

# Videmus Omnia

## 55<sup>th</sup> WING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER

2010

### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings from the Heartland,

Time flies. Must be a symptom of "seniority". Where did the summer go? Sure went by quickly for me.



Seems like we just wrapped up the Reno reunion. The next one in McKinney, Texas, is just six months away. We have a large membership in Texas, and it was April 1985 at San Antonio when we last visited the Lone Star State.

**Greg and Julia Smith** will be our hosts, and the Holiday Inn staff in McKinney has stepped up to the plate to give us a good show. In our planning we will take into consideration transportation between the DFW Airport and McKinney.

One thing in my short exposure to **55th** reunions that I have learned is that the reunion happens in the hospitality suite and at the banquet. It is the fellowship and memories of long time comrades and friends that make a reunion. All else is but frills on the package.

If your schedule permits, let's get together in McKinney in May 2011. And by the way, I have already heard of a number of **55th** veterans planning on attending the Wing Birthday Ball in March 2011. The Ball is the anchor event of an action filled week of heritage events, including *Tales of the 55th* and other unit celebrations and memorials.

Great news! There will again be a private bar stocked with some high class hooch just for **55th** veterans at the LaVista Embassy Suites. Just look for the corner room and the sign "*Speak Easy, No Guns Allowed*". You will be welcomed.

The holiday season is just around the corner. May yours be filled with friends, family, fellowship, good fortune and good health.

You all be careful out there, now.

*Videmus Omnia, Jim*



### EYES OF TEXAS REUNION

The next reunion will be 19-22 May 2011, at the Holiday Inn and Suites in McKinney, TX, just 30 miles north of Dallas, Greg Smith, chairman. Greg will be working to make this one more in a string of memorable reunions.

This is Alert Order 003 to mark your calendars for the gathering at the **55<sup>th</sup>** North Texas Operating Location.



McKinney is home to one of Texas's largest historic districts, and has the scenic charm and comfortable pace quite different from that of the urban metroplex of Dallas/Ft Worth.

Hospitality suite and a grand banquet will be the center pieces of this reunion. One of the potential tours in the planning stage is a trip to the L-3 facility at Greenville where the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing's** RC-135 fleet undergoes modifications and periodic updates.

For those of you gearing up with advanced planning, you can call 1-888-HOLIDAY to make your room reservations anytime. Until a reunion

rate is established, you are advised to ask for the government/military rate in the interim. You can access the hotel's web site at [www.holidayinn.com/hotel/us/en/mckinney](http://www.holidayinn.com/hotel/us/en/mckinney) for details on the reunion HQ and its amenities.

**A complete reunion registration package and schedule will be mailed to members sometime after the first of the year with plenty of lead time.**

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## WING WINS OMAHA TROPHY

The Strategic Command Consultation Committee awarded the 2009 Omaha Trophy to the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** for its superior accomplishments in Strategic Aircraft Operations.

**Brigadier General Jack Shanahan, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Commander, accepted the award at a ceremony at Offutt AFB on 7 July 2010 from committee members **David Brown** and **Mark Theisen**.



*BG Shanahan raises the Omaha Trophy as General Chilton, Brown and Theisen applaud.*

The Omaha Trophy is presented each year in four categories by the Consultation Committee to units performing missions for, or in support of, US Strategic Command. The award dates back to 1971 and the days of Strategic Air Command.

Brown said that the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** was the most tasked wing in the Air Force, with over 800 combat missions in support of US Central Command, and a collection efficiency rate of over 98%.

**General Kevin Chilton**, Commander of USSTRATCOM, commented, "I couldn't agree more with the committee selecting the (**55<sup>th</sup> Wing**) for this award. The wing supports combatant

commanders all over the world and is one of the most deployed units in the Air Force".

"It is a thrill and an honor to accept this award on behalf of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. It is about the men and women of the entire wing", remarked BGen Shanahan.

*(This article is compiled in part with information from an article by **Debbie Aragon, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Public Affairs.)*

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## TALES OF THE 55<sup>TH</sup> - 2011

**The 12<sup>th</sup> annual Tales is slated for Friday, 25 March 2011.** Once again Pres Thomas will orchestrate and emcee more oral history of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth's** heritage.

Speakers from various eras of the Wing's storied past will present personal tales of 'there I was' to a crowd of active duty troops, veterans and family and friends. Be there!!

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

**The 2011 Ball, the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual, is to be held on Saturday, 26 March at the LaVista Embassy Suites.**

This event will celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WWII origin of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. It is the Wing's largest formal social function each year and is regularly attended by over 800 people, including many members of the **Association**.



**Major Andy Burroughs**, and his sidekick, **Capt Devin Long**, of the 45<sup>th</sup>RS, are leading the committee to plan and execute the gala affair.

As is the custom, the Hall of Fame inductee(s) and the **Association's** Award for Excellence are presented at the function.

The **Association** contributes \$1000 each year to help defray the costs for younger airmen to attend; and Max Moore and Bill Ernst continue to represent the **Association** as advisors to the committee.

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# ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY

# MEMBERSHIP REPORT

## Association Business/Policy/Awards:

### President Jim Thomas

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

### Vice President Ricky McMahon

14325 Orlando Road  
Nokesville, VA 20181  
E-mail: Rick\_CaryMc@comcast.net

## Membership/Dues/Changes of Address:

### Treasurer Michael Cook

3204 Rahn Blvd  
Bellevue, NE 68123  
E-mail: Michael.Cook@cox.net

### Secretary Kevin Todd

31651 E 167<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Hudson, CO 80642  
E-mail: Guyn5gals@msn.com

### Newsletter Editor Max Moore

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

## Association Historian:

### Robb Hoover

13412 Tregaron Circle  
Bellevue, NE 68123  
E-mail: RobbHoover@aol.com

## Association Web Page Comments/Ideas/Input:

### Webmaster Jim Maloney

7908 Kona Circle  
Papillion, NE 68046-5619  
E-mail: jim@maloney.com

## Other Members of the Board of Directors:

Sam Pizzo, Bill Ernst, Errol Hoberman, Don Griffin, Joe Gyulavics, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Dennis Haun, Pete Glenboski, Larry Utlej, Don Kelly. *Active Duty:* LtCols John Cooper and Mohan Krishna.

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*A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel good.*

As of 1 October 2010, the **Association** had 688 members **in good standing**, including 19 life members and 12 gratis positions from the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** senior staff. This is an **increase of 54** from 18 May 2010. New memberships and renewals come in regularly.

Another thirty-nine **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** units, plus other associated organizations, receive the newsletter for public relations purposes.

Approximately 170 widows of former members receive the newsletter at no cost, and are welcome to participate in any and all **Association** activities.

**It is hoped/expected that those who have yet to renew their dues will do so soonest. Dues for 2011 (and beyond) are due in January. Pay up now and avoid the rush!**

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The **Association** has members in 49 states (*only Alaska is MIA. Go figure*), plus Guam, and APOs in Europe and the Pacific, and now, Ontario, Canada. **Nebraska** leads with 161. Texas (106), Florida and California (78 each), and Virginia (69) follow.

The number of **active duty members** continues to increase 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. There was also a noticeable uptick after the **Association** name change was announced during Heritage Week events last April.

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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: YOUR DUES EXPIRE: 20XX**

For example: **2010** on your address label means your dues will expire on 31 December 2010. Any other year indicates that your dues did, or will, expire on 31 December of that year. **If you are delinquent, or are due to run out on 31 December of this year, please renew soonest.**

Any member whose dues **expired on 31 December 2009** was taken off the member-in-good-standing roll effective 1 April 2010. To be reinstated, please remit **\$20** to become current through 31 December **2010**. Or better still, **send \$55 for the next three years.**

\* \* \* \* \*



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.*)

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If your dues expired in 2009, or will in 2010, please remit payment to **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** as soon as practical for future years.

Mail to: **55<sup>th</sup> Wing 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 be used to report any address or other changes in your contact information.**

Current members desiring replacement or additional **Association** 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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## TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 1 October 2010, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$26,000. Although the **Association** is solvent, we have expenses, obligations and bills to pay, such as publishing this newsletter and a new **Association** directory. **So, please pay your dues promptly, or early and often.** Thank you very much.



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*Occasionally, members include modest amounts of money over and above what is required for dues to add to the treasury. **Those donations (NOT DUES) are tax deductible under an IRS ruling for the organization.** Every dollar is much appreciated. We can use the economic stimulus like every other group.*

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## ASSOCIATION LITHO PRESENTED TO RAF UNIT

During the last week of June, BGen Shanahan took a team and an RC-135 to RAF Waddington, UK, to make an initial liaison visit with the RAF's 51 Squadron.

Earlier, **Major Gavin Gigstead**, in preparation for the visit, was searching for an appropriate gift to give the 51 Squadron. He asked the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** president if there was a copy available of the lithograph "*Sentinel of the Hindu Kush*", by famed photo-artist **Robert Wong**, which could be given to 51 Squadron from the ***Fightin' Fifty-Fifth***.

The **Association** had recently obtained a copy of this litho from a member donor, and proudly donated the depiction of an RC-135 in flight over the rugged Hindu Kush Mountains in Afghanistan. Appropriate **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** symbols were added on the base margin. The idea was to connect the two units with similar global missions and a special relationship

The general graciously and enthusiastically accepted the offer, and expressed his appreciation to the **Association**.



The presentation took place at Waddington in late June with RAF 51 Squadron commander accepting. In turn the RAF rep gave the general a

picture showing a NIMROD aircraft and an RC in formation, with four RAF emblems embellishing its base margin.

The 51 Squadron currently flies NIMRODs on reconnaissance missions, but they are to be phased out. The RAF will acquire three RC-135 RIVET JOINT aircraft to be modified at Greenville, TX. Their aircrews will be trained 'nose to tail' in the 55<sup>th</sup> 'schoolhouse' beginning in January 2011.

Accompanying the general on the trip was **LtCol John Cooper**, Deputy Operations Group Commander, and a member of the **Association's** Board of Directors.

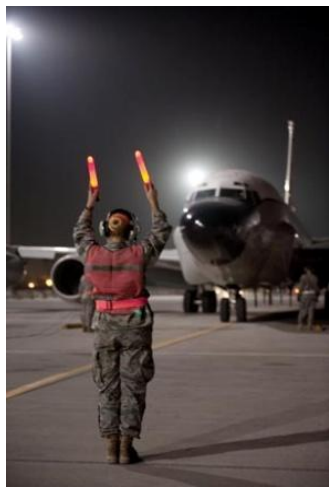
*Contributed by Jim Thomas.*



## 55<sup>TH</sup> WING MARKS 20 YEARS IN SOUTHWEST ASIA

On Monday, 9 August 2010, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing at Offutt AFB, NE, surpassed 20 years of non-stop support of operations in Southwest Asia. This is believed to be the longest single continuous deployment in US Air Force history, according to wing officials.

"This achievement is truly remarkable," said BGen Shanahan, commander of the unit, which is also known as the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. He added that "it's amazing to think that we have new airmen assigned to the Wing who were born after the first deployment to the region."



Members and equipment of the Wing first arrived in

Southwest Asia on August 9, 1990, one week after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Today, they average 3.1 deployments to the region per year. Currently the Wing's RC-135s fly with the 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Sqd from an air base in the region.

*(Edited from a report by **Ryan Hansen**, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Public Affairs)*



## REDEDICATION 55<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP MEMORIAL

On 27 August 2010, the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing rededicated a memorial plaque to the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, its WWII predecessor. The memorial was originally dedicated on 6 June 1987 during a reunion of the 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group and 442<sup>nd</sup> Air Service Group Association, which was sponsored by the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW, Colonel **Larry Mitchell** commanding. Placed in front of (north side) of the Wing HQ, the area had been completely reconstructed.

The ribbon cutting ceremony official was **Colonel John M. Hansen**, 55<sup>th</sup> Operations Group Commander. Attending him were **Don Gifford** and **George Eichhorn**, both former P-51 pilots with the 343<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron in WWII.



*L to R: Eichhorn, Col Hansen, Gifford*

Also in attendance was another WWII veteran, **John Waters**; plus a cadre of active duty troops from the Wing, retirees and guests.

Former wing commanders **Reg Urschler** and **Steve Stevens**, State Senator **Bob Krist**, and 55<sup>th</sup> Association Board members **Thomas, McMahon, Ernst, Hoover, Moore, Maloney, Kelly, LtCol John Cooper**, Deputy Commander of the Ops Group, and **LtCol Mo Krishna**, 343<sup>rd</sup> RS Commander, were in the audience.

Punctuating the ceremony was a flyover by vintage P-51 and P-38 aircraft,



the types flown by the Fighter Group out of the UK and Germany during WWII. They were at Offutt for the annual air show held that following weekend. Also in the background was an F-22 Raptor going thru its pre-show paces.

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## T A P S



**ADAMS, Marvin L (Sparky)**, 88, Ft Worth, TX, passed away 15 July 2010; wife of 65 years, **Connie**. He was a WWII veteran pilot who served with the **55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing** at Forbes AFB, KS, in the 1960s flying RB-47s and on staff. Sparky was an integral member of the **Association**, serving as a member of the ad hoc and steering committees in 1994 that formulated the foundation for what the **Association** is today. He was on the first elected Board of Directors in 1995 and served until his passing.

**AYLSWORTH, Aleta Mae (Dete)**, 84, Empire, MI, 27 May 2010. She was the widow of **Warren**, who died in October 2006, a long time pilot who served in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Forbes and the 82nd SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa. Dete was a licensed real estate and insurance agent in addition to being a dedicated Air Force wife and homemaker.

**BOSZE, Richard**, Bracketville, TX, 23 August 2010; wife, **Patricia**. Dick was in the RB-50 era with the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW**, and in RB-47s at Forbes in the late 1950s.

**BROCKEL, Donald D**, 76, 25 September 2010, Selby, SD; wife of 55 years, **Nina**. Don was an RB-47 pilot with the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Forbes in the 1960s. He later flew HC-130 rescue aircraft as an exchange pilot with the US Coast Guard for a year. He retired in 1974.

**CLANCY, Emily B**, 87, Topeka, KS. A life long homemaker, she was the widow of retired CMSgt **James**, who served in the **55<sup>th</sup>** in the 1950s and '60s. He died in August 2002.

**COLLADAY, Georgianne (Danny)**, 81, Bellevue, NE, 14 June 2010. The widow of LtGen (Retired) **Martin**, a long time SAC HQ staffer and friend of the **55<sup>th</sup>**. Danny was the consummate AF wife, activist and a community leader.

**GRANT, Denise M**, 90, Lexington, KY, 21 July 2010; widow of **Don**. Her husband (deceased in 1989) was a veteran RB47 instructor/pilot/AC at Forbes, and a former commander of the 343<sup>rd</sup>.

**HICKS, LeWanda Bones**, 75, Bellevue, NE, 8 June 2010, wife of **Frank**. Predeceased by her first husband **Jim Bones**. LeWanda worked for the Bellevue Public Schools for over 20 years. Both Jim and Frank were pilots in the **55SRW**.

**KADEN, Roy (Pop) E**, 93, Maumelle, AR, 11 October 2010; wife of 55 years, **Geraldine (Gerrie)**. A WWII veteran and a true strategic recon pioneer, "Pop" was an RB-50/RB-47 pilot and AC with the **55<sup>th</sup>** in the 1950s. He was inducted into the Wing Hall of Fame in 2003.

*(See article following TAPS.)*

**MARTIN, Paul H**, 74, Nashville, TN, 22 July 2010; wife, **Patty**. Paul was a RC-135 pilot who served at Eielson AFB, AK; with the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt, then to Yokota AB, Japan, and Kadena. Later, he was at the SAC Recon Center at Offutt. He retired as a major general commanding the Electronic Security Command.

**MILLER, Elizabeth L (Betty Lou)**, 80, Colorado Springs, CO, 14 June 2010. She was the former wife of LtGen (Ret) **George**, a past **55<sup>th</sup>** wing commander and SAC vice commander.

**MIXON, Marion C (Hack)**, 92, Tampa, FL, 19 May 2010; wife of 62 years, **Mary**. Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Army in 1939, he subsequently became a pilot commanding a B-24 squadron in Italy in WWII. He later flew B-47s in SAC and served in Vietnam. Col Mixon was commander of the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** at Forbes, 1963-66. He then commanded a U-2 wing at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ.





**MORRISON, Marjorie J**, 74, Albuquerque, NM, 26 June 2010. A career registered nurse, she was the widow of **Jay (Tex)** (Feb 2004), a former RB-47H crew chief at Forbes in the mid-1950s.

**MORTON, Richard L**, 17 July 2010, Medina, OH; wife, **Karen**. He was a pilot/AC in RCs in the 82<sup>nd</sup> SRS at Kadena in the early 1970s.

**RESH, Ron**, 72, 25 October 2010, Silver Spring, MD. Ron served in SAC at Lockborne AFB, OH, and Lincoln AFB, NE. After the AF, he became a successful lawyer and businessman, but never lost this respect for the AF and SAC. He was the driving force who spearheaded the establishment of the SAC Memorial at the USAF National Museum in 2005.

**SCHUETT, Shirley**, 52, Highlands Ranch, CO, 28 May 2010. A Nebraska native, she was wife of **Brian**, a former RC pilot in the 38<sup>th</sup> SRS at Offutt.

**SEH, Sandy**, 73, Grasonville, MD, 15 September 2010; wife of **Bob** for 53 years. Bob was an RC EWO in the 343<sup>rd</sup> SRS at Offutt. Besides being a devoted AF wife and mother, Sandy did library research for Anser and Mitre Corporations, and worked at George Mason University

**SMILEY, Katherine**, 78, Denver, CO, 22 October 2010; wife of **Rolland (Crane)**. He was an RB-47 pilot and AC with the **55thSRW** at Forbes in the 1960s.

**UNREIN, Gerard (Jerry) A, III**, 61, Bellevue, NE, 4 October 2010; wife **Judy**. Jerry served with the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt as an RC instructor navigator in the 38<sup>th</sup> SRS training flight from 1985-91.

**WEST, William O, III**, 71, Union, MO, 1 August 2010; wife **Antoinette**. Bill was a pilot/AC in RC-135s with the 82<sup>nd</sup> at Kadena in the early 1970s. An Oklahoma native, he also flew KC-135s and RF4s. After retiring from the AF, he spent ten years as an instructor with American Airlines.

**WHITE, Benjamin**, 88, Norfolk, VA, 4 October 2010; wife, **Betty Ann**. Ben entered the service during WWII in 1942. He later became an RB-47 EWO at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Ben was another original member of the foundation committees in 1994, and helped build the current **Association**. He was on the first elected Board of Directors, served as secretary from 1996-2001. He was the ‘father’ of this modern newsletter as editor from April 1997 through September 2000.

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**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 to whom the Association condolence card may be sent; date of demise, age, location; and if known, crew position/aircraft, or duty specialty, organization and bases, and approximate years with 55<sup>th</sup>; and any other pertinent information you wish to relate.**

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

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Roy “Pop” Kaden was born in Denver, CO, in 1917. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1937 and served as an aircrew member in B-10, B-18 and B-17 aircraft with the 38<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Sqd. (*Not a 55<sup>th</sup> unit then.*) Commissioned a second lieutenant in February 1942, he graduated from pilot training in 1943 and became a pilot and instructor in advanced flight training schools in B-17s until 1945. After WWII he was assigned to the 91<sup>st</sup> Recon Sqd flying photo-mapping reconnaissance in B-17s, mostly in South America, until 1949.

In 1950 he became an RB-50 pilot assigned to the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** in the 38th SRS, deployed to accomplish photo and electronic surveillance missions against the Soviet Union. In September 1952, his crew was selected to fly a top secret, presidential directed, photo and electronic recon sortie over Franz Josef Land Archipelago, a Soviet denied over-flight territory in the far northern reaches of Russia (between 80-82 degrees north latitudes).

It was 50 years later that he and his crew were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for that mission when Cold War classifications on such over flights were lifted.

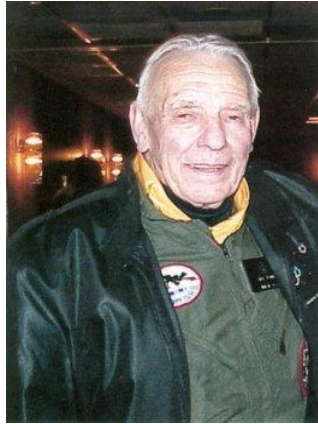
Pop later transitioned to the RB-47 in the **Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth** and commanded crews from 1954-1960. He also served in the Wing as Field Maintenance Sqd commander, Chief of Maintenance, and a detachment commander at forward operating locations. After retiring from the AF in 1960, he was employed by various companies as a manufacturing, tool, and chief engineer before retiring a second time in 1974.

*Contributed by Robb Hoover, Assn Historian.*

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**Epilogue:** Roy expressed the desire to be buried in his flight suit and squadron scarf. After his death, the family located the flight suit but couldn't find that scarf the **Association** had given Roy when he was a speaker at the Tales in February 2002.

Roy's son, **Tom**, contacted Robb Hoover two days before the funeral. Robb then went to the 38th and talked to the squadron commander, **LtCol Ryan Rogers**, and ops officer, **LtCol Shawn Gunter**, filled them in on Roy's background as a **55th** Hall of Famer.



LtCol Rogers (*whose father **Robert** is a **55th** alum, as well*), gave Robb a special 38RS 100-mission scarf, plus a squadron coin to slip in Pop's flight suit pocket. The items were sent over night to Gerri Kaden in time for the funeral.

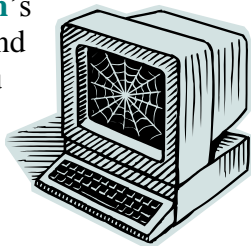
This episode is but one in a continuing series of demonstrations of the rapport and liaison the **55th Association** has with the active duty wing and its members. It is also an indication of their appreciation for the heritage and lineage of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifty*.

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## YOUR **55<sup>TH</sup>** SRW ASSN WEB SITE

[www.55wa.org](http://www.55wa.org) (new)

Under the technical expertise of Webmeister **Jim Maloney**, the home page is an integral and vital part of the **Association's** line of communications and information. It is where you can keep informed between newsletters, and when news is reported and updated in a more timely manner.



Among other things, our internet presence provides two primary functions: First, is to keep member viewers up to date. Plus, it provides members a forum to keep in touch, learn about

current and ongoing **Association** activities, and reference previous projects and/or events.

A third increasingly important function in this ever evolving cyber-age is that our internet link to the world provides former **55<sup>th</sup>** warriors a means to come back to the fold. It is not uncommon for past **SRW/55<sup>th</sup> 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.

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/info update form**.

The latest news on upcoming reunions, the Birthday Ball, and other significant events are there. "Mail Room", "Clothing Sales", "Memory Lane", a picture gallery, and links to other associated and interesting sites are included.

**New to the site is an alphabetical listing for the TAPS section. It makes for easier to access the names and dates of those who have passed from our midst.**

**There is also an archive of past newsletters for review and research.** As examples: The most recent issue, May 2010, explains the organization's name change; 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 **55<sup>th</sup> SRWA's** Cold War Memorial, **one of our most significant projects**; 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.

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## MEMORY LANE FEATURE

The **Association** web page *Memory Lane* has factual, non-fiction stories on **55SRW** and **55th Wing** individuals, crews or events. Browse it and you may be surprised at what is there. You may even be inspired to contribute a first person story.

You are invited, encouraged, urged, and welcomed to submit your inputs. 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. See "Memory Lane" on the website, [www.55wa.org](http://www.55wa.org) for format and submission details.

You do not have to be a seasoned, elder vet to contribute. We would be particularly pleased to get anecdotes from the **active duty troops** of the **Association** regarding **Operation Desert Storm**, on thru the current and enduring conflicts in SW Asia, and other 55<sup>th</sup> operations.

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## LETTERS AND STUFF



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Dear Max,

I just finished a cover-to-cover reading of the latest (**Association**) newsletter (*May 2010*). It is superb, as always.

Old I am getting. TAPS really hit home this time. **Burt Barrett** checked me out in the K system in my first ride in the RB-47. Our front end crew was assigned to the 338<sup>th</sup> SRS for check out. We flew three or four weather recon sorties with him and he always acted as instructor navigator, as well as the instructor pilot.

I suppose when one achieves the ripe old age of 86, one must expect losses. **Fred Glass, Jim Riley, Nick Yanuzzi**, friends all.

That really doesn't make it any easier. A loss is a loss. We can only remember, not replace.

Also wanted to tell you how much I enjoy the newsletters, and how very much I appreciate the effort you put into the **Association**.

Pass along my thanks to Jim (*Maloney*) for an excellent web page, as well.

Fond regards,

**Bill Lewis** (*The Elder*), Kerrville, TX.

*(Condensed and edited from a heartfelt, and much appreciated, letter, 1 June 2010)*

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It was 50 years ago today (*1 July*) that **Major Willard Palm** and his crew (**55th SRW/343rd SRS**) launched from RAF Brize-Norton on their first operational RB-47 mission in the Barents Sea.

The story of their shoot down by a Soviet fighter is well-known to all **55<sup>th</sup>ers**. Navigator **John McKone** and copilot **Bruce Olmstead** survived the shoot down and several hours in the frigid Arctic waters of the Barents before being rescued by a Soviet fishing trawler. They were imprisoned in the infamous Lubyanka Prison in Moscow for seven months, and subsequently released in January 1961 (*as a friendly gesture to newly inaugurated President John F. Kennedy*).



John and Bruce were awarded the Silver Star for their gallant resistance while in prison by the Chief of Staff of the USAF and the Secretary of the Air Force in a ceremony held in 2004 during the Air Force Association national convention.

I spoke with members of the Palm crew this morning: John McKone and his wife **Norma Jean** live on Virginia's Middle Peninsula near the coastal waters. John remains active with The Gideons International distributing bibles after having served for several years as an officer in Rotary Intl.

Bruce and **Gail Olmstead** live in Annapolis, MD. Bruce said that he called John this morning and they had a good chat. Bruce and Gail now spend some winter months in Venice, FL, that charming community on the Gulf Coast.

**Maria Goforth McAtee**, the widow of electronic warfare officer **Oscar Goforth**, now lives in Knollwood Military Retirement Residence in the District of Columbia. With the help of her daughter **Linda** and son **Daniel**, she moved from

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## COLORADO SPRINGS OUTING

A group of former **55<sup>th</sup>** RC crewdogs got together last July at Fox Run Park near Colorado Springs for the first of what is hoped to be a series of gatherings in that area. The idea is similar to what VP Ricky McMahon and friends do in the DC area twice a year.

**Kerm Neal**, a former active duty member of the **Association** Board of Directors, and **Mace MacElhaney**, were the planning and communication drivers for the event.

The prediction of threatening weather (*unfulfilled*) kept the numbers lower than expected, but the troops were not deterred. They hope to attract a larger crowd next time. So, you **55<sup>th</sup>'ers** in the CSprings/Denver vicinity, and there are many, keep your heads up for the next one.



*Pictured are: L to R: MacElhaney, Al Feldkamp, Neal, Jack Carson, Rich Trentman (seated), Ron Machoian and Juan Moreno.*

Here is **Tim Spaeth's** (Springboro, OH), suggested caption for the above photo (*with tongue planted firmly in cheek*), displaying his sharp wit and attention to detail:

*"Former **55th Wing** members got reacquainted in Colorado during a cupcake eating contest. Rich Trentman is girded to take on the next tray of goodies while fellow competitors look on. Juan Moreno is poised to present the coveted "Pink Teddy" to the winner."*

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Topeka, KS, a few years ago. Maria had just returned from a visit to her native Puerto Rico.

**Pat Phillips**, widow of electronic warfare officer **Dean Phillips**, lives in Sacramento, CA, near her daughter **Roxanne**. Pat has befriended **Rear Admiral Boris Novyy**, the retired Russian Navy veteran who has been very helpful to the US authorities in researching Russian archives about the circumstances of Cold War shoot downs.

**Robb Hoover**, Bellevue, NE  
**55th Wing Association** Historian  
(*Edited from an e-mail, 1 July 2010*)

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To All,

On March 19, 2010, the House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution that designated the DFC memorial at March Field Air Museum as a national memorial. This memorial is currently under construction at the March Field Air Museum in Riverside, CA. **Jim Champlin**, President of the Inland Empire Chapter, Riverside, CA, has worked tirelessly on this project.



The next step is obtaining the Senate's approval. On April 29, 2010, S3284 was introduced to the Senate, but it requires co-sponsors to move forward.

Our goal is to have this bill pass before our 2010 DFCS Convention in Riverside, CA, scheduled for October 2010. This would be a real boost for our membership and in attracting new members.

In Fellowship,  
**Chuck Sweeney**, Coronado, CA  
President and CEO, *The Distinguished Flying Cross Society*  
(*Edited from an e-mail 7 July 2010*)

In an update of 23 September, DFCS Pres Sweeney said the memorial has come to fruition and was to be dedicated on 27 October at the DFCS National Convention.

(*Note: Many members of our **Association** belong to the DFC Society, and many more are eligible to join. If you want to know more about it, and/or care to join, go to the web site at [www.dfcsociety.org](http://www.dfcsociety.org), or call toll free 1-866-332-6332 for detailed information.*)

Max:

Yesterday, 28 October 2010, I had the occasion to visit Arlington National Cemetery and the final resting places of two of our departed comrades and friends.

My two last visits were when I was here for their internments, as a pallbearer for each of them, **Bill Palm** and **Mike Rafferty**. Bill's burial was in 1960 and "Iron Mike's" in 1967.

Ironically, Col Rafferty led the five-ship RB-47 flyover for Bill's funeral only to be buried near-by seven years later.

I'm confident they, as well as all our departed comrades, continue to fly with the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* as they watch over us and prepare for our ultimate arrivals.



*Videmus Omnia*, Reg (Urschler), Bellevue, NE

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## SALUTE OR HAND OVER HEART?

**Public Law 110-181** states that "all persons present in uniform should render the military salute (to the US flag) Members of the Armed Forces and **veterans who are present, but not in uniform, may render the military salute.**



All other persons present should face the US flag and stand at attention with their right hand over the heart, or if applicable, remove their headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart.

**To clarify, retirees may salute or place their right hand over the heart to render respect for the US flag.**

*Note: This item was extracted from the Sept 2010 issue of Afterburner, News for USAF Retired Personnel. That article included a picture of **CMSgt (Ret) Bob Williams** of Bellevue, NE, which was taken by **Josh Plueger** of the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Public Affairs Office.*

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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.** Pictures are good. 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.)*

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## ASSOCIATION BX

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### ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

**These are 'must have' items for the reunions, and they 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.





There are currently two designs available. Both have the dual shield on the left breast, no pocket.

The former design is white with red collar and sleeve trim, navy blue front placket. They are 100% pre-shrunk combed cotton pique. This shirt's cost remains \$25 per shirt.

Those shirts are now available only in small and medium as they are being phased out. When they are gone, they are gone.

The new all white design is 100% polyester micro pique, moisture-wicking and anti-microbial control; available in sizes medium, large, XL, and XXL. Size 3XL can be ordered if the need arises. The cost of this version is \$30 each.

Be sure to state the design and size you want.

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

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

There are charges for priority postage to be added to the individual item cost: \$5.35 for one shirt, or one cap; \$10.60 for both a shirt and cap order; \$10.60 for two shirts.

More ways to identify with your Association and "show the logo" as appropriate for 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 a must have for the reunion banquets and other appropriate events.



\* \* \* \* \*

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

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



(Shown larger than actual size.)  
(Note: The pin is .5 by 1.25 inches.)

The pins continue to be sold to Association members all over the country. They are particularly evident at official and social functions at Offutt, and at 55<sup>th</sup> 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 or anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer.

Classy, but inexpensive.

*(Ladies, if ol' 'What's His Face' doesn't take the hint, order one for yourself.*

*And Guys, in the spirit of gender equity, you can buy one if you want to. It will look great on that reunion souvenir ball cap or golf visor.*

*You will be the envy of the course, don't cha know?)*

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, and an Association member and supporter, offers them and you can purchase directly from the store.

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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# REUNIONS



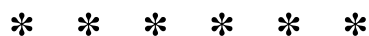
## FUTURE 55<sup>TH</sup> WING ASSOCIATION REUNION



September 2012, Colorado Springs, CO. **Sandy Feldkamp**, chairperson, **Alan** assisting.



Stay alert to the *Association* web site and future issues of the *Videmus Omnia* for details as they develop and come together.



## 55<sup>th</sup> FIGHTER GROUP and 442<sup>nd</sup> AIR SERVICES GROUP ASSOCIATION



The 55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, the WWII predecessor to the current 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, most of whose members are part of the Greatest Generation, held its final reunion 20-22 May 2010 in Albuquerque, NM.

Almost fifty veterans, family and friends attended, including sixteen Fighter Group members: **William Allen, Frank Birtciel, Ken Cottrell, John Cunnick, Jordan Eliades, John Feller, Ed Giller** (the group's president), **Harold Hall, Raphael Larko, and Paul Lichty**. Plus: **Robert Light, Robert Litchfield, Duane Wikholm, William Willis, Wright Whitelaw, and Walter Yakimowicz**.



Reg Urschler and Steve Stevens of the 55<sup>th</sup> Association also were among the guests.

Those attending enjoyed tours of the city of Albuquerque and the new Atomic Museum near Kirtland AFB; hospitality room, reception, business meeting and a grand banquet.

BGen John Shanahan, the current 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, wrote in a message addressing the reunion attendees, which was read by MGen (Ret) Giller at the banquet, and stated, in part:



“My message to you is a relatively simple one: all of the Airmen in the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth* today owe you an enduring debt of gratitude for everything you did to serve our nation during a period that was defined by the most horrific and far reaching conflict of the last century.

Though a conflict it was, in terms of its goals and ultimate achievements, it was also an honorable one. Your efforts in that war paved the way for the wing that exists today. ....the only way we can understand where we are today, and where we need to go in the future, is by understanding where we came from. The path to the future runs through the past. It runs through all of you.”

The letter concluded with “Thank you for all you did. Thank you for charting the course to greatness. Thank you for setting the standard. Thank you for standing tall when it counted. We will not forget our origins. We will ensure the lineage remains unbroken. And we will hoist the flag high. God Bless America.

*Videmus Omnia, Brig General Jack Shanahan, Commander, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing”*

\* \* \* \* \*

General Giller responded to the Wing Commander in a later letter, in part:

“Well, our association has dissolved with mixed emotions and feelings. You said your message was a simple one. True, but (*it was done*) in such an



eloquent way that it had a tremendous emotional impact. I read it after the (*banquet*) meal to a very quiet and thoughtful audience.

Your message reflects the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing's** view of our contributions in a way we never could do ourselves. I believe that accounts for the feelings and emotions that surfaced for everyone there.

This was our last reunion, which was very successful with memories, stories, and emotions building throughout the three days in a way that seemed to crest at the final dinner.

It would be an understatement to say your message was the fitting highlight to the end of our association.

On behalf of our members, I want to thank you for the greatest sendoff any flying, fighting organization could have. We are especially pleased and proud that the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** will continue our traditions and heritage.”



55<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group P-38 and P-51 aircraft in their WWII squadron liveries.

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# WHO SHOT WHAT



Graphics and official logos from various sources. Photo credits to: **Jeff W. Gates**, USAF photo of Omaha Trophy; litho presentation from RAF 51; USAF News Service for photo of RC-135 at night. Ribbon cutting, Ernst; flyover, Moore; Mixon from the Tampa paper; Kaden by Hoover.

*Topeka Daily Capital* shoot down headline and Arlington flyover from **Bruce Bailey's** book, *We See All*; CSprings group pic, MacElhane; *Mad Max* graphic by **Patricia Gros**; **Association** shirt/cap, by Utley; **Association** tie, Pizzo; **55<sup>th</sup>** pin by Moore; Fighter Gp reunion and Giller pix, Steve Stevens; BG Shanahan, official AF photo.

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# GOD BLESS AMERICA!!





# Videmus Omnia



## 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association, Inc.

(Formerly – 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association)

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Veteran? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No    Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates of Service)

Are you a former member of the 55th Strat Recon Wing? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates of Service)



Are you a current or former member of the 55th Wing? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates of Service)



Which 55th Unit(s) were you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you on active duty? \_\_\_\_ If so, with what unit? \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_

What is your present occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form with dues, if applicable  
(\$20 per year or \$55 for 3 years)\*

to:

**55<sup>TH</sup> WING ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**P.O. BOX 13165**  
**OFFUTT AFB, NE 68113**

\* Note – Expiration date of new members joining after 1 Oct extended to 31 Dec of following year  
\*\* Note – Dues expiration date – 31 December

2 April 2010

