



Videmus Omnia

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2001

MELBOURNE, FL, 17-20 MAY, 2001

The 55th SRW Association held its 21st reunion from 17 to 20 May 2001 at the **Holiday Inn Beach Resort Melbourne-Oceanfront** located in Melbourne Beach, FL.

Reunion cochairmen, **John Caban** and **Barney Clary**, did a superb job of putting together a well balanced agenda of activities and free time for the 250 attendees.

REUNION RECAP

Registration began early Wednesday afternoon in the spacious suite atop the Holiday Inn south wing. It afforded a great panoramic view of the pool, ocean and beach. The room also served as the hospitality suite throughout the reunion, and was always busy during the generous hours. So much so, that several "scarce items" runs had to be made to various local stores to replenish the refreshments.

The reunion activities included a shopping trip to the outlet mall in Vero Beach; a casino boat cruise; and a golf

outing at the nearby Patrick AFB course.

55ther's were also given plenty of free time to walk the beach, visit area attractions and restaurants, or gather in the hospitality room. And in the latter, as advertised, **Marsha Griffin** and **John Caban** frequently took turns at the piano while the 55th 'singalong choir' sang vintage ditties. Notable (*pun intended*) among the group were **Jumpin' Joe Gyulavics**, **Tango Towery**, **Kathy Murphy**, and others too numerous to mention.



*Pat Melone and Marsha Griffin
yuk it up.*

A major highlight was the trip to the Kennedy Space Center. There was an obvious Disney World influence in that they knew how to move people and make the displays and exhibits interesting and meaningful. Reunionites could enjoy several attractions, including the Visitors' Center, the fantastic Apollo/Saturn display, and the working Space Station Center where the Sky Lab components are being built. An extra-added attraction was a rocket launch from the Cape on Friday, May 18, seen by those on the tour, and readily viewed by those on the balcony of the hospitality room.

The Friday sunset cruise aboard the *Dream Believer* on the Indian River gave the lucky 75 who signed up early enough, a most pleasant evening on the water in a relaxed atmosphere in which to gabfest the night away. We were in fact blessed with great Florida weather the entire stay.

SATURDAY'S AGENDA

This day's schedule was jam-packed. **Robb Hoover** did his routinely outstanding job of organizing and moderating the

morning recon update seminar. He kicked off the program with some background info on an RC-135 mission flown out of the UK on 17 November 1970 into the Barents/Pechora Sea areas. That was the last time aircraft from less than friendly nations fired weapons near a 55thSRW aircraft.

Four members of that RC crew were present, and they were introduced to relate their various perspectives on that mission. Aircraft commander (the “veteran aviator”) **Jimmy Jones** was first up, followed by nav-1 **Max Moore**, nav-2 **Bill Simon** and copilot **Earl Mayfield**. Their accounts riveted the assemblage, and suffice to say, you had to be there to appreciate those gents’ personal expressions and emotions.

Unfortunately, there were no EWOs from that mission at the reunion, so there was no view from the backend.



Cold Warriors, L to R: Earl Mayfield, Bill Simon, Max Moore, and Jimmy Jones.

Robb then showed some recently declassified photos from hand-held camera shots of Soviet fighters which had intercepted 55thSRW aircraft over the years. A very vivid reminder of “the good ol’ days”.

Dr. Dave O’Brien, Chief Scientist of the Air Force Tactical Applications Center at Patrick

gave an accounting of that unit’s history and mission.

Next was **LtCol Ricky McMahon**, 338th Combat Crew Training Sq. Commander, who presented a briefing on current operations and status of the 55th Wing at Offutt.

The 55SRW Association membership business meeting took place immediately after the seminar. Business discussions, an election of the Board of Directors and future reunions were among the several subjects covered. *(Note: A complete set of minutes from that meeting is published elsewhere in this newsletter.)*

Several troops then loaded buses to go to Patrick and tour an RC-135 flown in from Offutt by **Major Jeff Needham** and crew. The plane was the first RC modified with the CFM-56 engines (*big muthas with more boost and less noise*). The professional crewdogs from the 55th Wing were enthusiastic hosts of the tour, and it was evident they were proud of the plane and their jobs.

This modified RC has so many new ‘toys’ and the ‘glass cockpit’ (*can we still call it that?*) it looks like a video game. And, they only have one nav per crew now. No room, what with the many computers, inertial, and other gizwiggies. Mission planning is all done with computers, as well. *(Methinks it is all done by magic now, and not much of a challenge. Max)*

While the ‘older heads’ wondered at the marvelous new equipment, there was plenty of gear they recognized and.....the ol’ bird still smells the same inside.

Everyone at the reunion appreciated that the 55th Wing

could find the resources to support sending a plane and crew to Patrick for the gathered Association members to see where the tax dollars go. They were able to learn that although some things change, a lot of other stuff doesn’t. The crew flew training missions down and back, and one while there, so it wasn’t a ‘boondoggle’.



L to R: Fox Censullo, George Ross, Jim Maloney and Steve Turner dwarfed by one of those big mutha engines on 792.

THE GALA BANQUET

The banquet held in the Grand Ballroom was as elegant as to be expected. Robb emceed and introduced the **Reverend Fred Glass**, the Association’s ex-officio chaplain, for the invocation; Robb then announced the winners of the various golf prizes (story follows).

President Bill Ernst took the podium to welcome the attendees and to announce the members of the Board of Directors.

He related the criteria and rationale for the awarding of the inaugural **55thSRW Association Award of Excellence**, then made the presentation to LtCol McMahon. (Although this ceremony was initially done at the 55th Wing Birthday Ball in February, it was deemed appropriate by the Board that it should be done again in front of the membership. *See article later in this newsletter.*)

LtCol McMahon graciously spoke of his appreciation for being the inaugural recipient of the award, and for the entire Association and its continuing contributions to the 55th Wing.

The evening wound up with one more gathering in the hospitality suite for more camaraderie and sparkling chit-chat before saying good-byes, and looking forward to the next reunion in Savannah, GA, next May.

GOLF STORY

(The following rendition is golf organizer Jim Owen's version of the golf tournament. Be advised he is an author of humor and fiction. Max.)

It was a dark and rainy day. High winds blew off the ocean as white caps dashed the fairways. Freezing rain and blowing snow added to the difficulty of play. Just to finish under these adverse conditions was a victory in itself.

The stringent rules were: 1. Do **not** land your ball on Chinese territory. 2. Place your ball on the nearest tuft of grass in rough or fairway. 3. **No** out of bounds. Place your ball somewhere near where it crossed over the boundary. (Rule #2 applies and play away.) 4. Trees and bushes are designated as unfriendly. Move your ball out of their way.

5. Water hazards are deemed unfair – **no penalty**. Place ball somewhere near where it entered the wa-wa. (Rule #2 applies and play away). 6. All third putts are deemed to have entered the hole. 7. When you have achieved double par – that is your score. Pick up the damn ball and move on! *(Geez! With those rules, I could have played. Max)*

Scoring was arbitrary and unfair, as was the scorekeeper. A non-golfer who plays tennis and knows nothing about golf (*I represent that remark*), established the handicaps and scored the match. It has happened before and it will happen again - the golfer with the fastest pencil wins.

Winners were: Highest score – a tie, **Dave and Carol Sjolund**. They were given that Great American Novel, *No Time for Pilots* (*blatant book plug*) and encouraged to take up reading. Lowest natural score (without handicap)- **Jim Owen**. *(Note: this has rodent odor. Last line of previous paragraph applies.)* Ladies' winner – **Sascha Caban** (daughter of John and Karla). First Flight: **Jack Meyer**. Second flight – a tie, **Roby Craft** and **James DaVern**. Third flight: **Zig Zag Howe** (who zigged here and zagged there...all over the course). Closest to the pins – **Jack Schweizer** and **Tango Towery**.

All were awarded Tiger Woods Nike golf balls. Inside each ball is a microchip that will notify the factory if the player using it is a hacker. If this occurs, said balls will be immediately confiscated by a Nike representative, and the player will be publicly humiliated.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings one and all,

We had a wonderful time in Melbourne seeing and chatting with old friends, playing golf and the dinner cruise was terrific. The trip to the Kennedy Space Center will never be forgotten, and we really got a thrill seeing the launch

of an ESV (earth space vehicle, as we used to refer to the Russian satellites).

The banquet on Saturday night followed by the singalong in the hospitality suite put the final touches to a terrific reunion. Barney and **Renee**, John and **Karla**, you were wonderful and gracious hosts.

At the membership meeting, it was decided that the 55th SRW Association would sponsor a memorial monument to be placed in the US Air Force Museum and will be dedicated at the reunion to be held in Dayton in 2003. The monument will be like the one dedicated in 1996 and presented to the SAC Museum. A picture of the monument can be seen on our web site. For those who have not seen it, it is composed of black polished granite and stands five feet tall including base, and has the following inscription,

“DEDICATED TO
THOSE VALIANT STRATEGIC
AIRBORNE
RECONNAISSANCE
CREWMEMBERS WHO GAVE
THEIR LIVES DURING THE
COLD WAR, AND TO THEIR
FAMILIES WHOSE SACRIFICE
CONTINUES.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1996
(SEPTEMBER 6, 2003)

WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT FREEDOM IS NEVER REALLY FREE. IT IS THE MOST COSTLY THING IN THE WORLD, AND FREEDOM IS NEVER PAID FOR IN A LUMP SUM. INSTALLMENTS COME DUE IN EVERY GENERATION. ALL ANY OF US CAN DO IS OFFER THE GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOW A CHANCE FOR FREEDOM.”

The estimated cost of the monument, shipping, maintenance fees to the museum, as well as the concrete platform that it will sit on, and a sidewalk around the monument, is \$10,000. Because it's our gift to the US Air Force Museum, it was decided that funding to pay for the monument should come from voluntary contributions from within the Association. If every member will give just \$10, or an extra year's dues, we will have the necessary monies. For those who wish to contribute more, it will be welcomed.

A donation of \$50 or more will result in the donor's name being engraved on a brass plaque on the back of the monument. Your Association officers have each pledged \$100.

Please send your donations to Errol Hoberman, Treasurer of the Association, as soon as possible. The sooner we have the money in hand, the sooner we can order the monument so it will be in place for dedication at the reunion in September, 2003.

I will be going to Dayton this month to work with **Jack Kovacs**, our Reunion Chairman, and the Museum people to negotiate the location for the monument.

Tommy Harrison and **Jim Morrow** are working hard to put together the next **SAC Society/55th** Reunion in Savannah, GA, next May. If any of you would like to help, please contact Jim Morrow at 864-391-2810, or by e-mail at: morrow_jw@wctel.net. They need some help, especially from some folks in the immediate Savannah area.

See you there. Y'all come, hear.

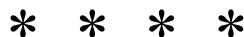
Videmus Omnia, Bill.



ELECTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

There was an election of the Board of Directors at the reunion membership meeting on 19 May. Their term extends to the next reunion.

Members elected as Directors are: **Bill Ernst (Pres)**, **Robb Hoover (VicePres)**, **Errol Hoberman (Trea)**, **Max Moore (Secy)**, **Don Griffin**, **Jim Maloney**, **Mike Cook** and **Bob Krist** (*Mike and Bob both served multiple tours in the 55th, and Bob was the first active duty officer rep on the Board in 1996.*) **Sparky Adams**, **Sam Pizzo**, **Charlie Waters** and **Ben White** opted for permanent status on the Board having been previously elected four times. **Col Scott Merrow** and **MSgt Steve Haggett** remained the active duty members of the Board.



Taken 21 Jun 01 at the combined Assn of Old Crows and Dadaelians luncheon, Offutt Officers Club.

Back row, L to R: Reg Urschler, BGen Greg Power, 55th Wing Commander; Jim Maloney, Pete Glenboski. Front row, L to R: Max Moore, Robb Hoover, Bill Ernst.



ASSOCIATION LOGO POLO SHIRTS/HATS

The Association has new set of polo shirts with the dual-shield logo of the Association on them. The logo is on the left breast, no pocket, white with red trim, navy blue front placket. They are 100% cotton. Cost is \$22 per shirt.

Also available at \$7 each are royal blue ball caps with the dual-shield. Both items are of excellent quality and by consensus, the best looking we have ever had. (*See group picture with Wing CC.*)

Charlie Waters was responsible for ordering and acquiring them. After the reunion, Mike Cook became the marketer for the shirts and hats. Anyone desiring to purchase either or both can contact Mike via e-mail at Michael.Cook@offutt.af.mil or mwjcook@attglobal.net. Write him at 3204 Rahn Blvd, Bellevue, NE 68123, or call (402) 293-9092. (*There will be a charge for postage, as well, approx. \$3.50*)



55th SRW ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP

MEETING MINUTES

19 May 2001 Melbourne, FL

President Bill Ernst called the meeting to order at 1130. He announced there was a quorum present. He stated that notice of the meeting was given on page 3 of the January 2001 *Videmus Omnia* newsletter.

Secretary Ben White read the minutes from the 2 October 1999 Reno reunion membership

meeting. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved as read. Motion carried.

Discussion followed on the 55th Wing Hall of Fame process, selection and criteria. The history and evolution of the Hall of Fame from 1998 to the present was related. It was a consensus of the membership that the Association continue to participate and attempt to influence the Wing by submitting nominations and working to affect a change in the selection process.

The president announced the Board of Director's decision to support the 55th Wing Birthday Ball with an annual donation of \$1000. He and others in attendance encouraged the membership to RSVP their invitations and to attend the Ball.

A report on the intention of the Association to have a reunion in Dayton, OH, in September 2003 was made. It will be in conjunction with the opening/dedication of the new Cold War Annex to the USAF Museum, the centerpiece of which is to be a restored RB-47, tail number 4299. Jack Kovacs is the man heading that reunion planning.

Vice President Robb Hoover reported on the progress of the *We See All* sequel. The Phase I collection activity is nearing an end, and the Phase II culling and organizing of the material will commence.

President Ernst recognized the good works of Don Griffin and **Dave Johnson** on the organization and upkeep of the Association's web site at www.55srwa.org.

He gave an explanation of how the Omaha Caucus is formed and continues to interface with the

active 55th Wing for betterment of both organizations.

Treasurer Errol Hoberman gave the report on the financial status of the Association and number of members in various standings. It was moved, seconded and passed that the report be accepted as presented.

He announced there would be a drive for donations from the members to support the commissioning of a Cold War strat recon monument for display at the USAF Museum. **A separate mailing** asking for a special contribution of at least \$10 will do this. It was moved, seconded and passed to implement this action.

The president recognized the co-chairmen and their wives of the 2001 reunion, Barney and Renee Clary and John and Karla Caban, for a job well done.

The question was posed: does the Association membership want to have a reunion between this one and the one slated in September 2003?

A proposal of a cruise was **not** supported. The membership was informed that SAC veterans will have a reunion at the Mighty 8th AF Museum in Savannah, GA, in May 2002. After some discussion, **Jack Schweizer** moved the Association have a reunion **with** the SAC reunion and have our own hospitality suite and block of rooms. Motion was seconded and passed. Pres Ernst said he would work with the SAC reunion chairman and see if there is an Association member who would act as liaison for that reunion.

Ernst explained how the 55thSRW Award of Excellence came to be, its design, and the selection process for the initial and

future winners. (*See following article*)

He also announced that the RB-47 painting purchased by the Association for display at the SAC Museum resided there now, but is awaiting a formal presentation ceremony. Details to be worked.

Sam Pizzo sought support for an Association 'regimental tie'. Enough was shown that he will further research the design and acquisition of same for future sales.

Pizzo, as head of the nomination committee, announced that four members of the Board of Directors had opted for permanent status: Adams, Pizzo, Waters, White. He then announced the slate of nominees to stand for election by the membership as: current Board members Ernst, Hoover, Hoberman, Moore, Maloney, Griffin. New nominees were Mike Cook and Bob Krist, along with the 55th Wing commander's nominations, Col Scott Merrow and MSgt Steve Haggett. It was moved the slate be accepted and elected by acclamation. Seconded and carried. The new Board was advised to meet immediately after the membership meeting.

The president stated that a committee was needed to update and upkeep the reunion photo albums. Volunteers are needed and sought for this project.

It was moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded and carried at 1243.

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A closed mouth gathers no foot.

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THE 55TH STRATEGIC RECONNAISSANCE WING ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The 55th SRW Association Annual Award for Excellence is to be awarded to that individual, group, or organization that best exemplifies the basic tenants of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association. These tenants are to foster and advance the ideals of patriotism and love of country. The Award will be a large permanent trophy to be displayed prominently in a 55th Wing place of honor. The annual winner(s) will have their names inscribed on the base of the trophy and will be presented a smaller replica of the Trophy.

The winner(s) will be announced at the 55th Wing Birthday Ball and at the 55th SRWA Reunion.

To be eligible for this award, nominees must be:

Member(s) of the 55th Wing during the calendar year and any of the following:

- a. The Wing nominee for a Department of Defense and/or Air Force special trophy and/or award
- b. A Wing Annual Award winner
- c. Nominated from at-large

Nominations will be submitted NLT two weeks before the 55th Wing Birthday Ball.

The Selection Committee shall be comprised of:

1. Members of the Omaha Caucus of the 55th SRWA
2. One non-voting advisor from 55th Wing (55th Wing/CS or 55th SG/CD)

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TREASURER'S REPORT

The Association, as of 30 June 2001, had cash assets of \$13,536, of which \$5,577 is invested in a CD.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 30 June 2001, the Association had 990 members in good standing, 150 of which are widows exempt from paying dues. This is an increase of 26 members since 31 December 2000.

If your dues have expired, \$10.00 is due. \$25 will update your membership for three years. The four-digit year your dues expire(d) can be found in the upper right hand corner of the mailing label for this newsletter. (Now go look for the envelope you discarded. Oops.)

Note: if your dues expired in 1999, this is the last newsletter you will receive unless you renew your dues.

Please remit dues to 55SRW Association mail to Errol Hoberman as soon as practical. **The enclosed Association-addressed envelope is for your convenience.**

New members receive the Association's dual-shield lapel pin. Members desiring replacement or additional pins can get them from Errol for \$5.00 prepaid.

An updated Association roster accompanies this newsletter.

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Always remember, you are unique. Just like everyone else.

55TH WING BIRTHDAY BALL

The 55th Wing will hold its 24th annual Wing Birthday Ball on February 23, 2002 at The Holiday Inn Central in Omaha.

The event recognizes the heritage and lineage of the WWII 55th Fighter Group, through the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, to the present day 55th Wing. This will be a celebration of the sixty-first anniversary of the activation of the 55th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, CA, in January 1941, and the fifty-fifth anniversary of establishment the 55th Reconnaissance Group at MacDill Field, FL, in 1947.

The second annual presentation of the 55th SRW Association Award for Excellence trophy will be made and new Hall of Fame inductees will be announced.

On Friday, February 22, at the Offutt O-club, the 55th SRW Association and the Association of Old Crows' Strategic Roost will once again co-sponsor an informal program, the "Tales of the 55th". Robb Hoover will put the program together by inviting former 55thers to relate their experiences.

All in all, it is one more occasion for a gathering of 55th alumni that makes the Birthday Ball weekend a mini-reunion in and of itself. More of you are encouraged to come see what this is all about.

(Notes: Ernst and Moore serve on the Ball committee as special advisors. And the Association donates \$1000 to support the festivities.)

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**YOUR 55TH ASSN
WEB SITE
www.55srwa.org**

If you have not already done so, you are urged to check out the site. Webmeister Don Griffin and his creative cyber-sidekick, Dave Johnson, maintain the Association home site.

Everything you want to know about the Association is there: constitution, bylaws, officers and bios; membership form, library, picture gallery, and e-mail address listing, bulletin board and links to many other sites of interest.

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**ASSOCIATION
BUSINESS &
MEMBERSHIP SOURCES**

Business/Policy/Reunion

Suggestions:

President Bill Ernst
410 Greenbriar Court
Bellevue, NE 68005
e-mail: BillErnst@aol.com

Association/Wing History:

Vice President Robb Hoover
13412 Tregaron Circle
Bellevue, NE 68123
e-mail: RobbHoover@aol.com

**Membership Dues/Changes of
Address:**

Treasurer Errol Hoberman
6441 Avenida De Galvez
Navarre, FL 32566
e-mail:
RavenOne@ispchannel.com

Secretary/Newsletter Editor:

Max Moore
201 Basswood Court
Bellevue, NE 68005-2001
e-mail:
MaxMoore55@aol.com

**Association Web Page
Comments/Ideas**

Don Griffin
8683 Rawhide Lane, #11
Wilton, CA 95693
e-mail: dgrif@ns.net

TAPS – News of Association members and associates taking the “Big PCS” should be sent to **both Bill Ernst and Max Moore**. Please include next of kin and an address to which the Association condolence card may be sent; date of demise, and any other pertinent information, if known. The news in **TAPS** is limited by what information is given.

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T A P S



Donald Armstrong, died 24 Jan 01; wife, Eve; Sequim, WA. Don was a longtime RB-47 pilot and staff member at Forbes AFB, KS and Eielson AFB, AK.

Curt Borchardt, 26 April 01; wife, Cynthia; Lake Oswego, OR. Curt was affectionately known as “Hoggy” by many. An RB-47 and RC 135 navigator, and staff officer at Offutt AFB, NE.

Al Franko, 21 Jun 01; wife, Linda; Bellevue, NE. Al was a 2ACCS EC-135 IP at Offutt in the early 1980s, served at Shemya and on staff in 55th at Offutt.

Patricia Ham, 17 April 01; wife of Howard, past 38SRS commander and RC-135 pilot at Offutt. San Antonio, TX.

Richard King, 14 Feb 01; wife, Betty; Ridgeland, MS. Dick

was a long time RB-47 nav/IN, and staff officer at Forbes.

Walter Konantz, 3 April 01. WWII pilot with the 55th Fighter Group. Member of 55th Wing Hall of Fame, 1998.

Secy Lawing, widow of the late William (Bill); 1 June 01; Charlotte, NC.

Dryden “Jim” Leitner, March 01; Melbourne, FL. RC-135 EWO at Offutt in 1980s.

Dr. Lee Tracy, 14 March 01. Bellingham, WA. P-51 pilot with WWII 55th Fighter Group.

John Troike, April 01; wife, Ellen; Sandusky, OH. RC-135 EWO at Offutt.

Dick Reeves, 19 Jun 01; wife, Sylvia; Tampa, FL RC-135 nav/EWO on Lisa Ann at Eielson.

Nana L. Zeno, widow of the late Forrest; 7 April 01; Bellevue, NE.

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**RECON RENDEZVOUS
AT DAYTON IN 2003**

The Association is committed to holding a reunion in Dayton, OH, during the week **after** Labor Day 2003. This reunion is intended to coincide with the opening/dedication of the Cold War Annex to the Air Force Museum near Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

The “queen”, or centerpiece, of the exhibit is to be an RB-47H, tail number 4299, which flew operational strategic reconnaissance missions for the 55th SRW at Forbes AFB, KS, in the 1960s. Restoration of the ol’ bird is progressing well.

John (‘Jack’, ‘Ernie’) Kovacs remains our man in place, and he has been formulating and coordinating reunion plans. He continues to keep the Board

updated on the status of the restoration process, and he is in frequent contact with **MGen (Ret) Charles Metcalf**, Air Force Museum Director.

The Museum may "co-sponsor" the reunion, which could grow to include other reconnaissance units, such as C-130, U-2 and SR-71 veterans.

More on this in future issues, and on the Association web site, as details develop.



MORE ON RB-47H, #4299

Attention former RB-47H crewmembers! As you may know the USAF Museum is in the process of restoring the RB-47H (4299) for display. The restoration work started about August 1999, and completion is expected around spring 2003, in time for the "Recon Rendezvous 2003" to be held at the USAF Museum.

In conjunction with that, and in its efforts to restore 4299 to "a moment of time" in the past, the Museum staff is looking for RB-47H photos, aircraft equipment, aircrew member flight clothing of that era, and manuals or documentation. **Good, clear photos or slides are needed now to help validate the exterior appearance.**

All donated articles will be carefully preserved in the USAF Museum archives, and/or used in the display of 4299 in the Museum's new building.

This is a good way to get rid of those things gathering dust in your house, and still preserve them for future generations. If you have any questions, contact Jack Kovacs ([55thSRW](mailto:55thSRW@forbes.afm.af.mil), Forbes AFB,KS, 1958-63), via e-mail:

J1a2c3k@aol.com, or 564 Sartell Drive, Fairborn, OH 45324-5745, or call (937) 879-1390.

(Contributed by Jack Kovacs)



55thSRWA REUNION ATTENDEES-MAY 2001

Adams, Sparky & Connie
Agronis, Gil & Ellen
Back, George & Gerrie
Baker, Thomas & Janie
Barrett, Burton & Charleen
Beauvais, Moe & Cris
Benyunes, Charlie
Bishop, Roger & Ann
Blanchard, William & Norene
Blount, Harris & Norma Kussman
Boothby, George & Diana
Bostock, Ray & Doris
Bray, Jim & Kim
Butchko, Mike & Kay
Caban, John & Karla
Carbaugh, Phil & Mickey
Caselton, Jean & Sue
Censullo, Fox
Church, Joe
Clark, Charles & Carolyn
Clary, Barney & Renee
Cofield, Ralph, & Joan
Cole, Pappy & Anka
Connor, Ryan
Cook, Mike
Cook, William & Beverly
Cooper, Bob & Nadeane Fulcomer
Craft, Roby & Betty
Cummins, George & Caren McCourt
Dawes, Tom & Lorraine
Desroche, George & Dorris
Dowd, George
Drost, Johnny & Reese
Dube, Buck
Duer, Glen & Ann
Ernst, Bill & Linda
Everling, Tom & Monica
Feldkamp, Al & Sandy
Fennelly, Norm & Arlene
Gardner, Don & Joan
Garrity, Tom & Francine
Gautreaux, Lionel
Gillmour, Lou & Tu
Glass, Frederick
Gray, Willie & Nancy

Griffin, Donald & Marsha
Gurney, Don & Barbara
Gyulavics, Joe & Dotty
Hagie, Doug
Hailey, Jim
Harris, Tom & Betty
Hedge, Dick
Henderson, Bill & Jean
Hoberman, Errol & Sue
Holland, Floyd & Carolyn
Hoover, Robb & Shirley
Howe, Arlen & Mary
Hutchinson, Hutch, Jan & Cindy
Hyde, Fritz & Marty
Jeffers, Fred & Heidi
Johnson, Dave
Johnson, George & Martha
Johnson, Bill & Jeanne
Jones, Jimmy
Kaden, Roy & Gerry
Keene, Dave & Gail
Knecht, Ron & Donna
Kramer, Kurt
Kresge, Clete & Marge
Lachance, Andy & Bunny
Larabel, Dale & Joanne
Lawrence, Gene & Doris
Leeman, Dave & Jan
Lewis, Bill & Lou
Liller, Charlie & Sara
Lowman, William
Maloney, Jim
Marlin, Bo & Ann
Martin, Dan & Jean
Mayfield, Earl
McDonnell, Jim & "D"
McMahon, Ricky & Cary
McRaney, Jeff & Cecelia
Melone, Pat & Marie
Meyer, Jack & Judy
Mixson, Hack & Mary
Mollnow, Marvin & Cindy
Moncure, Alice
Mooney, Dan
Moore, Max & Carol
Murphy, Terry & Kathy
Needham, Jeff
Nelson, Jim & Sharon
Nickols, Marge
O'Hara, Bill & Dolores
O'Kelly, Jean
Owen, Jim & Bobbie
Palcowski, Dick & Martha
Palmieri, Elvio & Darlene
Parker, Ed & Frances

Paxton, Jim & Anita
 Penfield, George & Ginny
 Phillips, Patricia
 Phillips, Terry
 Pizzo, Sam & Mary
 Prody, Mark
 Rais, Tony & June
 Reinhardt, Jim
 Reynolds, Bill & Charlotte
 Richardson, Jan
 Rieden, Hank & JoAnn
 Riley, Jim & Roberta
 Romanick, David
 Rosen, Jim & Mark & Mary Joe Wooley
 Ross, George
 Rosser, Bill & Elly
 Rowlinson, Don & Joyce
 Ruid, Glen & Kay
 Savage, Doc & Lia Rose
 Schweizer, John & Peg
 Schwieso, Duaine & Mary
 Scott, Dick & Janey
 Simmon, Bob
 Simon, Bill
 Sjoland, Dave & Carol
 Stern, Ted & Audrey
 Thomas, Clyde & Dot
 Thomas, Don & Barbara
 Thomas, Terrence
 Thompson, Bob
 Towery, Tommy & Sue
 Turner, Steve
 Wakeman, Edwin & Linda
 Wallace, Dick & Janis
 Waple, Hugh & Odie
 Ward, Walter
 Waters, Chuck & Jane
 Watkins, Bill & Nora
 West, Rufus & Doris
 White, Ben & Pat Relyea
 Williams, Herb & Barbara
 Williamson, Mark
 Wilson, Rich & Sue
 Yanuzzi, Nick & Georgina

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LETTERS AND STUFF

Dear Folks at [55th SRWAssn](#),

Enclosed is my check for the first year of what I hope to be a long-term membership. It was not until recently that I became aware of your organization.

I was assigned to the 338th SRS in 1952 and served as a C-82 and YC-97 mechanic until the squadron started receiving RB-47Es in late 1955. Then, most of the troops were transferred out, going with the RB-50s to Rome, NY. I was transferred to the 815th Ops Sqd where I finished my enlistment as an A/C mechanic on the alert crew.

I consider myself fortunate to have been a member of such an organization, and believe those years were the best. The work standards were very high, the hours long, and duties were not easy; but the pride (I) felt of being associated with such a magnificent organization rendered light the demands placed upon us.

Cordially yours, **Enrique Torres-Cajigas**

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Dear Errol, 5 Mar 2001

On behalf of the men and women of the "[Fightin' Fifty-Fifth](#)" [Wing](#), I want to personally thank you for your generous donation of \$1000 to our 23rd annual birthday Ball celebrating the wing's 60th birthday.

Your contribution embodied the theme of our 60th birthday celebration honoring our "Silent Partners", and your organization continues to be such a vital component of our wing. We would not be where we are today without the [55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association's](#) continued "behind the scenes" support that allows the [55th Wing](#) to accomplish its varied and critical missions.

I look forward to our future work together and our continued dedication to the service of our nation. Please accept my thanks again.

Sincerely, **Gregory H. Power, Brigadier General, USAF, [55thWing](#) Commander**

* * * * *

Fellow [55thSRW Association](#) Members:

This note will be my last official act as a member of the [55thSRWAssn](#) Board, as I'm about to leave for a one-year assignment to Monterey, CA (language school), followed by two years at the US embassy in Athens, Greece. (Tough duty, I know, but someone has to do it.)

I want to express my appreciation to you for allowing me to serve on the Board this past year -- it was a true honor and a great privilege. And, as an active duty board member, and also in my capacity as the deputy commander of the 55th Operations Group, I want to thank the members of the Association for the many lasting contributions you all have made, and are continuing to make to the [55th Wing](#).

In my mind, there are three categories of [55th Wing](#) members. First, there are those of you who came first. You are retired from the Air Force now, and you comprise the vast majority of the [55th SRWAssn](#) membership. Your memories of the [55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing](#) are Cold War memories -- RB-47s and the transition to RC-135s; Forbes AFB, "*The Little Toy Dog*," the move to Offutt AFB, the Vietnam War, and so much more. You established the [55th Wing](#), and you made it great. The Wing is still great today because of you. We are, and ever shall be, indebted to you.

Secondly, there are folks like me, still on active duty (some recently retired), but longtime members of the 55th team. I first

arrived at Offutt in March 1977 (24 years ago -- yikes!!!), and this is my third assignment here. My contemporaries and I have had a different experience in the Wing. Our memories are transitional. We started our careers in SAC, now we're in Air Combat Command. We were members of the [55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing](#), now it's simply the [55th Wing](#). We began by flying PARPRO missions and now, most of our missions are in contingency operations like SOUTHERN WATCH. We share some memories with our predecessors, such as Mildenhall and Kadena and Hellenikon, but we also have our own memories -- DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, and places like Souda Bay, Riyadh, and Khartoum (ask "**Tiny**" Wolfe about that one).

And the third category is the newcomers, younger folks who are doing their first tours in the [55th Wing](#). The "alone, unarmed, and unafraid" concept is mostly foreign to them, since the main focus these days is on contingency ops. (Although the recent EP-3 incident in China brought the idea of "alone, unarmed, and unafraid" quickly back into focus.) Just as the folks in the first category are the heart of the Association, this youngest group is the heart of today's 55th Wing and its expanded mission.

When they're our age, and they look back on their days in the Fightin' Fifty-Fifth, a lot of their memories will be of Prince Sultan Air Base in Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia; but, like us, they'll also have fond memories of Mildenhall and Kadena, as well as Souda Bay, Greece and Incirlik, Turkey. While you reminisce about the transition from the RB-47 to the

RC-135 and I reminisce about the transition from the M-model to the W-model, this new generation will reminisce about the transition to CFM-56 engines and the "glass" cockpit.

Those of you in the first category can't imagine how important your contributions are to those of us in the latter two categories, especially the younger troops. It's a new Air Force. Remember how, on any given Friday night, almost every person you knew was at the Officers Club? It's not like that any more. (Those of you who actually go to the O' Club on Friday nights have already noticed that.) The unit cohesiveness of yesterday is gone for the most part. Unit loyalty among the younger folks is still strong, but during their free time, the crewdog of today is more likely to be an active member of the Omaha community (or Bellevue, or Papillion) than of the Offutt AFB community. That's not necessarily a bad thing -- it's just a fact of life.

I believe this is why the [55thSRW Assn](#) is so important. The Association helps hold the reconnaissance community together. The Association's sponsorship of the annual Birthday Ball and other activities throughout the year is a wonderful thing. Not only are these events the social highlights of the Wing, but they bring the past, present, and future together. The Birthday Ball brings back the spirit of fun and camaraderie, and it's an opportunity for the three categories of 55th members to mingle as one. And here's the proof of the pudding -- have you ever met anyone who attended a 55th Birthday Ball and didn't have a great time?

There are special moments at every Birthday Ball. For me, there were two "most" special moments at this year's Ball. The first was the award of the Association's first-ever "Award of Excellence" to LtCol Ricky McMahon. Ricky is of my generation of 55th members. He's a great officer and a great friend. He brought the 338th back to life, this time as a combat training squadron. His blood, sweat, and tears made that squadron a reality. No one deserved to have his name inscribed on that beautiful, new trophy more than Rick.

The other special moment at the Ball was the induction of **Jerry Kozlek** into the [55th Wing Hall of Fame](#). Jerry (a retired CMSgt) has done more to ensure successful reconnaissance operations in the European theater than anyone. I'm not exaggerating. Go to Mildenhall, go to Souda, go to Incirlik -- he's largely responsible for all our successes in those three locations. When I was commander at Souda, I couldn't have made it without his help. Seeing his picture on the [55th Wing Wall of Fame](#) is very gratifying.

Those were my favorite moments at this year's Ball. I know a lot of you have your own favorite moments -- the induction of **Colonel Bill Riggs** into the Hall of Fame, for example. But that's the beauty of the [55thSRW Association](#) -- it spans the generations.

I encourage all of you who are currently members to reach out to the young folks in the Wing today and keep the heritage alive. The future of the 55th Wing will be better for your efforts.

Thanks, again, for the privilege of serving on the [55th SRWA Board](#) this year.

Videmus Omnia, **Scott Merrow**

* * * * *

(The following article was written by Eugene Curtin, Senior Writer for The Bellevue Leader. It appeared in the March 7, 2001 issue. Mr. Curtin was moved to write the piece after attending the "Tales of the 55th" gathering at the Offutt Officers Club on the Friday night before the Birthday Ball. Reprinted with his gracious permission, it is a tribute to our group, and was well received by the local area contingent of 55th veterans who read it. Max)

OLD CROWS NEVER DIE

I never considered a military career.

I simply never thought about it, any more than I thought about becoming an oil rigger or a traffic engineer.

Perhaps I would have if someone had suggested it. But no one ever did, and so the idea never occurred to me.

I felt a twinge of regret about that last month when I attended the tribute to the [55th Wing](#) sponsored by the Association of Old Crows and the [55th SRW Association](#). For 23 years it has been my job to take a seat in the back of the room, shut up and watch. That's basically what we reporters do, or are supposed to do: Observe, and then report on what we see, preferably with some fairness and accuracy. So I took my seat and shut up.

What I saw was a series of retired warriors recount some hair-raising experiences. They were war stories of a familiar kind, seen in countless movies: Airplanes being shot at, adventures in foreign lands, long hours under

appalling conditions, lengthy separations from family.

But there was a subtext, a subtext that made me suspect these guys possess something that can't be measured in money or medals, something I'll never own.

Like most subtexts, it's easy to miss. This particular one is probably best described as camaraderie, but a mellow form, far more mellow than its close relative that was much on display the following day during the Wing's 60th Birthday Ball over at Harvey's Casino.

I noticed it in their greetings and manner of relating to one another. Handshakes were close up, not at arm's length. They patted each other on the back, gently massaging shoulders in a manner that might almost be described as – forgive me, guys – affectionate.

They looked each other in the eye with the ease and comfort of brothers; they refilled each other's glasses, seemed to have little sense of "personal space" when chatting face to face, often whispering jokes and asides into each other's ears.

There was an intimacy there. It was an easy intimacy, too. Generals, colonels, captains and everything in between seemed to mingle freely. I did not sense, among these retired military, any continuing sense of rank. Perhaps my familiarity with their world is too slight to observe such subtleties, but it seemed to my untrained eye a pretty egalitarian gathering, devoid of awkwardness related to higher or lower, exalted or lowly.

To the rest of us, who pursue our careers in the relative stability of a rooted home, an ever-present family, and familiar

streets and shopping malls, this intimacy is hard to come by. We have not seen co-workers get their heads blown off by some Vietcong killer. We have not spent months and years away from our kids in a remote desert or jungle, shared a sleeping bag with two other guys splitting 24-hour duty, or had to wear suits protecting us from chemical attack in the sweltering heat of deserts. Certainly, the airplanes in which we travel have never been fired upon.

It's an odd life. You haul your family all over the world, enroll your kids in 10 different schools, live always in a house, never a home. Your natural friends – those with whom you grew up and went through high school – fall by the wayside as you make a series of fleeting friendships in whatever civilian neighborhood you land. The lasting friendships, I imagine, are found in the service.

The gentle spirit of the retired Crows was nowhere present the following night when active-duty members of the 55th Wing gathered at the grand ballroom of Harvey's Casino for their annual Birthday Ball.

These guys are in the game still. The sense of rank was strong, with adulatory applause directed to the wing commander whose speech was packed with ringing declarations of the Wing's worth and superiority. The wives were all stunning, dressed in strapless gowns that gave testimony to the virility of their warrior husbands.

The stories of these men and women, of course, are still being written, and one could sense they were competing to make them as brilliant as possible. Ladders are still being climbed, favor still being courted, promotions still being sought.

Stars or stripes dangle elusively on their horizons.

This I did not envy. It was a world I know too well.

But I know that something more attractive awaits them in retirement.

There they will join organizations and mingle with men and women who know their souls, who know the hells they have endured, who can welcome them with a rub of a shoulder into a fraternity forged by fire.

And people like me will hover around the edges, noticing all this, forever aware that we cannot be where they are, because we have not been where they have been.

* * * * *

(This is a letter I wrote in response to Mr. Curtin's article. It was published March 14th in the Bellevue Leader. Max.)

Eugene Curtin's piece, "Old Crows Never Die" (March 7), was indeed a stirring and respectful tribute to the personnel who have served, and are serving in, the "Fightin' Fifty-Fifth". Any reader could tell it was personal, sincere, and heartfelt. Mr. Curtin is to be commended for sharing his feelings with readers of the Leader.

He mentioned the easy camaraderie, the intimacy of fellowship, and, yes - affection among the retired warriors. But that merely scratches the surface of how true and solid the bond is for those kindred troops.

There has been, is, and always will be, the deep feeling of pride of wearing the uniform and serving one's country. Plus the job satisfaction and sense of duty in spite of sacrifices made.

The 55th has a storied heritage with roots in WWII as the

55th Pursuit Group (1940-41), then as the 55th Reconnaissance Group (1947) in Strategic Air Command. It evolved into the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing**, its designation for 42 years, succeeded by the current **55th Wing** in 1992.

The unit has always held a singular place in SAC and the US Air Force due to its varied operational missions of national and global significance, through the Cold War and into some hot ones. Even today, it is the largest and busiest wing in Air Combat Command.

It was my distinct privilege to have served in the **55th SRW** for 23 years, the last 16 here at Offutt. I know its history and lived much of it with legions of dedicated men and women, many of whom, both locally and across this country, have known each other and stayed connected for 20, 30, 40 years. They may move away, return, retire here or elsewhere, but it is a unique bonding of memorable experiences in a truly great organization that is the "Fightin' Fifty-Fifth" which unites us as a proud fraternity.

Max R. Moore, LtCol, USAF-Retired

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A TRIBUTE TO THE MILITARY WIFE

The good Lord was creating a model for military wives and was into his sixth day of overtime when an angel appeared. She said, "Lord, you seem to be having a lot of trouble with this one. What's wrong with the standard model?"

The Lord replied, "Have you seen the specs on this order? She has to be completely independent, possess the qualities of both mother and father, be a perfect hostess for four to 40 with an hour notice, run on black coffee, handle every emergency imaginable without a manual, and to be able to carry on cheerfully, even if she is pregnant and has the flu; and she must have six pairs of hands."

The angel shook her head. "Six pairs of hands? No way!"

The Lord continued. "Don't worry, we will make other military wives to help her. And we will give her an unusually strong heart so it can swell with pride in her husbands achievements, sustain the pain of separation, beat soundly when it is overworked and tired, and be large enough to say, "I understand" when she doesn't, and "I love you" regardless.

"Lord," said the angel, touching his arm gently, "Go to bed and get some rest. You can finish this tomorrow.

"I can't stop now," Said the Lord. "I am so close to creating something unique. Already this model heals herself when she is sick, can put up six unexpected guests for the weekend, wave good-bye to her husband from a pier, a runway or a depot, and understand why it's important that he leave."

The angel circled the model of the military wife, looked at it closely and sighed. "It looks fine, but it's too soft.

"She may look soft," replied the Lord, "but she has the strength of

a lion. You would not believe what she can endure."

Finally, the angel bent over and ran her finger across the cheek of the Lord's creation. "There's a leak," she announced. "Something is wrong with the construction. I'm not surprised that it has cracked. You are trying to put too much into this model."

The Lord appeared offended at the angel's lack of confidence. "What you see is not a leak," he said. It's a tear."

"A tear? Why is it there?" asked the angel.

The Lord replied, "It's for joy, sadness, pain, disappointment, loneliness, pride and dedication to all the values that she and her husband hold dear."

"You are a genius!" exclaimed the angel.

The Lord looked puzzled and replied, "I didn't put it there."
Author Unknown

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THE SAC MUSEUM

In June 2001, what was called the Strategic Air *Command* Museum, had a name change to the Strategic Air *and Space* Museum.

The corporate rationale is explained in a letter to "valuable supporters", quoted here in part:

"Prompted by many Museum patrons and sponsors, the Museum's name is changing to reflect the Museum's evolution to the present. Our new name, **Strategic Air and Space Museum**, incorporates the Museum's rich past, while reaching out to a growing

audience attracted to the Museum by dynamic programming and exciting exhibits that educate and inspire, while captivating interests and imagination."

They go on to say that although the word 'Command' is no longer in the name, the Museum will continue to focus on and stress the history and legacy of SAC. *(It's a done deal.)*

*(And the answer is: No, they **did not** seek nor ask for any input from the Museum members or the retired military community prior to making the change. They are getting input and opinions now, I assure you. Max)*

You can visit the web site: www.strategicairandspace.com

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BG and MRS POWER WIN O'MALLEY AWARD

(From AF Print News)

BGen Gregory and Mary Ann Power, from Offutt AFB, NE, are the General and Mrs. Jerome F. O'Malley award winners for 2001. The award is given each year to the best wing commander and spouse team in the Air Force. This is a great honor for the **55th Wing**.

BGen Power and his wife spent countless hours improving the all-around quality of life for the more than 11,000 military, civilian and family members at Offutt.

The **55th Wing** is the largest in Air Combat Command, logging 14,238 flight hours and 2557 operational reconnaissance and training sorties while maintaining alert commitments and executing 62 contingency operations and exercise deployments.

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BOGEY! TWO O'CLOCK HIGH!

The *We See All...the Sequel* project team recently received some declassified copies of hand-held photos taken by RC-135 crews of Soviet and other fighters that intercepted our missions.

One of the best is this picture of the massive Soviet TU-128 Fiddler interceptor (below), the largest fighter aircraft ever built. It was taken by crew E-18 from Eielson on June 29th, 1972 in the Kara Sea, north of the Fiddler's home base of Amderma. The menacing AA-5 Ash air-to-air missiles (nearly 11 feet long!) with infrared and radar homing noses are clearly visible.

If you know who took this picture – according to intelligence sources, one of the most revealing ever taken - or can identify any crewmembers of E-18 from Alaska in 1972, please contact RobbHoover@aol.com, or call (402) 292-6616, so full credit can be given.



* * * * *

Sex is hereditary. If your parents never had it, chances are you never will.

* * * * *

HIGH FLIGHT” as REVIEWED BY FAA

The following version of "High Flight" has been annotated with numbers in parenthesis, which refer to the attached FAA comments, that are intended to ensure that the poem does not induce other pilots to be less than careful.

Proposed rule implementation and publication in the Federal Register is being scheduled.

HIGH FLIGHT (FAA Annotated)

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth (1), And danced (2) the skies on laughter silvered wings. Sunward I've climbed (3) and joined the tumbling mirth (4) On sun-split clouds (5) and done a hundred things (6) You have not dreamed of -- Wheeled and soared and swung (7); High in the sunlit silence (8). Hov'ring there, (9) I've chased the shouting wind (10) along and flung (11) My eager craft through footless halls of air. Up, up the long, delirious (12), burning blue I've topped the wind-swept heights (13) with easy grace, Where never lark, or even eagle (14) flew; And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod The high unsurpassed sanctity of space (15), Put out my hand (16), and touched the face of God. (17)

Federal Aviation Administration Stipulated "High Flight" Supplement Revision 2001

1. Flight crews must ensure that all surly bonds have been slipped entirely before taxiing or flight of
2. During periods of severe sky dancing, all crewmembers and

passengers must be wearing seatbelts. If installed, the Fasten Seatbelt sign must remain illuminated 3. Sunward climbs must not exceed maximum certified climb rates or designated aircraft ceiling.

4. Aircraft engaged in carrying passengers for hire are prohibited from joining the tumbling mirth.

5. Pilots flying through sun-split clouds must comply with all applicable visual and instrument flight rules.

6. All hundred undreamed things must be submitted on an approved FAA Flight Plan and approved prior to execution.

7. Wheeling, soaring, and swinging must not be attempted simultaneously except in an approved simulator.

8. Sunlit silence should be considered an indication of a major engine malfunction.

9. "Hov'ring there"--in fixed wing aircraft--should be considered a possible indication that a stall condition is imminent.

10. Forecasts of shouting winds are available from the local Flight Service Station. Encounters with unexpected shouting winds should be immediately reported to FAA Flight Watch on 122.0.

11. Craft flinging by pilots may result in exceeding the stress limits of the aircraft and may cause damage to the airframe.

12. Should the pilot, or any crewmember experience delirium while in the burning blue, a review of his (her) medical certificate is warranted.

13. Windswept heights must be cleared by a minimum of 1000 feet in designated non-mountainous areas, and 2000 feet in designated mountainous areas.

14. Encounters with larks are

permitted if contact with the aircraft is avoided. Eagles must be widely avoided to prevent ingestion into engines, and to avoid any habitat disturbances as required by the Endangered Species Act.

15. ATC and the Department of the Interior must issue a special clearance for treading the high untrodden sanctity of space.

16. Opening the pilot's vent window for the purpose of putting out hands, or any extension of bodily extremities, should be avoided except during slow-flight in non-pressurized aircraft.

17. The FAA is restricted from issuing any ruling concerning the appropriateness of touching the face of God during flight operations due to separation of state and church.

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HAGGETT SCORES A DOUBLE!

The membership should be pleased to know that MSgt Steve Haggett, an active duty enlisted representative to our Board of Directors, was selected in February as the 55th Wing's Senior NCO of the Year (2000). He followed that by being the recipient of the Arthur Storz Award in the same category as recognized by the Omaha Air Force Association chapter.

Multitalented in the extreme, Steve is currently Superintendent in the Wing Protocol Office, but is a crew chief by trade. Hearty congratulations to Steve for both awards!