

Reunion 1985: A Homecoming Travelog

By Jeff Hackett, '75

At the time of this writing it isn't completely clear how many members of our class made it out for the ten-year reunion; it's somewhere between 250 and 290! What *is* clear is that by any standard, every one of those people had a remarkable, memorable, fantastic. . . yes, we'll have to say "MAHVELOUS" time.

None of the real pictures came out and/or we were too busy having fun to pick up the camera so sit down, turn on your imagination and I'll "show" you the mental slides we took. "Click-click." Here's Tim O'Connell, his wife Roni and his cohorts the morning before we arrived; that's Al Piotter the "unofficial #1" Assistant; "Mr. Enthusiasm," Ken Finn; and "King of the Jabara Banquet/Ball," Mitch McVay up front. In the back row you'll recognize Doug Miller, Jerry Levesque, Bob Akers, Dave Lafave, Mike Reese, Duane Jones, Scott Smith, Mark Wells, Jim Heald, Scott Skinner, and Bill Davis. Notice the bags under their eyes, the pensive looks of concern, but the confident smiles of satisfaction in a job well done on every face. We really owe these guys for duty above and beyond. I'll pause for a unanimous standing ovation.

"Click-click." This is a time-lapse shot overlooking Colorado Springs. It really conveys the sense of anticipation and flurry of activity that stretched from the airport to the Sheraton and back down to the Pete O'Club on Thursday afternoon and early evening. "Click-click." Here's a couple of shots of the class party at Pete. No they weren't taken with a trick lens; there really were that many people there. Notice that about a third of the guys are looking at other people's name tags because they can't remember the name that goes with that face. Another third have astonished looks on their faces as they realize that although the face is the same, the hair and body shape have undergone considerable change on this person. And just to prove some things never change, the other third are looking at all those good looking wives and girlfriends; the class of '75 has remained inordinately lucky!

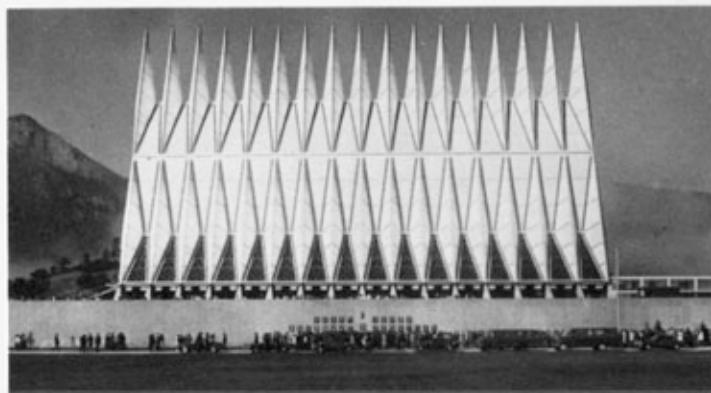
"Click-click." I included these next shots as a personal example of the craziness that grew out of the party. Myself and the rest of the "niners" can be seen driving through Douglas Valley at 11:30 p.m. to the then-major-AOC, now-colonel-deputy commandant Lonny Alexander's house. "Click-click." Here we are knocking on the door for a no-notice hospitality check and "click-click," here we are crawling out the door three hours later. As I said it's just a sample of the '75 spirits that were in rare repair Thursday night.

This next series of slides, "click-click," shows the various dignitaries briefing us on what's new at USAFA. . . believe me there are *a lot* of new things! "Click-click." As you can see one of the things that remains as it was is cadet creativity for a Friday noon-meal car/pep rally. And later on that afternoon, "click-click," you can see us trudging off to Fairchild for a second try at some of those aero classes. (I was persuaded to leave out the pictures of certain classmates "stacking Z's" in the back row!)

"Click-click." Here we are trying to fit all of the '75ers into the Academy O'Club with all the old men from '65 and a few drifters from other classes. If you look closely you might recognize some of the hors d'oeuvres from the night before at the Pete O'Club. Typical of the freelancing good times that took place later that night is this, "click-click," shot of the Tiger Ten guys invading the Golden Bee, one of many bars to experience a return to those glorious days of yesteryear.

"Click-click." There was of course a job to do and I think all of us did it inside our hearts on Saturday morning. The Memorial Service started with life inside the proverbial milk bottle (fog) but as the last of the names were read and Taps were played, "click-click," the fog completely lifted to this brilliant blue sky! A fitting backdrop as we remembered our twelve fallen comrades; Brundige, Cox, Dodds, Hossler, Johnson, Jones, Logan, Mark, Putt,

Ridge, Simonitch, and Simpson. There's not a picture here. . . I guess all of us got something in our eyes and couldn't focus.



1985 Homecoming Memorial Ceremony

"Click-click." As you can see, the perfect fall weather continued for the tailgate party as we all prepared to let out some very non-mandatory spirit! Slides would not do justice to the Falcon football team. You need high-speed movies to keep up with that action! As Kent Traylor said, we saw more offense in the first two USAFA possessions than we did in our four years with "Ben and the boys." (No offense to the '75 gridders since I noticed all of you are as big and mean as ever!) By the second half the best action was watching these men, "click-click," lead a *very* rowdy group of grads in some cheer, I mean cheers. Recognize Russ Trinter and Ollie Lorenz? They haven't lost it. I wish you could have heard the bridging of a generation gap as the grads yelled, "TASTES GREAT!" and the Cadet Wing responded with, "LESS FILLING!" And here, "click-click," is Russ and CIC Kim (female) Lewis doing their 52 push-ups after USAFA scored the seventh touchdown; Russ is the one with ugly legs and swayed back! Of course no cheerleader saga would be complete without a "Pass 'em up!" and "click-click," here we are passing both of them up and over.

"Click-click." Here's a close-up of the hors d'oeuvres they had at the Jabara Banquet, I swear they're the same ones! At any rate the class really raced to the many gold draped tables for another chance at Arnie's cuisine and to see this man, "click-click," Colonel James Allburn (ex-aero instructor extraordinaire) receive the Jabara Award. "Click-click." They even let the ex-chorale and choir guys get up and sing with the Cadet Chorale which now features real sopranos! Then it was off to Arnold Hall for, "click-click," a little dancing and a whole lot of exchanging of addresses/goodbyes.

The Sheraton made a brilliant business decision when they, "click-click," had the gala opening of their new disco that night. Note that the place is 90 percent grads and 10 percent strange-agents (you'll have to decide for yourself whether there's any overlap in those categories). Jim Burling supplied a perfect way to wind-down the evening and the weekend as "click-click," he took over the piano bar in the Sheraton lobby. We sang, we drank, and we reflected.

"Click-click." This shot of the checkout desk at the Sheraton is a lot like the one that many of us have of the North/South Gate in the rearview mirror the day of graduation: this experience was a real milestone in our lives. Just to match our moods (and the condition of our bodies at this point), "click-click," it rained on Sunday.

So there it is, Reunion 1985. What a time! There was even a lot of talk about a Reunion 1990! Who wants to wait another 10 years? Whenever it is, be sure to grab your "camera" and I'll see you there!

1985 Homecoming Reunion Classes Featured



Class of '65, Squadrons 1-12



Class of '65, Squadrons 13-24



Class of '75, Squadrons 1-20



Class of '75, Squadrons 20-30



Class of '75, Squadrons 30-40



Col. James N. Allburn, Class of 1963, accepts the 1985 Jabara Award for Airmanship from Superintendent Lt. Gen. Winfield W. Scott, Jr., at the Jabara Banquet during Homecoming 1985. Colonel Allburn earned the award for his superior leadership as program manager of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) X-29 Advanced Technology Demonstrator. Colonel Allburn's leadership led to the first flight of the X-29, which is the first manned X-series aircraft to be developed and flight tested in over a decade. The high-risk, high-payoff X-29 program would not have happened without Colonel Allburn's leadership.

HOMECOMING PHOTOGRAPH ORDERING INSTRUCTIONS

Homecoming photographs are 8 by 10 inch color prints which cost \$10 a print (includes postage and handling). If you want to order the complete set, the charge is still \$10 a print. Each graduate may order specific prints or the complete set. Please allow three to four weeks for delivery. Send your check along with your name and address to:

Darrell Wagner Photography
1503 North Royer St.
Colorado Springs, Colo. 80907



As it has in the past, the Air Academy National Bank cosponsored and provided funds for the reception prior to the Jabara Banquet. Shown at the banquet are Col. Jock C. H. Schwank, USAF (Ret), president of the Association of Graduates; Ms. Sue Heinig, bank loan supervisor; Ms. Dottie Endsley, bank vice president; Mrs. Webb, and Mr. Jack Webb, president of the bank.