

Videmus Omnia

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2007

NEXT REUNION 14-18 MAY 2008

Vice President Ricky McMahon, chairman of the 2008 Association's 26th gathering, dubbed "The National Treasures Reunion", has contracted with the Hilton Crystal City in Arlington, VA, for 14-18 May 2008. The hotel is at Washington Reagan National Airport and within minutes of central Washington, historic Alexandria and Georgetown.



Ricky Mac, Chef-in-Chief at the DC BBQ

The special room rate is \$159, plus taxes = \$175.30; and is good for two days either side of the reunion, and <u>may</u> be available for longer, based on individual requests and room availability.

For any eager beavers, you can call to book your rooms at Hilton central reservations, 1-800-HILTONS (445-8667). The code for the special rate is: 55th SRWA National Treasures Reunion.

To get the special rate room reservations must be made before 12:00 AM 13 April 2008.



Should you have problems getting the reservation, contact Ricky at his home number, 1-703-791-4133.

Mark all this on your calendars NOW and begin making your plans to attend what promises to be one more grand reunion in the tradition of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* comrades, families and friends.

The **Association** Board of Directors meeting is slated forTuesday, 13 May.

The banquet will be Friday night, the 16th, with the membership business meeting on Saturday morning. Events are being looked into for Thursday and Saturday evenings. Maybe a Potomac dinner cruise, although there are myriad options.

The full and detailed schedule of events, activities, tours and costs will be forthcoming on the web site and in the registration package issue of *Videmus Omnia* to be published as soon as all the information is finalized.

In addition to the plethora of attractions in the nation's capital to draw visitors, all of which are **free**, fairly recent new ones are: the World War II Memorial, the Air Force Memorial, the FDR Memorial, the new annex of the Air and Space Museum near Dulles International Airport.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings from the Heartland.

Where did the summer go? Here it is September already. *Tempus Fugit*. Hope all had a pleasant summer of good tidings and good times. To help us pass the time, Max has for all, another newsletter of great import.

As you have seen, the DC reunion honcho Ricky has come a long way to solidifying the reunion plans. No small task. Planning a get together in Omaha, one has to go out and find what is available, if at all. Setting up a reunion in DC involves lots of elimination of things that are already available. There are just so many choices.

Ricky is finding the good deals and narrowing down specific optional events. Then there is always all the rest of that stuff to see and do. It will only be a short tube ride to get there from the hotel. Location, location, location. That is what the Hilton Crystal City has to offer. When you put together the location and room price, and compare that to other similar hotel venues, the Hilton Crystal City is a good deal despite the rates.

If we get the humble numbers we hope for, we will have 8-10 free room nights to raffle off as we did in Omaha. Additionally, if you are <u>not</u> a member of Hilton Honors, join, so you can get points for your stay and use the bennies later.

Please, please commit as early as you can. We have to commit to the hotel to fill a minimum number of room nights. If we do not do so by the 30 days prior deadline, we still must pay for the revenue lost. So, sign up early... and often. It gives us maneuvering room with the hotel if we see a shortfall coming or if we know we need more rooms early in the game. Hotels in DC do not have any occupancy problems. Final details with sign-up and a playbill will be available in the next newsletter. This DC reunion will be one to remember...a real national treasure.

I want to thank **Sam Pizzo** for putting forth, and riding herd on, the *Memory Lane* project, more tales of the 55th. Our web site, **www.55srwa.org** now has 13 tales with eight writers having made inputs. Not bad at all for less than a year of being on the hunt.

Articles have been, and will continue to be, published in the newsletter. *Memory Lane* is an excellent way to revisit our proud history, and an inexpensive way of recording it permanently. Add to the program. If you know of a great tale that might rightly belong to someone else to tell, hit them up to share it with us.

I just thought of such a great post-mission happening at the RAF Mildenhall Officers Club that deserves to be told, and I will do just that. I'll ring-up **Reggie Stewart** and make him an offer.

There are a thousand tales out there, in our memories, that deserve to be told, and need to be recorded forever. If not shared, they will only be carried west... in our memories. A grand idea, Sam. Thanks.

Again it is time to put out the Call for Nominations for the 55th Wing Hall of Fame. Timelines and procedures follow herein. We have a standardized process, submission format, and specific criteria for selection. These measures are necessary to keep the playing field level. The time span from the 55th Pursuit Group (1939), through the 55th SRW Cold War years, and to the present day 55th Wing covers lots of terrain.

Just the facts. The contributions to the missions of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* are the only criteria. Those are the currency of the Hall of Fame.

Nominations (*submit just one original copy*) are due to me **NLT 1 December 2007**. If you need to submit electronically, please call me first. Any questions, you know how to get me. (*See page 4*)

I know you will enjoy this once again super newsletter. Max is leaning forward so far to get this one on the printer. I'd better cut it off and let him loose.

Ya'll be careful, out there now. Have a super fall, a warm winter, and good health through it all.

Videmus Omnia, Jim



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS 55th WING HALL OF FAME

Administered by

55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association

Hear ye, hear ye. From the President, 55th SRW Association....to all those who have not done so, do so immediately. Send me your nomination to be considered for induction into OUR Hall of Fame

But, before you go digging through those foot lockers of documents, etc, read below where I have included some essential information on procedures and our process for selection. Each year the timelines have to be modified to coincide with the date of the Wing Birthday Ball.

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HALL OF FAME

Objective: To recognize those former members of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* whose mission accomplishments, contributions, and/or sacrifices stand out while performing or providing direct support to the missions of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.

<u>General:</u> Nominations will be accepted this year through November 2008. A maximum of two (2) awards (a crew will be considered as one award) may be given in one year. Consideration of nominees does **not** mandate selection to the HoF. Formal induction ceremonies for the Hall of Fame will be conducted during the 55th Wing Birthday Ball weekend in 2008.

Nominees for the HoF recognition will be former military members who have served as members of any of the following units: 55th Pursuit Group, 55th Fighter Group, 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing and/or 55th Wing. These units are herein referred to collectively as the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.

The selection process consists of actions by both a Screening Committee and a final Selection Committee. These committees are made up of both retired and active duty members of the 55th Wing.

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<u>Selection Process:</u> The HoF final selection will be the end result of two processes:

- 1. The HoF Screening Committee will receive and review all nomination packages and forward those to be considered by the Selection Committee. The HoF Screening Committee will be chaired by an Omaha area-based member of the Board and be comprised of at least four Association members in good standing, one of which will be the 55 Wing Vice Commander or his designated representative.
- 2. The Selection Committee will consider all nomination packages forwarded by the Screening Committee and make the final selection recommendations to the 55thSRWA Board of Directors for their approval. The Selection Committee will be comprised of Chairman of the Awards Committee, Chairman of Screening Committee and not less than three, or more than five, Omaha area-based Association members in good standing, one of which will be the 55 Wing Vice Commander or his designated representative.

Eligibility Criteria

- 1. Must have been assigned to the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.
- 2. Mission accomplishments, contributions, and/or sacrifices must have been accomplished while assigned to and performing the missions of the *Fightin' Fifth-Fifth*; or having been assigned to the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*, the mission accomplishments, contributions, and/or sacrifices must have had a direct, significant and sustained impact on the accomplishment of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth's* missions.
- 3. Nominee **cannot** be on active duty.

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

Nomination packages will be comprised of the following items:

1. Nominator: (One nominator only) (see para 6) Name:

Address:

Phone number/email:

2. Nominee(s):

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

If nominee(s) is/are deceased, please provide name, address, and phone number of an appropriate family member who can represent the individual (if possible) at the HoF induction ceremony.

3. Photo of nominee (color preferred)

The following will be in narrative format:

- 4. Assignment Dates Provide assignment history to the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* and/or assignment history and nature of relationship in direct support to the mission of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.
- 5. Narrative Detail specific mission accomplishments, contributions, and/or sacrifices to the legacy of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.
- 6. Nominations must be signed by nominator and one/two additional individual(s) who was/were either witness to the acts, unyielding service, etc., or someone who can attest to the validity of the nomination. The nominator must provide best available supporting documentation wherever possible to ensure the HoF selection committee can be convinced of the authenticity of the facts forwarded in the nomination.
- 7. Submit nominations to the Awards Chairman, Jim Thomas. Nominations packages with supporting documentation should be sent to him at 4418 Anchor Mill Dr., Bellevue, NE, 68123-1168. Only one original package must be submitted. The Awards Chairman will be responsible for providing best copies of all documents to all committee members.
- 8. Nominations may also be submitted to JThomas927@aol.com.

9. Nomination schedule:

1 December 2007 - All nomination packages are due to the Awards Chairman.

The 55th SRWA President:

- a. Prepares "Call for Nominations" memo for inclusion in the 55thSRWA newsletter and web site
- b. After the Selection Committee has finalized the selection of any new inductees, the President will forward this information to the Board of Directors for concurrence.
- c. Informs the 55th Wing Commander of the inductees.
- d. In consonance with the 55th Wing POC (normally Protocol and Wing Birthday Ball Project Officer), coordinates presentations at the annual Wing Birthday Ball, or other event or venue as coordinated between the 55th Wing and the 55th SRWA.

James W. Thomas, President, 55th SRW Association



ASSOCIATION BUSINESS & MEMBERSHIP SOURCES DIRECTORY

Business/Policy/Reunion Suggestions:

President Jim Thomas

4418 Anchor Mill Bellevue, NE 68123-1168 E-mail: JThomas927@aol.com

2008 Reunion Chair:

Vice President Ricky McMahon,

14325 Orlando Road Nokesville, VA 20181

E-mail: Rick_CaryMc@comcast.net

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E-man. Kooomoover@aoi.com

Association Web Page Comments/Ideas: Jim Maloney

7908 Kona Circle

Papillion, NE 68046-5619

E-mail: jim@maloney.com

Other Members of the Board of Directors:

Permanent Members: Sam Pizzo, Sparky Adams, Charlie Waters, Bill Ernst, (Hoover, Maloney, Hoberman, Moore). Elected Members: (Thomas, McMahon) Don Griffin, Joe Gyulavics, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Kevin Todd, Michael Cook, Dennis Haun, Pete Glenboski, Larry Utley. Active Duty: LtCol Ken Bauer and LtCol Brian Tingstad.



TREASURER'S REPORT

The **Association**, as of 22 August 2007, had a checking account balance \$2,861.00. Another \$8,861 is in a saving account.



It looks good on paper, but we have bills to pay and expenditures pending, so please pay your dues promptly.

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Occasionally, members include modest amounts of money over and above that required for dues to add to the treasury, and every dollar is much appreciated. (Hint, hint, heavy hint.)

Others may wish to contribute to the Association with an outright donation, or by an endowment or bequest. Something to consider.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 22 August 2007, the **Association** had **1,024** members in good standing, of which 159 are widows. That is an **increase of 19** since 15 April 2007. Another 28 associated members and 36 55th Wing units receive the newsletter.

The **Association** still claims members in all **50 states**, plus Guam, Puerto Rico and APOs in Europe and the Pacific.

The number of **active duty members** continues to increase, largely due to the **Association's** exposure to the Wing at events such as the *Tales* and Birthday Ball; in addition to the solid support of the Wing senior staff, and as current members continue to recruit in other areas of the country.

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The most asked question of the membership chairman is, "When do my dues run out?" It is indicated on your address label, or in the eversion introduction.

2006 on <u>your address label</u> means that your dues expired at the <u>end of last</u> year. (If you threw the envelope away, go look for it!) Any other year indicates when your dues will expire, or have already expired.

Dues are payable each January, so if you haven't already done so, renew <u>now</u>.

For those of you whose membership expired in 2006, \$10.00 is <u>past</u> due for 2007; \$25 will update your membership for three years beyond what now shows as an expiration year.

This will be the last newsletter you will receive unless you reup, and you surely don't want to miss the reunion registration issue.

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Please remit dues to 55SRW Association and mail to Errol Hoberman as soon as practical. For those who receive this newsletter via regular post, an Association pre-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

New members receive the **Association**'s dualshield lapel pin and the **55**th**SRW** Cold War Memorial coin from 2003 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.).

Thomas and Moore have pins and coins, as well, so members in the Omaha area can get the pins from them for \$3.00 without the postage. Extra memorial coins are \$5.00 each.

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If you don't receive e-mails from the **Association**, it likely is because your e-address is **not listed or outdated**. To get on the *members only* e-mail roster, or correct/update any changes in recent months, send your current e-mail address to Errol Hoberman at **SAC-EWO@mchsi.com**.

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Eventually you get to the point in life when you stop lying about your age, and start bragging about it.

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TULL HONORED ONCE AGAIN

Harrison D. Tull, LtCol USAF (Ret), was among six former Tuskegee Airmen from Nebraska who were honored at a festive dinner and ceremonies in Omaha on 5 July 2007. It was coincidentally, Harry's 87th birthday.



He was presented the Congressional Gold Medal by **Senator Ben Nelson** (D-Neb). Harry is also an original member of the 55th Wing Hall of Fame and in the Nebraska Aviation Hall of Fame.

Three other Tuskegee Airmen were also given the medals, and family members of two deceased veterans accepted the awards. Congressman Lee Terry (R-Neb) and Nebraska LtGovernor Rick Sheehy were among other presenters.

President George W. Bush had presented Congressional Gold Medals to a group of surviving Tuskegee Airmen in a Capital rotunda ceremony on 29 March; but, because not all of the Nebraska veterans could attend, members of the Alfonza W. Davis Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen hosted the ceremony at the Omaha Double Tree Hotel.

About 250 guests were at the affair, including a table of ten sponsored by the 55th SRW Association. The delegation was led by Association President Thomas. With him were past president Ernst, Regis Urschler, Steve Stevens, Dick Purdum, Frank Hicks, Ham Kennedy, Hoover, Maloney and Moore. The group, resplendent in navy blue blazers and Association ties, attracted some admiring and/or curious attention from other attendees. (Who are those old dudes?)



L to R: Maloney, Stevens, Purdum, Hicks, Tull, Hoover, Kennedy, Thomas, Ernst, Moore (Reggie had departed the building)

Uniformed dignitaries included **MGen Roosevelt Mercer**, Director of Plans and Policy,

US Strategic Command; Col Sheron Bellizan, 55th Comm Group Commander; Col Tom Goffus, 55th Mission Support Group Commander; 55th Wing Command ChiefMSgt Kenneth Funderburg; BGen Robert Bailey, Assistant Adjutant General of Nebraska; and BGen Randolph Scott, Deputy Commander of the Nebraska Air National Guard. Also attending was BGen (Ret) Paul Cohen (an Association member), the Administrator of Public Building Commission for the city of Omaha.

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HAUN HALL DEDICATION

The 45th Reconnaissance Sqd of the 55th Wing, dedicated its briefing/conference room in Bldg 40 at Offutt AFB, NE, in the name Chief MSgt (Retired) Dennis Haun.

In a ceremony led by LtCol Kenneth Bauer, the squadron's commander, on 22 June 2007, Haun was recognized for his long, superior and distinguished Air Force career and dedicated service to the 45th in the early 1990s.



LtCol Bauer presents the framed crew chief badge, wrenches, sqd coins and plaque to Haun.

Witnessing the presentation is SMS Phillip Evans of the 55th Maintenance Group.

The shadow box was permanently mounted on the briefing/conference room wall. Also, a large painted rendering of the badge was unveiled on the front wall of the room.

A career maintainer and crew chief on several weapons systems during his tenure, Chief Haun became a rarity as both a maintainer and enlisted man to have an edifice dedicated in his honor.

In his acceptance remarks, Dennis mentioned that his time in the 55th was among the most rewarding of all his varied experiences.

A large crowd of active duty squadron members was on hand to pay homage to the Chief, as were his wife **Cheryl** and other family members, plus friends and several 55th **Association** members. Both Bauer and Haun are members of the **Association's** Board of Directors.

The 45th is now the third 55th squadron to honor an iconic veteran of the 55th's storied past.

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COL DON KELLY LEAVES 55TH

55th Deputy Ops Group Commander, Col Don Kelly's last day with the wing was 27 July. An informal (at Don's request) luncheon was held on that date at the 45th RS's recently dedicated "Haun Briefing Room".

The 55th Ops Group, other wing personnel, family and friends gave honors and farewells to a well respected leader and mentor for his two years service in the position. Col Kelly moved across Offutt to a job at US Strategic Command.

Regrettably, he had to relinquish his position on the **Association**'s Board, but will continue as a valuable member of the **Association**. (As the sonin-law of 'Ziggy' and Mary Howe, what choice does he have?)



Kelly with OpsGroupCC, Col. Phil Smith

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NEW ACTIVE DUTY

BOARD MEMBER

LtCol Brian Tingstad, former commander of the 343rd RS and currently the 55th Wing Director of Staff, is the newest volunteer active duty member to be selected for the **Association** Board of Directors.

He was nominated by 55th Wing Commander Col (BG-sel) Jim Jones, and unanimously approved by the Association Board on 17-18 August 2007.



Welcome aboard "Tinger"!!



DC BELTWAY ALUMS BBQ

The 55th East group (our first chapter?) held its annual summer picnic on the afternoon of 4 August at Crystal Park on Ft Belvoir, VA. Ed Topps and Ricky McMahon organized the event attended by over 40 former 55th, ers and family members.



They have been holding this gathering, plus a winter holiday social, for some years now. It gives the area alums a chance to remember their 'roots' and have a mini-reunion of sorts. As we all know, that 55th camaraderie never dies.



L to R: Bill Strandberg, Monica and Ed Topps, Ann Strandberg

Monica Topps and Cary McMahon pitched in to support their respective spouses. Jeff and Trish Seinwill, Will and Jennie Hampton were big time helpers in the execution of the affair.



L to R: Laura Dugie, Trish Seinwill, Will and Jennie Hampton, Jeff Seinwill

Other attendees included Marcy Atwood and Neil Pucket, Ken and Sue Cobleigh, Mark and Mrs Damiano, Val and Laura Dugie, Carol Johnson, Laura Koch, Bo and Ann Marlin, Eric and Mrs Paulson, Rich and Mrs Shipman, Louis and Mrs Mingo, Mary and Rich Schwing, Bill and Ann Strandberg, Maxie Thom, Mark and Michelle Williamson.

(If any attendees (and names) slipped under the radar and are not listed, mea culpa. Well, actually, it is Ricky's or Ed's fault. Max)

While the banner depicted above may be misleading since not all attending were members of the **Association**, a concerted recruiting effort occurred. Trumpeting for the spring 2008 National Treasures Reunion was evident, as well. The group was comprised of active duty, contractors, retirees, and family members.

Planning for the area holiday party is already underway with Ricky looking to enlist **Steve Groll** and **Carl Misner** as able assistants.

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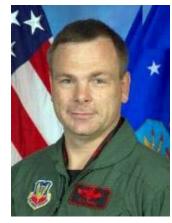
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE 55TH ASSOCIATION

By *LtCol Ken Bauer*, 45th RS Commander, Active Duty Association Board Member

Over 20 years ago, when I entered the Air Force as a green second lieutenant in a KC-135 tanker squadron, we sat alert. We had hours to burn waiting for one enemy or another to press the button that would start

World War III. So, we would kill time by telling stories. It was on alert that I learned about my squadron; the rich history of when and why it came to be, and what it was all about in the present time.

We studied our certification information, and learned such things as how to squeeze more range out of our aircraft by cutting bleeds; and how we would survive in the event of an unexpected



landing in hostile lands. The days of alert are long gone, and so is a lot of the history that was learned during those endless hours in the Alert Facility.

Fast forward to Offutt AFB and my life as a reconnaissance pilot. The 55th Wing has such a long and storied history, but as the mission tempo has gotten busier and busier, there is little time to reflect on history; and now our heritage, and more importantly, those who have gone before us and their tales are slipping away.

There is no venue for such story telling anymore. The younger airmen do not hang out at the o'club. They spend what little free time they do have with their families. So, individuals who have paid the ultimate sacrifice, and the stories of "why", are missing from our younger airmen's minds.

I have the good fortune of a great unit historian, plus involvement in the 55th SRWA, to help remind my unit, and me, of where we have been. With no more alert to share those stories that were legendary, the *Tales of the* 55th event each year

gracefully pulls together the best of what was, and the pride of what now is, the Fightin' Fifty-Fifth.

It was at those events I realized that the younger aviators needed heroes; men who had flown missions against other foes. Today's men and women are hungry for someone to tell them why they are important, so they can see that although the adversaries are different, our experiences are similar in many ways. The legends have previously walked the proverbial mile in our shoes, and inspire us to continue to provide the best reconnaissance support in the world!

The 55th Association is the keeper of that knowledge, and the heritage of what we do. The old saying of, "if you don't know where you came from, how do you know where you are going?" is still valid today. The SRWA helps lead us in the right direction by letting us know where we came from - our distinguished and proud heritage.

So, the question is not why do we have organizations such as the 55th Association? The real question is why don't more join and celebrate our heritage and rich future!



55TH WING BIRTHDAY **BALL 2008**

As this issue goes into final preparation, the 55th Wing's annual gala is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, 5 April 2008. However, a venue had not been secured, nor a contract signed.

The planning committee, ably headed by Capt Kim Arnold, commander of the 55th Services Sqd, is diligently working to get the main plans accomplished, then dig into the details for the Wing's largest formal social event of the year.

The Ball, which was established by our own Regis Urschler when he was the 55th SRW commander, was first held in January 1979.



THE 55TH SRW ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The 55th SRW Association Award for **Excellence** is presented annually to that individual, crew, group, or organization that best exemplifies the basic tenants of the 55th SRW Association.

Nominees for the 2008 honor will be accepted in time to be presented at the next 55th Wing Birthday Ball.

Past award recipients are LtCol Ricky McMahon, 338th Combat Training Squadron commander, for 2000; and MSgt Steven and MSgt Lisa Haggett, 55th Wing Command Section, 2001; LtCol Kurt Kramer, 38thRS commander, 2002, and LtCol Glen Gulleckson, 343rdRS commander, 2003; TSgt Terry Hunt, Medical Support Group, 2004; MSgt Norman de la Vega, 55th Security Forces Sqd, Elite Guard, in 2005. The 2006 awardee was MSgt David A. Cain of the 55th AMS, a crew chief by trade

The permanent trophy resides in a display case in the lobby of the Gen Russell Dougherty Conference Center at Offutt. Many significant events are held there each year, including the annual ACC Commanders and Chiefs Conferences, so it is in a high visibility area.



FIGHTIN' FIFTY-FIFTH HISTORY

The following article recounts a remembrance from the 55th's past. There are several other entries on the Association web site under the Memory Lane link.



MY TOUR AT FORBES AFB By Robert H. Goss

After Bomb/Nav Maintenance Training School at Lowry AFB, CO, I reported to Forbes AFB, KS, in June, 1954, and was assigned to the 55th Armament and Electronics Maintenance Squadron.

I was in the Bomb/Nav Field Shop and spent the summer of 1954 unpacking and assembling mockups. After that was completed, we had to install modification kits or cable replacements to the junction boxes to match versions of the actual bomb/nav equipment that we would be maintaining. Later, we cut stencils and painted black mobility markings on each box. I think we had a total of four sets of mockups. In September, the first of the RB-

47s began to arrive and we finally got into the business of repairing real "black boxes".

One morning, our first alert sounded around 0400, so we all jumped out of our beds, not knowing what to expect. One of the old-timers told us that it was an alert, but that we should go back to bed for an hour, then go to work. Of course, we eager beavers got dressed and rushed up to the flight line only to find the gate locked. We waited around for about an hour until the Air Police got there to unlock it and admit us to the flight line. About that time, the old-timer sauntered up and made us feel silly.

In January 1955, rumors began that our wing, and the 90th SRW, would be deployed while a runway construction project could be completed. One of the wings would go to Morocco, the other to Alaska. Since everything was considered classified, we could only speculate and were cautioned not to talk about it.

Late in April, we were told that the 55th would be going to Morocco. Of course by that time we knew our destination as we had already been told to purchase aviator sunglasses at the Base Exchange and had been issued pith helmets, not exactly Alaska gear.

Ben Guerir AB was situated about 36 miles north of Marrakech and was in a flat, rocky plain with desert-like conditions. Housing was in 32 foot by 16 foot plywood huts. Latrines were concrete block buildings and were almost always flooded. We had to wade through six inches of water to get to the showers, then stand on planks resting on concrete blocks while showering.



While at Ben Guerir, there were three siroccos, or sandstorms. One learned that when the ugly

brown cloud on the horizon appeared, you needed to wet a towel and wrap it around your head to filter out the dust. I imagine the air crews must have hated the storms as the sand got into everything

We would work until 1100 and then knock off as it got too hot to run equipment. We did not have air conditioners to cool the equipment. Afternoons were spent sleeping or drinking, and there was no swimming pool on the base. Movies were held in an outdoor theater after dark. Another pastime was to turn rocks over looking for scorpions.

One day we borrowed a thermometer from the hospital and measured the temperature in the RB-47 navigator's position. It registered 157 degrees F. That night in the outdoor theater the temperature measured 50 degrees, a swing of 107 degrees in one day! That was the desert for you.



The author with snake charmer in Morocco.

After the return to Forbes, I was assigned to the maintenance docks as the bomb/nav system and autopilot inspector. Initially, we were located in an old hangar, but later moved to a new four story hangar that had been built in anticipation of B-52 aircraft.

One day we witnessed an RB-47 from the 90th SRW make a hard landing, crash, and burn. Fortunately, the crew managed to get out of the burning aircraft uninjured, but the plane was a total loss. A downdraft at the end of the runway was determined to be the cause.

It was also our job to "swing the compass". Unfortunately the compass rose was next door to the engine run-up area. We were issued the small rubber earplugs and I think this was the beginning of my loss of hearing in later years.

One evening around the 1956-57 time, while returning from the compass rose, we waited for the

green light signaling that it was okay to cross the active runway. We waited but no light was seen, so we figured the tower operators did not see us. After starting across, we discovered an RB-47 bearing down on us. Our driver had quick reactions and we got out of the way. Needless to say we got several red flashes and very quickly. Perhaps some of you former crew members reading this will remember that incident.

I remember when the mayor of Topeka came on base complaining that off-duty Air Force personnel were causing problems in the city, but were not contributing much to the local economy. Next payday we were paid in two dollar bills. That was followed by the complaint that we were flooding the city with two dollar bills. I think the mayor got the point.

Our wing commander was Col Olbert F. Lassiter. When you see the movie Strategic Air Command with Jimmy Stewart and June Allyson, you should note Col. Lassiter listed in the credits as the Technical Advisor.

While in Kansas I never did see a tornado, but watched one on radar. It appeared as a bright "J" on the screen and disappeared about three miles from the base. The tornado sighting was confirmed by the base weather station.

On May 20, 1957, a tornado touched down near Williamsburg, KS. It cut an 80 mile path of destruction and was said to have multiple funnels. I visited the area soon after and saw trees that were twisted and broken about six feet above the ground. While the tornado was doing its damage, I could see storm clouds to the south of Forbes that were an ugly green-black in color and knew something was happening.

(This article has been edited and shortened. The original memoir, and more pictures, can be seen on the Association website's Memory Lane link. Max)



TAPS

TAPS notification of Association members, spouses, friends and associates taking the Big PCS should be sent to Jim Thomas and Max Moore (see DIRECTORY, page 4 for contact info).

Please include next of kin and an address and to whom the Association condolence card may be sent; date of demise, age, crew or duty position; bases and approximate years with 55th; and any other pertinent information you wish to include.

The news in TAPS is <u>limited</u> by how much and how accurate the given information.

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BLOMBERG, Richard T., 86, died 12 May 2007; Hemet, CA; wife: **Mary Margaret**. Served in WWII and was a POW in Germany for 9 months. Also a Korean War veteran, Dick was an EWO in RB-47s in the 55th at Forbes AFB, KS, 1967-68.

HANNA, Keith, 82, 6 May 2007; Fort Sam Houston, TX; wife: **Bette**. Keith joined the 55th as an RB-50 pilot at Ramey AFB, PR, in 1950. He moved to Forbes with the wing and transitioned into the RB-47 until 1957.

LARSON, Doyle E., 77, 13 August 2007; Burnsville, MN; wife: Lois. Doyle began his career in basic training, then aviation cadets, and rose to two-star rank, commanding the USAF Security Service at Kelly AFB, TX. Previously, he commanded Security Service squadrons at Eielson, Offutt and Kadena.

MCCLENHAN, Doris, 24 March 2007; Tucson, AZ. She was the widow of Malcolm who passed in 2002. He was an RB-47 EWO at Forbes in the early 1960s.

PARSONS, **Ken**, 30 June 2007; Berea, KY; wife: **Linda**. An E-4 navigator in the 1ACCS at Offutt AFB, NE, he later served as a maintenance squadron commander there, and PCS'd to Eielson AFB, AK.

SCOTT, Roy M., 85, 26 July 2006; Colorado Springs, CO. Roy was an RB-47 EWO at Forbes in the late 1950s-early 1960s.

THOMAS, Clyde, 12 May 2007; Baton Rouge. LA; wife: **Dottie**. Brother of another former 55th, er,

Don L., Clyde was an RB-47 pilot at Forbes in the 1960s and later went to B-52s.

TRUHAN, Steve, 86, 28 July 2007; Camarillo, CA; wife: **Anne**. A WWII B-24 pilot with 24 combat missions, and a Korean War vet, Steve was in RB-47s at Forbes, with the **55**th in 1955-58, and then went to the 376th SW at Lockbourne AFB, OH.

ZABIELSKI, Ray F.; 84, 23 August 2006; Longview, TX, wife: **Grace**. Served in the 55th at Forbes from 1957-62. Retired as a MSgt from Griffiss AFB, NY in 1964.



LETTERS AND STUFF



Dear Max:

Another great newsletter (May 2007)---they just get MORE BETTER AND MORE BETTER----that's far-east Texas for 'pretty dern flashy'.

TAPS hit home this time: Dan Birmingham worked for me at SAC Recon Center as well as in the 343rd. I worked for, and with, Andy Corra; Don Miller was a good friend. Tony Rais was a great boss and a good friend; Chris McAloon and Danny Mateik were fine guys, as well.

I guess when one arrives at the ripe old age of 83, one should expect losses. My grandmother used to say, "If it weren't for an occasional funeral I wouldn't have any social life at all." I understand the observation better now than I did in my teens, when I first heard it, and I thought the ole gal was 'losing it.'

The Wing birthday bash and dinner for the new commander must have contributed to keeping you 'out of the poolroom and off the streets' for a few days. Sitting in the shadow of the wing headquarters (at Offutt) keeps you guys humping.

Thanks for the good work you all do.

Regards, Bill Lewis, The Elder. Kerrville, TX

PS: I'm going to slip the treasurer a few extra bucks for postage, I like receiving the newsletter in hard copy. I keep it on file it for reference.

(From an e-mail 6 June 2007)

Dear Mr. Moore:

I received a copy of *Videmus Omnia*, the **55th SRW** newsletter, sent to my mother, Doris McClenahan, at her former address and forwarded to me.

My mother passed away March 24 in Tucson. She was the widow of my dad, LtCol Malcolm McClenahan, (*See TAPS*) who served with the 55th at Forbes in the early 1960s as an EWO in RB-47s. (I was six or so at the time, so please excuse any inaccuracies here.) Dad passed away in 2002.

I know that he and my mother were close to many of their old friends from the 55th, as well as the other outfits in which Dad served.

I enjoyed reading your newsletter. It's nice to remember that the Air Force family is truly a close-knit group of people. Thank you for reminding Mom of "the good old days" through the years.

Sincerely, *Marc McClenahan*, Chandler, AZ (*From an e-mail 21 June 2007*)

* * * * *

(From an open e-mail on the Freedom Through Vigilance Assn web site, 15 August 2007.)

MGen Doyle Larson (Ret) passed away peacefully around 1800 14 August. Our hearts go out to the Larson family. Please keep Gen Larson and his family in your thoughts.

I know you all fully appreciate what Gen Larson meant to this agency, and the entire Air Force as an institution and a profession.

I am glad we were able to have the special dedication ceremony in his honor a couple of weeks ago. I talked to him after he had a chance to review the recording of the ceremony. He wanted all of you to know that he was humbled by the recognition and very appreciative of the thoughts and prayers.

(*Please remember*) Gen Larson and his remarkable work in setting the stage for what ISR has developed into today, and where it is heading in the future----a great leader, a great mentor, a great airman.

MGen Craig Koziol

Commander, Air Force Intelligence Surveillance Reconnaissance (ISR) Agency, Lackland AFB, TX (MGen Koziol is a former CC of the 55th Wing.)

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LEGISLATION ALLOWS VETERANS TO SALUTE THE FLAG

WASHINGTON, D.C. – US Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today (26 July, 2007) praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying US law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hands over their hearts without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform.

"Unfortunately, current US law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to others citizens.

Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

(From the Senator Inhofe's web page)

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Editor's plea: If any members wish to contribute letters, stories, photos and articles, please send them to me. If events occur in your area that you think would be of interest to the general readership, mail or e-mail the pertinent details, and include the names of those Association members who attend. Names are news. The only way to broaden our coverage is to get input from 'out there'.

Thanks, and Videmus Omnia, Max (Contributions may be edited for content, readability, and spacing.)



ASSOCIATION COINS



Coin shown as actual size

Above is a picture of the coin (1.75" diameter) that was a gift presented to all who registered for the September 2006 Omaha reunion.

They are available for purchase. Make checks payable to the 55th SRW Association. Send check and mailing instructions to Jim Thomas' home address: 4418 Anchor Mill Dr, Bellevue, NE, 68123. Coins are \$5 each, plus postage for 1-3 coins...\$1; 4-6 coins...\$2; 7-9 coins...\$3; 10 or more coins — contact Jim for cost and availability.

You can view a color depiction of the coin on the **Association** website, **www.55srwa.org**/sales.

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MEMORIAL BRICK ORDERS

Dear Fellow Members.

There may still be some **55th** veterans or family members who want to order bricks for the **55th SRW** Cold War Memorial patio in the National Museum of the US Air Force Museum Memorial Gardens, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH, dedicated in September 2003. Over 600 of the bricks have been engraved-to-order thus far.

If you wish to buy a brick, or know of anyone who wants one, it can still be accomplished. It is necessary to compile fifteen or more orders for the contractor to engrave the additional personalized bricks on-site.

The cost is \$65 for each brick, and the engraving is limited to three lines, 13 characters per line including spaces, dashes and slashes (No periods, commas, colons or semicolons or quotation marks. Send us \$100 and you will pay for a brick and get three years' Association

membership dues extension. Add \$65 for any additional bricks.

This is the time to get a brick for your grandchildren and great grandchildren to reflect upon in the years to come.

Make your checks to **55SRW Association**, **tell us exactly how you want your brick(s) to read**, and mail to Bill Ernst, 410 Greenbriar Court, Bellevue, NE, 68005 or e-mail: BillErnst1@cox.net *VO*, *Bill*

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ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

Be sure to state the size you want: S, M, L, XL, XXL, and we can get 3XL if the need arises; and yes, we have sold that size in the past. Anything larger, we have to go to Omar the Tentmaker.

Give a big hint to the family and mayhap some generous loved one will give you one for whatever you have going: Fathers Day, birthday, anniversary, Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Kwanzaa.

They are 'must have' items for the reunions. Cost is \$25 per shirt.

The dual shield logo is on the left front, white with red collar and sleeve 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.



The golf/ballcaps are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front, and an adjustable back strap. They go for \$7 each.

The items can be viewed in color on the **Association** web site at **www.55srwa.org**, and click on the *Clothing Sales* link.

There are charges for priority postage to be added to the individual item costs: \$5 for a shirt only; \$7 for two shirts; \$6 if both a shirt and cap are ordered; \$4 for a cap only.

One more way to identify with your **Association** and "show the logo" at appropriate official and social functions, on the golf course, wherever.

Great gifts! The shirts and caps are unisex, so get one for your spouse, significant other, or other family members. The family pet, even.

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THE ASSOCIATION TIE

The 'regimental' tie is a 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.

It can also be seen in color on the web site.

The price is \$25 per tie, including shipping and postage.

Order now! This item is another <u>must have</u> for reunion banquets and other appropriate events.

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Anyone desiring to purchase shirts, caps or ties can send an e-mail: **Larry Utley** at LarryU1001@aol.com; phone 402-592-6627; or write 1001 Michelle Parkway, Papillion, NE 68046.

Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55th SRW Association, or to Larry Utley. Either way, the bucks end up in the Association treasury.

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55TH FASHION PINS

As a direct result of newsletter notices, the above pins continue to be sold to **55SRWA** members all over the country.

You will want to acquire one for that special lady in your life to wear on any appropriate

occasion. Gents, it makes a great birthday, anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer. Classy, but inexpensive.



(Shown as near actual size)

The **Association** does **not** sell these pins and receives **no** money. But, as a service for those who wish to possess same: **Erwin's Jewelers, Frank Kumor,** proprietor, in Olde Town Bellevue, offers them and **you can purchase directly from the store**.

Send requests to 223 W. Mission Ave, Bellevue, NE; or call: (402) 291-2454, or fax to (402) 293-5873 to order the pins. Costs are \$9 for the pin and \$3 for shipping.



YOUR 55TH SRW ASSN WEB SITE

www.55srwa.org

'Transition' is the keyword for this operation. **Don Griffin**, who established the **Association** web site in September 1996, and devoted much time and energy to maintaining and upgrading it during its evolution over the ensuing years, retired from his capacity as webmeister.

The home page has become a most valuable medium for connection to the membership. He also has made many other significant contributions to the **Association** with his wise and often prudent counsel as a Director, in which capacity he still contributes. *Well done, Grif!!!!*

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The web site is now in the capable mind, hands and fingers of **Jim Maloney**. The home page is an integral and vital part of the **Association**'s line of communications and information. You are urged to check it out and view the makeover Jim has made.

Everything you want to know about the **Association** is there: "Corp HQ" includes the constitution, bylaws, memos for record, officers and bios; and **membership form**. The "Mail Room" lists traffic from members for other members. "Events" covers upcoming reunions and timely info on the Birthday Ball and other events, plus important bulletins on any projects in progress. "Clothing Sales", "Memory Lane", and links to other associated and interesting sites are included.

There is also an archive of many past newsletters for review and research. As examples: the October 2005 issue has an article on the history of the Association; the April 2003 and February 2004 issues have all one would want to know about the 55th SRWA's Cold War Memorial; and the January 2001 issue has the Hall of Fame history.

Jim is always looking for new and fresh ideas. Inputs from members are encouraged and welcome.

MEMORY LANE FEATURE

The Association web page Memory Lane feature continues to grow, with factual, non-fiction stories on 55SRW, or 55th Wing, individuals, crews or events. Browse it and you will be pleased at what you view.

You are invited, encouraged, urged, and welcomed to submit your inputs. If you need some help in getting started, feel free to contact Sam Pizzo at 985-845-7445, or e-mail him at sampizzo@webtv.net.

This is your chance to let the Association membership learn of your experiences, 'war stories', and 'there I was' tales. Take advantage of the opportunity to share and preserve history.



E – NEWSLETTER

Association members in good standing who so desire can receive the newsletter via electronic transmission. To get on the *members only* e-mail roster, send current e-mail address to SAC-EWO@mchsi.com. Or go to: www.55srwa.org for full instructions on how to read and/or download the e-newsletter.



REUNIONS

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COMBAT APPLE OPERATIONS 11-12 SEPT 2007- COUNCIL BLUFF, IA

The COMBAT APPLE 40 Reunion was held at the Holiday Inn and Suites, Council Bluffs, IA. This was a joint 82nd SRS and 6990th Security Sqd event.

The reunion was planned on the precise dates of the 40th anniversary of the first Combat Apple Gulf of Tonkin mission flown by crew S-01 on RC-135M, tail #24135, in support of the Vietnam War.



Robb Hoover and Tom Tennant were the lead planners

for this gathering of over 170 veteran "Hoggies" and friends.

Hoover, Tennant, **Bud Morss** and Reg Urschler told a series of vignettes reminiscing on the history of the Combat Apple mission days at the banquet.

Among those attending were numerous **Association** members and guests:

ARBUCKLE, Jim and Pam BIMA, Bill and Rose BISHOP, Roger and Ann BROOKIE, Jim and Marilyn CONNAUGHTON, Dave CHERRY, Charles (Chuck) CURZON, Hanna ERNST, Bill and Linda FRUTCHEY. David and Rosemarie HICKS, Frank and Lewanda HOOVER, Robb and Shirley HOWE, Arlen and Mary JOHNSON, John and Toni KENNEDY, Ham and Pat MARK, John and Sheila Bracken MATOL, John R. MEYER, John (Jack) F. MITCHELL, Larry and Susan MOORE, Max and Carol MORSS, Marvin (Bud) O'HARA, Bill

O'NEAL, Ray and Marian
RIEDEN, Hank and JoAnn
ROBESON, Fletcher (Robey) and Brenda
RUANE, Jim and Barb
SAENZ, Roland and Kathy
SCHAPKER, Fred
SCOTT, Dick and Jane
SIBLEY, Bill and Marilyn
SIEVERS, Stan and Shirley
SIMON, William (Bill) III
STOOP, James (Ken). and Myrtle
THOMAS, James W.
TOBIAS, Richard (Tobey) and Lois
URSCHLER, Regis
WHITLOCK, Tim and Ann

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343rd SRS REUNION



The Country Inn and Suites is HQ for this gathering of veterans from any era of the "weary crow squadron". It is easily accessible off I-80 in Lincoln. Room rate is \$82, plus taxes.

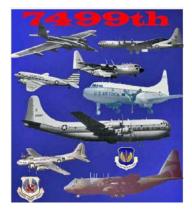
Project point man is **Paul Dolby**. Contact data is: 1211 Riverside Drive, Huntington, IN, 46750; ph:260-356-1761;e-mail: paul343rdsrs@yahoo.com

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7499th SUPPORT GROUP REUNION 4-8 OCTOBER 2007-WASHINGTON, DC

The Double Tree Hotel in Crystal City, Arlington, VA, is reunion central. It is adjacent to Reagan International Airport and near the Pentagon.

Many former 55th'ers served in or were associated with



the 7499th SG and the 7405, 7406, 7407, 7580 Sqds at Wiesbaden and Rhein-Main ABs flying assorted

"spook air 'chines" in the Berlin corridors during the height of the Cold War. This will be the third reunion of the group.

Alan Brown is the contact guy for more details. He can be reached at 7097 Game Lord Drive, Springfield, VA, 22153; ph: 703-455-38218; e-mail: a-abrown@cox.net. There is also a web site www.7499throupreunions.com

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STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND

30 APR - 4 MAY 2008- FAIRBORN, OH

The Holiday Inn Conference Center in Fairborn, OH, is the staging area for this reunion.

This will be a particularly memorable event for all SAC veterans in that **the main event**



is the dedication of the SAC Memorial in the Memorial Gardens of the National Museum of the Air Force at 1400 on Friday, 2 May. There will be an "under the Wings" banquet in the Museum on Saturday, 3 May.

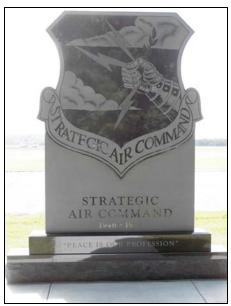
Reunion project officer is **J.T. Romero**. You can contact him to get the complete registration package for full coverage of the event and costs. Write to him at PO Box 14233, Tucson, AZ, 85732-4223; phone: 1-502-203-8809; E-mail – jtrome-25@excite.com.

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STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND MEMORIAL PROJECT

The SAC Memorial project is an effort by veterans and former component organizations of SAC to erect a memorial at the National Museum of the US Air Force Memorial Gardens near Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

Initial planning and design of the ten feet tall, six feet wide monument were completed earlier this year. The edifice was set in place 31 July by Dodds Monuments, the same company who produced the 55th Cold War Memorial.



Front



Back

The funding target of \$25,000 was readily achieved thanks to contributions of individual SAC veterans, SAC organizations and private sources. **The memorial has been paid for in full.** However, donations will still be gratefully accepted to help pay for the dedication and associated costs.

Ron Resh is the contact for the memorial info. Address:10825 Bucknell Dr, Silver Spring, MD, 20902-4325; e-mail: rreshlegis@aol.com

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B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION 25-27 SEPT 2008 – MARIETTA, GA



Anyone who ever associated with flying, maintaining, supporting and/or was/is interested in the B-47 is cordially invited to attend this reunion.

Point man for contact is **Bob Bowman**. He can be reached at 770-826-5562; or e-mail: bbowman@northhighland.com. There is also a web site: **B-47.com** where details can be obtained as they develop and are posted.





Various graphics and official logos; Ricky Mac and DC picnic photos, Val Dugie; Tuskegee ceremony, Haun dedication, Tingstad, Assn shirt and cap, Moore; Kelly/Smith shot, Capt Charles Barton, 45RS; Bauer, official photo; Forbes tour pix from Goss; Association coins, Cook; tie, Pizzo; 55th pin, Beth Kelley; SAC Memorial from Jack Kovacs;











MEMBERSHIP AND INFORMATION UPDATE FORM

Name	Spouse _		
Address	City	State_	Zip
	Cell Phone		
eMail Address			_
Are you a prior member or a frie	nd of the 55th Strat Recon Wing?	Member Friend	
Are you a current/prior member	or a friend of the 55 th Wing?	Member Friend	
When were you a member of the	55th Strat Recon Wing or 55 th W	ing?	
Which 55th Unit(s) were you a n	nember?		
Are you on active duty? If	so, with what unit?	Rank	
What is your present occupation?	?		
Are you a widow/widower?	(Spouses of deceased members re	ceive free lifetime memb e	ership.)

Please duplicate and send to a 55th Friend/Member.

Return this form with dues, if applicable, (currently \$10 per calendar year or \$25 for 3 years) to:

55 SRW ASSOCIATION 6441 Avenida De Galvez, Navarre, FL 32566 THE 55TH SRWA HAS PRINTS OF GEORGE BACK'S PAINTINGS, "HOT DAY DURING A COLD WAR" (18 X 24") AND THE 82ND MONTAGE "HOG HEAVEN" (22 X 24"). THESE PRINTS ARE FOR SALE AND ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE ASSOCIATION. THE COST IS \$15 PER PRINT, PLUS \$5.95 SHIPPING. MULTIPLE PRINTS MAILED TO THE SAME ADDRESS WILL INCUR JUST ONE SHIPPING CHARGE.



Send your order to:

55thSRWAssn Prints 6441 Avenida De Galvez Navarre, FL 32566

LAST PAGE

THERE ISN'T ANY MORE

HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT ISSUE