



# Videmus Omnia

## 55<sup>th</sup> STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2004

### MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!!!

The 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing's Cold War Memorial was dedicated to its veterans on 5 September 2003 at the US Air Force Museum's Memorial Park just outside of Wright Patterson AFB, OH. It is truly an imposing and unique tribute to the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*, which will stand as a proud and eternal symbol through out the ensuing years.

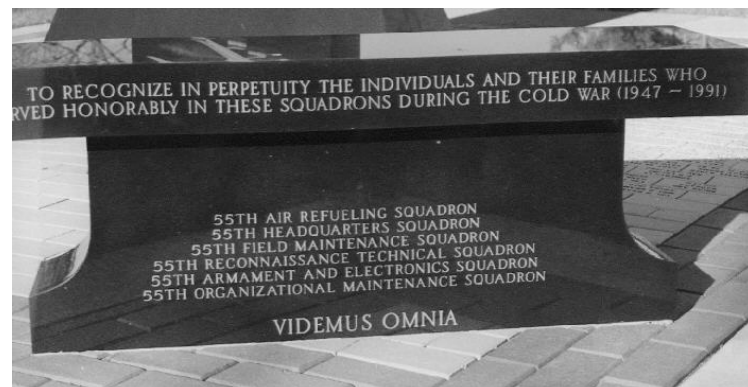


The impressive monument, the centerpiece of the Memorial, is an eight-foot high, polished India black granite marker resting upon a base. The base has engraved upon it the names of members of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW who gave their lives during the Cold War. Ironically, they number exactly **fifty-five**.

It stands in a patio-type area of about 1400 tan bricks, over 560 of which are engraved with the names of donors or in memoriam to others.

The corners of the area are graced by four black granite benches. Three honor members of the operational squadrons (38SRS, 343SRS, 338SRS) and their families, while the fourth is a composite dedicated to personnel and their families of the 55<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Squadron, the 55<sup>th</sup> A&E Sqd, 55<sup>th</sup> OMS, 55<sup>th</sup> FMS, 55<sup>th</sup> Recon Tech Sqd, and the 55<sup>th</sup> HQ Sqd, all of whom supported the flying operations.

The wing motto, *Videmus (Vi-DAY-moose) Omnia (We See All)*, is engraved on the foot of each bench.



Beginning in early 2001, the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association's** Board of Directors began the process to place a monument at the USAF Museum, to honor those members of the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** who served honorably and with distinction, and to those who died in the line of duty during the Cold War, and to all their families.

Thus came to a final realization well over two years of planning, designing, development, fund raising and implementation by many, many, many dedicated members and supporters of **the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association.**

**The commissioning and funding of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Cold War memorial/monument is the single most significant accomplishment of your Association. It is also its largest undertaking.**

Well over 600 55<sup>th</sup> veterans, widows, families and friends, and interested on-lookers witnessed the very appropriate and moving dedication ceremony in the bright, dazzling September sunlight.

This article will not do justice, nor adequately describe the event. One cannot put into words the sincere gamut of emotions felt by those assembled – honor, pride, solemnity, celebration, et al. It truly was an occasion where you had to be there to appreciate the memorable experience.

### *The Ceremony*

Association President **Bill Ernst** presided over the agenda. He welcomed the assemblage, the colors were presented, and the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all. He then gave opening remarks defining why and how the monument came to be.

The 55<sup>th</sup>'s own Reverend **Fred Glass** blessed the ceremony and the memorial with a very fitting invocation in his always inimitable style.



**LtGen (USAF – Retired) C. Norman Wood**, a 55<sup>th</sup> SRW alum who began his operational AF career as an RB-47 raven at Forbes AFB, KS, gave a most inspirational and eloquent dedication speech befitting the occasion.



Accepting the monument on behalf of the USAF Museum was its Director, **MajGen (USAF – Retired) Charles Metcalf.**

### *Honor Roll/Bell Tolls*

The ceremony included the solemn reading of each individual's name of the Honor Roll on the monument's base. As each name was read, the 55<sup>th</sup> bell was sounded to punctuate the reverence of the moment.

The striking was done in turn by 55<sup>th</sup> veterans **Harry Tull** and **Larry LaFlair**, with **LtCol Kurt Kramer**, representing the active duty wing.



*LiCol Kramer tolls. Tull and LaFlair stand by.*

Reverend Glass gave the benediction, an echoing TAPS was played, and **Reg Urschler** roared overhead in his P-51 Mustang in a defining salute to conclude the ceremony.

Afterwards, most everyone in the gathering mingled about with their various emotions and thoughts as they examined the monument up close, and read the engraved bricks to seek out their own, and those of family and/or friends.



Ernst, LaFlair and **Robb Hoover** were other major contributors to the effort, as were many of the Museum staff. **Max Moore** contributed to and assisted in editing the registration packet.

### *Registration, Hospitality, Golf*

The Kovacs family (Jack, wife **Judy**, daughter **Karyn**, son **Kevin** and daughters-in-law **Diane** and **Debbie**) ran the registration table. Much help was given by attendee volunteers who included: **Tom and Francine Garrity, Steve Stevens, Don and Joan Gardner, Dick Hedge, Jim Maloney, Frank and LeWanda Hicks, Hank Reiden** (hope we didn't miss any; if so, you have the *mea culpa* now).

The Holiday Inn staff was particularly cooperative, helpful and efficient through out.

About **730** registered for the reunion, of which **548 indicated they were 55<sup>th</sup> SRW affiliated**: members of the Association, veterans of ARS, AEMS, A&E, OMS, FMS, all three ops squadrons.

Over 150 folks represented other units, the next largest was the Lockborne group. Others with representatives were: USAF Security Service, 301BW, 91SRW, 6490SS, 6990Ss, 7406SS, 6916SS, 6988SS, 7499 SGp, 7405SGp, 6990SGp, Big Safari, CIA, 6SRW, Natl Recon Office, 9SRW, 70SRW, 26SRW, 24SRS, E-Systems, DPMO, 4080SRW, 376BW, 46SRS, CAF, and 82SRS. A truly representative recon rendezvous.



*L to R: Carol Moore, Donna Staples, Duveen Russell, and Pat Prislusky: The Steel Magnolias.*



## **RECON RENDEZVOUS 2003** **DAYTON, OH**

**At the USAF Museum**

The **55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association** held its 23<sup>rd</sup> reunion **3-6 September 2003**. The USAF Museum co-hosted the Recon Rendezvous, which was attended by delegations from other SAC and USAFE recon, support and associated units.

Of course the hospitality room was a focal gathering point and it was consistently humming with activity. Long time comrades, family members, visitors and friends from all over met to retell 'war stories', remember the good times, and reminisce about those who couldn't make this reunion or took the 'big PCS' in the sky.

The obligatory golf outing on Thursday garnered just **55** players. (*An appropriate number, don't you know. Curious how that keeps cropping up. Must be fate at work here.*)

**Sparky Adams** and **Sam Pizzo** were the golf honchos making sure the duffers stayed in line and on course (*pun intended*).

### *Symposium*

The USAFM theater was the site for an all-day Friday symposium, once again orchestrated by the indomitable Robb Hoover. During the multi-topic day, over 400 folks heard a wide-variety of speakers recount nearly every facet of strategic recon operations and associated subjects. **Cargill Hall**, of the National Reconnaissance Office and a former AF historian, moderated the morning session and Hoover took the afternoon.

### *Dining and Socializing*

Immediately after the dedication ceremony, the crowd moved into the Museum to enjoy a social hour and wander among the exhibits, before partaking of the BBQ feast.

The Association held its membership meeting Saturday morning and it was the largest attendance in memory. (*Minutes follow later in this newsletter.*)

Saturday evening featured the gala banquet in the same setting to cap off the reunion in spectacular fashion. The tab was for 690 meals, and the Museum staff noted that this was the largest military function they had ever hosted.

MGen Metcalf emceed the evening after an intro by Pres Ernst. The guest speaker for the event was Mr. **Dick Hallion** from the USAF Historian's office, who regaled the audience with his words.



### *RB-47H/ Cold War Annex*

Additionally, Jack Kovacs was the man-on-the-spot, with diligent and continuing monitoring of the restoration of RB-47, 4299. From the time it arrived at the Museum in the fall of 1998, until its full restoration just prior to placement in the newly completed Cold War annex to the USAF Museum last summer, he was ubiquitous on the scene.

It was a labor of love for Jack, and he was around the restoration hangar so much he had his own coffee mug, and the staff treated him as a member of the team.

In addition to the memorial dedication, the reunion was part of the recognition and initiation of the Museum's newest addition.

OI' 4299 has a prominent placement in the center of the Cold War annex, majestically set upon pedestals. In an inspired touch, there is a MiG-19 poised off the left wingtip of the RB.



*RB-47H, 4299 in all its glory.*



*MiG-19, an old adversary lurks.*

Attendees were afforded the opportunity to climb into the cockpit, nav and crew compartments on Friday evening, and some stood in line for an hour and a half to do so. The Museum staff was around, and even stayed past normal operating hours, to accommodate the crowd. It was a nostalgic experience to get in there one more time.

Several veteran crewdogs were heard to comment, "Somehow, I remember those areas being larger in my flying days." (*Yeah, right. They shrunk just like clothes do in the closet.*)



*Patty Smith and Kathy Murphy climb aboard 4299*

As a footnote: due to Kovacs' astute management, all the reunion bills were paid and this baby even made money! **Way to go, Jack!**

All in all, and every way, this was a superior reunion which will remain in the memories of everyone who attended for quite some time to come. **Well done!!!!**

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## **LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Greetings from the Midlands and a Happy 2004, As I stated in my July 02 missive, "Seldom in one's life do you get a chance to do something as meaningful and enduring as that in which we are currently engaged. After a year's planning and coordinating, the grand **55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing Cold War Memorial** is coming to fruition."

The dedication of the Memorial on 5 September 2003, as witnessed by over 600, was the

culmination of a labor of love. I think it appropriate to formally thank the members of the Planning Committee for their outstanding vision, and the Association for the honor of spearheading this lasting tribute to those who served during the Cold War. Again, it was only possible because of the generosity of the gallant members of the '**Fightin' Fifty-Fifth' Association**, their loyal families, and the personal and dedicated oversight of Jack Kovacs. To all: your support has been overwhelming, and the Memorial exceeds our every expectation.

### ***Multi-Thank Yous***

My special thanks to the Reverend Fred Glass for asking God's blessing of the memorial; and to C. Norman Wood for his dedicatory remarks. He reminded us, "Let us never forget that at every minute in every hour of every day, there's a **55<sup>th</sup>** aircrew airborne, and a support package waiting for their return as they continue to be the front line of defense for freedom for all mankind. This memorial is dedicated as a sacred pledge that we will never forget."

Thank you General Urschler for punctuating the entire event with your fly-by.

For those who could not be there for the dedication, I am truly sorry. The picture of the memorial on the front page of the V.O. is beautiful, but you have to see it up close, front and back, to get the full impact.

Additionally, I would be remiss if I didn't properly recognize those who worked so hard to entertain us at "Recon Rendezvous 2003." As mentioned above, Jack Kovacs was "the main man" who did **all** the spadework, and was assisted by his wonderful family, and by Larry La Flair.

The Green County Visitors Bureau, along with Jack's family and many Association volunteers, solicited by Tom Garrity, saw to it that everyone was welcomed with a smile and a warm greeting. The bus transportation was there when we needed it to get us where we needed to go due to the watchful eye of Dick Hedge.

Robb Hoover lived up to his superlative reputation and put on a terrific symposium with his sidekick, Cargill Hall. My thanks also to MGen Metcalf and his outstanding AF Museum staff for all their assistance in the planning and execution of the many faceted event.

To Dick Hallion for his inspiring words; and the “Band of Flight”- you put the icing on the cake and sent chills up and down everyone’s back. RR2003 was the “mother of all reunions” because you who attended made it so.

One last kudo. The Board of Directors, both outgoing and incoming, are the most professional, dedicated individuals that I have had the pleasure to work with. Thanks for all you do for this terrific Association.

The 55<sup>th</sup> Wing held an outstanding weekend and Birthday Ball 23-24 January. I hope many of you were able will join us for that festive occasion.

Take care of yourselves, stay healthy, and the good Lord willin’, we’ll see you in San Diego in the March of 2005.

*Videmus Omnia, Bill*

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**MINUTES OF THE  
GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING  
6 SEPTEMBER 2003 – FAIRBORN, OH  
HOLIDAY INN BALLROOM**

President Bill Ernst in accordance with notice given in the Association newsletter date April 2003, called the meeting to order at 0830. He opened the meeting with introductory remarks and welcomed the members. He then introduced the Board of Directors: **VP Robb Hoover, Sec. Max Moore, Treas. Errol Hoberman, Webmaster Don Griffin, Awards Chair Michael Cook, Jim Maloney; permanent members: Sam Pizzo, Sparky Adams, Charlie Waters and Ben White; 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Representatives Capt Beth Kelley, and LtCol Will Hampton** who were to arrive later in the day. (*Member Bob Krist was unable to attend the reunion.*)

Secretary Moore read the minutes from the membership meeting held in May, 2002, at the SAC reunion in Savannah, GA. Hoover moved to approve the minutes as read. Seconded and passed.

Treasurer Hoberman gave a summary report on the Associations finances and membership status. The Association is in good financial shape. He reported there were 1023 members in good standing and the number is increasing. (*The treasurer’s books were audited by Cook and Maloney and no discrepancies were noted.*)

Pres Ernst gave a comprehensive report on the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Cold War memorial/monument status and finances. He stated money continues to come in for commemorative bricks and that orders will be taken until the end of 2003.

LtGen (Ret) **George Miller** was recognized as the donor of \$5555.55 to put the memorial bench project over the top. (*BGen (Ret) Reg Urschler, who spearheaded the drive among former commanders of the Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth to raise the funds for the benches, and also started the fund with a \$5000 check, was not at the meeting due to an airshow commitment.*)



Ernst reported that the reunion commemorative coins commissioned by the Association were distributed, or would be, to 55<sup>th</sup> SRW members attending the reunion, to all donors to the memorial fund, and to those Association members who could not attend the reunion. (*Cook and Maloney were responsible for designing and procuring the coins.*)



Coin Front



Coin Back

### MEMORIAL COINS

*(The above coins [actual size: 1½ inches in diameter] were produced expressly for the sole purpose of providing them to Association members at the reunion as a memento. For those who could not attend the RR2003 reunion, or did not receive one at the reunion, and wish to have a Memorial Coin, contact Errol Hoberman (SAC-EWO@mchsi.com, or 6441 Avenida De Galvez, Navarre FL 32566-8911); or Bill Ernst (BillErnst@aol.com, or 410 Greenbriar Ct. Bellevue, NE 68005, PH 402-202-1205). One memorial coin will be mailed to you free of charge. Additional coins may be purchased for \$5 each.)*

### Minutes Continued

It was announced that the RC-135 from Offutt AFB would arrive at 1330 this day with BGen T. C. Jones, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing commander, on board. He will be at the banquet.

VP Hoover announced there would be another SAC reunion May 14-16 2004 in the Barksdale AFB, LA, area to be hosted by the local area Air Force Assn chapter. He also told of the reunion cruise by more than 100 former members and friends of the 82<sup>nd</sup> SRS who will sail the Caribbean 8-15 February 2004.

Webmaster Griffin reported on the Assn web site, eight years in existence, and recognized member **Dave Johnson** for his invaluable and creative efforts in assisting in maintaining the site. Griffin stated it was time for a new web team to take over and lead the process into the future. A new webmaster will be sought.

Awards Chair Cook covered the Association's Award for Excellence purpose and process. He also told of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Hall of Fame induction criteria. Cook recognized Moore for his past efforts in preparing and submitting nominees who were chosen for induction over the past three years.

Ernst elaborated on both the Award for Excellence and the Hall of Fame. He said that the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing turned over the selection process to the Association and it was up to the members of the Assn to put forward those individuals or crews who were worthy of induction.

Pizzo was introduced to present the slate of nominees for election to the Assn Board of Directors. He first thanked the membership for buying all the 'regimental' ties. He read the slate of nominees for election to the eleven positions as follows: Ernst, Hoover, Moore, Hoberman, Griffin, Maloney, Cook, **Joe Gyulavics**, **Jim Thomas**, **George Ross** and **Dennis Haun**. Permanent Board members remaining are: Pizzo, Adams, Waters. LtCol Hampton and Capt Kelley continue to represent the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing. (Note: Krist chose not to run and White retired from status as a permanent member.)

*(FYI: Bylaw 3.1.1 of the Association states: "There shall be no less than seven or more than eleven elected Directors. Additionally, the serving 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander may nominate two volunteer active duty persons from the Wing to serve on the Board." The latter two must be approved by the serving Board.*

*Bylaw 3.1.2, as amended in March 2000, allows Board members who have been elected four times to be exempt from election, should they chose to do so, and be granted "permanent" status (and not count toward the limit of eleven). They can decline and opt to stand for election. A permanent Board member cannot serve as president.)*

Pres Ernst asked for nominations from the floor. There being none, George Miller moved the nominations be closed. Seconded by many. Motion carried.

Miller then moved the slate be elected by acclamation. Seconded by many. Motion carried in voice vote.

Ernst announced the new Board would meet immediately following the membership meeting to elect officers and conduct any required business.

Reunion Chairman and Monument Coordinator Jack Kovacs was recognized for his dedicated and detailed work on the Recon Rendezvous 2003 and received a standing ovation. He announced the attendance at the Friday bar-b-que and the Saturday banquet would be about 700.

Kovacs stated the reunion was well financed and should be in the green. He urged folks to sign up for the panoramic picture that was taken at the memorial dedication. He also mentioned that the AF Museum's archives were available and a valuable place for research and study.

It was announced that the next reunion would be in San Diego, CA, in/about the spring of 2005. (*Due to intense lobbying by Carol Moore, Bill and Carol Lewis accepted the responsibility to chair that reunion.*) **Bill Lewis** (*the younger*) was recognized and said he already had eager volunteers ready to assist the effort. Dates and details will be forthcoming in the ensuing months via the web page and newsletters.

Gyulavics announced plans are underway for an Aviation Cadet reunion and the building of a museum. Details pending.

The aborted project to produce a sequel to **Bruce Bailey's** "*We See All*" book was covered by Ernst, but he encouraged the continued submission of stories, history, etc. for compilation and archived for future use. Hoover is the History Chairman.

Moore pointed out the displayed flags commissioned by the Assn, one with the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW shield and one with the official Assn dual-shield emblems. They were debuted at the "Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>" event at Offutt last January, were displayed at the memorial dedication, and would be so at the banquet that night.

Hoover announced the next 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball was scheduled for 24 January 2004, to be preceded by another edition of "Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>". Ernst urged all who desired to attend to do so, and others who receive invitations to respond. Moore elaborated that 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Protocol culls the invitation list of those who consistently do not reply to invitations, nor attend the Ball. So members who desire to attend the Ball need to be proactive in letting 55<sup>th</sup> Protocol know they want to come.

Miller moved the meeting be adjourned. Seconded by many. Motion carried at 0917.

*Max R. Moore, Secretary*

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

The Association, as of 1 January 2004, had a checking account balance \$19,930. Another \$6146 is invested in an Association funds CD, plus \$3000 in a saving account.

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## MEMORIAL FUND DRIVE RECAP

Association members may recall that when the fund drive for the memorial began in May 2001, we had hoped that our nearly 1000 members would donate \$10 each. That would give us a nice sum for a decent monument.

**Well, troops, over 640 donors contributed more than \$68,000!** All the bills for the monument are paid, to include the benches, brick patio (over 570 engraved), perpetual care fees, and any additional expenses. There is enough left to purchase a few trees to enhance the memorial area.

\* \* \* \* \*

In March 2003 the Association Board of Directors voted to grant **life membership** (without further payment of dues) in the Association to those who had donated \$500 or more to the Cold War monument fund.

Those persons are:

**Stefan Antel  
Robert Gmitter  
William Kyle  
George Miller  
Dan Peterson  
Steve Stevens**

**Gary Ambrose  
Carolyn Haley  
Mrs. Richard Q. King  
Larry Mitchell  
Robert Sims  
Regis Urschler**

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## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 7 January 2004, the Association had 1049 members in good standing, 150 of which are widows and 38 associated members. This is an **increase of 51** members since 1 March 2003.

Several new members signed up before and during the September reunion. But, there are still too many lapsed members out there whom we hope will return to the fold. (*Unfortunately for them, they do not get the benefit of this sterling newsletter.*)



There are now **more active duty members** than ever before as interest has picked up due to the Association's exposure, and as the Offutt area members continue to recruit.

Trivia item – The Association has members in **49 states** (*our Alaska rep moved to Texas*), DC, Guam, Puerto Rico and APO Europe.

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**The year your dues expire(d) can be found in the upper right hand corner of the mailing label for this newsletter.** (*You discarded the envelope already, didn't you? Well, go look for it and see if you are delinquent.*)

**If your dues have expired, \$10.00 is due for 2004; \$25 will update your membership for three years. NOW is the time to renew.**

*(Note: if your dues expired in 2002 or 2003, this is the last newsletter you will receive unless you renew your membership.)*

Those who donated \$100 or more to the memorial fund have had their memberships extended for three years.

Please remit dues to **55SRW Association** and 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 when they join. Members desiring replacement or additional pins can get them from Errol for \$5.00 prepaid (*if you want more than one pin, the cost is just \$3.00 for each additional pin if mailed at the same time; i.e. one pin, \$5, two pins, \$8, three pins \$11, etc.*).

Ernst and Moore have pins, as well, so members in their area can get the pins from them for \$3.00 without the S/H.

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*Money can't buy happiness.*

*But then ,*

*happiness can't buy money.*

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## **55<sup>th</sup> WING GETS NEW COMMADER**

On 29 October 2003 **BrigGen Craig Koziol** assumed command of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing. He replaced **Major General Timothy C. Jones** who held the position for 14 months.

MGen Jones pinned on his second star just before the change of command ceremony. Although other 55<sup>th</sup> wing commanders have made progressive rank after departing the wing, MGen Jones was the first to make a second star while the sitting commander.

BGen Koziol made history, as well, becoming the first non-rated commander of the wing. He is a career intelligence officer, and his previous assignment was Deputy Director, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Deputy Chief of Staff, Air and Space Operations, Headquarters US Air Force. In that position his boss was **MGen Ron Sams**, a former 55<sup>th</sup> commander himself.

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As has been done with the previous six 55<sup>th</sup> Wing commanders, Offutt area members of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association hosted BGen Koziol for an informal dinner on 2 December. This event allows the new commander to meet 55<sup>th</sup> veterans in a social setting early in his tenure. The group has **no** agenda other than the success of the Wing, and to let the commander know we have, and are, resources to be used to support that effort.

The dinner was at Gorat's Steakhouse in Omaha, well known as the favorite eatery of Warren Buffett, the Oracle of Omaha, who enjoys hosting his friends, such as Bill Gates, there.

Those attending were: Ernst, Hoover, Maloney, Haun, Capt Kelley, Hedge, Jim Thomas, Tull, **Pete Glenboski, Ham Kennedy, Arlen Howe, John Tresmer, and Bill Betz.**

Ernst presented BGen Koziol with the official Assn polo shirt and ball cap. He was also introduced to the tradition of the 55<sup>th</sup> bell when Tull, who first rang the bell in 1965, gave another resounding ring as the group proudly toasted, "*Videmus Omnia!*"



## 55<sup>th</sup> WING BIRTHDAY BALL 2004



*Pres Ernst, the 55<sup>th</sup> bell, BGen Koziol*

BGen Koziol said he would be making plans for a special display of that historic artifact. He wants a specific case built to enclose the bell and its cradle, then have them placed at the Dougherty Conference Center on Offutt, where it can be viewed by the many high-ranking visitors from across the AF and the military who use that facility.

When asked who the action officer would be for the Association rep to work with, BGen Koziol said, "I'm the action officer!" Hoover then asked where should the bell be kept in the interim. The general replied, "In my office". Whereby Robb delivered it the next day.



### 55<sup>th</sup> WING MISSION STATEMENT

*(FYI: So we all are in the know)*

The 55<sup>th</sup> Wing is responsible for organizing, administering, equipping and training six groups and 36 squadrons assigned. It executes worldwide reconnaissance, electronic attack, command and control, presidential support, and treaty verification, directed by the President of the United States, Secretary of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, theater commands, major commands, and national intelligence agencies. The wing is also responsible for support to 93 associate units, including US Strategic Command, Air Force weather Agency, Defense finance and Accounting Service, and more than 57,000 active duty personnel, civilians, dependents and retirees.

The annual 55<sup>th</sup> Wing birthday weekend was 23-24 January 2004, and it was another in the continuing string of outstanding events for the Association and the Wing.

### *"Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>"*

On Friday afternoon, a large crowd of over 200 active duty troops, Association members and guests attended the fourth edition of the "Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>", once again organized by Hoover who also acted as emcee. The event was co-sponsored by the **Association** and the Strategic Roost of the Association of Old Crows.

It began with a social period, and the program was opened with the sounding of the recovered **55SRW** bell, which had been used on celebratory occasions in the 1960s at RAF Upper Heyford.

A framed copy of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Cold War Memorial dedication crowd panoramic photo was presented to BGen Koziol for the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, by Association President Ernst. Then the general made a formal announcement regarding the permanent display of the 55<sup>th</sup> ceremonial bell.

He also related his experience on a 26 hour humanitarian mission over Kosovo in which he was a participant as a Lt. Col. Security Service squadron commander.

Other speakers were: Max Moore, who recounted the incident of 17 November 1970, when **Jimmie Jones'** RC-135 crew was intercepted by Soviet MiGs, which subsequently fired warning shots 'across the bow'; **LtCol Jeff Needham**, 343dr/CC, telling of the experience of the terrorist attack on a 55<sup>th</sup> crew bus in Athens in 1987; and **LtCol Ken McDaniels** and **Maj Rich Linehan**, 338CTS, regarding 55<sup>th</sup> Wing sorties during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in Mar/Apr 2003.

### *The Birthday Ball*

The 26<sup>th</sup> Birthday Ball was held on Saturday, January 24, 2004, at Omaha's Doubletree Hotel, and an outstanding event it was! This year's theme was "Celebrating Our Past" with a World War II motif.



The Association contributes \$1000 annually to help support the Ball. In recent years, Ernst, Hoover and Moore have served on the Ball committees as special advisors.

The gala event was attended by a packed house of over 700 active duty wing members, community leaders and retirees. Well over 100 Association members and guests, including Pres Ernst and his wife, **Linda**; VP Hoover and **Shirley**, Secretary Moore and **Carol**. Board members Jim Maloney and **Peg**, Michael Cook and **Tina**, Jim Thomas, LtCol Will Hampton and **Jennie**, and Capt Beth Kelley, Denny Haun and **Cheryl** also represented the **55th SRW Association**.

Four former wing commanders attended: LtGen (Ret) George Miller, Steve Stevens with wife **Suzanne**; Larry Mitchell and **Susan**; **Bill** and **BJ. Manire**.

In addition to the many **local** Association members, several parties from out of town attended the festivities: **Jean O'Kelley**, **Bess Tejada Bergmann**, **Jim** and **Marion Taylor**, **Pete** and **Treva Potter**, **Roger Craig**, **Hank** and **Sandra Dubuy**, **Al** and **Sandy Feldkamp**, **Al Kamback**, **John Caban**, **Joe Siniscalchi**, **Clark Hinkle**, **Fox** and **Theresa Censullo**, **Ken** and **Pam Urtz**, **Loose** and **Cynthia Lane**, **Jack** and **Retha Cooke**, **Don** and **Margaret White**, LtCol **Ricky McMahon**, and LtCol **Tim Spaeth** and **Deb**.

WWII veterans **Dewey Ballard** and his wife **Mary Frances**, and **Harold Hall** also represented the **55th Fighter Group**.

### *The Program*

The program included presentation of the colors, the national anthem, and POW/MIS ceremony. Opening and closing remarks were made

by BGen Koziol, plus his State of the Wing presentation.

Also on the agenda were the induction of new members into the Wing's Hall of Fame (*see article below*), and the announcement by Pres Ernst of **55SRW Association** Award for Excellence given to **Col (select) Glen Gullekson** (*see later article*).

BGen Koziol, LtCol (Ret) **Neil Webster** representing the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, and the youngest airman in attendance, did the ceremonial cutting of the birthday cake. They used the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association** engraved saber which was presented to the Wing at the 2001 Ball. Commiserating, reminiscing, visiting old friends and dancing went on until midnight.

Music was performed by "The Noteables", the big band ensemble of the ACC Heartland of America Band, who wore their WWII replica uniforms befitting the evening's theme.



## **55<sup>th</sup> WING HALL of FAME HISTORY**

*(Retold one more time)*

### *The Inception*

Most of the Association's members know that the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** has an established Hall of Fame consisting of former 55<sup>th</sup>'ers who have distinguished themselves in significant ways.

The Hall of Fame process is an evolving one that actually had its beginning in 1998 with a "heritage project" initiated by **Col Bob Atkins**, the 55<sup>th</sup> Support Group Commander at that time. The concept was to select a number of "heroes" from the Wing's storied past to be honored in a lithograph and accompanying book, and to be presented at the Birthday Ball in January 1999.

A panel headed by the then-Wing Vice Commander, **Col Greg Smith**, began an arduous selection process over a several month period in 1998. Association Board members Bill Ernst, Robb Hoover, LtCol **Bo Marlin** and TSgt **Craig Kibbe** were among the members of that committee.

There were an established, definitive criteria, and a conscientious effort to choose a solid cross-section of the Wing's heritage.

The daunting challenge of reviewing many worthy nominees culminated in the naming of 19 "heroes" who **represented** the long history of, varied missions of, and the thousands of outstanding

people who have served in the 55<sup>th</sup> over the decades, from WWII, through the Cold War era, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and into the 1990's.

Two more inductees, LtGens **Tom Keck** and **Phil Ford**, were chosen by **BGen Ron Sams**, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, and presented at the Ball in January 2000. There was no formal selection method.

### *The Process Evolves*

In 2001, **BGen Greg Power**, the wing commander, decided to define the criteria for nominees, named a selection panel, and add two more inductees.

The selection guiding principles stated: "Nominees could be civilian or military of any rank. The nominee(s) must have had a direct impact on the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing mission and/or (Offutt) community. Nominees can be historical figures who impacted the development of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing" (including all previous 55<sup>th</sup> organizations—the 55<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group, 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group or the 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Recon Wing.)

"While personal achievement is important, the nominee will stand as a role model, therefore, primary consideration will be given to the nominee's leadership, vision and impact on the Wing." Association President Ernst was named to the four-member panel.

The reason for this review article, and there is one, is that since its inception, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Hall of Fame has generated much discussion, sometimes passionate debate, and some would say, controversy, among Association members as to how our organization should respond and participate in the future of the Hall of Fame process.

President Bill Ernst made the offer to **Colonel John Daly**, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing vice commander, that the Association assume responsibility for the selection process from the Wing. Col Daly was receptive to the proposal and the Association began the process in September 2003.

At the RR 2003 reunion BoD meeting, Pres Ernst appointed Sparky Adams as chair of a screening committee to accept nominations from the membership and the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing. Adams asked Pizzo and Gyulavics to be on that committee. Once nominations were screened, they were to be forwarded to Awards Chairman Mike Cook to continue the selection of Hall of Fame inductees.

In December Pres Ernst appointed Reg Urschler to head the final selection committee. Reg then asked Dick Hedge, Max Moore, Tom Garrity, and Jim Thomas to sit on the committee.

They met on 13 December, and from a set of eight nominees, selected as this year's inductees the **RB-50 crew of 15, commanded by Capt Stan O'Kelley**, who were shot down by the Soviets on 23 July 1953.



## 55<sup>th</sup> WING HALL OF FAME ROLL OF INDUCTEES

- \*Col (Ret) Jack Jenkins**,  
WWII former 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group commander
- MajGen (Ret) Edward Giller**,  
WWII fighter pilot/downed a German Me262
- \*Major (Ret) Walter Konantz**,  
WWII credited with downing two Me 262s
- MajGen (Ret) Howard Smith**,  
Cold War/Strat recon pioneer
- LtCol (Ret) Robert Rich**,  
Cold War RB-50 returned fire on MiG-19
- Col (Ret) Burton Barrett**,  
WWII and Cold War RB-47 pioneer
- Col (Ret) Bruce Olmstead**,  
Cold War (Major Palm's copilot)
- Col (Ret) John McKone**,  
Cold War (Major Palm's navigator)
- \*Col Charles "Iron Mike" Rafferty**,  
Cold War/Cuban missile crisis
- BrigGen (Ret) Regis Urschler**,  
Cold War/Former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW commander
- Capt Hank Dubuy**,  
Cold War (LtCol Mattison's copilot)
- LtCol (Ret) Harrison Tull**,  
Former Tuskegee Airman and Cold War
- LtGen (Ret) George Miller**,  
Former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW CC and Vice CC of SAC
- Col (Ret) Donald White**,  
Former 2ACCS commander/ABNCP operations
- LtGen (Ret) John Sams**,  
Former 1ACCS commander/E-4 operations
- BrigGen (Ret) Larry Mitchell**,  
Former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW commander/Cold War
- \*SSgt Ronald King**,  
Killed in Kobar Towers terrorist attack

**Lt Sheila O’Lear Kirkwood**,  
Desert Shield/Storm RC-135 EWO  
**Major Edward “Muddy” Waters**,  
Outstanding airmanship in RC-135 emergency  
**LtGen (Ret) Tom Keck**,  
Former 55<sup>th</sup> Wing commander  
**LtGen (Ret) Phillip Ford**,  
Former Vice CC of STRATCOM  
**CMSgt (Ret) Jerry Kozlek**,  
Gulf War/Open Skies support as a GS worker.  
**\*Col (Ret) William Riggs**,  
Former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW CC/Cold War/mission transition  
**\*Major Willard Palm**,  
Cold War RB-47 shootdown  
    **\*Capt Eugene Posa**  
    **\*Capt Dean Phillips**  
    **\*Capt Oscar Goforth**  
**LtCol (Ret) James Taylor**,  
Cold War/RC-135 EWO instructor  
**\*LtCol (Ret) Hobart Mattison**,  
Cold War/RB-47 recovery after hostile fire  
**LtCol (Ret) Roy “Pop” Kaden**,  
Cold War RB-50 strat recon pioneer

*\* Denotes deceased*

\* \* \* \* \*

## THE 55<sup>TH</sup> SRW ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association Annual Award for Excellence is presented to that individual, crew, group, or organization that best exemplifies the basic tenants of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association.

The award winners are announced at the annual 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball and at 55<sup>th</sup>SRWA reunions. Their names are inscribed on the base of the trophy and they receive a representative plaque.

### **2003 Award Winner**

Awards chairman, Michael Cook, chaired this year’s selection committee. They met in December and chose Col (select) Glen Gullekson, the preceding 343<sup>rd</sup> commander from a list of nine outstanding candidates.

He was recognized for his superior leadership and management as the author and implementer of the largest wing reorganization in 24 years, as well for as his squadron command capabilities. In addition, Gullekson was chosen by the wing to lead his squadron during a deployment during Iraqi

Freedom. The crews and support personnel performed outstandingly during an operations tempo of monumental proportions in direct support of the war effort in Iraq.

The previous award recipients are **LtCol Ricky McMahon**, 338th Combat Training Squadron commander, 2000; and **MSgt Steven and MSgt Lisa Haggett** for 2001, and **LtCol Kurt Kramer**, 38<sup>th</sup> RS Commander for 2002.

The presentations at the past four Birthday Balls have been very well received, and this award has become recognized as a prestigious accomplishment among the active duty troops.

The unveiling of the imposing trophy always gets an appreciative and audible response from the crowd at the Ball.



The Award is an impressive four foot tall trophy, displayed between presentations in the lobby of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Support Group Headquarters (Bldg C). It is the busiest administration building on Offutt.

The names of the award recipients are engraved on plates placed upon the base of the permanent trophy, and each receives a smaller plaque.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Happiness may come through a door you did  
not even know you left open.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*Age is a question of mind over matter. If you  
don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.*

# T A P S



**Penny Benziger**, died 23 December 2003, Edgewater, FL; wife of **Jack (Alfred)**, veteran RB navigator at Forbes AFB, KS.

**Joe Cleary**, 79, 11 May 2003; San Jose, CA. RB-47 EWO 1957-1963; HQ SAC/DOR; wife: **Molly**.

**Betty D. Craft**, 19 March 2003; Satellite Beach, FL; wife of **Roby**; longtime RB-47 pilot at Forbes AFB, KS.

**Lewis Dickerson**, 14 March 2003; Milford, DE; wife: **Elaine**. *Only info provided.*

**Wendell P. Graves**, 23 November 2003, Tucson, AZ; wife: **Sherry**.

**Lewis Hayes**, 14 May 2003; wife: **Elaine**. *Only info provided.*

**Marilyn Kingsbury**, 21 April 2003; St Louis, MO; wife of **Dale**. *Only info provided*

**John Lappo**, 83, 15 November 2003; Eagle River, AK; wife: **Kay**. Korean War veteran B-29 pilot; RB-47E recon icon at Lockborne AFB, OH. Flying career ended after he flew an RB under the Mackinac Bridge in April 1959.

**Donald Mather**, 80, 15 June 2003; at his cabin in Canada, although he resided in Apple Valley, MN. Pilot with 55<sup>th</sup> in RB-50s and RB-47s. Longtime stand/eval at Forbes. Had a long second career with the FAA.

**David Romanick**, 6 January 2004, Stayton, OR. Dave was a veteran SAC navigator in B-36s, then in RB-47s at Forbes. He regularly attended the reunions for many years.

**Mary Stowe**, Visalia, CA. *Assn correspondence returned April 2003. No other info provided.*

**C. Hunter Smith**, 23 June 2003, Santa Rosa, CA; wife: **Peg**. Former RB-47 pilot and 343<sup>rd</sup> squadron commander at Forbes.

**William (Bill) Tanner**, 56, 20 March 2003; Bellevue, NE. RC-135 navigator at Eeilson AFB, AK, and Offutt AFB, NE.

**Johnnie Theobald**, 15 June 2003, Mesa, AZ; wife of **Truman R.**, 1950s era RB-50/RB-47 pilot at Forbes.



## AN ACTIVE DUTY PROSPECTIVE

*By Lt Col Will Hampton,  
Commander, 338<sup>th</sup> Combat Training Squadron,  
55SRW Assn Member of Board of Directors*

About 12 years ago when I was first assigned to the 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing. Aside from the fact that the 55th was co-located with the Headquarters for Strategic Air Command, there seemed to be something different about the wing, something unique. It wasn't until a couple of years later when I attended my first 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball that I understood: the 55 SRW Association was the flame that kept the wing's heritage alive. But I didn't think much past that. I didn't join the 55 SRWA; I didn't even really know who could join or who made up the membership. And when I left the wing after serving for four years, I still didn't really know that much about the 55 SRWA.



When I was reassigned to the 55<sup>th</sup> in 2000, I came back to Offutt knowing what the 55 SRWA was, but still not really understanding it. But, after a few more Birthday Balls and "Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup>", I've learned that the 55 SRWA is really the soul of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing's heritage and history.

But, I was still perplexed at the membership roster—very few active duty members. The overwhelming majority of the members being retirees from the Cold War and Vietnam eras. It

wasn't until I attended the 55 SRWA reunion in Dayton last September that I finally got it.

I traveled to the reunion on Saturday, 6 September, on the RC-135 that the wing flew up for a static display, and then flew back the following Sunday following the reunion banquet the night before. On the flight back, Lt Col Kurt Kramer and I were discussing the reunion and the 55 SRWA, when I wondered aloud why there was so few active duty members. Kurt mentioned that he and one of our general officer members had discussed that very subject just a couple of days before at one of the reunion functions.

A thought was that the 55 SRWA provides a common venue for those who have served in the 55<sup>th</sup>, but lost the bond of the uniform. That is, those who have hung up their uniforms have found that there are very few organizations or clubs outside of the military that have the same level of camaraderie and closeness as actually serving in uniform. Many come back to their roots by joining a military organization such as the 55 SRWA. The 55 SRWA ties hundreds of former "55<sup>th</sup> Wingers" together, from locations all over the United States.

So why does an organization like the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, with such a rich heritage and an active association, have so few active duty members in the 55 SRWA? I suspect it's a mixture of several things—some don't even know that the Association exists; some who don't understand the Association's role, and therefore don't want to be a part of it; some who aren't interested in the past, and therefore see no common reason for joining.

Do I think the 55 SRWA will dry up and go away—no, I don't. I believe the Association will continue to thrive. I believe that as those of us on active duty reach retirement, many will find the close bonds and camaraderie we enjoy in our military service will be lacking in the civilian world, and many will join the Association to get it back. The torch will pass from the Cold Warriors to the DESERT STORM Warriors to the ENDURING FREEDOM / IRAQI FREEDOM Warriors, to those after us, who will keep the 55 SRWA lights glowing.

The 55 SRWA should absolutely continue its outstanding support of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing's heritage. By continuing to educate our younger airman about who we are and what we do, we guarantee that the

torch of the Association will continue to be passed from generation to generation.

Our Association is phenomenal; and so is the heritage that it cradles.

*(Note: Will also wrote an article for the 23 Jan 04 issue of the Offutt base paper in which he said, "The 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Association is the soul of our heritage....." He further related that the SRWA preserves that heritage "through its members, who maintain the knowledge of our past accomplishments and current endeavors, a rich camaraderie, and friendships we cultivate in our military service." He concluded by suggesting the active duty troops to join the Association.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## LETTERS AND STUFF

Dear Colonel Ernst, 9 April 2003

On behalf of the men and women of the "Fightin' Fifth-Fifth" Wing, I want to thank you for your (organization's) contribution to our 25<sup>th</sup> annual Wing Birthday Ball celebration. Your generosity played a major role in keeping the tradition of the Birthday Ball alive. We would not be where we are today without the continued community support that allows the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing to accomplish its varied and critical missions.

Again, on behalf of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, thank you. Your support is paramount to our success. I appreciate your continued dedication to our nation.

Sincerely,

**Timothy C. Jones**, BrigGen, USAF  
Commander 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, Offutt AFB, NE

*(Note: the letter was addressed to Bill as President of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association)*

\* \* \* \* \*

*(The following correspondence is but a mere sampling of the many, many notes and letters which accompanied donations/contributions to the Cold War memorial fund.)*

Dear Bill: 22 December 2002

In response to your recent letter and to the letter of BrigGen Urschler, dated 8 Dec 2002, enclosed is my personal check.

Sincerely,

**William Kyle** Ogden, UT

*(Note from a former 55<sup>th</sup> SRWing Commander)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Bill: 6 January 2003

Here is my contribution for now. Let me know if the fund is short later on.

Thanks for all your efforts and great work on this tribute.

*Steve Stevens Bellevue, NE*

*(Note from another former 55thSRW/CC)*

*(Needless to say, we didn't come up short.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Bill: January 7, 2003

Thank you for your letter about the memorial in Dayton. Sounds like it will be a wonderful addition to the AF Museum.

Please accept my small contribution toward the benches. Bless Reg (*Urschler*) for his generous contribution! I remember him well from our days in the wing (1966-1970).

Also, my girls want to add a brick to the patio if its not too late.

Thanks, too, for all you do as president of the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association.

Sincerely,

*Alice Riggs, San Antonio, TX*

PS - Am really enjoying the portrait of Bill, sent by the wing last year. It is in his den.

*((Note is from widow of Col-Ret William E. Riggs, former 55<sup>th</sup> SRW/CC and a 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Hall of Fame inductee in 2002)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Mr. Ernst: June 12, 2003

Glad that the 55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing will be represented at the USAF Museum. Especially pleased that my late husband's name, via a brick, will be part of it. Great idea!

Please keep the newsletters coming. They are so informative and very well written.

Brick form and check enclosed. Thanks.

Sincerely,

*Dorothy R. Heany, Goffstown, NH*

\* \* \* \* \*

## MORE LETTERS AND E-MAILS

Max,

I just received my new member packet today and about fell over when I came across the poem on page 15 (*of the April 2003 newsletter*) titled "*Flyer's Heaven*".

I'm enclosing a poem I wrote for the memorial (*of*) a very dear friend of mine. He was the first crew-chief I was assigned to in the 55<sup>th</sup> back in 1954. He was a SSgt and I was a two-stripper. You might say he taught me how to be an airman and above all, taught me how to crew an RB-47. Our paths crossed a few times during our careers, and we kept in touch with letters, Christmas cards, etc.

In 2001 Chief Plumlee lost his battle against (*the effects of*) Agent Orange. I was asked to write a poem for his memorial service by his family. I cannot believe the poem in the newsletter and the one I composed are so similar!! If you know who submitted the poem, I'd appreciate knowing. I cannot do anything legally as I have no copyright, and that is not my intention. I'm just curious as to how the individual came across this particular poem. Thanks, Max.

*Dave Hall, MSgt. (Ret)*

*(From an e-mail 9/18/03)*

*(Note: As stated in the last newsletter, the item was credited to "Author Unknown". Whenever possible, Videmus Omnia will give attribution to the source. As I explained to Dave Hall, I received the poem some time past in a mass-addressed e-mail; but I did not remember the sender who had merely forwarded it. I have since seen another version of the poem with a few differences, titled "Flying West".*

*MSgt Hall's poem is virtually identical to the one printed in April 2003 and predates any versions I received. So, I readily acknowledge his authorship, and thank him for the input. Max)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Max,

18 May 2002

I second **Larry King's** kudos (*in the last issue of the Assn newsletter*). Thanks again for working so hard for the organization.

More on the RB-47 search missions in 1965 (*out of Incirlik AB, Turkey, reported in Letters column the last two issues, now a continuing saga*), re: Harriman and Rodecap comments.

Frank Hicks, certainly one of SAC's best ever, had the RB-H crew there (*at Incirlik*) that fall when the RB-57 tragedy occurred. Col "Big" **Bill Lewis** was the HQ honcho involved in directing the RB-57 (*search and rescue*) mission, and he invited me to the command post to watch the dramatic event. That part should remain under wraps, but soon after the



bird was overdue, we were among those alerted to search the Black Sea; all rules of engagement waived during the S & R operation.

We flew several times, as I recall. One mission in particular was probably the most exciting of the hundreds I made in the 12 years in the Wing. We flew right on the deck over the large assigned search pattern, talking to all kinds of people on the rusty old boats, navy ships, and who knows who else, involved in what was a really big deal.

On several occasions we actually 'popped up' over Russian ships and even woke up Don Gardner with all kinds of lock-ons that even that old crow had never seen or heard before.

Eventually, the downed aircraft was located, one of its big wings sticking up out of the water. F-100s were sent out and sank the wreckage just before the bad guys got there with their salvage ships.

*Dan ("Magic") Mateik, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hi Bill,

Please pass along to all responsible: Thanks for putting on a great reunion! The memorial dedication was superb.

The speaker presentations were enlightening. Esprit-de-corps, reminiscing, food, drink, and fun....all the logistics came together like a precision recon mission.

I'm looking forward to future get-togethers.

Thanks, **Mark Pestana**,

*NASA Dryden Research Center,*

*Flight Crew Branch, Edwards AFB, CA.*

*(From an e-mail 9/11/03)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Bill:

I wanted to thank you and all of those who worked to make the reunion a memorable experience for me. The overall program and your fine presentation of the dedication ceremony of the wing memorial, was for me, the high point of the reunion.

The opportunity for me to visit the AF Museum, and to be able *(to enjoy)* fellowship with everyone was something very special.

Thank you again for a great work in Dayton.

**Roy "Pop" Kaden** *Maumelle, AR*

*(From an e-mail 9/9/2003)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Fellow Crewmates:

Just a note of thanks to you and everyone who put together the recent 55<sup>th</sup> Rendezvous. Both Norma and I were impressed with the superb organizational planning involved in getting 700+ people together in one place!

Thank you, too, for the courtesies extended to me and my wife. May God continue to bless you and yours in the future.

With warm regards,

**John and Norma McKone**, *Hardyville, VA.*

*(From, an e-mail 9/14/2003)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Bill:

We sent our note of appreciation to Jack Kovacs, but we wanted to let you know that we had a wonderful weekend at the Recon Rendezvous 2003 in Dayton. It was great seeing old friends. Our thanks and gratitude to the 55<sup>th</sup> SRWA for providing us such a grand and faultless event. Our special thanks to Jack for his tireless efforts.

I not only speak for the 91<sup>st</sup> SRWA, but also for the Lockborne AFB group.

Sincerely,

**Maurice Cea**, *President 91<sup>st</sup> SRWA*

*(From an e-mail of 11/03/2003)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

Sales of polo shirts and caps at the Recon Rendezvous 2003 the Association were sensational! The inventory was depleted and back-orders taken for more. Over 300 have been sold since its inception.

With the newest order and after sales at the "Tales", the January shirt inventory by sizes is: small - 2; medium -8; large -10; XL - 4; XXL - 3; XXXL - 0. We can always order more of any size, as needed.

**Cost is now \$25 per shirt.**

The dual shield logo is on the left breast, white with red trim, navy blue front placket, no pocket. They are 100% combed cotton. The quality is such that there is little to no fading or shrinkage.

All of the **golf/ballcaps** were sold and 24 more were ordered. They are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front and adjustable back strap.

**They go for \$7 each.**

The items can be viewed in color on the Association web site at [www.55srwa.org](http://www.55srwa.org), and click on the *Clothing Sales* link.



*Jane Waters adds some class to help Max sell the Association shirts and caps at the reunion.*

Anyone desiring to purchase either or both can send an e-mail to: [MaxMoore55@aol.com](mailto:MaxMoore55@aol.com); phone: (402) 291-8272; or write to: 201 Basswood Court, Bellevue, NE, 68005-2001

**There are charges for postage to be added to the individual item costs:** \$7 for two shirts; \$5 if both a shirt and cap are ordered; \$4 for a shirt only; \$2 for a cap only.

**Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Association, or to Max Moore. Either way, the bucks end up in the Association treasury.**

Just another way to readily identify with your Association and “show the logo” at appropriate functions, on the golf course, whatever.

They are unisex, so get one for your spouse or significant other, or other family members.

Great gifts! Come and get ‘em!!!

\* \* \* \* \*

### **THE ASSOCIATION TIE**

Pizzo’s grand plan for the Association to have its ‘regimental’ tie was a complete success. All 316 of the ties were sold out in the blitz before and during the reunion.

There is even a demand to continue this new tradition, so **Jim Thomas** has picked up the baton

as the vendor and with a new batch of 75 being reordered.

It is an attractive and distinguished blue and red striped design with the Association’s dual shield logo prominently displayed in the tie’s center. A fine gold line defines every fourth blue/red stripe.

**The price is \$20 each which includes shipping postage. Order now!**

Contact Jim at [JThomas927@aol.com](mailto:JThomas927@aol.com), or write him at 4418 Anchor Mill, Bellevue, NE 68005-1168. Ph: 402-292-4260.



*Sam Pizzo and Pat Phillips show off the Association tie. Thus proving Sam can sell ties to anyone. He also sold the ‘last’ tie at least six times. What a guy!*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **PANORAMIC PHOTO**

Anyone desiring to purchase the panoramic picture of the crowd at the memorial dedication can do so by calling **William Aldrich** at (937) 434-9287, or by sending a \$20 check to Pan-A-View, 2501 E. Rahn Road, Kettering, OH, 45440. Cost includes shipping and postage. Refer to the Recon Rendezvous 2003 Photo. they will be available indefinitely.

This is also a private enterprise in which the Association is **not** involved. Another public service.

\* \* \* \* \*

*If you think there is good in everyone,  
you haven’t met everyone, as yet.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*If you can smile when things go wrong,  
you probably have someone in mind to blame*

\* \* \* \* \*

## SPARKLY 55<sup>TH</sup> PINS



*Pin shown near actual size*

A couple of years ago, **Donna Daly**, wife of the Col Daly, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing vice commander, had the idea to commission a distinctive pin for the Wing to give as Christmas gifts to the wives of the senior staff members. The pins were an instant sensation. Others wanted to get them, but the original vendor couldn't handle the volume of demand. So, Erwin's Jewelers in Bellevue, NE, picked up the sales. The rest, as they say, is history.

Capt. Beth Kelly and Carol Moore were seen wearing them at the RR 2003 reunion, and of course the pin became a item of demand. Some members have already purchased them for wives and friends, and now, you too can get them.

The Association gets **nothing** for these pins and it is **not** into the sale of them. But, as a public service for those who wish to possess same: **Erwin's Jewelers, Frank Kumor**, proprietor, in Olde Town Bellevue has an inventory of about 120 and **you can purchase directly from the store.**

You can write to 223 W. Mission Ave, Bellevue, NE; call: (402) 291-2454, or fax to (402) 293-5873 to order the pins. Cost is \$9 for the pin and \$3 for shipping for out of Bellevue buyers.

\* \* \* \* \*

## REUNIONS

**STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND  
2004 REUNION  
12-15 May 2004 - Boosier City, LA  
Isle of Capri Hotel/Casino**

Co-sponsored by the AK-LA-TEX chapters of the AFA and MOAA, in conjunction with the Retiree Affairs Office at Barksdale AFB, LA.

For more information, and to get a registration form contact: Retiree Office, PO Box 134, Barksdale AFB, LA 71110; or fax: 318-456-3520; e-mail: RAO@Barksdale.af.mil

\* \* \* \* \*

**B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION  
4<sup>th</sup> REUNION  
September 23-25 2004, Dayton, OH**

Our next reunion is **23-25 Sept 2004** - that's right, in less than nine months. So mark your calendars. I expect to see you all there. Don't tell me I did not give you enough notice.

It will be in Dayton, OH, and we will be visiting the largest aircraft museum in the world - the US Air Force Museum.

On Friday, 24 September, we will dedicate the \$25,000 memorial to all who maintained, flew, and supported the B-47, the aircraft that helped win the Cold War and never dropped a bomb on an enemy - now that's deterrence! Our memorial will be placed in the memorial gardens at the AF museum.

*(The RB-47 strategic reconnaissance operations will be recognized on a marble bench. Max.)*

Let's make this one of the biggest B-47 Association reunions yet! Call, e-mail and tell all of your B-47 friends to join us at the reunion. If they are not members of the Assn. have them contact me and I will mail them an application form. Dues are just \$15 a year, and you get a quarterly newsletter chock full of interesting stories and pictures about the B-47. My phone number is (402) 291-5247; e-mail: DickPurdum@aol.com

Don't forget to check our web site **B-47.com**

Please beat the drum, and contact any former B-47 troops you know and tell them about the reunion.

See ya all in Dayton this fall, if not sooner, **Dick Purdum**, President, B-47 Stratojet Association

*(Yep. Its déjà vu all over again. So if you missed the RR 2003, here is your chance to go view that new monument, and the 55SRW Cold War memorial. Max)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55<sup>th</sup> SRW ASSOCIATION 24<sup>TH</sup> REUNION

### March 2005 - San Diego, CA

Bill and Carol Lewis went right to work after the Dayton reunion and have already booked a hotel for the next one. The Red Lion Hotel in Mission Valley will be the HQ from **9-15 March (Wed – Tues) 2005**. The hotel has plenty of amenities – two dining rooms, bar, pool, spa, fitness room, meeting rooms and a banquet room.

It is located on the famous and convenient trolley line which connects to Old Town, Downtown, Tijuana, and several other places and sights of interest in the San Diego area. SD is famous for its great weather all year round, scenic beauty, a great waterfront and marinas, all sorts of history and entertaining tours, and outstanding shopping and restaurants.

A **tentative** schedule is also in the works for the attendees to include the always popular hospitality room hours, golf, tours, a dining cruise and the grand banquet. Details to be ironed out and will be forthcoming in the next newsletter.

**It is not too early to mark your calendars and count on making this next reunion in a superior locale. Plan to go early stay late.**

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## ASSOCIATION BUSINESS & MEMBERSHIP SOURCES

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**TAPS** – News of Association members, friends and associates taking the “Big PCS”, hitting “High Flight”, “folding wings”, etc., should be sent to 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, pilot/nav/EWO, time with 55<sup>th</sup>, and any other pertinent information, if known.**

The news in TAPS is limited by how much and how accurate the information is given.

*(Note: In other words, if there are mistakes, it's someone else's fault! No more mea culpae,..... I hope. Max.)*

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## YOUR 55<sup>TH</sup> SRW ASSN WEB SITE [www.55srwa.org](http://www.55srwa.org)

The Association homepage continues to garner rave reviews from those who go there. If you have not already done so, you are urged to check it out.

Webmeister **Don Griffin** and his creative cyber-sidekick, **Dave Johnson**, form a dynamic duo to maintain the site. They do some eye-popping work, folks.

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.

Info and updates on the next reunion and important bulletins on any projects in progress are posted. Also, there is e-mail traffic on many subjects of interest to members. Lots of good stuff.

**Even so, Grif is always looking for input from members. Send him pictures, war stories, anything you want to share with the Association.**

**Notice: Grif and Dave are looking to retire from those duties and hand over to younger, fresher blood. So, any super cyber dudes or dudettes with interest in taking part in this endeavor are urged to contact Grif and communicate your desires and qualifications.**

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### E – NEWSLETTER

Association members in good standing (paid up dues) who so desire can receive the newsletter via electronic transmission. To get it, go to: [www.55srwa.org](http://www.55srwa.org) for full instructions on how to read and/or download.

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### VETERANS' DAY

Remember - It is the Veteran, **not** the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press.

It was the Veteran, **not** the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.

It was the Veteran, **not** the lawyer, who has given us the right to fair trial.

It was the Veteran, **not** the campus organizer, who has given us freedom to demonstrate.

It was the Veteran, **not** the politician who has given us the right to vote.

It is the Veterans, who salutes the flag, who served under the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protestor the freedom to burn the flag.

*Written by **Father Denis Edward O'Brien**, USMC – "All Gave Some - Some Gave All"*

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### MORE RR 2003 ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR SALE

Robb Hoover is evaluating CDs and DVDs of the reunion, the memorial dedication and the RB-47 restoration process. He will determine when and at what price they will be made available for purchase if there is sufficient interest.

Check in to the web page for further info, or you can contact Robb directly via e-mail or phone. (See the directory in this newsletter, pg. 20)

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### WHO SHOT WHAT?



*Picture Acknowledgements: Jack Kovacs for the memorial patio and bench; Sam Pizzo for Assn tie display; Jim Maloney for the bell/BGen Koziol; Mike Cook for the coins; Robb Hoover for the trophy; Beth Kelley for the pin; and Max Moore for all the others.*

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### TULL HONORED ONCE AGAIN

LtCol (Ret) Harrison G. Tull, already a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Hall of Fame, was inducted into the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame on 22 January 2004. He was a member of the Tuskegee Airmen, Class 44-45-B, 14 November 1944.

Harry was one of three former Tuskegee grads from Nebraska so honored at a ceremonial banquet in Kearney, NE. The others were LtCol (Ret) Paul Adams and LtCol (Ret) Charles Lane.

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### FYI

The Oct/Nov issue of *Air and Space* magazine, published by the Smithsonian, had an article on page 66, about the RC-135 operations at Shemya AFB, AK, which monitored soviet nuclear tests. It is written by Association member **Robert L Brown**, an old crow and former 343<sup>rd</sup> ops officer.

Some may remember Bob as the originator of the infamous *Crewdog Gazette* back when Urschler was the wing king. He now resides in Dalzell, SC.

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### RECON RENDEZVOUS 2003 55<sup>TH</sup> SRW ATTENDEES

Adair, Jerry & Lelia  
Adams, Sparky & Carolyn  
Agronis, Gil & Ellen  
Alspaugh, Jim  
Arbuckle, Jim & Pam  
Arnold, Bob & Madeline  
Austin, Bill & Myrtle  
Back, George & Gerrie  
Baker, Mike & Pat  
Barkalow, Hank & Joy  
Barker, John M & Nona  
Barrett, Burton & Charleen  
Bateman, Bill & Marilyn  
Bates, B. J. & Lou  
Beauvais, Moe & Cris  
Benyunes, Charlie  
Black, Charles  
Blackwell, Reg & Judy  
Blanchard, William L. & Norene E.  
Blount, Harris & Norma Kussmann  
Boothby, George & Diana  
Borden, Andy & Sue Henkes  
Bostock, Raymond & Andrew +Catherien  
Bosze, Richard & Patricia  
Bowker, Bill & Jean  
Boydston, Ted & Marlene  
Britton, Jim & Linda +9 others  
Brockel, Don & Nina or Larry Nelson  
Brown, Harry & Barbara  
Brown, Jack E. & Chuck Brown  
Brown, Paul & Maxine  
Brown, Robert "Bob" & Cathy  
Bryan, Kenneth & Gretchen G.  
Butler, Jon & Marge  
Caldwell, Jim & Nancy  
Campbell, Dick & Eve  
Carbaugh, Phil & Mickey  
Carey, John & Barbara  
Carpenter, Buz & Nancy  
Caselton, Jean & Sue, James  
Clark, Rich & Thelma  
Cofield, Ralph & Joan  
Cole, Warren & Angelica "Anka"  
Conover, Charles A. & Billie J.  
Cook, Bill & Beverly  
Cook, Michael J.  
Cooper, Bob & Mary Furrie  
Corbin, Paul  
Crockroft, H. R. & Eva  
Crowson, Earl E. & Leona F.

Cummins, George & Caren McCourt  
Curzon, Dan & Linda  
Dant, Richard H & Mary K.  
Davis, Ed  
Davis, Walt  
Dawes, Tom & Lorraine  
Dennis, Bill & Julie  
DesRoche, George & Dorris  
Dolby, Paul F & Joe  
D'Orvilliers, Larry  
Dowd, George  
Dragon, Gene  
Drost, John & Reese  
Dube, Buck & Mitzi  
Dubuy, Hank & Sandra  
Duer, Glen & Ann  
Dyer, Dean P & Sue  
Dziejowski, René  
Eddins, Doug & Ann McFate  
Eisenberg, Lou & Mary  
England, Dave  
English, Bob & Judy  
Ernst, Bill & Linda  
Everling, Tom & Monica  
Fair, Roy V. & Libby  
Ferlaak, Mick  
Flipovich, John H.  
Fortin, Paul & Jane  
Fraser, Robert J & Margaret  
French, Don & Judy Apel  
Fruchtnicht, James & Helena  
Garbukas, Lucas & Laura  
Gardner, Don & Joan  
Garrison, Alex  
Garrity, Tom & Francine  
Gillmour, Louis & Yu Suk  
Glass, Frederick A L & Marne A.  
Gmitter, Robert J. & Vera M.  
Gnadke, John T. & Loren Hansen  
Goeden, Sam & Pat  
Goss, Robert H. & John R.  
Grant, Denise M & Debra  
Gray, Eddie & Libby  
Gresalfi, Tom & Carol  
Griffin, Donald & Marsha  
Gurney, Don & Barbara  
Gutzat, Gus & Judy  
Gyulavics, Joe & Dottie  
Hagie, Doug & Phyllis  
Hale, Bob

Hall, Joe & Helen + Johnny & Kellie  
Johnson  
Hampton, LtCol Will  
Hanley, Tom & Polly, Tom Jr  
Harpster, Terry & Phyllis  
Harriman, Dick & Evie  
Harris, Tom & Betty  
Hazzard, Buzz  
Heaton, John  
Hensley, Dale & Pat  
Hicks, Frank & LeWanda  
Hill, Bob & Loretta  
Hill, Dave & Claudia, +Sean, Sarah  
Hoberman, Errol  
Hodgson, Jack & Willie  
Holden, Bill & Mary  
Holland, Floyd E. & Carolyn R.  
Hoover, Robb & Shirley  
Howard, Russell  
Howe, Arlen & Mary + Don Kelley  
Hunton, Hugh & Clara  
Hurd, Pete  
Hutchinson, Richard & Jan  
Irwin, Don & Cynthia  
Isner, Bill  
Jansen, Ted & Ellen  
Jeffers, Fred & Heidi + 3  
Jenkins, Don & Mary  
Johnson, Dave  
Johnson, John & Toni  
Johnson, John T. & Dee  
Jones, Glen & Judie  
Jones, BGen T.C., [55<sup>th</sup> Wing/CC](#)  
Junker, William  
Kaden, Roy & Gerry  
Kaminski, Joe & Cathy  
Kaznecki, Larry  
Kelley, Capt Beth  
Kelley, Ken  
Kelly, John & Cathy  
Kelly, Ralph  
Kempf, Paul  
Kennedy, Ham & Pat  
Kiefer, Dick & Carrie Lou  
Kitchens, James E.  
Kleck, Peter G. & Patricia  
Knecht, Ron & Donna  
Knief, Duke & Jackie  
Kovacs, John A. & Judy  
Kramer, LtCol Kurt  
Kresge, Clete & Marge

Krulik, Richard & Ruthene  
LaFlair, Larry & Julie  
Lavers, Brent & Diane  
Lawrence, Gene & Doris  
Leeman, Dave & Jan  
Lemoncelli, Ed  
Letto, Augustine R.  
Lewis, Bill & Lou  
Lewis, Bill M. & Carol E.  
Lolli, Jim & Mary  
Lutkenhouse, Joel & Irene  
Lynch, Steve & Mary McQuin  
Magart, Grant L. & David H.  
Malcomson, Clark A & Margueritte  
Maloney, Jim  
Malunat, Don  
Manley, Frank & Joan  
Martin, Dan & Mary Burg  
Martin, Norm & Marie  
Mayfield, Earl  
McAloon, Chris & Peg  
McAtee, Maria Goforth  
McKechnie, John  
McKinney, Tom & Kate  
McKone, John & Norma  
McLaughlin, Jack (Mac) & Sharon  
McManus, Brian & Carole  
Medearis, Wayne & Mechaele Nebben  
Metcalf, George & Nancy  
Meyer, Chuck  
Michael, Al & Peggy  
Millen, Billy B. & Kathy  
Miller, George D  
Miller, P.B. & Judy  
Mitchell, Larry & Susan  
Moncure, Tom & Alice, Tracy, Steve  
Moore, Max & Carol  
Morris, Ray & Dora  
Morrow, Jim & Carole  
Morss, M. N. "Bud"  
Murphy, Terry & Kathy  
Mutual, Gene & Roberta F  
Navarro, Lloyd & Sylvia  
Neal, Stew  
Nelson, James L. & Sharon  
Nelson, Jim & Ruth  
Nichols, Junior A. & Jeanette  
Nickerson, Ron & Martha  
Nikolai, R.T. [Nick]  
Nolan, Jerry & Marcia

Nussbaum, Richard & Barbara  
Oberkrom, Herman & Ruth  
O'Connor, Chuck  
Olmstead, Bruce & Gail  
Owens, Roy & Charlene  
Pacala, Anthony & Judy  
Palcowski, Dick & Martha  
Palmieri, Elvio & Darlene  
Paul, Norman & Joyce  
Penfield, George & Rob  
Percival, Garry  
Perrizo, John (Jack)  
Pestana, Mark  
Phillips, Patricia & Roxanne  
Phillips, Terry C.  
Pixley, John J. & Sandy C.  
Pizzo, Sam & Mary  
Potter, Eliot "Pete" & Treva  
Powers, John & Pat  
Prislusky, Pat + 5  
Prody, Mark  
Pruss, Ted & Arlene  
Quinn, Paul & Neil  
Racine, Joe & Mary  
Ray, Dick & Susan Sandel  
Rehman, James H. & Shirley  
Remaklus, Don  
Reynolds, Bill & Charlotte, Jim, June  
Rieden, Hank & JoAnn  
Riggan, Lew & Darlene  
Riley, Jim & Roberta  
Robeson, Fletcher (Bob) & Bruce  
Robinson, Jack (Wm. G.) & Diane  
Roland, Jay  
Romanick, Dave  
Ross, George  
Rosser, Bill & Elly  
Rowlinson, Don & Joyce  
Ruppert, William  
Russell, Bobby R & Duveen  
Ryan, Don  
Saenz, Roland & Kathy A.+ Gabriel  
Samuel, W. E. Wolfgang  
Sanks, Julius F & Poppy  
Savage, Walt  
Schulz, Donald & Lucienne + 3

Schuneman, Steve & Ann  
Schweizer, John & Peg  
Schwieso, Duaine & Mary  
Shaw, Eugene B. & Linda L.  
Simmon, Robert & Eve Armstrong  
Simon, Bill & Rosemary LaPierre  
Sjoland, Dave & Carol  
Smart, Rudy & Terry  
Smith, Al & Marty  
Smith, Gary & Patty  
Smith, Keith & Fran  
Smith, R. L. & Hilda  
Sneary, Russell & Sandra  
  
Staples, Buck & Donna  
Starkenbug, Sherm [Starky] & Janet  
Stern, Ted & Audrey J.  
Stevens, Steve & Dick Purdum  
Stitt, James E. & Cynthia J.  
Strandberg, Bill & Ann  
Sul Jr., Aristeo & Virginia E.  
Tesi, Guido & Margaret + Robt Eichkorn  
Thomas, Clyde  
Thomas, Don & Barbara  
Thomas, Jim  
Thompson, Bob  
Thompson, Rick & Jacque  
Trout, Max & Dottie  
Truhan, Stephen & Anne  
Tucker, Dick & Judy  
Tull, Harrison  
Urschler, Regis  
Wakeman, Edwin & Linda + 2-Nellers  
Waple, Hugh & Odie  
Waters, Charlie & Jane  
Watkins, Bill & Nora  
Welch, Dale & Barbara  
Wesner, John A. & Ann  
White, Ben & Pat Relyea  
White, Don & Margaret  
Whitworth, Neil & Doloras  
Williams, Herb & Barbara  
Wood, Norman  
Wygant, Larry J & Shirley  
Yanuzzi, Nick & Georgina