Honoring our Killed In Action Classmates Who were Forward Air Controllers

J. E. Duffy

J. L. Ryder

W. G. Uhls

P. V. Jackson, III

T. B. Hallenbeck

Click on any image on this page for a larger picture and more information.

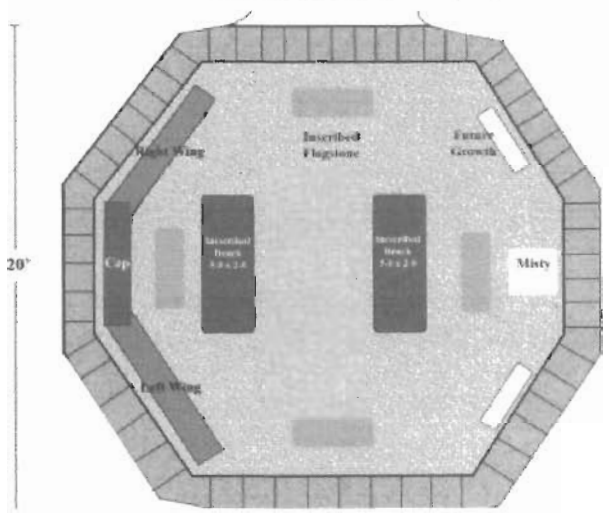
Jim Palmer, FAC Memorial Chairman, accepting the $10,000 Class of '68 donation from Bob Sallee, Rhip Worrell, Steve McPhail and Al Blumberg

On Tuesday, April 15, 2008 a check for $10,000 from our Class was given to the 2008 Forward Air Controllers Memorial Committee. The donation of Class of 1968 funds was recommended by the 40th Reunion Committee at their third meeting. The recommendation was forwarded to our Class President, Phil Pignataro, who approved the recommendation and released the funds on 17 Mar 2008. It is a contribution of two thousand dollars in honor of each of our five Classmates who were killed-in-action while flying as Forward Air Controllers (FAC): John Duffy, Ted Hallenbeck, Paul Jackson, John Ryder, and Willis (Grant) Uhls.

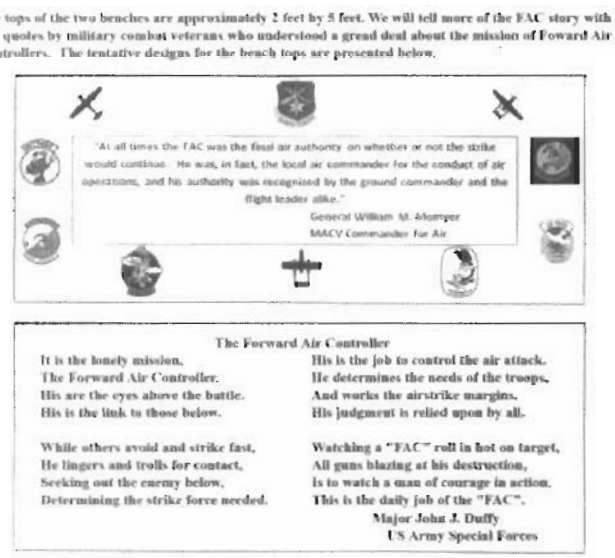
The donation becomes part of the funding needed to construct the 2008 Forward Air Controllers Memorial at Memorial Park in Colorado Springs. Our donation, the largest one of cash, received by the FAC Memorial Committee, assures that the Memorial will be completed and that a Dedication Ceremony worthy of the nearly 300 men will be conducted. Thirty US Air Force Academy graduates names will be listed on the Memorial.

The Memorial will be on the north side of the Ring of Honor at the 195 ac Memorial Park which is located at 1605 E. Pikes Peak Avenue. Lots of us remember Prospect Lake there. The Forward Air Controller memorial will be approximately 6' high, approximately 14' 6" wide and 12" thick. The memorial will be of granite with text and graphics engraved into the face of the stone. In addition, a second granite stone, 3' high, 2' wide, and 12" thick will be erected across from the main memorial. This stone will honor the Misty Forward Air Controllers who lost their lives in the war in Southeast Asia. The monuments will be placed upon a concrete pad measuring approximately 25' in diameter. Two granite benches will be

Overhead Representation of 2008 FAC Memorial Pad



placed on the concrete at the base of the memorials.



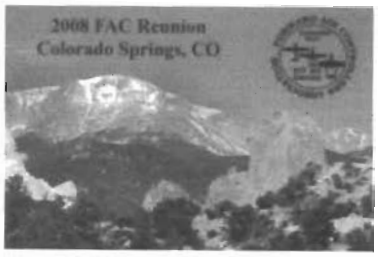
Each bench will be inscribed as indicated in the diagram. The benches are there for people passing through or for those family members that want quiet reflection. The memorial will display quotes from others about FACs, their mission and history. This will be the educational aspect regarding FACs to the public. Behind the main pedestal and the name pieces is a spectacular view of Pikes Peak. The location of the memorial is immediately adjacent to the parking lot, which will provide easy access to the memorial.

From Jim Palmer, Chairman, Memorial Committee; *"Much of what we are doing is for the families of those whose names are on our Memorial. The Class of 1968 knows what the atmosphere was like in the US during the latter stages of the Vietnam War. Families that lost loved ones received virtually no support from the civilian community when they needed it most. Additionally, 73 FACs were killed flying classified mission outside of South Vietnam—these missions were classified until 1993. These families received little or no specific information from our government during those years, so they have many feelings that can be helped a little by these Memorials, by talking to the FACs that flew with their loved ones, by sharing a common bond with others who experienced the same shattering experiences, and in knowing that their loved ones were heroes. We cannot thank the Class of 1968 enough for your generosity!!"* Click here to read the May 8, 2008 thank-you letter to the Class of '68.

This donation represents lessons even greater than the size of the donation - and these lessons are important for the 21st century Cadets at the Academy. Friendships, camaraderie, and loyalties extend out well beyond graduation. Those of us who shared combat four decades ago still remember and honor those who didn't come home with us. That respect is spread throughout all who served with dedication during the difficult years of the War in Southeast Asia. In a time when much of the media does its best to avoid recognizing the heroism of Americans in combat in Southwest Asia, it's important that our young people see this demonstration of how older Vets honor their fallen comrades in the way American heroes deserve to be honored.

The Dedication Ceremony is scheduled for 10:00 AM, Friday October 3, 2008. This will be during the FAC Reunion being held at the Crown Plaza (aka Sheraton Hotel) and during our 40th Reunion. The golf tournament during our 40th Reunion has been moved to Thursday afternoon so Friday is now free, and Classmates who want to attend the FAC Memorial dedication will be able to do so.

For more pictures and information, please click on the thumbnails below.



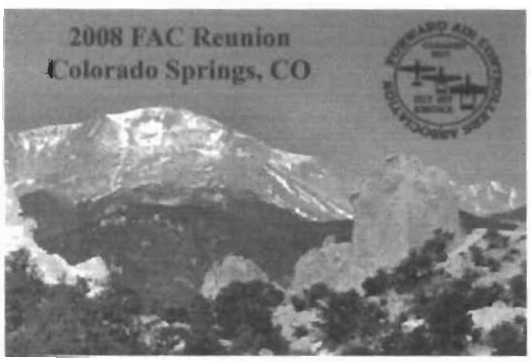
Links to sites about FACs

Forward Air Controllers Association
The Covey-FAC Association
OV-10 Bronco.Net
Raven FACs
Rustic FACs
Misty FACs

Thanks to Jimmie H. Butler, '63, Jim Palmer (FAC Assn), Rhip Worrell and Gene Rose for the story information.

2008 FAC Association National Reunion

1-5 October 2008 Colorado Springs, CO



Forward Air Controller Memorial Dedication

3 October 2008 at 10 a.m.

Honoring AFA Class of 68 FACs Killed In Action