



Firebird Flyer



Volume 18 # 1

The Firebird Association

August 31, 2015

The Firebirds to Invade Fredericksburg Texas.

On April 25th, 2016 the Firebirds will invade Fredericksburg Texas for the first time. The reunion will be held at the **Fredericksburg Inn & Suites**, 201 South Washington (aka US Hwy 87 to San Antonio), Fredericksburg, TX 78624. Fredericksburg was chosen due to its central location, the tourist attractions, and the co-operation of the hotel in providing a hospitality room and allowing us to bring our own refreshments.

The reunion will be Monday April 25th 2016 (Arrival) to Thursday April 28th 2016 (departure). The reunion planning committee has negotiated a reduce room rate for the Firebird reunion. These rates are good for early arrivals, and late departures.

We will once again have the “Early bird” drawing. On March 2nd 2016 we will draw three names from the people that have registered before March 1st 2016.

Each name drawn will receive one nights comp on their hotel room.

J.C. Arrington

From the President:

All Firebirds are being “Recalled”. It is getting close to the 2016 Firebird Reunion. This time we will be meeting in Fredericksburg, Texas. The dates are April 25th, 26th, and 27th 2016. So call all of the Firebirds that you know and tell them to call all of the ones that they know. I was at the planning meeting and I know you will have a great time. Y’all come.

Bob Mattingly

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Visit the Firebird website at: www.firebirds.org



Welcome To Fredericksburg

This is a special invitation to all Firebird Association members to attend the 2016 reunion. Since we last met in Biloxi, Mississippi in 2014, a lot of Firebirds have “Flown West” (Take a look at the “Taps” page). It does not matter if you are in the 517th, the 109th, or were in the 61st, 17th or VXE-6. We are all comrades. We share the same background. Officer or enlisted, Flight crew, or support, we are comrades.

Please come to Fredericksburg, Texas in April 2016. Lets have a drink, share a meal, and tell some stories, and remember our mates together. Let us make this Firebird reunion the best one ever held.

J.C. Arrington

Firebird Association Officers

Officers:

President: Bob Mattingly
Vice-President: Ken Pribyla
Treasurer: J.C. Arrington
Secretary: Warren Miller
Historian: Nolan Bailey
Newsletter Editor: J.C. Arrington

Board Members:

Eric Wiener (109th)
Sid Marcus
Ron Farrell
Gene Ramsey
Ray Reaves
Sal Salazar

Past Presidents—3

Dick Dodge
Jay Walker (D)
Alan Anderson

Honorary Board Member:

John Parker

Firebirds that have “Flown West” since the 2014 Firebird Reunion.

TAPS

Michael C. Ashcraft	1-03-2014	William M. Nichols	10-18-2014
.James L. McKenzie	3-16-2014	Thomas E. Huddleston	10-18-2014
Sam E. Arnold	3-19-2014	Bruce P. Huff	12-04-2014
Ora J. Baird	5-14-2014	James E. Maggard Jr.	3-29-2014
Vera M. Arnold	12-15-2014	Armand J. Gionet	11-28-2014
Michael R. Nash	9-6-2014	Donald E. Sheehan	12-19-2014
Jay B. Walker	10-22-2014	Stanley Tencza Jr.	9-25-2014
Richard L. Henry	12-25-2014	Thomas P. Strahan	4-09-2014
Howard W. Mulanax	2-14-2014	John R. Tippet	11-3-2013



The Firebird Association

In 1982, former members of the 17th TCS and 17th TAS officially organized the Firebird Association.

The stated purpose of the Association is to commemorate the aviation history of the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron of the United States Air Force, its predecessor and mission-successor organizations, and of all military units who have flown ski-equipped versions of the C-130 aircraft within any of the Armed Forces of the United States of America. And, provide social and recreational activities for, and to maintain fraternal contacts between, its members.

Eligibility for membership is open to any and all persons who served on active duty in the United States Air Force with the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and/or the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron; any and all persons who served with any of the predecessor or mission-successor organizations of the 17th Troop Carrier Squadron and/or the 17th Tactical Airlift Squadron, including but not limited to the 61st Troop

Carrier Squadron, the 109th Tactical Airlift Group/Wing, or the 517th Airlift Squadron; any and all persons who served with United States Navy Antarctic Development Squadron Six (VXE-6); Any and all persons who, while on active or active-reserve duty with the United States Air Force or the United States Navy, have ever flown as a crew member on a ski-equipped model of the C-130 aircraft; Any and all persons who have supported the missions of the ski-equipped C-130 aircraft flown by any active duty, reserve or National Guard unit of the Armed Forces of the United States,

such as but not limited to, operational control, aircraft maintenance, aerial port, combat control team and industry technical representative; The spouses, widows, widowers and children of any of the above; and Upon nomination for membership by any active Firebird and acceptance by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, any other person, not otherwise qualified, who has an interest in this association and supports the purposes for which it is organized.



To all DFAS Retiree Pay Recipients:

When you filled out the forms to begin receiving your military retirement pay, did you intend to designate a beneficiary to receive entitlements after your death? If your answer is yes, please read the following statement.

There is a widow among the Firebird family who was just slammed with the startling news that her retired-deceased husband never completed the necessary forms naming his beneficiary. She has given permission to use her name, but I have chosen to not do so. Her husband had always told her not to worry that she was taken care of if he died. Apparently he thought that filing proof of marriage was sufficient. It is not!

She was given some very uninformed advise and has been forwarded from department to department at the VA (Veterans Administration), has taken off work to make fruitless appointments, filled out many forms, has been required to use most of her savings to pay his final expenses and still did not have any results or answers. She is not the only widow that has been blindsided by this invisible wall of misinformation. Seeking support, she phoned a friend who had recently gone through much the same process and it is a process. The friend advised her to call DEERS and DFAS. The information did not come from the VA, Social Security, or even the funeral director but from another widow who did know the process.

A five minute call to DEERS and she had the devastating news that the husband had never completed the necessary forms to make her his beneficiary. This is not a made up story or a figment of imagination, but cold hard fact. She is legally and rightfully entitled to receive a portion of his retired military pay but will never get a bit of it because of a simple act of omission.

So military retirees, play it safe, check your pay record to be sure that it is complete.

If you have a MyPay Account, open and print both sides of your pay record statement. At the bottom of the front side the information will show you the name and birthdate of your designated beneficiary and if you applied for benefits. You will also be informed as to how much the current annuity is proposed to be. Go to the back side of the form and you will be shown who you selected for a back up recipient.

If you do not have a MyPay Account, then you should call DEERS or DFAS and speak with a customer care representative.

DEERS-Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System

1-800-538-9552 (Mon-Fri, 6:00 am– 5:00 pm (PST))

DFAS-Defense Finance and Accounting Service

1-800-321-1080 (Mon– Fri. 8:00 am– 5:00 pm (Eastern Time))

Be advised you will need your full name, social security number and possibly will be asked for other personal information to validate your identity. Your information must agree with the information in your permanent record.

If you did not make these provisions, you may be too late, but don't wait. Call and find out.

Also, be advised that it may take several weeks to get through this process because these offices receive about 5000 requests each day.

Don't let this happen to your loved one!

Ms. Betty Huff has put together a step by step guide folder for this process. If you would like a copy contact Betty Huff at: e-mail <b.huff@att.net> Betty Huff will have copies of the guide at the reunion.

FIREBIRD ASSOCIATION REUNION XIII
Fredericksburg Inn & Suites
Fredericksburg, Texas

April 25th-27th 2016

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Revised 9/01/2015

Monday, April 25th- Travel Day	06:00-09:00 12:00 18:00 23:00	Motel Continental Breakfast Registration begins, Hospitality room opens, Barons Creek Conference Center (Hospitality Room) Located to the right of the motel entrance parking lot. Early bird arrivals, Deli Trays and beverages, Hospitality room Make your own sandwiches. Hospitality room closes.
Tuesday, April 26th- Reunion Day	06:00-09:00 07:00 07:00 09:00 12:00 13:30	Continental Breakfast Hospitality Room opens Golfers leave for Lady Bird Johnson Golf Course Tee-Time, 08:00 \$60.00 Pay in advance 1st and 3rd option tours depart via tour bus 1st Tour-LBJ Ranch, \$29.00 per person, pay in advance 3rd option- LBJ Ranch, noon meal-Distillery & Wine tour \$119.00 Pay in advance, includes meal LBJ tour returns Distillery and Winery tour departs via tour bus, \$79.00 Per person, pay in advance. Returns about 17:00hrs
Wednesday, April 27th Reunion Day	06:00-09:00 07:00 10:00 10:00 13:30 18:00 18:45 19:00 23:00	Continental Breakfast Hospitality Room opens Men's Business Meeting Hospitality Room Ladies Event Hospitality Room Nimitz WWII Museum tour, \$8.00 per person, pay in advance Happy Hour Hospitality Room Welcome ceremony Buffet/Banquet \$27.00 per person, pay in advance Hospitality Room closes
Thursday, April 28th Travel Day	07:00	Hospitality Room opens for cleaning and packing up 'til noon.

Schedule subject to revision. Check in at Firebird Command Post (Board Room) upon arrival for latest Changes.
Hours of Hospitality Suite dependent upon the number of volunteers available to provide supervision.

Fredericksburg Hotel Accommodations

All hotel reservations will be handled directly by the **Fredericksburg Inn & Suites, 201 South Washington, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.**

Phone **1-830-997-002** or **1-800-446-0202** to make room reservations.

Www.fredericksburg-inn.com. FAX: 1-830-997-5740 Email: stay@fredericksburg-inn.com

103 rooms with free wireless internet, in room coffee makers, 27 inch TVs, microwaves and mini refrigerators, clocks, TV remotes and hair dryers, double queens or single King. \$99.00 +13% tax=\$118.87. (\$120.00 Normal price)+ 13% tax = \$135.60

Deluxe suites are fully equipped with wet bars, separate bedrooms, pull-out queen sofas, two TV's, all of the above noted amenities and King beds. \$129.00 + 13% tax= \$145.77. (\$150.00 normal price + 13% Tax = \$169.50).

Have your credit card handy, and be sure to get a confirmation number.

Motel reservations must be made by March 24, 2016 to guarantee the group special pricing and secured with a credit card. When calling, use The Firebird Reunion code.

Prices are good for early arrivals and late departures.

This is a scenic, relaxed atmosphere located on the banks of Barons Creek with ample protected outside, poolside seating. The breakfast room is very small, but plates can be carried to several other locations to be consumed.

A BBQ grille is available to guest, also a hot tub and swimming pool are located in the patio area.

This location is also in the heart of the famed Texas Hill Country.

EARLY BIRD SPECIAL

A drawing will be held on March 2, 2016. Three names will be drawn from all Firebirds that have registered before March 1, 2016. Each name drawn will receive one night hotel stay comped by the Firebird Association. (Board of governor are not eligible).

RV PARKS

Fredericksburg TX KOA
5681 E. US Hwy 290
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-4796

Fredericksburg RV Park
305 E. Highway Street
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-990-9582

Frontier Inn & RV Park
1704 W. US Hwy 290
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-4389

Oakwood RV Park
78FM-2093
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-9817

Travel Information

Travel to Fredericksburg TX will probably be by private car. The nearest commercial airport is San Antonio International airport.

The Gillespie County airport is on the edge of town if you have your own airplane. Travel from San Antonio to Fredericksburg is about 70 miles. Driving from San Antonio, take west Interstate 10 (30 miles) to Comfort TX. Turn north on US highway 87 north and drive 40 miles to Fredericksburg.

Traveling from Austin TX to Fredericksburg, take US Hwy 290. Drive 34 miles to Johnson City and continue west for 33 miles to Fredericksburg TX.

Keep some cellphone numbers handy:

Bob Mattingly 321-482-7115.
J.C. Arrington 615-439-0344.



**Firebird Dinner
Buffet**

April 27th, 2016



Salads

Mandarin Orange Salad

Entrees

Caribbean Chicken

Agave Nectar Glazed Beef Tenderloin Kabobs
(With red bell, onion, and fresh pineapple)

Mango Salsa

Jamaican Jerk Rice

Stir Fried Vegetables

Sweet yeast rolls assorted desserts

Iced Tea and coffee service

Bon
Appetit

REUNION ACTIVITIES

GOLF:

For all of you who love the links, Bob Mattingly has arranged a morning at the Lady Bird golf course. The Lady Bird golf course is a 6,686 yard PAR 72 Golf Course. The golf course has 46 bunkers, and water on 10 of the 18 holes.

Tee time is 08:00. The cost is \$60.00 per person.

The golf outing will be individual play. Bob needs to know your Handicap, or scores of your last 3 rounds. There will be prizes for first, second, and third place, and a custom made driver for the winner.

For additional information, contact Bob Mattingly

e-mail: bobc130d6@yahoo.com or phone 321-482-7115.

TOURS:

At this time we have the following optional tours planned. Which tour take place depend on how many people sign-up during registration. The final decision will take place in March 2016.

Tour #1:

09:00 April 26th 2016

Depart motel, LBJ Ranch and Johnson City Post Office (time permitting).

Return to motel around noon.....\$29.00 per person.

(If a member of the Johnson family is present, these tours are conducted by that person. They like to do this and the house is still set up as it was the day that President Kennedy died. He was scheduled to visit there after leaving Dallas.)

Tour #2:

13:30 April 26th 2016

Depart motel, Tour a working bourbon distillery (said to be a "Must see Tour" I have heard this from several sources.) Then, time permitting, 2 or 3 wineries. All of these tours offer tasting opportunities. This tour can take 3 to 4 hours and cost is \$79.00 per person

Tour #3:

09:00 April 26th 2016

Depart motel, do the LBJ Tour, bus to an area restaurant , have lunch, then do an afternoon distillery and wine tour. This price is \$119.00 per person, meal included.

These tours are accompanied by a personnel guide who has pertinent information on "Potty Stops", time elements, etc.

One vehicle is a small 33 passenger bus, which is presented as very comfortable. If necessary, a 55 passenger bus can be called up for larger groups.

Firebird Association Reunion XIII
 Fredericksburg, Texas
 April 25th-27th, 2016
 Registration Form

Registrant Information: (Please Print)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ +4 _____

Telephones: _____

Spouse/Guests Names: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Military Units _____ Dates Assigned to Unit: _____

Registration Fees:

		<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Total</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Firebird Association Dues*	See footnote	_____ @	\$20.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Reunion Registration Fee**		_____ @	\$40.00	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffet Tickets**	Wednesday night dinner	_____ @	\$27.00	\$ _____

Tours & Activities:

(Subject to Availability, Interest, and Change)

<input type="checkbox"/> Golf Tournament - TBA	Tuesday: 07:00	_____ @	\$60.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour #1	Tuesday: 09:00	_____ @	\$29.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour #2	Tuesday: 09:00	_____ @	\$79.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour #3	Tuesday: 09:00	_____ @	\$119.00 ea.	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour #4	Wed: 13:30	_____ @	\$8.00 ea.	\$ _____

Golfers: List average 18 hole scores or handicap: _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Mail form and check to: Firebird Association, 3778 Lark Ct. Murfreesboro, TN 37129-1919
See additional important information on page 11

Hotel reservations are NOT included on this form. To reserve a room, call the **Fredericksburg Inn & Suites** at **800-446-0202**. Use the code word "**Firebird Reunion**" to receive the reduced room rate.

NOTICE: Due to circumstances beyond our control, those early registrants paying less than the final price for a meal or activity, will be asked to make up any difference at the reunion. If one has paid for a tour or activity that does not occur because of a lack of participation, or paid too much because an original price has been reduced, he or she will be given a refund at the registration table in Fredericksburg with an association check.

The Association is offering a special invitation to surviving spouses or family of deceased members, and World War II members, who may wish to attend the reunion. These persons may participate by paying for their room and the individual activities, meals, and tours that they elect to attend. They will not be required to pay the membership or registration fee.

* **Firebird Association Membership:** To register for this reunion, your Firebird Association membership must be up-to-date. If Association dues for the Years 2015-2016 have not been paid prior to registration, a membership fee of \$20.00 must be included.

** **Reunion Registration - The registration fee does not include a ticket to the Tuesday night buffet this year. Due to limited seating in the banquet room, banquet/buffet tickets will be offered on a first come, first served, basis. Only ONE registration fee is to be paid per Firebird, or a Firebird's entire family.**

*** **For more information** on tours, or golf, please visit the **Tours and Golf** menu. Tour times as listed are approximate.

Firebird Association Membership Application

Name: _____

Initial Membership

Address: _____

Renewal

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ + _____

Phone: (____) _____ FAX: (____) _____

E-mail: _____

Units: 17th TCS 17th TAS 517th TAS Other _____

Please mail completed form and payment to:

J.C. Arrington
Firebird Association
3778 Lark Court
Murfreesboro, TN 37129-1919

Please check one block:

- Biennial Dues \$20.00
- Life Membership \$100



J. C. Arrington
The Firebird Association
3778 Lark Court
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

Place
Stamp
Here

Place Address Label Here