

Hello Everyone,

Call it what you may, but I have worked on these reunions since January of 1990. At that time I was in a different life, one daughter was still in High School and my truck was only 6 years old. Now, 13 years later, I am in a new life, my sixth grandchild has been here two years and my truck is now 20 years old.

I have very fond memories of my life on "The Base". Fond enough to have given me the drive and stick-to-it-tiveness to work on the research of trying to find the "Kids" over all these years. On the way, I was fortunate enough to find a lot of the parents and some GI's that lived on the base. Some of the GI's were there in the mid-forties. After talking to literally thousands of people (including a lot of wrong numbers), "The List" has approximately 1400 names and addresses. (Another 122 addresses have been removed do to the deceased or by request of the individual.)

Most everyone relates to the good times they had while living there either as a parent, a GI or as a Brat. (civil service and military) I have also had opportunities to talk to other military-brat organizations, book writers, politicians, military personnel, civilians and many others about life at White Sands. January 9, 1999 – I was invited to talk on a radio show; and did, about our mission of finding the kids of WSMR.

Back to the memories. Does anyone remember walking everywhere? How about the cost of a loaf of bread, gasoline or the 25¢ haircut? How many others of you knew about the old ice machine beside the old gas station? Change fell to the side so if your fingers were small enough, while on your way to the picture show; you could retrieve a quarter, enough to get you in to see a movie and pay for the popcorn at the old theater. (For those of you that have not been there, the theater is the same as it was in the 50's - just more paint and higher prices.) Remember the trips - Sox Hop in El Paso, Carlsbad Caverns, White Sands National Monument, The Grove, Cox's ranch, The Organ Mountains. Remember Scouting, Vacation Bible school, Teen Club (old and new), and Hoover's Paddle? How about the snakes, horny toads, rabbits, tarantulas and lizards? How about the snake pit around the housing area that was suppose to keep the snakes out? Remember the scooters, and the old cars. You may remember a gold Cushman Eagle that I had. When I sold it to Ted Parker, he painted it flat black. I never did forgive him. The 55 Chevy I owned for my paper route, I never got to drive because I was still under age. Remember the different jobs you had starting out in life. I personally mowed lawns, worked in the old bowling alley setting pins and at one time I had the entire base plus Organ and a small on neighborhood out side of Las Cruces on my paper route.

Remember the house(s) where you lived. We lived in three different homes. Built two yards, had one address change while we were living there. ('D' Street became Dart Street when the base name was changed from White Sands Proving Ground to White Sands Missile Range.)

Of course there was the trailer park, Navy quarters, and the Officers quarters. (By the way, if you need an address, call me; I have most of the phone directories from the 50's and 60's.) There were about 40 out of 79 streets for residences and it did not take long to learn them like the back of your hand.

Remember the clear skies, wonderful temperatures, low humidity and the minimal days of total cloudiness. How about the dust storms? I remember holding on to a street sign to keep from being blown away. Does anyone remember the day a car in front of the school had all four doors open and the wind picked it up and rammed it into the vehicle in front of it? Does anyone remember trying to do twice the speed limit anywhere on the base? I remember hitting golf balls from the driving range down by headquarters up base into the housing areas. A lot of the guys had some of their best years playing baseball at WSMR. Did you take dancing lessons in school and had to have your parents take you to pick-up your first formal date?

Remember the Teen Club functions. The dances, hay rides, the dances, pool parties, and the dances. Some people could really cut-a-rug, while others just stood in one place and rocked back-and-forth. Guys, did you sack groceries at the Commissary? Felt lucky if you got 10¢ a bag. I have been back to the base probably 10 times since I left in 1963. I even had an opportunity to work on the base with my past company for a couple of months. That was when I drove for the first time on Range Road Seven, up range and got to see the Trinity Site, the wild horses, the different mountain ranges and other wilds. Very few people in this country will ever have the opportunity to go on Range Road Seven.

During a lot of my return trips, especially when I was on leave in the service and went to Las Cruces to see relatives, I would almost always go see Mr. and Mrs. Hoover. Which reminds me of the time Mr. Hoover made me write (by hand-of course) the entire Constitution of the United States after school. Then when I was done I had to watch him throw it in the trash. Remember the Little Red English Grammar book Mrs. Hoover used. I think Stephanie still has hers. (Mrs. Hoover has joined us at each reunion for the formal dinner.)

Well, I need to close this. The longer I sit here, the more I think to mention. I lived on the base less than some but more than many - seven years. Again, it was a very memorable and wonderful time in my life. The camaraderie of the kids was unique. Almost like a small town anywhere in the good old US of A. When a conversation is brought up about - why WSMR Kids, I just tell them that this was a place that when you left it, you were in the middle of nowhere. And that, most bases, when you went out the gate, you were in some town. This made WSPG/WSMR different than other bases. I am hoping my two daughters go to the reunion. My oldest was born on the base while I was on Christmas leave. My youngest had never been there until the 1999 reunion and both had heard about it their entire lives.

I am so proud that I have touched so many lives in a positive way and played a part in bringing together so many friends. Some of the kids never came to a reunion, but because of "The LIST", were still able to communicate with each other. The committee; not enough could be said. They have become a family - year round, while working for almost twelve years to preparing for the best reunions I have ever attended.

Enjoy the "WSMR Kids Reunion Fall 2004", I know I will.

Regards,  
William E Adler  
Founder

