

Videmus Omnia

55th WING

ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

JULY

2020

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fightin' Fifty-Fifth Colleagues, I trust, this finds you and yours—STILL--COVID safe, healthy and wise?! The proverbial, "...may you live in interesting times..." certainly applies to 2020!



Targeting in on Association alumni news: As you know, *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* alums continue to soar even after leaving our noble fold. To

borrow a phrase, we are the "wind beneath their wings"!

You'll see embedded in this latest Max-missive, a recent announcement on new "stars" in the **55th Wing** "galaxy". Sending "CONGRATS!" on behalf of the **Association**; and wishing our best in his continued career progress. (*Pg 12*)

Dead reckoning to your Association's staff: Your Board of Directors (BoD) successfully navigated social distancing with a virtual meeting on 16 July via ZOOM (kudos to **Jim Maloney, Bill Ernst** and **Trish Seinwill** for their push to do so!).

(*See meeting notes following on page 2.*)

Mo Krishna (membership chair since 1 April) and his trusty sidekick, **Jon Adams**, are successfully wringing out details of their joint-venture leading **Association** membership which hovers in the mid-400s range. Kudos to this "Dynamic Duo" for developing a highly successful (now, oft-used!) on-line membership enrollment.

Your **Association** continues to be financially healthy; in large part, due to the continuing diligent efforts of **Michael Cook**, Treasurer.

Notably, the **Association** received an unexpected (and most welcome) boost recently with

regard to predicted 2020 cash flow--a generous donation from an anonymous new member who wanted to fund something memorable in honor of **Keith Cox**, a well respected COBRA BALL raven who passed away, way too young, years ago.

Half the honorarium went toward the **Association** monument (to be in Bldg. 500, twin to the one dedicated at last year's Rendezvous in the Omaha National Cemetery (ONC). The other half was donated to the 45th RS's RIVET AMBER monument (the Wildcats are still raising funds for that one!). The split-donation is a true win-win.

Noting RIVET AMBER, our illustrious Vice President **Ricky (RJ) McMahan's** vineyard is releasing a new vintage to honor that ill-fated mission. Like many in our ranks, I hope to try it soon.

Your BoD is also on the prowl for a new webmaster to replace "**Jimbo**" **Maloney**, who has admirably guided our website for years; but will retire from the role NLT our 2021 reunion. If you know of any contenders willing to accept Jim's baton being passed, please reach out and help grow the **Association's** "next generation".

Mission Delays: Unfortunately, COVID prevented many of local/annual activities, including those associated with Memorial Day. Our editor, Max, was scheduled to present the **USAF/55th Wing Association** wreath in this year's ONC ceremony; however, ONC activities were cancelled with NO back-up date. OAFB Cemetery ceremonies fell to the same fate, as did the Cambridge American Cemetery in the UK.

Indeed, COVID-related restrictions continue to delay actions on our plate: ONC monument rededication (final engraving complete); the traditional meet and greet dinner with the **Wing**

commander; USAF Birthday Ball; and (some) Bldg. 500 transformation (memorabilia moves, Palm Memorial and Award for Excellence trophies' relocation, etc., to name a few).

However, the Hall of Fame was successfully re-established in Bldg. 500, and the HQ STRATCOM exterior signage was removed. (Pg 10)

The challenges abound; but we'll get there, eventually, as further evaluations allow.

Cleared for Take-off: Barring further constraints/challenges, eternally optimistic **Val Dugie's** planning for our April 2021 Tucson Rendezvous/Reunion (co-hosted with the BIG SAFARI ASSN, whose 2020 event was cancelled and they requested to reschedule coincidental with ours) continues unabated. Fingers crossed; we'll see you there! Updated information is discussed later in this edition. (Pg. 16)

As the sun sets on this prezgram, I appreciate, even more this particular year that, "The Sun Never Sets on the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*!"

Despite social, medical, political, cultural challenges—and more--our **Association** continues to "Honor Those Who Serve and Serve Those Who Do". Well done!

Videmus Omnia, Spv V

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BoD VIRTUAL MEETING 16 JULY 2020

Due to Covid-19 restrictions (among other things), the **55th Wing Association** Board of Directors held a virtual meeting through the use of the on-line program Zoom. Twelve board members attended the meeting: **President Joe Spivey, Mohan Krishna, Max Moore** (*in person at Calvert's conference room*); **Vice President Ricky McMahon (VA), Errol Hoberman (FL), Secretary Trish Seinwill (VA), George Ross (CO), Val Dugie (VA), Bill Ernst (FL), Don Kelley (NE), Fox Censullo (TX),** (*on screen*) and **Colonel Dave Preisman (NE)** via telecom. **Jon Adams (NE)** was invited on screen as the appointed assistant membership chair.

While technically there was a quorum present, this was a business discussion/reports only meeting. No actions were proposed or taken.

President Spivey convened the meeting at 1645 CDT. He then recognized in order:

Newsletter Editor Moore stated he was in throes of finalizing the next issue for publication by the end of July pending specific input from contributors.

Webmaster Maloney gave an update on the **55th Wing Association** webpage, reminding everyone that he would be stepping down at the next reunion.

Dugie gave an update on the **55th Wing Association** Reunion. Much discussion by many ensued and centered on potentials/speculation/what-ifs, etc. Spivey did mention that at some point there would be a go/no go decision.

Adams gave a membership/data base update (*see report in this issue*) and stated that the on-line membership signup is going well.

Spivey gave an update on the Hall of Fame hallway in Bldg. 500, sharing that due to the Herculean efforts of **Mike "Coach" Hoskins**, the Hall of Fame plaques were saved from the 2019 flood. Mo Krishna reported that the plaques have been hung in the now wing headquarters in Building 500. The **55th Wing** has asked the **55th Mission Support Group** to re-designate the structure **Building 55**.

Mo also gave a brief overview of the grand plan to renovate the base from the 2019 flood. (Pgs 8-9)

President stated that the September Air Force Ball at Offutt has been canceled, but the long range plan is to get the **55th Wing** Birthday Ball back on track in 2021.

All in all, it was a useful and productive exercise getting the group 'together' after months of sporadic e-mail contact on various subjects.

Meeting was adjourned at 1710.

(*Combined effort from notes by Secretary Seinwill, President Spivey and Moore.*)

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FROM THE 55TH WING COMMANDER

Fightin' Fifty-Fifth alumni!

I hope you, your families and loved ones are staying healthy during COVID-19. I took command just over a year ago now and looking back, there

was no way to predict how many challenges (or opportunities) would be headed our way in a mere 365 days.

In the midst of a pandemic our country hasn't seen in more than a century, our Airmen continue to crush the mission in incredibly challenging conditions, and you should be extremely proud of them.



As I reflect on this time, it is no wonder why you're so proud of your prior service with this incredible team! I'm grateful that you continue to stay engaged and involved.

This is truly an historic time for the ***Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*** as we are in the midst of three projects that will have lasting impacts on our installation for the next century.

First, the runway reconstruction project contract has been awarded! This effort is being overseen by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC). It will reconstruct the original runway infrastructure, built in 1941, to include full-depth concrete end sections, an asphalt center section, and asphalt shoulders, as well as installation of new lighting systems.

Once this project starts, we will transition our operations to the Lincoln Airport over the next year-and-half. We expect nearly 700 personnel to take the 50-mile trek daily in order to accomplish our mission. To say the least this will be challenging and quite burdensome, but I have no doubt our Airmen will rise to the challenge.

Second, we continue to recover from the March 2019 flood. We have currently achieved 15% design for eight campuses that will not only transform how we accomplish our mission, but also the look and layout of the southeastern portion of our base. These eight campuses include the NC3 Alert Campus, SATCOM Campus, Multidomain Operations Campus, Emergency Power Microgrid, Security Forces Campus, Logistic Readiness Squadron Campus, Flight Line Campus and Base Lake Campus.

At this time, we are projecting \$626M for the rebuild and we're working closely with Air Force and Air Combat Command leadership to secure the necessary support and funding.

Third, we are in the early stages of re-unifying our headquarters into Building 500, the former home of US Strategic Command. So far, the command staff, Commander's Action Group, Plans and Programs, and Protocol have all transitioned into this facility. As we begin to make ourselves at home, we are re-branding the entire facility so when you do come to our new headquarters, you are keenly aware that you are at the home of the **55th Wing**.

Long-term we have a lot of things we need to upgrade like the HVAC, communications system, and electrical system, but in the end, we anticipate more than 3,000 personnel calling this facility home – from the Wing as well as from nearly 50 of our mission partners. We anticipate the entire project being complete somewhere around 2025.

I would be remiss if I did not specifically mention our response to COVID-19. Early on, we established a Public Health Emergency Working Group, which included experts from across the installation. Under their guidance and recommendation, we went into a declared Public Health Emergency, raised our Health Protection Condition level to Charlie, and had thousands teleworking from home with only mission-essential personnel reporting for duty on the installation in mid-March.

Since then, this pandemic has without question tested us in ways we would never have imagined. But our Airmen continued to make the mission happen, and I couldn't be more proud of the way our entire base populace has responded and been supportive.

Thankfully, we've started our transition out of that posture and hope to continue making progress as long as data trends in the right direction regarding positive cases, testing capability and hospital capacity.

However, in the interim, we will continue to require a safe physical distance, continue the



frequency of hand washing and other sanitizing measures and the wear of masks in accordance with Center for Disease Control and base policy. Those measures will continue to be necessary (on and off the installation) in order to protect our Airmen and our mission for the near future.

In closing, it truly has been the honor of my career to serve as commander of this prestigious, historic wing. I look forward to the next 12 months and the great things in store!

World-class is our standard.

Videmus Omnia!

*Colonel Gavin P. Marks,
Commander, 55th Wing*

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TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 24 July 2020, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of 50,000.

A significant portion of the money in the account comes from dues paid in advance. Therefore, we must keep money in reserve for each calendar year to which the dues apply. For example, dues paid for years thru 2022 (or more) are prorated and spent through the ensuing years.

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

We do have a budget.

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Please remember that the **Association** is a **non-profit IRS 501(C)19 veterans, federal tax exempt organization.**



Thus, you may **donate** additional funds to the treasury, or in the memory of a comrade or loved one who has taken their final celestial journey.

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, and thank you very much.

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MEMBERSHIP REPORT

There were 447 members in good standing as of 31 July 2020, compared with 458 on 5 March 2020. Unfortunately, dues and members do expire.

Forty members' dues expired on 31 December 2019. Several of them diligently renewed, plus a number of new members joined, and a few lapsed members returned.

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

Fifty **55th Wing** and associated units and offices, are sent the newsletter for PR purposes, and to keep them connected with the **Association**, and vice versa.

Occasionally, this initiative has a payoff of exposure for the **Association**, and new active duty members to the organization, now at 18.

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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: 20XX.**

Please make a note of this year-date to keep up with your dues.

If you are still not sure of your dues expiration date, to inquire on same, please e-mail to **Membership Chairman Mo Krishna** at **volvomo@gmail.com**, or drop him a note at the address noted in this text to get an update on your membership status.

When in doubt, send money. It will be credited toward future years. One gent is paid up to 2048!! For him, that may be a life membership.

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

Life Members (LM) and widows are dues exempt.

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PLEASE ALWAYS USE THE ASSOCIATION'S ADDRESS ON THE MEMBERSHIP FORM WHEN SENDING DUES OR NEW CONTACT INFO. THANK YOU.

**55 Wing Association, Inc.,
PO Box 13165
Offutt AFB, NE 68113**

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Please help us stay current.

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

Please use that form any time you pay dues, even if there are no changes to your basic info; 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 to go into our data base.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE SENT TO YOUR ADDRESS IN THE ASSOCIATION DATA BASE.

If sent first-class to a former address, we get returned mail if it cannot be forwarded. Third-class mail is not forwarded, nor returned.

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ONLINE DUES PAYMENT APP

*Contributed by Jon Adams.
Assistant Membership Chair*

To make **renewing or joining** the **Association** as convenient as possible, we have added a website that accepts credit or debit cards as payment options.

One can renew/join with a one year or three year membership. We had a successful trial period, and it is very easy to use and manage.

The free website can be a little finicky and doesn't display correctly if you're using Internet Explorer. If you open the website from the newer version of Internet Explorer, which is Microsoft Edge, or Google Chrome and the website will display correctly.

Here are the directions to sign up online:

To purchase/renew a one or three year membership: go online and follow these steps.

1. Go to this website: **55waonlinehelp@gmail.com** (If you are using Microsoft Office, you might need to hold down the CTRL key and click the link)
2. The one year and a three year membership options appear. Click **Shop Now** for the membership option you want.
3. Click **Join/Renew**.
4. Click Checkout at the bottom right of the screen.
5. Enter your information. Click **Next**.
6. Enter your payment information. Click **Next**.
7. Review your order, and then click: **SUBMIT** your order.
8. **Fill out the membership application on page 2 of the document and email to 55waonlinehelp@gmail.com**

After you complete those steps, you will be good to go! If you have any questions, please let us know. **55waonlinehelp@gmail.com**

Please note: the Association does not issue membership cards. So, your canceled check or credit card statement is your confirmation.

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ASSOCIATION WEB SITE 55wa.org

The **55wa.org** web site is operating smoothly and securely. On the URL bar at the top of the page, the site now has an **upgraded security status** – <https://> rather than the former <http://>
You can now use a search box to look for a

name rather than scrolling through long lists on the TAPS, or dues date pages.

You can view the **55th Cold War Memorial** page in the Heritage section and find the location of your (or another) patio brick. Memory Lane has several “there I was” tales. You can submit yours.

I'm always open to positive suggestions and recommendations to improve access to, and navigation of, the site.

Jim Maloney, the Web Guy.

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MAIL 'N STUFF

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Max,

We have known each other long enough so that you know I always speak my mind frankly.

I just finished reading the latest newsletter from cover to cover.

Even though I left the **55th** in mid-1964, it has kept me feeling part of that great unit, for all these years. It was a great time in my life.

We all owe a big thank you for doing what you do, so well, for so long.

THANK YOU!!!

Roby Craft, New Smyrna, FL

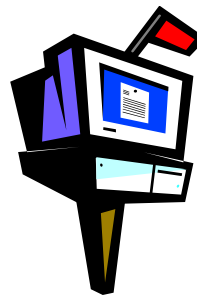
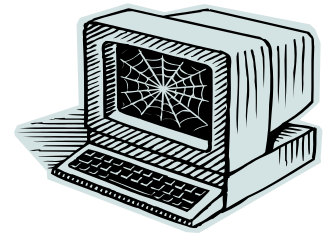
(From an e-mail 28 March 2020.)

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Warhawks!

I am very pleased to announce that the **55th Wing Chapel Team** has been selected as the winner of the 2019 **Charles I. Carpenter** Large Chapel Team Award!

This Air Force level award is presented to the team that best exemplifies “caring for Airmen more than anyone thinks possible” through their service, passion, and innovation.



The **55th Wing** Chaplain Corps, led by **Lt Col Chaplain Kevin Humphrey**, continues to go above and beyond to ensure our members are taken care of, and they are always a call away (if not already there!) when their presence is needed.

From supporting our Warhawks through the devastating Offutt AFB flood (*March 2019*), to standing by our Airmen who are battling tough times; and now, looking into innovative ways to reach our Airmen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This team (*which serves all Offutt personnel*) always puts others first and meets the definition of world-class.

Please extend congratulations to them for their many outstanding accomplishments and winning of this prestigious Air Force Chaplain Corps annual award!

Colonel Gavin P. Marks, Commander, 55th Wing
(Edited from an e-mail 1 April 2020)

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Joe,

Finally!!! Dodds Monuments got the last two bricks we ordered made AND installed! **Pops Hornor's** and **Don Miller's**.

I think they were ordered a couple of years ago, and as we told people, there might be a delay in making them. (*Because the brick orders have been few and far between.*) I've been bugging Dodds ever since we got the order.

This chapter really closes me out (*on monument duties*), and there's nothing left on my "to-do" list.

The rest is up to **Perry Peloquin** and the team.

VO, warm regards,

Jack Kovacs, Fairborn, OH

(From an e-mail 3 June 2020)

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ORIGINAL EC-130H SETTLES INTO RETIREMENT

Staff Sgt Betty R. Chevalier, 355th Wing Public Affairs, Published 11 February 2020

On 19 March 1982, the first specially modified EC-130H Compass Call aircraft, tail number 1587, arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. On 15 January 2020, the aircraft made its final flight over the skies of Arizona.

The Compass Call aircraft is a tactical weapon system used to disrupt (jam) enemy command and control communications, and limit adversary coordination essential for enemy force management.

The aircraft, assigned to the **55th Electronic Combat Group (ECG)**, under the **55th Wing** at Offutt AFB, NE, has supported various missions over its 37 years including, but not limited to, Operations Inherent Resolve, Iraqi Freedom and Desert Storm.

Motto: "Compass Call....Jams!!!"

"The retirement of aircraft 73-01587 is an historic event for the US Air Force, and a proud moment for the EC-130H COMPASS CALL program," said **Colonel Phil Acquaro, 55th ECG commander**.

"In March 1982, "Kermit" entered USAF's ranks as the first aircraft modified into an airborne electronic attack platform to enhance defense of American and allied interests in Europe. Its service culminated with close to 29,000 flight hours, almost 11,000 of which have been in direct support of combat operations," added Col Acquaro.

The **55th ECG** is the only Compass Call unit in the Air Force, and has been continuously deployed since 2001.

Airframe 1587's flying days are over, but it will continue to represent the **55th ECG**, as it will be modified for static display and placed in front of the ECG campus at D-M AFB.



*The 55th ECG personnel (far right) form up for a farewell salute to "Reaper".
(Photo by 355th Wing PA)*

"Aircraft 1587's legacy was derived from the blood, sweat and tears of the thousands of Americans that designed, built, maintained and flew this aircraft for the last 37 years," said Acquaro.



“Over the years, the nickname has changed from “Kermit” to “Reaper”. This respected aircraft has been through numerous modifications to keep pace with evolving technology and meet new mission requirements of combatant commanders. “Reaper” has delivered precise electronic fires to disrupt our adversary’s command and control networks, and save lives of American and coalition forces around the world. It has served with distinction and it is a proud day as we salute its last flight.”

(Edited from an article submitted by Association member Colonel Acquaro.)



OFFUTT REBUILD PLANS AFTER THE FLOOD

Mohan Krishna, Technical Advisor to the Offutt Flood Rebuild Program Management Office

We are almost a year and a half after the March 2019 historic flood, and not much seems to have changed in the flooded areas on base; but that is because the planning and design have to be done before we can start putting shovels in the ground.

Since my last update to the **Association**, we have completed the planning stage for all eight of the “campuses” and are forging ahead with the design phases. Campuses are a way to bundle like functions and keep stakeholders focused on their priorities.

My last article noted why we were re-building in the “flood plain” (best location).

The Army Corps of Engineers and Nebraska Natural Resource Division federally mandated work to raise the levees east and south of Offutt is almost complete, and soon the site preparation will begin to raise critical functions three feet above the 100 year flood level, and raise non-critical functions two feet. That project will take about 675,000 cubic yards of dirt—over 60,000 truck loads.

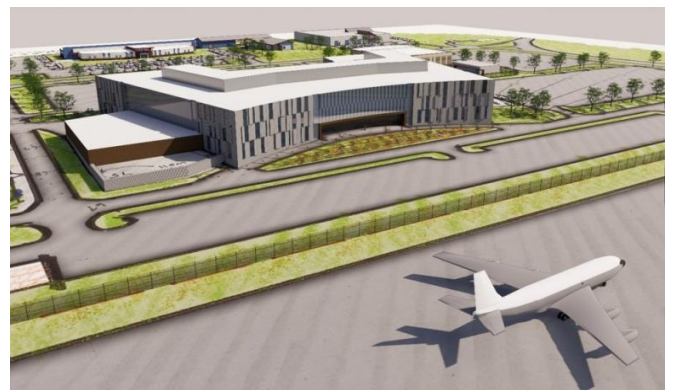
If you wonder if these heights will be enough, consider that the levees are now up to the 100 year flood level. The new facilities will be 2-3 feet above that and protected by the “bath tub effect” meaning that the entire region would have to fill with water before it began to reach the new facilities.

Our #1 priority is the Nuclear, Command, Control and Communications (NC3) Alert Campus which includes alert billets for the E-4B National Airborne Operations Center (NAOC), Navy E-6B *Looking Glass* (formerly E-6B ABNCP, which replaced SAC’s EC-135 *Looking Glass*), and the RC-135 Reconnaissance in support of nuclear operations missions. It also includes the operational squadrons and battle staffs for those missions as well as the alternate Command Post and the alert dining facility. This campus includes a maintenance facility for the E-6B aircraft and a family visitation facility.

The surviving E-4B hangar and maintenance facilities are being renovated and will be completed by the beginning of 2021. We are striving to align the alert billets with the reopening of the runway so that the alert crews can be bedded down as soon as the aircraft return from operations out of Lincoln Airport back to Offutt.

The next priority is the Satellites Communications (SATCOM) facility which will be relocated from the southeast side of base to the southeast side of the hill by the former STRATCOM building. This relocation will give the “golfball domes” better sky view and keep them far above any future natural disasters.

The third priority, but the **Wing’s** most pressing concern, is the Multidomain Operations Center (MDO) Campus, also known as the Operations Group (OG) Campus. (*Rendering below*) Not only will all of the Operations Group squadrons be housed in these new buildings (343d, 38th, 45th, 97th, 338th, OSS, ISS, 49th AF Reserves), but also the 170th Group (Nebraska Air National Guard), and the 20th Intelligence Squadron (IS).



This 400K+ sq ft, half-SCIF facility will finally give the OG a consolidated facility where coordination can be done by walking across the hall instead of driving around the base.

The term multidomain comes from the addition of the 20th IS which currently does traditional kinetic (read: munitions) targeting/target characterization, and is moving toward non-kinetic (read: electronic warfare and information operations) targeting/target characterization. The three story building will sit approximately where the previous **55th Wing** headquarters was located.

Next priority is a new Security Forces Campus where the squadron operations building will be on the same site as the indoor firearms training range and the military working dogs facility and training area.

The next two campuses support logistics with the new Logistics Readiness Squadron (LRS) Warehouse and the Flight line/POL Campus. The LRS Warehouse will be adjacent to the fuel tanks and be the central inbound and outbound shipment point for the entire base.

The Flight Line Campus replaces the POL (aircraft fuel) operations facility as well as the liquid oxygen and deicing fluid storage facilities.

The Base Lake Campus, while small compared to the other facilities, has huge morale impact to the base community with camping areas, playgrounds and picnic areas. It replaces the boathouse and event facility, and repairs the power and water at the RV parking spots.

The final project is the Emergency Power Microgrid, which will modernize backup power delivery for many organizations on base and reduce the number of generators required for individual facilities.

But the real question you probably have is: when will construction begin? As we understand the ‘tea leaves’ today, early spring next year, we should see wrecking balls swinging and truckloads of dirt start to be delivered. The situation may change.

A new video was posted to the **55th Wing** YouTube page, which describes the flood, walks through the destroyed buildings and gives a brief overview of the recovery plan. The drawings on the video and here may change as we go through the design and build process but they give a good idea

about what the next generation of Offutt may look like. (*See editor note below.*)

Every storm has its rainbow.

I will give another update in the next newsletter as we get closer to construction.

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This link will show a seven minute video described above.

<https://youtu.be/fAYV78VGy1s>

*It is narrated by **LtCol Chris “Conman” Conover, 55th Wing Director, Offutt Flood Rebuild Program Management Office.** (An Association member.)*

After the opening sequence, there are myriad videos about Offutt and its history for those interested.

One vintage clip is of the SAC HQ underground command post. Everyone in class A blue uniforms.

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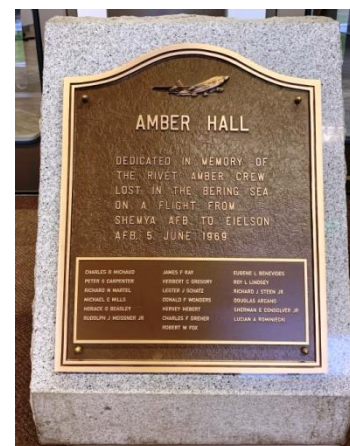
AMBER HALL PLAQUE UPDATED

Attached is a picture taken 10 October 2019 while I was deployed to Eielson AFB, AK. I cleaned the marble slab as best I could with available supplies. It is housed in the foyer of the 354th Wing HQ building and protected from the elements.

The original request for changes to the plaque included SCHATZ (from Shatz) and BEASLEY (from Beasley). **Lt Col Cory O’Tool** (45th commander at the time) asked me to review the changes and determine if there were any more.

Working with the **55th Wing** Historian and **Kingdon Hawes**, I had six additional changes. Luckily, the plaque had not yet been fixed and all the corrections were made on the updated project.

During my work with Hawes, I came to the strong belief that a granite monument should be placed at the 45th Squadron beside the aircraft 664 monument.



The family members of the 19 souls lost on that flight have not had a place they can go to see and understand the importance of their loved ones commitment and service. Eielson is too far for most, so with Omaha being centrally located, it makes sense to install a granite monument on Offutt AFB, NE, at building 40.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn CW Roberts, Major, 45th RS Historian

(Edited from an e-mail 15 May 2020. Note: the squadron is still accepting donations for the monument. They were \$5075 short of the goal. Donations can be sent to the 45RS, ATTN: Major Roberts, 101 Washington Sq, Ste116, Offutt AFB, NE, 68113.)



COBRA BALL AIRCRAFT AND TROOPS ASSEMBLED

The Wildcats of the 45 RS took advantage of a unique opportunity to capture all three Cobra Ball airframes together at Offutt AFB.

Tail numbers: 662, 663, 128. Note the right wings are painted black, mission specific.



(Photo by 55th Wing PA)

This photo was taken the first week in June 2020, a **rare occurrence** as one of the three airframes is usually in depot maintenance, and another is across the globe at any given time for mission tasking.

Last time this happened was in 2012 in Kadena AB, Okinawa, when all three were out of depot and there was an aircraft and crew swap out.

Respectfully, "Tripper"

Lt Col Andrew J. Maus, Commander, 45th Reconnaissance Squadron

(From e-mails 8 June 2020)



HALL OF FAME RETURNS

As the historic flood waters of March 2019 reached **55th Wing** buildings in the southeast sector of Offutt AFB, Mike "**Coach**" **Hoskins** took action on his own initiative to rescue as many irreplaceable memorabilia as he could from the Command Section. Prime among those were more than 50 plaques of the **55th Wing** Hall of Fame inductees.

He kept them in diligent 'protective custody', then displaying them at the annual **Tales of the 55th** last September. The goal was to preserve the items until they could be properly displayed once again.

That action occurred the first week in July, engineered and supervised by **Major Desiree' Bricks** of the Commander's Action Group (CAG), and ably assisted by **Association** Board member, Mo Krishna, when the plaques were installed along the walls in the main hallway leading to the now relocated **55th Wing** Command Section in Bldg. 500. They are now placed in an orderly fashion by year of induction.

The entire enterprise can be credited to the dedication of **Association** members with the blessing and coordination of the **55th Wing** staff.

At some future date, there may be a rededication ceremony.



*One section of the hallway walls.
(Photo provided by Krishna.)*

All signage reflecting USSTRATCOM is gone from the Bldg. 500. That moved to the new STRATCOM Command and Control Facility (Bldg. 1000) on the southwest Offutt campus. The name of **General Curtis E. LeMay** also was re-appropriated to that imposing edifice.

There is an initiative to change the designation of the building on the hill to **Bldg. 55**, where now the leadership of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* resides in the hallowed halls and offices once tread by Strategic Air Command legends.

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COLD WAR MONUMENT STATUS REPORT

The National Museum of the USAF was closed to the public since March in compliance with federal and state COVID-19 guidance.

From the **Association's** perspective, that translated into not being able to keep the **55th SRW** COLD WAR memorial "spit and polished" as **Jack Kovacs** and **Larry LaFlair** have done for these many years.

However, the Museum was scheduled to open to the public on July 1. With that in mind, we contacted Jack's good friend, **Jane**, at the Museum. Jane gave us the thumbs-up to clean up the memorial in advance of the opening, and she took care of coordinating our access with the facilities manager.



Attached is a photo with **Dave Snow** giving the granite a soapy sponge bath.

We are happy to report that the memorial is weeded, scrubbed and trimmed, and ready for visitors.

As soon as they get the water turned on at the park, we'll give the bricks a proper power wash. For now, we have to haul water in jerry jugs to get it bathed.

Perry Peloquin, Bellbrook, OH
(From an e-mail, 18 June 2020)

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ASSOCIATION HONORED FOR USAF RECRUITING SUPPORT

The **55th Wing Association** was recently recognized by the Air Force Recruiting Services' 348th Recruiting Squadron (*Bellevue, NE*) for **Association** members' Outstanding Achievement in supporting the unit's recruiting mission.

For several years, *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* retired officers have commissioned, sworn in and inducted college students into the USAF's Healthcare Professional Services. Student candidates serve, most often, in a Reserve capacity (Lts or Capts, depending upon experience/skill set/academic domain) until graduation. This is followed by active duty service in any of the DoD medical roles including: doctors, nurses, dentists, technicians, etc.



Association members who have participated over the years in these commissioning events include: **AnnMarie Anthony, John Cooper, Paul Jeanes, Don Kelly, Kurt Kramer, Mo Krishna, Mark Schenck, Joe Spivey**, and several others.

Kudos to all for their contributions to the USAF's "next generation" of healthcare professionals, and for continuing "to serve those who do".

Joe Spivey, President, (E-mail 3 June 2020)

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FORMER 55TH COMMANDER ONWARD AND UPWARD

Major General Gregory M. Guillot has been nominated for promotion to the rank of lieutenant general, with assignment as commander, US Air Forces Central Command; commander, Ninth Air Expeditionary Task Force, Air Combat Command; and combined forces air component commander, US Central Command, Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, and Shaw Air Force Base, SC. (Whew!)



General Guillot was serving as director, operations, J-3, Headquarters, US Northern Command, Peterson AFB, CO. He previously commanded the 55th Wing at Offutt, 19 June 2013 - 1 June 2015. (Official AF photo)
(Announcement dated 14 May 2020)

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COMMANDER'S SECRETARY TO RETIRE

Melinda Kelly is retiring as executive secretary to the 55th Wing commander effective 31 August. She has held that position for over ten years and served seven wing commanders.

Mel winds up a 30 year civil service career at Offutt and other bases; following her mother's path who retired at 20 years.

During her long tenure she worked for eight flag



officers in various commands.

In her capacity Mel has always been helpful to, and cooperative with, the Association leadership with timely information and coordination.

What makes her tenure significant is that she is the daughter of Mary and the late Arlen "Ziggy" Howe, a long time 55th navigator and staff officer.

She was born in Topeka, KS, when the 55th SRW was located at Forbes AFB prior to moving to Offutt.

She is married to Don Kelly, another 55th alum navigator and a former 55th deputy ops group commander. Don currently sits on the Association's Board of Directors. They have two adult children.

Mel's professionalism and dedication follows in the tradition of Mary Krings and the late Mary Iona Stout, both long serving and loyal 55th executive secretaries known to many Fifty-Fifth veterans for decades.

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NEWSLETTER INPUTS ENCOURAGED AND WELCOME

Yes, we are aware that these newsletters tend to be Offutt-centric. 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 2. We encourage and welcome any input.

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When events featuring 55th members 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 in.

The only way to broaden our coverage is to get input from throughout Fifty-Fifth-land.

Letters, articles, photos, and other items in this issue are examples.

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

Also welcome would be any suggestions on how to improve these issues to better inform the membership, so that they do not become stale, which is this editor's biggest concern.

Thanks, and Videmus Omnia, Max.

(Graphic by Patricia Gros, friend of the Association.) (Note: The graphic is dated, but then, so am I.)



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EAST COAST “CHAPTER”

East coast area alumni, including active duty, retirees, Pentagon habitués, and ‘beltway bandits’, have occasional social gatherings. Events are organized periodically for reconnecting and camaraderie in the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth* spirit.

For information on **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. His cohort is Trish Seinwill, pseinwill@yahoo.com

If you know of any former *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth*’ers in the DC/VA/MD region who is **not currently** receiving **55th Wing Association** information, let Ricky or Trish know, or provide contact information for those persons, and one of them will make sure they get an **Association** membership form and the information they need to become connected in that area.

Ricky and Trish are considering a wine tasting in the Piedmont area of Virginia in the future.

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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. Some groups meet for

breakfast or lunch regularly, others the occasional dinner with spouses.

(Hello, Greenville, TX, Colorado Springs, and Dayton, OH, what say you?!?)

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EC-135C RESTORATION AS OF 16 JUNE 2020

In early 2015, the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum projected that the restoration of EC-13C Aircraft 38049, and putting it on display, would take five years and cost \$250,000. Obviously, delays and extra costs have occurred.

The ultimate goal is to restore the plane to its status when it flew its final ABRNCP/*Looking Glass* mission in 1990. The bird was the high time EC-135C with 29,151.2 airborne hours.

Restoration of the interior of the EC-135 is complete. Every piece of equipment, seat, flooring, sidewall insulation, and workstation in the aircraft was repaired, refinished, and replaced. New ceiling panels were fabricated, LED lighting was installed in refinished original fixtures, and new wall kick panels were fabricated.



*Cockpit looking forward.
Navigator station on right.*

A replacement table for the battle staff area was built. New carpet, donated by Douglas Interior Products, Bellevue, WA, was installed throughout the aircraft. The flight deck and galley/crew rest areas were similarly rebuilt and refitted.

Recent work on the exterior has focused on the main landing gear.

With the loosening of restrictions, volunteers have returned to prepping the exterior for priming, painting and the reapplication of decals, warnings, etc.

Actual painting of the aircraft has been delayed pending determination of an acceptable process to prevent paint fumes from migrating throughout museum.

Paint has been donated and delivered by PPG Aerospace.

In 2018, the Museum began developing a grand Redevelopment Plan (RP), which includes expanding and modifying the Museum and repositioning aircraft. The final positioning of 049 within the Museum, and the exhibits related to 049, are part that Plan.

The Museum's initial schedule was to complete the project between 2025 and 2027, with Hangar A being the first part. Since the final position of 049 is projected to be prominent in Hangar A (without wings/engines due to space limitations), 049 will not be put on display until the RP is fully funded. That drive is ongoing.

Progress on the Plan was, of course, delayed in response to the COVID-19 restrictions.

The Museum ended tours of the interior of the aircraft when restoration had progressed to where visitors interfered with safety and with the orderly reinstallation of equipment.

The Museum must protect the outstanding work of its restorers by ensuring that an uncontaminated aircraft is available for many years, and to tell the story of the crewmembers's dedication and service in providing deterrence for the United States against a nuclear attack during the Cold War.

While putting 049 on display will be delayed until Hanger A is ready, interested persons **need not wait** until 2025 to see the results. The Museum has posted a video to its website, which provides a virtual tour of the restoration to date.

Go to <https://sacmuseum.org/what-to-see/restoration/> , then click the **big red arrow** for a two minute tour of the unpainted exterior and completed interior of 049. It is amazing.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused the Museum to shut down and the Museum is just recently

reopened. The Museum's operation, and income, was severely disrupted.

The Museum needs more members interested in preserving the history of SAC, and more funds are needed to get 049 ready for display.

You can join, or renew memberships at <https://sacmuseum.org/join-give/membership/>.

Donations may be sent to: Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum, Attn: Development, c/o EC-135C, 2821 West Park Hwy, Ashland, NE, 68003; or on line at: SACMuseum.org/donate Please specify that the donation is for the EC-135C restoration. They still need all the assistance they can get.

The pictures herein were taken by **Norma Kathman** on 4 June 2020, when the plane interior was "uncovered" in order to make a video of the restored interior. WOW! What a change from 2015 when restoration began.

(Editor note: Black and white does not do the work justice. The interior looks like the day 049 rolled out of the factory. Please take the video tour.)



Battle staff compartment looking forward

Pictures of the project's progress from day-one are posted to the following Facebook sites: SAC ACC (Strategic Air Command–Airborne Command and Control), 4 ACCS PACCS, LOOKING GLASS (SAC ABNCP) AND PACCS, FANS OF STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND SAC, and SAC VETERANS.

If you like what you see of the restoration, please express your appreciation in your comments.

*(Updated material provided by **Hank Carriger**, Volunteer Coordinator, Boerne, TX, after review*

and coordination by **Jeff Cannon**, President/CEO, Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum by e-mail of 3 July 2020.)



TAPS



BOHMFALK, Frederick H., 82, 28 August 2019, San Rafael, CA; wife of 54 years, **Julie**. Fred served in the 6th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW) at Eielson AFB, AK, as an RC-135D EWO, then was assigned to HQ SAC/IN at Offutt AFB, NE, mid- to late 1970s.

BRIDGES, Pamela K., 61, 8 April 2020, Plattsmouth, NE; wife of **Michael**, an RC-135 EWO in the 55th Wing at Offutt circa 1990s.

BRYARS, Frank K. (Ken), 82, 13 June 2020, San Antonio, TX; wife, **Beverly**. Ken was an RC-135 EWO with the 82nd SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa, and with the 343rd SRS at Offutt in the late 1960s, early 1970s. He retired at Offutt 31 March 1985. Ken then worked several years for SAIC in Bellevue, NE.

DePHILLIPS, Robert, 12 July 2020. Bob was an RC-135 navigator in the 343rd SRS at Offutt in the early 1970s, then served on staff at RAF Mildenhall, UK. (*Only information provided.*)

GRIGSBY, Donald R., 95, 20 March 2019, Medford, OR. A WWII veteran who flew 31 combat missions in Europe as a bombardier in B-24s. Postwar, Don became an EWO in RB-50s and RB-47s in the 55th SRW, the latter at Forbes AFB, KS, 1955 into the early 1960s.

HAINES, Billie Wasmer, 84, 24 May 2020, Brookdale, LA. She was the widow of **Roger Wasmer**, an EWO in the 55th SRW in RB-47s at Forbes and RCs at Offutt in the 1960s to 1970s. He passed in February 1997. Billie remarried and is survived by **Robert**.

KING, Larry A. 82, 24 June 2020, Merced, CA; wife of 28 years, **Deanna**. Larry was an RC-

135 pilot in the 55th at Offutt, then in the 82nd SRS at Kadena in late 1960s, early 1970s. He returned to Offutt before retiring in 1980. He then was an airline pilot for ten years.

LaVALLEY, Lorraine K., 98, 19 June 2020, of Fort Washington, MD; widow of **Ernest A. LaValley, Jr.**, who passed 28 August 1986. Lorraine was a devoted military wife, mother of four and grandmother of three. Ernest served in the 55th SRW as a crewmember in RB-50s and RB-47s at Forbes, 1953-1958.

MARCHITELLI, Phyllis B., 62, 5 July 2020, Elkhorn, NE; wife of **Steven**. He was an RC-135 EWO in the 55th twice: 1982-85, 1999-2005. Phyllis graduated from State UNY, Albany. She went to OCS and served four years in the USAF. She graduated from Creighton Law School in 1987 and practiced law in Shreveport, LA. Phyllis became a stay-at-home wife and mother after Steve's move to Offutt.

PATRICK, Richard, A (Dick), 90, 19 June 2020, Meridian, ID. A tanker pilot who served as the vice commander of the 55th SRW at Offutt, 1976-1978. Retiring in 1983, he resided in Papillion, NE, for a number of years. He was a lifelong avid golfer.

RUSSELL, Bobby, 82, 19 March 2020, Albany, TX. He was an EWO in RB-47 in the 55th SRW at Forbes, in the 1960s, then in RC-135s at Kadena. Retiring after 23 years service, among other positions, he was the city manager of Albany for several years.

TICE, RUSSELL K., 81, 25 July 2020, Papillion, NE. Russ served as an EC-135 navigator in the 2ACCS and as a wing staff officer at Offutt in the 1970s. In retirement, he was active in the Eastern Nebraska Soccer Association as a coach, trainer and referee.

TURNER, Paula C., 72, 20 July 2020, Suffolk, VA; married to **Steve** for over 50 years. A Boston native, she worked for companies in the Boston financial district until getting married. Steve was an RC/EC pilot who commanded the 38th SRS and 2nd ACCS at Offutt in the 1990s.

WILLIAMS, Herbert E. III, 86, 3 July 2020, Deerfield, WI. Herb was an RB-47 aircraft commander in the 55th SRW at Forbes in the early 1960s. He flew several critical Cuban Crisis

missions. He separated from the Air Force and had a long career as an airline pilot.

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

It is *not* an imperative that the departed be a member of the Association. If one has any relevant connection to 55th history, they will be remembered.

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 (i.e.: crewmember, maintenance, communications) will be helpful.

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

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TAPS ON THE ASSN WEB SITE

The TAPS section has a listing for access to the names and dates of those in the 55th family who have passed beginning in 1996.

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 webmaster to do so.

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

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REUNIONS

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55th WING “Old Pueblo” ROUNDUP and REUNION 645th AESG “Big Safari” SYMPOSIUM and REUNION 14-18 APRIL 2021 (TENTATIVE) STILL WORKING IT

Submitted by Val Dugie, 55th Wing Association and Sue McKechnie, Big Safari Association Reunion Chairs



There have been some rather interesting developments and changes since the last newsletter update, as you can see from above. The Big Safari Symposium and Reunion scheduled for last April in San Diego, was cancelled due to the COVID pandemic.

With a shared history, and a significant number of shared memberships, both Association Boards of Directors agreed to a first-ever joint event in 2021, which was endorsed by commanders of the 55 Wing and 654th Aeronautical Systems Group (AESG, Wright-Patterson AFB, OH.)

We are in the final planning stages to gather in Tucson, AZ, aka “The Old Pueblo”, for this historic joint event. Our current event window has narrowed to 14-18 April (Wed-Sun), but could be as late as 10 May. **Our preferred dates are in April and we are continuing to work on contract details.** Please keep your calendars tentatively blocked as we finalize details and lock in exact dates.

The Reunion BRAT continues the final negotiations with the hotel properties, which has been complicated by the recent site/location closures and re-opening requirements, in light of pandemic requirements and health regulations.

That said though, we are making progress and hope to have a final hotel selection recommendation in the near future. The focus will then shift to putting together the reunion events and activities schedule.

We have narrowed the field to a single hotel location with dates noted above, but please note this is **still very tentative** and could change depending on several items we are still working through.

Look for reservation information and links to the hotel site in the next newsletter!!! More details and information to follow as soon as hotel location and event dates are confirmed.

If the basic info (hotel and dates) becomes known before that, the announcement will be posted on both Association web sites, and sent via ‘flash’ messages far and wide.

As a reminder, the event is planned by the **55th Wing Association** and is open to all current and past personnel assigned to the **55th Wing** and its predecessors; plus friends, associates, supporters, and family members thereof.

Stay tuned as we are all looking forward to seeing one another at one more grand reunion.

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82nd RS REUNION RE-SCHEDULED

Due to the pandemic, the reunion previously planned for July 2020 has been postponed to (*tentative*) 1-4 July 2021. So put it on your calendar and I’ll send a formal announcement as we get closer.

Next year will be the 30th anniversary of the reactivation of the squadron under the **55th Wing**, just to make you feel a little older!!

Stay safe and healthy,
Mace MacElhaney, Colorado Springs, CO
Macemhaney@comcast.net

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DFC SOCIETY 2021 REUNION

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society (DFCS) will host the 2021 Reunion in Washington, DC, in mid- to late September 2021. The 2019 Dayton

Reunion was the best yet, and we plan to be even better in 2021.

The DFCS is in the process of selecting a reunion contractor who will negotiate the host hotel.

A list of fantastic tours will be finalized in collaboration with the selected contractor. There will be options for tour packages.

The Welcome Night Dinner will be “under the wings” again, in a museum yet to be chosen.

Updated information on the details can be found at dfcsociety.org.

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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 on the **Association** web site at www.55wa.org, and click on the BX, Clothing Sales link.

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



(Photo by Sargent.)

Give a big hint to the family, and maybe some generous loved one will give you a gift for whatever you have going: Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, birthday, anniversary, Christmas, Hanukkah,



Ramadan, Kwanzaa, Chinese New Year, or just because you are you.

Now available in a variety of colors, available in sizes medium, large, XL, and XXL. **The cost of the current stock is \$35 each.**

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

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The golf/baseball caps have 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, now at a flat rate of \$7.00.

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

In the future more items, such as ball point pens, hot cups, coffee mugs, etc., will be available with the **Association** logo emblazoned thereon.

Anyone desiring to purchase any of the advertised items should contact the haberdasher, **William (Bill) Sargent** at 1122 Summit Ridge Drive, Papillion, NE, 68046 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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There is a web site set-up with a vast assortment of items and colors that members can order with the **Association** logo.

Site address link is:

<https://fiftyfifthwingassociation.qbstores.com/a/login>

When you order on line, you can preview what the merchandise looks like with the **Association** dual logo, and select whatever item you want.

The site usually has a special running, and once you sign up, they will e-mail you a coupon for money off the purchase. Postage is included when you order.

The new shirts/apparel are at a substantial savings, some as low as \$22 including shipping!

For those who do not have a computer available, you will still be able to order through me via the US Postal Service.

Bill Sargent, Association Haberdasher

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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 Birthday Ball, and at official and social functions at and near Offutt.

Gents and ladies, it makes a great birthday or anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer.

(Shown actual size)



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 a **55th** Commander's Wingman, in recognition of his superior and continued community support to the **55th Wing.**

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Videmus Omnia



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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM (Contact Information 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 Dec of following year
** Note – Dues expiration date – 31 December
***Note - Questions? **Contact Mohan Krishna, Membership Chairman, at volvomo@gmail.com, or at the above mailing address,.**

