

Videmus Omnia

55th WING ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

JULY 2017

WORDS FROM THE NEW PRESIDENT

Greetings, 55th Wing Association Members:

Changes of Command, guidon passes, and assumption salutes are well-known military indicators a new generation is taking the reins.



For those of us who participated in these time-honored transitions, we know there is always an atmosphere of relief, on the one hand, and trepidation on the other.

Taking the Association's presidential reins from a *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* legend such as **Jim Thomas** is a daunting task.

As you know, Jim faithfully and admirably served as Association President for over 12 years.

Despite passing me the torch in Tampa, he will continue to serve. I welcome his role as mentor—and more. Jim truly deserves, in the jargon of our US Navy brethren, a hearty “BRAVO ZULU!”—well done and thank you.

Many members may ask as we transition, what is the Association's future? Simply put, “Why try to repair something that isn't broken?” Our time-honored traditions will stand: Reunions, Birthday Balls, Hall of Fame, Excellence Trophy, memorial wreath presentations, *Tales of the Fifty-Fifth*, Wing Commander dinners, etc.

Some processes may be refined with ideas already being generated by many in our ranks. I'll discuss more of these later as we mature viable concepts into reality.

For now, however, I leave you with my vision for the Association: “Honoring those who served and serving those who do.”

Videmus Omnia, Joe



*Ending one era, beginning another.
Joe Spivey accepts the Association
flag from Jim Thomas.*

(Photo by Moore)



RETIRING PRESIDENT THOMAS SAYS FAREWELL

If you were unable to make the reunion in Tampa, you missed another good one. It was small in numbers, but very rich in fellowship.

As you may know by now, I have stepped down from the presidency of the Association. At the ending of the banquet at the reunion seemed like the appropriate time and place for that. It was an honor to be given the opportunity to shepherd the values of the Association for all these years.

Who would have thought that an informal organization that began over four decades ago would have the evolution it has, and would today be the viable and relevant organization that it has become. What a challenge it has been.

The **Association** stands today because of the steadfast efforts of the original founders and later, more founders, who put in place the permanent foundations that we have today. Many of those founders have "Gone West", others still serve to this day.

I was privileged to know and to serve with many of those visionaries. They were an inspiration to me.

To all those serving on the Board of Directors, past and present, thank you for your commitment to seeing that we remain a viable and relevant organization. And most significantly, we stand today because of a very loyal membership - ideas, moral and financial support are essential.

A little about your new president. Joe Spivey is no stranger to the **55th** or the **Association**. He is currently the Vice President for Strategic Operations for Calvert Systems, Nebraska office. That translates to him being responsible for the BIG SAFARI contract portfolio that includes the **55th Wing's RC-135 fleet**.

Joe served 26 years in the Air Force. He crewed on the B-52, OC/WC-135, and numerous models of the RC-135. He commanded the 45th Reconnaissance Squadron, and was the Deputy Commander of the Operations Group, and the Combat Support Group in turn.

Joe has hit the ground running as your president. The **Association's** business is not new to Joe. I have worked closely with him on numerous **Association** issues and objectives that were of major significance. He gets it. He is a seasoned leader. He will lead the **Association** to new heights.

Again, thank you for the honor of serving you as your president. I hope to see many of you at the next reunion right here in Omaha at the home of the **Fighting Fifty-Fifth**.

And....not to forget..."Y'all be careful out there now."

Videmus Omnia, Jim

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

The 32nd reunion of *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* warriors, guests and friends was another memorable occasion for those who attended. Although the numbers were the lowest in the long history of **55th** reunions, more than one member observed that the social and generational interaction was more diverse and intimate than in the past.

Richard Ray (a former RC/EC pilot in the 343rd and 38th) was the reunion chairman and he did an outstanding job of planning and executing the entire reunion agenda and events.



*"Madam Secretary" Colleen Beshara
and Richard Ray.*

Accommodations at the Hilton Tampa Airport Westshore Hotel were superb, and the staff support responded to every need and request. A delightful complimentary breakfast was offered each morning.

First arrivers and some of the Board of Directors came in Wednesday, 19 April. The BoD met at 1600. After adjourning, members, spouses and guests moved to the nearby Cooper's Hawk Winery and Restaurant for a delicious family-style, four course dinner with a nice selection of wines. No one left this one hungry.

Registration chairperson for the reunion was **Sue McKechnie** (wife of **Bill**), shown on next page greeting arriving attendees. She did an outstanding job of preparing and getting it done.



*Sue checks in **Ron Knecht, Harris Blount and Betty Ross.***

Over the course of the next few days, she was ably assisted by **Susan Mitchell**, Betty Ross, Colleen Beshara, and Max Moore with checking in attendees and handing out nametags, schedules, and goodie bags.

Thursday, 20 April, began the full agenda with an optional trip to the Lowry Park Zoo, a golf outing at the Rocky Point course, and the evening informal reception. The latter featured a generous array of beef and turkey slicing, heavy hors d'oeuvres and open bar. In addition several boxes of Jimmy John's sandwiches were provided by local owner **Mark Mitchell**, son of **Larry**.



*L-R: **Gil Agronis, Harris Blount, Norma Kussman, Ellen Agronis, Doug Eddins.***

Generous hospitality suite hours were slated throughout the week, and it was the focus of continuous gatherings. **Bud Aston**, a good friend and pilot training classmate of Ray's, was the master of the bar, who did yeoman duty all week with the organization, setting it up and keeping the supplies flowing. Besides the usual bar snacks, the

remaining Jimmy John's food ended up in the hospitality suite, as well.



*L-R: **Spivey, Lambert, Kennedy, McFall and Mitchell.**
Gary Smith's pate (I think).
At the bar. Where else?*

The suite opened onto the hotel's pool deck and gazebo of which reunionites took frequent advantage, both day and night.

Volunteer bartenders included **Terry Murphy, Ham Kennedy, Hank Dubuy, Craig McFall, Valerie Hinkle, and Cliff Lambert.**

Friday's main event was a tour to MacDill AFB to visit Special Operations Command and Central Command. AF **Colonel Ireland**, J5 Plans, gave a most informative briefing of the command's structure, diverse and essential missions, and personnel.

The tour group then walked to the SOCCOM's impressive memorial to the fallen, and a short briefing by an Army Lt colonel, head of SOCCOM's communications group.

Ample time was allotted for viewing the wall, monument, etc., and for numerous photo ops before another short walk to the Officers Club for a soup, salad, sandwich buffet.

Larry Mitchell coordinated this day's activity.





Are we there yet?

Once boarding the bus for the return trip to the hotel, on the way back, Max Moore related that the **55th SRW** had a connected history with MacDill dating to the Cuban Crisis when a detachment of RB-47s, crews and maintenance personnel were deployed to the then-SAC bomber base.

The missions were to conduct weather reconnaissance in support of the varied surveillance activity of the Communist island.

One aircraft and crew were lost during that episode. (*See Keith Smith's account in the Letters section for more details from one who was there.*)

That evening a dinner cruise on the yacht Star Ship provided our merry band with a great meal while sailing on Tampa Bay, taking in the variety of sights, a spectacular sunset, and seeing Tampa's skyline at night.

The membership meeting was at 0900 Saturday. Among other things, the state of the **Association** was related, the Board of Directors was elected, other business was either discussed or conducted. Full minutes of the meeting follow in this issue.

Several ladies ventured to the International Mall on a shop-'til-drop trip.



There was no 'Sisterhood of the Shirt' photo at this reunion, so we make do with the "Mrs'es at the Mall".

*L-R: Mesdames **Murphy, Smith, McFarland, Hinkle, Moore, Lambert and Ross.***

(Photo provided by Carol Moore)

That evening there was a social hour prior to the grand banquet.

President Jim Thomas emceed the event making opening remarks and introducing the head table. He also orchestrated the presentation of the Vietnam Veterans lapel pins to all the warriors there, and a mass pin-on occurred.

LtGeneral John N. T. (Jack) Shanahan (a former **55th Wing CC**, April 2009-March 2011) was



the guest speaker. His current position is Director for Defense Intelligence, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Pentagon, Washington, DC.

In the weeks prior to the reunion, General Shanahan asked Larry Mitchell to round up some true humorous stories about some of those who

were at the reunion.

An APB did not produce any stories that could be told in polite company, so Moore suggested **a few** of the more senior members be recognized.

The general readily agreed and was gracious in noting that **Tom Dawes**, "96 years young", was a WWII veteran of 22 combat missions before his tenure as a navigator in the **55th SRW** in RB-50s and RB-47s from 1950 to 1964.

Next up was **George Penfield**, still trim and quick witted at 91, a true strategic reconnaissance pioneer pilot from 1949, even before his two stints and many years with the **55th SRW**.

Doug Eddins, a Korean War veteran, retired as a master sergeant, who was in the **55th** for ten years (1954-1964) at Forbes AFB, KS, as a bomb-nav equipment technician in the **55th Avionics Sqd**. He was on flight status for 2.5 years and deployed to every **55th** operating location.

**55TH WING ASSOCIATION
MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES
SATURDAY 22 APRIL 2017
TAMPA AIRPORT HILTON**

Thomas also expressed appreciation for the several generous sponsors who helped make the reunion a success. Their donations essentially paid for the informal reception and bus transportation, which held down the reunion registration fee.

Kudos to **Sierra Nevada Corp, L3 Corp, the SAC Federal Credit Union, and the Great Western Bank of Bellevue, NE.** There were a few personal donations, also much appreciated. SNC also donated several mementos for the occasion at the banquet.

Thomas announced the results of the Board of Directors election and introduced the new president, **Joe Spivey.** Joe then made remarks on accepting the office expressing his appreciation and optimism for the **Association's** future.

Ham Kennedy then presided at a presentation



of a decorated clock to outgoing president Thomas in appreciation for his dedicated leadership for 12 years in heading the **55th Wing Association.**

A similar presentation was done by Thomas for his retiring successor, **Bill Ernst** at San Diego in 2005. Now Ernst (*who could not attend due to recent surgery*) reciprocated with the memento.

Sunday, 23 April, saw a leisurely stream of breakfast farewells as the members departed by various means for their destinations of origin, and/or points in between.

Thus ending one more gathering of the faithful until **we reunite again in Omaha in the spring of 2019** is the goal.

(A complete list of attendees and a photo album beginning on page 25.)

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If God had meant for men and women to fly, He would have given them more money.

The pursuit of happiness is the chase of a lifetime!!! Go for it!!

The meeting convened and was called to order by President Jim Thomas at 0905. He stated that notice of this meeting was published in the January 2017 issue of *Videmus Omnia*, the **Association** newsletter, and that a quorum consisting of the attendees was present.

Max Moore moved to dispense with the reading of the last membership meeting minutes, which was held at the San Antonio reunion in October 2015. Seconded and carried. He noted that those minutes were published in the January 2016 newsletter and are posted on the **Association** web site.

The president then referred to the Treasurer's report and membership report, both of which were provided as handouts to the members attending. He stated the **Association** was in good shape with regard to budget and expenditures.



He also noted that while the **Association** membership numbers were holding steady at about 500, there was the constant diligence in having members renew their dues, and to recruit new or lapsed members. The report also emphasized that dues should be renewed in January after the year dues expired on 31 December, as shown on the newsletter address label and in the Members Only section of the web site. There is a grace period until 1 April each year before non-paying members are dropped from the members-in-good-standing data base.

Thomas once again explained the specifics of meeting the IRS requirements for 501K tax exempt status for the **Association**: 95% of the membership must be documented veterans. Thus the membership form revised in January 2016 for specific data.

Thomas stated that the relationship between the **Association** and the **55th Wing** at Offutt was

excellent. The commander and his staff 'are on board 100%'.

A new **55th** commander will take over in a ceremony on 8 June. Sometime in August an Offutt area cadre of members will host the new leader at a dinner, details TBD.

Next was an explanation of how the **Wing's** Birthday Ball came to be delayed from the slated 1 April date into September, details also TBD. There was an unfortunate IRS tax compliance situation preventing the Ball committee from seeking donations and other financing for the event.

Rapt attention by all hands.



When the actual date and venue are resolved, Heritage Week will precede the gala, and the Hall of Fame ceremony and *Tales of the 55th* will fall into place. Info on those events will go out via the web site, social media, e-mails just as soon as details are known. (See related articles later in VO.)

Nominations for the **55th Wing Association** Award for Excellence are already in the selection process. The winner is announced at the annual **Wing** Birthday Ball.

Thomas mentioned that what is now an established annual rite, the **Association** and the 95th IS at RAF Mildenhall, UK, participate in the laying of wreaths at Madingley, UK, to honor the **55th** Fighter Group members who died in WWII. The **55th WA** provides the wreath and the 95th participates in the Memorial Day ceremony. Those plans are being coordinated for this year's event.

He noted that among other ways the **Association** has established PR exposure is by sending the newsletter to 51 wing units and offices; and the replication of the Palm Memorial Trophy, which was presented to the **Wing** at last year's Tales.

Moore stated that a new/updated **Association** directory will be published and mailed with the next issue of the newsletter, targeted for July. **He**

emphasized the necessity for members to keep their contact information updated with the membership chair, especially when relocating, by using the Membership Form. The info that changes most often are e-mail addresses by name or server. Any member who maintains two residences, please tell the **Association** which one is primary for correspondence.

Jim Maloney was recognized to provide info and updates on the **Association** web site. He said that NOTAMS provide timely news items, as are TAPS notices. The web site is the best means to get the latest news on reunions, the Birthday Ball, etc. He said that the web site has a Facebook connection for those so inclined. There is a Members Only section which is password protected, where the most recent newsletter is posted, as well as the dues expiration dates for each member.

The president noted that the strategy meeting last Wednesday did not have a Board quorum, but did accomplished meaningful discussions on all the topics addressed at this meeting.



*Your Board at work at the strategy meeting:
Counterclockwise from left: Dugie, McMahon,
Maloney, Hoberman, Thomas,
LtCol Preisman, Ross, and Spivey.
(Not shown, Moore who took the shot.)*

He then recognized the former enlisted troops in attendance: **Doug Eddins, Chuck Burmeister, Joe Shanley, David Aaron.**

Pres Thomas told of the Omaha National Veterans Cemetery beginning internments last September. Several **Association** members serve on the advisory committee and/or as volunteers there.

Moore related that the reunion survey instituted in the July 2016 newsletter netted ten responses. As reported in the January 2017 issue, that could mean

the **Association** is doing okay in the reunion planning, or members just did not care to respond. Nonetheless, reunions were a matter of intense discussion on what to do about the decline in attendance at recent gatherings.

Tentative plans are for the next reunion to be in Omaha/Offutt one more time, in the spring of 2019, a two year break. If possible, and the **55th Wing** gets the Birthday Ball back on a March/April schedule, the reunion can end with the Ball as was done in 2014, which proved to be a huge success.

Also considered was using the Reunion BRATS planning organization if/when **Association** on-site planners are not available. It was noted that Big Safari, B-47 and other related organizations have used that group with success. A major advantage is that BRATS is in the business and regularly negotiates better hotel rates. The **Association** would provide a coordination committee to state our needs and desires.

The slate of nominees for election to the Board of Directors meeting was listed by Pres Thomas. They are current members **McMahon, Maloney, Ross, Hoberman, Ernst, Thomas, Dugie, Krishna, Griffin, Kelly, Censullo, Seinwill, Cook, Jeanes, Moore,** plus newcomers, **Joe Spivey and Ham Kennedy.**

Incumbents **Herd, Glenboski** and **Todd** chose not to stand for election this time. President Thomas recognized and thanked them for their diligent service to the **Association** during their tenure.

Moore moved the slate be nominated. Seconded by many and passed. There being no further nominations, Terry Murphy then moved the slate be elected by acclamation. Seconded by many. It was.

Thomas then announced his intention to step down as **Association** president after 12 years (*the longest tenure of any Association president*) and stated his rationale that it was time for fresh leadership. He introduced Joe Spivey and recommended his election as the next president of the **Association** when the Board meets after the membership meeting. Thomas related Spivey's past record in the **55th** and since, and noted his willingness to serve as president.

Spivey then addressed the meeting briefly.

(Note here: When Spivey's election was announced at the Saturday night banquet, he spoke eloquently

about the responsibilities he was ready to accept.



Mitchell had the floor to recognize Reunion Chair Richard Ray for his outstanding planning and execution of the Tampa reunion. Pres Thomas chimed in and Ray was awarded a well deserved round of applause.

Thomas also mentioned that at the banquet, there was to be a presentation to all Vietnam veterans in attendance with a lapel pin in recognition of that service. He then made the first pin-on to David Aaron. Aaron then gave a few remarks marking the occasion.



Thomas pins Aaron.

Gary Smith suggested the Board consider having the **Association** donate to the Special Operations Command Memorial Foundation to show appreciation for SOCOM's briefings and courtesies displayed during the Friday MacDill tour by reunion attendees. Pres Thomas stated he would raise the suggestion at the Board meeting.

The newly elected Board was reminded to meet immediately after this meeting.

There being no further business for the membership, the meeting was adjourned at 1005.

Respectfully submitted.

Max R Moore, Acting Secretary.



55TH WING ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES - SATURDAY, 22 APRIL 2017 TAMPA AIRPORT HILTON

The meeting convened and was called to order by President Jim Thomas at 1020.

Present was a quorum of nine members elected at the membership meeting just prior to this one: Thomas, Ricky McMahan, Jim Maloney, George Ross, Errol Hoberman, Colonel Mo Krishna, Ham Kennedy, Joe Spivey, and Max Moore.



L to R: Moore, Krishna, Maloney, Ross, Thomas, Spivey, McMahan, Hoberman, Kennedy.

There were no minutes from the San Antonio October 2015 reunion BoD meeting as no quorum was present.

As mentioned at the Wednesday Board strategy meeting 19 April, and with his rationale, Pres Thomas recommended that Michael Cook and Jim Maloney be awarded life membership in the **Association**.

The president recognized Moore for a motion. Due to their consistent and enduring superior service to the **55th Wing Association**, and IAW the By Laws, Moore moved that **life memberships** be awarded to Jim Thomas, Michael Cook and Jim Maloney. Seconded by several and carried unanimously.

President Thomas then discussed and announced the recommended changes to the By Laws. He had previously asked George Ross to review the By Laws, and this topic and rationale were discussed at length during the strategy meeting of 19 April. Most are administrative changes in wording, such as: timing of reunions every 18-24 months is to be determined by the BoD; and the number of elected BoD members was reduced from **a maximum of 19 to 17**.

A significant recommended change was to include for eligibility as the active duty representatives to the BoD, members of the Air National Guard who virtually serve as active duty with the **55th Wing**.

The approved updated By Laws will be posted on the **Association** web site in the near future.

McMahan moved to approve the revisions to the By Laws as presented. Motion was seconded and carried.

Pres Thomas noted that near the conclusion of the membership meeting, Gary Smith had suggested that the **Association** donate to the Special Operations Command Memorial Foundation to show appreciation for SOCOM's briefings and courtesies displayed during the Friday tour by reunion attendees. The SOCMF provides financial assistance for higher education to the children of all services special operations personnel who died in the line of duty. Hoberman moved that the **Association** donate \$250 to the Special Operations Command Memorial Foundation. Seconded and carried.

(A letter of appreciation to the Association acknowledging the donation was subsequently received by Thomas in mid-May.)

Thomas noted that the BoD has an open item from the strategy meeting worthy of future discussion: That is the long standing problem of obtaining a quorum for Board meetings at reunions, and ways to solve the situation. It is a complex issue deserving of more attention, and perhaps a committee study. (Open item TBD)

Pres Thomas recognized Moore who moved that the current holders of the offices of Vice Pres (McMahan), Treasurer (Cook) and Secretary (Trish Seinwill) be retained in those positions. Seconded and carried.

Moore then nominated and moved that Joe Spivey be elected president of the **Association**. Seconded and carried. Thomas had announced his intention to step down after 12 years at the helm at the 19 April strategy meeting and recommended Spivey succeed him. Thomas had also reviewed Spivey's *bona fides* and willingness to accept the position at that meeting.

Newly elected President Spivey then made remarks to the Board expressing his appreciation for the Board's support and his intention to follow the leadership examples of his predecessors.

It was noted that members holding appointed positions would remain in those, (membership chair, web master, awards chair, newsletter editor, historian, enlisted liaison.

(See Board directory below.)

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1049.

Respectfully submitted,

Max R Moore, Acting Secretary.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS DIRECTORY

Association Business/Policy/Issues:

President Joe Spivey

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Waterloo, NE, 68069

E-mail: jespivey@thecseteam.com

Vice President Ricky McMahon

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E-mail: potomacpistol@gmail.com

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Awards Chairman

Hamilton Kennedy

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Other Members of the Board of Directors:

Bill Ernst, Jim Thomas, Errol Hoberman, Don Griffin, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Don Kelly, Paul Jeanes, Val Dugie, Colonel Mohan Krishna. Active Duty: LtCol David Preisman.

(Note: SMSgt (sel) Glynnis Young received PCS orders to Kadena in June, and thus had to leave the BoD.)

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Appointed Historian:

William (Bill) Sargent

2711 Northwood Circle

Papillion, NE, 68133

William488@cox.net

Appointed Enlisted Affairs Liaison:

Elvio Palmieri

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ElvioPalmeri@yahoo.com

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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*).* 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.



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As of 15 June 2017, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$39,000. However, a final accounting for the reunion, when all donations are in, and bills paid, should add more funds to the treasury.

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. For example, dues paid for year thru 2020 cannot be spent until the ensuing calendar years.

Some members have paid for years in advance. One gent is covered through 2031. Now that is loyalty and optimism, folks.

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

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

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There were 470 members in good standing as of 26 June 2017, compared with 510 on 31 December 2016. Unfortunately, dues and members do expire. (See TAPS.)

Members (58) who did not renew their dues by 1 April 2017 were sent 'friendly reminders' one more time, by e-mail or snail mail. About 40% of those did renew by publication time, and we welcome them back to the fold.

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 165 widows receive the newsletter gratis. As always, they are welcome to any and all Association functions.

Fifty 55th 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 24.

The top three states where members reside remain: Nebraska (*No longer a surprise.*) 118; Texas, 73; Virginia, 43.

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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. 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: 55th Wing Association

ATTN: Michael J. Cook

PO Box 13165

Offutt AFB, NE 68113

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

THANK YOU.

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Please help us stay current.

There is a membership/information update form at page 32 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.

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.

Invariably we get returned mail because of outdated addresses. Third class mail is **not** forwarded, nor returned to us.

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THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

What is the first thing you do when you get a new directory? You look up yourself to see what's there, huh?

Then, if something is amiss, most comments will be some version of: "My (insert item) is wrong!!" A more correct term should be 'outdated'.

After months of diligent work in trying to make it the best directory possible, unfortunately, feces occurs. No amount of proofreading well over 700 entries of names, addresses, phone numbers, etc., will catch every typo, and we *mea culpa* on those.



But, if members relocate and do not tell us, how can we know? Changes are even more prevalent with e-mail addresses as folks drop or change servers, or revise their e-addresses.

Worse yet, some packages will be returned as **non-deliverable** for whatever reasons to which the USPS attributes. First-class mailed is forwarded unless the addressee has moved over one year before. Otherwise, it is returned to sender.

If/when mail is returned to the **Association**, then 'we' research and try to locate those members, or widows, and resend when possible.

We need every member's help in keeping all the contact info current. It is each one's responsibility to keep us updated.

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Women will never be equal to men until they can strut down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.

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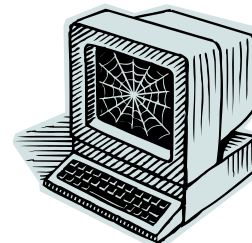
YOUR 55TH WING ASSOCIATION WEB SITE

www.55wa.org

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

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

A Tampa Reunion photo album slide show is available as well as on the **55th Wing Association YouTube** channel, to which folks can subscribe.



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>.

Check the web site regularly for the latest information on the next reunion, Heritage Week activities, and other significant events.

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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.

This page also contains a "Lost and Found" section where members can search for information about how to contact friends and former crewmates.

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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?)

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55TH WING CHANGE OF COMMAND

The 55th Wing had a change of command ceremony on 8 June 2017, as **Colonel Michael Manion** replaced **Colonel Marty “Moose” Reynolds** who has led the **Wing** for the past two years.

Colonel Reynolds was awarded the Legion of Merit for his tenure. His next assignment is as military liaison with the Council on Foreign Relations, a nonpartisan think tank on international affairs in New York.

Major General Mary E. O’Brien, Commander, 25th Air Force at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, TX, officiated the ceremony.



*MGen O’ Brien hands the 55th guidon to Col Manion.
55th Wing Command ChiefMSgt
Michael Morris stands by at the rear.
(Official AF photo by 55th Wing Public Affairs.)*

Colonel Manion is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia. He is a navigator/EWO with multiple tours at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ in EC-130H aircraft with the 55th Electronic Combat Group, which is under the 55th Wing. He held a variety of crew, staff and command positions during those stints.

He also has had assignments in special operations, and in the UK, Korea, Haiti, and Afghanistan. His previous position was the 39th Air Base Wing Vice Commander at Incirlik AB, Turkey.

Plans are for local members of the **Association** to host Col Manion at a meet-and-greet dinner sometime in August, as has been done for the last twelve 55th commanders.

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MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY AT MADINGLEY UK

In what is now an established annual rite since 2014, the **Association** and the 95th IS personnel at RAF Mildenhall, UK, participate in the laying of wreaths at Madingley, UK, to honor the 55th **Fighter Group** members who died in WWII.

The 55th **Wing Association** pays for and provides the wreath.

This past Memorial Day, **SSgt Kendal Cooper** represented the 95th and 55th **Wing** in fine fashion during at the ceremony at the Madingley American Cemetery in Cambridge.



*SSgt Cooper after laying
the wreath*



*The wreath honoring
the 55th Fighter Group.*

There were over 50 military personnel from the US Tri-Base area at the wreath laying ceremony. The crowd of US military and local civilians was impressive.

SSgt Cooper related that, "It was a humbling experience to see the gigantic wall with names of those who fell during WWII. To see and meet the veterans, hearing their stories, and what they went through made me feel proud to be part of (the ceremony)."

(Basic article information and photos provided by LtCol Kevin Webster, Commander, 95 RS, RAF Mildenhall, United Kingdom.)

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OLMSTEAD CEREMONY AT ARLINGTON

Colonel Bruce Olmstead (USAF, Retired), an authentic *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* hero, and in the



original cadre of inductees in 1999 of what became the **55th Wing Hall of Fame**, passed away 14 October 2016. However, he had to be in the usual queue to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. (A tribute

article was published in the January 2017 issue of the *Videmus Omnia*.)

Subsequently, his widow, **Gail**, informed the **Association** that his ceremony was scheduled for 1100 on Thursday, 27 July 2017

In February this year, then-**Association** President Jim Thomas informed **55th** Wing Vice Commander **Colonel David Berg** of the ceremony's date. Colonel Berg immediately suggested the possibility of the Wing providing a flyover for the ceremony.

Thus, it was set in motion as Thomas worked with **Scotty Dowell**, **550SS/OS** (flying hour manager), on the process.

The actual request had to come from the family, and Gail Olmstead was given the necessary information in early April to contact the Air Force

Mortuary Affairs office in order to initiate the process with a letter and required documentation.

The request was approved in relatively short time and if **Wing** requirements allow, the flyover is in the works.

A contingent of **55th** alumni in the DC/VA/MD area, led by **55th Association** vice president Ricky McMahon, and **Association** secretary Trish Seinwill, will attend the funeral ceremony.

Following the ceremony, a reception will be held at the Ft. Myer Officers Club.

This is historic, and a positive example of how the **55th Wing** and the **55th Wing Association** worked in concert to get an important and meaningful event accomplished.

The **55th Wing** Public Affairs office, led by **Ryan Hansen**, was instrumental in getting the ensuing publicity accomplished.

(Note: A full report of the events will be published in the next issue of Videmus Omnia.)

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*Fightin' 55th Aerial Demonstration Team,
Were it possible.*

(Photo shopped by the late Dave Johnson, 2006)

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HALL OF FAME CEREMONY AND TALES OF THE 55TH

Slated for Friday, 8 September, a large audience of active duty personnel, veteran **55thers**, and guests, is expected to attend a program to include the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame induction ceremony, and tale talkers from various eras of the Wing's history.

Jim Thomas will continue to orchestrate these events. The activities grow every year and are a must do for out of town visitors.

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The **55th Wing's** Public Affairs office has produced a video on the history of, and process for, the Hall of Fame to be presented at either the induction ceremony, or the Ball, or both.

Featured in interviews are Jim Thomas, a lead member of the Hall selection committee, and Max Moore, who was inducted into the Hall in 2011.

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HALL OF FAME HISTORY

By *Delanie Stafford*, **55th Wing** Public Affairs.

The *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* has left an indelible mark on history since its inception in 1941. The **Wing** has been involved in nearly every major conflict, beginning with World War II, and is one of the most heavily deployed units in the US Air Force today.

As the **55th Wing** celebrates its 76th birthday this year, the **55th Wing Association** is once again accepting nominations for the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame.

"We want the people in the **Wing** to come forward with the people they hold in high esteem," said Retired US Air Force Col. Jim Thomas, who is the former **55th Wing Association** president and a Hall of Fame selection key committee member.



Thomas says the purpose of the program is to recognize individuals who have made the most significant contributions or sacrifices in support of the **55th Wing** mission. The program is also meant to instill pride in the Wing. He added that all members of the Wing have a say in who is inducted.

"It's their Hall of Fame - we want them to submit the people that they feel are valuable to this

Wing," Thomas said. "And then those people, in later years, can walk by that wall in the Wing headquarters and say 'I nominated that guy.' Or wing members can look up there and read the citations on the plaques...and say 'I want to be like that person.' That's what we are after in the Hall of Fame."

Once the nominees are selected, the Wing arranges for the induction presentation, which typically coincides with **55th Wing** Birthday Ball. This year's ball is scheduled for September 9 and will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Air Force.

"The Hall of Fame is a great way to honor those who have made the biggest impact on the success of this organization," said Col. Michael Manion, **55th Wing** commander. "I would encourage nominating someone you feel is deserving of this honor."

The Hall of Fame began in 1999 when the first 19 members were inducted in what was the Heritage Project. In total, 64 individuals and the **55th Wing** spouses, past, present, and future, have received the honor.

Retired Air Force LtCol Max Moore, who was selected for induction in 2011, said the award is important to preserving the legacy of the *Fightin' Fifty Fifth* and is one of his greatest achievements. "It was my very good fortune and high privilege to spend so much of my career in the **55th** as a crew-dog navigator and a staff officer," Moore said. "The dedication, motivation and the job satisfaction was always there in every position, in everything we did. It was the highest honor of my lifetime to be inducted into the Hall of Fame and become a part of the illustrious roster of **55th** heroes and legends."

The deadline for nominations is July 15. For more information on the nomination process, visit the "Hall of Fame" page on the **55th Wing Association's** website at <http://www.55wa.org>.

HALL OF FAME

THIS 55th WING HALL OF FAME HONORS THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE FIGHTIN' 55TH WHO HAVE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED INCREDIBLE PROFESSIONALISM AND DEDICATION IN SUPPORT OF THE MISSIONS WE HAVE BEEN TASKED TO PERFORM BY OUR NATION. THEY REPRESENT THE UNTOLD NUMBER OF VALIANT, DEDICATED, AND PATRIOTIC WARFIGHTERS WHO HAVE SERVED THIS GREAT NATION, AND THIS WING, WITH DISTINCTION.

THIS WALL OF FAME SYMBOLIZES AN ILLUSTRIOUS HERITAGE AND LEGACY OF WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF THE 55th WING, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, CAN BE JUSTLY PROUD.

VIDEMUS OMNIA

DEDICATED 31 JANUARY 2003

(Photo and Hall of Fame dedication plaque quote inserted by Moore.)

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55TH WING/AIR FORCE BALL 9 SEPTEMBER 2017 Century Link Center - Omaha

The 55th Wing Birthday Ball was originally scheduled for 1 April, but as the Ball committee began planning for the gala event, it was discovered that the committee had lost its IRS tax exempt status due to neglect to request same in a few previous years. Thus, there was no effective way to raise funds for the event. The IRS said it would take six months to have a reapplication approved.

Subsequently, the Wing regrouped, and Colonel Marty Reynolds, then-the 55th Wing CC, asked his staff if they could pull off a ball in September.

The Offutt TOP 3 Association (Senior NCOs) volunteered to take the lead to plan an event in just five months, other than the usual year's time frame, and to use its tax exempt ID number.

The decision was to 'merge' a Birthday Ball with an Air Force anniversary event.

The theme is to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Air Force as a separate service. Also in the theme are: 100 years of Air Power and 150 years of Nebraska statehood.

The heritage of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* will be covered in the program script.



Logo by Josh Plueger, 55th Wing PA.

The planning is to include the Hall of Fame inductee(s) presentation, and the announcement of the awarding of the 55th Wing Association Award for Excellence. Other details are in the works.

The stated goal is to set a Ball record for attendance (which is now 970 for 2012); thus a standard ticket price for all attendees, regardless of rank or status, is \$20 per body.

Fund raising, sponsors and donors will have to make up the difference for the actual per plate charges. Historically, the Association has donated \$1000 every year since 2001.

Nevertheless, an event since 1979 and a 38 year tradition are set aside for 2017.

Whether or not the 55th Wing will return to celebrating its storied heritage in 2018 or 2019 is undetermined. A quick turnaround for March/April 2018 seems questionable at this point.

The Hilton Omaha is directly across the street from the venue (with a skywalk), but at this time it is not known if there is a special room rate for the evening of the Ball. Negotiations TBD.

Please check the Association web site from time to time for updates on further developments as they become known.

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Please note that 55th Wing Protocol office personnel 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 have occurred in the recent months/years, nor 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.

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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 Balls past, and this year's Air Force Ball, pay for themselves.**

NO taxpayer dollars finance these events. They are paid for with 'ticket' sales, fundraising, sponsors, and donors.

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55TH WING ASSOCIATION AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

The original trophy, commissioned in 2000, is now retired and is on permanent display in the **General Russell Daugherty** Conference Center at Offutt. A newer high-tech version has replaced it.



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

The new trophy has a viewing screen capable of displaying a looped video of past winners and aircraft, for

instance.

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

Award winners receive a representative plaque presented at the **Wing's** annual ball.

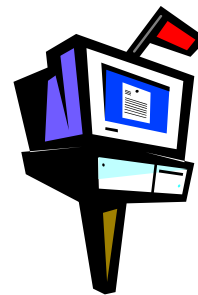
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Cartoon courtesy of Jerry Thompson, a SAC bomber pilot and famed SAC cartoonist.

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MAIL 'N STUFF



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In response to a question posed in the January 2017 newsletter by **Chuck Meyer**, I have a few answers:

The **55th SRW** at Forbes AFB, KS, was tasked to provide weather recon support for the photo recon planes' flights over Cuba; RF101s which flew twice a day out of MacDill AFB, FL. Our take-off times were midnight and noon for about six hours.

Since aircraft, crews, and maintenance resources were over-extended for the whole **55th Wing** it was an ad-hoc arrangement. The crews were housed in a Holiday Inn off base and used rental cars for transportation.

Most of the flights were flown with P, CP and Nav only; except for one ERB47H aircraft, which flew with two EWOs: Raven One, **Otto Bobo**, and Raven Two, **Keith Smith**. We flew with several different front end combinations, never our own.

After flying one midnight mission, processing our intel take data, going to breakfast at the diner next to the hotel, we headed to bed. At about 1000 hrs, we met the men from the other crew heading out. The crew consisted of **William A. Wyatt**, **W. C. Maxwell** and **Ronald M. Rial**.

About 1400 hrs, we were awakened with news that they had crashed on take-off and all perished. This was the third crew lost in six weeks from the 343SRS. We flew our next mission that night. The most apprehensive take-off I ever had.

I believe most of the time there were three aircraft and four crews there at a time.

The safety requirement limit of 125 hours per month flying time was waived for many crewdogs. A/C **Ed Gray** had two waivers in one month. The aircraft and maintenance crews were stretched out to the max, as well.

Keith W. Smith, EWO, Colorado Springs, CO.
(From an e-mail 8 February 2017)

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*Enjoying dinner in the Florida panhandle.
L to R: Gerri and George Back, Errol and Sue
Hoberman, JoAnn and Alex Garrison, 7 March
2017, just after George's 80th birthday.
(Contributed by Errol, Navarre, FL.)*

* * * * *

Max,

Fun looking at the Tampa reunion photos (*on the web site*).

As always, a great time!

Kudos to all who had any part in making it such a success.

*Terry Murphy, New Bern, SC.
(From an e-mail, 8 May 2017.)*



*No Evil Trio at Tampa
L-R: Maloney, Lambert, Murphy*

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*You cannot have everything.
Where would you keep it?*

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FORMER WING COMMANDER PROMOTED

Brigadier General John T. Rauch, a former **55th Wing** commander, (June 2012-June 2013) was nominated for the rank of major general on 10 March 2017.



His current position is Director, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities, Deputy Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Headquarters USAF, Pentagon, Washington, DC. (*Whew!!*)

The general is a sustaining member of the **Association**. *Hoo-rah!!*

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NEWSLETTER INPUTS WELCOME

Yes, we are aware that these newsletters tend to be Offutt-centric. 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 9. 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, articles, 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.



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USE OF BOLD FACE TYPE IN TEXTS

Readers may have wondered from time to time, why words or phrases are in **bold face type** and others are not. Of course you have. Maybe not.

Emphasis is one reason to draw extra attention to what is written, *Hello!* With proper names, as a general, but not an inviolate rule, when a name is used for the **first time** in this newsletter, it is in **bold face**. After that, generally not. This is a fairly standard procedure for many commercial publications. Now you know.

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THREE 55th SQUADRONS TO CELEBRATE 100 YEAR ANNIVERSARIES

The 95th Reconnaissance Squadron, RAF Mildenhall, UK; and the 41st and 43rd Electronic Combat Squadrons of the 55th 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 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.

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EAST COAST "CHAPTER"

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

Potential gatherings for this summer include a *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* 'Bullpen BBQ' at a Potomac Nationals baseball game in mid- or late July; and a wine tasting social in the rolling hills of Virginia in late August or early September.

For information on future 55th Wing Association East events, or to get on the e-mail listing, phone Ricky McMahon's cell: 571-643-2602, or e-mail at potomacpistol@gmail.com, or Ricky.McMahon@L3T.com. His cohort is Trish Seinwill, pseinwill@yahoo.com; then pass your contact information to either of them.

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SAN ANTONIO LUNCH BUNCH

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

Initially, five veteran crewdogs began the group a few years ago. Typically, 9-12 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 June 2017.
Pictured, L-R: **Ray Uribe**, **Ned Gates**, **Charles McBride**, **Dave Frutchey**, **Mike Morris**, **Bill White**.
(Group motto noted.)(Photo provided by McBride.)

Others who often attend are: **Bruce Barker, Jim Hilliard, Clay Harvey, Hank Dubuy, Ron Nickerson, Ralph Cofield, Chuck Younkin, Andy Borden, and Howard Ham.** Occasional visitors are: **Ken Bryars, Bill O'Hara, and Frank McMillan.**

Anyone wishing to join this genial group can contact Dave at dfrutche@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.

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OFFUTT AREA 55TH ROMEO BREAKFAST CLUB

Offutt area alumni of the **55th SRW**, and friends, have been meeting every week for well over 25 years. Although days and locations have changed over the years, they now convene each Tuesday mornings at *The Lodge*, a bar and grill in La Platte, NE, just a few clicks south of the airbase.

Attendance ranges anywhere from six to 20, or more, at these "meetings", as the four person tables are moved in place.

Some of the original organizers/members of this gathering are **Reg Urschler, Frank Hicks**, who still attend, and the late **Jimmy Reinhart** and **Dick Hedge**.

Other local folks in the **ROMEO** (Retired Old Men Eating Out) breakfast club, AKA: the **TM55RCCB**, "Tuesday Morning **55th** Retirees Commanders Call Breakfast", who are regular to occasional attendees are: Jim Thomas, Jim Maloney, Ham Kennedy, **Carl Diver**, Bill Ernst, **Steve Stevens, Jim Arbuckle, Ron Strong, Gene Murphy, Fred Schapker, Hank Rieden, Mick Vinckier, Roland Saenz, John Tresemer, Mike Cook, John Johnson, Don Bacon** (*before he was elected to Congress*), **Tom Garrity, Dan Peterson, Roger Craig, Mike Wise, Dick Harriman, Mike Tabler, Chris Canada, Rich Clark, Don Kelly, Max Moore** and **Gerry Pritchard**, among others.

On occasion, guys do bring relatives: adult children, grandkids, the intrepid spouse (*very rare*), and even a mom. Decorum is 'usually' better on those occasions.

One of the more interesting things about this event is that one never knows who might drop in.

Many alums know of the meetings, so out-of-towners such as **Fox Censullo**, Charlie McBride, **Jeff Polles, Bill Belew**, and others, have been known to show face.

*This is neither the Last Supper,
nor the first breakfast.*



(Apologies for the poor effects due to focal length and exposure, but best we could do.)

Counterclockwise from the lower left:

Harriman, G.Murphy, Saenz, Schapker, Tabler, Moore, Stevens, Thomas, Ernst, Diver, Kennedy, his grandson, Johnson, Rieden, Maloney, Saenz's son, Garrity, Hicks, Strong. Taken August 2014.

Ambiance is not the draw here, although Fox News is usually on the TV in the background, but the food is good and the prices are better.

No real business is conducted and no actual decisions are made, but useful information is often exchanged. Discussions occasionally get lively, and camaraderie memories of the 'good ol' days', politics, and modern medical science (*Please, not while I'm eating!!!*) all receive frequent attention.

Absolutely nothing is sacred here, and good natured sarcasm often reigns. Everyone has been, or will be, a target, some more than others. Ego scar tissue abounds. Thick hide is required attire.

Lodge owners, siblings **Eddie Krajicek** (cook) and **Carol Strazclas** (server) give as good as they get.

Unfortunately, time takes its toll and former attendees such as **Robb Hoover, Arlen Howe, Harry Tull, Fritz Hyde, Joe Guylavics, and Dan Curzon**, and others, have left vacancies.

(Basic article and photo contributed by Maloney, Papillon, NE, edited by Moore.)

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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.

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82nd SRS WEB SITE (COMBAT APPLE ERA)

Dave Frutchet has developed a web site dedicated to everyone who worked with and flew RC-135M Combat Apple missions from Kadena AB, Okinawa, 1967-77. This was before the 82nd SRS was under the 55th, but with the 3rd Air Division (SAC), then at Andersen AFB, Guam.

Now up and running:
Enter goo.gl/huyuBK in the search bar to get there. In the top right corner of the home page are two year groups. Click on either one to bring up the four sub sets:
Command/Crews, 100 Missions, Awards and Dec's,

and Fun Times.

Missing is anything from 1973 on, so your help is needed there.

Interested parties are able to input pix, stories, and comments from that era for everyone's enjoyment. Anyone wanting to contribute ideas and/or info please contact Dave at dfrutchet@att.net for more details.

Get to it Hoggies!!

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EC-135 RESTORATION UPDATE

Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum is about half-way through a two-year, \$200,000 project. Just \$87,000 raised so far. After the initial surge of publicity, donations have slowed.

You can send a donation to: SAC AEROSPACE MUSEUM, Attn: Development, c/o

EC-135, 2821 West Park Hwy, Ashland, NE, 68003; or on line at: SACMuseum.org/donate, and state it is for the EC restoration.

Support from donors is sorely needed since little money has come from corporate donations.

The ultimate goal is to restore the plane to the way it was when the last *Looking Glass* mission was flown in 1990. In 2018 it will be displayed (*without wings and engines*) in the main museum viewing area.

Outside the aircraft, the volunteers continue to prepare the frame and skin of the aircraft for priming and painting.



049 Sanded and prepped for painting, June 2017

The workers recently discovered significant damage to the rudder surface. This damage will require the metals magicians to do the entire repair from the high lift.

Steve Stevens and former 55 SRW member **Merle Johansen** have spent numerous hours preparing and painting the aircraft hubcaps. There was so much paint on the hubs the manufacturer's name could not be seen.

Inside the aircraft, the volunteers have almost completed repairing corroded areas on the inside frame of the fuselage, and have finished repairing and repainting the plywood floors. They have removed and are restoring the equipment from the boom pod.

Volunteer **Bruce Jones** is rebuilding the wooden frames that held the overhead lights down the center of the fuselage.

In the cockpit, volunteers **Chuck Karrick** and **Dick Doolittle** have made significant progress.



Painting is completed, the insulation has been reinstalled, several instruments have been reinstalled, and cockpit lighting is turned on.

If you flew on the EC-135s, or significantly supported the EC-135 mission, and visit the SAC Museum, be sure to ask a restoration volunteer to escort you into the Restoration Hanger for a closer look at 049.

Safety permitting, the volunteers welcome the chance to talk about, and show any visitors the progress made in restoring your aircraft.



Carriger, Stevens and Doolittle brief a group of visitors in the restoration area, 10 June 2017.

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 volunteer work time and expertise can do so by contacting the Museum's web-site, sacmuseum.org.

*(Updated material provided by **Hank Carriger**, Volunteer Coordinator, June 2017. Photos by Carriger and Moore.)*

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TAPS



AMES, Ivan G., 82, 2 May 2017, Blue Water Bay, FL; wife: **Jan**. Ivan served in the **55th SRW** at Offutt AFB, NE, as an RC-135 pilot/IP, chief of stand/eval, and ops officer in the 343rd SRS from early to mid-1970s. Prior to that he had a

Vietnam tour. After retiring from the AF, he flew at various times for US Airways, the Army Corps of Engineers, and managed a flying school and charter business. He was an avid and low handicap golfer for most of his adult life.

DAMRON, Melville, 11 December 2016, Lubbock, TX; wife, **Lois**. Mel was an IMT on RC-135s, and was an electronic communications superintendent in the **55th SRW** at Offutt AFB, NE. His career included assignments at Westover AFB, MA, Biggs AFB, TX, Kadena AB, Okinawa, and Shemya AFB, AK. Mel retired as a SMSgt after 27 years active service.

CAMPBELL, William J., 85, 2 February 2017, Sarasota, FL; wife, **Peggy**. A native of Chicago and a 1953 graduate of the US Military Academy, Bill became an AF pilot and was one of the first in the SR-71 program at Beale AFB, CA, in 1965. He commanded the 6th Strat Wing at Eielson AFB, AK, in 1975. Later he was commander of 8th AF at Barksdale AFB, LA; and then Vice CINCSAC at Offutt. He retired a lieutenant general in 1985.

DEAL, JAMES E., 84, 31 January 2017, Auburn, WA; wife, **Karolyn**. Jim was a career maintenance officer who commanded the **55th Aircraft Maintenance Sqd** at Offutt in 1978-79. Later, after a year as an exchange officer with the RAF in the UK, he returned to the **55th SRW** as Deputy Commander for Maintenance, 1981-82. Jim retired in 1989 after 34 years active service. He then worked for Boeing in Seattle for 22 years.

FRICK, Ronald, 78, 4 February 2017, Papillion, NE; wife of **55** years, **Sally**. During his 25 years active duty he was an RC-135 navigator and staff officer in the **55th** at Offutt circa late 1970s until retiring in 1985. Ron was an avid barbershop singer and a master bridge player for many years.

GEER, Lyle A., 88, 26 March 2017, Surprise, AZ. A native of Minnesota, he entered the Air Force as an aviation cadet in 1947. He became a tanker pilot and served in Korea. Lyle was a longtime resident of Bellevue, NE, with tours at SAC HQ in tanker ops and plans. Retiring in 1979 after 31 years active service, he became a CPA.

HAILEY, Jane P., 75, 14 March 2017, Lincoln, NE; wife of **Robert**, an RC-135 navigator in the **55th** at Offutt and 82nd at Kadena. Jane was an honor graduate of McLean Hospital School of Nursing in Arlington, MA. She had a 20+ year

career in psychiatric nursing, and also worked as a school nurse in Bellevue, NE.

MEDFORD, Samuel Widd, 80, 8 May 2017, Austin, TX. Widd was an RB-47 pilot in the **55th SRW** at Forbes AFB, KS, in the early 1960s. After leaving the Air Force, he had a 20+ year career with Trans World Airlines, retiring as a captain.

MONCURE, Thomas F., 91, 15 January 2017; Tucson, AZ. Tom served during WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Cold Wars. He was an RB-50 EWO at Biggs AFB, TX; then in RB-47s at Forbes AFB, KS beginning in 1955, and in RCs with the move to Offutt. Tom was in the **55th SRW** for over 20 years interrupted by a tour at Shemya. He retired in 1970, then worked another 20 years for Lockheed-Martin.

PYKE, James A., Jr., 83, 11 February 2017, Cheyenne, WY. Entered the Air Force for pilot training in 1955; he served a tour at Takhli AB, Vietnam. Jim came to the **55th SRW** at Offutt when the E-4 operations moved from Andrews AFB, MD, in November 1974. He served with the 1ACCS and was ADO. Jim was instrumental in the E-4 program from its inception, development and operations. He retired in 1983 with 28 years service.

SHAW, William (Bill) J., 60, 24 May 2017, Annapolis, MD; wife, **Oren**. A 1978 graduate of the AF Academy, he served 23 years including tours in the 1980s in the **55th SRW** as RC-135 EWO at Offutt, followed by the Det. at Athens, Greece; and later at Wright Patterson AFB, OH, and National Security Agency. After AF retirement Bill worked as a contractor at NSA, and volunteered much of his personal time to help find a cure for Alzheimer's.

THEOBALD, Truman Roger, 30 April 2017, San Antonio, TX; wife, **Ruth**. *Only information provided.*

* * * * *

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.

The information is then relayed to the **Association** president and the web master.

Please include next of kin and an address to whom an Association condolence message may be sent by the President.

The date of demise, age, location; and if known, connection to the 55th - 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.)

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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 **55th** 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.

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MEMORIAL BRICK ORDERS STILL CAN DO

There still 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.

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 about 100 available for new orders. Since 2003 about 50 new bricks have been added. Some years a few new bricks are added, some years, none.

Any new brick orders must be sent to Ernst **NLT 31 July** to give the engravers/installers this summer and early fall for the installation.

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Jack Kovacs reports that 20 replacement bricks have been ordered with Dodds Monuments, and should be placed in the patio by summer's end.

Another batch of faded or damaged bricks will be ID'd for replacement next year.

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FLAGS FLOWN OVER THE AIR FORCE MEMORIAL - PROCEDURES HAVE CHANGED

As of 1 April 2017, the responsibility for daily operations of the Air Force Memorial have transitioned from the Air Force Association to the United States Air Force.

This is the very latest word from the Memorial staff:

“We are currently in the process of developing the flag-flying program under the Air Force.

For now, **we require that a flag be sent to us, along with a return mailing envelope, or prepaid postage.** Our address is 1 Air Force Memorial Dr, Arlington, VA, 22204;

ATTN: Outreach Coordinator.”

“Once we have a program fully developed, a form will be available online at **our new website**, <http://www.afdw.af.mil/afmemorial/>. Please feel free to put **afmemorial@mail.mil** as the point of contact (POC) for any inquiries.”

“Thank you for your continued support.”

Zachary H. Steele, GS-12, DAF
Events & Outreach Coordinator,
Air Force Memorial (Cel): 703-462-4093

For inquiries on hosting events, visiting, or for general information about the Memorial please contact the AFM Staff at 703-462-4093, or via e-mail at **afmemorial@mail.mil**. You can learn more at the new Air Force Memorial website at <https://www.afdw.af.mil/afememorial/>.

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*The best part about the future
is that it always starts with tomorrow.*

* * * * *

REUNIONS

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THE DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS SOCIETY NATIONAL CONVENTION DALLAS, TEXAS SEPTEMBER 24-28, 2017

The 2017 convention will be held from 24-28 September in Dallas. This convention will honor the “*Heroic Women of the DFC*”.

This is shaping up to be a big one. Nice hotel, great agenda, program and tours.

There will be three evening meals planned, as well as a hosted hospitality room included in the price of the registration. There will be guest speakers at the evening meals and four tours of local attractions during the days.

Complete details and registration form can be accessed by going to: **www.dfcsociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/Flyer-2017-convention.pdf**

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AIR FORCE NAVIGATORS OBSERVERS REUNION SEPTEMBER 26-28 2017 SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

To be held at the Holiday Inn San Antonio Riverwalk Hotel, 217 N St. Mary’s Street. The hotel is located in the heart of downtown San Antonio and has direct access to the famous Riverwalk.

It is also within walking distance to downtown dining and attractions, including the Alamo, Rivercenter Mall, LaVillita Historic Arts Village, and El Mercado Market Center.



Complete details and registration form can be accessed by going to: <http://www.afnoa.org/reunion>

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OMAHA AREA POPULAR FOR REUNIONS IN 2018

Following are 'mark your calendar notices'.

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BIG SAFARI ASSOCIATION



This one begins 20 June 2018 and ends Saturday, the 23rd.

Reunion chair, **Bill Ernst**, is looking at the Garden Marriott in Bellevue as HQ.

The college World Series will be going at that time.

Details TBD in newsletters and on the organization's web site.

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B-47 STRATOJET ASSOCIATION

Scheduled from 18 September thru Friday 21 September (check out) 2018.

Dick Purdum leads this gathering.

Reunion headquarters will be at the Magnolia Hotel, 615 Howard Street in downtown Omaha, just around the corner from the Orpheum Theater.

Details TBD in newsletters and on web site.



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ASSOCIATION BX

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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, 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, or just because you are you.



Photos by Sergeant.

Now available in white and royal blue, the 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 and color you want in your order.

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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.

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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.

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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.

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.

*(The tie was the brain child and creation of the late, **Sam Pizzo**, the first elected president of the **Association**, an original and long time member of the Board of Directors.)*

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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 55th Wing Association, and Bill will promptly respond to your order.

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55TH FASHION PINS

The pins continue to be sold to **Association** members all over the country. They are particularly evident at 55th reunions, the Ball, and at official and social functions at and near Offutt.

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. *(Shown actual size)*



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 55th Commander's Wingmen, allowed to wear the coveted leather flight jacket awarded for superior and continued community support to the 55th Wing.

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WHO SHOT WHAT

Graphics from various sources, Clip art, and web sites. Pictures **not** previously attributed: Rauch, official AF photo; Award for Excellence trophy by Moore. Olmstead from Gail; AF Memorial from the Air Force web site.

Association tie by Pizzo; 55th pin by Moore; ‘Mad Max’ graphic by **Patricia Gros**, friend of the **Association.**

Photos from the **reunion** throughout the recap article, minutes and following album, were provided by Moore and/or Murphy.

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55TH WING ASSOCIATION REUNION – TAMPA, FL ATTENDEE LIST

They were there, and you weren't.

DANIEL AARON
GIL and ELLEN AGRONIS
BUD and JANET ASHTON
HARRIS BLOUNT and NORMA KUSSMAN
CHUCK and CAROL BURMEISTER
TOM and LORRAINE DAWES
HANK and SANDRA DUBUY
VAL DUGIE
DOUGLAS and DAVID EDDINS (Son)
TOM and BETTY HARRIS
CLARK and VALERIE HINKLE

ERROL and SUSAN HOBERMAN
 SAM and RAY KINCAID
 HAM and PAT KENNEDY
 RON KNECHT
COLONEL MO KRISHNA
 CLIFF and KAY LAMBERT
 CHARLES and SARA LILLER
 JIM MALONEY
 STU and KRISTIN MARTIN
 CRAIG and KRIS MCFALL
 MIKE and PEARL MCFARLAND
 BILL and SUE MCKECHNIE
 RICKY MCMAHON
 KAT MERRIMAN (Young Lady Crow)
 LARRY and SUSAN MITCHELL
 MAX and CAROL MOORE
 TERRY and KATHY MURPHY
 GEORGE and ROB PENFIELD (Son)
LTCOL DAVID PREISMAN
 RICHARD RAY and COLEEN BESHARA
 DON REMAKLUS
 GEORGE and BETTY ROSS
 ROLAND and KATHY SAENZ
 WOLFGANG SAMUEL and JOAN POWER
 BRIAN SCHUETT
 JOE and JOANNE SHANLEY
LTGEN JACK SHANAHAN
 JOE and KIM SINISCALCHI
 DAVID and CAROL SJOLUND
 GARY and PATTY SMITH



*Enjoying the poolside gazebo:
 Standing: L-R: Hank Dubuy, Gil Agronis, Jim
 Thomas. Counterclockwise at table: Sandra Dubuy,
 Kay Lambert, Kathy Murphy, Cliff Lambert, Ellen
 Agronis, Pat Kennedy.*



Tampa skyline from MacDill AFB.

REUNION PHOTO ALBUM



*Betty Ross checks in Richard Ray,
 Wolf Samuel, Joan Power.*



*Susan Mitchell and Betty Ross greet golfers
 Ricky Mac, George Ross, Maloney, Dugie.*



Attendees enjoying camaraderie, food and beverages at the Thursday evening reception.



Tampa Lowry Zoo safari: L-R: Coleen Bashara, Richard Ray, Rob Penfield, George Penfield (in back), Kathy and Roland Saenz, Susan Mitchell, Carol Moore (maiden name Lowry, so she was awarded a special prize.)



L -R: Hinkle, Mitchell, Knecht, Maloney, Ross, Smith back to camera. "Here's how it is, guys."



L-R: Susan Mitchell, Carol Moore, Sue McKecknie, Pat Kennedy, Kathy Saenz, Kat Merriman, standing.



Basking in the Florida sun at the impressive Special Operations Command Memorial.



Counterclockwise from the left: Cliff and Kay Lambert, Pearl McFarland, the Murphys, Betty and Tom Harris, George Ross. In back: the Kennedys and Ron Knecht.





The Star Ship (previous page) and our hardy crew await boarding.



On the non-bounding Tampa Bay, It was smooth sailing and good food.



This happy troupe awaits their cuisine: From the left, counterclockwise: Carol Moore, Sam and Ray Kincaid, Craig and Kris McFall, Kim and Joe Siniscalchi. The missing man took the photo.



No need to tell this group to smile: L-R: George Penfield, LtGen Shanahan, Gary Smith, Joe Spivey, Patty Smith (in front) and Colonel Mo Krishna.



Cocktail hour: L-R: Chuck Burmeister, Joe and JoAnne Shanley, Kathy Murphy, Carol Burmeister.



Now THIS is a pretty picture. Really too bad it isn't printed in color. From left: Kris McFall, Betty Ross, Patty Smith, Pearl McFarland, Carol Moore, Kay Lambert, Pat Kennedy.



Counterclockwise from left: the Mitchells, the McKechnies, LtGen Shanahan, and the Siniscalchis



Clockwise from the right front: Gil Agronis, David Eddins, the Lillers, Doug Eddins, the Dawses, Ellen Agronis



*Traditional lodge photo: 'The mens', Vietnam and Cold War veterans all.
(Photo by Sue McKecknie)*



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** only joining after 1 Oct extended to 31 December 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.**

14 January 2016

