



Greetings Everyone,

We had a very enjoyable and productive day at the Clear Lake Hilton in Clear Lake, Texas yesterday (Saturday, Feb 2.) Nine members were present, seven of whom are board members, including Bobby Gassiott, Tony Girtman, Ernie Gassiott, Alfred "Ace" Bowman, Billie Mills, Andy Vaquera, Sam McGowan, Ralph Bemis and Hector Leyva. After going through the by-laws (to give time for Col. Mills to finish breakfast and for Hector to get through traffic) we chose Ace Bowman as our chairman of the board. Tony Girtman was nominated for vice-chairman but declined due to family health issues. Bobby Gassiott suggested that we offer the position to Carl Wyrick, a veteran troop carrier pilot with long experience in the mission, conditional on his acceptance. After some brief discussion the group decided that since this was essentially our organizational meeting and we need to have a full slate of officers and board members to get things doing, we would elect the initial leadership at the meeting, then follow the procedures spelled out in the by-laws for future elections. We chose Hector Leyva as our new president and Rodney Crawford as vice-president (conditional on his acceptance.) Sam McGowan and Ralph Bemis remain as secretary and treasurer. Andy Vaquera is joining our board and will be chairman of the membership committee. We also decided to invite Jim Ostrem and Joe Newman to become alternate board members. Jim Ostrem is a veteran troop carrier pilot and Joe Newman was a maintenance officer in the 463<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier Wing at Langley and the Philippines and is very interested in participating with troop carrier veterans organizations. We were joined for awhile by Ted Applebaum, who lives in the vicinity of the hotel. Ted flew C-130s at Sewart, CCK and Little Rock and was the pilot of one of the first two American airplanes to land in Hanoi in 1972.

Our new president, Hector Leyva, lives in San Antonio and is involved with the Alamo Chapter of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society. He has a lot of experience with organization and is undoubtedly the best choice for the role of president. Under our new by-laws, the Chairman of the Board has overall responsibility for setting the goals of the organization while the president is responsible for carrying them out. Ace's Email address is [aceplace@clearwire.net](mailto:aceplace@clearwire.net) and Hector's is [hector145@msn.com](mailto:hector145@msn.com).

#### **By-Laws**

After reading our by-laws and making suggestions, they were adopted with some minor revisions. Ace Bowman came up with a way to stagger the terms of officers and board members so that we can maintain continuity. Basically, some officers and board members are now elected for three year terms while others are for two, with reelection as an option. For example, the president and secretary will have three-year terms while the vice-president and treasurer will be elected for two years. Some board members, depending on position, will serve for three years, some for two and some for one, with reelection as an option.

#### **2008 Reunion**

We agreed to pursue the possibility of participating with the World War II troop carrier veterans in their planned gathering in Fayetteville, NC in October, with a back-up plan to meet in Galveston if that doesn't work out. (Another possibility would be San Antonio since Hector and Andy are there and could spearhead putting it together.) Tony Girtman volunteered to take the role of chairman of a reunion committee, with Sam McGowan assisting. As most may recall, we had tentatively planned to meet in Little Rock in 2008 but the Fayetteville gathering presented a new opportunity that is hard to pass up for a number of reasons. We checked our roster and see that we have a number of members in North Carolina, which is a condition we have unofficially adopted as

necessary for future reunions – that there is someone in the area who can help put things together. We'll be in contact with Mark Rudivage, who is coordinating the WW II gathering.

### **Membership**

Promoting our organization and enrolling new members is a very important responsibility for an organization such as ours and we are fortunate that Andy Vaquera volunteered to be chairman of the membership committee. Andy is fully retired from the Air Force Reserve now and is eager to devote time to this endeavor. He served on active duty in aerial port then became a loadmaster in the reserves at Kelly. Several ideas have been suggested for promoting the organization, including placing notices in various veterans and military magazines and adding a reunions page to our web site. Reunion notices can also be posted on the Forum.

### **Preserving and Promoting Our History**

Ace Bowman emphasized the importance of preserving and promoting the history of the troop carrier/tactical airlift mission. We have a rich history that most Americans are not aware of, including other veterans the members of the modern military. We discussed some ways to do this, including the possibility of having existing periodical and books republished (a long-term goal as it would require considerable funding) and the use of our web site and newsletter as well as individual member contributions through presentations to local civic and veterans organizations. Personal recollections are very important to this goal, and we encourage our members to write up their experiences and submit them for publication in our newsletter, etc.

All in all, we had a very good day and everyone left with a feeling of enthusiasm about the future and direction of our organization! I will be compiling the minutes and publishing them to the board and membership ASAP.

Sam McGowan

Secretary