

**173d Airborne Brigade Association
Mid-Winter Conference
16 -17 January 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 0900 the morning of 16 January 2016.

The President, Roy Scott then welcomed all and the opening ceremonies were held. Pledge to the Flag, Moment of Silence, Prayer led by Joe Marquez.

The secretary then called the roll. A quorum was present. See Attachment 1 for those present.

There was no reading of the last minutes as they are posted on-line for all to see at any time. They were approved.

Roy Scott then gave the President's report. He told us the membership is rising. He is also working on establishing a chapter in Colorado. The Association Store is doing well and encouraged all to buy what they need from the store. The Association is seeking a Treasurer. He asked that all chapters bring this up at their chapter meetings to see if any of our members is willing to do this. The person needs to be familiar with Quick Books, which is the computer software used to keep the books for the Association. Jerry Cooper, the last treasurer said he will assist the new person in getting going on the Quick Books. During Jerrys presentation he mentioned a lady he knew that might consider doing the books for the Association. This will cost the Association.

Wako Cotney made a motion to hire this lady if she is willing. Wambi Cook made the second. The motion was: Hire the lady Jerry told us about, but if someone in the Association comes forward to do the job, they will get the job of Treasurer. This was passed.

Roy then continued on with his report. He told us we are now a National and International organization. The Sky Soldier of the year is coming in April this year. If any chapter wants to nominate anyone, this needs to be done prior to 15 March 2016. This is held by the Static Line Airborne Soldier of the Year. The person needs to be present at the banquet in Atlanta to be considered for the honor. It is a way for the chapters to recognize their members. The Sky Soldier of the year last year was Jack Kelly. He then talked about getting more of the Active Duty Sky Soldiers involved in the reunions.

The President Emeritus, Frank Miceli then spoke that the North East portion of the US wants to host the reunion in 2018.

Terry Aubrey then gave the Vice President's report. He is working on a coin for the 50th reunion of the Brigade going to Vietnam. It will cost \$25.00 and he hopes to have the information sent with the winter issue of the Sky Soldier magazine. He then covered the Association Store, which falls under his, the VPs duties. He urged all to buy something from the Association Store at the reunions, and any other time during the year. He emphasized that the Association makes its money from the store and the annual raffle. He also had the latest, 173rd cuff links. Any who wear shirts that require cuff links should get a pair of these.

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Chapter 173, Frank Marcantonio, then gave the 173rd Airborne Brigade Report. He brought this from the Brigade in Italy and it was given by the Commander a few days prior to us seeing this. He told us what all the Brigade is doing and how spread out they are throughout Europe and Africa. He then encouraged all to plan on making the “Reunion in Italy” from 10 to 14 July 2017. They, the Brigade, has great plans for us when we arrive. Hopefully all will make their plans to attend.

The Memorial Foundation Report was given by Richard Weik. He is also the Honorary SGM for the 503rd Regiment. The Memorial Foundation meets each June to update the memorial. They will be cleaning the memorial on 8 June 2016. They will have a candle light memorial on the evening of 8 June 2016. This is the first day of this year’s reunion, so many should be able to attend. Go to www.guidestar.org, then in their search area type in 173D AIRBORNE BRIGADE NATIONALMEMORIAL FOUNDATION INC and their financial reports all are accessible. This is a 501C3 organization. They are still encouraging each Sky Soldier to give to the maintenance of the Memorial, which is tax deductible.

Roy then stressed that the reunion will return to Fort Benning/Columbus, GA every 5 years. This is because each and every one of us were there for some part of our training and so it is the “home of our roots”. So, the 2020 reunion will be in Columbus, GA/Fort Benning.

Jerry Cooper then gave the financial report for both the Association and the Association Foundation. He brought almost 50 pounds of documents so any and all could see what was spent where for the Association Foundation and the Association. He will be putting much of this on our web site, so anyone that desires can go to our web site and see the financial reports for both. The Foundation reports will be on the foundation web site. Go to our web site and click on the 173RD AIRBORNE BRIGADE ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION, and you will be taken to the Foundation web site and you can see all there. Chapters should send their yearly financial reports to Roy. This makes it much easier for each chapter, so they do not have to worry about a tax number or getting any of the legalities that that requires. Each chapter will fall under the Association and be able to use their tax number. Several chapters were glad to learn this and sent their 2015 financial reports to Roy. He then encouraged all chapters’ presidents to get the word out to their members to remember, if they are ordering anything from Medals of America to go to the 173d Airborne Brigade Association web site www.skysoldier.net and then go to Medals of America from there so the Association gets a percentage of the order. He then talked about the Junior ROTC programs across the US. He encouraged each chapter to get involved. The Association has an award to give members of the Jr. ROTC program. Thus far, Chapters 10 and 18 are the main chapters that are participating in this program. The chapter purchases the coins from the Association and makes the presentations. Jerry does that here in Oklahoma and J.C. Terry does that in California. Both are who to talk with at the reunion to get all the information. Also, Jerry will have an article in the magazine about this. He also encouraged us to get a visual of the States so it is easy to see which chapter has what territory is theirs. If a chapter can get someone to do that, he will put it on our web site. Also, remember, any and all 173rd Association events can be put on the web site, so there is no need to purchase a web site for any event. We, the Association, already have the web site. For the 2017 reunion in Oklahoma City, all the information will be on our 173rd web site mentioned earlier. He then mentioned the Scholarships.

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The person submitting for the scholarship must send in their GPA and their photo with the application, or they will not be accepted.

We then discussed the by-laws. There was an issue on who could be a Life Member. After much discussion,

Carlos Hernandez, Chapter 28, recommended we change Article II MEMBERSHIP, Section 2 Dues and Initiation Fees; D. to: All Regular Members and Immediate Gold Star Family Members who pay the Life Membership Fee shall be Life Members. A motion to this was made by Bill Vose, Chapter 7, and seconded by Wako Cotney, Chapter 30. This was voted upon and passed with no dissenting votes.

We then had a report on the 2016 reunion. We currently have 152 Sky Soldiers registered with 101 guests. We have 42 for the ladies luncheon and 92 for the Andersonville trip, and 188 to go on the Fort Benning trip. All are encouraged to encourage their chapter members to pre-register soon for the reunion.

We then talked about the 2017 reunion. It will be the 100th anniversary for the Brigade, and the 10th anniversary for the Brigade as they went to Afghanistan. Remember, after the reunion in Oklahoma City, which will be 16 to 22 May 2017, we will then meet in Vicenza, Italy July 10 to 14, 2017. All start making your plans to attend both.

The 2018 reunion will be held in the North Eastern United States. Chapter 1, Joe Flesh is working on that and already has some great plans, and it being very close to Washington D. C. the rates are less than we have had in many other places. They have looked at several places and have it narrowed down to Alexandria, VA at the Mark Center Hilton. More on this will come after the next reunions.

Roy then asked all chapters to consider being the chapter that makes the calendars for the Association. Chapter 7 volunteered to do this. That means the Association will begin having the calendar again. I look forward to seeing them and getting one each year.

Wambi then thanked all for attending the reunion in San Diego. It was very successful and he and the chapters involved in putting that on were grateful for all participating. The final count was 650, but they knew there were between 50 and 75 present that did not pay. We need to encourage our members if they go to pay so they will be sharing the cost.

Bill Reynolds, Chapter 25, then asked what the Association Goals are for assisting the kids getting off Active Duty. He suggested each chapter have a service officer. And the front of the magazine we have a graphic for the US to show which chapter has what geographic area. Bill then made a motion: Each chapter is to Identify and train a service officer. Frank Miceli, chapter 6, seconded the motion. The motion was then made by Roy Scott to table the motion until enough information was obtained as to what all would be incurred by each chapter. This was seconded by Wako Cotney, Chapter 30. This passed.

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Bill Reynolds, Chapter 25, asked why nominations for the Association Officers could not be made from the floor of the General Membership meeting and then voted upon. John Ward, Chapter 8, then asked that in 2017 we have the candidates talk at the General Meeting and then the members' that are present vote. Bill Reynolds, Chapter 25, then made a motion that the By-Laws be amended to allow us to vote on-line. Wako Cotney, Chapter 30, seconded the vote. After the discussion it was voted on and passed. A member now can vote either by mail-in ballot or on-line, but he will still only get one (1) vote. This changes the By-Laws under Article IV **Officers**, Section 2: Election and Term, paragraph A will now state:

The Association will conduct its annual elections via ballot or on-line voting. The ballots will be distributed in conjunction with the Spring Edition of the magazine "Sky Soldier". Only paid up regular members will be allowed to cast a vote. Ballots must be returned to the Election Committee by a designated date twenty days prior to the Reunion that year. Only one ballot per return envelope will be allowed. Multiple ballots sent or brought to the Election Committee will be disqualified.

The meeting was then adjourned until Sunday morning.

SUNDAY, 17 January 2016

Roy started off, after the pledge, the moment of silence, and the prayer led by Joe Marquez, talking about the Association organizations. The Association has the store, the raffle, the calendar and the coin sales. The vision of the Association is to have a strong administration and financial base. The Association Foundation is not a part of the Association, it is its own organization.

Eric Hitchcock is the Association Foundation Chairman. He is seeking a replacement for Cheryl, the Gold Star Representative. He would like to have 2 or more to cover the US and not just one for the US. Doris is working on getting people to accomplish this. The Association Foundation Vice President has resigned, so he is seeking another person to fill that spot. He is hoping to have that filled by a member from the current Brigade and will announce the person at the reunion this year. There is no wasting of money at the Foundation. The treasurer brought all the documentation for all to see. He is working on two golf outings for 2016. One will be where the one was last year. Another will be in Colorado. All four of the Brigade Medal of Honor Recipients have said they will be in attendance. Doris has told him she would like to be our Gold Star representative. We should know by the Reunion this year. The Association Foundation is concerned with and trying to make a difference in the Brigade suicide rates. They are going to have a "Tough Ruck" event in New England this year. That is you walk a marathon with a 30 pound ruck sack. A 173rd team will be entering and he is asking for sponsors for this event. The CFC is still going and he is asking for all chapters to participate next year in their areas. If you are interested you need to start the beginning of summer to make the connection with the part of the Federal Government you are going to try to get involved with. He told us last week he was working with a 173rd double amputee and would let us know how that is going at the reunion.

New Business:

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Trudell Guerue, Chapter 15, was concerned with the reunions being taken away from the chapters by National. He was glad to learn the chapters still have the ability to host as they step up to do so. It was explained it was taken over by National so the reunion would be spread out across the US more than it had been in the past.

There were concerns about the Association store being the only store at the reunions. Roy assured all that that aspect would be removed. But again stressed the store was one of the only means the Association has to fund itself. Also, it was pointed out it that it takes a little over \$7,000.00 per issue to get the magazine out.

Bill Vose, Chapter 7, the spoke about the tables at the reunion for the banquet. He would like for the Battalions/Companies/Batteries be allowed entrance to mark the tables so they can all set together and not have such a "mad rush" as the doors are opened. After much discussion it was determined the reunion host should establish a means to where the Battalions can have an area for the banquet and that be changed each reunion so a battalion will not always get the spot in front of the podium.

Bill also brought up the registration process at the reunions. It is always a great line once you get to the reunion. Several ideas were discussed. Pre-order the t-shirts so they are already in the bag. Have the bags pre-made so as you check in at the host hotel you get your bag at that time with all the registration stuff in the bag. This is something that the host for the reunion will have to work on and hopefully it will be better. I am sure Chapter 30 will do an outstanding job and not have us all waiting in a very long line, and working themselves to death.

It was brought up that when any member of Association goes to Italy and wishes to visit the Brigade to make arrangements as the Brigade will be glad to have you visit them. Please get the word out at the chapter meetings so all the members can know this. It is easy to do, just contact one of the Association officers and they will be glad to forward your information to the Brigade and have you get in direct contact with them. The Brigade said they are always glad to have past members of the Brigade to visit them.

The Board of Directors then thanked Jerry Cooper for having been the Treasurer and getting us on a better direction.

George Bembischew, Chapter 4, then made a motion to adjourn. This was seconded by Bob Ortiz, Chapter 10. The motion carried.

