

SAME Fort Worth Post – November 2017 Meeting Program

SNOWBALL EXPRESS

Speaker: **Major General (Retired) Rich Mentemeyer**

Since 2006, the mission of Snowball Express (SnowballExpress.org) has been a simple, yet profoundly important one: Provide hope and new happy memories to the children of military fallen heroes who have died while on active duty since 9/11. We bring children together from all over the world for a four-day experience filled with fun activities, like sporting events, dances, amusement parks and more. Parents of children of the fallen often tell us that their child is reserved, withdrawn or unwilling to talk about their loss. Participating in Snowball Express changes that, making each child feel special and giving them an opportunity to share their feelings about losing something so precious, their parent.

Using a volunteer team, Snowball Express creates a weekend of events to connect the children and surviving spouses of the fallen with others going through the same experience. The children who attend our annual event walk away knowing they are not alone, and that we honor the sacrifice their parent made while serving our country. Children often return year after year to reunite with the friends they have made through Snowball Express.

About our Speaker

Major General (Retired) Rich Mentemeyer is majority owner of Tritech Construction after more than 32 years of distinguished military service. A command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours, he has extensive planning experience and was the initial Director of Mobility Forces for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, Air War College, Webster University, and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, he serves on several non-profit advisory boards including Snowball Express and the SMU Lyle School of Engineering Knowledge.

During Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan (2001), General Mentemeyer was the initial Director of Mobility Forces. As such, he was responsible for providing all of the theater airlift and refueling capability for the combined joint force deployed to the Middle East. During Operation Provide Relief, the Somalia Humanitarian mission in 1992, the general was the Joint Task Force Director of Operations, in charge of the airlift of relief supplies. He also served as Ambassador Oakley's military adviser when the U.S. mission moved into Mogadishu, Somalia. General Mentemeyer is a command pilot with more than 4,000 flying hours in airlift, refueling and training aircraft.