

# THUNDERROLLS



2015  
Volume 22 No. 3

## Registration Underway for Reunion Nov. 12-14

Invitations and paper forms have been mailed, and online registrations have begun for the Thunderbirds reunion Nov. 12-14.

“We’re planning a fun-filled couple of days for alumni to meet old teammates, friends and current team members and at the same time keep costs down,” said Jeff Remington, chairman of the Thunderbirds Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Golf at the Revere Golf Club will kick off activities Thursday (Nov. 12). The Perch Party will be held at the South Point that evening.

Alumni will visit the Thunderbirds hangar Friday (Nov. 13). “We’ve asked the team to fly a demonstration for us,” Remington said, “and Boss ‘Reggie’ Hammond assures me the team wants to do this for us. We’ll get the word out as soon as we have a decision.”

Friday (Nov. 13) evening is open. F-100/F-105/F-4 era alumni are planning a mini reunion at the South Point, while F-16 era alumni are planning mini reunions at both the South Point and Tommy Rockers.



*Chuck Pegram (Material Control 1980-83), Tim Coy (NCOIC of Administration 1982-84), Tim Padmore (Crew Chief #2 1981-84), Terry Winter (Maintenance Control 1981-85) and Sam Mollise (Sleeve 1981-85) pause for a picture in the Thunderbirds hangar during the 2013 reunion. Photo by TK Dudley*

## New Board To Lead Association in 2016-17

Results of elections are in and a new Thunderbirds Alumni Association Board of Directors will take office and start their four-year terms Jan. 1.

“I want to thank all of the candidates for volunteering to serve on the TBAA Board of Directors,” said TBAA Board Chairman Jeff Remington. “It takes dedicated alumni like yourselves to selflessly volunteer your time and talents towards the success of an organization.”

“We received 111 ballots by email and another 14 ballots in the mail,” said Frank Howe, this year’s election chairman. “That accounts for 16 percent of the membership who voted. We had a record number of

The TBAA business meeting will be Saturday (Nov. 14) morning. The banquet will begin that evening with a buffet meal followed by team awards. Gen. Lori J. Robinson will be the guest speaker. She

votes for this election cycle and the results were extremely close.”

New board members include: Mike “Mo” Beale (Solo Pilot 1990-91); Jim Dye (NCOIC Aerospace Ground Equipment/Assistant Crew Chief #7/Assistant Specialist Flight Chief 1995-99); Chuck “Bam-Bam” Lombardo (Aircraft Maintenance Technician and Crew Chief #8 1971-75); Bob Purtiman (NCOIC Media Relations 1997-2001); Mark Thome (ACC #2/Pneudraulics 1987-91); and Costa “Chachi” Tzavaras (Narrator and Operations Officer 1998-99).

Returning board members include Remington (Solo 1988-89 and Operations

is Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Air Component Commander for U.S. Pacific Command; and Executive Director, Pacific Air Combat Operations Staff, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Officer 1989), Secretary Shellie Vaught (Personnel Specialist 1998-2000), Treasurer Brian Plauche (Crew Chief #7, #1, #8 2000-05), and Directors Kati Grabham (Public Affairs 2002-07) and Frank Howe (Public Affairs Administrator 1995-98). Doe Wilson, the TBAA Administrative Assistant, is a nonvoting member of the board as well.

The officers of the TBAA are Remington as Chairman; Vaught as Secretary; and Plauche as Treasurer. The current board will select a new vice chairman. Their selection, as well as committee assignments, will be announced at the general membership meeting during reunion.

# From the Chairman



We're pleased to welcome a number of new annual and lifetime members this year. If you're in touch with alumni who are not members of Thunderbirds Alumni Association, please encourage them to join.

With more than 120 ballots received, the process of selecting six people to fill vacancies on the TBAA Board of Directors is complete. Individuals selected by the membership to serve

on the Board, with four-year terms beginning Jan. 1, include:

- Mike "Mo" Beale (Solo Pilot 1990-91)
- Jim Dye (NCOIC Aerospace Ground Equipment/Assistant Crew Chief #7/Assistant Specialist Flight Chief 1995-99)
- Chuck "Bam-Bam" Lombardo (Aircraft Maintenance Technician and Crew Chief #8 1971-75)
- Bob Purtiman (NCOIC Media Relations 1997-2001)
- Mark Thome (ACC #2 and Pneudraulics 1987-91)
- Costa "Chachi" Tzavaras (Narrator and Operations Officer 1998-99)

I would like to extend my deepest thanks to all the 2012-15 board members who recently completed their terms. They include Kevin "Joker" Mastin (Solo 2000-01), Lennie Coleman (Right Wing 1991-92), Shawn "Norm" Pederson (Solo 2001-02), Eric "Flak" Schnaible, (Public Affairs Officer 1992-94) and Carey "CB" Shoff (Assistant Crew Chief #1/Electrical Systems Specialist 1994-97). Your dedication and service to this Association is the fuel that drives us and the glue that binds us.

Those of us on the board rely on your feedback for setting the direction for the TBAA and its membership. Please share your ideas and suggestions with us and let us discuss them.

The 2015 Thunderbirds reunion is a few weeks away and the keyword for this year's event is FUN. We've allowed a full day

for golf on Thursday and moved the Perch (cocktail) Party at the South Point to Thursday evening. The rest of the weekend will have familiar venues: visit to the Thunderbirds hangar, business meeting and of course, the banquet – with much opportunity to comport with your elders, juniors and teammates.

We'll also have a hospitality suite open Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. Room location will be available at the registration desk. Take advantage and go out on a limb – say hi to someone you don't know . . . yet. We're all family.

As part of our efforts to support the current team, the TBAA Board has offered to help defray the cost of the banquet for our stars – the active Thunderbirds team! Officers and enlisted alike.

A number of items which help generate revenue for TBAA will be available for sale this year at the registration desk. These items include 60th Anniversary Coin Sets, Once a Thunderbird Always A Thunderbird lapel pins, the new TBAA lapel pin, TBAA coins and posters.

We're extremely pleased to have Gen. Lori J. Robinson join us as the guest speaker at the banquet Saturday night. She is Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Air Component Commander for U.S. Pacific Command; and Executive Director, Pacific Air Combat Operations Staff, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. General Robinson is no stranger to the Thunderbirds family. Her husband, retired Maj. Gen. Dave Robinson flew left wing in 1987 and was the slot pilot and operations officer in 1988.

I hope that all of you (from 1953 to 2015) will join me and Boss Hammond's truly amazing Airmen in November for an outstanding reunion. Not only is reunion a time to catch up with past teammates, but also a wonderful opportunity to meet the current team and learn about their challenges and experiences.

Jeff Remington  
Solo (1988-89) Chairman (2014-17)

# From the Boss



Thunderbirds,

The Traverse City Cherry Festival in Michigan marked the halfway point of the 2015 season. It's hard to believe the milestone already came and went. The Team is in full swing and performing nicely. We have had the same weather, airlift, tanker and divert issues that plague the Team each year, but those factors have not prevented the Team from continuously improving the show and execution of the mission each weekend.

What is even harder to believe is that the Team has already interviewed and selected the 2016 Thunderbird Team.

With us having out-of-cycle departures for Thunderbirds 10 and 12, their replacements already have a couple of months of trips under their belt. The new Executive Officer is Capt. Angelina Urbina joining us from Andrews AFB, D.C., and the new Public Affairs Officer is Capt. Sara Harper coming from MacDill AFB, Fla. Both have hit the ground running and are great additions to the Team. The rest of the 2016 crew will join us in October, ready to start the training season. They are:

- Thunderbird 2, Left Wing, Capt. Ryan Bodenheimer, coming from Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
- Thunderbird 4, Slot, Maj. Nicholas Krajicek, coming from Osan AB, Republic of Korea
- Thunderbird 6, Opposing Solo, Capt. Alexander Turner, coming from Hill AFB, Utah
- Thunderbird 7, Operations Officer, Maj. Kevin Walsh, from National Defense University, Bolling AFB, D.C.
- Thunderbird 11, Maintenance Officer, Capt. Warren Smith, coming from Spangdahlem AB, Germany

*Continued on page 3*

## Joining Forces Announces New Executive Director

A former Thunderbirds Right Wing pilot has been named to lead a White House effort to support service members, veterans and military families.

On May 28, Lt. Col. Nicole “Fifi” Malachowski, Thunderbirds Right Wing pilot during the 2006 and 2007 demonstration seasons, was named the new Executive Director of Joining Forces.

Joining Forces is a White House nationwide initiative calling on all Americans to rally around service members, veterans and their families and support them through wellness, education,



*Lt. Col. Nicole “Fifi” Malachowski (Right Wing 2006-07) is the new Executive Director of Joining Forces. Courtesy Photo*

and employment opportunities. The organization works hand in hand with the public

and private sector to ensure that service members, veterans and their families have the tools they need to succeed throughout their lives.

“I’m excited to get to work on behalf of military service members, veterans and their families,” said Fifi, a colonel selectee. “It’s nice to be involved in work that has such meaning and impact.”

Malachowski is no stranger to the White House. Fifi served as a White House Fellow from 2008 to 2009, where she worked as an executive leader on the Presidential Transition

Support Team in the Office of the President-Elect, placed within the General Services Administration. During her time as White House Fellow, she also co-authored Senate Bill 614, which awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Air Force Service Pilots of WWII. This legislation passed both houses of Congress with overwhelming support and was signed by President Obama on July 1, 2009.

Learn more about Joining Forces by following their blog at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/joiningforces/blog>

## Former Thunderbird Helps Paralyzed Veterans

A spinal cord injury ended the 14-year Air Force career of a former Thunderbird, who was recently reelected as a national vice president of an organization dedicated to changing lives and building brighter futures for seriously injured veterans.

Ken Weas (Administration 1984-86) was recently elected to another term as national vice president of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Previously he served terms in that position beginning in 2002.

Weas was assigned to the Defense Intelligence Agency following his Thunderbirds assignment.

Working at the U.S. Embassy in Bern, Switzerland, Weas helped coordinate the Thunderbirds’ first-ever visit and demonstration in that country in 1991.

It was during this assignment he sustained a spinal cord injury in an automobile accident, ending his military career.

He joined the Central Florida Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans in 1995 and served as its vice president and hospital liaison program director until 2000, when he moved to Phoenix. As a member of the Arizona chapter, he served as its hospital liaison program director.

In 2006 Weas returned to Florida and rejoined the Central Florida Chapter, reassuming the position of hospital liaison program and outreach director and also serving as a national director. He also has been a member of several national committees monitoring the quality of health care delivered to PVA members and all veterans.



*Former Thunderbird Ken Weas serves as National Vice President of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Courtesy Photo*

In 2008 the surgeon general of Florida appointed Weas to the Florida Department of Health, Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Advisory Council. They provide oversight for the state’s health care and other services for individuals in Florida with spinal cord injury or traumatic brain injury.

Weas continues today to advocate with energy and desire for better quality of life for individuals with a disability. “I’m always looking for opportunities to help veterans,” said Weas.

PVA was founded by a band of service members who came home from World War II with a spinal cord injury. Their 34 chapters represent thousands of veterans in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

## From the Boss

*Continued from page 2*

The reunion is rapidly approaching and the Team looks forward to meeting all those Teams that paved the way and established the Thunderbirds brand we are all so proud to be a part of.

To address the elephant in the room, I know everyone wants to know if there will be a demonstration to coincide with the reunion. There is a possibility for a Nellis Appreciation Show taking place either the morning of Friday, Nov. 13, or the morning of Saturday, Nov. 14. Coordination amongst the Wing agencies

and with McCarran International Airport is in the works. Should the potential show come to fruition, you will be the first to know.

Thanks again for all the support you give your USAF Thunderbirds! Clear skies and tail winds!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lt Col Chris Hammond".

Lt. Col. Christopher B. “Reggie” Hammond  
USAFADS Commander/Leader (2015-16)

# Events Nearly Finalized for Reunion Nov. 12-14

## Wednesday, Nov. 11

**Reunion Registration Desk** – Open from 2-6 p.m. at the South Point Conference Center.

**Hospitality Suite** – Open 8 p.m. to midnight. Room TBA.

## Thursday, Nov. 12

**Golf Outing** – Lexington Course at the Revere Golf Club. Shotgun start at 9 a.m. Coffee/tea and pastries available to participants prior to start. Light lunch available to participants afterwards. The Peoria scoring system used. New Callaway rental clubs available for \$35 at the course. Cost – \$80 per person.

**Reunion Registration Desk** – Open from 2-6 p.m.

**Perch Party** – Second floor of the South Point Conference Center from 6-8 p.m. Menu includes Steamship Round of Beef, Roast Turkey Breast and Sugar Cured Ham Carving Stations, Potato Chips, Corn Chips and Pretzels, Salsa, Hot Spinach and Artichoke, Sour Cream and Onion and Queso Dips, Assorted Mini Rolls, Mustard, Ketchup, Mayonnaise, Creamy Horseradish and Cranberry Relish, Potato Salad and Cole Slaw. Cost – \$45 per person.

**Hospitality Suite** – Open 8 p.m. to midnight. Room TBA.

## Friday, Nov. 13

**Reunion Registration Desk** – Open from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

**Thunderbirds Hangar Visit** – Times for visit and whether the team will fly a demonstration TBA.

**Buses to Nellis** – Depart for hotel TBA. Cost – \$20 per person.

**F-105/F-100/F-4 Alumni mini-reunion** – South Point. Pay-As-You-Go bar. Time and room location will be available at the registration desk. Contacts: Bill Martin ([unclemarty5173@msn.com](mailto:unclemarty5173@msn.com)); Al Scheibly ([aljaysch@aol.com](mailto:aljaysch@aol.com)) and Dave Wells ([bigdog2@inreach.com](mailto:bigdog2@inreach.com)).

**F-16 era mini reunion** – South Point Conference Center from 6-8 p.m. Cost TBD. RSVP [al.eakle@gmail.com](mailto:al.eakle@gmail.com)

## Saturday, Nov. 14

**Reunion Registration Desk** – Open from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**TBAA business meeting** – South Point Conference Center starting at 9 a.m.

**Banquet** – Second floor of the South Point Conference Center. Cocktails begin at 5 p.m. Open seating. Buffet dinner beginning at 6 p.m. Menu includes Caesar Salad with Homemade Croutons and Shaved Parmesan, Asparagus Spears and Pancetta with Lemon Vinaigrette, Marinated Mushroom Salad, Pasta Salad Caprese with Tomato and Basil, Lemon Sage Chicken Breast with Sundried Tomatoes, Miso Glazed Swordfish Steak, Flat Iron Steak with Caramelized Onions, Wild Mushroom Pilaf, Fire Roasted Garden Vegetable Medley, Chocolate Chip Cake with Ganache Icing, Dutch Apple Crumble, Strawberry Mousse Pie, Pretzel and Cheese Rolls, Freshly Brewed Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee and Tea. After dinner presentation of team awards. Guest speaker



Hank Canterbury (Slot 1965-67), "Scar" Scarbrough (Narrator/Solo 1977-80) and RD Evans (Solo 1979-81) share a moment at the Perch Party during the 2013 reunion. The event has been moved to Thursday night this year. Photo by TK Dudley

is Gen. Lori J. Robinson, Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Air Component Commander for U.S. Pacific Command; and Executive Director, Pacific Air Combat Operations Staff, Joint

Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Cost – \$85 per person.

**Hospitality Suite** – Open immediately following the banquet. Room TBA.

## South Point Hotel, Casino and Spa

### Room Rates

Sunday through Thursday nights – \$55. Room tax is additional.

Friday and Saturday nights – \$80. Room tax is additional.

Junior suite (one-bedroom) – \$175 per night

One-bedroom suite – \$250 per night

Two-bedroom suite – \$350 per night

Luxury one-bedroom suite – \$600 per night

Luxury two-bedroom suite – \$900 per night

### Resort Fee

\$14 per night fee waived. Complimentary in-room Wi-Fi/internet; fitness center access; airport shuttle; free local/toll-free phone calls; printing of boarding passes; parking and valet.

### Room Reservations

Online: [www.southpointcasino.com](http://www.southpointcasino.com) and use the group code: THU1110

Phone: Call the hotel at 1-866-791-7626 and identify as being with the Thunderbirds Alumni Association reunion.

### Free Airport Shuttle

Call toll-free 1-866-791-7626 to make reservations at least 24 hours in advance.

## 11 Show Sites Remain in Thunderbirds 2015 Season

Eleven sites remain on the Thunderbirds show schedule through early November.

Aug. 29-30: Midland, Texas

Sept. 5-7: Cleveland, Ohio

Sept. 12-13: Owensboro, Ky.

Sept. 19-20: JB Andrews, Md.

Sept. 26-27: Millington, Tenn.

Oct. 3-4: Mather (Sacramento), Calif.

Oct. 10-11: Grand Junction, Colo.

Oct. 17-18: Houston, Texas

Oct. 24-25: Lake Charles, La.

Oct. 31-Nov. 1: JBSA Randolph, Texas

Nov. 7-8: Moody AFB, Ga.

**NOTE TO ALUMNI:** If interested in Thunderbirds airshow tickets, contact Maureen Walker, the commander/leader's secretary, at [maureen.walker@us.af.mil](mailto:maureen.walker@us.af.mil). Please request tickets no later than one month prior to the event.



Thunderbirds Alumni Association  
 Reunion Registration  
 November 12-14, 2015  
 South Point Hotel and Casino  
 Las Vegas, Nevada



**REGISTRANT INFORMATION**

(Must be received by Monday, October 12)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Badge \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell No. \_\_\_\_\_

If riding bus to the Thunderbirds Hangar, indicate Military ID (yes/no) \_\_\_\_\_  
 If no Military ID, we need your and your party's date of birth.

Name/DOB(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name/DOB(s): \_\_\_\_\_

If driving to the Thunderbirds Hangar and you do not have a Military ID, we need date of birth and driver's license of you and your party.

Name/DOB(s): \_\_\_\_\_ DL No.(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name/DOB(s): \_\_\_\_\_ DL No.(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**EVENT FEES (Per Person)**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$80 Golf \_\_\_\_\_ \$45 Perch Party \_\_\_\_\_ \$85 Banquet  
 Guest 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Guest 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL FEES**

Events Purchased .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Registration Fee (\$10/Person) .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Round Trip Bus Transportation Ticket to Hangar (\$20/Person) ..\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Please make checks payable to: Thunderbirds Alumni Association  
 Payment and registration form should be mailed to:  
 Doris "Doc" Willson, 7661 Angel Crest Circle, Las Vegas, Nevada 89117  
 or  
 Register and pay online by bank/credit card at: [www.tbaa.org](http://www.tbaa.org)

**Meet the New Thunderbirds Officers, Chief**



**Capt. Angelina Urbina** is the new Executive Officer (Thunderbird #10). She leads an executive support staff responsible for cyber/



**Capt. Sara Harper** is the new Public Affairs Officer (Thunderbird #12). She is responsible for the team's extensive marketing, recruiting and publicity



**Chief Master Sgt. Candace Smith** is the new Chief Enlisted Manager. She leads enlisted supporting Air Force public outreach,

knowledge operations, budget, training and force support actions for the commander/leader. Captain Urbina earned her commission through the Air Force Officer Training School at Maxwell AFB, Ala., in 2010. Before joining the team, she was the Deputy Chief, Senior Leader Management Division for the Air Force District of Washington at Joint Base Andrews, Md. Captain Urbina is in her first season with the team and hails from Helena, Mont.

programs. Captain Harper earned her commission in 2010 as a graduate of Auburn University's ROTC program. She served as Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, 82nd Training Wing, Sheppard AFB, Texas, and Deputy Chief of Public Affairs, 52nd Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem AB, Germany. Before joining the team, Captain Harper was the Chief of Public Affairs at MacDill AFB, Fla. She is in her first season with the team and hails from Tyrone, Ga.

recruiting and retention programs. She oversees all actions required on 11 Block 52 F-16 aircraft. Chief Smith trains, counsels, mentors and ensures overall enlisted professional development. She entered the Air Force in 1994, starting in Personnel and retraining into Physical Therapy. Before joining the team she was the Advanced Leadership Experience Team Lead and Instructor at the Air Force Senior NCO Academy and hails from Corvallis, Mont.

# Benchstock

Congratulations to **Lt. Gen. Darryl L. Roberson** (Left Wing 1994-95) who assumed command of Air Education and Training Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas. He was formerly Commander, 3rd Air Force and 17th Expeditionary Air Force, Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Congratulations to **Brig. Gen. Carl A. Buhler** (Maintenance Officer 1997-98), who assumed duties as Director, Logistics, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. He previously served as Commander, Ogden Air Logistics Complex, Air Force Materiel Command, Hill AFB, Utah.

Congratulations to **Col. Todd Canterbury** (Solo 2003-04) as he headed off to a new job as Chief, Operations Division, F-35 Integration Office at The Pentagon. He previously served as commander of the 33rd Fighter Wing at Eglin AFB, Fla.

Congratulations to **Col. Case Cunningham** (Commander/Leader 2010-11), who has assumed command of the 432nd Wing at Creech AFB, Nev. He previously served as the Air Force Operations Liaison to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Director.

Congratulations to **Brian Plauche** (Crew Chief #7, #1, #8 2001-05) on his promotion to Major and assumption of command of the 307th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Barksdale AFB, La.



Alumni have asked about a challenge coin sold by the team.

The cost is \$12 per coin. Individuals interested in purchasing one should make checks payable to the **Thunderbirds Enlisted Fund** and mail them to: **USAFADS/CCS, 4445 Tyndall Ave., Nellis AFB, NV 89191-6079.**



*With more than 8,000 pilots flying for one commercial airline, the odds are slim two former Thunderbirds pilots would share flight duties on the same flight. That happened not long ago on a Southwest flight. In the left seat is the flight's captain, Costa "Chachi" Tzavaras (Narrator and Operations Officer 1998-99) and in the right seat first officer Mark Smith (Left Wing 2003-04). Courtesy Photo*

Welcome new Thunderbirds Alumni Association members: **Matthew "Ace" Acevedo** (Client Systems Administrator 2004-08); **Shawn Branam** (Avionics/Assistant Crew Chief #7, #4 2006-08); **Ann Butterfield** (Graphic Artist 1984-89); **Ryan Dudgeon** (Logistics Coordinator 1999-02); **Rob Givens** (Right Wing 1996-98); **John Hemphill** (Communications-Navigator 1974-77); **Tobin Huff** (Ground Communications 1974-76); **Bill Kurek** (Assistant Crew Chief #8 1996-99); **Darrick Lee** (Public Affairs Officer 2012-15); **Joe Martin** (Corrosion Control Specialist 1983-86); **Dawn Musser** (Associate); **Angela (Johnson) Neff** (Public Affairs Officer 2005-06); **Mark Nuernberg** (Crew Chief #3 1985-88); **Beth Coffua-Robert** (Administration and Public Affairs 1977-79); **Dwight Roberts** (Crew Chief #7, #2, #1 1979-82);

**Michael Schuller** (Communications/Video Technician 1991-94); **Cameron St. Amand** (Egress/Assistant Crew Chief #7 and #8 1998-03); **John Schwingle** (Associate); and **Jeffrey Wood** (Advance Pilot/Narrator 2001-02).

JUST IN – New 3/4-inch metal Thunderbirds Alumni Association lapel pins. Cost is \$10 per pin (including postage). Pins may be ordered by sending a request and paper check to: Thunderbirds Alumni Association, c/o Doris Wilson, 7661 Angel Crest Circle Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89117. Pins will also be available for sale at the registration desk during reunion.



## Fundraiser Helps Parents of Former Thunderbird



Shawn "Norm" Pederson (Solo 2001-02) is recovering from a cerebral aneurysm which he suffered in September 2014.

Norm has fought off death, infections, disease and countless setbacks to make it to where he is today. In addition, he has been moved between

multiple facilities across the nation, with no real end in sight for these challenges.

Through all of this, his parents have been by his side. This fundraiser was established to assist them with the very real challenges they have yet to overcome. These

include housing, transportation (including a wheelchair van for Shawn) daily living expenses, airplane tickets, etc.

Individuals can make a donation by going to: [www.giveforward.com](http://www.giveforward.com) and type Shawn Pederson in the find a fundraiser box.

# Gone But Not Forgotten

*NOTE: There may be some time between an individual's death and when we print an obituary. They are printed after the Thunderbirds Alumni Association receives them. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family members and friends of these cherished members of the Thunderbirds family.*



**Retired Chief Master Sgt. Daniel R. Cane** (Maintenance Superintendent 1958-63) died Jan. 4. He is preceded in death by his wife, Shirley (Kidwell) Cane and brother, Jerry Cane. Survivors include brothers Loren Hewitt, Germany, and Richard Cane, Fla.; sisters, Jeanne Babcock and Grace Angeleo, both of Buffalo, N.Y.; children, Candace Jacobs, Ariz., Martin Cane, Utah, Nova (Jim) Heersche, Mulvane, Chris Cane, Wichita, Kan., Nick Cane, Mulvane, Kan.; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.



**Retired Senior Master Sgt. Reuben Erhardt** (Environmental System Specialist/Crew Chief 1980-82) passed away of natural causes May 30 at his home in Sacramento, Calif. Survivors include his sister Gretchen Brown of Oneonta, N.Y. He will be laid to rest at the Sacramento National Cemetery at a date to be determined.



**Retired Staff Sergeant Reed W. Fleck** (Assistant Crew Chief 1953-55) died July 22 at University of Iowa Hospital, Iowa City, Iowa. He was preceded in death by wife Mary L. Allen, son John Fleck, his sisters Sarah Sutton, Oma Lloyd and Janis Rightnour and his brothers William and Boyd Fleck. He is survived by daughter Karen and her husband Scott Holmes of Wilton, Iowa, and two grandsons, Eric and Kyle Holmes. He is also survived by a special friend, Delores Bieber of Muscatine, Iowa.

**Robert W. Henry** (Skyblazers crew chief 1961-62) died Jan. 3, 2013. Internment was at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix.

**Retired Senior Master Sgt. Robert N. Kelley** (Crew Chief 1961-63) died May 16. After retiring from the Air Force, he worked for McDonald Douglas and Northrop Grumman Aircraft Corporations and retired from both companies. He is survived by his sister, Theresa (Herb) Foster of Palo Alto, Calif., and several nieces and nephews. Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, Clara, two sisters and a brother.

**Mrs. Carol (Melancon) Souza** (Associate Member and Widow of Capt. Mark Melancon, Slot 1981-82) died Feb. 27, 2014.



**Retired Brig. Gen. William "Bill" Strand** (Honorary Thunderbird 1975-77) died April 25. He was preceded in death by wife Barbara and daughter Kathleen. He is survived by his daughter Cindy; son Mick (Sarah); stepsons Brent and Bob (Felicia); five grandchildren; one great grandchild; three step grandchildren; and one step great-grandchild. Graveside services were held at Churchill County Cemetery in Fallon, Nev.



**Retired Master Sgt. Russell W. Voisin** (Support 1965-67) died June 4. Survivors include wife Ellen; daughter Darcel Bell (Bruce), son Mark Voisin, daughter Debra Halsey (Bill); two grandsons; and three great-grandchildren. Burial with full military honors was June 7.



**Retired Senior Master Sgt. Paul K. Wright** (Line Chief 1970-73) died May 18. Survivors include wife Lois; sister Carol Paige; daughter Nancy Moodys; sons Scott (Paige) Wright and Mark (Emily) Wright; stepsons Travis Brim and Shane Burroughs; six grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

# ThunderRolls

This is the final issue of *ThunderRolls* to be printed in 2015 for members of the Thunderbirds Alumni Association. The next issue will be Quarter 1 (January-March) 2016. Submissions (including high resolution photos in jpeg format) may be emailed to: [al.eakle@gmail.com](mailto:al.eakle@gmail.com). Submission does not guarantee publication and editorial staff may edit for style and content.

Change of address should be submitted to: Doe Wilson, TBAA Administrative Secretary, 7661 Angel Crest Circle, Las Vegas NV 89117. Phone: 702-871-7197. Email: [DoeWilson@aol.com](mailto:DoeWilson@aol.com)

## Thunderbirds Alumni Association Board of Directors

### Chairman

Jeff Remington (1988-89)

### Vice Chairman

Kevin "Joker" Mastin (2000-01)

### Secretary

Shellie Vaught (1998-2000)

### Treasurer

Brian Plauche (2000-05)

### Director

Lennie Coleman (1991-92)

### Director

Kati Grabham (2002-07)

### Director

Frank Howe (1995-98)

### Director (Nominations Chairman)

Shawn "Norm" Pederson (2001-02)

### Director (Communications Chairman)

Eric "Flak" Schnaible (1992-94)

### Director (Membership Chairman)

Carey "CB" Shoff (1994-97)

### Administrative Secretary

Doe Wilson

### ThunderRolls Editor

Al Eakle

### Historian

Carol Knotts

The Thunderbirds Alumni Association would like to thank Lockheed Martin for its continued support of *ThunderRolls* and the TBAA.

### Graphic Design and Printing

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics  
Fort Worth, Texas

### LOOK FOR:

Official TBAA website  
[www.thunderbirdsalumni.org](http://www.thunderbirdsalumni.org)

**Facebook Page:** Thunderbird Alumni  
(TBAA emblem on opening page)

# THUNDERROLLS



7661 Angel Crest Circle  
Las Vegas, NV 89117-3220

Office 702-871-7197  
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## Former Thunderbird NCO Competes in American Ninja Warrior



*Kirk Alexander (Assistant Crew Chief #8 and Crew Chief #7 1988-91) climbs the cargo net during his run on the television series American Ninja Warrior.*

Photo courtesy Brandon Hickman/NBC

A comment by his kids ultimately led a former Thunderbird to enter a nationally televised sports entertainment competition.

Kirk Alexander (Assistant Crew Chief #8 and Crew Chief #7 1988-91) competed in American Ninja Warrior television series where competitors try to complete a series of obstacle courses of increasing difficulty called “stages.”

“My wife and kids were watching the show and my kids said, ‘hey Dad you could do that,’” said Alexander. “I followed up with yes I can. Most I served with on the team know I would always try to find a gym on the road. I’ve been training for years.”

Training for the program, however, was a little different. “You need to have a lot of grip and upper body strength for these obstacles,” said Alexander. “Training involved pull ups, back and forearm work.”

He submitted his application, along with a three minute video tape. Alexander was one of the 800 applicants selected from more than 40,000 applications submitted. Filming was in six different cities across the country, and he competed in a special military program filmed in San Pedro, Calif., near the battleship USS Iowa.

Alexander made it through the first two obstacles, the quintuple steps and cargo net. The third obstacle was four spinning logs. “I short-stepped the fourth spinning log,” said Alexander, “and rolled under. That ended the competition for me.”

Alexander said he has about 300 days to get ready for season eight. “I was ready this year and I will be ready next year as well,” he said. “I need to be just as good next year or better. I’ll have to go through the application and put together a three-minute. And there’s no guarantee that I will be selected again.”