

Videmus Omnia

55th WING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2013

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings from the Heartland.

It's vacation time again and there are so many little things to do...including, as Max keeps reminding me, "I Need Your PREZGRAM Yesterday!" He is hot on the trail of another blockbuster newsletter.....and he gets a tad insistent about the input from Yours Truly.

Time just keeps flyin' by and I like it that way vice the alternative. Seems like yesterday we were wrapping up our Colorado Springs reunion, and now, we are half-way to our next great act of another reunion in the Heartland here in Omaha and Offutt AFB next April.

Planning, discussing and researching have been in progress for some time now. This could be a big one even though our last reunion here was in 2006. Much has changed in the city of Omaha. The city has a new face all around town especially downtown and in the Old Market.

The 55th Wing missions have increased in kind and frequency, and continue around the globe. The 55th remains the leading edge of the spear for America and the US Air Force.

There will be much to see and do with longtime friends, and opportunities to see the now-55th up close and to be a part of Heritage Week. Hope to see many of you here for this reunion.

There are some figures in the membership report that give me cause for a little concern: that number of those who have failed to renew even at the delinquent point, 1 April.

Regardless, we are mailing those lapsed members this newsletter in the hope that missed renewals were just an oversight, and that they will be reminded to update their memberships.

We value the loyalty of the membership. That loyalty has provided for this **Association** to remain active and productive in its purposes for years beyond what some have thought possible.

Have a grand summer and fall. May the good Lord bless you and your loved ones with happiness and good health. Enjoy another Maximus Newsletter.

Videmus Omnia, Jim

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NEXT REUNION OMAHA/OFFUTT 9-13 APRIL 2014

The 55th Wing Association will hold its 30th reunion 9-13 April 2014 at Omaha/Offutt. Mark your calendars now and please plan on arranging your lives and schedules to attend.

This could be HUGE and comparable to the reunion in 2006, as it will be held at the same time as the 55th Wing's Heritage Week special events at Offutt AFB. This will be a rare opportunity for many of our members to participate in those events.

The headquarters for the festivities will be the Embassy Suites in LaVista, NE. You can begin your planning by calling the hotel to make reservations at (402) 331-7400. Please use the

group name "2014 55th Wing Association", or group code "FF1", to get the special reunion rate of \$102 per night (plus taxes and fees, of course). The rate includes breakfast buffet each morning and cocktail receptions in the evenings.

For computer savvy folks, you can log onto our reunion's personalized group web page, which will automatically load the hotel and group information. The web page can be accessed through the following link:
http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/O/OMAESSES-FF120140406/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG.

You have until **10 March 2014** to make your reservations. Anyone calling after that date will be told that the block is unavailable, and then offered the standard nightly rate, which is quite a bit higher. The **Association** has a limited number of rooms blocked, so it imperative you book early for this great rate. Neither the Embassy Suites, nor your friendly **Association** reunion chairman, can guarantee those special rates after we sell out our committed rooms, so register early.

Reunion Chairman **Don Kelly** has laid the groundwork and has contract in hand. Don is a member of the **Association** Board of Directors and a former Deputy Operations Group Commander in the **55th Wing**. His bride is **Melinda (Mel)**, the daughter of long time **55th'ers**, **Mary** and the late **Arlen "Ziggy" Howe**. She is currently executive secretary to the **55th Wing** commander.



Kelly is pictured here at the 2006 reunion membership meeting delivering the 55th Wing Unit Mission Briefing when he was the Deputy OG.

There are many details to be determined and those will be made known through the **Association** web site and/or e-mails. **The registration package/newsletter should be published in January 2014.**

Preliminary plans include generous hospitality suite hours, a Thursday evening informal reception, and a variety of optional tours of Omaha attractions and Offutt. For example, Friday the 11th may include static displays, various base tours, including the simulator and squadron roll calls, as well as the Hall of Fame induction ceremony and the *Tales of the 55th*.

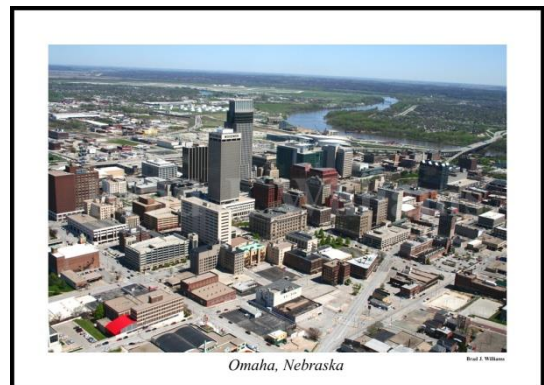
There will be the usual membership meeting on Saturday morning at the hotel, and the reunion will culminate that evening by joining members of Team Offutt of all ranks, local dignitaries, and retirees at the gala 36th annual **55th Wing** Birthday Ball in the LaVista Embassy Convention Center Ballroom (Attached to the hotel.)

This event is the Wing's largest formal social event of the year. First held in January 1979, it was founded by then-Colonel **Regis F.A. Urschler**, the **55th SRW** commander, with the aim of connecting the active duty members to the heritage and storied history of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*. Attendance is usually between 800-900, about 10% of whom are **Association** members and guests (*local and out of town. See related article following in this issue.*)

Reunion attendees will have our own section of tables with sign up/assigned seating, as we usually do for our banquet. Recommended attire for gentlemen on this occasion will be the **Association** tie with dark business suit or jacket. Mess dress for active duty. **This will be a singular opportunity for those of you who have never attended this outstanding event to experience a truly grand evening of traditions, dining and dancing.**

You now have just enough info to whet the appetite for the next BIG ONE. Plenty of time to make plans, buy a new **Association** polo shirt and get a 'regimental' tie. Be here before you know it.

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Yes, friends, Omaha has a skyline. The stockyards gave way many years ago to a cosmopolitan metropolitan entity. There is a vibrant, revitalized center city and a developing mid- and north downtown with a convention/event center and a newer ballpark for the NCAA College World Series, generating the attendant bars and restaurants.

There is the world-class Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium; the highly regarded Joslyn Art Museum; Boys Town; the Durham Western Heritage Museum; Lorenzen Botanical Gardens; Orpheum Theatre; and the acclaimed state of the art, Holland Performing Arts Center that hosts the Omaha Symphony and many big name acts and shows.

The eclectic Old Market has a variety of shops and eateries; and there are active community theaters.....and, oh by the way, a plethora of famous steak houses, fabulous golf courses, and three casinos on the Iowa side of Missouri River.

Five Fortune 500 companies have their headquarters in Omaha, which boasts more millionaires per capita than any US city. This ain't Curt Lemay's and Tom Power's Omaha or Offutt of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

There are many new buildings and roads on Offutt. In fact, they are building a new \$1B USSTRATCOM headquarters on the site of the former nine-hole golf course on Offutt. Come see for yourselves.

The former SAC Museum (now called the Strategic Air and Space Museum) near Ashland, NE, about 20 minutes from the Embassy Suites, houses numerous historic aircraft and displays, including the original memorial obelisk that was the model for the **55th SRW Cold War Memorial**, and a duplicate SAC Monument of the one at the National USAF Museum Memorial Gardens, near Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 15 June 2013, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$42,000.

Although the **Association** is solvent, we have expenses, obligations



and bills to pay, such as this newsletter. **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, or in the memory of a comrade taking that final high flight. Those donations (NOT DUES) are tax deductible under an IRS ruling for the organization. Every amount, large or small, is much appreciated.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There were 544 members in good standing as 15 June 2013, compared with 623 on 31 December 2012.

Regrettably, those 79 members whose dues expired on 31 December 2012 were taken off the member-in-good-standing roll as of 1 April 2013.

However, as a matter of good faith, the Association is mailing this newsletter to those folks as a means to remind/encourage renewals. Those who choose not to reup will have received their last newsletter. Pity.

If you have put off renewing for 2013 and beyond, it isn't too late. Some members have paid for out years as far ahead as 2019.

About 170 widows receive the newsletter gratis, and they are welcome to any and all Association functions. Fifty-one 55th Wing units and offices are sent the newsletter for PR purposes, and to keep them connected with the Association.

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WHEN DO MY DUES EXPIRE?

That is the most asked question of the membership chairman. That date is on the address label to the RIGHT of your name in bold print: 20XX - Take a look and make a note.

Membership comes due each January. It is hoped/expected that those of you who have yet to renew your dues for 2013, will do so soon.

Mail to: 55th Wing Association
ATTN: Michael J. Cook
PO Box 13165
Offutt AFB, NE 68113

For whatever reason, if you do **not** know your dues 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 membership status.

Please keep us informed of any changes in your address or other contact information. Invariably we get returned mail because of outdated addresses. **Please help us stay current.**

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You will find a membership/information update form at page 19 of this newsletter, as well as on the Association web site.

We respectfully request that the form be used any time you pay dues, and/or to report any address or other changes in your contact information. That is the best way to ensure we have your latest information on file.

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ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY EDITOR'S COMMENTS

As an FYI, the newsletter is **usually** mailed via USPS third-class, bulk mail postage, being the economical choice. Thus, it is **not** forwarded to members who relocate, **nor returned** to the Association if not deliverable for whatever reason (misaddressed, person moved or is deceased, etc.)

The dual mailing of the January issue of the *Videmus Omnia* and the directory was sent first-class, the first time since December of 2010. So, depending on when a member or widow last changed addresses, one may have missed the following newsletters: February and July 2011, February and May 2012. Those are available on the Association web site in the newsletter archives and can be accessed, read and/or printed from there as one desires.

As a result of the first-class mail, over 40 packages were returned for various reasons (about 5%). Some members had moved and new addresses were provided by the USPS even though the time limit for forwarding had passed. Others had to be researched. (*Sleuthing through whitepages.com, or looking for obituaries, can be interesting or frustrating.*)

Those members whose contact info was located and updated were resent packages. Unfortunately, some folks were just not traceable. (*In deep cover?*)

An 'unintended consequence', as they say, was learning of the demise of some members and widows spanning the past two years or more. Thus, the significant number of names in the TAPS section of this issue.

We know that some packages were forwarded to members who relocated as the envelopes did not get returned, and we were later informed of the new info. Yep, the most common changes: e-mail addresses and/or servers.

As stated before, it is up to individuals to keep the **Association** apprised when relocating. **We cannot update what we don't know.** Your cooperation in that endeavor is encouraged and appreciated. Thank you very much.

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YOUR 55TH WING ASSOCIATION WEB SITE

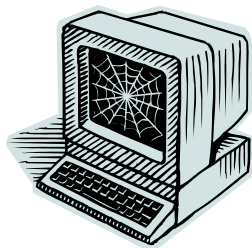
www.55wa.org

The home page continues to be an integral and vital part of the **Association's** line of communications. It is where one can keep informed between newsletters, and where news is reported and updated in a near real-time manner.

The latest news on reunions, the Birthday Ball, and other significant events are there. There also are many links and sections to explore.

Another important function is that our internet link to the world provides former 55th warriors a means to reconnect. It is not uncommon for past 55th members, or friends and families, to find the web site after an internet search, and reengage friends and comrades from their days with the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*.

Webmaster **Jim Maloney** reports that from 1 January thru 31 May this year, 784 people made 2845 visits to the site and viewed over 4000 pages. Of course most were from the USA, but there have



been viewers from the UK, Philippines, Canada, Germany, Japan, Brazil, Spain and Italy.

The **TAPS** section has an alphabetical, as well as chronological, listing for easier research access to the names and dates of those in the 55th family who have passed.

Also, in keeping with the **Association's** philosophy of advancing, we have a presence on the social networking phenomenon, *Facebook*.

Check out the new page at <http://www.facebook.com/55thAssociation>. When you get there, be sure to "Like" us.

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Any member who wishes to read and/or download future **Association** newsletters from the web site, rather than receive them by snail-mail, can notify Michael Cook to **remove** his/her name from the newsletter mailing list.

This will save the **Association** mailing costs, while allowing members to read it as soon as it is published, as well as read it wherever in the world one might be at anytime.

In order to do so, you will need to visit the "Members Only" page on the web site, and read the newsletter, or download it from there. **Simply request the username and password from the web-guy and you're all set.**

Reminder to all: **the web site address is 55wa.org.** 55srwa.org is no longer available.

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55TH CREWS AND AIRCRAFT MARK 10,000TH SORTIE IN SW ASIA

The 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Sqd (ERS) completed its 10,000th sortie in Southwest Asia since it began flying in the region 23 years ago, unit officials announced. The squadron hit the milestone sortie on 10 April 2013

The squadron, which operates electronic reconnaissance RC-135 from a forward area base, has been a continuing presence in Southwest Asia dating from the first Gulf War, supporting coalition troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.



On Final Approach

"The job we do helps get people home safely," said LtCol **Brian Lebeck**, 763rd ERS director of operations. "If we can do that for even one or two soldiers on the ground, that makes it worth the effort," he added.

The squadron's RC-135 flights average about 10 hours in duration, according to the release.

The aircraft and crews are on detached duty from the **55th Wing** at Offutt AFB, NE.

(Edited from a press release from the 379th AEWing, the squadron's host unit, by SSgt. Joel Mease)

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ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS THE WING BALL

On 4 April 2013, **55th Wing Association** President, Colonel (Ret) Jim Thomas, presented the **Association's** check for its annual \$1000 donation to the **55th Wing** Birthday Ball. Accepting on behalf of the Ball committee were **Col John Rauch**, **55th Wing Commander**, and **Capt Jamie Hernandez**, **55th Security Forces Sqd**, Birthday Ball committee chairman.



Pictured L to R: MSgt John Wilson, Ball committee member, Capt Hernandez, Thomas, Col Rauch, and 55th Wing Command Chief William Thomaston.

The money goes toward a fund to help defray the ticket costs for younger airmen to attend the gala event, this year held on 4 May.

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55th WING HERITAGE WEEK

In March 2010 **Association** President Thomas proposed to the then-**55th Wing** Commander, **BGen John Shanahan**, that some wing units hold a series of events during the week leading up to the **55th Wing** Birthday Ball to commemorate the history and legacy of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. The general readily embraced the idea, issued a wing-wide "Shanagram" and another tradition was born.

Continuing that commitment, **1-4 May 2013**, Heritage Week was celebrated and highlighted by such functions as the Ops Group Commander's Conference, the Wing Commander's Conference, gatherings at various squadrons, culminating with the **Tales of the 55th**, and the main event, the 35th annual **55th Wing** Birthday Ball.

The functions at the operational squadrons of today allow the seasoned crewdogs to return and mingle with the current generation of **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** warriors.

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HALL OF FAME

There was a selection process, but for a variety of unrelated circumstances, no one was named for induction this year. It happens.

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TALES OF THE 55TH

The fourteenth edition was held on Friday, **3 May 2013**, in the **CMSAF James M. McCoy** Airmen Leadership School with **Association** President Thomas as honcho and emcee.

This year, Thomas opened with recognition of the late **Robb Hoover**, founder of the **Tales** in January 2000. Thomas stated that Robb is still a sponsor of the event via memorials donated to the **Association** in his name. Thomas also made a moving tribute to Robb and his contributions to the Wing, the **Association** and his community.



Tribute slide to Robb.

Shirley Hoover is in the lower right hand corner of the above picture, back to camera.

As is now an established tradition, the program began with the ringing of the 55th Ceremonial Bell by the current 55th Wing Commander, **Col John Rauch**, and three past wing kings: L to R: **Steve Stevens, Larry Mitchell, and Reg Urschler.**



A short history of the bell was noted by Thomas, who then read a letter from **Chuck Meyer** of Stanton, NE, ‘the last man standing’ from the six RB-47 crewmembers whose names are engraved on the bell. Chuck expressed his regrets due to health issues, but elaborated on the bell’s history, yet another Robb Hoover initiative.

Col Rauch gave a few opening remarks welcoming the attendees, and about the Wing’s impressive record the past several months.

Thomas also touched on the significance of the 55th Wing Hall of Fame and introduced those members in attendance. In addition to the three former wing CCs mentioned above, **Hank Dubuy, Bill Ernst, Joe Siniscalchi, Mike Cook, and James R. Taylor** were recognized.

Thomas gave a vignette about a WWII 55th **Fighter Group** unique and first of its kind mission, when P-38s were used as bombers on an airfield in

France. The ranks of the Greatest Generation are thinning, plus age and health factors prevent many from traveling to attend this event in recent years.

Bill Sargent, who is the **Association’s** historian, presented his tale of Cobra Ball deployment operations when he was an RC navigator in the 24th RS and 45th RS at Shemya AFB, AK, and out of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

He was followed by **LtCol Richard Messina**, who related his experience as detachment commander of an operating location in Curacao, Dutch Antilles, just north of the coast of Venezuela. The RC-135 missions in June-September 2012 were for counter narcotics support to the Columbian military, and had a significant impact.

The event closed with Col Rauch joining the speakers to toast all the wings troops who are deployed around the globe; befitting the slogan that “*The sun never sets on the **Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth.***”

Attendance grows every year as most of the Wing’s senior staff, and an eclectic group of active duty troops, retirees, families, and assorted visitors in town for the Birthday Ball, fill the venue. It is a must-see event for out-of-towners, and is a mini-reunion of sorts.

Heritage displays from various wing units, food, beverages and ‘redistribution of property’ were all part of the festivities.

Co-sponsoring the Tales with the **Association** are local chapters of the Order of Daedalians and Association of Old Crows. Thomas also recognized the many individuals and units of Team Offutt who help set up the logistics and layout of the Tales to make it a successful event.



Paul Jeanes and an interested NCO view one of the several memorabilia tables.



55th WING BIRTHDAY BALL

The 55th Wing held its 35th annual Birthday Ball, **Saturday, 4 May, 2013** at the Embassy Suites Convention Center in LaVista. The gala event was hosted by **Colonel John Rauch, 55th Wing Commander**, and his wife, **Diane**.

The Ball celebrated the 72th anniversary of the unit from its roots in the activation of the 55th Pursuit Group at Hamilton Field, CA, in January 1941, during World War II.

The theme was *“Ever Present, Ever Vigilant”*.



The guest speaker was **MGen James J. Jones**, former 55th commander (March 2007-April 2009), currently serving as Air Force Director of Operations and Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements.



Dave Webber, local TV personality, was again the master of ceremonies.

The Ball is the Wing’s largest annual formal social function. It is attended by active duty personnel, retirees, local dignitaries, including many alumni and **Association** members. This year’s attendance was 840.

Among those was **US Senator Deb Fischer** (R-Neb) and **MGen Kim Siniscalchi**, USAF Assistant Surgeon General. Besides MGen Jones, other former wing commanders there were BGen (Ret) Larry Mitchell and his wife, **Susan**; Colonel (Ret)

Steve Stevens and his two ROTC cadet grandsons **Erik** and **Reid Wondra**.

Several members from out of town made their treks to attend: Hall of Famers **Tom ‘Loose’ Lane**, Hank Dubuy and wife, **Sandra**; James R Taylor and **Susan**; and Joe Siniscalchi and daughter, **Lauren**.

Other travelers were: **Tom Andersen, Eliot “Pete” Potter** and **Treva, Jim and Marion Taylor, Al and Sandy Feldkamp, Bo and Ann Marlin, Tim and Deborah Spaeth, Mark and Karen Pestana, Craig and Carole Ebjay, Bill and Suzanne McKechnie, Brian Schuett, Paul and Susan Yeoman**.

Among the nearly 80 **Association** members and guests, in addition to the several local area attendees, others came from Alabama, Florida, Texas, Kansas, Iowa, California, Ohio, Colorado, and Virginia.



Cutting the ceremonial cake, L to R: LtCol (Ret) Eliot “Pete” Potter, representing a senior generation of 55th’ers, Col Rauch, Airman Luis Rodreguiz, 55th Force Security Sqd, the youngest enlisted person at the Ball.

This year’s planning was headed by **Capt Jamie Hernandez** of the 55th Security Forces Squadron and his able committee. Ernst and Moore represent the **Association** as advisors to that committee, and the **Association** donates \$1000 every year to help defray the tickets for younger airmen.



The 2014 55th Wing Birthday Ball date is 12 April and will be the featured option for the next reunion attendees.



2012 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The 2012 winner of the **55th Wing Association's** award was **SSgt Joel T. Therrien** of the **55th Security Forces Sqd.** Primarily a Military Dog Handler, he also performs other duties as a dedicated member of his unit.

He is consistently an outstanding professional, whether at Offutt or on long deployments. Recognized by his peers and superiors as a leader, self-motivator and for his 'can do' attitude.

In addition, SSgt Therrien is an active volunteer in the Wounded Warriors Project and Habitat for Humanity, among his several other activities.



Pres Thomas announced the award at the Birthday Ball and was assisted in the presentation by Colonel (Ret) **Ham Kennedy**, Association Awards Chairman, and **TSgt Jennette Johnson**, member of the Association Board of Directors.

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55th WING GETS YET ANOTHER NEW COMMANDER

Colonel Gregory M. Guillot assumed command of the **55th Wing** at Offutt AFB, NE, in a ceremony on 19 June 2013. The event was officiated by **LtGen Robin Rand**, commander of 12th AF, and commander of Air Forces Southern, US Southern Command, Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ.

General Rand had high praise for both men, citing their records of leadership, success, integrity, and their continuing potential for greater accomplishments.

Col Guillot (*pronounced: Gey [rhymes with key] - Oh*) succeeds **Colonel John T. Rauch, Jr.**, who is moving on to an assignment at the Pentagon after one year at the helm of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**. Col Rauch had previously served in the **55th** as vice commander and 343RS commander.



Col Guillot (R) accepts the 55th Wing guidon from LtGen Rand.

(Photo by Jeff Gates, 55th Wing Public Affairs)

Col Guillot came to Offutt from Tinker AFB, OK, where he was the commander of the **552nd Air Control Wing**. He coincidentally succeeded Col Rauch in that position a year ago.

He is a graduate of the USAF Academy and has served in a variety of weapons, battle management and AWACS positions. He is a senior air battle manager. Prior to his last command, he was Deputy Director of Operations at Air Combat Command, Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA.

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In a tradition that began in 1997, local members of the **Association** will fete and greet Col Guillot at a dinner on 30 July at Piccolo's in Omaha. He will be the eleventh **55th** commander to be so welcomed.

Included will be three former **55th** commanders, local members of the **Association** Board of Directors and other veteran **55th**ers.

This is an opportunity for the colonel to learn of the history and dedication of those who have supported the wing and its missions for many years.

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EAST COAST 'CHAPTER'

Many east coast alumni, including active duty, retirees and 'beltway bandits', have occasional 'First Friday' social gatherings. Other events are organized periodically for reconnecting and camaraderie in the **55th** spirit.

For information on future 55th Association East events, or to get on the e-mail listing, drop Ricky McMahon an e-mail with your contact

information at Rick_CaryMc@comcast.net, or find him on the Pentagon Global for those of you with access.

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CSPRINGS/DENVER AREA

Kerm Neal informs us that there is no CSprings/Denver area gathering slated for this summer. But, if you are interested in being included in future alumni events, or to get on his e-mail listing, send your contact info to Kerm at Kerm.Neal@northcom.mil

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MEMORIAL BRICK ORDERS: STILL CAN DO

Fellow Members:

All bricks that were ordered and paid for in 2012 have been engraved and are in place in the memorial patio. An updated diagram of the patio layout is posted on the **Association** web site.

It is still possible to order new ones.

There may be some **55th** veterans and/or family members, friends, associates, who want to order bricks for the **55th SRW** Cold War Memorial patio in the National Museum of the USAF Memorial Gardens. That memorial was dedicated in September 2003. Over 600 bricks have been engraved-to-order and are in place thus far.

If you wish to buy a brick, or know of anyone who wants one, now is the time to place an order.

All new bricks will be placed this summer.

New orders should be received anytime **before 1 August 2013** to ensure placement of the bricks during good weather.

The cost is **\$65 for per brick**, and the engraving is **limited** to three lines, 13 characters per line including spaces, dashes and slashes. (**No periods, commas, colons, semicolons or quotation marks.**)

You can e-mail **exactly how you want your brick to read (all caps, please)**. Make your checks payable to **55 Wing Association**, and mail to Bill Ernst, 410 Greenbriar Court, Bellevue, NE, 68005, or e-mail: BillErnst1@cox.net

Videmus Omnia, Bill

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TAPS

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ARMSTRONG, Eve, 86, 22 November 2011, Sequim, WA; widow of **Don**, an RC pilot who served many years during the early 1960s at Eielson AFB, AK, who passed in 2001. Eve was born in the UK, and at 17 served in the British Army Auxiliary during WWII. Immigrating to the US in 1945, where she had her own careers in entertainment and with Sears.

BAUGH, David S., 80, 10 April 2013, Dallas, TX; wife, **Joy**. An RB-47 pilot in the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW)** at Forbes AFB, KS, in the early to mid-1960s, Dave moved to B-52s and survived a crash. He also served in Vietnam, and after retirement, became a civilian flight instructor.

BRITTON, Mary, 89, 21 April 2011, Green Valley, AZ; widow of **Ray**, passed in 1999. Ray was a long time **55th SRW** RB-47 pilot at Forbes circa 1950s-1960s.

BUGLEWICZ, Frances J. (Fritz), Jr., 79, 1 April 2013, Papillion, NE; wife, **Candy**. A Sout'Omaha native, Fritz was a tanker navigator at Lincoln AFB, NE; then was in the **34th ARS**, the **2ACCS**, and Command Support Airlift (CSA) in the **55th** at Offutt AFB, NE, from the late 1960s through 1985. That stretch was interrupted with a Vietnam tour where he flew 67 combat missions in EC-130s.

FRENCH, Donald W., 81, 29 September 2011, Georgetown, TX. Retired electrical engineer. May have been an RB-50 EWO in the 1950s. *Only info known.*

KEATON, James H., 61, 15 March 2013, Tomball, TX. An USAF Academy graduate, class of 1974, Jim served 20 years in the Air Force. He flew with the **38thRS** at Offutt from late 1988 and early 1990s in Operations Desert Shield/Storm.

KENNEDY, EDWARD C., 76, 23 February 2013, Kerrville, TX; wife of over 54 years, **Jane**. Ed came to the **55th SRW** out of EW school and flew in the RB-47 until the early 1960s. He went into B-58s and then had a tour in Vietnam in F-105 Wild Weasels. He retired in 1978.

LENZ, Howard T., 78, 21 October 2011, Rapid City, SD. An RB-47 navigator at Forbes AFB, KS, in the early 1960s, Howie was in the first cadre of RC-135 crews at Offutt circa 1966. He later served in the Plans directorate, then transferred to Ellsworth AFB, SD, and retired in 1978.

MCKECHNIE, Mary, 82, 11 November 2010, Alexandria, VA; widow of **John**, passed 2008. In the early to mid-1950s, John was an RB-50 crewman at Ramey AFB, PR, and later flew RB-47s at Forbes. After that he became a missileer.

METCALF, Edna, 80+, 5 November 2010, Plain Dealing, LA; widow of **Cony**, passed in 2004. Cony was a **55th SRW** pioneer, an engineer on RB-29s in the early 1950s. He left the Air Force and served with Trans World Airlines for 32 years.

NICHOLL, Robert (Bob) A., 86, 8 June 2013, Henderson, NV; wife of 62 years, **Virginia (Ginni)**. Enlisting in the US Army Air Corps in 1944 he served as an airborne radio operator in Africa and the Pacific. Bob later was commissioned and became a pilot. An RC pilot with the **55th** at Offutt in the mid-1960s, he later was the commander of the **82nd SRS** at Kadena AB, Okinawa, in 1969. He had a follow-on tour in Vietnam and then was the wing commander at Grissom AFB, IN.

PARKER, Frances H., 87, 30 January 2013, Gainesville, FL; wife of **Edward**. She worked at the Reitz Union Hotel on the U of Florida campus for many years, also in real estate, and as a Mary Kay sales representative a number of years.

PARKER, Edward H., 91, 15 February 2013, Gainesville, FL. Ed was a Korean War vet and an early recon pioneer as a navigator in RB-50s with the **55th** at Ramey and Barksdale AFB, LA. He survived an RB-50 crash at Offutt on 26 February 1952. He later was an EWO in RB-47s at Forbes from 1955-1965.

PIZZO, Mary L., 87, 9 January, 2013, Mandeville, LA; wife of **Sam** for 68 years. Mary was the consummate Air Force wife, devoted spouse and mother. Sam, a WWII veteran, was an RB nav at Forbes in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He was the first elected president of the **Association** and still serves on the Board of Directors.

POKORNY, Walter T., 78, 28 February 2013, Bellevue, NE; wife **Ruth**. A navigator in EC/RC-135s at Offutt in the 1970s, Walt later served in the 2ACCS battle staff.

SANDELL, Norman R., 81, 25 April 2012, Tucson, AZ; wife of 60 years, **Bonnie**. Norm was a Cold War and Vietnam veteran who served as a KC-97 pilot in the **55th Air Refueling Sqd (ARS)** at Forbes, 1958-1962.

WEST, JOYCE A., 76, 1 July 2012, Beaver Creek, OH; widow of **Charles**, who passed in January 2003. He was a KC-97 navigator with the **55th ARS** at Forbes in the early 1960s.

WILSON, Edward (Ned), 79, 1 January 2013, Boyd, TX; wife of 31 years, **Mary** (also a retired Air Force officer). A Kansas native, Ned was an RB nav at Forbes from 1955. He moved to Offutt with the **55th** in 1966 as an RC-135 nav, then went into Plans and later served for six years as the executive officer to five wing commanders. His last assignment was in tanker ops at Kadena AB, Okinawa, where he retired in 1983 to be an AF spouse.

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TAPS notification of **Association** members, spouses, friends and associates should be sent to Editor **Max Moore**, 201 Basswood Court, Bellevue NE, 68005; or e-mail MaxMoore55@aol.com

Please include next of kin and an address to whom an Association condolence card may be sent.

The date of demise, age, location; and if known, connection to the 55th - base, time frame and Air Force duty will be helpful.

Please note that the news in TAPS is determined and limited by how much and how accurate the given source information.

*Prior to January 2000, just the names of those 'Gone West' were published herein, and on the **Association** web page, so research sources on those who were previously listed is thin.*

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*The following essay was contributed at separate times by **Bud Morss** and **Don Griffin**, and was published in the August 2002 issue of the **Videmus Omnia**, and again in February 2011.*

All the specifics may not apply to our group, and the exact atmosphere of our gatherings, but it captures the essence of any military reunion and is moving enough to share and appreciate.

THE REUNION

By Rachel Firth

Autumn leaves rustling, together at the appointed place, the old warriors come. Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve. Where they meet is not important anymore. They meet and that's enough for now.

Greetings reach across a lobby. Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, to shy to accept so lovingly. But, deep within these Indian summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of life and love. The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds grow vigorous, remembering.

On a table, someone spreads old photographs, a test of reflection. Friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white,or gone. The rugged, slender bodies lost forever. Yet they no longer need to prove their strength. Some are now sustained by one of those "medical miracles", and even in this fact, they manage to find humor.

The women, all those who waited, all those who loved them, have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other, as glad to be together as the men.

The talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and retold again, reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past. Mending one more time the banner of their youth. They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines whine and whirl, and planes come to life. These birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the air again, chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of the flight close to the heavens.

Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in the time, if only in spirit, move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes. Each in his own way may wonder who will be absent in another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.

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Max:

I really enjoyed the January issue of the *Videmus Omnia*. It is one of the few things I read cover to cover!

Jolly good show, mate!

Ron Strong, Bellevue, NE

(From an e-mail, 17 January 2013)

* * * * *

Dear Max:

I received the latest newsletter in the afternoon mail today. I just finished reading it. It was a great issue from the first caption to the final period. You have given lots of folks some great, interesting reading for more years than I care to remember.

I dread turning to TAPS. Too many great gals and guys have made their final celestial journey.

We enjoyed the Colorado Springs bash. It is always great to visit with some of the old gang: **Sam Goeden** and **Jim Taylor** were the first two we saw. There were a few (*former*) 343rd navs; we seem to be outlasting the pilot types.

We are looking forward to old home week at Omaha (*April 2014*) as we still have a goodly number of civilian friends, as well as all of the 55th group there.

I am beginning to feel like the ancient mariner. I am rapidly sneaking up on my eighty-ninth birthday. For a guy who rarely buys green bananas, I am planning pretty far into the future. The Lord willin' and the crick don't rise, see you in the spring of '14.

It is sign off time. (*Also*) time to write and mail my dues check.

Our best to you and Carol.

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

(From an e-mail 18 January 2013)

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Max:

The latest edition (*of the newsletter*) caught up to us here on the eastern shores of Mobile Bay.

Your production once again was an excellent piece of reporting and effort, which we all appreciate. Your literary training at Ball State shows through.

Many thanks for all you do to keep the organization alive.

Reg Urschler, Bellevue, NE.

(From an e-mail, 26 January 2013)

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Mike (Cook):

Hope you are doing well. Sorry we were not able to make the CSprings reunion. Sounds like everyone had a grand time. We do plan to make the Omaha gathering next year.

We continue to be amazed (although we should not expect less) as to how well the newsletters, and all the **Association** publications, are done. You guys are far and away the most professional group of any association we have observed.

Just because we have not attended that many events does not mean you are not in our hearts.

Keep up the good work.

Terry and Kathy Murphy, New Bern, NC

(From and e-mail 25 January 2013)

* * * * *

Hello Max,

I have really enjoyed reading the *Videmus Omnia* newsletters and getting caught up.

I noticed in the (January) newsletter your story, "Third Generation 55ther Assigned to the Wing" had a challenge attached to it. It was whether anyone else could claim three generations assigned to the 55th.

I think the Zyndas (my father, myself and oldest son) can claim to be a part of this unique group. All three of us have the same name, were at one time or another assigned to the 55th, but were not all pilots.

My father, **Edmund Paul Zynda** (Warrant Officer, Retired), joined the Army Air Corps as a flight officer, then later became a flight engineer when the Air Force was stood up. He served during WWII, Korean War and Vietnam. He was at one time stationed at Forbes Field, KS, (in RB-50s) but I do not know the exact dates. When he retired in 1966 he had over 12,000 flying hours. Unfortunately, Agent Orange got the best of him and he is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

I was stationed at Offutt AFB a few times - first in the 6949th Electronic Security Sqd as an Airborne

Maintenance Technician (1981-1985) and then later as a navigator on the RC135 variants in the 38th SRS (1987-1990) and 24th/45th RS (1990-1992). I was also in the 55th Ops Support Sqd as the Chief, Wing Navigation, and later as the Chief, Wing Aircrew Life Support. I ended up flying with the 1ACCS aboard the E4-B before retiring in 2000.

My oldest son, **Edmund Paul Zynda III**, was also stationed at Offutt flying on the same RC135s as a linguist from 2006-2009. He was later reassigned and flew missions out of RAF Mildenhall, UK. He is now stationed at Eglin AFB, FL, (and has) deployed to Afghanistan flying on the MC-12s.

Keep up the good work!

Edmund Paul Zynda II, Woodbine, MD

(From an e-mail 12 April 2013)

* * * * *

Hi Max:

Thought you would like to know that the **Association** is proudly represented via my new license plates.



Videmus Omnia,

Ray Uribe, Ft Worth, TX

(From an e-mail May 2013)

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Errol Hoberman would like our members to know there is a worthwhile organization for USAF navigators, observers, electronic warfare officers (EWOs), weapon system officers (WSOs), and combat system officers (CSOs). It is aptly named The Air Force Navigator Observer Association (AFNOA).

Those interested in the organization can visit its web site at www.afnoa.org. A copy of the AFNOA reunion newsletter can be secured by sending a request to:

AFNOA-members-owner@yahoogroups.com

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ONWARD AND UPWARD!!

Current active duty Board member, **TSgt Jeannette Johnson**, was recently promoted to Master Sergeant. *Hearty congratulations are in order.*

LtCol Mohan Krishna, a former member of the **Association** Board (2009-2012) has been selected for promotion to colonel. Mo served in the **55th** as the **343rd** RS commander and deputy commander of the Mission Support Group.

Congratulations to a stalwart leader.

Another former active duty Board member, **Colonel Will Hampton**, is currently the Air Attaché in Lisbon, Portugal. *Tough duty, what?*

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BOOK SELECTED FOR USAF CHIEF'S LIST

General Mark A. Welsh III, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, has selected Colonel (Ret) **Wolfgang Samuel's** book, *I Always Wanted to Fly: America's Cold War Airmen*, for the USAF's 2013 Chief of Staff Professional Reading List.

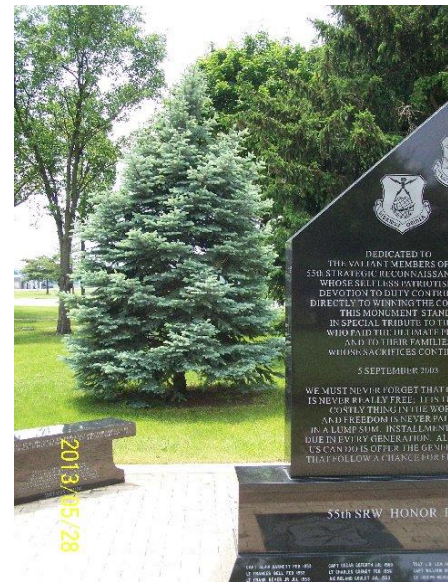
Wolf was notified via letter from General Welsh, 13 February 2013, congratulating him on the great work, stating "We choose your book because it will spark dialogue and encourage innovation and forward thinking."

The book includes chapters on Cold War strategic reconnaissance including the **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing** of which Wolf is a veteran. He served as an EWO in the RB-47s at Forbes in the 1960s, and had a combat tour in Vietnam in RB-66s.

He is an acclaimed author of several books. They can be purchased through amazon.com.

* * * * *

Jack Kovacs, our ever vigilant monument monitor and guardian in Fairborn, OH, reported that the blue spruce that graces the **55th SRW** Memorial at the USAF Museum, is flourishing at nearly 15 feet tall. *(From an e-mail 26 May 2013.)*



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38th RS LOUNGE RE-DEDICATED

The **38th** Recon Squadron re-dedicated its crew lounge on 28 June 2013. Originally dubbed *Reggie's Raiders Lounge* on 29 March 2007, to honor former **55th SRW** commander, BGen (Ret) Regis Urschler, the room had undergone a complete renovation and updating.

38th RS Commander **LtCol Lisle Babcock** welcomed and addressed a packed group of the active squadron members and families, wing senior staff, and **55th Wing Association** representatives, and noted the occasion as a re-christening.

Urschler in his remarks recounting much of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth's* history, commented that the **38th** was the last of the original **55th Fighter Group** numbered squadrons.



Reggie and LtCol Babcock undrape the 'crew rest area'.

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PRO-NUN-SEE-A-SHUN

During a social encounter a few years ago, a young second lieutenant (*are there any other kind?*), who professed to have survived four years as a student of *Latin*, informed this editor that the correct pronunciation of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* wing motto is thus: **Wi - dAy - moose Omnia**

He insisted the 'v' be pronounced as a 'w', and a soft 'i', with emphasis on the mid-syllable and a hard 'A'. Thus, for your edification, or whatever.

However, common usage and personal preference will likely prevail in the use of 'v', as in vigilant, valiant, victorious.

(This is a repeat item for those who did not see it in previous issues, or any newbies. Max)

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FLAGS FLOWN OVER THE AIR FORCE MEMORIAL ARE AVAILBLE

*From an Air Force Association Bulletin
August 2011*

The Air Force Memorial staff now makes available for purchase, **US flags** flown over the memorial. These are great gifts for retirement, birthdays, Christmas, etc. All flags purchased through the Air Force Memorial are **made in the USA** and include a certificate of authenticity.



Pricing: 3 x 5 - \$24 Nylon, \$34 Cotton; 5 x 8 - \$42 Nylon, \$59 Cotton (plus \$6 shipping and 5% Virginia sales tax). Nylon is recommended if the flag will be flown outside. You may also choose a **specific significant date** on which you would like the flag flown over the Memorial.

For specific and updated information, contact the Air Force Memorial staff at Ph: 703-979-0674, or go to **afmf@airforcememorial.org**, click on the 'Flag Flying Request' link to download the order form.

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LAW UPDATES VETERANS SALUTING FLAG AND ANTHEM

Reminder Reprint

WASHINGTON (AFRNS) October 31, 2008 -- Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect this month.

"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 (*in 2007*) 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 **Senator Jim Inhofe** of Oklahoma, an Army veteran. It was included in the Defense Authorization Act of 2009, which **President George W. Bush** signed October 14, 2008.

The **previous 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*)

* * * * *

Here is how members can help diversify the coverage in Videmus Omnia: Editor's usual plea: If anyone wishes to contribute letters, true humorous or otherwise stories, photos and articles, please do so. Send them to MaxMoore55@aol.com, or mail to the address in the directory. We welcome the input.

If events occur in your area (Florida, DC area, Denver/CSprings, Texas, California, wherever) that you think would be of interest to **the general readership**, mail or e-mail the pertinent details, and include the names of those who arrange and 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**.

(Contributions may be,..... well, of course they will be, edited for content, readability, and spacing.)

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



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ASSOCIATION BX

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ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

These are ‘must have’ items for any reunion events; plus, they look good on the golf course, for casual Fridays at the office, and any leisure activity.

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

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

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

The former (phasing out) design is white with red collar and sleeve trim, navy blue front placket. They are 100% pre-shrunk combed cotton pique. **The cost is \$20 per shirt plus postage and handling. Just four mediums** remain in this style. This style will **not** be reordered.

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 requested. **The cost of this version is \$35 each.**



Be sure to state which design and size you want to order.

* * * * *

The golf/baseball caps are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front, and an adjustable back strap. **They go for just \$10 each.**

The items can be viewed in color on the **Association** web site at **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: \$5.95 for one shirt, or one cap; \$11.35 for both a shirt and cap order; \$11.35 for two shirts. Yep, the USPS keeps upping the ante.

More ways to identify with your **Association** and “show the logo” as appropriate for official, social and casual 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 **Association** reunion banquets and other appropriate events.



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Larry advises that the next ordered batch of shirts and/or caps will likely go up in price, as it is with most things these days. So, it would be wise to order items now to have on hand and to be ready for the next reunion.

Anyone desiring to purchase any of the advertised items 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 55th Wing Association, and Larry will mail your orders promptly.

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55TH FASHION PINS



(Shown actual size)

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 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 or anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer.

Classy, but inexpensive.

The **Association** does **not** sell these pins and receives **no** money from the sales. But, as a service for those who wish to possess same: **Erwin's Jewelers, Frank Kumor**, proprietor, (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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HISTORIC PRINTS

George Back has donated prints of two of his paintings to the **55th Wing Association.** The first



print (20"x15") depicts the North Korean MiG attack on an RB-47 of the **55th SRW** in April 1965.

George was an electronic warfare officer on that historic Cold War sortie. The battle-damaged RB-47 and crew landed safely at Yokota AB, Japan, due to the piloting skills of A/C Lt Col **Matt Mattison**, and the gunnery action of copilot Capt Hank Dubuy.

The second print (26"x16") is a montage of Combat Apple memorabilia from the 82nd SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, during the Vietnam era, circa 1967-1974.

These prints are available for \$20 each (which includes shipping) by contacting Larry Utley. Make checks to the **55th Wing Association.**

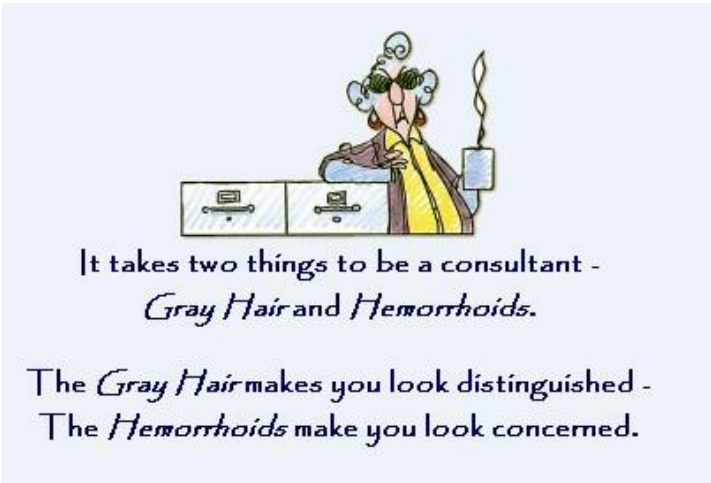
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55th FIGHTER GROUP LITHOGRAPH

Regis Urschler commissioned the noted aviation artist **Richard Wong** to do the lithograph, entitled *Guardians of Freedom*. It depicts P-51s and a P-38 of the **55th Fighter Group**. Reg donated a limited number of these lithographs to the **55th Wing Association.**

To purchase same: contact Larry Utley (*who else?*) at contact info above in the tie blurb. Costs are: (unframed) basic lithograph, \$60, plus \$8 postage; (unframed) lithograph **numbered and signed** (there are nine), \$100 plus \$8 postage.

Make checks in the full amount payable to the **55th Wing Association.**



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WHO SHOT WHAT



Pictures not previously attributed: Thomas, Kelly, Ball check, 38th rededication and 55th pin by Moore; Ball logo by **Josh Plueger**, 55th Wing Public Affairs (PA); Ball, Tales and Award for

Excellence pix by **Charles Hampton**, 55th Wing PA; **Association** shirt/cap by Utley; tie by Pizzo; 'Mad Max' at desk graphic by **Pat Gros**.

Graphics and organization logos from various sources and web sites (*Omaha, RC-135, AF Memorial, et al.*).

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*One thing you can give and still keep is....**your word.***

* * * * *

Old age is when former comrades and/or classmates are so wrinkled, gray or bald, that they do not recognize you.

* * * * *

GOD BLESS AMERICA!!





Videmus Omnia



55th Wing Association, Inc.
(Formerly – 55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association)

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (Address Update)

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 55th Strat Recon Wing? _____
(Dates of Service)



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

When were you a member of the 55th 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:

55TH 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**

*****Note - Questions? Contact Michael J. Cook, Membership Chairman, at Michael.Cook@cox.net, or at the above mailing address, or call (402) 578-5848.**

20 May 2012

