

Volume 8, Issue 4

December 2004

## Edelweiss Lodge and Resort Grand Opening

Edelweiss Lodge and Resort hosted its official Grand Opening Celebration on Oct. 30, 2004 with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house that literally lit up the night sky over Garmisch, Germany.

An estimated 1,000 guests cheered as special guests representing the many organizations involved in creating the new resort cut the ribbon in the spacious main lobby officially opening the resort to service members and their families.

The 330 room lodge features spacious guest rooms, three uniquely themed restaurants, THE POINT Wellness Club, a leisure activities, daily tours, and recreation programs center, and full service conference facility.

While this was definitely a historic day for Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, our goal is to continue to provide exciting recreation, services and events for service members who visit the resort throughout the year and for generations to come.

To plan an Edelweiss Lodge and Resort getaway, contact the Vacation Planning Center at 08821-9440 in Germany and (011-49) 8821-9440 in the United States. For more information and pictures, see the resort web site at: <http://www.edelweisslodgeandresort.com/>.

## Board Election

*March 2005*

An election for the three at-large Directors is scheduled for 2005. The AHA Corporation Bylaws proscribe that Directors are elected in odd number years (2005) and Officers are elected in even number years (2006).

The AHA President, Jay Craddock, appointed an Election Committee composed of the Vice President, Ken Moore, the Secretary-Treasurer, John Ruppel, and association member at large, LTC Jim Rommelfanger. The committee will be responsible for gathering nominations, distributing, collecting, and counting the ballots. The newly elected Directors will be announced at the Association's annual meeting, the Annual Old Timers' Lunch, scheduled for mid-March 2005.

Any AHA member in good standing may serve as a Director. Individuals interested in serving as a Director should complete the form included in this newsletter. Return the completed form (or a reasonable facsimile) no later than January 10, 2005, to:

Col John Ruppel  
6718 Zerillo Drive  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

Nominations must be postmarked by January 10, 2005, to be valid. All nominations will be included on the ballot. Ballots, a self-addressed stamped postcard, will be mailed to all members, with the next edition of the newsletter, in early February. There is no write-in provision. Ballots must be returned with a postmark no later than March 4, 2005 to be valid. The three nominees with the highest number of votes will be declared Directors, and will be announced and begin their two-year term at the Old Timers' Luncheon

Interested in serving? Get your nomination form completed and returned ASAP!

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## The Prez Sez

*The President's Column*

LTC Jesse Craddock (Ret.)

We are closing in on the end of another year, which included many important and historical events.

The War in Iraq is the primary concern to our Nation and support of our Armed Forces is vital to our winning the war on terrorism. Pray for an early victory.

Sunday, November 5, the Wing conducted a formal change of command ceremony. Colonel Amos Bagdasarian assumed Wing Command, becoming the fourteenth 129<sup>th</sup> Commander. Previously, Col Bagdasarian served as the Wing Logistics Group Commander. Prior to joining the 129<sup>th</sup> RQW, Col Bagdasarian served in several leadership positions with the 144<sup>th</sup> FIW. I want to welcome Col Bagdasarian and offer the AHA's support for any project within our capabilities.

At the Saturday evening Farewell Party the Association presented Colonel Williams with a lifetime membership. We wish Stephanie and Col Williams well as they relocate to Sacramento.

We have lost a few "old friends" this year - some dating back to Hayward and the original 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. Blaine Hall, "Mac" Campbell, Ray Fitts, and Don "Stumpy" Zumsteg were "good troops" who will be missed, but not forgotten. The Newsletter contains a background piece on Ray, Blaine and Don.

The Newsletter includes a background piece on former Adjutant General, Major Gen Willard Shank who passed away in October.

The Association will conduct a March Directors election. The Newsletter contains election procedures information and a nomination form. The Association utilizes a self-nominating procedure. All nominees' names will appear on the ballot. This is your opportunity to participate in the Association's management.

The email Newsletter test delivery is complete. If you signed up for email Newsletter delivery and have not received an email copy, either the mail file has an incorrect email address or your computer is utilizing a spam blocking program which identifies the Newsletter

## ***The Prez Sez - cont***

as spam. Please contact the Newsletter editor Lynda Fawcett [lfawcett@hotmail.com](mailto:lfawcett@hotmail.com) to verify your email address and/or authorize your computer's spam program to accept Newsletter delivery.

The Board has received a suggestion that the Association web page establish a bulletin board. If we receive favorable membership response a members-only bulletin board will be added.

We are already planning our annual "Old Timers Luncheon" which is slated for mid-March. The next Newsletter will have full details.

I want to wish all Members a Happy Holiday Season and thank you for your support in 2004.

***Happy Holidays!***

*Jay*

## ***The Vice-President's Two-Cents Worth***

CCMS Ken Moore (Ret.)

The editor of this Newsletter, Lynda Fawcett, has again been recognized by her employer, Citigroup, for the hours of volunteer service she has donated to the AHA. Citigroup published the following in an internal newsletter:

Lynda Fawcett, of Citigroup Realty Services, is one of those dedicated behind-the-scenes volunteers who keep an organization humming. Her group is the 129th Rescue Wing Alumni & Heritage Association, comprised of veterans and current members of this Air Force National Guard unit. She handles everything from the group's tax return and newsletter to finding bodies to staff the beverage booth at an annual fund-raising event. It added up to 350 hours last year. She said they "adopted" her nearly 20 years ago when she worked for the unit and, "once you're in, you're in." Her other tie is a son who is an active member. This California-based unit undertakes long-distance, offshore rescues and was recently searching for lost hikers in Yosemite National Park. "This organization gives them a chance to pass on the stories from one generation to the next," she added.

# NOMINATION FOR DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Now is your opportunity!

Do you want to have a hand in running the 129<sup>th</sup> Alumni and Heritage Association? Do you want to be more involved in the Association? Do you have lots of great ideas for things the Association could be involved in?

Now is your opportunity. Nominate yourself (you CAN NOT nominate another person) to serve for 2 years as a Director at large. If elected, you will serve on the Board of Directors of the 129<sup>th</sup> Alumni and Heritage Association.

**Volunteer NOW!**

# NOMINATION FOR DIRECTOR AT LARGE

Yes! I want to be more involved in the 129<sup>th</sup> AHA!  
Place my name in nomination for Director at Large.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

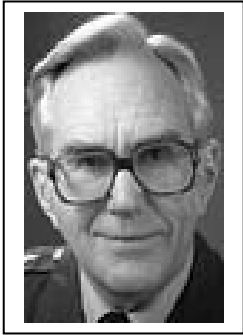
E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service in 129<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Must be postmarked by January 10, 2005. Mail to:

Col John Ruppel  
6718 Zerillo Drive  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122



## MG Willard A. Shank

*November 9, 1921 – October 25, 2004*

Willard A. Shank, a Sacramento civic leader, attorney and citizen soldier whose career included a stint as commanding general of the California National Guard, had been in failing health since suffering a stroke four years ago. He was one of the highest-ranking lawyers in the state attorney general's office when then-Gov. George Deukmejian selected him to lead the National Guard. Holding the rank of major general, he was the organization's commander from 1983 until 1987. As the Guard's top general, Mr. Shank presided over a major transformation of the organization - more integration with active-duty components, an increase in overseas training missions, and beefed up training.



## SMSgt Blaine D. Hall

*August 7, 1923 – October 15, 2004*

Blaine enlisted in the Army on March 3, 1942, and was assigned as a member of the original Cadre of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, 505<sup>th</sup> Parachute Infantry Regiment Company B. He was one of very few to have survived a low-level jump when his parachute failed to open from 700 feet. He was a part of the forces that invaded France and suffered injuries during small arms fire with the Germans. Following active duty, and a stint as a cab driver, Blaine joined the Ca. Air National Guard in 1949 in the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Bomber Wing followed by the 129<sup>th</sup> Special Operations Group and later the Aerospace and Recover Group. He retired on August 7, 1978, after 36 ½ years of faithful service in various capacities most notably as a Superintendent of the Life Support Division in his unit.

He leaves behind his loving wife Dorothy, sons Blaine Jr., Kevin and predeceased son Randy, daughter Jeannine, six grandchildren and one great grandson.



## Col Raymond John Fitts

*February 17, 1921 – November 3, 2004*

Ray served in World War II as a B-29 instructor pilot. He returned to active duty for the Korean War. He flew 32 combat missions and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for successfully landing his B-29 with only two of four engines operating and one on fire, saving the crew and plane. After the war he served for over 20 years in the California Air National Guard with the 129th Special Operations Group, Hayward. He retired as a full Colonel. He continued to fly into his 80's. Ray was preceded in death by Mildred, his wife of 54 years. Ray is survived by his current wife of 3 1/2 years Mary Murtagh Fitts; sons, William, Raymond and Russell; daughters-in-law, Barbara, Karen and Janet; grandchildren, Erin, Kelly, Michael, Jennifer, Jessica and Jeffrey; great grandchildren, Noah and Jillian.



## MSgt Donald Henry Zumsteg

*March 9, 1932 – November 22, 2004*

MSgt Don Zumsteg served as an Aircraft Electrician Technician beginning in Hayward in 1956 when the Unit was still the 144<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. He retired in 1987. Don was preceded in death by his wife.

# Time Rolls On! Recent Retirements Steven C. Speer

**Sent:** Sunday, November 14, 2004 9:12 AM  
**Subject:** Farewell Address

This is my last Guard weekend and my last day in uniform and I wanted to let all of you on this email know you were a large part of my success. You learn a few things in life after 35 years in uniform. The most important is who your friends are and to say you will all be missed. Another thing you learn is to be brief, get to the point, and get offstage.

From Airmen to Brigadier General, it has been a great ride. Over 6300 hours of C-130 time in 9 different models of the airplane. Different missions to be sure, but all in the Herc. With a few hours in T-33s with Tom and some HH-60 hours with Ed. Thanks to all of you for so many experiences. So many memories the world over.

So as I go forward to life after the Guard, just let me say thanks for your mentorship, support and leadership and to a few of you, love for all these years. I'll be working in the Defense Industry for Eagan, McAllister Associates, Inc. in Lexington Park, MD. I'm still working issues related to C-130J mods and will do so for years yet to come. The boat has a deposit on it and I'm looking forward to that lifestyle as well.

My future email address is [csolo99@aol.com](mailto:csolo99@aol.com) so that shouldn't be a change for any of you.

Keep in touch and keep the Air Guard strong.

My personal thanks

Steve Speer  
46860 Hilton Dr Apt 1131  
Lexington Park, MD 20653

*Good Luck, Steve!*

## Change of Command Ceremony

November 7, 2004

Col James T. Williams passed the flag and the command of the 129<sup>th</sup> Rescue Wing to Col Amos Bagdasarian in a Change of Command Ceremony held on Sunday, November 7, 2004.

Col Bagdasarian most recently served as the Commander of the 129<sup>th</sup> Maintenance Group. He enlisted in the California Air National Guard in 1971 and served as an aircraft crew chief prior to commissioning and pilot training in 1975. He was assigned to the 194<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group at Fresno ANG Base as a fighter interceptor pilot. Col Bagdasarian has held several positions in the 144<sup>th</sup> FIW, including Fighter Squadron Commander, Logistics Group Commander, and Operations Group Commander.

Welcome, to Col Amos Bagdasarian, his wife Anne, and daughters Audra, Amy, and Alexis!



Col James T. Williams passes the flag to Col Amos Bagdasarian.



President Jay Craddock presents a lifetime AHA membership to outgoing Commander - Col James T. Williams.

# Dondi's Mercantile Store

*129<sup>th</sup> AHA Merchandise & Apparel*

After much searching we have found a new source of MembersOnly jackets - so we are once again taking orders for 129<sup>th</sup> AHA jackets.

Want to own a really unique & distinctive shirt or cap to show your affiliation with the 129<sup>th</sup> AHA? Dondi's Mercantile Store has a healthy stock of 129<sup>th</sup> AHA related items. Jackets are customized with your name and rank.

All merchandise can be ordered by phone or on-line. Items and prices are shown at right. Shipping and handling are EXTRA.

All items as well as order forms for the jackets will be available at the Air Show.

Order from Don Delucchi at:  
(925) 689-2683  
or online at [Dondi129@hotmail.com](mailto:Dondi129@hotmail.com)

| <u>ITEM</u>                                | <u>COST</u> | <u>SIZES</u>    |
|--|-------------|-----------------|
| Logo Jacket-1 ONLY!                        | \$70 - \$75 | 2XL ***         |
| Logo Polo Shirts                           | \$22        | M, L, XL, & 2XL |
| Logo Baseball Cap w/<br>Embroidered Logo   | \$10        |                 |
| Logo Baseball Cap w/<br>Silk-screened Logo | \$5         |                 |
| Large Jacket Patch                         | \$10        |                 |
| Small Shirt / Hat Patch                    | \$5         |                 |
| Logo Pin                                   | \$5         |                 |
| 129 <sup>th</sup> Aircraft Collage         | \$10        |                 |

All items can be shipped. Shipping and handling are EXTRA. All items are sent via U.S. Mail.

**\*\*\* ONLY 1 JACKET (SIZE 2XL) LEFT!!!!**

Have you moved? Know a former member of the 129<sup>th</sup> who isn't a member yet?

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / CHANGE OF INFORMATION FORM 2005 Dues \$10.00

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP+4: \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

RANK: \_\_\_\_\_ 129<sup>TH</sup> SERVICE DATES FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the above information and mail to:  
129<sup>th</sup> Alumni & Heritage Association  
c/o Col John L. Ruppel, Jr. (ret)  
6718 Zerillo Dr.  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

**If your personal information has changed,  
PLEASE USE THIS FORM AND NOTIFY US IMMEDIATELY!!**

## New to the Gang

*Our Newest Members*

*SSgt Robert M. Walker*

## Welcome!

Do you know someone who has been affiliated with the 129<sup>th</sup> RQW or its predecessor organizations - and is not a member of the Association? Let's get them signed up!

## Final Flyby

In Memoriam

We bid farewell to our members who have departed on their final journey.

Col Ray Fitts

SMSgt Blaine D. Hall

MSgt Donald Zumsteg



## Air Force Retiree News

[http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/AF\\_Retiree\\_News.htm](http://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/afretire/AF_Retiree_News.htm)

The Air Force Retiree News Service (AFRNS) maintains a web site at the above internet address. Much information of interest to the Air Force Retiree Community is available at that site. Some of the current information available includes:

**DFAS updates CRSC processing status** - Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) officials announced this week that DFAS has completed processing the backlog of more than 9,000 approved Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) retroactive payments older than 60 days to qualified military retirees.

**VA improves "My HealtheVet" web site** - Under the latest improvement to VA's "My HealtheVet" Web site, veterans will be able to update personal information and record medical data such as prescriptions.

**Dec. 15 deadline looms for DIC restoration** - Time is running out for certain surviving spouses of deceased veterans to apply for re-instatement of VA survivor benefits. Last year, President Bush signed Public Law 108-183, the "Veterans Benefits Act of 2003," which restores entitlement to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and related home loan and education benefits for surviving spouses who remarry on or after their 57th birthdays. For more information on restoration of DIC, call VA's toll free number at 1-800-827-1000 or go to

<http://www1.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash=1> to find the nearest VA regional office.

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AND  
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6718 Zerillo Drive  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## Are You Missing in Action?

### *Dead Letter Department*

Have you moved recently - or not so recently? Do we have your correct mail and e-mail addresses & phone number? Please let us know when you move.

The newsletter is mailed out with a request for address correction. The post office does not forward the newsletter to you. They return it to us - and charge us 37¢. Then we update your file, put your newsletter in an envelope, put a 37¢ stamp on the packet, and mail it out to you. Total additional cost to the association is nearly \$1.00 per returned newsletter.

Please take a moment to remember the 129<sup>th</sup> AHA when you notify your correspondents of your new address. A member information form is included in every issue.

Col. John L. Ruppel, Jr. (Ret.)  
6718 Zerillo Drive  
Riverbank, CA 95367-2122

E-mail: J-L.RUPPEL@WORLDNET.ATT.NET

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
RIVERBANK, CA  
PERMIT #20



# Happy Holidays!

