

# Videmus Omnia

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



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

### RECON RENDEZVOUS TAMPA, FL, 19-23 APRIL 2017

Hello and a Happy 55<sup>th</sup> New Year to all!

Well, boys and girls, we look forward to another monumental gathering of our merry band, the 32<sup>nd</sup> reunion of *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* warriors, guests and friends.

**Richard Ray** (a former RC/EC pilot in the 343<sup>rd</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup>) is the reunion chairman and he has lined up accommodations with the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore Hotel.

He can be reached at richardray55thwingassoc@earthlink.net.



Reservations chairperson for the reunion is **Suzanne McKechnie** (wife of **Bill**).

**For hotel reunion reservations**, call the Hilton central reservations at 1-800-445-8687; and identify as the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association Reunion**. **Cut-off date for the reunion rates are 20 March 2017. Do it today.**

Rates: Single, \$139; Double, \$149; Triple, \$159; Quad, \$169. Includes buffet breakfast, Transportation to and from Tampa International Airport, and local transportation; complimentary parking; complimentary internet access in rooms.

Reunion rates are good for two days before and after the reunion dates, depending on room availability.

Under the hotel picture following is the link to check out the hotel and its amenities.



<http://www3.hilton.com/en/hotels/florida/hilton-tampa-airport-westshore>

First arrivers and the Board of Directors are expected on Wednesday, 19 April. The BoD will meet at 1600 and reunion attendees are welcome. Dinner on your own.

The full reunion agenda begins on Thursday, 20 April. Highlights that day are an optional trip to the Lowry Park Zoo, the obligatory golf outing for those so inclined, and the evening informal reception. Generous hospitality suite hours are slated throughout the week.

Friday's main event is an optional tour to Madill AFB to visit Special Operations Command and Central Command with lunch at the Officers Club. **Larry Mitchell** coordinated this one. A dinner cruise on the Yacht Starship is offered for the evening entertainment.

**The membership meeting will be at 0900 Saturday.** This is important for all to learn of the state of the **Association**, elect the Board of Directors, conduct other business, and select location and date for reunion #33 (perhaps, fall of

2018). Suggested wear is the **Association** polo shirt. Spouses and/or guests are welcome.

A golf outing is also offered Saturday with tee times beginning at 1200 hours.

That evening is the finale' grand banquet with **Congressman Don Bacon**, Nebraska 2<sup>nd</sup> District, (and former **55<sup>th</sup> Wing CC**) as the scheduled guest speaker. (*See related article later in this issue.*) Attire is business casual (*no jeans or shorts, please*), but coat and **Association tie** or **polo** are options for the gentlemen.

For those not inclined to do the optional events, there is a plethora of things to do and see in Tamps. Lots of fine dining establishments, as well. The reunion welcome package will have appropriate brochures, or one can research Tampa via its official web-site at <https://www.visittampabay.com> to explore the area attractions.

A complete agenda and registration form are pages 23-26 of this issue. More details and information therein. Please make your hotel reservations, travel plans and get the registration for in as soon as practical, **but NLT 15 March**.

*(Note: Some details and agenda items may be subject to change in the ensuing weeks. Welcome package will have updated info.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Greetings from the Heartland,

Winter has finally arrived, Christmas went by like a flash, the New Year has arrived, and our Recon Rendezvous in Tampa will be here before you know it. Time seems to be just a flyin' by. We have not had a Florida reunion since May 2001.

Richard Ray and Larry Mitchell have been all over putting together another fun reunion. With all the favorable aspects of a Florida reunion, I am looking forward to a blockbuster.

The reunion package is included at the end of this newsletter. We need your registration package mailed **NLT 15 March 2017**; however, please, make your room reservations **soonest**. The earlier



we see that we might need additional rooms, the easier it is to get rooms added to the bloc.

We have a great hotel, good events planned, and as usual a fully stocked hospitality suite, and the weather will be fantastic. Let's rendezvous in Tampa for some fun in the sun.

You will see the membership report provided by Mike Cook. I will leave the interpretations to you. **End year is when dues become overdue**. There are usually a number of members who forget to renew. That leaves a bunch needing to catch up.

Our newsletter often comes out in the first quarter of the year and serves as a timely reminder. Efforts by Mike and Max greatly compliment the efforts to regain members. Please take time now to scan your memory if you are not sure you are up to date. Get those dues in by the delinquent date of 31 March 2017.

If you have not yet done so, do so immediately...that is: check out the **Memory Lane** section on our web site, [www.55wa.org](http://www.55wa.org). There are 44 tales of the **55th** posted. I randomly picked **Walt Stoll's** "A Tell Two Tale". That piece of **55th** history, long since declassified, is now available to the world, and the stories of those who won the Cold War are being told by those who were there.

There would be no Memory Lane had **Sam Pizzo** not been adamant about creating this avenue to tell the **55th** story. Sam is the contributor of the most stories to Memory Lane. I am sure he would not mind losing that distinction.

Check out the stories and get an idea of what makes a good one and add to our trove of history by those who made it. Tall tales in good taste are also welcomed. Those events were our humor in times when it was needed. It is all part of our **55th** legacy. Let's get more of it documented.

At our Membership Meeting in Tampa Saturday morning we will be covering the status of the **Association**, election of Board of Directors, and, most colorful of all, will discuss the location of the next reunion. Think ahead about your inputs and come armed to advocate your position.

Wishing all the best of new year,. good fortune and good health.

You all be careful out there, now.

*Videmus Omnia*, Jim

\* \* \* \* \*

## REUNION SURVEY RECAP

The results of the survey solicited in the July issue of the *Videmus Omnia* were underwhelming.

The extremely low number of responses could indicate that the corporate 'we' must be doing okay with the way things have been planned in the past, or.....a lack of interest in responding.

One member did write a small dissertation on our reunions in general. Perhaps if the **Association** ever has another reunion in the DC/Virginia area, he would leap at the chance to chair same.

Summary: Pick a good locale every 18 months, try for reasonable hotel rate, keep registration expenses down, past agendas okay, minimize tours, stop members from aging so fast. Use BRATS if we get desperate. Anywho, it was worth a try.

\* \* \* \* \*

## DIRECTORS DIRECTORY

### Association Business/Policy/Issues:

#### President Jim Thomas

4418 Anchor Mill  
Bellevue, NE 68123-1168  
E-mail: [JThomas927@cox.net](mailto:JThomas927@cox.net)

#### Vice President Ricky McMahon

14325 Orlando Road  
Nokesville, VA 20181  
E-mail: [potomacpistol@gmail.com](mailto:potomacpistol@gmail.com)

### Membership/Dues/Changes of Address:

#### Treasurer Michael Cook

3204 Rahn Blvd  
Bellevue, NE 68123  
E-mail: [Michael.Cook@cox.net](mailto:Michael.Cook@cox.net)

#### Secretary Trish Seinwill

9335 Branchside Lane  
Fairfax, VA, 22031  
E-mail: [pseinwill@yahoo.com](mailto:pseinwill@yahoo.com)

#### Newsletter Editor Max Moore

201 Basswood Court  
Bellevue, NE 68005-2001  
E-mail: [MaxMoore55@aol.com](mailto:MaxMoore55@aol.com)

#### Webmaster Jim Maloney

7908 Kona Circle  
Papillion, NE 68046-5619  
E-mail: [jim@maloney.com](mailto:jim@maloney.com)

### Other Members of the Board of Directors:

**Bill Ernst, Errol Hoberman, Don Griffin, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Pete Glenboski, Kevin Todd, Don Kelly, Paul Jeanes, Val Dugie, Jeff Herd, Colonel Mohan Krishna. Active Duty: (as of 26 August 2016) LtCol David Preisman, MSgt Glynnis Young.**

\* \* \* \* \*

As a result of **MSgt Rick Brown** retiring and **SMSgt Vanessa Johnston** going PCS last summer, it was necessary to fill the active duty BoD positions. To that end, **Col Marty Reynolds, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Commander, strongly recommended, and the Board of Directors approved in August, LtCol David Preisman and MSgt Glynnis Young.

Both are enthusiastic supporters of the **Association** and expect to make positive contributions. LtCol Preisman (NE Air National Guard) is commander of the 238<sup>th</sup> Combat Training Sqd, which works closely with the 338<sup>th</sup> Combat Crew Training Sqd.

MSgt Young is assigned to the 97<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Sqd, was a member of the 2016 Birthday Ball committee, and was highly recommended by SMSgt Johnston.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Appointed Awards Chairman

#### Hamilton Kennedy

13701 S. 129<sup>th</sup> St  
Springfield, NE 68059  
[HHAAMMKK@aol.com](mailto:HHAAMMKK@aol.com)

### Appointed Historian:

#### William (Bill) Sargent

2711 Northwood Circle  
Papillion, NE, 68133  
[William488@cox.net](mailto:William488@cox.net)

### Appointed Enlisted Affairs Liaison:

#### Elvio Palmieri

4020 W. Palm Aire Drive, Apt. 409  
Pompano Beach, FL. 33069  
[EllvioPalmeri@yahoo.com](mailto:EllvioPalmeri@yahoo.com)

\* \* \* \* \*

*It is easy to make a small fortune in aviation.  
Just start with a large one.*

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Please remember that the **Association** is a **non-profit IRS 501(C) 19 veterans, federal tax exempt organization.** (See the *Association* *web site: [http://www.55wa.org/CORP\\_HQ/TaxExemptStatus.html](http://www.55wa.org/CORP_HQ/TaxExemptStatus.html)*). As such, you may **donate** additional funds to the treasury, or in the memory of a comrade taking that final flight. Those **donations (NOT DUES)** are tax deductible under an IRS ruling for the organization. Every amount, large or small, is very much appreciated. It happens.



\* \* \* \* \*

A of 18 December 2016, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$46,900.

A significant portion of the money in the account comes from dues paid in advance. Therefore, we must keep money in reserve for each year to which the dues apply. In other words, dues for 2020 must not be spent until that calendar year.

Some members have paid as far ahead as 2028. Now that is loyalty **and** optimism, folks.

Although the **Association** is solvent, we have expenses, obligations, and bills to pay, such as this newsletter and its postage.

**It is never too soon to renew your membership. So, please pay your dues promptly, or early and often.** Thank you very much.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There were **510 members in good standing as of 15 December 2016, compared with 493 on 15 June 2015.** We gained ground, but unfortunately, dues and members do expire. (See *TAPS*.)

Current members (119 total) whose dues expired on 31 December **2016 have until 1 April 2017** to renew before being **deleted** from the membership data base.

### THOSE MEMBERS SHOULD RENEW THIS MONTH.

**Retaining members, and recruiting new ones, is a recurring and never ending priority. There is an urgent need to reverse the loss of members.**

About 170 widows receive the newsletter gratis.

As always, they are welcome to any and all **Association** functions.

Fifty-one **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** units and offices are sent the newsletter for PR purposes, and to keep them connected with the **Association.**

Occasionally, this effort has a payoff of exposure for the **Association** and new active duty members, now at 23.

The top three states where members reside are: Nebraska (*surprise!*), 116; Texas, 75; Virginia, 42.

\* \* \* \* \*

### 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. Please make a note to keep up with your dues.**

**Life Members (LM) and widows are dues exempt.**

**See the note about Members Only** section of the **Association** web site in the following item.

***You must be a dues paid, member-in-good-standing to gain the password and access.***

If you still are not sure of your dues expiration date, to inquire on same, please e-mail **Michael.Cook@cox.net**; or drop him a note at the following address to get an update on your membership status. **When in doubt, send money.**

**Please pay your dues prior to 31 December of your expiration year; but no later than 31 March to remain in good standing.**

**Mail to: 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association**

ATTN: Michael J. Cook

PO Box 13165

Offutt AFB, NE 68113

\* \* \* \* \*

***PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY ASSOCIATION CORRESPONDENCE TO MICHAEL'S HOME ADDRESS, JUST THE ASSN PO BOX.***

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a membership/information update form at page 27 of this newsletter, as well as on the **Association** web site.



Please use that form 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.

It is imperative to update your latest contact information, especially if you have relocated, changed your e-address, etc., within the past six months. Plus, the USPS does not forward third call mail.

This is particularly important as we intend to publish a new directory this year and need latest and accurate data.

If you own more than one home, please give us the address you want any Association correspondence mailed to, and go into our data base.

**ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE SENT TO YOUR HOME OF RECORD.** Please keep us informed of any changes in your address or other contact information. Invariably we get returned mail because of outdated addresses. Third class mail is **not** forwarded. **Please help us stay current.**

\* \* \* \* \*

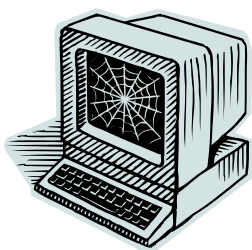
## YOUR 55<sup>TH</sup> WING ASSOCIATION WEB SITE [www.55wa.org](http://www.55wa.org)

The Association web site continues to be an integral and important part of the Association's communications. It is where one can keep informed between newsletters, and where news is reported and updated in a timely manner.

The home page NOTAMS list includes many recent and interesting postings.

In the months from July to mid-November 2016, there were 1101 visits, 74.4% were returnees and 25.6% were new.

The **BX** section is where to find how to purchase Association items. Articles are added to the **Memory Lane** section as they are submitted. Please contribute **your own** to share.



Also, be sure to check out, contribute, and indicate you "Like" the Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/55thAssociation>.

There is a **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** channel on *You Tube*, as well.

Check the web site regularly for the latest information on the next reunion, Birthday Ball, and other significant events.

\* \* \* \* \*

An added link is in the **Members Only** page, where any member can check on his/her **DUES EXPIRATION DATE**. This area is updated periodically and may not reflect recent renewals.

Also on the front page is an area for members to enter their email address, and then they will be notified when there's been a change or update to the web site.

\* \* \* \* \*

Any member who wishes to read and/or download Association newsletters from the web site can do so. That allows members to read the latest issue as soon as it is published, as well as read it wherever in the world one might be at anytime.

Newsletters are usually published about four months before a reunion, a couple of months after a reunion, and about six months from that one.

Based on that 'schedule', you just have to make periodic look-ins at the web site to find out.

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

*You must be a dues paid, member-in-good-standing to gain the password and access. (Is there an echo in here?)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55<sup>th</sup> WING OPERATIONS GROUP GETS A NEW COMMANDER

By 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Public Affairs  
(Condensed and edited by Moore)

55<sup>th</sup> Operations Group welcomed a new commander in a change of command ceremony held in the Benny Davis Maintenance Facility 15 July 2016, where **Colonel Mohan S. Krishna**

relinquished command of the **55th** Ops Group to **Colonel Joseph C. Santucci**. More than 500 were in attendance for the ceremony including civic leaders and former **55th Wing** commanders.

**Colonel Marty Reynolds, 55th Wing** commander, presided at the ceremony and praised Krishna for his many accomplishments and his leadership during a period of emerging global threats. “Crews deployed rapidly and began delivering the intelligence which shaped the US response,” Reynolds said.

Reynolds then welcomed Santucci, noting his extensive experience in the intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance community. “His background is diverse and impressive,” Reynolds said.

In a time-honored tradition, the **55th** OG guidon was handed from Krishna to Reynolds to Santucci, signifying his authority as the incoming commander. Santucci now leads the largest operations group in the Air Force, consisting of 12 squadrons, more than 500 airmen and 33 aircraft.



*Col Reynolds hands guidon to Col Santucci.  
(Photo by Zachary Hada, 55th Wing PA.)*

Santucci thanked the men and women of the **55th** OG and noted the importance of the group’s mission. The ceremony concluded with a final salute from a formation of operations group members to Krishna and a first salute to Santucci.

Krishna, who commanded the group since May of 2014, transferred to the Pentagon where he is assigned to the Inspector General’s office. “I will watch your conquests from afar, knowing that every situation or conflict around the world already has the **55th** Operations Group on watch and on guard,”

Krishna said. (*Col Krishna remains an elected member of the Association’s Board of Directors.*)

Santucci is a command pilot with more than 2,900 flying hours and is a graduate of the US Air Force Academy. He most recently served in the United States Strategic Command at Offutt as the chief of the operations division for the Joint Force Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance



## FORMER WING COMMANDER IS NOW CONGRESSMAN BACON

**Donald J. Bacon** (Brig Gen, USAF, Retired), former **55th Wing** Commander, (March 2011-June 2012) on 8 November 2016 was elected to Congress to represent the Nebraska 2<sup>nd</sup> District. He defeated a one term Democrat incumbent.

He retired from the Pentagon in August 2014 and returned to Papillion, NE, where family, friends, and interests were, having been assigned in the area three different times.



He became involved in church, community and several organizations. He also had a position with Bellevue University.

After several months of soul searching, Bacon went to the Nebraska Republican Party stating his interest in running for Congress. He was embraced and received support from many prominent Nebraska Republicans.

Bacon announced his candidacy on 25 March 2015, presented by former Nebraska Governor **Kay Orr**. Several important endorsements followed (Nebr Governor **Pete Ricketts**, Nebr Senator **Deb Fischer**, local mayors); headliners including House Speaker **Paul Ryan** campaigned, and Bacon ran a very positive campaign with clever, innovative ads.

He has been a member of the **Association** for nearly 20 years and has always been an ardent supporter of the organization.



# TULLOS IS PROMOTED

**Brigadier General Andrea Tullos** was promoted on 2 August 2016. She is currently assigned as Director of Security Forces, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force protection, HQ USAF, Washington, DC. (*Whew!*)



Then-Colonel Tullos was the **55<sup>th</sup>** Mission Support Group commander at Offutt from July 2011-July 2013. She was solid supporter of the **Association** during her tenure.

She has been an **Association** member in good standing from that time. BG Tullos and her husband Gavin reside in Alexandria, VA.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55th WING EARNS OUTSTANDING UNIT AWARD

*55th Wing Public Affairs (Edited by Moore)*

Air Combat Command (ACC) recently (*Sep 2016*) announced the **55th Wing** as a recipient of the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award (AFOUA) for the period of June 1, 2015 - May 31, 2016.

The AFOUA is awarded for exceptionally meritorious service, accomplishing specific acts of outstanding achievement, excelling in combat operations against an armed enemy of the United



States, and/or conducting distinct military operations involving conflict with, or exposure to, a hostile action by any opposing foreign force.

"This award is a direct reflection on everyone in the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*," said **Colonel Marty Reynolds**, **55th Wing** commander. "Through their hard work and dedication, we were able to accomplish our mission, support our people, and take pride in our support to combatant commanders around the world."

During the period, the **Wing** surpassed 25 continuous years of operating in the US Central

Command's area of responsibility (AOR), and supported every major Department of Defense mission for which it was tasked.

All seven of the **55th Wing's** aircraft variants answered the call when needed over this twelve month stretch: RC-135V/W Rivet Joint crews flew 489 missions in support of six combatant commanders; EC-130H Compass Crews flew 522 missions in two AOR; RC-135S Cobra Ball crews executed 95 missions for four combatant commanders. RC-135U Combat Sent crews flew 112 high-priority missions; WC-135W Constant Phoenix crews generated 14 high-interest missions; OC-135B Open Skies crews conducted eight missions over Russia, Ukraine and Italy; E-4B crews surpassed 40 years of continuously alert

In addition, the **55th** Communications Group ensured the **55th** became the largest wing to pass a Command Cyber Readiness Inspection; while the **55th** Dental Squadron and **55th** Force Support Squadron were named best in ACC in their categories.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Ed. note: The **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** has won this award an even dozen times in its history. Three times during the 1960s, while flying COLD WAR strategic reconnaissance missions in RB-47 aircraft from Forbes AFB, KS; and since moving to Offutt AFB in 1967, and using RC-135 model aircraft, the **Wing** continued to perform in a superior manner to earn another nine awards. However, this is the first since 1999. (I guess just doing your job for 25 years in the desert is routine.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## NEW UNIT STANDS UP AT OFFUTT AFB

The 595<sup>th</sup> Command and Control Group was activated in ceremonies at Offutt AFB, NE, on 6 October, with **Colonel Robert Billings** commanding. **Major General Thomas Bussiere**, commander of Eighth Air Force, under which the new group resides, officiated.





Eighth AF is under AF Global Strike Command and both are headquartered at Barksdale AFB, LA.

The new group is made up of four squadrons: 1st Airborne Command and Control Sqd, 595<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Maintenance Sqd, 595<sup>th</sup> Communications Sqd. (a split-off from the 55<sup>th</sup> Communications Sqd) and the 625<sup>th</sup> Strategic Operations Sqd.

The group is to fly and support the four E4B aircraft, which serves as the National Airborne Operations Center (nicknamed “Nightwatch”) for the President, Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs of Staff when tasked. The aircraft and crews may also be used to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) following natural disasters.



The takeaway here is that the 1ACCS is **no longer** part of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing, dating from 1 November 1975 when the operation moved to Offutt from Andrews AFB, MD.

The new group, while now a separate tenant at Offutt, will be considered as yet another ‘partner’ unit to the host 55<sup>TH</sup> Wing.

\* \* \* \* \*

## RC-135K/RIVET JOINT CREW BEST IN AIR FORCE

*By Drew Nystrom, 55th Wing Public Affairs /  
Published 18 November 2016  
(Condensed and Edited by Moore)*

An RC-135V/W Rivet Joint crew, PYTHON 71 at Offutt AFB, NE, earned the 2016 **General Jerome F. O'Malley Award** as the best USAF Intelligence, Reconnaissance, Surveillance crew, and was recognized by the Air Force Association (AFA) at its annual convention in Washington, DC, last September.

The winning crew, recognized for their actions in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE in 2015, was comprised of personnel from the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron, 45th Reconnaissance Squadron, 97th Intelligence Squadron, 338th

Combat Training Squadron, 390th Intelligence Squadron, 55<sup>th</sup> Operations Group, and the Royal Air Force's 51 Squadron.

“What the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing did on that day (12 November 2015) mattered, in the life-or-death sense, to many warriors and civilians on the ground,” Col. Joe Santucci, 55<sup>th</sup> Ops Group commander, said. “PYTHON 71 helped liberate Sinjar province and then continued to save the lives of ISF troops and American advisors fighting ISIL in central Iraq. This is a 55<sup>th</sup> Wing team accomplishment and it represents us at our best!”

The intelligence garnered and passed on by the crew resulted in the destruction of 26 terrorists positions, 11 staging points, and five transport trucks. The crew also alerted US and coalition aircraft of threats in the area during the mission.

The RC-135 Rivet Joint platform is a reconnaissance aircraft, and supports theater and national-level consumers with near real-time on-scene intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination capabilities.

The 55<sup>th</sup> Wing and its Rivet Joint aircraft have maintained a constant presence in Southwest Asia since the early 1990s.

*(Ed. Notes: A member of the crew was a featured speaker at the Tales of the 55<sup>th</sup> last May, and it was known at that time the crew was the O'Malley winner, as noted in the July issue of Videmus Omnia. A composite 55<sup>th</sup> crew also won the award for 2015. Since its inception in 1987, Fightin' Fifty-Fifth crews have been awarded the O'Malley trophy 20 times.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## HALL OF FAME CEREMONY AND TALES OF THE 55<sup>TH</sup>

Slated for Friday, 31 March 2017, in Dock 1, of the 55<sup>th</sup> maintenance facility at Offutt a large audience of active duty personnel, veteran 55<sup>th</sup>ers, and guests, is expected to attend another program to include HoF induction and tale talkers from various eras of the Wing's history. The event grows every year and is a must do for out of towners.

\* \* \* \* \*



# 55<sup>TH</sup> WING BIRTHDAY BALL SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2017

*The Wing has regained control of the schedule and this year's event will be on Saturday, 1 April at the LaVista Embassy Suites and Convention Center.*

*Please note that Wing Protocol periodically reviews and culls its DV invitation list to reduce mailing costs, and to delete repeat offenders who do not RVSP, even with regrets, and there are many.*

*Thus, if you have received invitations to the Ball and/or other events in the past, it may not occur in the future.*

*Never fear, there will be ways to know of, and to attend, functions as information will be made available thru e-mails, the Association web site, networking, etc.*

\* \* \* \* \*

In today's climate of funding crunches, the world needs to know the following fact (*it isn't new info, and has always been so*): **The 55th Wing Birthday Ball pays for itself. NO taxpayer dollars finance the event. It is paid for with 'ticket' sales, fundraising, sponsors, and donors.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55<sup>TH</sup> WING ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE



The original is shown in a wing heritage display case with the **Wing** Ceremonial Bell.

The original trophy was commissioned in 2000, is now retired and is on permanent display in the **General Russell Daugherty** Conference Center at Offutt, as a newer high tech version has been completed.

**Association Historian Bill Sargent** worked that updated project with **Ham Kennedy**, the **Association Awards** Chairman.

The new version (with Sargent at right) has a viewing screen capable of displaying a looped video of past winners and aircraft, for instance..



The new trophy will be retained by the **Association** and stored in a custom-built carrying case until needed for appropriate occasions.

Award winners receive a representative plaque.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MAIL 'N STUFF



\* \* \* \* \*

Dear Max:

It is a given that in most organizations, 10-15 per cent of the people do 85-90 per cent of the work (*to support the organization*).

It seems to me about 2% (*of the Association members*) are involved in our **55<sup>th</sup> Association**, and you are one of those who keep it going. I just want to give you a hearty **THANK YOU** for all you do.

I intend to make all the reunions from now on as long as I can drive. Just got an RV and will be selling the house.

**Allen Pringle**, Lafayette, LA

(From an e-mail, 20 June 2016.)

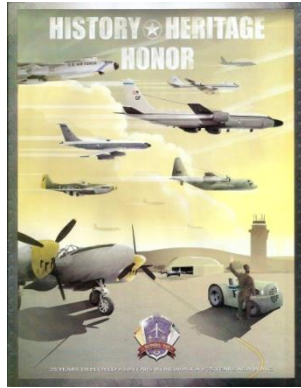
(Ed. Comment: While compliments are always appreciated, I can assure Allen and other members that the entire Board of Directors, and appointed committee chairs, are involved in running this great

organization; plus there are many volunteers who have chaired or worked the several successful reunions over the years. It is truly a team effort.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Max,

I got the July 2016 newsletter and, as I suppose as others do, read every word of it. Thanks a bunch. The Heritage booklet is also an enjoyable addition, and thanks for sending that. It puts some of our stories in print. There are many which are still not told and it would be enjoyable to hear or read those, too. There have been many near misses which would make exciting reading.



The Cuban crisis, when we flew under wartime conditions, using all of the runway and the lowest possible minimums, has some untold stories. What was **Ray Britton's** crew doing in the Bahamas, for example; and what about the RB-47 that went into Tampa Bay at McDill AFB, F? (*Both were during Cuban Crisis in the fall of 1962*)

Would it be possible to get some of those declassified so the membership could share? The Freedom of Information Act should allow some of that stuff to finally be seen.

It would take some detective work, which would likely begin with members telling us they have stories to tell, collecting that list, and getting wing and Air Force historians to share their files on those matters. Just an idea, but it would flesh out the real history of the **Wing** for all of us to share.

My time in the **55th** was still the best part of my life, and it is a source of pride to me to be "the last man standing" listed on the Bell, with my name there alongside **Harry Tull** and **Robb Hoover**, the backend EW crew from crew S-67.

Glad to see the report that the Bell is still the symbol I hoped it would become. Robb Hoover would be proud, too, the Bell being his idea during that TDY to RAF Upper Heyford, UK. Of course, **Howard Rust**, **Vic Prislusky**, and **Arlen Howe** are there, too. May they all rest in peace.

I have mostly quit practicing law and am in full retirement here in Stanton. I am 77 now and health is kind of lousy.

Thanks a bunch for all you do.

**Chuck Meyer**, Stanton, NE

(*Edited from e-mail 6 July 2016*)

\* \* \* \* \*

Hello Max:

I just finished reading the July issue of the **55th Association** newsletter, plus the Wing's Heritage publication that accompanied it. Thank you very much, Max.

As I recalled from 75 years ago that I grew up at Hamilton AAF base north of San Rafael, California. I was five years old and started school a year later at Meadow Park elementary adjacent to the base. My dad was an enlisted crew chief there, and we left as I was entering the 8th grade.

Those were the happiest years of my childhood which included being in the Cub and Boy Scouts where our leaders were Army Air Force sergeants and mentored us as if we were in the military also.

I was able to see and sit in the newest fighters, bombers and transports which were enroute to the Pacific theater after being delivered by Womens Air Service Pilots to Hamilton. Little did I suspect that I would become a part of the **55th Pursuit Group's** successor years later, a member in the **Fighting 55th!**

After reading through these pubs, I have come to the conclusion that the **Association** just has to be the top military group of the nation's finest retired and active men and women in existence today. The leadership, *esprit* and pride of the members are amazing, and arguably unmatched, in my opinion.

Lastly, I want to congratulate you on producing another absolutely outstanding newsletter. You should earn an award for such professional work.

**Videmus Omnia,**

**Ray Uribe**, Fort Worth, Texas

(*From an e-mail 6 July 2016*)

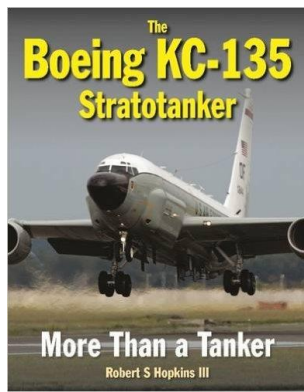
\* \* \* \* \*

Hello Max,

Great newsletter and history booklet. Proud to have been part of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifty**.

The letter from **Jim "Jet" Morrow** in the newsletter (*July 2016*) about his experience delivering the final KC-135A from Boeing to the 380th BW at Plattsburgh AFB, NY, caught my eye.

I've just finished the revised, second edition of my KC-135 book (*More Than a Tanker*), and one of the photos shows the delivery crew just prior to departure from Seattle. Hopefully this will bring back some memories.



Kindest Regards,

**Robert "Dr Bob" Hopkins**, Glenn Heights, TX

(Ed. Note: Morrow responded that he is not in the photo and thinks it may have been a post-mission posed photo op without the original crew.)

(Part 2) You can let Jim know the tail number was 64-14840. Wouldn't be surprised if it wasn't the original crew in the photo.

Always happy to help. If I come across any collection of material and photos that might be worth sharing in the newsletter. I'll send them your way to use or discard as you see fit.

The first volume of the history of US strategic aerial reconnaissance *Spyflights and Overflights 1945-1960*, is now on Amazon and covers a lot of early **55th** operations. I'm trying to coordinate a way for sales to benefit the **55th Association**, but am not having much luck.

Volume 2, 1960-1992 will be released in 2018. The -135 book is slated for release in September 2016, and that will be followed by a B-47 book in June 2017, with extensive coverage of RB-47 operations which I trust will reflect well on the members of the **55th**.



VO, **Dr Bob**

(From e-mails 5-6 July 2016)

\* \* \* \* \*

Max:

To preserve our current status; I still don't like you, and nothing I say will change that. It pains me to tell you that you do a hell of a job with the newsletter, which I read cover to cover; even about people I don't know.

So, with courtesies out of the way.....:

Re: the article about the bell at Upper Heyford, it reminded me of a similar tale:

In late 1965 I came off crew duty at Forbes, and became ops officer for the 38<sup>th</sup> SRS (that duty had been seriously downgraded and most functions transferred to Wing HQ).

That Thanksgiving I was sent to RAF Brize-Norton, UK, to assist **Tex Thacker** in moving the **55th**, Det 1, to RAF Upper Heyford. After about three weeks, I moved to Upper Heyford to coordinate the receiving of "stuff" from Brize.

Tex would load up things in trucks at Brize about 7 AM and send it to Heyford, where I and my several airmen would receive and place it in the proper buildings. Allowing for the time to load and ship, I told my airman to show up at 9 AM on the flight line.

Before we received the first load, I was called to the base CO's office where he, **Col Rupert Hurley** (I think), proceeded to chew my ass for several minutes.

His policy was that people who worked on the flight line would be there at 7 AM - No exceptions!!!!!! That gives a sense of the kind of CO he was.

I went to the "O" club that evening for dinner and was surprised to find only three people there: the bartender, a 1Lt. admin officer, and a major from the alert force. Since Col Hurley wanted to make sure no one on the alert force would have a drink, a senior officer was there each night to enforce the rule. As a result I never saw an alert crew member in the club **at any time**.

The bar had its own traditional bell which was rung for free drinks when someone made an etiquette boo-boo.

At some point after I returned home in February, I learned that the bar bell had disappeared. And for several weeks each deployed B-47 and KC-135 departing for Plattsburg AFB, NY, was searched in an attempt to locate the bell. The bell was not found.

I subsequently learned that the bell was found hanging in a tree in front of the "O" club, and was much later recovered and sent quietly to Plattsburg after Rupert retired. Justice will be served always.

Your ex-friend,

**Roby Craft**, Satellite Beach, FL.



Max: (continued)

The bell in my tale was from the B-47 bomb wing at Plattsburgh, who pulled reflex alert at Heyford before the **55th** arrived.

From reading the Tale of the (*the 55th*) Bell in your commentary, I surmise that the lack of a bell (*at Upper Heyford*) in your story is because the original bell had been subsequently recovered from the tree by one of the Plattsburgh crews and taken to Plattsburgh.

Your version could, in fact be the conclusion of my story because I had never heard the story of Rusty's crew.

Too bad we don't have an old Plattsburgh crew to fill in some of the "gaps".

**Roby** (From e-mails, 11-12 July)

*(Ed note: Roby has had this running thing about not liking me for at least 50 years, and sticks to it, as reported in past newsletters. But, we both know it is a subterfuge to cover mutual respect and friendship. Max)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Hi, Jim (*Thomas*):

I hope all is well with you. Greetings from Hickam. (*Aloha?*) I sent in my application to join the **55th Wing Association**. I look forward to keeping up with the team from afar.

Lots of **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** aircraft in the theater at any time. It is always a pleasure keeping up with them in the morning ops/intel updates.

VO, **Gooley (Gregory Guillot**, BrigGen, former **55th Wing CC**, June 2013-June 2015) (He is currently serving as Chief of Staff, HQ PACAF.)

*(From an e-mail, 17 October 2016)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Max:

You may have heard **Bill Steele** (*B52, RC-135 EWO and JrROTC Commander/Instructor at Bellevue East HS*) is battling brain cancer. Bill requested to get a set of jump wings, and recently elected congressman, Don Bacon, took the time to present Bill with the honorary jump wings.

The 22 November presentation was well represented by former **55th Wing** members.

Bill's family, and many of his friends from BelvEast HS ROTC, also joined in the presentation.



In the back row: (L-R) **Joe Spivey, Kurt Kramer, Denny Haun** (mostly hidden), **Daniel Rocha, Don Kelly, Kurt Wright, Paul Jeanes, Bill Bierbaum, Jack Bauerle, Virg Love**. Kneeling (L-R): **Ben Ungerman, Bacon, Steele, Mike Bridges, Steve Marchitelli.**

*Paul Jeanes, Papillion, NE*

*(E-mail and photo 23 November 2016.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## THREE 55th SQUADRONS TO CELEBRATE 100<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARIES

The 95<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, UK; and the 41<sup>st</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Electronic Combat Squadrons of the 55<sup>th</sup> Electronic Combat Group at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, all trace their lineage to 1917, pre-dating WWII.

Ceremonies and social events to mark the proud history of the units, and heritage milestones, are in the early development /planning stages and will occur this summer and fall.

**55th Wing** Public Affairs and **55th Wing** Historian will be involved, and details will be forthcoming as they are solidified.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave in a well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, totally worn, out, shouting, "Holy crap....what a ride!"*

*Author unknown, but suspicion falls on any number of former 55th crewdogs.*

# NEWSLETTER INPUTS WELCOME

*Yes, we are aware that these newsletters tend to be Offutt-centric. Hello! It is where stuff happens.*

*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, preferably; or mail to the address in the Directory on page 3. We encourage and welcome the input.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*When 55th events occur in your area (Florida, Texas, MD/VA/DC metroplexes, Denver/CSprings, California, wherever), gatherings great or small, 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. Use 'em. Pictures are good. Send 'em.*

*The only way to broaden our coverage is to get input from the near and far reaches of Fifty-Fifth-land.*

*Letters and the following items are examples.*

*(Contributions may be,..... well, of course they will be, edited for content, readability, and spacing. It's what I do.)*

*Thanks, and Videmus Omnia, Max.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## EAST COAST "CHAPTER"

East coast area alumni, including active duty, retirees and 'beltway bandits', have occasional social gatherings. Events are organized periodically for reconnecting, exchanging information, and camaraderie in the 55<sup>th</sup> spirit.

For information on future 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association East events, or to get on the e-mail listing, drop Ricky McMahon an e-mail at



potomacpistol@gmail.com, or Ricky.McMahon@L-3Com.com, then pass him your contact information.

*The more the merrier (Obligatory cliché).*

\* \* \* \* \*

## SAN ANTONIO LUNCH BUNCH

This alumni 'chapter' is flourishing. As Charlie McBride and Dave Frutchey have reported, they gather the **second** Thursday of the month, 1200 hours, at the *Lion and Rose Pub*, Blanco and Loop 410.

Initially, five veteran crewdogs began the group a couple of years ago. That has now grown to about 20 'members'. Typically, 10-15 attend each monthly gathering. It is a time of reliving the past and just enjoying one another's company.

The most recent gathering was 8 December 2016. Pictured, L-R: Frank McMillan, Dave Frutchey, Hank Dubuy, Bill O'Hara, Ron Nickerson, Ned Gates, Andy Borden, Bruce Barker, Charles McBride and Chuck Younklin.

*(Photo from McBride)*



Others who occasionally attend are Jim Hilliard, Ken Bryars, Hiram Goya, Ralph Cofield, Mike Morris, Bill White, Jeff Herd, Howard Ham, Clay Harvey, and Gil Dewind.

Anyone wishing to join this genial group can contact Dave Frutchey at dfrutchey@att.net, ph: 210-355-0040; or Charlie at cmcbride40@yahoo.com, ph: 830-438-3349. Better yet, just show up.

*The more the merrier (Repeat obligatory cliché). (This is a recording.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## NEWS FLASH

Some seasoned "crew dawgs" in the San Antonio 'chapter' are developing a web site dedicated to everyone who worked with and flew RC-135M Combat Apple missions from Japan/Okinawa, 1967-77. This was before the 82<sup>nd</sup> SRS was under the 55<sup>th</sup>, but with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Air Division (SAC), at Andersen AFB, Guam.

82nd scrap book photos and articles serve as the foundation to build upon.

When up and running, interested parties will be able to input pix, stories, and comments from that era for everyone's enjoyment. Anyone interested in contributing ideas and/or info please contact Dave Frutche: dfrutche@att.net for more details.

\* \* \* \* \*

*If there are any new 55th 'chapters' (big, small, in-between) forming out there, please let it be known so the word can spread. California, Florida, Colorado, and other parts of Texas (to list just a few) all have pockets of alums where such activity may occur.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## EC-135 RESTORATION UPDATE

Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum is about half-way through a two year, \$200,000 project. Just \$85,000 raised so far. The ultimate goal is to restore the plane to the way it was during the hey-day of its mission years. In 2018 it will be displayed (*without wings and engines*) in the main museum viewing area.

The volunteers continue to sand the outside and inside of the aircraft. They are still finding corroded areas. Several volunteers work to restore and wrap the equipment, previously removed from the aircraft, for later reinstallation.

The Museum has not received significant donations from the major corporate vendors which provided the aircraft and/or its various equipment/systems. An exception is PPG, Inc. An employee of PPG, and former Looking Glass crewmember, convinced PPG to supply replacement windows for the aircraft and to supply the paint and primer which will be used in restoring the aircraft.

Have you asked what your employer, or your former employer, to donate materials that could be useful in the restoration? Don't limit the donations to major aircraft systems.



*Don Peterson hard at work.*

The Museum needs and uses a lot of practical materials and air tools (sanders, di-grinders, etc.), sand paper strips/pads, adhesive and solvents, and other general shop equipment and supplies. The Museum will need lots of aircraft carpet and insulation. The Museum also is seeking two VIP boarding stairs, preferably stairs which load 90 degrees from the stair axis rather than straight in.

This is a long and arduous project requiring dedication and a lot of time and elbow grease. At least 36 volunteers have put in over 8600 hours of work thus far.

**Anyone wishing to donate money or volunteer time can do so by contacting the Museum's web-site, [sacmuseum.org](http://sacmuseum.org).**

*(Basic report and photo from Hank Carriger, Bellevue, NE, 22 November 2016)*

*(Some material added from an article in the 1 January issue of the Omaha World-Herald.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## TAPS

\* \* \* \* \*

**COOK, William (Bill)**, 80, 10 December 2016, Des Moines, IA; wife, **Beverly**. Bill was in 55<sup>th</sup> maintenance as a bomb/nav flight line technician on RB-47s at Forbes AFB, KS, 1954-1961.





**EDGREN, Mary**, 90, 2 July 2016, Omaha, NE. Mary was the widow of **Don**, a staff officer in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt AFB, NE, 1966-67. He also served at Kadena AB, Okinawa, and in the SAC Recon Center at Offutt in the 1970s. She was a teacher and tireless volunteer.

**ERNST, Linda R.**, 78, 30 November 2016, Bellevue, NE. Married for **55** years to **William (Bill)**, past president of the **Association**, former 343<sup>rd</sup> commander, and a member of the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Hall of Fame. Linda was a TWA flight attendant, past president of the Offutt OWC, devoted to her family, and loved to travel, visiting 28 countries.

**GATEWOOD, Jack E.**, 93, 6 November 2016, Ft. Walton Beach, FL. A WWII vet, his tenure with the **55<sup>th</sup>** was as an EC/RC pilot in the 2ACCS and 343<sup>rd</sup> at Offutt in the late 1960s. Jack was the Det commander at Shemya AFB, AK, in 1970.

**HAIN, Harlon A.**, 90, 23 November 2016, Bellevue, NE; wife of 64 years, **Virginia (Ginger)**. Harlon enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1944 and became a pilot. Among his many assignments, he flew the SR-71 at Beale AFB, CA, 1960s-70s. Aviation was his passion which he shared with many students as an instructor, and in several organizations. He retired in 1981 from the SAC Recon Center, then worked 20 years with Northrop-Grumman.

**HEWARD, Henry W.**, 79, 14 September 2015, Linwood, NJ; wife, **Evelyn**. A native of New Jersey, Hank was an RC-135 EWO in Stand/Eval circa late 1960s in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt.

**LEHMAN, Herman W.**, 87, 20 October 2015, Bellevue, NE; wife, **Ann**. Herm had tours in Korea and Vietnam; his tenure with the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt was as a navigator in EC-135s with the 2ACCS, and later as executive officer to the DO.

**OLMSTEAD, F. Bruce**, 81, 14 October 2016, Annapolis, MD; wife of nearly 59 years, **Gail**. An RB-47 co-pilot in the 343<sup>rd</sup> SRS at Forbes in the late 1950s. An original 1999 member of what became the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Hall of Fame, he retired in 1981. He will be interred at Arlington National Cemetery at a date TBD. (*See article following TAPS.*)

**SCHWADRON, Jacquelyn (Jackie)**, 82, 29 August 2016, Auburn, AL. She was the widow of **Howard**, a navigator in the **55<sup>th</sup>** ARS at Forbes AFB, KS, 1955-62; then in RC-135s at Eielson

AFB, AK, and in the original cast of the 82nd SRS at Kadena in the 1960s.

**SNYDER, Albert L.**, 78, 17 August 2016, Wylie, TX. Al was a pilot who served in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt flying EC- and RC-135s circa late 1970s, early 1980s. After retiring from the AF he became an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church serving the San Antonio area for 28 years.

**STEELE, G. William (Bill)**, 63, 8 December 2016, Bellevue, NE; wife **Gwen**. Bill was a B-52 EWO before coming to the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt in RC-135s in 1982. After retiring from active duty in December 1999, and a short stint in the contract 338<sup>th</sup> school house, he became the JrAFROTC Commander/instructor at Bellevue East HS until his recent illness. In that capacity he impacted and influenced the lives of countless Bellevue students, many of whom entered the military.

**STERN, Theodore**, 93, 5 June 2016, Corrales, NM; wife, **Audrey**. Ted entered the USAF in 1948 and after bomb/nav training joined the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** at Forbes AFB, KS, as an RB-50 navigator. After serving in Korea, her returned to the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt in 1967 as an RC-135 crew navigator and then staff, retiring in 1972.

**TAYLOR, James D.**, 91, Topeka, KS, 7 July 2016; married to **Marion** for over 60 years. Graduating from Huntsville (AL) high school, Jim went to aviation cadets in 1943 and became a pilot at age 19. He was an RB-47 aircraft commander in the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** at Forbes for 10 years in the 1960s. He and Marion frequently attended reunions and the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Birthday Ball.

**THOMPSON, James E.**, 79, 20 October 2016, Bellevue, NE; wife of 55 years, **Nancy**. An RC-135 EWO at Offutt in the 1970s, Jim then served on the SAC IG until he retired in 1981. For the next 20 years he was executive assistant to the president of Bellevue College. He was a key player in the institution's growth into a university and its physical expansion.

**URIBE, Susan**, 73, 6 August 2016, Ft Worth, TX. She was the wife of **Ray**, an RC-135 navigator and in DOR staff in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Offutt in the 1980s. A proud Army brat, she met Ray while attending North Texas State University.

**WATSON, Jane**, 80, 20 August 2016, Bellevue, NE. Jane was the widow of **Dennis** who passed in July 2013. He was an RB-47 pilot in the

343<sup>rd</sup> at Forbes in the early 1960s. Jane was an accountant, devoted to her family, and active in her church.

**YOUNG, Emerson D. (Dave)**, 78, 1 August 2016, Urbana, IL; wife of 39 years, **Janet**. Dave served as an RC-135, navigator in the 82nd SRS at Kadena and in the 55<sup>th</sup> at Offutt in the 1970s. He went to RAF Mildenhall, UK, as director of Recon Ops, and the same job at Ramstein AB, Germany, retiring in 1981.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PLANE CRASH CLAIMS THE LIVES OF TWO 55<sup>TH</sup>'ERS

Tragedy struck on 24 July 2016 when the crash of a Beechcraft Baron in a field west of Omaha took the lives of two 55<sup>th</sup>'ers a generation apart.

**PANTING, Ronald**, 61, Papillion, NE. Ron, a San Francisco area native, was an instructor with the LeMay Flight Training Center (formerly known as the Offutt Aero Club). In the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing he served as an RC-135 pilot in Standboard, the Ops Group executive officer, and Chief of Wing Safety in the 1990s, retiring in 2005. He then flew nine years as a commercial aviator, and was an evaluator for the FAA. He is survived by his wife, **Lynne**, and adult children, a daughter and son.

**TRUBILLA, Michael**, 27, Bellevue, NE, was getting his FAA check ride for a private license. A Pennsylvania native and son of an Air Force veteran, he graduated from the AF Academy in 2011 where he excelled and won awards in science and technology. He was assigned as an RC-135 pilot with the 45<sup>th</sup> RS at Offutt in May 2013. He spent his leave in Haiti in the summer of 2015 doing missionary work

\* \* \* \* \*

**Freeman Bruce Olmstead** was born on 17 June 1935 and raised in Elmira, NY, Bruce earned a BA in history at Kenyon College before being commissioned in the US Air Force on 3 June 1957.

Bruce proudly served his country as a career Air Force officer and pilot with assignments at Forbes AFB, KS; MacDill AFB, FL; Eglin AFB, FL; Wright-Patterson AFB, OH; Command and Staff College, AL; and the Pentagon, Washington, DC.

Bruce and Gail were married on 27 December 1957 in Plainfield, NJ.



His first operational assignment in 1959 was to the 343<sup>rd</sup> SRS at Forbes as an RB-47 co-pilot on a crew commanded by **Capt Willard Palm**.

On an initial operational mission out of the UK, his RB-47 was shot down by a Soviet fighter in international airspace over the Barents Sea north of Murmansk on 1 July 1960. Palm perished from hypothermia in the frigid waters. His body was recovered and returned home to be buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The three EWOs, **Major Eugene Posa**, **Captains Oscar Goforth** and **Dean Phillips**, were believed to have ejected from the plane, but their bodies were not recovered.

After surviving six hours in the frigid water, Bruce and navigator **John McKone**, were picked up by a Russian trawler and they spent the next seven months in Lubyanka Prison in Moscow undergoing relentless interrogation, harassment and various forms of deprivation.

Both were released after nearly seven months in captivity on 24 January 1961 as a goodwill gesture to newly inaugurated **President John F. Kennedy**. Their families, the president and other dignitaries met their aircraft upon arrival at Andrews AFB, MD, and proceeded to the White House.

They were featured on the 2 February 1961 cover of TIME Magazine.

A book entitled, *The Little Toy Dog*, written by **William L.**

**White**, relates the full story of this incident, and has been frequently noted in later histories of the Cold War

Bruce also served as Commander of the Air Force ROTC detachment at Kent State University (Ohio). His final assignment was as Air Attaché at



the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen, Denmark, from 1980 until his retirement at the rank of colonel on 1 November 1983.

He was honored with the Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, and Purple Heart for his military service. Both he and McKone were eventually awarded the Prisoner of War Medal, which was presented at the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball in 1996.

Bruce and Gail had a long and happy retirement in Annapolis, where he enjoyed sailing and his membership in the New Providence Club, among other activities. He also loved to build model ships, listen to music, watch Washington Nationals' baseball, travel and spend time with his family and many friends.



*(Photos from AF archives and family.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

*(Anecdote: When Bruce and John were notified they were about to be released, and that an aircraft was waiting to take them away from the Soviet Union, one of their integrators asked, "Is there something you would like to say to the benevolent people of the Soviet Union?"*

*Bruce reportedly said, "Yes. Let's not miss that plane!")*

\* \* \* \* \*

**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 by the President.**

**The date of demise, age, location; and if known, connection to the 55<sup>th</sup> - base, time frame and Air Force specialty will be helpful.**

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

*Otherwise, I just have to make up stuff. (Insert smiley face.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## TAPS ON THE ASSN WEB SITE

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

Anyone who wishes to have the name of a family member, friend, or comrade who was a former member of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* added to the listing can request the web-guy to do so.

Please have the date of demise (*at least the year*) for placement.

\* \* \* \* \*

*"Everyone gets dead. It was his turn." John Wayne, "Hondo", 1953.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## MEMORIAL BRICK ORDERS STILL CAN DO

There may be some 55<sup>th</sup> veterans and/or family members, friends, associates, who want to order bricks for the 55<sup>th</sup> SRW Cold War Memorial patio in the National Museum of the USAF Memorial Gardens.

Orders have slowed considerably, but anyone interested in doing so should contact Bill Ernst for details: BillErnst1@cox.net, or phone 402-292-1205.

There are currently 602 bricks in the patio with 99 available for new orders. Since 2003 about 50 new bricks have been added. Some years, 7, 8, 9 new bricks, some years, none.

Any new brick orders must be sent to Ernst NLT 1 July to give the engraver/installers the next summer months for the installation.

\* \* \* \* \*

*(Follow up on a report in the January 2016 issue of VO, pg 14 on faded bricks.)*

Jim (Thomas) and Bill (Ernst):

I ordered the 26 "re-make" bricks for the Memorial patio.



**Larry Morrison** at Dodds Monuments, says he will sell them to us at \$25 per brick. To save us labor costs, he will install them himself. He has done this for us in the past as he stops at the Memorial after work, and installed bricks.

So this year we are only paying for the bricks, and **no labor** or installation costs for a total of \$650.

I suggest any leftover budgeted funds for the effort be carried over for next year.

**Jack Kovacs**, Fairborn, OH, 10 May 2016

*Late report: All of the bricks that were remade have been re-done and are in place in the patio.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## FLAGS FLOWN OVER THE AIR FORCE MEMORIAL ARE AVAILABLE

The Air Force Memorial staff has 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). Nylon is recommended if the flag will be flown outside.

You may choose a **specific significant date** on which you would like the flag flown over the Memorial.

You can also request that a flag you already own to be flown for free.

For specific and updated information, contact the Air Force Memorial staff at Ph: 703-979-0674, or go to [afmf@airforcememorial.org](mailto:afmf@airforcememorial.org) home page, click on the EVENTS block, then the 'Flag Flying Request' link (*left side*) to download the order form

\* \* \* \* \*



## ASSOCIATION BX

\* \* \* \* \*

Get your new 'stuff' in time  
for the Tampa reunion!

\* \* \* \* \*

## ASSOCIATION POLO SHIRTS/CAPS

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

All 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.



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

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

The 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, Big Guy.

**The cost is \$35 each.**

**Be sure to state which size you want in your order.**

\* \* \* \* \*

The golf/baseball caps are royal blue with the dual shield logo on the front, and an adjustable back strap. **They go for \$12 each.**

**There are charges for priority postage to be added to the individual item cost: \$5.45 for one**

cap; \$10.45 for one shirt; \$11.35 for both a shirt and cap order; \$11.35 for two shirts.

More ways to identify with your Association and “show the logo” as appropriate for reunions, official, social and casual functions.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 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.



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

This item is another great gift item, and a ‘must have’ for Association reunion banquets and other appropriate events.

\* \* \* \* \*

Anyone desiring to purchase any of the advertised items should contact the haberdasher, William (Bill) Sargent at 2711 Northwood Circle, Papillion, NE, 68133 or William488@cox.net

Checks for the full amount of your order should be made to the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association, and Bill will be promptly on your order.

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55<sup>TH</sup> 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 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.

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, 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.

Frank is an Association member and ardent supporter. He is also one of the 55<sup>th</sup> Commander’s Wingmen, allowed to wear the coveted leather flight jacket.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Air Force Navigators Observers Association (AFNOA) is an organization open to US Air Force navigators, observers, electronic warfare officers (EWOs), weapon system officers (WSOs), and combat system officers (CSOs), retired or active duty.



AFNOA currently has about 1200 members from World War II to current active duty, Air Guard, and Reserves (including several former members of the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifty*).

Members receive a quarterly newsletter, DR Ahead, and the opportunity to participate in activities with fellow aviators.

AFNOA started at Ellington AFB, TX, as a class reunion of 50-D in 1985. Other classes from Ellington wanted to be included. Later, other navigator training bases and classes asked to be included.

AFNOA has members who have commanded military operations in war and peace, have been published in numerous fields, continue to serve in community and national level careers, and continue to be outstanding representatives of the USAF.

Website since 1996: AFNOA.org. For those interested in joining, there is a link to a membership form.



## AVIATION CADET WORLD

A former USAF and commercial pilot named **Errol Severe** in 1994, using his own money and resources, started a “living museum” called Aviation Cadet World dedicated to all those who went through the programs.

It is a sprawling property in Eureka Springs in northwest Arkansas, and continues to grow.

The web site is [www.aviatincadet.org](http://www.aviatincadet.org) where one can learn all about the project and much more. It is an interesting and entertaining site, even for those who were not aviation cadets.



## COLD WAR MUSEUM

Another museum which should be near and dear to many **55<sup>th</sup>** Cold Warriors is the Cold War Museum in Warrenton, VA.

Founded in 1996 by **Francis Gary Powers, Jr.**, son of the CIA U-2 pilot shot down in by the Soviets on 1 May 1960; and **John C. Welch**, with the obvious dual purposes of preserving Cold War history, and to honor that war’s veterans. That war was real, lasted 42 years, and sometimes became a hot war. There were casualties.

The web site at <http://coldwar.org> has an in-depth and wealth of information on every aspect of that war’s history, which could fade into the mists if it were not for institutions such as this one and the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum near Ashland, NE.

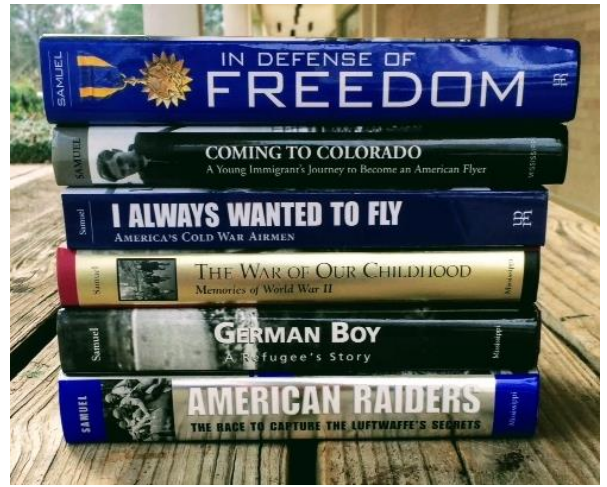


## WOLF SAMUEL’S BOOKS

Wolf is a former RB-47 EWO in the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Forbes in the 1960s. He is a prolific and interesting writer.

Anyone wishing to purchase his books at cost, plus postage, can reach him at [wolfsamuel@veizon.net](mailto:wolfsamuel@veizon.net), or call 703-250-5391 for details.

They can also be obtained from [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), go to **BOOKS** and type in his name.



Two other books, *Glory Days* and *Watson’s Whizzers* are published by Schiffer books.



## WHO SHOT WHAT

Graphics from various sources, Clip art, and web sites. Pictures not previously attributed: Bacon campaign photo; BG Tullos, official AF photo; Award for Excellence trophies by Moore.

AF Memorial from the AFA web site.

**Association** shirt/cap by **Larry Utley**; tie by **Sam Pizzo**; **55<sup>th</sup>** pin by Moore; ‘Mad Max’ graphic by **Patricia Gros**, friend of the **Association**.



*The following essay was originally contributed by **Bud Morss** and **Don Griffin**, and was published in the August 2002 issue of **Videmus Omnia**, and again in February 2011 and July 2013.*

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

*No date is noted, but it seems appropriate as yet another **55<sup>th</sup>** reunion approaches.*

## 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, too 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 flight close to the heavens.

Departed 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.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The smallest good deed is better than the grandest of intentions.*

*One thing you can't recycle is wasted time.*

\* \* \* \* \*

*This song was composed by Joe and Dottie Gyulavics and John and Reese Drost at the reunion in Seattle, August 1992. Sadly, all but John are gone.*

*“Jumpin’ Joe” G relished leading sing-a-longs at reunions and would insist this song be among the repertoire.*

*Now, what we need is another choir director to lead the ‘chorus’ in singing this ditty at some appropriate time during the Tampa reunion.*

**The *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth***  
**Reunion Song**  
*To the tune of “Hey, Look Me Over”*

Hey! Look us over,  
The **Fifty-Fifth** is here.

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

We get together  
Every other year.

If ever a wing in SAC there was,  
The **55<sup>th</sup>**’s the best because,

We’ve looked you over  
From way up in the sky.

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

Oh, the **55<sup>th</sup>**’s the first to fight,  
We’re always Number One.

So move over World,  
Here we come!!!

Published in **Association** newsletters:

**June 1994, January 2001**

**April 2003, May 2012**

\* \* \* \* \*

**THIS PAGE LEFT BLANK FOR SPACING PURPOSES**

**AGENDA AND REGISTRATION FORM FOLLOW**

# AGENDA

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

19 – 23 APRIL 2017

**WEDNESDAY 19 APRIL**    **ASSN BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET**    1600 - 1800

**THURSDAY 20 APRIL**    HOTEL COMP BREAKFAST    0630 – 1100

LOWRY PARK ZOO TRIP, Lunch    1000 – 1430

GOLF @ Rocky Point    1000 - 1500

(Call for tee time 813 673-4316, 18 holes/\$25 ask for seniors rate,  
within 3 mi hotel, shuttle avail, walk or carts avail).

REGISTRATION (Lobby)    1200 – 1730

HOSPITALITY SUITE    1200 – 1730

RECEPTION, Informal    1800 - 2030

(heavy hors d'oeuvres, beverages)

HOSPITALITY SUITE    2030 – 2300

**FRIDAY 21 APR**    HOTEL COMP BREAKFAST    0630 – 1100

TOUR MACDILL AFB, SOCCOM/CENTCOM  
(O Club lunch included)    0900-1430

REGISTRATION (HOSPITALITY SUITE)    1000 -1730

HOSPITALITY SUITE    1000 – 2230

DINNER CRUISE ON YACHT STARSHIP    1800 – 2200

*(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)*



**SATURDAY 22 APR** HOTEL COMP BREAKFAST 0630 – 1100

**MEMBERSHIP MEETING** 0900 - 1000

(Association status, Directors election, location next reunion, reunion survey)

HOSPITALITY SUITE 1000 - 1730

*(LATE ARRIVALS REGISTER)*

GOLF @ ROCKY POINT (See Thursday) 1200 - 1600

SEE “HOT DEALS GUIDE” AFTERNOON

FOR THINGS TO DO. *(Provided in welcome package)*

HOTEL TRANSPORT w/in 3 MILES.

REUNION BANQUET (Business Casual) 1800 SOCIAL

(No jeans or shorts, please) 1830 DINNER

(Guest: Don Bacon, Congressman 2<sup>nd</sup> District NE, **55Wg** CC, 2011-12)

HOSPITALITY SUITE 2030 TIL DONE!

**SUNDAY 23 APR** HOTEL COMP BREAKFAST 0630 – 1100

FAREWELLS

**Events locations provided in Welcome Package and posted/ updated on Registration B Board**

***SCHEDULED TIMES MAY CHANGE. CHANGES WILL BE POSTED IN THE REGISTRATION AREA B BOARD OR PROVIDED IN WELCOME PACKAGE.KEEP AN EYE ON B BOARD FOR HOT ITEMS.***



(Registration form page 2)

**DINNER CHOICES (# at each entry)**

Number\_\_\_ Grilled Chicken Breast w/Lemon Piccata Sauce

Number\_\_\_ Pork Tenderloin Stuffed w/ Figs & Walnuts finished w/ Apple Brandy Sauce.

Number\_\_\_ Vegetarian Plate

**SATURDAY, 22 April---Name tags please!**

Membership meeting 0900-1000

Golf At Rocky Point, 1200 - 1600 \* See AGENDA page (Self pay)

Reunion Dinner, (Business Casual. (No jeans or shorts, please) 1800 Social, 1830 Dinner

Herb Crusted Filet of Beef & Chicken Roulade

Number\_\_\_ x \$75 = \$\_\_\_\_\_

Guest: Congressman Don Bacon, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Nebraska, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, 2011-2012

**Grand Total (Registration, Zoo, MacDill Tour, Dinner Cruise, Reunion Dinner)**

**TOTAL \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**Make Check Payable to 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association (2017 Reunion)**

**Mail to: Richard Ray, Key # 460  
PO Box 6825  
Tampa, FL 33608**

**\*\*\*\*\*MAIL NLT 15 MARCH 2017\*\*\*\*\***

**\*\*\*SEE AGENDA FOR EVENTS, TIMES, THINGS TO DO\*\*\***

**\*\*\*\*\*MAKE A COPY FOR YOUR PERSONAL RECORDS\*\*\*\*\***





# Videmus Omnia



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

(Formerly – 55<sup>th</sup> 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 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** only 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](mailto:Michael.Cook@cox.net), or at the above mailing address, or call (402) 578-5848.*



