb Cintron

Missed: Jim Pearson & Jose Lopez

1. Financial Report

- Submitted in advance by email
- Accepted by the conference call attendees

2. San Diego update

- Volunteers Mario Pictures & Guest Speaker search
- Reviewed the hotel financial timeline / next

payment due \$3150 in June (Overall bill is \$6300 plus tax & Gratuities)

c. DJ will due another hotel walk through in the very near future

d. Call for reunion volunteers for the many details that need to be managed

e. Suggested activity is the Harbor Tour (\$25) other ideas will be considered and suggestions can be made

f. Name tags / Renee will supply templates & supplies

g. Transportation – Per car, Rental car, Uber (for Harbor tour)

h. Business meeting will be Friday morning

i. Navy Combat Camera will be shut down & closed by Oct 1st

3. AAVS building shields

a. Have been secured by Valley Community College (VCC)

b. VCC will refurbish and return to the Indian Tribe who's land it was

c. Asked for shields for the Norton museum and the request was denied

4. San Antonio Museum Update

a. Pat Knowles has been working with Roger Kremer and continues to do so and will pick up the pace so we can make museum headway and present a status/progress report by the reunion

5. Las Vegas reunion (2019) update

a. Alexis Park Resort <http://www.alexispark.com>

b. Discussions have begun along with a hotel walk through

c. Additional hotels will be considered & reviewed

d. Activities & shows are being considered

6. General Notes & Comments

a. Renee will send the board members some reference templates & checklists to assist with current & future reunions & events

b. Nugent Vegas activities suggestion – Neon museum, Thunderbird museum tour / practice if team is in town (will need bus probably) Photo shoot?

c. Nugent – suggested the Thunderbird reunion hotel South Point Hotel,
<https://southpointcasino.com/hotel>

Financial Report

By Pat Nugent

Financial Report		13-Mar-18
		<u>Notes</u>
Checking Acc Bal	\$8,297.54	
<i>Minus Bench Donations</i>	<i>\$1,927.51</i>	<i>Reserved for museum projects</i>
New Acc Balance	\$6,370.03	
PayPal Balance	\$1,867.70	
Final Balance	\$8,237.73	
Reunion 2018		
<i>Dates: Sept 20-23</i>		
<i>Attendance Fee - \$175.00</i>		

The VA Will Eliminate Hepatitis C In Veterans By Year-End

Submitted by Pat Nugent

[John LaMattina](#)

Only a few years ago, stories appeared in the media about how tens of thousands of U.S. veterans were infected with hepatitis C and that the government couldn't afford to treat them. Typical was a *CBS News* report headlined "[VA can't afford drug for veterans suffering from hepatitis C](#)". The drug in question was Gilead's Sovaldi, a once-a-day pill that remarkably can cure hepatitis C over a 12 week regimen. The concerns being raised by the press was that Sovaldi cost \$1,000/pill – a cost that could cripple the VA's budget if all of our veterans were to be treated.

The issue was especially timely. These veterans, many of whom contracted the disease during their service in the Vietnam War as a result of battlefield injuries requiring blood transfusions, were now suffering from the consequences of this largely silent menace. They were now experiencing liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer. Without Sovaldi, the sicker of these patients were facing certain death.

Fast forward to last Friday. At the 24th Annual Wharton Health Care Business Conference, Dr. David J. Shulkin, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, announced that the VA was on track to eliminate hepatitis C infections in the next 12 months for those who are willing and able to be treated. In October 2014, the VA had over 146,000 veterans afflicted with hepatitis C. By next October, this number will be only 20,000.

How did this happen? Here's the VA's response as contained in their 2018 Budget in Brief:

In 2014, VA began a ground-breaking system of care for Veterans with the Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). The Food and Drug Administration approved two new, highly-effective drugs – Sofosbuvir (Sovaldi) and Simeprevir (Olysio) – that work to change the lives of Veterans infected with Hepatitis C. Prior to the introduction of the new high-cost treatments therapies in the VA system in January 2014, treatments for Hepatitis C were often ineffective and presented considerable side-effects. By contrast, the new treatment options are considerably more effective than earlier options, and are much easier to administer. Cure of HCV significantly decreases the risk of progression of the disease to cirrhosis, liver failure, liver cancer, and death. VA wants to ensure that all Veterans eligible for these new drugs, based on their clinician's recommendation, receive the medication.

But what about the high-cost of these drugs? While the retail price of Sovaldi was \$84,000 at launch, the VA is allowed by law to negotiate drug prices. In addition, other hepatitis C cures have been brought to market over the intervening years such as AbbVie's Viekira Pak and Merck's Zepatier, thus putting purchasers in a good negotiating position. Here's how the VA described drug costs in their 2018 Budget in Brief:

VA successfully worked with the manufacturers of these drugs to receive a reduced price for their use to treat Veterans. VA estimates the drugs will cost \$748.8 million and provide 31,200 treatments in 2017 and costs increasing to \$751.2 million for 28,000 treatments in 2018.

If you quickly do the math, 59,200 U.S veterans will be cured of hepatitis C for roughly \$25,300/soldier. That's remarkable and a far cry from the concerns being raised less than four years ago.

This is a great story. Thanks to the VA's commitment as well as the innovation on the part the manufacturers, a major health issue for our veterans will be eliminated. Hopefully, the press will be motivated to cover this story as diligently as they did in 2014.

For those Retired Military living in California:

Submitted by Bob Edwards

Subject: AB 2394, online petition drive

Veterans: Veterans organizations are supporting AB 2394 by Assemblyman Bill Brough, which would exempt military retirement pay from state income tax. The author has asked us to get the word out regarding an on-line petition they have in support of the bill. If you would like to sign the petition, please see the instructions on the attached sheet. Please note that the on-line petition service will ask if you want to donate \$3. You do not need to donate \$3.

This bill will likely face an uphill battle in Legislature and we can use you help in gathering support from members of the Legislature.

This support helps us open the conversation to reach across the aisle to other members of the Legislature; you can:

1. **Sign our online petition at**
Change.org/AB2394

a. This petition is free and only asks for a name, email, and area you live in.

b. **PLEASE NOTE: Change.org will ask if you would like to "Donate \$3 to our petition?" This donation is optional and is unaffiliated with our efforts.**

Thank you,

Dana Nichol

Reeb Government Relations LLC

1107 9th Street, Suite 620

Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 492-0550

Thank you for your support of Assembly Bill 2394, which would exempt military retirement pay from state income tax. This bill will likely face an uphill battle in Legislature and we can use you help in gathering support from members of the Legislature.

This support helps us open the conversation to reach across the aisle to other members of the Legislature; you can:

1. **Sign our online petition at**
Change.org/AB2394

a. This petition is free and only asks for a name, email, and area you live in.

b. PLEASE NOTE: Change.org will ask if you would like to "Donate \$3 to our petition?" This donation is optional and is unaffiliated with our efforts.

2. Or email or write to the Assembly Committee on Veterans Affairs urging the support of AB 2394

Sample Letter:

Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation

Legislative Office Building

1020 N Street, Room 167A

Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chairwoman Burke and Members of the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation,

I write in support of AB 2394 introduced by Assemblymember Brough. California is home to 1.8 million military veterans, representing 8% of the total population of American veterans. By exempting military retirement pay from state income tax, California will join 16 other states like Hawaii, New York, and Massachusetts that provide these benefits. According to a report and recommendations from the Governor's Military Council, State leaders should explore appropriate ways to incentivize veterans to keep their excellent skills, such as, leadership, teamwork, and a high aptitude for technology here in California.

Sincerely,

NAME

City, State, Zip code

Sample Email

Send to

Assemblymember.Brough@assembly.ca.gov we will hand it to the committee:

Dear Chairwoman Burke and Members of the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation,

I write in support of AB 2394 introduced by Assemblymember Brough. California is home to 1.8 million military veterans, representing 8% of the total population of American veterans. By exempting military retirement pay from state income tax, California will join 16 other states like Hawaii, New York, and Massachusetts that provide these benefits. According to a report and recommendations from the Governor's Military Council, State leaders should explore appropriate ways to incentivize veterans to keep their excellent skills, such as, leadership, teamwork, and a high aptitude for technology here in California.

Sincerely,

NAME

City, State, Zip code

Do you have a story to tell?

Submitted by Pat Nugent



The goal of the Friends Journal is to present a variety of United States Air Force-related stories from all eras in which the U.S.A.F. or its predecessors played a role. We particularly love to hear firsthand accounts of military service and life from Airmen.

Not surprisingly, many of our stories are about aircraft and are written by members of flight crews, from pilots and navigators to loadmasters and gunners. We would also encourage maintainers, those working with aircraft armament systems and anyone else with a good story about an aircraft to submit it for review.

Combat is not the only aspect of the flying story we are interested in – aerial refueling, humanitarian missions and reconnaissance are just a few of the other flying missions that we would love to share.

Of course, the AF story is about more than just aircraft. Just a few of the areas we would love to hear from Airmen working in are explosive ordnance disposal, missile maintenance and aerospace physiology.

And life on AF bases has undoubtedly changed over time. There are certainly stories about off-duty life or what it was like as a child growing up on an AF base, for example, that would be of interest to our readers.

If you or someone you know has a personal experience you think our readers would find interesting, funny or exciting, please consider submitting a story to us. Writers with all levels of experience are welcomed!

CONTACT THE EDITOR:

Alan Armitage, at (937) 656-9622 (M, W, F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.), or email aarmitage@afmuseum.com with any questions you may have. The typical Friends Journal article is 3,000 words and includes three to five photographs. Your photos for scanning we will return them to you as soon as possible.

SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS AND PHOTOS TO:

Air Force Museum Foundations, Inc., Friends Journal Editor, 1100 Spaatz Street, P.O. Box 1903, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH 45433. Or via email to aarmitage@afmuseum.com. Authors retain all rights to further publications or use.

[go to <http://www.afmuseum.com/membership/friends-journal> Where you can see copies of the magazine]

BTW Pass this e-Blast on to fellow Combat Camera members who do not use computers.