



B.E. Pete Bostwick, Jr.
President
Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter
436 Chimaja Rd, Corrales NM 87048
(505) 898-2649 foreigndevil@yahoo.com

FEBRUARY MEETING -- WED FEB 12, 2014

WHERE: "The Egg & I" at 6909 Menaul Blvd NE (just East of Louisiana)

Sign in and order lunch 1100 Hrs - Call to Order NLT 1145 Hrs - Adjourn 1300

IN MEMORIAM

Please allow me to catch up on reporting the passing of three long-time members of the AFIO New Mexico Chapter, and forgive the delay...

ALFRED A. ABBOTT, Lt.Col. USA (Ret.), passed away 7 Sep 2013, at the age of 101. He enlisted in the Army as a Private and retired as a Lt. Col. 28 years later, having experienced buzz bombs in London and being in Paris on D.E. Day. A long time resident of Albuquerque, he was active in, and contributed to, a wide variety of civic organizations, and was inducted into the Albuquerque Senior Citizens Hall of Fame in 1998. Al was active in this chapter for many years, and last attended a meeting in his late 90's. Several chapter members attended his 100th birthday party at La Vida Llena, and found him nattily dressed and still conversational. He is missed.

TED F. BROWN passed away 21 Sep 2013, at age 72. Ted was a long-time member of AFIO, whose attendance was generally impeded by his various and far-flung construction activities throughout this region. He worked with his father in Brown Construction, with whom he built many of the major highways and bridges we drive on, in New Mexico. In those days, he flew the company twin-engine Beechcraft to the sites under construction, landing on and taking off from the highways being built. Additionally, after graduating from Baylor College he joined the Army and served as a 1st Lt. in Vietnam. He will also be remembered by those who knew him for his dry sense of humor and his great laugh.

BRENDAN O'DONOVAN, Maj., USAF (Ret.), passed away quietly and without fanfare at the end of October, last year. Brendan was one of the earliest members of this chapter and served as Secretary from—as far as I can determine—the very beginning. His low key presence, sense of humor, and attention to detail in generating meeting notes made him an invaluable and delightful presence. It's no exaggeration to say he was greatly missed by all after he fell ill—no one has since been able to imitate his style or productivity in putting out notes for our meetings. In addition to spending many hours on chapter business, he became a dedicated and talented artist, producing more than 200 works in watercolor and other media, while shunning all recognition. Even in death, Brendan eschewed any spotlight, choosing not to have a published obituary, and to go to his Maker wearing an Aloha shirt and khakis. His ashes were interred quietly, among family and friends, at Sunset Memorial Park on 11 Nov 2013. His supportive and gracious widow, La-iad, has found AFIO-related files from the early days of the chapter, and has offered to turn those over to us. Thank you, La-iad and Aloha, Brendan.

THE INTELLIGENCE ARENA

The brouhaha imposed on us by the smug, self-absorbed and naïve Edward Snowden continues to roil the Intelligence Community. Even granting the philosophical validity of public discussions about preventive threat surveillance, Snowden's revelations have done much damage to the underlying value of the intelligence gathering process, and have harmed our international alliances. The "outrage" expressed by foreign governments and other entities has been disingenuous, to say the least, and the effects on our own programs have yet to be determined. While I have no problem with the review, I am appalled at the thought of transferring the phone database to a third party. I oppose it for two reasons: first, we have absolutely no need for another government bureaucracy (especially in the Intelligence arena); and second, the proposal is simply asinine on its face. Finally, I'm appalled by the negative attention drawn to the NSA and other agencies, particularly because no one can point to any instance of willful negligence or invasion of a US citizen's privacy by these programs. I am grateful no end for the service rendered to this country by men like GEN Hayden, GEN Gates, GEN Alexander and GEN Clapper (under whom I served at PACOM). And, I would be remiss not to acknowledge Sarah Botsai, PhD (a former NSA executive) who serves as Vice Chairman of AFIO's Board. Let's hope none of these long serving, dedicated professionals are undermined as a result of this unwarranted "reform" effort.

One indisputable challenge I believe we face is the immediate restructuring of the security clearance vetting process. Turning clearance investigations over to profit-motivated contractors who value quantity over quality, and who employ inexperienced or unmotivated investigators, seems indefensible.

Apart from the distracting domestic issues, others are a long way from being resolved. The intractable, internecine Muslim disputes continue to play havoc with our Middle East relations and policies; Iran, Iraq, Syria and others pose significant challenges, and—wishful thinking notwithstanding—the Afghanistan conflict is not nearly over. Farther afield, but also tied to historic or improving alliances elsewhere, are perturbations in countries like Thailand, Burma, Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Given the range of our commercial, technological, cultural and economic interrelations, we can hardly afford to take our eyes off the ball, anywhere. The Defense and Intelligence communities need coordinated and sensible support more than they need restructuring. In my own career, I can't recall a reorganization I thought justified the turmoil that accompanied it.

The foregoing are, of course, my own observations, put out to the membership to stimulate discussion on current topics. All responses are welcome.

CHAPTER BUSINESS

It's that time. Ladies and gentlemen – elections will be upon us, shortly. All organizations that depend on volunteer involvement are facing great challenges. The demands on individuals and families these days are time consuming, and many causes compete for your support. If, however, you agree that it is important to support the IC, and to attempt to enlighten a generally naïve and poorly informed public about the value of the profession, it is important for you to continue to support AFIO and its initiatives, to actively recruit new members, and to do what you can to contribute to the Chapter. It's time for some different faces and new ideas to move into our leadership and maintain the traditional vitality of our Chapter. You know who you are, and if you're too shy to volunteer, don't be surprised to be nominated by your colleagues! Let's grab this tiger by the tail, and see if we can create some new energy and new opportunities.

Respectfully yours,

Pete Bostwick