

Videmus Omnia

55th STRAT RECON WING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

APRIL

2009

27th REUNION 55 SRWASSOCIATION RENO, NV 15-18 SEPTEMBER 2009

Members, families and friends of the **55th Association** will gather in "The Biggest Little City" at the **Silver Legacy Resort Casino** for yet another session of renewing friendships, camaraderie, and conviviality.

Chairman **Don Gurney** is once again at the helm, with his trusty sidekick,



Barbara, and they have lined up an agenda of activities with generous hospitality hours and/or free time to enjoy the myriad attractions Reno has to offer.

Now is the time to make your travel plans.

The reunion is scheduled during the week to take advantage of the special room rate and ahead of the weekend Reno Air Races. From Sunday through Thursday (13-17 Sep) **the reunion room rate is \$82, plus 13.5% tax and a \$3.00 per room, per night resort fee = \$96.07.** The latter covers round-trip airport shuttle service, valet and self-parking, and unlimited local calls. For those desiring to stay for the air races Friday – Sunday, **the rate jumps** to \$169, plus tax and fee.

To make room reservations, call the Silver Legacy Group Reservations Department at 1-800-687-8733. Be sure to mention the **group code of**

55SRWA to get the special rate. The blocked rooms are subject to a 30 day cutoff, so book your **hotel** reservations **not later than 14 August 2009.** Reservations made after that date will be accepted only on a space and rate available basis. Check in time is 1500 and check out 1100. Early check in will be accommodated as rooms are available. Luggage may be stored at the bell desk as necessary.

Reno Tahoe International Airport (RNO) is just four miles from the resort, a 12-15 minute drive. Silver Legacy offers **free** shuttle service to and from the airport daily from 0500 to midnight, running every 30 minutes. The shuttle leaves the resort on the hour and half past, and pick up at the airport at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour.

For those who drive to Reno, the Silver Legacy is a landmark easily seen from any approach, and is readily accessible from US395 and I80 highways. A ten story covered parking garage is available for self parking, and valet service is offered. Special car rental rates for resort guests can be booked at the Hertz desk in the lobby.

The Association Board of Directors will convene on Tuesday, 15 September at 1600.

Reunion registration will begin at **1300** on Tuesday, 15 September. A schedule handout will have event details. An informal/casual reception is planned from 1800-2000 Tuesday evening.

There may be a golf outing at the par 3 Reno Executive Course if enough interest is shown. See the registration form.

A Lake Tahoe luncheon cruise is slated for Wednesday, 16 September with another casual cocktail party that evening. The hospitality suite will be available often to enjoy conviviality for all.

The general membership meeting for the **Association** will take place the morning of Thursday, the 17th. Wearing of the **Association** polo shirt is encouraged for the meeting. (*If you don't*

have one as yet, or need a replacement, there is plenty of time to order one now. See the BX section, page 16.) There will be morning beverages.

The grand banquet will begin at 1800 Thursday evening in Silver Legacy A. This is a coat and **(Association)** tie event for the gentlemen.

The schedule, costs and associated information are included in the two registration pages at the back of this newsletter.

REPEAT: Make your plans and room reservations soon. Complete the registration form and send in with your checks early. Registrations postmarked before 15 July are \$105 per person, and go up to \$120 per after that date.

Cutoff date for any and all reunion registration payments is 10 August 2009.

We want to see as many members as possible attend one more in a tradition of outstanding reunions of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. See ya there!!!

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings to all, the faithful members of the **Association**:

I hope many of you out there are experiencing spring-like weather in your spot of paradise. We have had spring six times already here in Huskerland. What a deal! Only in Nebraska. That last snowstorm before Easter or just after Easter is always a threat here. We will get there soon and some consistency will prevail, we hope.

Other than the fickle weather, the first of the year busy season for the **55th SRW Association** has finally come to a close. The flurry of activity leading to the **Tales of the 55th**, the Birthday Ball, Hall of Fame and Award for Excellence is over. You all can, however, look back and see the results

of all this energy and accomplishment. Max will remind you of it all herein with the visual and by word.

While you are bringing yourself up to date on all these happenings, do not fail to give yourself credit for being a part of these accomplishments and deeds by your continued loyalty to, and support of, our great **Association** and its purposes. Congratulations to you all on our successes.

You will notice the **treasurer's and membership reports**. What is the health of our **Association**? Well, without the sugar coating, as those who know me, are aware that I don't do that sort of thing.....it is too mentally intensive. We aren't in too bad a shape. And that be OK. Do we have some challenges? Of course...and things are not fun without challenges. So what is on the plate for the future...besides a great reunion?

Personal contact with the members that we lost from the 2008 dues group. A letter campaign in February to 214 overdue dues members resulted in about a 50% return rate. We have that remaining 50% to go for one more try. We will do that. Loss of this group will impact our ability to do business as usual...but, we are resourceful and can make the grade even if the worst happens.

So how are we doing? All is not roses, but we can still make do, accomplishing the same objectives as in recent years for both the current **55th Wing** and the **Association** membership. The increase in dues is moving us back to a more solid financial position.

Time is necessary to overcome the three year provisions for dues paying in advance at an \$8.33 pro rata basis, vice the new pro rata basis of \$18.33 for \$55/3 years. **Membership here is the key**. We must hold the line with current members as close as possible to make success easier.

The help of **all members** to recruit new members, and to encourage those who have, for whatever reasons, got lost from the group, to rejoin the **Association** would be most helpful. Membership forms are available at our web site and in this newsletter. One retread, or one new member here and one there, is all we need. Every little bit helps. Give it a go.

One last comment before I finish. The current **55th Wing** Commander and Vice Commander, **BGen Jim Jones** and **Col Rob Maness** will be

departing the fix soon. Both partings will be bittersweet, but are inevitable, as we know. Both men have conducted themselves as extraordinary commanders and as outstanding advocates of our **Association** and its purposes. Their relationship with the **Association** has been priceless. We wish them our best in their future personal and professional pursuits. **Salute!**

Videmus Omnia, Jim

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ASSOCIATION BUSINESS & MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

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Association Web Page Comments/Ideas:

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Other Members of the Board of Directors:

Permanent Members: Sam Pizzo, Sparky Adams, Charlie Waters, Bill Ernst, and Errol Hoberman (*Hoover, Maloney, Moore*). **Elected Members:** (*Thomas, McMahon, Cook*) Don Griffin, Joe Gyulavics, Fox Censullo, George

Ross, Kevin Todd, Dennis Haun, Pete Glenboski, Larry Utley. *Active Duty:* LtCol Bill Jensen, former commander, 343RS, and LtCol Mike Kelly, commander, 38RS.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

As of 1 April 2009, the **Association** had 699 members in good standing. That is down from April 2008 primarily because some members are behind in their dues. We await those who need to update for 2009 and beyond.

On the positive side, new memberships and renewals are coming in regularly. **It is hoped this newsletter will prompt more of the same.**

Another 38 **55th Wing** units, plus other associated organizations, receive the newsletter for public relations purposes.

Approximately 160 widows of former members receive the newsletter at no cost, and are welcome to participate in any and all **Association** activities.


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The **Association** still claims members in all **50 states**, plus DC, 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 at Offutt.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

The **Association**, as of 1 April 2009, had an account balance \$16,837.69. This looks good, but we have BIG expenses coming in, such as this newsletter cost and the soon to be published updated **Association** roster. 

Please pay your dues promptly, or early and frequently. ☺

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Occasionally, members include modest amounts of money over and above what is required for dues to add to the treasury. Every dollar is much appreciated. We can use the economic stimulus like every other group. Hint.

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The most asked question of the membership chairman is, "What is the expiration date of my dues?" It is indicated on your address label.

For real this time. Printing 'oops' last issue.

For example, **2009** on your address label means your dues will expire on **31 December 2009**. Any other year indicates that your dues will expire, or have expired, on **31 December of the indicated year.**

If you are delinquent now, please renew soonest.

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Anyone whose membership expired in **2008** was taken off the member-in-good-standing roll effective **1 April 2009**. To be reinstated, please remit **\$20** to become current through 31 December **2009**. There are 112 persons whose dues went delinquent as of 1 April 2009, and we will be contacting once again, each of those lost members.

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Effective 1 January 2009, membership dues are \$20 per year, or **\$55 for three years**. All advance years expiration dates are honored. The new dues rates will commence upon any membership expiration date of 2008 or later.

The calendar year is the dues year.

Dues are payable anytime during an expiration year, so, please renew now.

Dues become delinquent on 31 March of the year following the expiration year. After 1 April of that year, delinquent members will be notified that their membership has expired and they will no longer receive the **Association** newsletter. (*Ouch.*)

This provides a 15 month window to pay your dues. Of course, we prefer sooner rather than later.

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Please remit dues to **55SRW Association as soon as practical for 2009 and future years.**

Mail to:

55th SRW Association,

ATTN: Michael J. Cook

PO Box 13165

Offutt AFB, NE 68113

For whatever reason, if you do **not** know your expiration date, to inquire on same, please e-mail **Michael.Cook@cox.net**; or drop him a note at the above address to get an update on your dues status.

You will also find a membership/information update form at the back of this newsletter. This form may used to report any address or other changes in your contact information. A new **Association** membership directory is in process, so you will want your latest contact info in there, particularly if you have relocated in the past year, or changed internet servers for instance.

New members receive the **Association**'s dual-shield lapel pin and a **55thSRWA** coin when they join.

Current members desiring replacement or additional lapel pins can get them from Cook 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 any of those three 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**. In a past attempt to notify members of their membership expiration dates via e-mail, **about 50% of them were rejected**.

To get on the *members only* e-mail roster, or correct/update any changes in recent months, send your **current e-mail address** to Cook. See contact info above.

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E – NEWSLETTER

Association members in good standing who so desire can receive the newsletter via electronic transmission vice snail mail. This will save the **Association** about \$1.75 per newsletter. **Repeat, to get on the *members only* e-mail roster, send current e-mail to Cook.**

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TALES OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH 2009

The tenth annual edition of the **Tales** was presented on **Friday, 27 March**, in the Offutt Airmen's Leadership School **CMSAF James M.**

McCoy Building. Held the afternoon prior to the Birthday Ball, it attracts a large crowd of out-of-towners, active duty, dependents and retirees.

Doors opened at 1500 for social time and memorabilia viewing. The program began at 1630.

Jim Thomas is the organizer and emcee for the event which features guest speakers from the various eras of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* history.

As has been the tradition, the 55th Ceremonial Bell was rung by the 55th Wing Commander BGen Jones, Hoover, **Harry Tull**, and **Arlen Howe** to open the program, followed by welcoming remarks by BGen Jones.



The 55th Wing Historian, **John McQueney**, gave a presentation on five members, including **Jack Jenkins** and **Bert Shepard**, of the WWII 55th Fighter Group, the original *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.

Association Historian Hoover followed with some Cold War stories and related issues focusing on widows of some of the downed flyers such as **Jean O'Kelley**, **Pat Phillips** and **Maria Goforth McAtee**.

Next up was **SSgt Ashley Jankowski** who told of her 'boots on the ground' experiences in the desert as a security forces specialist.

LtCol Mike Kelly, currently commander of the 38th RS, told of the early days' involvement of the 55th in the initial deployment of aircraft and personnel to SW Asia 19 years ago when he was a mere crewpup.

The *Tales* is sponsored by the **Association**, the Strategic Roost of the Association of Old Crows, and the LeMay Chapter of the Order of Daedalians. The 55th Ops Group contributes to the refreshments and publicity, as well.

A photo montage page of the Tales is later in this issue. Max.



55TH WING 2009 BIRTHDAY BALL

The 55th Wing held its 31th annual Birthday Ball, Saturday, March 28, 2009 at the Qwest Center Omaha. The gala event is for all active duty ranks, retirees, and by invitation to community leaders. The Ball is the Wing's largest annual formal social function. The event was hosted by BrigGen James Jones, 55th Wing Commander, and his wife, **Heidi**.

The Birthday Ball was originated by then-Colonel (now, BrigGen-Retired) **Regis F. A. Urschler**, commander of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing, in January 1979. His intent was to connect the wing's history and heritage to the current active duty personnel and missions. That tradition continues even today.

The Ball celebrates the 68th anniversary of the unit from its roots in the activation of the 55th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, CA, in January 1941, for World War II. Then its heritage through the 55th Reconnaissance Group, which stood up at MacDill Field, FL, in Strategic Air Command in February 1947; the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing from 1950 to 1992, at Barksdale AFB, LA, Ramey AFB, PR, Forbes AFB, KS, and Offutt AFB, NE; and up to the present as the 55th Wing.



This year's theme was "*Heritage, Culture, Values*" recognizing the history of the Wing and the men and women who currently perform the many and varied missions the Wing executes worldwide in peacetime and in support of the war on terrorism.

Major John Francolini of the 55th Maintenance Group expertly led the Ball

Committee made up of personnel from a cross section of the Wing's units.

The guest speaker was **LtGen (Retired) Walter E. Buchanan**, former 9th Air Force Commander. **Dave Weber**, sports personality from WOW-TV in Omaha, again acted as the master of ceremonies for the third year in a row.

Other items on the program included appropriate military ceremonies; induction of the newest members into the 55th Wing Hall of Fame; presentation of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) Association Award for Excellence; and the traditional cutting of the birthday cake by BGen Jones, **Reg Urschler**, and the youngest member of the Wing, **Airman Veronica Patton** of the 55th Communications Squadron. Dancing to the Doc James Band and "Honey" singers until midnight completed the evening.

Among the 860 attending this year were the usual local suspects, plus Hall of Famers Urschler, **Larry Mitchell**, **Harry Tull**, **Steve Stevens**, **Hank Dubuy**, **Loose Lane** and **Jeff Needham**, with their wives and/or guests.

Over 100 Association members and guests attended. Among the out-of-townners who ventured to the Heartland were: **Jim and Marion Taylor**, **Pete and Treva Potter**, **Ricky and Cary McMahon**, **Rich Holsinger**, **Alan and Sandy Feldkamp**, **Al Kamback**, **Greg Smith**, **MajGeneral Kim** and **Joe Sinascalchi**. It was at last year's Ball when Kim's pending promotion to be the Air Force Assistant Surgeon General was announced to the assemblage.

The Association donates \$1000 each year to help defray the costs for lower ranking airmen. Ernst and Moore represent the Association on the Ball committee.



Pres Thomas presents the Association's check to Ball committee chairman Major Francolini on 2 March. 55th Wing Commander BGen Jones witnesses.



55th WING HALL OF FAME 2009 INDUCTIONS

Colonel (Retired) **William Ernst** is the 2009 inductee into the 55th Wing Hall of Fame. Colonel Ernst has been a constant and significant contributor to, and ardent supporter of, the missions and personnel of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* for over thirty-five years. Coincidentally and appropriately, he is the **fifty-fifth** inductee.



Ernst receiving his plaque from BGen Jones at the Birthday Ball

Ernst assumed command of the 343rd Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron of the 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing in November 1973. He served during a period of many significant changes in RC-135 operations and programs: i.e., operational missions tripled, and the crew force doubled. His outstanding leadership as a squadron commander, and later as Deputy Director of Operations, was recognized.

Assigned to SAC Headquarters as Chief, Reconnaissance Operations Directorate from 1978-84, he assisted in the planning and directing of all RC-135 operational programs. He held this important responsibility until retiring in 1984 with over thirty years of active duty.

Even as a retiree he has continued to contribute from within many fraternal, civic, service and veterans organizations to which he has dedicated untold number of hours, days and years in supporting the 55th Wing and Offutt Air Force Base.

A founding member of the Offutt Advisory Council in 1991, he was instrumental in establishing that organization's foundation for support of the

55th. In four organizations: the Air Force Association, Wings Over the Heartland, the Order of Daedalions, and Association of Old Crows, among other accomplishments, he conducted fundraising, and either established or managed scholarship programs that benefited Wing personnel and families, and programs that aided enlisted members with tuition and grants.

His aggressive fundraising for the Offutt Open House contributed to success of the **55th Wing's** annual air shows. He has done the same for the Wing Birthday Ball for over a decade.

Among his lasting contributions are those made during his tenure as President of the **55th SRW Association** from September 1996 to March 2004, including the establishment of the Award for Excellence and the commissioning of the monument to **55th SRW** Cold Warriors. His stewardship also accomplished unprecedented rapport with the active duty wing to the benefit of both organizations.

He consistently set and met the highest standard of service to the **55th Wing**.

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In a surprise announcement at the Ball, BGen Jones inducted into the Hall of Fame **The 55th Spouse**, past, present and future, for their unwavering support and many sacrifices for their uniformed member, families, the Wing and the country.

The plaque is embossed with a depiction of the stained glass window in the SAC Memorial Chapel and contains the following inscription:

The 55th Spouse - Past, Present and Future

For many years airmen have left their loved ones to fly to far away lands or go on distant missions to protect those loved ones. This timeless event pictured

*has occurred countless times in the **Fighting Fifty-Fifth** during the dark days of World War II, the often forgotten war in Korea, the many years of the Cold War, and recently Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and the*



post 9/11 conflicts. Comforting to the warrior is the knowledge that all is well on the home front. Meanwhile, those who serve in silence remain behind... unseen... waiting...dealing with uncertainty each day...knowing the unknown every night...yet these angels... for all times... have and will give their warrior more than can be asked...their love, encouragement and loyalty...come what may.

These angels have many faces...and many are the airmen who honor them...forever.

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**THE 55TH SRW ASSOCIATION
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE**

The **55th SRW Association Award for Excellence** is presented annually at the **55th Wing** Birthday Ball to that individual who best exemplifies the basic tenants of the **55th SRW Association** and for superior achievement.

The 2008 award winner is **MSgt Maria C. Bell**, Superintendent of HQ USSTRATCOM Elite Guard, 55th Security Forces Squadron.

This standout performer has had her superior leadership skills and numerous accomplishments recognized by awards from the squadron level on up through Wing.

Pres Thomas made the announcement, as Vice President McMahon, the first recipient of the award (2000), made the presentation to MSgt Bell.

The 2007 award went to **SMSgt James H. Leichtenberg** of the 55th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron (AMS). Other previous award recipients were: **MSgt Steven** and **MSgt Lisa Hagggett**, **55th Wing** Command Section, 2001; **LtCol Kurt Kramer**, 38th RS commander, 2002; and **LtCol Glen Gulleckson**, 343rd RS 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.



The permanent trophy resides in a display case, along with the 55th ceremonial bell, in the lobby of the **General 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 highly visible.

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MCMAHON HONORED BY 338TH CTS

The Birthday Ball weekend actually got a kick-start at 1338 on Friday, 27 March, with the 338th Combat Training Sqd dedicating its Heritage Room (*crew lounge, bar, whatever*) with the name of **Ricky J. McMahon**, LtCol (Retired), currently the **Association's** vice president.

The room was packed with active duty crewdogs and many **Association** alumni of more than one generation dating back to the days when the 338th was a weather recon squadron at Forbes.



LtCol John Cooper, 338CTS Commander, made the dedication remarks and presented the permanent plaque naming the room for Ricky Mac.

The recognition was made since Ricky was directly responsible for laying the foundation for and heading the impetus for the programs that led to the rebirth of the 338th as the 55th Wing's sorely needed and long sought 'schoolhouse' for all RC-135 crew position training. He had previously been named the inaugural recipient of the **Association's** Award for Excellence in 2000 as a direct result of that significant accomplishment.

With this action, all four flying squadrons now have named rooms in their facilities after stellar **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** alumni and **Association** members: the 38th for Urschler, 343rd for Hoover, the 45th for Denny Haun. **Hoo Rah!!!!**

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T A P S



ANTEL, Stephan, 87, Fort Walton Beach, FL, died 6 October 2008. Born in Czechoslovakia, Steve was long time member of the **Association** and an early big dollar contributor to the Cold War Memorial. He joined the US Army in 1942 and became a paratrooper who jumped into Normandy on D-Day as a member of the famed 101st Airborne. He also survived the Battle of the Bulge with the "*Screaming Eagles*".

ANTHONY, Donald A., 73, Sanger, TX, 8 August 2008; died in a farm accident. He was a pilot with the 55th SRW at Forbes AFB, KS, from 1958 to 1966. Left the AF for a career with American Airlines and retired in 1994.

BOEPPLE, Wayne T., 72, Bellevue, NE, 31 January 2009; wife, **Ann**. A tanker navigator at Plattsburg AFB, NY, and later at Beale AFB, CA, where he supported RC-135 and SR-71 operations. He served at SAC HQ at Offutt and retired in 1976. He had a second career as an accounting auditor for First Data in Omaha.

BROWN, Eldridge W., 88, Thomasville, GA, 1 March 2009; wife, **Lula**. A WWII vet who entered the US Army Air Corp as a private. He earned his wings and flew B-17s as an instructor. His time with the 55th was in the 338th and later as adjutant to the wing commander in the late 1950s.

CAMPBELL, Richard (Dick) A., 85, Ft Worth, TX, 1 August 2008; wife, **Eva**. Dick was a WWII vet who flew transport missions in North Africa and in the Berlin Airlift. He later served in the 55th as an RB-47 pilot/AC during the 1950s at Forbes.

CARSON, Bruce M., 58, Lake Anna, VA, 13 September 2008; wife **JoAnn**. He was an RC EWO at Eielson AFB, AK, and Offutt AFB, NE. He survived the crash of the Cobra Ball RC at Shemya AFB, AK, in March 1981. He eventually became immersed in Big Safari programs at Greenville, TX, and on the Air Staff at the Pentagon.

CITRO, Joseph A., Jr, 68, Bellevue, NE, 18 November 2008. Retired Chief “JoeCee” served in the 55th OMS at Offutt in the early 1980s. He also was with OMSqds at Lockborne AFB, OH, and U Tapao, RAF Thailand, and later was assigned to SAC HQ at Offutt.

COOK, Oliver J. (Jim), Jr, Ft Walton Beach, FL, 5 March 2008. Jim was an RB-47 aircrew commander in the 338 SRS at Forbes in the early 1960s. He later served in HQ SAC Command and Control Division at Offutt.

DEAL, Mary Ann, Auburn, WA, 14 September 2008. She was the wife of **Jim**, a former 55th AMS squadron commander, mid-1970s, and then later the Wing DCM at Offutt in the early 1980s.

GILGUT, Richard (Dick) C., 72, Ocean Park, Kennebunkport, ME, 6 October 2008; wife, **Dody**. An RC-135 EWO with the 82SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, Dick also served with the 55th in the Combat Sent program at Offutt in the late 1960s to mid-1970s. He was later assigned to SAC HQ in DOOE, retiring in 1986.

GULLETT, William B., 72, Bellevue, NE, 14 September 2008; wife, **Sondra**. Bill was an RC EWO with the 55th at Offutt, and later the chief of the Wing Intelligence Division in the early 1980s.

HAGIE, Douglas E., 87, San Antonio, TX, 6 October 2008; wife, **Phyllis**. A WWII veteran combat bomber pilot, Doug later served with the 55th at Forbes AFB as an RB-47 pilot/AC, and eventually became commander of the 343rd SRS.

HALL, Jerry, 58, Carrollton, TX, 22 November 2008; wife, **Sheila**. An RC pilot with the 55th at Offutt in the 1980s, Jerry then had a career with Southwest Airlines.

HOLZBACH, Zita, 61, Vienna, VA, 27 June 2008. She was married to **Robert** for 39 years. Bob served with the 55th as an RC-135 navigator in the original cast at Offutt, 1968-70.

HOWARD, Ray L., 84, Concord, AR, 3 November 2008; wife, **Liz**. A WWII navy veteran, Ray later earned an AFROTC commission in 1948.

He served in the 55th as an RB-47 EW at Forbes in the 1960s; and then went to Eielson AFB, AK, in the original RC program, before going to Offutt where retired in 1967.

JOLLY, Edith, 73, Alma, AR, 22 August 2008. She was the wife of **Don**, a long time 55th pilot at Forbes and Offutt during the 1960s. He was the 343rd ops officer in 1969-70, and later commanded that squadron. He also served as the commander at Shemya AFB, AK.

JOHNSON, Jesse E., 58, Plattsmouth, NE, 11 November 2008; wife, **Pam**. A pilot in EC-135s and E4s with the 2ACCS and 1ACCS at Offutt in the 1980s, Jesse retired from the AF in 1990 and joined United Airlines. He continued his career there until health problems slowed him in 2007.

KANE, William T., 76, Cheyenne, WY, 23 September 2008; wife, **Virginia (Ginny)**. Bill was an RB-47 EWO in the 38th SRS at Forbes in the 1950s and flew covert overflights. After active duty he remained in the AF Reserve from 1959-66. He then earned his PhD and worked as a physicist for Corning Glass in New York before retiring to Cheyenne in 1993.

LOLLI, James J., 91, Topeka, KS; 19 January 2009; wife, **Mary Patch**. Chief Lolli was a veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. He served as an RB-47 line chief with the 55th at Forbes and retired in 1968. He worked another 15 years for the DoD as a Quality Control Inspector at Forbes. A long time **Association** member, he and Mary were regular reunion attendees.

MAXON, GARY L., 65, Pittsburg, MO, 19 January 2009; wife, **Carol**. He was chief of Quality Control for the 55th SRW. He later commanded OMS at Offutt in the early 1980s. Gary then flew RC-135s until he retired in 1988, when he went with TWA and later, American Airlines before retiring again in 2003.

NEVILL, Rex F., 88, Ft Walton Beach, FL, 23 October 2008; wife of 64 years, **Ruth Ellen**. An RB-50 pilot, Rex served in the Wing at Ramey AFB, PR, and Forbes in the 1950s.

POULIN, Roger G., 61, Papillion, NE, 12 July 2008; wife, **Dolores**. He served with the 343rd SRS as a Combat Sent EWO in RC-135s at Offutt during 1980s.

PREWITT, Harold E., 76, Colville, WA, 4 July 2008; wife, **Laura**. Hal flew with the 38th SRS from 1955-1962 in RB-47s at Forbes.

SHEPARD, Robert (Bert) E., 87, Highland, CA, 16 June 2008. Bert was a P-38 pilot with the **55th Fighter Group** in WWII. He was shot down in Germany, lost part of his right leg, and was a POW. After the war he became an advocate, activist and advisor for disabled veterans.



A gifted athlete, he pitched in one game for the Washington Senators in 1945. He became an avid golfer and won the National Amputee Championship in 1968 and 1971. ESPN has featured his story as the 'one-legged pitcher'. His obituary was in the Washington Post, LA Times, and NY Times, among others.

WAYNE, John W. (Bill), III, 83, Ft. Walton Beach, FL; 28 August 2008; wife of 63 years, **Ada May**. Bill served in the **55th** at Forbes, although his assignments were many and varied.

ZUPAN, Don J., 85, Shakopee, MN, 24 June 2008; wife, **Barbara**. A WWII ball turret gunner in B-17s, was also shot down and was a POW. He was with the **55th** A & E Squadron at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He later served as a B-52 gunner before retiring after 27 years in 1968.

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Maynard E. White, died in Elkhart, IN, on 28 April 2007 at the age of 89. He was the commander of the 46th Reconnaissance Sqd at Ladd Field, AK, when it formed in the summer of 1946. This top secret unit was the first Cold War operational squadron, and was under the direct control of HQ SAC (which was then still under the US Army Air Corps!).

General Curtis Lemay hand picked White to start up and lead this group. Their clandestine RB-29 missions against the Soviet Union were the forerunner of what became strategic reconnaissance.

The crews, maintenance and support personnel had to scrounge for nearly everything they needed in the way of supplies and materials, and virtually supported themselves in every way in those early days. Men and equipment had to overcome severe

winter conditions and myriad challenges to establish the squadron and perform their missions. Flying conditions were also daunting and the navigators pioneered grid navigation in the polar regions where the magnetic pole migrated and magnetic compasses were unreliable.

Maynard's son **Ken**, labored to get his dad and the secretive 46th (later the 72nd SRS) appropriate recognition for their dedicated service. He wrote and self-published a book, *World in Peril*, in 1994 about the formation and mission of the 46th/72nd, and the personal stories of the men's exploits and experiences. It is recommended reading for strat recon veterans and any other aviation history buffs.

Colonel (Ret) White and several of his former squadron mates attended the 50 year Strategic Reconnaissance Reunion in Omaha in September 1996. Then **55th Wing** commander, BGen **Michael Kudlacz**, presented the long overdue Air Force Outstanding Unit Award to White and his group. It was quite an emotional event.

The aforementioned book may be purchased by contacting Ken White at KW White and Associates, PO Box 1446, Elkhart, IN, 46515.

*Basic article contributed by Robb Hoover, **55th SRW Association** Historian. Edited and additional material by Max Moore.*

* * * * *

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 3 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, location, crew position/aircraft, and/or duty specialty, organization and bases and approximate years with **55th**; and any other pertinent information you wish to relate.**

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

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

The web site continues to evolve in the capable hands of webmeister **Jim Maloney**. The home page

is an integral and vital part of the **Association**'s line of communications and information.

Among other things, our internet presence provides two primary functions: First, is to keep viewers up to date. It provides members a forum to keep in touch, learn about current and ongoing **Association**



activities, and reference previous projects and/or events.

A second increasingly important function in this rapidly evolving cyber-age is that our internet link to the world provides former **55th** warriors a means to come back to the fold. It is ever more common for past **SRW/55th Wing** members, or friends and families, to find our web site after an internet search, and reconnect with friends and comrades from their days with the Wing.

For instance, during 2008, the web site was visited 94,725 times, a monthly average of 7894 and 258 a day. The average ranged from 132 hits a day in December to 493 a day in April. That's a lot of keyboard and mouse time, troops.

You are urged to check it out often for timely news, activities and information exchanges. Everything you want to know about the **Association** is there: "Corp HQ" includes the constitution, bylaws, memos for record, officers and bios; and a **membership form**.

Updated info on upcoming reunions, the Birthday Ball, and other events are covered; plus important bulletins on any projects in progress. "Mail Room", "Clothing Sales", "Memory Lane", a picture gallery, and links to other associated and interesting sites are included.

There is also an archive of past newsletters for review and research. As examples: the October 2005 issue has an article on the **history** of the **Association**; the August 2002, 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 an item on the Wing Hall of Fame evolution.

Jim is always looking for new and fresh ideas. Inputs from members are encouraged and welcome. Jim also contributed significantly to this article.

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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 may be surprised at what you view. You may even be inspired to contribute a first person story yourself.

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 this opportunity to share and preserve history.

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SAC AIRBORNE COMMAND POST BENCH DEDICATED

A memorial bench honoring the members of Strategic Air Command who operated, manned, maintained and supported the Post Attack Command Control System (PACCS) was dedicated on 16 October 2008 at the Memorial Gardens of the National Museum of the Air Force near Dayton, OH. (*Site #14NE*)



The majority of the missions were flown on EC-135s out of Offutt AFB, NE, with 24 hour coverage, every day of the year, during the Cold War beginning in February 1961. They were under the **55th SRW** from July 1966 until the mission's termination in September 1998. Supplemental sorties were also flown from Barksdale AFB, LA, and Ellsworth AFB, SD, as required.

CUBAN CRISIS BOOKLET

To the **Association** members:

Because of your interest or involvement in the **55th SRW**, I wanted (*your membership*) to be aware of a new booklet about the Cuban Missile Crisis. My brother-in-law was killed during the crisis. The booklet, *He Was a Hero*, recounts the unusual nature of his particular mission, the number of coincidences surrounding it, and rumors that were fostered by the continued (*required*) secrecy of the Air Force.

I wrote it to preserve the honor with which my brother-in-law, **Captain Robert Dennis**, served his country. In that task, though, I found that the number (*of people*) who served with honor, and made the ultimate sacrifice, were many. They all are heroes and it is their memories that are to be preserved.

In October 1962, the United States and Soviet Union nearly played into a world-wide nuclear holocaust, which noted historian **Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.**, called "the most dangerous moment in human history." War was narrowly avoided, but the US had marshaled its full military might and was prepared to engage the USSR on its own turf, as well as in Cuba. Without the readiness and dedication of our men and women in uniform, it may have been a different story.

But men did die during the Cuban Crisis, and one of them was my brother-in-law, whom I hardly knew. Capt Dennis was an electronic warfare officer aboard a sophisticated RB-47 outfitted for (*strategic*) reconnaissance when the aircraft went down in Bermuda, killing all aboard. Were it not for several coincidences, Bob would not have been aboard that flight.

* * * * *

Without the help of those who served in the **55th** (some of whom served with Capt Dennis), and a son who lost his father in the tragic accident, this booklet could not have been written. I have passed along copies to many of them, but I cannot afford to give copies to all who should have it. Thus, I am offering my publisher's discount of \$9.00, including postage, to anyone who wishes a copy.

The booklet can be previewed (and purchased for the full price) from this site:

The driving force behind getting the bench commissioned was **Jack Suggs**, President Emeritus of the PACCS Association; plus the outstanding efforts of Memorial Chairman **Fred Kemp** and his able committeemen, **Norman Goetz** and Suggs.

The dedication ceremony was held during the PACCS Association's biannual reunion. Following the unveiling by SAC ACCS President **Jim Dart** and Kemp, the bench was presented to MajGen (USAF-Ret) **Charles Metcalf**, Director of the Museum.

A commemorative coin with an image of the bench was produced and distributed to all contributors and is offered for sale.

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7000th MISSION IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

The 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron announced the recognition of the 7000th Rivet Joint sortie in its area of responsibility. That RC-135 flight took place on 6 February 2009.

Aircraft, crews, maintenance and support personnel from the **55th Wing** at Offutt have had a continuing presence in the SW Asia since August of 1990, providing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance without interruption in the war on terrorism in the region.

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55th WING CHANGES COMMANDERS ONCE AGAIN

Colonel John N. T. Shanahan, assumed command of the **55th Wing** on 24 April 2009. His previous assignment was Commander, 505th Command and Control Wing, Hurlburt Field, FL. His background is mostly as a fighter navigator. He replaces BrigGen James J. Jones, who moves on to be Deputy Director, Operations, J-3, US Central Command, MacDill, FL. He has led the **55th** since 28 March 2007.



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www.lulu.com/content/2217393. Those wishing to purchase a copy from me may do so via PayPal at NeilByDesign@earthlink.net, or by sending a check to: 3151 Rivermill Dr., Columbus OH 43220.

Please pass this information on to others you think would be interested.

Neil Webner, Columbus, OH.

(Ed note: The above article was submitted via e-mail to the *Association* website on 24 October 2008. It was edited for readability and continuity.)

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LETTERS AND STUFF



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A VISIT TO PALM PARK, TOPEKA, KS

After reading *As Good As It Gets* by **Sam Pizzo**, I decided to locate Palm Park mentioned in his book, since my wife and I were going to visit her family in Topeka, my wife's home town.

When I was in the 343rd Strat Recon Sqd in 1957 as a "crow" at Forbes AFB, KS, I knew both Sam Pizzo and **Bill Palm**. The shocking news of Palm's RB-47 crew being shot down (by a Soviet MiG) over the Barent's Sea (1 July 1960) was hard for me to take in 1960, even though I was back in civilian life.

After asking family members where Palm Park was, I was directed to the intersection of 37th Street and Burlingame Road, accessible from US Route 75. The memorial to Major Willard Palm is about three blocks east on 37th Street.



Rock marker and plaque honoring Palm and crew.

It was Memorial Day when the pictures were made and they show the regard the people of Topeka have for the sacrifices Major Palm and his crew made for our freedom.

For more detail on the experiences Palm, and other USAF personnel, made in the Cold War, read *U.S. News and World Report*, **March 15, 1993**, "America's Top Secret Spy War". You'll find on page 30 a picture of Major Palm and his crew.

Contributed by *Tony Maurin*, Metairie, LA.

21 August 2008

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Jim (*Pres Thomas*):

Larry LaFlair and I spent two hours today cleaning up the moss which was creeping up between many of the bricks on the memorial patio. We also gave the monument a cursory polishing to clean the dust and rain streaks. Larry will do more soon to remove the mineral deposits that have baked on. Monument and bricks look "almost" new now.

The Colorado spruce is still looking in good shape and actually has a bunch of cones in the top two feet. No signs of disease on this one. The museum has trimmed the ground level branches off the tree for mowing purposes, I guess.

As a side note, a person from the museum groundskeeper division came out and questioned us about "what company we worked for", and what we were doing. He could hardly believe we were volunteers. But, it was good to see that they are keeping an eye out for any unusual goings on.

VO, *Jack Kovacs*, Fairborn, OH

From an e-mail, 15 October 2008.

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Here is more follow up from Jack Kovacs on the Monument status.

Bill (Ernst), Jim, Max:

We've been working on this for more than a couple of months and I was waiting to see the outcome.

First THE BAD NEWS: Last fall when Larry Laflair and I cleaned up the Monument, Larry noticed a small crack in the monument, on the **back side**, in the **base piece**. We notified Larry at Dodds Monuments, and he examined it and had his experts look at it to determine the severity...ie, was it just a surface crack or did it go deeper.

The first picture is for orientation and doesn't show the crack...but the crack is on the base, starting just above the "R" in SRW, coming down through the "R" to the "MSGT" under the "RW" in "SRW". The average tourist probably wouldn't notice this crack. (See second photo)



In this photo the hairline crack can be seen from the base top lip, about the center of the picture, coming down through the "R" and going below it.



Now THE GOOD NEWS. It looks like, after Dodds experts examined it, that the Dodds lifetime guarantee is good. Larry Dodds has determined that the crack is severe enough that he has started the wheels rolling to replace the base piece. He has to order it, then it will have to be engraved, proof-read by Larry and me, and then installed in place of the original. This process will take several months, of course...but it will be fixed (time to order from

overseas, time to engrave, and finally waiting until the ground is firm enough to drive a crane onto the site to lift and change the pieces.) The actual changing of the piece will probably be done in one day, just in case anyone is planning a trip to the Museum this spring. I'll do my best to keep everyone informed although I may not have an exact date. Anyone traveling here can send me an email.

NOTE: When the engraving is done, the error done on the back (leaving off the "JUN" on one of the names of the six added Honor Roll names), will get special attention so as to be included properly this time.

Jack Kovacs, Fairborn, OH

From an e-mail, 13 February 2009

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Sincere appreciation from the Association membership to these two dedicated, selfless guardians whose obvious caring for the Cold War Monument assures it will not be neglected.

Well done, guys!!!!

* * * * *

Gents:

The Kennedy Presidential Library has posted a declassified copy of a document, (<http://www.jfklibrary.org/Historical+Resources/Archives/Reference+Desk/NSAMs.htm>) National Security Action Memorandum No. 24, titled: *RB-47 Reconnaissance Flights*, and dated February 27, 1961. The text is reproduced below.

It certainly emphasizes the critical importance in the eyes of the President of the RB-47 navigators' skills and responsibilities, and the aircraft's equipment!!

Robb Hoover, Bellevue, NE.

55th SRW Association Historian

From an e-mail, 5 November 2008.

* * * * *

February 27, 1961

TOP SECRET (Declassified April 1, 1998)

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM No. 24

FROM: THE PRESIDENT

TO: THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: RB-47 Reconnaissance Flights

I now authorize the resumption of RB-47 reconnaissance flights on the periphery of the Sino-Soviet bloc, subject to the following specific requirements in addition to those currently in force.

First, all responsible commanders will place the highest emphasis on continuous accuracy in navigation at all times while in the neighborhood of the Soviet Union. I understand that new and stricter procedures have been devised by SAC to meet this need, and my approval of renewed flights is conditional upon the adoption of such stricter procedures.

Second, flights in extreme northern latitudes will observe a wider margin of safety, and must remain at a greater distance from Soviet territory because of the additional difficulty of navigation in this area. For the present I desire that all such flights remain at a distance of forty nautical miles from Soviet territory.

Third, I direct that the highest priority be given to the rapid acquisition and installation of the most modern and effective navigational devices in high performance aircraft assigned to peripheral operations around the Sino-Soviet bloc. I should like an early report on the progress of efforts to improve the navigational capabilities of each aircraft, and I think it may be useful if appropriate officials of the Department of Defense keep in close touch with my Special Assistant for Science and Technology on this subject.

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COLONEL PROMOTIONS NOTE

Colonel Randy Vogel, current Deputy Commander of the 55th Operations Group, on his fourth tour with the Wing, and a long time member of the **Association**, put his eagles on 28 February.

LtCol Bill Jensen, a former commander of the 343RS and a current member of the **Association** Board of Directors, was selected for promotion to the rank of colonel two years below the zone!

Congratulations to these outstanding members of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth!** Onward and upward!!!

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NEW LAW UPDATES VETERANS SALUTING FLAG AND ANTHEM

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) October 31, 2008

Veterans and active-duty military **not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month (October 2008).**

"The military salute is a unique gesture of respect that marks those who have served in our nation's armed forces," said Dr. James B. Peake, secretary of Veterans Affairs. "This provision allows the application of that honor in all events involving our nation's flag."

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applied to service members while not in uniform.

Traditionally, members of the nation's veterans service organizations have rendered the hand-salute during the national anthem and at events involving the national flag while wearing their organization's official headgear.

The most recent change, **authorizing hand-salutes during the national anthem** by veterans and out-of-uniform military personnel, was sponsored by **Sen. Jim Inhofe** of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of **2009**, which President Bush signed Oct. 14.

The **earlier provision** authorizing hand-salutes for veterans and out-of-uniform service members **during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag**, was contained in the National Defense Authorization Act of **2008**, which took effect Jan. 28, 2008. (*Courtesy of VA News*)

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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 the near and far reaches of **Fifty-Fifth-land.***

*Thanks, and **Videmus Omnia**, Max*

(Contributions may be,..... well, very likely will be, edited for content, readability, and spacing.)



ASSOCIATION BX

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ASSOCIATION COINS



Front

Back

Coin shown as actual size

Depicted above is the official **Association** coin (1.75" diameter) that was a gift commissioned and presented to all who registered for the September 2006 reunion in Omaha.

It is 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. For 10 or more coins, please contact Jim for cost and availability.**

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

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ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

These are 'must have' items for the reunions.

They also look good on the golf course, for casual Fridays at the office, and any leisure time.

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.

Great gifts! The shirts and caps are **unisex**, so get one for your spouse, significant other, or other family members. The family pet, even. Who cares, as long as we sell 'em?

Be sure to state the size you want: S, M, L, XL, XXL. We can order 3XL if the need arises; and yes, we have sold that size in the past. *Whoa, Big Fella! Whoa!* **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.

Other versions (colors, material, with pocket) may be available in future reorders. Look to the web site and coming newsletters for details.



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: \$6 for a shirt **only**; \$8 for **two** shirts; \$7 **if both a shirt and cap** are ordered; \$5 for a cap **only**. (*Yep, the postal costs went up.*)

More ways to identify with your **Association** and "show the logo" at appropriate official and social functions.

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THE ASSOCIATION TIE

The **Association's** '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 must have for the reunion banquet and other appropriate events. This may be our last batch.

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Anyone desiring to purchase shirts, caps or ties can contact Larry Utley at his new e-mail OFFWEGO@cox.net; phone: 402-592-6627; or write 2409 Leigh Lane, also new, Papillion, NE 68133. Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55th SRW Association.

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55TH FASHION PINS



(Shown as actual size)

As a direct result of newsletter notices, the pins continue to be sold to 55SRWA members all over the country. They are particularly evident at official and social functions at Offutt and at 55th reunions.

You will want to acquire one for that special lady in your life to wear on any occasion. Gents, it makes a great birthday, anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer.

(Ladies, if the ol' dude doesn't take the hint, order one for yourself.) Classy, but inexpensive.

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, offers them and **you can purchase directly from the store.**

Frank has been designated a 55th Wingman, and he is an ardent supporter of the Wing, Offutt and many organizations including ours.

Send order 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 \$4 for shipping.**

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SAM PIZZO'S BOOK

"As Good As It Gets"

Sam advises that he has sold 400 copies to members of the 55SRW Association, the Roadrunners (Area 51, Blackbird) Association, and a few others at gatherings where he has given speeches regarding his service with Uncle Sam.

He has a few books left, and continues to get calls for the book. He further states that it is easy to reorder more copies from time to time.

Sam relates that the feedback from readers has been most gratifying and complimentary, with most saying how reading it brought back long dormant and pleasant memories.

If you are interested in ordering a copy, forward a check for \$10.00 to: Sam Pizzo,

218 Nottaway Dr,
Mandeville, LA 70471-1516

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REUNIONS

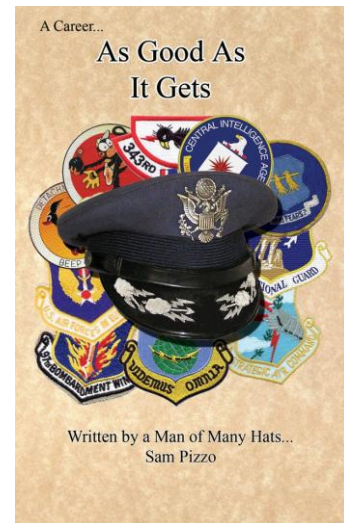
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B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION

25-27 SEPT 2008 – MARIETTA, GA

The gathering was held at the Marietta Hilton Conference Center and Resort.

There was a plethora of tours, hospitality, dinners, and a full Saturday program with the membership business meeting and a symposium. One highlight was a tour of the Lockheed plant where about 400 B-47s were built in the 1950s under contract from Boeing.



The grand banquet featured speaker was the 55th's own Colonel (Ret) **John R. McKone**. He recounted the details of the RB-47 shootdown and aftermath of Major Will Palm's crew referred to earlier in this newsletter.

John was the navigator on that fateful mission, bailed out, was captured and spent seven months incarcerated in the infamous Lubyanka Prison in Moscow, as was copilot **Bruce Olmstead**.



Norma Jean and John McKone

The Stratojet Association's next reunion will be held in **Omaha, 23-25 September 2010**. Mark your calendars now and please plan to attend.

The organization is for anyone who flew, maintained, supported and loved the *Stratojet*. Those who wish to join the Stratojet Association can contact Membership Chairman **Dick Purdum** at 13310 S. 26th Avenue, Bellevue, NE, 68123, (402) 291- **52 47** (*Get it? Those are aircraft he flew. Neato, huh?*), or e-mail him at dickpurdum@cox.net.



WHO SHOT WHAT



Graphics and official logos from various sources. Photo credits to: Silver Legacy from its web site; Ball logo by **Josh Plueger**, 55th Wing Public Affairs office; Ball check presentation, Jim Thomas; Shepard from *Cleveland Plain-Dealer*; ACCS bench, Fred Kemp; Col Shanahan from AF

link; Palm Park pix, Tony Maurin; Monument crack, Kovacs; McKones by Dick Purdum; **Association** coin, Mike Cook; **Association** tie and book cover Pizzo; fashion pin, **Beth Kelley Horine**. All others by Moore, including *Tales* montage. Ball montage photos courtesy of 55th **Wing** Public Affairs.



The *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* Reunion Song

To the tune of "Hey, Look Me Over"

Hey! Look us over,
The 55th is here.

We're a bunch over rovers,
Traveled far and near.

We get to-geth-er
Every other year.

If ever a wing in SAC there was,
The 55th's the best because,

We've looked you over
From high up in the sky.

We've flown to places
Faint hearts wouldn't try.

Oh, the 55th's the first to fight,
We're always Number One.

So move oh-ver, World,
Here we come!!!

By Joe and Dottie Gyulavics and John and Reese Drost at the reunion in Seattle, August 1992



"Where's the newsletter?!" Yep, 'we' got that a lot in recent months, and we know it has been a while, ten months, actually. But, the excuse/reason/alibi is: budgetary concerns.

'We' may be back on track for two per year as the funds build up. Next issue is planned after the reunion.

Myriad subjects are covered in this edition.

'We' hope you feel it was worth the wait.

Videmus Omnia, Editor Max.