

F-106 All Troops Reunion Committee History

By Bob `Bobski' Kwiecinski, TSgt USAF (Ret)

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Ken Wigton was the founder of the F-106 All Troops Reunion. He did his active duty for four years on the F-106 MA-1 Weapon Control System. He loved the F-106 and often wished that he had continued working on it for many years. He and his wife Fran settled down in the area surrounding Mt. Clemens, where he was stationed at Selfridge AFB from 1961-1963.

One of Ken's favorite pastimes and hobby was genealogy. He also had a great mind for assisting organizations such as high schools, colleges and other groups to organize their reunions. He enjoyed getting people together to share memories. His first attempt at a F-106 reunion was around 2009 when he simply got a small group of 8 or 9 guys who lived around Selfridge and met at a local Mt. Clemens Bar to reminisce the ole F-106 days, they were F-106 MA-1 and AFCS guys.



The first official committee consisted of (L to R): Bob Kwiecinski, Ken Wigton, Bill McKinney, Lee Kuhfeldt, Zig Stancavage, Dave Stiteler & George Hendricks. Laverne "Bear" Bruhn later joined the committee.

& Greet, Picnic at Metropolitan Park, Selfridge ANG Base tour (included lunch at Chow Hall, Base Museum & "Hanger 5"), Golf outing and Final Banquet Cruise on Lake St. Clair.

It was immediately following the very successful Selfridge 2011 Reunion that Ken had the wild and crazy idea to continue the

It was late 2010 when Ken decided to get serious about forming a bigger Selfridge F-106 reunion for Avionics guys, most were in the 1st A&E Squadron, which

supported both the 71st and 94th FIS. That first official reunion was held June 20 to June 23, 2011. Approximately 85 members and their wives attended. The events for that week were: Meet



2011 Selfridge ANGB Reunion



June, 2011 - First F-106 Selfridge Reunion



Jim Gier built & donated wooden clocks for all reunions. "Bear" Bruhn built wooden F-106 models.

reunions and to open them up to anyone whoever flew, maintained, or supported the F-106. This is when it became known as the F-106 "All Troops Reunion!" It was a scary concept at first, but we all decided to give it a try, and to also make it periodic, like every two years. We immediately started our investigation for a 2013 Reunion. It seemed logical to try to keep the location close to the committee members. So, Wright Patterson AFB/Dayton Ohio was a clear choice for us.



Jerry Braun, Ken Wigton & Bobski
in front of WPAFB Museum
Office, 4/17/2013

2013 Reunion: Wright Patterson AFB, Sept. 11 – 15.

[\(link here to the 2013 itinerary\)](#)

Ken and Bobski felt that this was going to be a big reunion. As it turned out it was, with nearly 200 attending. Ken and Bobski took two trips down to the Wright Patterson AFB area. On one of the trips they were joined by Laverne “Bear” Bruhn who drove all the way from Nebraska and met up with Jerry Braun, one of our local area reunion committee members. It would be the first time we ever worked



Ken, Bobski "The Team 2013"

with a CVB (City/County Visitors Bureau) and we had a great experience with the Greene County CVB. They were first class with all their knowledgeable staff, supplied us with free nice name badges and posters for our 2013 reunion. The Hope Hotel gave us a fantastic rate of \$59/night. It was in serious need of remodeling, but had adequate facilities for our group. We found a very nice F-106 patch, supplied by David Gray, who also brought his military memorabilia sales to the reunion.

We were very fortunate to have Bill Chesnut join our committee to put together a F-106 DVD video for this and all succeeding reunions. I'll never forget the feeling and “goose bumps” I had when we played it for the first time as we opened up the 2013 Meet and Greet. It started out with the klaxons going off loudly as two Sixes were taxiing out from the Alert Barns for a scramble. At the end of this video every single F-106 Squadron logo was displayed and as they came up on the screen every member of that organization stood up and cheered (goose bumps again!). This would be an ongoing tradition for all future reunions 😊



2013 Reunion Patch



AF Museum 2013 group photo

Ken always believed in having tours that were a mixture of military and local attractions along with simple events to allow people to gather to visit while riding buses or walking. It was a no-brainer to have a tour of the Air Force Museum. That was very popular and allowed us to have a great group

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photo in front of the F-106 "Cornfield Bomber." Gary Foust, the pilot of that unfortunate flight, was present and was interviewed by the Museum staff. Who would have thought that a visit to a local Dairy Farm would have been a fun event? It was delicious too, as so many enjoyed a BBQ lunch and fresh home-made ice cream!

This was Dick Stultz's first F-106 All Troops Reunion and he started a wonderful tradition of painting caricature plates for special guests, attendees and Air Force Band performers. Interesting we never got charged for the hundreds of plates he has painted!



2013 - Dick Stultz presenting his famous caricature plates to AF Band members.



2013 Bobski & Ken Wigton Final Banquet

We may go back and rename this reunion the "Goose bumps Reunion" because during the Thursday night hospitality room gathering Bobski had mentioned that we have an honored person amongst us, David Gray, who was selling the military memorabilia all week, was a Vietnam POW for over six years. He was shot down on his second F-4 mission. I had noticed on his vest he had a patch saying: "North Vietnam 1 ½ Missions!" As David stood up to be recognized by a thunderous round of applause, Dick Stultz, who was sitting next to him immediately stood up also and proclaimed:

"Oh My God, You and I swapped missions that day, I could have been the one who was shot down!" Talk about tears and goose bumps! By the way, I noticed when David showed us his POW ribbon it had the **gold number 2333** on the ribbon signifying the number of days he was in captivity.

Some of the other events that week was a wives shopping expedition at an upscale Mall and a golf outing. The Meet & Greet and Final Banquet were both quite an extravaganza with patriotic decorations, door prizes galore and so much fun and even tearful comradery! We were very fortunate to have an Air Force Band perform for our Final Banquet! At the banquet we voted on our next reunion location, Colorado Springs. So immediately following the Wright Patterson reunion we started planning for the next one.



2013 AF Band performing at final banquet

2015 Reunion: Colorado Springs, Oct. 7-11, Elegante Hotel ([link here to the 2015 itinerary](#))



2015 Committee getting set up for registration

Ken Wigton and Bobski flew out to Colorado Springs to begin hunting for local venues and visited 10 hotels. Colorado had many beautiful attractions to offer: the mountains, the Air Force Academy was a natural since many of our Sixers graduated from there (that tour was heavily attended). We set up tours to: Evening tour through Broadmoor and Cheyenne Mountain Zoo area with an



2015 Reunion patch designed by Designed by Dick Stultz

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after dark visit to Seven Falls, Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak, Cog railway, Manitou Springs, Peterson AFB and the Peterson WWII Aviation Museum.



There were many attractive area hotels that Ken and Bob inspected. It was a tough choice to make BUT! The hotel decision maker came on the morning the



2015 Bruce Gordon talking about the flight of 20 Korean Migs he intercepted in 69.

“Ken and Bob Committee” were getting ready to go to the airport and were just finishing breakfast with the Elegante Hotel director Tracey. Tracey asked us what would it take to “seal the deal with the Elegante.” Ken looked her squarely in her eye and said “Give us \$79 a night and including daily breakfast.” I was shocked when she reached across the table and we shook hands accepting her deal! Before that moment their best bid was \$109! She did admit that she knew the hotel would be undergoing remodeling during our planned reunion and if we didn’t mind a little construction.

We had an interesting Air Force “Clarinet Quartet” perform at our final banquet. We were very impressed with their performance. They played the Star-Spangled Banner along with the Air Force Academy Color Guard marching in for the final banquet opening ceremony. [Here’s the link to the video: 2015 banquet opening Colors](#) Jim Gier continued to build



2015 John Boudrou (deceased), Dick Stultz

wooden clocks for the reunions, he built 10 clocks for this reunion. Pat Perry, Dick Stultz and Pat McGee designed a Challenge Coin especially for the 2015 reunion. Our 2015 reunion logo and patch were designed by Dick Stultz. This was always my favorite reunion logo because it depicted a F-106 banking over into the Pikes Peak into the sunset. Our theme for this logo was “The Sunset of Our Lives.” The 48th Fighter Association combined their reunion with ours since their membership was dwindling. They had about 25 members show up



in Colorado Springs. They even had a mini banquet and their own hospitality room.

We had over 200 attend this 2015 reunion. Ken wasn’t feeling very well most of this reunion. Unfortunately, he had just begun his battle with the “C” word disease. He attended all the week’s events, but he was noticeably tired. All the events went off like clockwork. So many smiles, laughter, tears and great comradery! **In Honor of Ken’s final reunion attendance in person, I think we should call this one “2015, Ken’s F-106 Finale.”**





2015 Colorado Springs

2017 Reunion: Nashville TN, September 6-10, Millennium Maxwell House Hotel
[\(2017 Nashville Itinerary link\)](#)



Bobski & Dave Stiteler at Nashville YMRC

Nashville was a big surprise to us when we voted at the 2015 reunion. This was the first reunion without Ken Wigton being involved on the committee. We were very fortunate to have Dave Stiteler step right in and we both picked up what Ken and I had been doing for the previous reunions. This included a site visit to Nashville with our understanding wives Sharon and Carol. We were guests this time as we went to a YMRC sponsored 3-day military reunion familiarization event. We visited 8 hotels and did several local tours.



Nashville was an expensive venue and we were concerned it might be too expensive for some of our members and none of the hotels we toured filled our requirements completely, especially on the hotel prices. Dave Stiteler and I left our site visit a bit disappointed. But fortunately, someone asked if we had visited the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel, and we hadn't. Don Kenne came to our rescue as he lived about 2 hours from Nashville and he volunteered to check it out for us. Don scouted it out and the Millennium filled the bill. It was an older hotel needing renovation, but it was adequate and they gave us a great deal at \$99 per night including all our requests.



2017 Nashville



2017 Nashville "Meet & Greet"

Nashville is the Music City capital and kept in line with our 2017 Theme: "Nashville and the Six – "Music to our ears!" We set up tours to the Country Music Hall of Fame, The Jack Daniels Distillery, Grand Ole Opry Concert, Downtown Nashville, RCA Recording Studio "B" to make a CD recording of each one of us and what we did on the "Six!" The tours were very popular and we got a special backstage tour and two live radio announcements at the "Grand Ole Opry." We even ran

into another reunion group at the Opry, who were with the C-119 gunship "Spooky" from Vietnam. Several of us actually knew some of them! (most of them were ex MA-1 troops!)

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Bob Wegeman retirement at 2017 Nashville reunion

It was another beautiful F-106 reunion week of smiles, tears, hugs, laughs, reunions and meeting/making new friends. It was very special for Bob Wegeman, as we all celebrated his official retirement ceremony on Saturday afternoon. Bob was roasted well! Our attendance numbers were inflated that Saturday as 32 members from the 48th Tactical Training Squadron flew in on a “training mission” to attend Bob’s ceremony and the final banquet.



48th TTS 32 pilots flew in. Sitting with Dick Schuette



David Gray, Vietnam POW Honored Speaker 2017 Final Banquet

We were very fortunate once again to have a 32 piece Air National Guard “Band of the South” perform during our Final Banquet. The Nashville Final Banquet was also very special as we were honored to have David Gray, former Vietnam POW, as our Honored Speaker. David was held in captivity for 6 ½ years. Actually, it was 2,333 days as I noticed this number on one of his AF ribbons, which was the **POW** ribbon. He was associated with the F-106 assigned as the 48 FIS Ops Officer after his return. David kept the banquet audience captive for over 1 ½ hours that evening! Nashville was another huge successful reunion. That evening the membership unanimously chose Tucson as the next reunion site.



Tennessee ANG "Band of the South"



2017 Final Banquet - Flag being presented to David Gray.



2019 Tucson. Some of Dick Stultz art work keeping our level of humor up!



2019 Reunion: Tucson, AZ, April 3-6, Sheraton Hotel

[\(link to 2019 itinerary\)](#) [\(link to 2019 Attendees\)](#)

The Tucson City Visitors Bureau (CVB) was exceptionally good to us. They paid for both (Dave Stiteler & I) our flights, hotels and food for the 3 days of site tours. We saw quite a variety of hotels both in quality and price. Tucson was going to be economical and had a lot of nice interesting areas to visit. Our top three hotel choices were very close and we chose the Sheraton for its size, visiting areas, restaurant and price (\$93). The reason



"Injun Joe" was our perfect host at "Old Tucson"

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we got such a great price was that the hotel was shutting down right after our reunion for a major remodeling and re-flagging. The only minor drawback was their banquet space was just large enough to accommodate a group our size (240 again). Their hospitality rooms were perfect for us.



Tucson - Jim Gier came through once again with 15 hand crafted F-106 clocks with new designs which were a hit at the Banquet!

The weather for the week was perfect Tucson weather, clear skies, low 80's and cool at night (50's). We had a Southwest Tex Mex buffet for the Meet & Greet. This reunion seemed to have the busiest Hospitality Room, full each night!



Tucson, Wonder who this was?



Tucson, waiting for Tour buses



Tucson, Final Banquet



Tucson Boneyard gathering around A/C 130

The Pima County Air Museum and Boneyard Tours were outstanding. The F-106 (003) at Pima was in sad shape, but they said they were going to restore it in the near future. At the Davis Monthan Boneyard we were able to gather around F-106 (130), touch it fondly, tell stories around it and take many photos. It also was in very sad shape.



Our first tour stop was Old Tucson Movie Studio and Wild West Dinner and some Old West Musical Entertainment. They had an outstanding wild west museum, humming bird sanctuary and a western art gallery



Some of our own troops entertained us at the Grand Palace Theater by dancing along with the showgirls.

We had another AF small band at the final banquet. At the last minute before we started we had to improvise a Color Guard. So Gary Foust volunteered to lead it and we had one of our AF Academy graduates who was in the Academy Choir lead us in singing the National Anthem. It turned out very well! We had past commanders hand out the Vietnam War Commemorative Lapel Pin and congratulate all who served between 1955 and 1975 (any location).

The Reunion Finance Review Members: Dick Stultz, Gary Foust, Pat Perry, Abe Newman, reported everything in order. Recommended and approved to donate 50% of available donation money to be

given to F106 related projects. Great News: We sent \$2,000 checks each to KI Sawyer Museum (F-106 needs painting) and Palm Springs (F-106 B model restoration). When it came to the voting for the next 2020 reunion site Florida was the unanimous winner.



2021 Reunion: Melbourne FL, November 17 - 21, Hilton Rialto
[\(link to 2021 itenary\)](#) [\(link to 2021 attendees\)](#)

The Dave and Bobski F-106 reunion team hit the road again to scout out Florida. Dave flew down to Florida and stayed at Bobski's house a few days during the "Florida scout week." We spent 3 days in Jacksonville. We toured 9 hotels, saw the local attractions and tried the food. We also met with 5 local Jacksonville ANG F-106 retirees. They gave us the "local scoop." We found downtown Jacksonville to be very difficult due to traffic and construction, very confusing. None of the hotels offered shuttles to the airport which was a major problem as the airport was 18 miles from downtown. Their hotel rates were very good. We gave up on Daytona Beach because most of the hotels were too small to accommodate our reunion size. Next we scouted Melbourne, 6 hotels, lots of area attractions and very accomodating. We got a great deal from the Melbourne Hilton Rialto. It had recently renovated and met all our criteria.



Melbourne Hilton

Sadly the Covid-19 virus hit us and we had to reschedule the 2020 November reunion to March 2021. The hotel gave us an extension and kept the contract the same. As of August 2020 we are back on track and we are getting good responses from our F-106 family. This could be our biggest reunion ever!

Well here we go again, Covid still was causing us fits. One more 7 month delay! We finally decided to take a chance and do a November 2021 reunion. That's one year later than our original schedule. The Hilton Hotel still honored our rate of \$119 even after one year! Unfortunately this Covid crap put a little crimp in this reunion, more than we expected.



ANG Band of the South Quintet

We were able to achieve 153 total attending for the week. We had also expected a big turnout of Florida members, but that didn't happen. We think the Florida ANG members wanted it in their own backyard in Jacksonville. Melbourne was a 3 hour drive for them.



Bobski trying to do a Polynesian dance!

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*Palm Bay Bayside High School
NJROTC Color Guard*

We had two very good High School JROTC Color Guard units, from Sebastian H.S. and Palm Bay Bayside H.S. We had a small quintet of Air Force musicians perform before our final banquet. All the tours were well attended that week. The Kennedy Space Center tour was a hit. The Florida weather for the week was a bit on the cool and wet side. We did cancel the Don Garlitz Drag Museum tour due to low interest.

The Casino Boat was a fun trip. It wasn't a great day for sailing. The seas were stormy and made the boat roll up and down all day! I don't think we had any big winners.



A great number of raffle donations once again!

The Hospitality Room was run daily and superbly by Sandy & Dick Stultz, Pat Perry, Gary & Sue Foust, Chris Hermack, Randy Hardy and many other helpers. Thank all of you for doing a great job! Dick Stultz hosted the "War Stories." Sandy Stultz, Chris Hermack and Sue Foust put together all the Chinese raffle and silent auction items. Special thanks to Greg Maciolek for providing the AV services and videotaping some of our events. We were able to do some story telling on Thursday night. Many of the "war stories" were recorded by Greg Maciolek and put onto our website:

<https://soundcloud.com/patrick-mcgee-10> There's also some good video footage with Dick Stultz interviewing Chuck Lehman: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FPdc7ZQQFo3Ax4HyFGHg1SZhmjB_89Bn/view?usp=drive_link



M. Ross Shulmister's daughter Meryl, presented a recording of her dad telling war stories

We lost a very special F-106 member, pilot and a frequent reunion attendee, M. Ross Shulmister. His daughter Staar (Meryl O'Meara), and her family represented her dad. They donated a recording of her dad Ross telling war stories. She provided the Squadron table markers as Ross always had done for every previous reunion. We also held a special tribute for Jim Gier who had always hand made wooden F-106 clocks and wooden articles for every reunion!

We also had a special tribute for Chuck Townsend. He had the most flying hours in an F-106, 4410 hours! He also flew the last F-106 out of Otis on February 9, 1988. His wife Kathy, who was unable to attend donated dozens of memorabilia items for our raffles and silent auctions.



Dick Stultz checking out tables.

I think the biggest highlight of the week was the Polynesian night. It was well attended, great authentic polynesian food, everyone was presented a lei and we had a great polynesian dance group entertain us. They interacted very well. Here's some great photos:

<https://www.f-106deltadart.com/piwigo/index.php?/category/587>



Dave Stiteler, Gary Foust & Bobski

Bobski and Dave Stiteler were both presented with a very nice glass framed flag which was present in the cockpit of the last operational flight of an F-106 #59-0149, flown by Lt. Col. Mal Emerson, Davis Monthan AFB to Palmdale Airport on 2 August, 1988 (Bobski's birthday).

By the way, we had Gary Foust and Marv Donnelly examine and audit our financials. At the final banquet Gary announced after many hours of their auditing all our books and financials, are in proper order! We made a very good profit from these donated items! We decided after all the dust settles, we will invite any F-106 related restoration or museum to put in a description, how they will use our donation. Subsequently we awarded \$4,000 to the Castle Air Museum.

As usual there was a vote for the next reunion location and San Antonio was a unanimous winner! See you in San Antonio!

**We Had a Great Week!
Visited & Explored Melbourne
Reminiscenced
Laughed
Cried
Made new friends!**



2023 Reunion: April 12-16, 2023, San Antonio Texas, Holiday Inn Riverwalk
[link to 2023 itinerary](#) [link to 2023 attendees](#)

San Antonio turned out to be an excellent choice again. Dave Stiteler and Bobski did not get a chance to scout out the San Antonio area. We decided for the first time to try having a military planners business manage our reunion, AFRI (Armed Forces Reunions Incorporated). They set up a website to handle reservations, a big plus was they accepted credit cards, arranged and managed all tours, and supplied name tags. That took quite a load off of Dave and Bobski. On the downside they charged an extra \$15 per person registering, \$2 per banquet meal, and of course they had some income from the hotel.

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*Bobski & Sharon, Dave
& Carole Stiteler*

AFRI highly recommended the San Antonio Riverwalk area. The Downtown Riverwalk area was a perfect setting. It was a short stroll to the Riverwalk area. There were numerous themed restaurants, jewelry stores and souvenir places. Many took advantage of the riverboat cruises and horse carriage rides.

The hotel price crept up of course, \$139. Also banquet prices and tours. We had 169 attendees, up a bit from the last reunion. I think we still were affected by the Covid and higher prices. It was nice not having to take care of registrations and checkins as AFRI did that 😊

Great opening 2023 Reunion opening video produced by Greg Maciolek. Video is segmented by all previous F-106 All Troops reunions photos, aircraft, maintenance troops, committee members, a klaxon horn sounding off showing two F-106's taking off at night and finishes with logos from every F-106 unit that hosted a F-106 Aircraft!

[F-106 All Troops 2023 Reunion Opening Video](#)



Dick Stultz designed reunion challenge coin.

Dick Stultz did another marvelous job with designing the 2023 reunion logo/patch. He also surprised us with designing and producing a challenge coin for this reunion. He was very clever in showing the Six as a "Mig 106."

Both Color Guards came from Lackland AFB. This was the first reunion we weren't able to have an Air Force Band perform. They said they were booked that week.



Lackland AFB Color Guard preparing for entry.



Greg Maciolek recording interviews

Greg Maciolek, our audio visual expert was very busy all week and was able to record many hours of video interviews as well as the banquets.

Jim Granfor continued the tradition of Jim Gier by hand building wood clocks and other wooden articles for our raffles.



Jim Granfor hand built 15 clocks & articles

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Mal Emerson preparing the "Six Troops" to march into the Army meeting room.

Our **"Senior Warriors Sixers"** video marching in hallway headed to Army Reserve Recruiters classroom training room. What a blast it was! Eric Klanderman captured this video. Bobski had an idea to do this while our F-106 people kept walking through the hallway to the F-106 hospitality room. Everyday we walked by their training room. Malcolm Emerson did a brilliant job of cadence calling with Gary Foust as our OIC. Enjoy!

[Senior Sixers Warriors Marching down hallway](#)

This next video showing our Senior Sixers Warriors doing their skit in the Army Reserve Recruiters Training Room was taken by our AV specialist Greg Maciolek. He did not have a chance to set up his equipment ahead of this event. He had to run into their training room just ahead of us marching in, so there are some areas where the video is blurred. Enjoy this fun and memorable event video:

[Senior Sixers Warriors Skit](#)

[Senior Sixers Warriors Skit](#) (version taken by Don Smith)



Bobski & Pat Murray posing with Lackland T.I.'s

Of Course being in San Antonio some of us made it out to Lackland for a Basic Training graduation and parade! It was impressive that Lackland had forty some aircraft on static display around the parade grounds. Their F-106 was on a pedestal near one on the back gates.

Another fun tour was at Kelly AFB. A busload of people toured a

drone squadron operations area. They still require quite a bit of ground support of the usual crew chiefs, avionics, hydraulics, security and of course flight operators (used to be pilots)!



Drone operations tour was interesting!



John Hermack at the controls of a T-38 simulator

After the drone tour they toured a T-38 Flight Simulator. They let a few of our guys perform a sortie! Just like playing a video game!

There was also a tour to the Fredericksburg Museum of the Pacific War. It was lightly attended, but those who toured it enjoyed it.

We also had a fun night at the Rio Cibolo Ranch. BBQ food was good and we were entertained by a Cowboy roper who was a comedian and did some fantastic rope tricks.



Rio Cibolo Ranch night.

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Outstanding video produced by F-106 Reunion Committeeman Greg Maciolek (Col., retired). Scrolling Names of known deceased F-106 members who flew, maintained or supported the F-106. Military aviation poem "High Flight", written by John G. Magee on September 3, 1941, solemn background music, Taps, 21 gun rifle salute and more.

[F-106 All Troops Reunion Deceased Members Tribute Video](#)

So in conclusion for this 2023 reunion we took a vote for the next reunion location, Knoxville, Langley area or Dayton to be in the fall of 2024. Oh and also Dave Stiteler and Bobski decided to volunteered to head up the 2024 reunion without using a Planner Organization.

See you in the Fall of 2024! Dave and Bobski are already investigating sites!

Bob Kwiecinski (Bobski)