

A mini-reunion and informal re-dedication of the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Memorial was held at Cañon City, CO, on 26 - 29 August 2015. Association members attending were: Wilbur and Dawn Anderson, Pikeville, NC; Claude and Diane Blanchard, Metairie, LA; David and Charlotte Burrous, Cañon City, CO; Bill and Kay Cathey, Kerrville, TX; Ron Doughty, Cape Girardeau, MO; Sherif Lepi, Albuquerque, NM. Reunion days were spent touring, shopping and socializing, and evening dinners were enjoyed at favored restaurants. At the re-dedication ceremony at the Colonel Leo Sidney Boston War Memorial Park at Fremont County Airport, where a memorial wall includes bricks engraved with the names of the 108 12TFW fatalities, Association president, Claude Blanchard gave the introduction: “I’m Skip Blanchard. I’m from Metairie, LA; I’m president of the U.S. Air Force 12th Tactical Fighter Wing Association; and I was an F-4 fighter pilot in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing at Cam Ranh Bay Air Base in Vietnam in 1969. Welcome to all of you who are attending this reunion event here in beautiful Colorado. Our members traveled here this week from all around the country and we are enjoying this beautiful area. We have organized this informal annual ceremony to honor those who lost their lives while assigned to the U.S. Air Force 12th Tactical Fighter Wing. Your attention, please, for the playing of “To The Colors” and “The National Anthem.” Next, Association vice president, Ron Doughty, described the history of the 12TFW beginning in 1962 at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, and concluding in 1971 at Phu Cat Air Base in Vietnam. He stated that “Today, we are gathered here to remember and honor those who gave their lives and to re-dedicate this memorial

monument to the people whose names are listed on the brick wall here. So, why was this location chosen? During the year 2000, we discovered this memorial monument here at the Leo S. Boston War Memorial Park, which had been developed by the Fremont County government. Bricks on the wall had been engraved with the names of Fremont County military service fatalities, which included Ronald L. Packard, a native of Cañon City, who was a member of the 12th when he was killed in North Vietnam. Also, the F-4 aircraft on display here had once been assigned to the 12th. It clearly seemed appropriate to expand the bricks on the wall to include all 12th losses, and with the help of the War Memorial Park Commission, the Fremont County Veterans Service Officer, and Fremont County Commissioners, 12th veterans obtained an agreement which set aside a panel of the memorial wall (the section nearest to the F-4) for inscription of the names of all known 12th casualties. Fund-raising efforts were conducted and the engraving was completed during 2001. September 16, 2001 was selected as the dedication ceremony date. General Peter Sutton, then the commander of the 12th Flying Training Wing provided his written remarks for that ceremony, and I'd like to repeat a portion of those remarks.”

"The 12th Tactical Fighter Wing has a long and distinguished history of selfless commitment to defending our great nation, beginning with the wing's activation in 1962. Through the Cuban Missile Crisis and the war in Vietnam, the 12th was home to hundreds of real American heroes - true patriots who risked their lives to protect freedom and democracy."

"The memorial you are dedicating today honors those courageous airmen who gave their lives while serving in the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing. To the families of those airmen, thank you for their service and your commitment to preserving their memory and the honorable lineage of the 12th."

"Please accept my most heartfelt support for this memorial and the people it represents." Signed, PETER U. SUTTON, Brigadier General, U.S. Air Force.

As the re-dedication ceremony then continued, to recognize those who lost their lives, the name of each individual was stated. Skip Blanchard then played "Taps" on the bugle, then three skydivers of the High Sky Adventures Parachute Club landed while towing a huge American flag and streamers.