

## 2009 FAOCS Alumni Chapter Reunion Critique Written Comments

1. Everything was great. Thank you so much. It was great to see you. Pat and I had a Great time.

2. I want to thank you sincerely for the great time last week. As I reflect on it, I realize that those were the most memorable ten months of my life (including basic and AIT). Yours and your wife's efforts catapulted it into a fantastic experience.

3. Thanks. I really enjoyed my first visit. After I get work done that is piled up on my desk I will complete the critique form. Be assured that any comments I make will be in the spirit of helping describe the event from a first timer perspective. Know this. I was very impressed by your work and the work of your cadre of volunteers. I have nothing but praise for the level of organization and the countless hours that must have gone in to making this event possible. Congratulations to all on the outstanding job.

4. As the only class member from (my class), I will be making an effort to reach other class members in advance of next year's event. My success in that effort will determine if I attend in 2010 or not. To that end I have a couple of questions and a suggestion or two. Do you have email or other contact information for members of (my class) that you can forward to me to give me a start? Have members of (my class) attended past reunions? If so, who are they and how can I reach them? I understand there may be privacy issues in these matters but I believe you asked about sharing email or other information as part of the registration process. If not then that would be a good idea to foster more communications between members. Can you provide a help sheet showing the most effective Web sites for searching out classmates? Do you have other search experiences employed by others that would be helpful in getting me started? You may already have this information at the ready and if so please just forward it to me so I can get started on my search project.

I had the pleasure of sitting with two individuals at breakfast who had found every member of their class. That is astounding. They gave me some pointers that I will employ. Again, you may have a list of such pointers. If so please send them along. If not, you might send out a request for such information to folks you know have been doing such searches, compile the information and send it out to novices like me.

Again, thanks to you and your wife for all your hard work and thanks to the 1/78th for hosting us old farts in such a respectful fashion.

5. Unless I failed to read it, I was not aware the Induction Ceremony Dinner was "Formal". The information I received before I departed home said "Coat & Tie". But...I may have missed it. Super support by the 78th and all others. Lieutenants were as I remembered them: Sharp, professional and helpful.

6. Outstanding reunion. Was the best I have attended. It would be nice if we could eat in a dining facility. I hope LTC Ivester's replacement is as dedicated to this endeavor as he was. Could leave out FOB Kelly and it would be great next year when the museum is completed. Seeing the training methods was great. Keep up the good work, it is appreciated. I will help next year in any way I can do here in New Mexico. Again, thanks for the hard work. I appreciate it and plan to return next year.

7. Thanks for a great reunion, this is my fourth and the best. I particularly appreciated the prearranged seating for the banquet; it was always a problem for me as the only attendee from my class finding the right table where I would fit in. You may recall that I spoke to you about getting some updates from my class, would appreciate any information you might have access to. Thanks again for your efforts and those of your lovely wife, see you next year.

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8. On post lodging was insufficient to accommodate everyone. Staying on post certainly would enhance the experience. Mermite lunch was great and fun but it would be better if the unit could create two lines to shorten the wait. Please provide more time for the business meeting and handouts should be provided for the financial information. The price for the golf outing was different than printed in the registration sheet. That wasn't a problem for me but it may have been for someone else. A little better organization for the golf outing is in order. A sheet explaining the competition holes, scoring, card turn in, etc. This may lead to a better level of competition. Try a best ball tournament of some other format. I was not able to stay for Friday so I cannot comment on those events.

9. The overall experience was superior. The event was well-planned and the Army support was great. We didn't get an opportunity to do anything at FOB Kelly; such as see inside the housing, so that was not very interesting. The other problem that afternoon was that one of the buses had problems with its A/C. Generally, the bus transport worked as well as it could with such a large group. And that led to some good conversations with other OCS grads from other classes. That same afternoon, the buses were not carrying any ice water, but when we got to the MB4 site, it was provided out of a van. The housing and food were better than I expected. The weather in Ft. Sill is what it is; let's not move the date any later in the year. After the group photo, maybe the buses could have swung around by the old OCS barracks. A couple groups of us walked down there and got permission to go inside one building. I'm sure that all class 15-69 attendees were very pleased with the reunion. A very big thank you to Randy and Penny, and to the Army participants who helped. I was very impressed, and glad to have made the trip on our class' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

10. Thanks for everything! Enjoyed meeting you and keep up the good work!

11. The wife and I miss the involvement of the Army band and the formal retreat ceremony. We are probably among a very few who enjoy dancing after the ceremony. Important to me personally was the absence of the National Anthem at the colors presentation. Having said that, it was a great reunion!

12. BUSINESS MEETING - Providing the agenda for the meeting in advance with brief discussion points would have been helpful.  
ENGAGEMENT SKILLS TRAINER - More time allocated to this would have been very helpful.  
MILITARY SUPPORT - The support provided by the Military was magnificent, far beyond my expectations. This reunion far exceeded my expectations. Thanks again and a Well Done to all.

13. Overall the reunion, scheduled activities and military support were outstanding (that's above excellent). For next year's reunion, it would nice to have an update briefing from the CG or DCG (senior command) on consolidation of the Field Artillery and Air Defense Artillery Schools at Ft. Sill or Joint Fires Center of Excellence. A demonstration from the half section would be great as part of the museum tour. As normal - outstanding job by all of the people involved in putting on the reunion.

14. Overall the planning and execution of this reunion by the committee and the 1/78 was phenomenal. It was on a level of excellence that matched or exceeded any like professional or corporate event. The logistics were great. There was no "hurry up & wait". Meal served in the field as well as under cover were prepared well, hot, served well and seating went perfectly. Not only the committee and the 1/78 personnel involved did good, but the bus drivers and the lodging staff were equally pleasant and helpful at all times. Based on the OCS expectations and experiences I would have expected nothing less. I was not disappointed. The extra effort by all was noticed and appreciated. Great lengths were taken to make this a success by all involved. But the total dedication and motivation of Randy and his wife especially are to be commended.

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15. Suggest a wives tea at the officer's club to give wives an opportunity to share stories of past experiences. A video tape of the live fire demonstration would be a great addition to be added to YouTube for viewing.

16. Can you list the names of the Hall of Fame inductees in the information that is forwarded to the membership? THANKS! For the hard work you and your wife Penny have accomplished.

17. Some items were not applicable, so a N/A option might be appropriate.

Apparently some rooms were better than others, but lodging staff said that they were all the same. Flexibility of free time for other Post visits and/or naps was appreciated.

Because there have been so many advances in ammo, some more time on that session would have been interesting. The group photo could use a couple of LT's to make the timing better, and to fill in the bleachers from the top. The best registration that I've seen.

The agenda provided for buses to leave Durham Hall for both the tour and Allin Hall "as needed", but that was not clearly understood by the escort honcho.

Excellent idea to have escorts in uniform, both to see their names and to see the patches of where some of them are headed.

The stuff that you put together for the Business Meeting was excellent; and it was so comprehensive that there were virtually no questions to be asked.

Some background and explanation of the Hall of Fame and Saint Barbara awards would be appropriate. Invariably, there are a large percentage of attendees for the first time, so we should not assume that they all know and appreciate what is going on.

18. Need to have ability to register for day's not whole package. Some of us are not fully retired but prices were for fully retired. You might consider more items on Saturday and Sunday.

19. Although Temporary Vehicle registration was not given, getting on post with POV was really no problem. Day 3: FA Museum Complex tour was split into two groups, because of size. Compared to last year, it was rushed, and was not presented (we were told to wander around and look). Same for 1875 Cavalry tour. Once again the reunion was terrific. Thanks to Randy, Penny and all of the 1/78th support. This is something to which we all look forward.

20. This was my first reunion and I found it very well planned and executed. My wife, who has never been on a military base had a great time and is looking forward to the next reunion. I have two questions that I do not know if they could be incorporated in the daily activities or not. First would it be possible to allocate time or travel to the FAOCS and Museum store. Second - not being retired from the military, would it be possible to make purchases at the post uniform store. It would like to have been able to purchase Army logo t-shirts and running shorts, It would be nice if these could be added in the future. You did a great job keep up the good work

21. Camo nets over bleacher, tables etc, excellent. Golf outing was lacking in instructions, however, being good former Lts we figured it out. Enjoyed the comradeship and the course - a good time was had by all.

22. Thanks again....Regarding reunion activities and related ideas....Does anyone have a tape recording of the marching songs, particularly when we marched into chow...A CD of that would be a moneymaker....How about mixing up some of the base activities with a trip to Medicine Park...or up Mt. Scott (Medicine Mountain), or the Plains Museum just off post?...A trip to "The Square" would be depressing, as I guess all the bars (and hustlers) are gone.

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23. Just let me say that was a great reunion. You and your staff did a superb job. The incoming Ft. Sill Commander Dave Halverson was a student of mine here at the war college. I will ensure that he knows the outstanding work you and your staff do there. The Ft. Sill support was great. Question - Am I a member of Field Artillery Association/Field Artillery OCS Association that supports your work? If not send me the application.

24. Never got any even the barest hint that for 25 years FAOCS was holding reunions, I guess annually. Hence the low rating. Did get something from Xxxxx - but it was generalities. Xxxxx kept sending stuff which half the time was in word 2007. Until Tuesday, I only had word 2003. Some of us just don't feel a great need at our age to have the latest and greatest on our machines.

When my wife and I got there about 1800 -1830 Thursday NOBODY knew NOTHING. Go to Altamont then go to the other hall for this great billboard that would tell us something. Nobody at the check in desk had a schedule of events, none on any bulletin board etc. IMO the check in desk at quarters should have been furnished a schedule like "most" hotels/motels providing rooms for events are given by the event organizer. When I organize and sign up a block of rooms that facility gets a shotgun sleeve with the schedule in it that has red letters on top "DESK COPY DO NOT REMOVE."

All day Friday, until picture time and even then someone mis-ided you, I must have asked for "Randy a 'big guy' with a beard" to everyone but you and your wife. Nobody could provide a clue as to how to contact you.

When I sent the money I had no idea what I really was "buying?" I still don't but that is immaterial except FAOCS membership. I think I joined the FAOCS Alumni Assn.? For X hours, days, weeks, months, years when I sent you the money? What are the membership dues? and what options on those dues? E.g. family, Life, 3 year, 5 year or what?

Durham Hall's walls are tooooooo busy. Maybe take some of the pictures and put them in big photo album books by year groups. A lot of jostling in the floor space (hot odorous after a full day in the sun.

It might work out if you'd get a local photog up there who would do pictures of the separate classes as well as a gaggle straggle. I would have liked to have a picture of my classmates to go with the one taken 50 years ago.

25. I was only able to attend the Hall of Fame Banquet, however everything was great. Looking forward to next year. Thanks for a great job well done. Enjoyed the Reunion and will be back next year so keep me informed. I viewed the pictures from the Reunion and the HOF presentation on the website. All looked great.

26. Excellent presentation and operations, impressive organization, operation was conducted by personnel much more experienced and knowledgeable than myself, therefore, no recommendations for change made.

27. We felt that the location and food were much better on Thursday night at Gunner's Inn than on Friday night. The Friday night meal was not as good as the Thursday night meal. Also, room temperature was uncomfortable on Friday night.

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28. Wives particularly liked the extra effort to have portable potties and camouflage netting for the sun. FA Assoc has so little gifts for sale; it's hardly worth the effort to find a parking spot. Outstanding job. We should always be sure to communicate our appreciation for the welcoming and supportive attitude we see from the staff, soldiers, LT escorts, and everyone on Post. I am concerned when I see the buses box-in other officers and NCOs who have a schedule to meet and can't get their cars out of the lot because of us. OCS Hall of Fame is a wonderful spot. Every active duty volunteer should be recognized somehow and know of our appreciation. Post Lodging facilities are just fine, but the soiled carpets and bathrooms would merit a month of trips up MB 4. I treasure the moments I spent with my classmates. It was great. You and Penny and the rest who volunteer for all this work can never be thanked enough.

29. Sign in packet might add a paragraph about available medical assistance as most of us are 60+. At least a phone number for Civilian hospital/doctor, VA Clinic and Army hospital. I had a med emergency while at Sill and had a difficult time finding the # and contacting the VA Clinic. (I got the phone number from the VA website – I couldn't find it in the phone book in our lodging).

30. Thank you for an excellent reunion. If I can assist for 2010 please contact me.

31. Ensure A/C on buses work. Extend registration to 7 or 8 pm. Day one meal mediocre: more variety please. Museum tour is important – more time s/b sent there. Jark may be better to start day three. Randy & Penny deserve highest praise

32. Reunion was well organized & conducted. Randy Dunham & his staff should be commended as well personnel from the 78<sup>th</sup> FA. 1<sup>st</sup> order of business should move funds excess to operating requirements from checking account to secure interest earning account – money market/CD. I was surprised that group pictures were not sold i.e. fundraising!! Take orders at HOF banquet? Does chapter secretary get a stipend? I hope so! If not he should!! Thank you one & all!!

33. Someone was smoking in the vicinity of my room #318 Allin. Fallen Comrades Presentation was the highlight of the reunion in my opinion – well done documentary. Overall a great event – will be back.

34. Thanks Randy & Penny – Another outstanding program.

35. Let us know next year dates earlier – so we can plan 2010. Critz Hall mermite lunch - Food was great – needed additional serving line – too slow!! Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was rushed – not enough individual time per awardee. LTs were not good conduits of info – for bus give them loud speakers, etc. HOF buses not organized well enough – going buses unloaded one at a time. Leaving should have moved when loaded one at a time. Need overall transportation movement officer/NCO.

36. Mermite meals were difficult to eat out-of-doors. On buses – LTs did not know what was going on – when an NCO was in charge job was done better. It wasn't evident who was in charge of LTs – they acted more like participants in the reunion than responsible for getting the task accomplished. Overall – great job in general – better than some of the reunions we have attended. (We have been to 5).

37. I wouldn't have changed a thing. Everything was excellent, my hats off to all those who made it go.

38. I was very pleased with the help from the military – Thank to all. Another great job. Thanks.

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39. The lady serving breakfast, name unknown (Blonde), was the most pleasant and made you eager to start the day. The timing this year was in conflict with Mothers Day. However the schedule was Excellent!

40. Job well done. Everything was just great.

41. Get folks on buses faster after Mow-Way. Use bull horn to announce departures. A lot of us waiting on a few stragglers.

42. Randy and his wife did an exceptional job. I will attend another in 8 years. 50<sup>th</sup> year since graduation

43. (Temporary Vehicle Registration) was not necessary after the first admission Used only ID to get on post. Air Force Bases do not require vehicle registration any longer. My closest military post is Buckley AFB in Aurora, CO. Said military ID was sufficient to get on base. Why not press the Army to follow suit. Save lots of money & administrative cost.

Enjoyed the reunion – FOB Kelly visit outstanding. Since my son is headed that way, now I will know how he will be living. Enjoyed firing at bad guys.

Enjoyed the featured speaker at the Banquet. Captain Johnny T. Clack. Found out he was a Cuchi Base Camp with the 25<sup>th</sup> INF Division same time I was there as the Asst G-1 for Morale & Discipline. General Shinsiki – former Chief of Staff of the Army and now the Secretary of Veterans Affairs was also an FO with the 25<sup>th</sup> at the same time.

44. On-Post Lodging: I didn't stay on post but the only Alumni I heard speak on the subject and who liked the quarters they were given were the one given the field grade officer's quarters.

Meal at Allin Hall on Wednesday: Alumni should be given option of NOT going the Wednesday BBQ at Allin Hall and NOT having to pay for it. On the registration form there is not an option and everyone has to pay for it. Make the price of the BBQ an optional money adder which will be included with the interested Alumni's registration fee. By doing that you will have a reliable head count and payment and can plan the BBQ with a firm budget based on those who will attend the BBQ. And you will not wind up with too much left over food. It is unfair to charge everyone for this meal. Only the ones attending should have to pay.

Group Photo: There needs to be an organized effort for getting people in and out of the bleachers for our picture. Because of the SNAFU with some of the busses getting the Alumni to Durham Hall this year, several different groups of people went halfway up the bleachers and then sat down, and waited for the other group of people still riding on the busses to arrive. There was very restricted access to the unoccupied top bleachers seats by the time the second group arrived at Durham Hall. Access to the remaining seats at the top of the bleachers was limited. Supervision is needed in both filling the bleachers with Alumni and then getting everyone safely down. The top seats should fill first and the lower seats after. The reverse order should be used for egress.

LT Escorts: Even though the battalion commander praised the lieutenants in the Friday night dinner, the situation observed by those on the busses was that no one was in charge. The new Lieutenants had a deer-in-the-headlights look when it came to managing the OCS Alumni. They just didn't know how to do it. Instead of using Lieutenants for the bus leaders, I suggest replacing the Lieutenants with NCOs next year and putting a senior NCO in charge. Managing the OCS Alumni is not an easy task. One person stated it is the same as herding cats. I disagree and think herding cats would be easier. NCOs have better people skills and management skills and would do a better job with the Alumni.

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45. FOB Kelly could be dropped. The total cost could be lowered. Wives seemed to enjoy it. Army role was outstanding to include food, firepower demo, NCO info etc. etc.
46. Thanks for your great efforts and time to make the reunion such an amazing experience.
47. I drafted a Letter of Commendation for Randy and wife's outstanding accomplishments. It would be redundant in view of the above. (Reference to all excellent marks on critique boxes)
48. Logistics were handled very well. The FOB was not interesting. Group Photo is always a trial. Too many people on the ground. All in All it was a good program. As you know, I came to Sill one day early to spend time in the museums – mission accomplished.  
Randy - Thank you and all the other persons from the maids in our quarters to the troops and officers who do so much to make our visit worthwhile. Hope to see you in 2010!
49. Lunch service at Critz Hall could have been better. Needed two serving lines and separate "Drinks area" to speed thing up.
50. Jark – Some transportation should be available for those who simply cannot walk the hill.
51. Compared to my last reunion, 2007, the LT escorts were below par. The 2007 escorts were more people oriented and friendly. They greeted us when we got on the buses, asked how everything was going, briefed us on what was going to happen that day, and walked the length of the bus, talking to us and answering questions. At the Hall of Fame Banquet they would introduce their spouses when they saw us. The 2009 escorts did none of this. They got on the bus and sat down without saying a word. Again when the bus arrived at the location they got off without a word. They appeared to group among themselves. I will say, if asked a question they answered or found the info if they did not know the answer. I talked to several other alumni and the feeling was mutual.
52. Hall of Fame – I think there are too many inductees- Durham Hall is being taken over by HOF – A bunch of pictures of guys who you have no idea of what they did except maybe make Full Colonel. Thanks for a great reunion
53. My wife and I thought this was the best reunion we have been able to attend. The BBQ evening meal is a good way to get to know a lot of people early on in the reunion.
54. Jark – fog – no sunrise. Call Al Gore next year. Jark Bus – no show. Transportation- some with and some without AC. HCT- Shell too heavy  
My first time back in 50 years. Easy to get lost while looking for something from back then. Many thanks to you and your wife.
55. The Reunion was outstanding! The presentations and activities were well thought out and planned. The Firepower demonstration could not have been better. Others who have attended have stated they thought it was the best they had attended as well. Thank You for all your efforts.
56. I would suggest that in case of rain out or at the participants election of not to participate in the golf outing in rainy weather. I would recommend that you send out something to encourage all to do a news release on the event in their local paper. This would gain publicity for the event and perhaps help identify other graduates. You should send a suggested media release if you decide to do this. I would send it by email or mail it.
57. The event was well organized. The best event was the session with COL Fant. The food was the best of all reunions attended. Like the way the Hall of Fame was re-done.

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58. Thanks and had a great time at the 2009 Reunion. You and your wife did a great job and your hard work for that as well as all year long is certainly appreciated.

59. Free Time – Very little. I flew in early from Florida to reacquaint myself to the area.

Transportation – Insufficient the morning of the walk, other than that, excellent. (Some of the buses were lacking in AC)

Big Picture Film – OK

Historic Tour – Enjoyed the cemetery and Med Bluffs. FOB Kelly was just OK.

Engagement Trainer – I commented to a NCO that a better briefing on the individual weapon, safety latch, magazine release, etc. should have been given prior to the engagement scenario. It was a long time since I handled that weapon. Time was available since we went through in groups of 10 and had approx 75+ people there. (Better weapons familiarization would have allowed me more than (1) lethal shot!)

Durham Hall – I was looking for a picture of an inductee from last year, and didn't know where to look and there was no one to ask. I finally figured out how it was arranged. I can't express how much I enjoyed my visit. I have planned to return over the last several years. It wasn't until last year that COL William Bonnick (RET), an inductee from last year, called me and told me about the reunion. I don't know how many more there are like me but the number must be great (If you had 100 1<sup>st</sup> timers this year!). I can't even suggest how to reach them unless there are articles in magazines like Military Officer and MOWW.

Jark Stroll – I did make it to the top! I think I signed up? And I am in the group picture, standing on the leg of MB4 marker. (We did not call it Jark in '54) We called it other things though!) We didn't bring back rocks either.

Induction Ceremony- I am deeply touched by the entire dinner at the Patriot Club. (CPT Clack was tremendous. Colonel's Fant & Ivester are truly great.

Randy, it was a pleasure to meet you and your wife. You did a great job. Hat's off to the 1-78<sup>th</sup> for their participation. You filled the days well from beginning to end. Noon meals in mermite containers were outstanding. Keep up the good work.

60. Excellent Preparation- Enjoyed thoroughly – one of the best reunions attended!

Recommend in the next re-write of the Durham Hall FAOCS publication, a comment be included that during periods when OCS was not being conducted at Fort Sill, that many hundreds of OCS graduates were commissioned in the FA upon completion of OCS programs at the Ground General School, Fort Riley Kansas during the period 1941-1951, and at the Infantry School, Fort Banning, Georgia at other times Fort Sill was not engaged in operating an OCS program.

61. Thank you for the two videos that were shown at the 2009 OCS reunion banquet Thursday evening. They were the video of the superiority of the artillery vs. the other branches and the excellent remembrance video showing each of our classmates who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Is it possible to obtain a copy of these two videos? Can they be purchased? If so please let me know as I would like to get a copy of each. Thanks for all you and your associates are doing.

62. Really appreciate all the demanding "behind-the-scenes work" you and your wife did to make this year's FAOCS Alumni meeting so successful. This meeting was the first time I attended such an event and it was super!!

63. Good Event! Thanks for taking care of me and the Mrs. You guys work too hard to be retired. Hope to see you next year. Thanks again

64. I would like to commend you and your charming wife for all the work you did to make the Reunion so enjoyable. Everything was outstanding, from beginning to end. My recommendation is – don't change a thing. This was the first time I attended an OCS Reunion. I'll be back next year.

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65. Perhaps a little more downtime to visit gift shop or talk to existing active duty military. Would visit another site rather than go to Geronimo's grave which took up a lot of time in the heat of day. Would like to obtain a copy of the videos that were shown on Thursday night. appreciate the outstanding work done by those who organized and worked at the reunion.

66. Everything at the reunion was outstanding. I extended my stay an extra day to view Durham Hall in detail. It was well worth it. Randy and his wife did a wonderful job. Without them, it is my opinion; it would not have been as good. Also CPT (R) Tommy Clack should be commended for an excellent speech. This was my first reunion. Lord willing, I'll be back next year.