

The Golden Eagles Continuing History 2021

This Historical Summary was compiled by CAPT Bill Young, USN (Ret). Assisted by Web Master CAPT J. R. Davis, USN (Ret).

The Continuing Historical Summary covers the period from the 2020 Virtual Annual Membership Meeting of 02 May 2020 until the 2021 Virtual Annual Membership Meeting of 01 May 2021 due to the cancellation of the 2021 Golden Eagles Reunion in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Approved Minutes of Golden Eagles Annual Membership Meeting (Zoom) on 1 May 2021

Meeting was called to order by Pilot Campbell at 1300 EDT.

The pilot opened with providing "rules of engagement" on use of Zoom for the participants (members). There were 60 attendees and 8 panelists on-line for the meeting.

Pilot Remarks: RADM Jay Campbell

* I would like to thank the Flight Deck for their active participation in all of the remote activities imposed during this past year by the pandemic. The assistance they provided me through editing NOTAMS, Special Notices and other correspondence proved invaluable.

* Special thanks to the Regional Flight Leaders for staying so close to their members, providing outlets for gatherings when allowed, and communicating with me and the rest of the Flight Deck to keep us up to date.

* The responsiveness of the Board of Governors to short-notice Zoom Meetings and other administrative duties was exceptional, especially during this year of enforced isolation.

* Pilot especially wanted to thank Co-Pilot Shadow Stalder for providing the Zoom technical expertise to enable all these Zoom meetings. Additionally, he recognized Denny Ireland for his short notice fill-in as the executive assistant, learning on the job and not skipping a beat. BZ to both.

* A final "Thank You" to all of the Wingmen who have taken the responsibility to remain in close contact with our Emeritus Members. Volunteers to serve as Wingmen are solicited from the members.

* Thanks to all who joined today's member meeting.

Co-Pilot Remarks: LtGen Keith Stalder

* Thanks to the Pilot for keeping us all informed and providing details of membership changes in the quarterly reports.

* Added his thanks to Flight Leaders for keeping the Flight Deck up to speed on regional activities.

* Thanks to Gazelle for keeping the books in order, and to the Navigator and Engineer/Historian for flight deck coordination.

Navigator's Report: VADM Marty Chanik

* Member meeting minutes from 2020 were done virtually by email, and approved by the

membership, again by email, all done in May 2020. They are currently posted on the Golden Eagle web site.

*** The Golden Eagle Membership now includes:**

- 200 Regular members
- 44 Emeritus members
- 3 Honorary members

*** During the year:**

- Nine members were accepted into the Golden Eagles
- Seventeen members (fourteen Emeritus, three Regular) made their Last Takeoff
- Six members transferred to Emeritus
- Sixteen Golden Eagle Ladies passed away (six from previous years)
- There were no resignations

Radio Officer's Report: Col Gary Van Gysel

- * The GE fiscal year runs from the end of March to the first of April next year. FY-21 started 1 April 2021.
- * On 1 April 2021 I published the financial report to the Flight Deck and submitted taxes for FY-20. All numbers discussed for the FY-20 financial report are rounded to the nearest whole thousand.
- * We started the FY with approximately \$82K in liquid assets. We ended FY-20 with approximately \$107K in liquid assets. Add to that number the worth of 141 sets of miniature wings valued at \$7K, we have a total net worth of \$114K.
- * In FY-20 our gross receipts were \$37K; our gross disbursements were \$12K. Our net change in operating funds was a positive \$25K.
- * As I continue, you will hear me talk about flight escrow accounts. When we increased the dues to \$100.00, the BoG decided that \$10K of our \$20K annual dues would be held in escrow for use by the Flights to cover reunion expenses: essentially passing that money in savings back to our members.

• Some highlight numbers for FY-20:

Receipts:

No capital campaign was conducted in FY-20. However, \$15K was contributed by an anonymous donor and is included in our net worth. This money will be provided to NE Flight to reduce costs at Lansdowne.

Membership dues/fees collected was \$21K.

Disbursements:

- * The National Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola was given \$2500.
- * The Navy/Marine Corps Relief Society was given \$2500.
- * The Coast Guard Mutual Assistance was given \$1500.
- * We purchased the watch for the annual Tomlinson Award (Test Pilot of the Year) for \$371.00.

- * I disbursed \$2750.00 to West Flight to close out sunk costs for their Idaho Reunion. The \$2K advanced from their escrow account was retained as a deposit for the hotel in Idaho for 2025.

FY-21 What's ahead:

- * NE Flight will be advanced \$2K from their escrow account for payment of expenses prior to Lansdowne. They will have \$8K remaining in escrow from our 2021 dues collection.
- * NE Flight will be advanced \$15K from the anonymous donor to defer costs to our members for the Lansdowne Reunion. No decision has been made on whether they will conduct a capital campaign. We will plan again to give \$2500 to each to the museum and NMCRS and \$1500 to support CGMA. A motion was made, seconded, and approved to do the same in 2021.
- * We will support the Tomlinson Award by paying for the watch and engraving.

Dues:

We collected dues again this year using only email. I want to thank the Flight Leaders who were instrumental in getting the word out and then chasing down those that were delinquent.

Engineer Officer/Historian Report: CAPT Bill McCamy

- * The reunion at Lansdowne, VA in 2022 will be our 60th Reunion.
- * Currently there are only two member bios missing from the "Members" listing on our website. Both members have been notified and are working towards completion.
- * All members in jeopardy of not fulfilling the requirements of attending at least one of the last four reunions have been notified. 2020 and 2021 have been waived, of course.
- * PROJECT UPDATE 2020 has been a good success so far. Many Regular members and a few Emeritus members have availed themselves of this opportunity to update their photos and add a couple missing items, i.e., combat missions, all awards, and post active-duty careers. Our new Chronolog Template is a great tool for those wishing to update their bios, and are encouraged to do so.
- * An updated "Chronolog MS Excel Data" or "Jerry Zacharias' Spread Sheet" will soon replace the one currently on the website.
- * The "Chronolog Forward Page" is being updated to reflect the addition of our new members' accomplishments. Very impressive would be an understatement.

Nominating Committee Report: RADM Don Boecker

Pilot Campbell provided the below report from Don Boecker:

"In accordance with the requirements set forth in the Bylaws, the Nominating Committee has met and selected the following nominees for the Board of Governors and Flight Leaders. Each nominee listed below has been called and congratulated and has agreed to accept the position nominated for."

The Board of Governors approved the below slate for member voting:

Board of Governor Recommendations:

NE - RADM David W. Kunkel, USCG (Ret) to relieve CAPT John P. Gay, USN (Ret)

SE - VADM Howard B. Thorsen, USCG (Ret) to relieve CAPT Warren B. Christie, USN (Ret)

CENT- VADM Jerry L. Unruh, USN (Ret) to relieve Col Donald A. Beaufait, USMC (Ret)

WEST- RADML William E. Terry, USN (Ret) to relieve CAPT Thomas A. Morganfield, USN (Ret)

Flight Leaders Recommendations:

NE - Col David T. Seder, USMC (Ret) to relieve RADM Matt Moffit, USN (Ret)

CENT - CAPT Michael L. Coats, USN (Ret) to relieve Col Gary Elsten, USMC (Ret) in the Fall of 2021

WEST - CAPT Charles R. Schroeder Jr. USN (Ret) to relieve CDR Curtis Dose, USNR

A motion to accept the above slate was made, seconded, and approved.

2020 Tomlinson Award Presentation: RADM Don Boecker

Pilot Campbell presented the following from Don Boecker:

“On 12 February 2021 Naval Test Wing Atlantic conducted a ceremony at the HX-21 Hangar where RADM Boecker presented the 2020 Tomlinson Award wristwatch to the Test Pilot of the Year, Major Joshua L. Foxton, USMC from HX-21. Major Foxton was the Team Leader and lead pilot for the new CH-53K heavy lift helicopter for the USMC during shipboard trials on the USS Wasp.”

Membership Selection Committee Report: LtCol Howard DeCastro

This year the pool of nominees consisted of 10 USMC and 35 USN/USCG aviators with selection limited to 1 USMC/3 USN, with any USCG selection coming from the USMC allotment. The limited number for selection is due to the fact that 7 USMC and 18 USN aviators from previous years are still waiting induction. Normal annual selection numbers are approximately 3 and 9 respectively. All membership selection committee members engaged in the process and ended up selecting one USMC and three USN nominees. While nomination write ups were generally very good, this year's tough competition due to limited available slots highlighted the continued emphasis to every sponsor/co-sponsor to write as complete and thorough a nomination as possible. The Chairman thanked the committee members for their effort, and Don Weiss for all his work to make this process go as smooth as possible. Chairman DeCastro responded to an asked question of how many nominees reached their five-year limit in the nominee pool. This year two USN nominees had their last look. He also provided numbers year by year for the next three years of nominees reaching their eligibility limit. Finally, the Chairman opined that the probability of normal selection numbers (approx. 3 and 9 for USMC/USN/USCG respectively) was good for the upcoming years.

Membership Selection Committee Secretary Remarks: RADM Don Weiss

Don echoed the Chairman's comments, with nothing else to add

The Pilot thanked the Chairman and Secretary for their hard work in this very important process.

Site Selection Committee Report:

Pilot Campbell provided this summary of the committee report:

- * The 2021 Site Selection Committee met virtually on 9 February 2021, to discuss the currently scheduled 2022 Leesburg, 2023 San Antonio and 2024 Jacksonville reunion and to review the proposed Coeur D'Alene venue for 2025.
- * 2022 Northeast Flight: The Lansdowne Resort, Leesburg, VA

This is the second reunion scheduled at the Lansdowne. Familiarity with the resort facilities, accommodations and surrounding area venues provided the opportunity to build on the outstanding 2018 reunion event.

- * 2023 Central Flight: The San Antonio River Walk Westin Hotel, San Antonio, TX
Planning for a San Antonio reunion and all reunion activities and events is on schedule. A local vineyard with a wine tasting tour has been included in the schedule of events.
- * 2024 Southeast Flight: The Jacksonville Hyatt Regency-Riverfront Hotel, Jacksonville, FL
Following the cancellation of the 2020 reunion, Jacksonville was again selected as the 2024 reunion site. AFRI is the Event Coordinator, and the planning is on track with a similar venue and reunion schedule as published for the 2020 reunion.
- * 2025 West Flight: The Coeur D'Alene Resort, ID
The option to re-schedule the Coeur D'Alene Resort venue for 2025 was discussed. The previous acceptability of the site, the established cost and availability of resort conference facilities provided a base to compare previous venue costs and accessibility factors. West Flight 2021 Planning Committee members concurred with the option to repeat the 2021 venue with acceptable resort contract costs. Following a discussion of travel costs, resort amenities, and conference facilities, Flight Leaders concurred with West Flight's proposal to pursue Coeur D'Alene as the 2025 reunion site.

Old Business

- * Pilot Campbell provided the following information on old business BoG discussions for the benefit of the members:
 - The 2022 reunion Memorial Service will probably need to honor about 40 Last Takeoffs that have occurred since the 2019 reunion. Significant discussion is ongoing in how to best accomplish this with our normal outstanding service, given that it is about 2 to 3 times larger than normal. The Pilot is in continued discussion with the Reunion Committee.
 - One item of interest from this year's Membership Selection process was a proposal to consider whether there should be a direct selection to Emeritus membership for nominees that are very senior age wise, for example older than 85. An ad hoc committee has been assigned to explore this possibility and will report out at next year's BoG meeting.
 - The Nomination committee is tasked to find a new Webmaster, Radio Officer, and Reunion photographer. Any volunteers and/or suggestions would be greatly appreciated.

New Business

- * Pilot Campbell explained that the eligibility requirements for an officer of the Association needed clarification in the by-laws. Specifically, the requirements for Principal officers, as defined in the by-laws. The BoG approved the recommended change.
- * Proposed By-law change/clarification (change designated in red) Article V, Section 2.
"Eligibility. To be eligible for election as a **Principal** Officer, or as a member of the Board of Governors, an individual must have been a Regular Member for at least three years and must have attended at least three annual membership meetings. "
- * **There was a motion to make the change, it was seconded, and approved.**
- * There was no other new business.

* Pilot Campbell again thanked Co-Pilot Shadow Stalder for the extraordinary effort in making the Zoom calls feasible.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and approved. The meeting adjourned at 1343 EDT.

FY 2021 Flight Leader Consolidated Reports:

WEST FLIGHT:

“We had a fun and safe Mini-Reunion Luncheon 8 October 2020 at The Harbor House in Seaport Village. The outside patio location was perfect for getting friends together while social distancing. The food and wine received rave reviews. Continuing the bad news/good news theme, the bad news is that The Harbor House has lost their lease in Seaport Village, so a new restaurant will be taking over their location, but the good news is that this won’t happen until late 2021. So, because we will probably still have COVID-19 concerns and restrictions into next year, we have again reserved this location for our Valentine’s Day Mini-Reunion Luncheon on Thursday, 11 February 2021 at 1100. Save the date! And while you are saving dates, make sure you block off 28 April–02 May 2021 for our Annual Golden Eagle Reunion at the stunning Coeur d’Alene Resort in Idaho. Covid-19 is still controlling, but this is still five months and a possible vaccine away, so keep your options open.”

West Flight intended to hold a luncheon at the Harbor House outdoor restaurant on the beautiful San Diego Bay waterfront for a February Valentine’s Day Mini-Reunion, but the event unfortunately was canceled because dining restrictions were reintroduced in San Diego. With dining opportunities now re-opening, West Flight is planning an April luncheon to regroup, reacquaint and welcome new members. As you know, the April 2021 Golden Eagle Reunion, to be held in Coeur d’Alene, ID, was canceled amid COVID restrictions. The Coeur d’Alene Resort has once again been proposed as the West Flight’s Reunion site scheduled for 22–26 April 2025. This will be a special opportunity and adventure for us all to experience the scenery and resort activity of the great northwest section of West Flight’s spectacular areas. Following our Virginia, Texas and Florida venues, Idaho will be a remarkable and memorable reunion site.

Chuck Schroeder extends a Well Done to Curt Dosé for his initiative and imagination in planning and executing all the activity for West Flight. He’s made this an easy turn-over and insured a smooth transition as Flight Lead and set a high bar for the next two years. I’d like to thank Curt for his personal enthusiasm and success in planning and organizing our social luncheons and insuring a personal contact with the flight during a challenging two years. With restaurants and venues re-opening with a return to safe social gatherings, planning for our first 2021 Mini-Reunion in San Diego is underway for August. Following the necessary cancellation of our 2021 West Flight Reunion in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, and a review of other venue options for 2025, the planning group elected to extend our commitment with the Resort and conduct the 2025 West Flight Reunion in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. The next four years offer us all the adventure to travel and gather in Virginia, Florida, Texas, and finally, the great northwest in Idaho. It’s time to cast off.

Following this past quarter of isolation and an easing of restrictions upon receiving our 'jabs', West Flight is back on a social schedule with our first Mini-Reunion luncheon in a year. The rendezvous for a formal luncheon will be at the Coronado Yacht Club in Coronado, CA early this October with 50 Golden Eagles, wives and guests planning to attend. With a weather eye on the social forecast, we'll plan for one more gathering in February prior to meeting in Virginia this spring. While activity and updates for West Flight have been centered primarily in the southern California area, the opportunity to report on individual gatherings within our wide area, from Alaska and Hawaii to Wyoming and New Mexico, will keep us all in closer contact. Received news from Kurt and Terrie Schroeder and Bill and Susan Newman both now settled in St. George, Utah, with a report of good fly fishing in Salida, Colorado, from Fred and Patty Baldwin. Final note: West Flight's Golden Eagle Annual Reunion is on schedule for our 2025 Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, gathering in the great North-West.

CENTRAL FLIGHT:

Gary Elsten reports that Central Flight had a busy quarter with a mini, and multiple luncheons, but it would be a lie. COVID continues to restrict activity. In early December, Pensacola Golden Eagles had a luncheon at an outdoor restaurant with six Eagles and three wives attending. We may have breached the 6-foot distance rule a little, but were not sitting shoulder to shoulder. We plan to have a mini in the fall of 2021 at the site of our 2023 reunion in San Antonio. Hopefully, all of us and our wives or friend will have had an opportunity to get the vaccine by then.

It has been way too quiet on the "Redneck Riviera" and the other 19 states in Central Flight. There may be light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, however. The Pensacola Golden Eagles had a late February luncheon at a local indoor/outdoor restaurant attended by 11 Eagles and 9 wives. Progress!

Central Flight is currently working on plans for our 2023 reunion in San Antonio. Our Mini-Reunion will be in San Antonio, 27–28 September 2021 at the Riverwalk Westin, the same hotel our 2023 reunion will be held. At this time, we can review our options for the 2023 reunion. AFRI will be negotiating our plans for the 2023 reunion. The Pensacola Golden Eagles and wives recently had a luncheon at local restaurant with 11 attending. Mike Coats has relieved Gary Elsten as the Central Flight Leader and states, "Gary has done a terrific job of staying in touch during the last difficult 18 months."

Mike Coats reluctantly cancelled the Central Flight Mini-Reunion in San Antonio, scheduled for September 27/28. The cancellations were piling up due to the spread of the COVID Delta variant and the lack of ICU beds in our Texas hospitals was becoming critical.

SOUTHEAST FLIGHT:

This year has greatly impacted GE Southeast's ability to humanize, colonize and enjoy the fruits of our later years with our friends, neighbors and our brothers from the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard air. First and foremost, while we have lost a few heroes from our group and a few have gone Emeritus, we have gained the grace of new members. While we have continued to take great advantage of the merits of Networks in this era and have the ability to talk to, and even see who we're talking to, Southeast Flight had a real get together on the 3rd of December. I had proposed the opportunity after having received a heads up and, "What do

you think about a get together at the Cavalier Country Club" from our own 'BAD' Fred Lewis in late October. I did a little survey on interests for this gathering and had a significant thumbs up from our group. Bad and Allie were members there and did all of the leg work and put together the opportunity for a great event. But COVID-19 concerns following Thanksgiving saw the number of possible attendees slowly winnow down from a gathering of as many as 25 attendees, to 10 on the morning of 3 December. "But we did it." The 10 finalists ordered from a menu developed by Bad and Allie and the Club, and we sat at four large round tables with a breathtaking view of the waters of Virginia gleaming brightly in front of us. Of note, Bad Fred had even arranged a guest speaker, the CO of NAS Oceana, CAPT John Hewitt. He spoke for 20 minutes and buoyed a lot of our memories of the Fighter Base of the East and we were impressed with his concepts for the future there. Of note, when I stood up to thank him for his presentation, he looked at me and said, "you look like him" to which I replied, "him who?" to which he replied, "your son Cory! We were roomies in the same squadron and he's still one of my best friends." SMALL WORLD. The event was a success thanks to Bad and Allie and in debrief we thought that events may become more numerous if we did some or all of the following throughout the GE membership.

- Have a series of small (10-15 people at 2-3 locations) in each of the four Flight sectors.
- Tie each of them together at a programmed point using ZOOM, Facetime and any other means of joining them all into a large grouping of virtual communication and location.

It's been an agonizingly quiet and 'alone' quarter! Thus, other than a few 'moves' and LTO's and 'new guys!' There's nothing but a noiseless void in the Southeast Flight.

Mike Kurtz and Wild Bill McCamy have taken the lead for Southeast Flight to convene, and finally have the signed contract for the Mini-Reunion at the Hyatt Regency Riverfront in Jacksonville, FL from Wed, 29 Sep to Fri, 1 Oct. The Flight Schedule is currently in work, but you can expect a reception on Wednesday evening, golf and other activities on Thursday with cocktails and banquet in the evening.

The Southeast Flight Mini-Reunion scheduled for 29 September to 1 October at the Hyatt Regency Jacksonville-Waterfront was the sole event for the quarter. We had 25 Golden Eagles and spouses attending, with the Welcome Aboard Reception kicking things off on Wednesday 29 September. Golf, lunch after golf, then cocktails and the Banquet were the highlights for Thursday, 30 September. Mike Stortz worked hard to bring together those healthy and ready for this modified Golden Eagle get-together. Hats off to him and his efforts to sustain our union.

NORTHEAST FLIGHT:

As Yogi Berra once said, "it's like deja vu all over again. ...". Another quiet COVID-19 driven quarter, unfortunately. All are doing well, but due to reinstated Virginia restrictions the opportunity to get together faded. On the positive side, and that's the good side, Black Adkinson set up two Zoom calls for bedridden Hap Simpson. Hap enjoyed both very much. Black has been a great wingman for our WWII hero. Finally, and most importantly, we are looking forward to the availability of the new vaccines! In closing, I lean on Yogi's wisdom yet again as "the future ain't what it used to be. ...".

Several Northeast Flight members got busy with the 2022 Reunion planning by gathering at the Lansdowne Resort for our kickoff planning meeting. Those in attendance toured the facility

to evaluate various options available for the reunion events. During the meeting we brought in several other event leads via Zoom and had a productive gathering. While we haven't had any group NE Flight social events, several members have been joining for a round or two of golf. The weather has supported that activity fairly well this winter in the D.C. metro area. Additionally, we have identified a lead planner for our fall mini reunion and will look into October to see if the conditions are right for a gathering. Our hats are off to Black Adkinson for keeping Hap Simpson engaged with the Northeast Flight members and others for as long as he could. Black (and his daughter Amy) had been working Zoom calls with Hap and a good number of members were able to share in those calls. Hap was very appreciative, and we're all thankful that Black was his wingman!

The world is reopening — even D.C. 2022 Reunion planning is ongoing with good progress — on or ahead of major decision milestones. Thanks Matt and your planning team. Further meetings with the Church (Memorial Service) and Lansdowne Resort are scheduled in July. We are actively pursuing the feasibility for a Mini-Reunion in mid to late October and a NE Flight lunch during the summer. We have re-engaged with Arlington National Cemetery, USNA and MCB Quantico to restart our Honorary Pall Bearer tradition post COVID.