



the WIRE BENDER

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July through December 2025

AMTA PRESIDENT

After a lot of hard work and effort by Bob White, 2025 AMTA Reunion Coordinator, and quite a few AMTA members and associate members the 2025 AMTA Reunion happened, over the week of October 15th through the 17th. It not only happened... It turned out GREAT! Due to the people attending and the interaction of everyone. Everyone worked together and helped each other as needed. The Friday evening meal was one of the best ever. It was a served plated dinner, and the food was delicious. The hotel staff at the Double Tree were professional and very helpful, and extremely nice. When discussing the Friday evening dinner and the entertainment, we do not want to forget the Pike sisters, Nanette and Karen, singing the United States Air Force song. Nanette stated they were raised singing that song.

The outgoing board of directors did not meet due to some members missing due to other commitments. The new AMTA board of directors met and elected new AMTA officers. Much was discussed about the future of the AMTA and the new board expects the AMTA to be around for quite sometime. Everyone agrees on one fact and that is we need a younger generation supporting the AMTA and becoming members.

If someone would have told me in 2019

(Continued on page 2)



DOUBLE TREE BY HILTON, HOME OF THE 2025 AMTA REUNION

TREASURER REPORT

As always, I would like to thank everyone who attended the 13th AMTA Reunion. It was small in dimensions but turned out to be a great one. The evening banquet meal was one of the best that we have ever had. Everyone was happy with the hotel and their accommodations. Special thanks to Johnnie Estes for updating everyone on the history of the AMTA.

Recap of our financial status for 2025. Money paid during the year was \$1,000.00 Air Force Enlisted Village. Reimbursement of banquet meals, snacks/drinks, digital voice recorder, and deposit only stamp. Total of \$2,275.54.

For 2025 Christmas season the AMTA membership supported our "USO" as we have done in the past. We received \$1,735.00 from our membership. Thanks to everyone that donated and are in support of the USO.

Memberships: we had eight lifetime memberships and one three-year renewal. There were thirteen donations

(Continued on page 3)

AMTA SECRETARY

Hi everyone, as the new AMTA secretary, I wanted to share with you that I am still trying to learn the job so please be patient with me as I learn what my duties are and what I am required to accomplish. Every AMTA board member is aware of the main obstacle we are facing and that is membership, especially members from the younger generations. Hopefully we can get things on track to increase the AMTA membership numbers and increase the participation of the current membership. We have been holding reunions every other year (odd numbered) in San Antonio, as we thought it was required by the AMTA Articles and Bylaws. As future reference to the AMTA membership, you will be determining where each reunion will be held. Nothing in the AMTA Articles and Bylaws dictates AMTA reunion locations. Travel to San Antonio can be difficult for many due to work scheduling or simply difficulty traveling as we get older and everything is so expensive today. Of course it will be impossible to have a reunion at

(Continued on page 3)

Inside This Issue

REMEMBER THE 198...	Pg 2
AMTA VSO / AMTA CHAPLAIN	Pg 2
OPINIONS & THOUGHTS	Pg 3
FACEBOOK ADMINISTRATOR	Pg 4
AMTA VICE-PRESIDENT	Pg 4

AIRBORNE MAINTENANCE TECHICIANS, 719 NAMES! WHERE ARE THEY???



(President's Continued from page 1)

that in six years I would be back on the AMTA board of directors, I would have thought, NO WAY! However, it has happened and I have been elected AMTA President again and will do the best job I possibly can to ensure the AMTA remains a solid and worthwhile organization. I am not totally sure of what the problem was after Whitey, Jim and I stepped down, but something went terribly wrong, quickly. I may be wrong but I think the biggest problem was the elected officers between 2019 and 2025 were overwhelmed and unfamiliar with the task at hand. Every board member was dedicated and willing to do what was necessary to ensure the success of the AMTA, and deserving of their position. It was simply too big of a gap at one time for three board members to retire. To get the AMTA back to where it needs to be will not be done by the board of directors or even by the membership, but all of those pitching in that have the desire to see the AMTA succeed.

The new section to the newsletter, "OPINIONS and THOUGHTS", will provide everyone the opportunity to voice their opinion on any topic whether good or bad.

Thanks to all that have given so much strong support to the AMTA. You are what makes the AMTA and it's success.

Johnnie Estes
AMTA President

AMTA VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

I have not been working as much with the Veterans Administration as I have in the past and not much if anything has changed. Most of you are probably aware of the change that VA has asked to be implemented, and that is if medication changes the status of a disability then the VA will change the amount allowed for the disability. This appears to be going no place as Congress has totally voted against this action taken by the Veterans Administration.

If you have not looked into the most recent Medicare Advantage Plans, you may want to do that now. Some of the plans give money to you with a zero dollar premium., You can get money back for food and OTC medicine. Some plans have dental coverage, as well as hearing aid coverage and eyeglasses coverage. It would be worth your while to look into these benefits that are there for veterans to be using at no cost to you.

As always if you need help with anything concerning the VA, I am always available and ready to help. If I cannot answer your question, I can usually direct you to someone that can help.

If you need to contact me just go to the AMTA website www.amtassociation.org and click on VSO John Hurst.

I look forward to hearing from you and will do whatever I can to help each and every member of the Airborne Maintenance Technician Association to get any and all VA benefits you may be entitled to.

John L Hurst
AMTA VSO

AMTA CHAPLAIN What it's all about.....

When we were AMTs, we were trained to step up and make repairs or modifications, as needed to keep our systems working during the mission. When we were on the ground, we maintained the equipment in the back shop and on the flight-line to support those airborne missions. We had the mission all around us – every day. It was what we did. It was who we were. We were quiet about our mission, outside of work, as we needed to be.

Now, for many of us, long retired from that service, perhaps retired from a second or subsequent career, we can look back with fond remembrance at the mission that we accomplished, at the equipment that we operated and maintained, at those beautiful (to me and others) aircraft that we flew aboard. Most importantly, we can remember those awesome people with whom we did those things. We can remember their friendships, their behaviors, both on and off duty. We may remember their families, and the closeness that we had with them all, especially when stationed overseas. Many of them became surrogate families to us.

In remembering those things, I realize that many of us are not the same people that we were, 20, 30, 40, even 50 years ago. We have grown, changed by life itself. I have personally seen many of my former AMT friends, come to a saving knowledge of Christ in the years since I first knew them. I, too, already having been a professing Christian, had wandered from the flock for a few years, but was brought back by a Lord whose loving kindness, mercy, and forgiveness, forever changed me. He has shown me that He pursues us; He woos us; He loves us and wants to be in close communion with us. This is a new mission that we have. We had to be quiet before, for the sake of our earlier mission,

(Continued on page 4)



the WIREBENDER
Staff:

Editor: P. Riley
Temp Editor: J. Estes

*"It's your newsletter to use to
communicate with other AMTs, etc."*

(Treasurer continued from page 1)

from our members. 2025 Reunion numbers, after everything was paid and cleared up, we ended up with a positive balance of \$1,138.27. A huge part of this was due in part to individual donations, snack donations, silent auction and 50/50 drawing. Overall, the reunion was a complete success. Our overall AMTA financial status remains healthy. Thanks to everyone for their continued support and dedication. Additionally, we had 12 Flag Box donations totaling \$2,835.49. Four flag boxes ordered, paid for, and delivered. We have a remaining balance of \$2,445.47 which is solely dedicated to flag boxes.

Overall figures, as of 1 January 2026, the Association has savings of \$10,195.12 and checking of \$15,852.36, for a total of \$26,047.48. Note \$2,445.47 is dedicated to flag boxes only.

Are "you" ready for the informal reunion in Greenville, Texas this fall? Time is passing quickly away, we are all getting older, having health issues and traveling is not as easy as it once was. I trust and pray that we can once again join together soon for memorable fellowship. Friendship cannot ever be replaced. The board members are grateful for the continuous support of our entire membership, thank you! Without you this organization cannot and will not exist. If anyone has any constructive ideas on how to build up our membership, increase interest in our organization or any other topic, please let the board members know. I hope everyone has a blessed 2026. As always thank you, take care and stay safe!

*Robert J. White
AMTA Treasurer*



Airborne Maintenance Technician Association

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**LIFE IS A ONE TIME OFFER
USE IT WELL!**

(Secretary Continued from page 1)

any location without some members having to travel short and/or long distances.

This coming fall of 2026 we are planning on having an informal reunion in Greenville, Texas. This location will hopefully encourage attendance from AMT's, IMT's and ASE's that are currently retired or working in the Greenville area as well as others. If everything goes as planned, we hope to arrange a tour of the L3 Harris facility and see the depot maintenance being performed on the RC-135 aircraft that most of us flew on during our Air Force careers. As the 2026 AMTA Reunion Chairman, I plan to start negotiating with hotels on room and food costs. The exact dates have not been decided but it will be sometime between September 16th and October 14th, give or take a day or two. Now is the time to start making your plans so nothing comes as a surprise when the final dates are set. Sometime in June or July we will start sending out emails requesting you to reserve your hotel rooms and food. Hope to see you this fall, and look forward to a wonderful time together. Wish me luck in the job as your new AMTA Secretary.

*Tom Muggeo
AMTA Secretary*

When life gets tough , hang out with your dog.

AMTA Board of Directors:

Johnnie Estes - President, Director
Mervin Gross - Vice-President, Director
Tom Muggeo - Secretary, Director
Robert White - Treasurer, Director
David Leslie—Director
John Hurst - Director
Pat Riley - Director, AMTA Photographer
Johnnie Estes—Director (Permanent)
Mervin Gross—Director (Permanent)
Jim Hargrove – Director (Permanent)
Bill Wilson – Director (Permanent)
Mike McLaughlin—Director (Permanent)
Pat Riley — Editor Newsletter

*The Winds of Grace are Always Blowing
It is up to you to raise your sails*

This is your **OPINIONS** and **THOUGHTS....**

What is it with Mildenhall in the 70's. The showers were cold and the beer warm! Has it changed? Bet not! Remember hearing the SR71 taking off and running out of the shop to see nothing...gone.

James Tam , Tampa Fl.

Hey Johnnie: my thoughts are brief. Need to bring some young blood into the AMTA. Not easy; but someone with contacts needs to visit Offutt 55th and give a pitch on the bennie's of the AMTA to try to get some youngins onboard. I would also suggest someone make contact with the Navy EP-3 and any follow on's that carry AMT's but whatever they call them and try to fold them into the Assn. No reason it has to be AF only. Good luck. Also AWACS FLIES WITH AMTs of some sort that might want to join and a small group but the nuclear sniffer birds fly with AMTs.

I know these other AMTs are outside what our mission statement called for but we need to widen our base or we'll wither out.

Robert Miller Point Vedra, FL

Dear Mr. (formerly Staff Sgt) Estes I have always considered my time in the USAF/Security Service as a grand experiment from total desperation (by the USAF) everything from basic training (long story) & then two (2) (7 level schools directly behind the 3 level basic electronics/EW course. And then straight off to Pleiku as my first duty station and you as my first supervisor. You were knowledgeable, personable, informative, direct, firm, and an example of good leadership and I am thankful and grateful to you. There were lots of reasons I chose an early out over reenlistment, the training and you were the only reasons to reenlistment.

Looking back over the years, it's easier to recognize divine intervention and appreciate those blessings. I took early

(Continued on page 4)

(Chaplain Continued from page 2)

but now, He wants us to speak up. Be vocal. Spread His word. In Matthew 28, verses 18 through 20, Jesus was speaking to the eleven disciples. 18) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." 19) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

This is our new mission, should we choose to accept it. Some of you have. I have. I invite each of you to do so. If I can help you with that question or decision, please reach out. I would be most honored to assist.

Blessings,

Randy Holt, AMTA Assistant Chaplain
randy@holtplace.net

AMTA VICE-PRESIDENT

Do not ask me how it happened or why it happened, but for some odd reason I fell asleep and woke up to find myself elected AMTA Vice-President again.

I, like everyone else, am getting on up in years and our days for doing anything effectively and efficiently are steadily waning away. I will attempt to do the very best job I can at filling the position the AMTA membership has extended to me.

I am not familiar with all that is going on in the AMTA at this time, but hopefully we will all catch up and figure out what we need to get done to ensure the AMTA remains a strong organization for a few more years.

I know we decided to have the 2026 informal reunion in Greenville, Texas in the fall of this year. It sounds like fun and we should have plenty of things to keep us busy for a couple of days. I hope to see everyone there and I am looking forward to it.

Whitey Gross
AMTA Vice-President

Success has many fathers, while failure is a lonely orphan.

Author: Unknown

AMTA FACEBOOK GROUP ADMINISTRATOR

The FaceBook AMT page has been pretty quiet for last few weeks. Posts are always welcome. Our group now has 243 members, we have only added a couple in the last 60 days or so. If you're receiving this WireBender and are not a member of the group please consider joining us.

The FaceBook group is a private group for Airborne Maintenance Technicians (AMT), In-flight Technicians (IMT) and ASE personnel. The purpose is to provide a place where members of the group can communicate with other members and provide information common and of interest to the group. With the upcoming political season it is noted that political commentary is not allowed.

In order to be accepted to the group you must qualify with the following information. Tell us that your served as an AMT or served as an IMT or served as an ASE or be an Associate Member of the AMTA. You must tell us when and where you served. A person will not be allowed until we can verify that you qualify.

Only group members can see who is in the group and see what they post.

Earl Sifford
AMTA FaceBook
Administrator



The glory of life is to LOVE not be loved; to GIVE not to get; to SERVE not to be served.

OPINIONS/THOUGHTS

release in Jan/1971, spent a couple years in school and then a position as a civil servant – the Dept/Air Force found me & I later transferred to the Dept/Navy at the Pacific Missile Test Center (now called the Naval Air Warfare Center, Weapons Division). Throughout the 30+ years of DOD employment working primarily in Research and Development. Test & Evaluation (mostly in EW/ISR) and retiring at the GS-15 equivalent, I had numerous direct supervisors (military including Generals/Admirals/& civilian including Senior Executive Service). I was also a supervisor at all my grade levels. Over the years & supervisors I've had, I can count on 1 hand the number of supervisors whom I considered good, and you are one of them. Operational experience, training, circumstances, and leadership were all invaluable to me. Thank you.

PS I can also add in all of the supervisors I've encountered as a government contractor (such as Computer Sciences Corporation, retired 2014) and the contractor I still work with part-time /on-call at 78 years old.

Dick Hunt Ventura, CA

Speaking for myself, it is the camaraderie! I always meet interesting people, all who did the same job, and shared the same joys and frustrations. At my age, nobody I flew with attends, as far as I know, Roy Shaffer is the only one left. This year I met a man who followed me in the 6988th. My highlight as a member was the year my son and I got to tour the latest aircraft, that was a eye opener for both of us, such a great change from the 130's. Thanks for the memories!

Leigh Sinnamon Deerfield, NH

For those that may not know, our friend of many years, Mike McLaughlin has been suffering from severe back pain for over three years. He has had two major surgeries, but to quote Mike, "I am still enjoying life on this side of the grass. Prayers for Mike