

REUNION UPDATE



This is the back view of the Soundside Club and Commando Inn lodging facility. The club, and gazebo (bottom right) face Santa Rosa Sound.

Fort Walton Beach reunion

April 10-14, 2018, event in heart of Florida's sunny Emerald Coast

The Ramey Air Force Base Historical Association hosts its 2018 business meeting and reunion at Fort Walton Beach, Florida, April 10 to 14, 2018.

And the registration price is still just \$190.

The event site and headquarters is at the Hurlburt Field Soundside Consolidated Club and Visitors Center. It is co-located with the Commando Inn lodging facility.

"Locals call it the Soundside Club, or just Soundside," said Ella Moon, a manager at the club.

Soundside is also what people call the small and picturesque extension of Hurlburt that's home to the club. Next to the club is the Joint Operations Planning Facility. This small "base" lies directly across Highway 98 from the Hurlburt main gate. It has its own gate. The base marina is there. And it has a hiking trail, too.

"It's a nice facility—right on the water. It has big banquet rooms and a bar and grill, The Hooch, which has

food and drinks," reunion committee member Gail Cole said. "The hotel rooms are nice, and \$60 a night. It has a small beach and there are lots of trees. And you can go for a walk—there's a trail about 40 yards from the club."

The event headquarters—hospitality room—is the hub of activities. At Soundside, it will be in the Hartman Room. That's where administrative functions take place.

Members also meet there to socialize and grab a cold drink. And it's where silent auction items displayed.

"We have a few more things to shore up, but we're getting close to finalizing the reunion details," Association President Joyce Lanier said. "I do know that our members will get their money's worth. And they'll have time to relax and socialize a bit."

The final details of the reunion, with a complete itinerary, will be in the January 2018 of the *View From The Tower*.

In the meantime, here are the details we do have:

Arrival airport. There are three to choose from. Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) is closest, about 15 miles from Hurlburt. Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) is about 65 miles away. And

Pensacola International Airport (PNS) is about 40 miles away. All have rental car agencies.

Base entry. No worries. Association member with or without a military ID card may enter the Hurlburt main base or Soundside for the reunion. Security police at both base gates will have a list of the members that may enter.

Reunion registration. That is at Soundside. It's where members get their badge, welcome packet and T-shirt. But the reunion committee still doesn't know if registration will be at the hospitality room or the lodging front desk.

Register early. Remember to circle, on the registration form (Page 11), what size and color T-shirt you want.

Lodging. The association reserved 35 rooms at the base's Commando Inn (21 are at Soundside), April 9 to 15.

Members may book rooms now. First come, first served.

Call (850) 884-7115 to reserve a room. Provide the RAFBHA group confirmation number: 20630098084. These details are also on the reunion registration form.

Register now. If you need a room for a person with special needs, remember to



Photos/Louis Arana

ask the reservation clerk.

Check in is at 2 p.m., check out at 11 a.m. Rooms have one queen bed only; private bathroom, television, microwave, mini fridge and coffee maker.

The price is right: \$60—much cheaper than off base.

Silent auction. "This event has never been more important, now that Hurricane Maria has virtually destroyed the Borinquen Field-Ramey Air Force Base Museum," Lanier said. "So, please, bring what you can. The money we make from the auction goes directly into helping reestablish our museum." Email her if you plan to donate something at mrzip@mtco.com.

Websites. These sites have more on the Emerald Coast:

www.hurlburt.af.mil
<http://myhurlburt.com>
www.emeraldcoastfl.com
www.fwb.org
www.cityofdestin.com
www.visitpensacola.com

Remember—book early. Final reunion updates and itinerary will be in the January 2018 newsletter.

We challenge member to reach out, make contacts and try to bring one new member into our fold.

—Joyce Lanier
President