



NEWSLETTER



707th WEBSITE is: www.af-acw.com
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General



By Barney Fisher

Well it's over, the 2008 Reunion, that is. I can't begin to tell you how grateful I am to the HQ Group for putting on such an event. We had a few things against us this year, floods all over the Midwest, high gas prices, health and conflicting dates, but all in all we had a good turn out. We started off with 120 folks that were going to make it but with all the above problems only 93 were there. It was a good size crowd but still small enough so everyone was able to visit and reminisce. The only activities offered were the Welcoming Reception, Marker Dedication, Memorial Service, Picnic, Farewell Breakfast, Golf and Banquet.

That sounds like a pretty full schedule in it's own right, but like I said it allowed time to talk and visit. So in thinking over what happen during our stay in Grand Rapids I'll just use the tested method of reporting.

We arrived on Tuesday after holding our breath for 3 days trying to avoid detours etc from the floods. There was to be a dinner that night with a meeting of the Reunion committee and anyone else that was in town and wanted to attend. The meal and the meeting went without a hitch and we all agreed this was going to be a good event.

Wednesday we all slept in and then had a nice complimentary breakfast and started to set up the hospitality room for the opening at 1500. Folks were waiting in line to register when we opened and the Sessions were once again good enough to take pictures of everyone as they checked in. Registration was open until 1700 and the hospitality room until 2200. Once registration was closed folks were on there own until Thursday at 1400.

Thursday everyone was up and about taking part of the complimentary breakfast and then off to sightsee or visit family and friends in the area. Registration and Hospitality suite were open from 0800 until 1300. There was fresh coffee, soft drinks and snacks available and many folks just sat around the pool and talked. At 1400 the Welcoming Reception was held, with drinks and a light lunch. By now the group was growing and the sound of friendly chatter could be heard throughout the hotel. After the reception the group broke up and folks were on there own. The hospitality suite opened again from 1800 – 2200. Some made use of the pool and just sat reminiscing.

Friday was going to be a busy day and started off with the Complimentary Breakfast, then opening Registration and Hospitality Suite at 0800 until 1200. By the time of the Historical Marker dedication at 1300 the bulk of our members had arrived. The committee had 200 chairs delivered and set up early that morning and just about all of them were taken when the ceremony began. The Marker was covered by a Red, White and Blue bunting, with a centerpiece of Red, White and Blue flowers placed at the base. There was a color guard consisting of 13 members from the various Veterans Organizations. Present from the dignitary side of the fence were the Mayor Jim Mills, Senator Tom Saxhaug, Representatives Loron Solburg and Tom Anzelc. Rev. Lynn said the opening and closing prayers. I was honored to made the dedication remarks for the unveiling of the marker and was very proud when it was reveled to the public.

Immediately following the Marker Dedication the Memorial Service was held and it was a moving event to say the least. Mike McKeever and John Newman read the names of all the deceased members with a pause between each name. I caught myself reflecting on each individual and recalling what I knew of them or trying to place them. As I looked around the crowd I could see that I wasn't the only one so moved. Now here is where things take on a surreal event. We were unable to have a fly over as in 2003, but at about the same point in the reading of the names, a lone EAGLE started circling over head. It continued soaring above the ceremony, the 21 gun salute and the playing of taps and then flew away. No one that experienced this will ever forget it, no fly over has ever carried as much meaning as this one.

After the ceremony we retired to Gunn Park for the Picnic. The food was delicious and we were entertained by some choice remarks by Ferd to set the mood for fun and laughter. A short business meeting was held and approval was given on the following. A donation would be given to ICHS for the help they had given us over the past year, also to continue making a yearly donation to Grace House with a goal of \$1,000.00. Folks were told to give thought to future reunions and we would discuss it at the Banquet. The only problem encountered was the wind picked up and so did just about everything in the shelter. Things finally calmed down enough and people enjoyed the rest of the day. At 1800 we departed the park and made it back to the hospitality suite which would be open until 2300. Lots of folks took the time to visit with friends in the general area.

Saturday was also a busy day for some of us. Learning from our lesson in 2003 we had a continental breakfast served from 0700 - 1100, rather than on Sunday. Registration and Hospitality suite opened at 0800 until 1600 but all but 5 of the folks had already signed in prior to this. The Golf outing was held at Pokegama Golf Course and we had 11 brave souls take part. Somehow the wildlife got the word I was coming and all took for cover. I must admit though I didn't loose as many balls as last time and not as many went into the woods but there are a few fish and turtles that wish I hadn't made the trip. Needless to say a great time was had by all. While we were out chasing the little white ball, others had the day to themselves to do as they wished and this is where a problem came up. We forgot to assign someone to open the hospitality and registration desk. When I returned from golf there were a few unhappy folks but it all worked out since the lounge at the hotel was open all day.

The Banquet started with a social hour at 1700 and the Buffet at 1830. All I can say is it was a delicious array of food. By the time the program started with MC Jerry Hedberg at the helm the last of the members signed in and we had a full compliment in attendance. Those late arrivals were still able to get something to eat so that worked out well. We also were entertained by another of Gus's slide presentations and this one was different, and well received. There were some door prize drawings and you could tell everyone was enjoying themselves. We had a brief discussion about future reunions and it was agreed that the next one would be in September 2010, keep watching in the up coming months for more on this. It will more than likely be a 2 day affair with fewer events planned. After the short program the DJ started playing and many made use of the dance floor. Soon the night was over and it was time to pay the final bills and make ready for tomorrow.

Sunday dawned bright but full of sorrow. Sorrow, because we all knew this was going to be the last time many of us would be together. Quite a few of us managed to attend mass together and then returned to the hotel for a Buffet Breakfast. You could tell no one wanted to leave but finally reality set in and the farewells were exchanged. The 2008 reunion was small in numbers compared to 2003 but will never be lacking in memories. My THANKS to all that made it possible.



Bulletin Board by Barney Fisher

As noted in the remarks about the reunion it was voted that we continue making a yearly donation to Grace House sometime in the last quarter of the year, maybe just before Thanksgiving. I've asked that everyone set aside \$1.00 a month and then I'll ask for the donation during September and October. I know I'm dreaming but if everyone did this we would reach the \$1,000.00 goal very easily but that would be a perfect world and this is far from that. I'm just glad that some find it in their heart to donate more and this helps us reach the goal. So in case your one of the one's that are just sitting and waiting now's the time to figure out how to make up for those months you didn't save that \$1.00

I haven't heard back from HQ about the donation to ICHS so I guess they had enough money to cover the \$500.00 donation to them. While I'm talking about ICHS, if you haven't purchased your brick for the Yellow Brick Road and would like to have more information you can go to the website photo gallery and on the opening page there is a link for the form. If you would rather call me for the information that's fine, if you leave a message I'll get back to you.

While I'm at it, might as well remind you that the website and newsletter are funded until Jan 09 so there's another donation to be thinking about. Our last drive worked out good and I didn't have to bother you for almost 2 years. Now that's what I call good work.

Some of the folks at the reunion saw fit to make donations to Grace House and for the upkeep of the site/newsletter and I thank them for being first on board. Many others said they would be following up with a donation once I started asking for help. So keep watching for the upcoming drive, around the last quarter of the year, or you can send it in now. Thanks.



Day Room by Barney Fisher

Ferd's Words of Wisdom:

Don't argue with an idiot; people watching may not be able to tell the difference.



Inform and be Informed by Barney Fisher

I had a long talk with Rev. Lynn at the memorial service and found out that Grace House is in the process of buying a building that is suited for their needs. It's a former Drug and Alcohol rehab center. It has all the rooms and facilities needed for a shelter and will be less expensive than building. Needless to say we didn't get to see the inside but I did drive by the building. It looks good and it appears to have been well maintained. Lets hope that the deal goes through and they can maybe be in it before the cold weather comes howling in.

There are disc available of the Dedication and Memorial Services and you can obtain them by calling Judy Johnson. DVDs from ICTV. They are available for fifteen dollars and five dollars shipping. You can order by e-mailing them at ictvinc@mchsi.com or call 218-327-5866.

Sick Call: We've heard of many members that have been having medical problems or procedures over the past months. Please say a prayer for all our members and their families. If you have, or know of any other member with, a medical problem – and would like to be added to our prayer list, Please let me know.



From Headquarters

by Barney Fisher

I have a few of the Reunion Booklets that were handed out and if you'd like to have one let me know. Sorry but there will be a shipping charge, I don't know what it'll be but I would imagine around \$1 or \$2. If you're interested Let me know.

Judy says that she see's many folks stopping by the Memorial Marker and reading it. Sort of nice that she lives right next to it and can keep us informed as to how folks are reacting to it. Believe me folks it is something we can all be proud of, make sure when your in the area that you stop by and check it out.



Sound Off

by Barney Fisher

Thanks to the generosity of a member I'm going to be able to send a copy of the Master Roster to the snail mail folks. This is going to run up the postage on the newsletter and the printing cost but he said do it and give him the bill. Thank you, kind sir.

It was brought to my attention that some civilians that served with us were not included on the Master Roster and or Taps. Please if you know of someone that falls into either group, let me know so we can recognize them, Thanks. I'm waiting for verification on 4 right now that will have to be added to Taps.

It won't be too much longer and the photos from the reunion will be posted in the Photo Gallery. We were also Fortunate enough to have some new photos lent to us. The scanning is completed and as soon as Gus can find some time to break away from his business he'll post them. Red Daniels gave us his entire scrap book and Gus did a great job with the pictures and articles.

PICTURES: There have been some new photos added to the Photo Gallery, we're always looking for pictures from the past or present. Thanks.



Taps



by Barney Fisher

This spot reserved for reporting the passing of our brothers. Please take a few minutes to reflect and say a prayer for a friend now gone ahead. So far we haven't added anyone to taps this year, lets keep it that way. If you know of anyone that has suffered a loss, or is ill, please keep us informed so we may acknowledge them, Thanks.

Prior to the Memorial Service, it was reported that James "Hiram" Walker passed in May of 2008 so we were able to include his name in the reading of the deceased.



Dismissed

by Barney Fisher

In closing I'd like to ask everyone to keep me informed of any information regarding our members and yourself. PLEASE, send me stories/memories of the 707th. Pictures of your days with the 707th or after, are always welcomed. My contact information:

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Till next issue, remember to Thank a Veteran, Pray for our Troops and God Bless America.

Be safe and be happy!

