

Videmus Omnia

55th WING

ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER

MAY

2021

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fightin' Fifty-Fifth Colleagues,

This *Videmus Omnia* edition's "Prezgram" follows an avalanche of activity related to further solidifying our Wing and **Association** heritage.



The **55th Wing** has been "on a roll" in spite of post-flood recovery, COVID challenges, runway deconstruction, ops relocation to Lincoln (again!) and more.

Notably, several **Association** members, along with alums and active-duty staff, were involved in a full-court press to relocate **Wing** HQ and re-brand Offutt Bldg. 500 (previously the **LeMay** Building) as the **Riggs** Building on 30 April (more on that later).

"The LeMay" name relocated to Bldg. 1000 (HQ USSTRATCOM)—built on the eastern grounds of the cherished Warrior Nine golf course.

So, what has changed? Glad you asked!

Many related activities are covered later in this latest "Max Missive"; however, here's my "view from the top" with regard to your **Association's** involvement.

Several alums selflessly kicked-in to make the Riggs ceremony dignified, meaningful and successful. Truly, that started "at the top" with **Wing Commander Colonel Gavin Marks'** leadership driving the entire 30 April event vision to "World Class" reality, including a new **Wing** Museum at in the north entrance theater foyer.

Gavin's desire for top-notch facilities, coupled with his appreciation of **Wing** heritage will definitely be missed when he changes command as summer approaches.

Several key sources of "elbow grease" also contributed: Commander's Action Group (CAG) **LtColonel Patrick Kriz** and **Major Desiree Bricks**; **Wing Plans' Mike "Coach" Hoskins**, **Wing Historian John McQueney**, Public Affairs **Ryan Hansen** and staff, Protocol **Ski** and team, **BIG SAFARI**-funded contractors, **55th Wing Association** members, widows and "casual status" airmen from the 338th Combat Training Squadron.



CAGsters Major Bricks, at left, LtCol Kriz.

I personally saw this renovation team scrape wallpaper, clean spaces, hang photos, prep/paint walls, move memorabilia and more—always

without complaint—equally respectful of each task’s historical significance.

This team TRULY made change happen!



L-R: **Dan Jenson**, *SpyV* partially hidden, **Michael Hartman**, **Denny Haun** at the wall.

Here are many, but not all, of the changes they facilitated in accordance with the Riggs Building dedication. Several are discussed more in this edition, so here’s a thumbnail sketch: exterior building signage, interior Riggs tribute posters, historical **55th Wing** artifacts, renovated museum cases, creating a Heritage Hall (Hall of Fame, past Offutt **55th** commanders, original units, historical flag, etc.); successfully connecting with and inviting Riggs family members, installing the new museum area items, hanging aircraft posters, dedicating Government proclamations from our 2019 Rendezvous (Thanks, **Miner** family!), creating (from the carnage left in the wake of STRATCOM’s departure) a “World Class” work-in-progress *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth* Museum with artifacts from WWII, Cold War, Gulf War, Global War on Terrorism, other contingency/combat operations, and several special interest exhibits.

This new identity captures an 81-year storied history proving “The Sun Never Sets on the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth*”!

I was truly honored to be just a small part of this team effort which “honors those who served and serves those who do.”

Unlike Bldg. 500’s past restricted access, the Riggs Building is open to all who have base privileges. I encourage you to spend a few minutes delving into our past and reminiscing.

Videmus Omnia, Spy V



OFFUTT BLDG 500 NAMED FOR COLONEL WILLIAM E. RIGGS

The historic structure, which was built to be the Headquarters of Strategic Air Command (SAC) in 1957, where once the titans of SAC occupied offices and walked the hallowed halls, is now fully branded as the Headquarters of the **55th Wing**.

At a ceremony on Friday, 30 April, that began at 0955, on a perfect sunlit day at the west/front of the building, a ribbon was cut dedicating the home of the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth* in the name of the late **Colonel William E. Riggs**, the longest serving **55th** commander in its history.

His name now is emblazoned over the front/west entrance and bears the official name.



A plaque adorns a wall to the right, and the lobby is a veritable homage to one of the finest men to ever lead the best wing in the Air Force, then and now.



(Photos by Moore.)

A CDC restricted crowd of 50, and assorted bystanders, witnessed the ceremony.

After **LtCol Barrett**, the moderator, made welcoming introductions, an ensemble from the Heartland of America Band played the National Anthem, an invocation ensued, and opening remarks were made by **Colonel Gavin Marks, 55th Wing Commander**.

He noted this was the fifth building the **Wing Headquarters** has occupied, either temporarily or 'permanent', since moving to Offutt in 1966, and that several units, including the command section, had been 'squatters' or nomads around the base since the flood of March 2019.

Among the dignitaries in attendance were: **Admiral Charles Richard**, Commander, US Strategic Command; **State Senator Rita Sanders**, a former mayor of Bellevue; current **Bellevue Mayor Rusty Hike**, **Plattsmouth Mayor R. Paul Lampert**; **John Hansen**, Offutt Advisory Council president, and **Rick Sanders**, a Commander's Wingman.

Past **Wing** commanders there were **Major General John Rausch** and his wife **Diane**; **Major General (Ret) Michael Kudlatz**, **BrigGeneral (Ret) Regis Urschler**, and **Colonel (Ret) Dan Peterson**.

President Joe Spivey, **Vice President Ricky McMahan** and Board member Max Moore represented the **Association**.

Wing personnel included: **Vice Commander Jon Shumate** and his wife; **Group commanders Colonel John Litecky (Ops)**, **Colonel Alan Dayton (Mission Support)** and **Amy**; **Colonel Julie Ostrand (Medical)** and her husband, and **55th Wing Historian, John McQueney**.

55th Wing Command Chief Bryan Tuman and past **Wing Command Chief (Ret) Brian Thomas** also attended. (*Apologies to anyone I missed, and there are many, Max.*)

Mrs. Kelly Riggs Witteman, daughter of Colonel Riggs, gave an emotional tribute to her late father, and expressed her family's appreciation for honoring him.

She also thanked the **Wing** staff and the **Association** for planning and staging the ceremony.

Her sister, **Ms. Kimberle Chandio**, assisted in the plaque and name unveilings as well as the ribbon cutting.



The band, Col Marks, LtCol Barrett



Kelly Riggs Witteman speaks.



The plaque is unveiled.

L-R: Command Chief Tuman, Mrs. Witteman, Ms. Chandio, Col. Marks.



Kim, Col. Marks, Kelly, Chief Tuman

(Photos by Josh Plueger, 55th Wing PA.)

After the formal ceremony, attendees and guests were invited into the lobby for a reception and tours of the recently renovated sections of the first and second floors.

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Colonel Bill and Mrs. Alice Riggs taken 17 July 1970, the date of his change of command ceremony and retirement, in front of Bldg 500, then SAC HQ, that now bears his name.

(Provided by Kim Chandio.)

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The rebranding was completed that day with the renaming of three streets around the edifice: **Videmus Omnia** View on the west side; **55th Street** to the south, and **Warhawk Way** on the east side.

A move is afoot to renumber the building as **55**, but that is TBD.

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In addition to the re-designation of the entire facility, the overall complex is in the first of three multi-million dollar phases of renovation.

During phase one: large-scale infrastructure systems are being updated to include a new state of the art command post, renovations to the second floor common areas, theater and cafeteria.

Phase two: the first floor office spaces and exterior are to be upgraded and improved; and then the final phase includes the third floor and underground facilities.

(This text is edited from material from the Offutt web site posted by 55th Wing PA, Max)

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After the biblical flood of March 2019, events were accelerated when US Strategic Command moved its headquarters into the new Bldg 1000 in November 2019, taking the **General Curtis E. LeMay** name with it.

The **55th Wing** began moving into Bldg 500 locating on the second floor in temporary cubicles until STRATCOM personnel were completely out.

Once the **Wing** was fully established in Bldg 500, a process to rename the facility for a notable leader of the **55th** began last November. The decision was made on the name in early January and set in motion a flurry of activity to redecorate the west lobby, spearheaded by **55th Wing Association** personnel and the CAG member Major Desiree Bricks, and to plan the dedication ceremony.

(Blatant self-serving note here: When the naming process began, Max Moore submitted Colonel Riggs' name and provided documentation based upon Colonel Riggs' Hall of Fame nomination package in 2001. Once the decision was made, follow on coordination ensued with Riggs' next of kin, CAG and PA over the next four months.)

The **55th Wing** Historian, John McQueney, has also established a museum inside the north entrance near the theater with primary assistance of several **Association** volunteers.

Memorabilia, to include the **55th Ceremonial Bell**, the **Palm Trophy**, and the **55th Wing Association** Award for Excellence, display cases

and all, were relocated from other places around the base to this centralized locale.

Many more new items were created specifically to adorn the walls of the west lobby and the Museum.



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2020 HALL OF FAME RECOGNITION

The induction ceremony for the 2020 honorees: **Major General (Ret) Kim Siniscalchi** and **Colonel (Ret) Paul Fortin** was held virtually last September due to the pandemic with the principles in absentia. Their plaques were placed on the wall in **55th Wing HQ** and their personal copies sent to them.

All of that was fully reported in the December 2020 issue of the *Videmus Omnia* newsletter.

To rectify that lack of a formal event, **Association** President Joe Spivey spearheaded organizing a recognition reception on 30 April 2021 to culminate a *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* Heritage Day after the Riggs Building dedication that morning.

The venue was the Beardmore Event Center in Bellevue and began at 1500 with a social hour.

Attendees included **55th**

alumni, several active duty **Wing** staff, family and friends, numbering about 75 persons, some of whom came in from out of town.

This truly was a mini-reunion.

SpyV then began the ceremonies with welcoming remarks and explained the rationale for the agenda. He recognized distinguished guests, **55th Wing** senior leaders, and Hall of Famer members.

Moderator Spivey then reiterated the storied history of the **55th** Ceremonial Bell, its decades long travails, and the traditional significance of being rung at important **Wing** and **Association** events.

Colonel Gavin Marks was invited to officially open the festivities by ringing the **55th** Ceremonial Bell. Colonel Marks followed by making his remarks marking (*pun intended*) the occasion.



Members of the Hall of Fame present trooped by to ring the Ball in turn: Reg Urschler, **Hank**

Dubuy, Steve Stevens, Michael Cook, Max Moore, Jim Thomas, Denny Haun, **Joe Siniscalchi**, and Ricky McMahon.

Moderator Spivey presented the narrative on MGen Siniscalchi, a career Air Force nurse whose resume includes two tours in the **55th** Medical Group at Offutt, six years at the White House, retiring as the Air Force Assistant Surgeon General and head of Nursing Services.



After Colonel Marks presented her plaque, she rang the Bell, then spoke accepting the honor and about her career.

Colonel Paul Fortin was next up, a true strat recon pioneer and Cold Warrior, he was an EWO in the 55th SRW at Forbes in the mid-1950s before the Wing even had its brand new RB-47s. He was part of a cadre working on the acceptance planning.



He subsequently flew Top Secret overflights of the northern Soviet Union in 1956.

A tour in Vietnam saw him rack up 100+ combat missions in RB-66s.

Colonel Marks presented his plaque, he rang the Bell, then commented accepting the honor and related his career.

Colonel Marks joined a group photo of the assembled Hall of Famers. A rare occasion to have so many inductees in one place.



L-R: McMahon, Joe and Kim S., Colonel Marks, Urschler, Moore, Fortin, Cook, Shirley Hoover, representing the late Robb; Dubuy, Haun, Thomas.

(Stevens had departed prior to the photo.)

(All photos by Moore)

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Next on the agenda, Association member Mike “Coach” Hoskins related the history behind, and significance of, the Major Willard Palm Trophy. It is awarded by the 55th Operation Group to the most outstanding 55th Wing crew of the year.

Following is the narrative for 2019.

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On 5 May 2019, a composite 55th Wing RC-135 crew was reallocated on short notice from

tasking in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE to conduct a mission the following day in support of Operation FREEDOM'S SENTINEL in a sensitive area of responsibility for deployed 55th assets.

In less than 14 hours, the crew flexed to execute electronic warfare (EW) in support of bombs on target in coordination with the electronic attack duty officer in the Combined Air Operations Center on the ground. He was responsible for directing, coordinating, and integrating its unique cutting-edge EW and ISR capabilities with electronic attack assets to determine performance and effectiveness of precise electronic attack and EW support before, during, and after strike operations.

The crew supported the deliberate strike at dozens of aim points that resulted in more than two hundred and fifty enemies killed in action. Those actions demolished a key enemy institutional network of more than a hundred structures that produced substantial support to their lethal campaign against coalition forces.

Moreover, the effects of the operation crippled the enemy's financial engine, paralyzing its ability to forward its engagement of coalition forces throughout the region.

Crew members on that mission who earned the Palm Trophy are:

LtCol N. Michael Felder (763 ERS), MSgt Stephen Hobbs (97 IS), SSgt Joshua Ein (97 IS), Capt Michael Luttkus (38 RS), SSgt Brody Kaufman (38 RS), SrA Ashley Kyler (38 RS), Capt Mark Douglass (38 RS), SSgt Joshua Baker (97 IS), SrA Zachary Dominowski (97 IS), Capt Taylor Maturo (38 RS), SSgt Lorenzo Cobarrubia (97 IS), SrA Stephan Mitchell (97 IS), 1Lt Joshua Irvin (38 RS), SSgt Lagelica Lloyd (97 IS), SrA Jordan Perez (97 IS), 1Lt Sarah Mancebo (38 RS), SSgt Ryan McGuire (97 IS), A1C Christopher Dinnoo (38 RS), 1Lt Mick McNaughton (38 RS), SSgt Jacob Priebe (97 IS), A1C Alexander Hardrath (38 RS), 1Lt Alison Dellinger (97 IS), SSgt Hannah Snyder (97 IS), A1C James Dalton (97 IS).

Contributed by LtCol. N. Michael “Axel” Felder, Commander, 38th Reconnaissance Squadron.



*LtCol Felder accepts the Palm Trophy from
55th Ops Group Commander
Colonel John Litecky.
(Photo by Moore.)*

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The reception continued with an open bar, finger food, conviviality, socializing and a general feeling of good will at being able to have such an event once again. The last guests to leave hung on until about 1900, reluctant to depart even then.

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55TH OPERATIONS FROM LINCOLN AIRPORT

On 28 February 2021, the Lincoln Phase 3 was completed when the last 55th Wing aircraft from Offutt landed at Lincoln Airport.

On 1 March 2021 at 0055 hours Offutt's runway closure was official with all aircraft set to return to a new runway in the late fall of 2022.

Offutt's runway is now a construction zone with all equipment traffic entering and existing through the base lake gate (eastern most).



Big 'chines ready to bust up concrete and move dirt.

The Offutt lower ramp (MPA) contract was awarded 31 March; then the selective slab removal/repair and replacement commenced.



Looking east in mid-April, some of the old runway rubble.

All 55th Wing aircraft are now flying/operations out of Lincoln airport, with the first aircraft having arrived 1 February and daily sorties having commenced 24 February.



During a normal weekday, 700+ 55th Wing personnel will operate/work out of Lincoln supporting flight operations.

The Wing anticipates those operations to continue for approximately 18 months with transition back to Offutt projected October 2022.

(Article and photos contributed by Mark Schenck, Project Engineer/Contractor/Runway, an Association member, 21 April 2021.)

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As reported above, the 55th Wing has been operating from Lincoln Airport since February; however, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts, symbolically "reopened" Lincoln ANGB at a formal event on the afternoon of 16 April in the main hangar at Lincoln Airport.

The 155th Air Refueling Wing (Nebraska Air National Guard) also officially welcomed the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* to the base.

Among the several dignitaries, officials and key staff members at the event were LtGeneral Michael Loh, Director, US Air National Guard,

Pentagon; **MajGeneral Daryl Bohac**, Adjutant General Nebraska National Guard; Colonel Gavin Marks, **55th Wing** commander; **Colonel John Williams**, **155th** commander; **Lincoln Mayor Leirion Baird**, Bellevue Mayor Rusty Hike, State Senator Rita Sanders.

*(Some material herein gleaned and edited from an article by **Zack Hammack**, Lincoln Star, 17 April 2021.)*



Maskateers L to R: Gov Ricketts, LtGen Loh, MajGen Bohac, Mayor Barird, Mayor Hike, Col Marks, Col Williams.

*(Photo by **Ryan Hansen**, 55th Wing Public Affairs.)*



*A 55th RC (tail #2792) and 155th KC (tail # 1495 nose to nose on display at the event. On the RC, under the ACC shield, is emblazoned in red, the depiction of Nebraska with the words **State of Nebraska** arched over it. The KC was also 'christened' the **City of Lincoln**.*

(Photo by Mark Schenck.)



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OPEN SKIES MISSION IS NO MORE

The Treaty on Open Skies established a program of unarmed aerial surveillance flights over the territory of its participants, designed to enhance mutual understanding and confidence by giving all participants, a direct role in gathering information about military forces and activities of concern to them.

The treaty was signed by **President George H. W. Bush** in 1989 and entered into force on 2 January 2002 as one of the most wide-ranging international efforts to date, promoting openness and transparency of military forces and activity.

The treaty specified that the entire territory of a member state would be open to observation by signatory states with no restrictions other than flight safety. All imagery collected from Open Skies missions was to be available to any state party upon request. As a result, the data available to each state party is much greater than that which it can collect by itself under the treaty quota system.

Management and coordination of treaty activities is the responsibility of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

The two OC-135B aircraft charged with executing the Open Skies Treaty missions are assigned to the **55th Wing** at Offutt AFB.

The 45th Reconnaissance Squadron successfully flew its first Open Skies mission over Russia in December 2002, and continued to fly observation missions over Russia until November 2019.

On 22 May 2020, **President Donald J. Trump** submitted notice of withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies due to alleged Russian violations. Six months later, on 22 November 2020, **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** announced that the U.S. was no longer a party to the treaty. Subsequently, in January 2021, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it would follow the United States in withdrawing from Treaty on Open Skies.



OC-135B Aircraft 61-2670 in Brussels, Belgium



An Open Skies aircrew tours the war monument in Khabarovsk, Russia.

The aging aircraft, tail numbers 2670, 2672, are nearly 60 years old and prone to frequent maintenance problems, sometimes being forced to land at remote bases in Russia.

Thus, they are headed to the ‘boneyard’ near Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, where parts will be cannibalized and the planes will either be mothballed or scrapped.

In a recent article in the Omaha World-Herald, **Congressman Don Bacon**, (BGen Ret) a former **55th Wing** Commander, is quoted as noting: “...they’re not going to do Open Skies anymore, it is a matter-of-fact that we are out of the treaty.”

“These aircraft are old and costly, and it costs too much to operate them,” he added.

*(Contributed by **Christopher “Fish” Herring**, LtCol Retired, RC-135 contractor pilot, an Association member. Edited and with added material by Moore.)*

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45th RS REMEMBERS CRASH OF COBRA BALL 664

*Contributed by **Paul Jeanes**,
55th Association Board of Directors member,
Former 45th Recon Sqd Ops Officer 1997 to 1998*

Who remembers where they were and what they were doing on 15 March 1981? **Wes Thibideaux** and I know exactly where we were on that date 40 years ago. We were both young lieutenants assigned to the 24th SRS at Eielson AFB, AK, part of one of two COBRA BALL crews making their way to Shemya AB that day.

While our arrival at Shemya three hours earlier via KC-135 was uneventful, the crew on COBRA BALL 664 faced a more challenging landing. In the time between our landing and 664’s landing, the weather changed dramatically.

After two go-arounds, the crew of 664 made one more attempt to land. Unfortunately, the third approach resulted in a crash.

Six of the 24 crew members lost their lives in that incident. Crew egress training, the lifesaving efforts of 664 crewmembers and the second COBRA BALL crew’s efforts prevented a greater loss of life.

15 March 2021 marked the 40th anniversary of 664’s crash and, as it has done in many years past, the men and women of 45th RS at Offutt AFB, held a memorial ceremony to remember the events of 15 March 1981 and to honor those who lost their lives.

This year’s memorial service, organized by the 45th in coordination with **Dr. Kerry Crooks**, a 664 crash survivor, and **Colonel (Ret) Rob Jensik**, was challenging and unique. Due to COVID 19, the memorial service was done virtually over Zoom in addition to those in person.

LtCol Andrew “Tripper” Maus, current 45th commander, was the lead speaker.

There were over 90 attendees, including 24th SRS personnel, and 664 crash survivors; but this anniversary included mission support members, as well as personnel who were stationed at Shemya at the time of the crash.

Among others were **Association** President Joe Spivey, a former 45th RS commander; **Association** Board member Mo Krishna, and **Brian Humphrey**, another former 45th commander.

As a member of the Eielson 24th SRS Cobra Ball Mafia, I want to pass on our many thanks to the men and women of the 45th RS for hosting the 40th Anniversary Memorial Service, for continuing to keep this part of Cobra Ball history alive, as well as their dedication to the Cobra Ball missions.

Well done WILDCATS!



***Captain Stephanie Taylor**, a current 45RS Cobra Ball Raven 1, laid a wreath at the 664 Memorial in front of the 45RS headquarters building at the north east side of the Offutt parade grounds.*

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COLD WAR MONUMENT SPRING CLEAN UP

The spring sprucing of the **55th Wing Association** Cold War Memorial in the Memorial Park of the National Museum of the USAF went off without a hitch, and had the memorial polished up before the Easter break when visitors began descending on the Museum.

Some of you may recall that our mainstay contact at the museum was **Ms. Jane Leach**. Jane was a big fan of the Memorial "old guard" and always had time to take a call or a visit. Jane retired earlier this year, but not before passing on a copy of *The Story of the Creation of the 55th SRW Association Cold War Memorial* that she had in her files and was given to her by the late **Jack Kovacs**.

She wanted to make sure it was available to the **Association** to appreciate and not stuffed into some nondescript file cabinet at the Museum. This book is now in the hands of the **Association**.

As for the Memorial itself, many of you will notice that the "backdrop" for the Memorial has changed.



The Museum decided to remove several of the large, mature pine trees across the Memorial Park as part of an initiative to create, according to the staff, a more open, park-like setting.

As a result, the "backdrop" for the Memorial is now open space that looks to the south across the west end and hammerhead of the runway adjacent to the Museum and the Memorial Park.

Plans for the open spaces are TBD.

(The half-dozen or so bare spots in the denuded area can be plainly seen. Max.)

*(Contributed by **Perry Pelouin**, Bellbrook, OH, 19 April 2021.)*



*(Moore notes: For comparison, this photo by **Jack Kovacs** was taken in May 2010. It shows the blue spruce to the left rear that was bought and paid for by the **Association** in September 2004 as **part of the Memorial**. The contrast with so many trees removed is stark to say the least.*

*No explanation can justify the removal of the **Association's** tree, and the others with or without prior notice, simply because that action ruins the esthetics of the area.*

End of rant. Max.)

55TH ECG TO GET NEW AIRCRAFT

The 55th Electronic Combat Group (ECG), Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, provides combat-ready EC-130H COMPASS CALL aircraft, crews,

maintenances and operational support to combatant commanders.



The group is a geographically separated unit that has been under the command of the 55th Wing at Offutt AFB, NE, since October 2002.

The group also plans and executes information operations, including information warfare and electronic attack, in support of theater campaigns.

In 2015 the Air Force made the difficult decision to divest roughly half of the EC-130H COMPASS CALL fleet as a result of the impact of the Budget Control Act and sequestration-level funding constraints. Fortunately, the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act blocked that and directed the Service to develop a plan to recapitalize the platform's capabilities.

The Air Force later reversed its position and decided to re-host the COMPASS CALL mission system on a fleet of 10 Gulfstream G550s, dubbed the EC-37B.

The first G550 (tail #17-5567)



airframe, with the conformal airborne early warning modification (CAEW), is scheduled to be delivered this fall to the professionals at L3Harris in Waco, TX, where it will complete 12-15 months of work to re-host the primary mission equipment and complete the conversion to EC-37B COMPASS CALL. Aircraft two (tail #17-5579) will be completed soon after. Both will undergo extensive

testing phases before the interim fielding authorization and arrival at Davis-Monthan.

The first five aircraft are expected to receive full fielding authorization at roughly the same time in the second quarter of 2025.

Finally, the EC-37B is not only a change in platform, but the manner in which it's maintained. Upon delivery, the group will shift from active duty maintenance on the EC-130H to contractor logistics support by BAE on the aircraft.

Unfortunately, this will result in the **deactivation** of the 755th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron – the “World's Best Maintainers”.

In the meantime, Team COMPASS CALL is working hard through EC-130H retirements, budget challenges, and scheduling issues to ensure the ECG can deliver precision electronic attack whenever and wherever needed.

COMPASS CALL... JAMS!

(Contributed by Terry Harroun, CMSgt Retired, former Superintendent with 55th ECG; now Acquisition Program Liaison with SRC, Inc., and an Association member, 7 April 2021. Edit by Moore.)



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TREASURER'S REPORT



As of 30 April 2021, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$53,600.

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, the postage and projects on the burner.

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 427 members in good standing as of 18 May 2021, compared with 449 on 30 November 2020. Unfortunately, too many dues and members do expire. New members keep the count steady, but recruiting is a never ending need to keep the **Association** viable.

134 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 19.

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RECRUITING MEMBERS TO THE ASSOCIATION

This is the life blood to sustaining the **Association's** membership..

Lapsed members returning, new sign ups of folks who have not belonged in the past, etc.

When anyone recruiting new members, for those potentials who ask questions or have concerns; here are some tips to point out to those who have concerns about joining:

1) **No meetings** except at reunions. Alleviates concerns of time and commitments.

2) The **Association** has **no HHQ to answer to**: no quotas, no required reports up channel, etc.

3) We have **no problem filling** officer slots, BoD or committees. Usually newbies think they may be tapped for those sorts of things as often happens in other organizations.

4) Belonging is a major way to **stay connected** with former and current **Wing** members, know about events the **Association** is doing, and news of the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* and Offutt. (Newsletter, web site, et al.)

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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 the directory on page 12 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.

* * * * *

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**

* * * * *

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 and through the app.

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.

If there are no changes to your basic info, just be sure to check the veteran line and send it in.

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.

* * * * *

As a courtesy, his newsletter is being sent to those members whose dues expired 31 December 2020 (shown on the address label), and went delinquent as of 1 April 2021. The hope is that those troops will return to the fold and stay connected.

Otherwise, regrettably, they will be removed from the members in good standing roll.

* * * * *

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.

I THANK YOU.

Steve Stevens, Pacific Junction, IA.

(Former **55th SRW** Commander, November 1982-October 1984.)

(From an e-mail 2 January 2021.)

* * * * *

Sir,

Received the recent newsletter and read it tonight.

Good to get the updates, and it is a reminder of the good ol' days.

Rich Casey, Bellevue, NE.

(Former **55th Wing** Command Chief, February 2000-August 2003.)

(From an e-mail 6 January 2021.)

* * * * *

Hi Max,

Thank you so much for sending the latest **Association** newsletter and including the nice write up on my husband, **Jeff Miner**. I'll forward it to his parents; they will appreciate it.

He used to auto-forward your emails to me. They always have lots of good information in them. Please keep me on that list.

Sincerely,

Deb Miner, Bellevue, NE.

(From an e-mail, 25 January 2021.)

* * * * *

Lt Col Moore (Max),

I sincerely appreciate your letter, and that you took the time to reach out to me.

I have been meaning to rejoin the **55th Wing Association**, so your letter was perfect. I have sent in my application and payment for dues.

Whenever people ask me about my proudest moments in my career, I always say that it was commanding the **55th Wing!** (9 November 1998-2 February 2000)

Thanks again!

Ron Sams, Lt General, USAF (Ret), Montgomery, AL.

(E-mail 10 February 2021.)

* * * * *

*You will never find anyone who can give you a clear and compelling reason why we observe daylight saving time. **Humorist Dave Barry**.*

(Among many others.)

Dear Max,

Another great issue of **Videmus Omnia** (December 2020). Congratulations to you, Max, and all the contributors.

You asked for contributions. So here is another epistle from one of the 'illegitimate kids' (non-**55th**) from the frozen north, 6th SW/24SRS, Eielson AFB, AK, late 1960s.

First, I was saddened to see the memorial announcing the death of Jack Kovacs. We served together in the Strategic Reconnaissance Center (*SAC HQ at Offutt*) in the early 1970s. A short-lived relationship, however, I consider Jack a good friend and I will miss him.

Next, is a story about one of the EWOs who rode the Cobra Ball aircraft off the cliff with me on 13 January 1969, the original Rivet Ball, RC-135S, tail number 59-1491, when we hydroplaned off the end of the runway and over a 40-foot cliff at Shemya AB, AK.

After the accident, an NCO pointed out a coincidence: my serial number was FR-3048491. Hmmm.

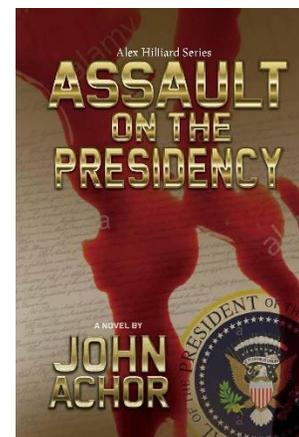
Show me a writer who doesn't stoop to blatant self-promotion and I'll show you a poor man.

I recently published two books: one was a thriller about a USAF pilot stationed in the Pentagon who uncovers a plot by the sitting president who doesn't want to leave office after eight years.

Before you say what you're thinking, I wrote the original draft to this one **twenty years ago**. Give *Assault on the Presidency*, a try. Available at Amazon in paperback and eBook formats.

The second book is a memoir of my time flying Rivet Ball out of Shemya, and the accident. Lots of personal input, a good number of photos and my feelings about the guys who rode the Ball off the cliff with me. *The Iron Pumpkin* is also available from Amazon in 8 1/2" x 11" paperback format.

Can anyone identify the creator of the pencil cartoon shown here? I recall getting it while still at Shemya after the accident, but I cannot remember from whom.



It reflects the Ball going over the cliff, with a caption that reads, "Whoa!!! You sonofabitch. Whoa!!!"

I'd like to give them credit, Reach me at: john@johnachor.com

Finally, here's the story about one of the EWOs I mentioned earlier, **Alan Hansen** seen here dressed for the balmy days at Shemya

Following is the final story included in *The Iron Pumpkin*.

Somewhere on my computer is a story about Al. I think perhaps Al, with a mischievous smirk on his face hid it from me, so I will attempt to recreate it here.



"Lurch" (his Team 2 nickname, of *Addams Family* fame) was the first of the crewmembers from that night to pass on.

Al picked up the nickname based on his size. He carried the largest frame on the crew.

It is only fitting that I give Al this final story in my book about Rivet Ball and let him have the last laugh.

Alan Hansen was a photographer and an EWO; what better place to serve in the Air Force than on an airplane that took momentous and unique photos that may have well changed the world.

He was one of the seventeen other guys who rode the Rivet Ball off the cliff at Shemya on 13 January 1969. That desolate and remote island at the end of the Aleutian Island chain was the "home" for the RC-135S, 59-1491.

The plane was a total wreck lying there in the dirt at the bottom of a 40-foot drop. We all suffered through the accident investigation board and finally made it back to Eielson AFB. With the loss of this one-of-a-kind bird, Al's job melted away. He

rotated back to the CONUS and I followed a few months later.

While at Offutt and filling a ground job, I flew the T-29, a navigation training plane with Base Flight. I was scheduled to fly a round robin carrying a batch of others who needed the flying time to collect flight pay. It had been a least a year since Al and I parted ways.

I was sitting on a front seat in the crew bus as the passengers climbed on. I recognized Al and we exchanged friendly nods as he passed. We completed the mission and landed, then headed for the crew bus again. I beat the passengers to the bus and took a seat up front again.

The passengers clamored on board; as Al topped the steps, he stopped next to me, and in that quiet, wry wit only "Lurch" could pull off, he said, "Better landing than last time."

Best wishes to all the **55th Association** members. Stay safe.

John Achor, Elkhorn, NE.

A recovered COVID 19 survivor; don't get it, it ain't fun! (E-mailed 21 March 2021.)



THE YOKOTA BELL RETURNS TO FIGHTIN' FIFTY-FIFTH

55th Wing Association board member Ham Kennedy (center), Major Desiree Bricks (at right), **55th Wing CAG**, and John McQueney, **55th Wing Historian**, display the historic bell from Yokota Air Base (Japan) Officers' Club bar.



Photo on the plaque at left shows two RB-47H on the ramp at Yokota, circa 1960s, and the one at right is of a COBRA BALL aircraft and crew.

(Photo by SpyV.)

Presentation to the **Wing** was made 30 March 2020 and is displayed in the heritage area of the **Wing** HQ Riggs Building.

The bell display was handcrafted by Major Bricks' husband, **Mike**.

The bell was rescued by an "Air America" pilot as a 'spirit mission' during the Yokota O-club reconstruction in early 1970s.

It was donated to the **55th Wing Association** by **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** alums, retired Colonels **Rick Thompson** and Ham Kennedy, honoring Yokota's decades long role as a **Wing** forward operating location.

On 30 June 1953, the Soviets shot down a Yokota-based **55th Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW)** RB-50 with a loss of 16 airmen.

Yokota basing served the **Wing** throughout the Cold War and continues to the present, the most recent being COBRA BALL operations by the 45th RS of the **55th Wing**.

(Contributed by Ham Kennedy, Springfield, NE, in an e-mail 30 March 2021.)

* * * * *

Colonel Mark D. "Chili" Howard will return "home" to the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** this summer as the **Wing's** Vice Commander. Chili is currently the Strategy Division Chief, 607th Air Operations Center, Osan AB, Republic of Korea.



He is a master RC-135V/W RIVET JOINT Combat Systems Officer with over 2,300 hours including 941 combat and 141 combat support hours.

In addition to the **55th Wing**, Colonel Howard's career assignments include tours at US Northern Command, Peterson AFB, CO; 763rd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, Qatar; and, Headquarters Air Force, Pentagon, Washington D.C.

In his various flying assignments, Colonel Howard flew RC-135V/W RIVET JOINT as an Instructor/Evaluator Combat Systems Officer (CSO) for Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations

(SRO). Additionally, he is a combat veteran of Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, NORTHERN WATCH, ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM.

Welcome home, Chili!

(Contributed by Jeff Johnson, Gretna, NE, 23 March 2021.)

* * * * *

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.

* * * * *

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.

As one can readily discern, the past three issues of the VO would be bare bones if it were not for the many contributors, some volunteers, many 'prodded' by our Peerless Leader, SpyV.

We thank them all. Keep it up!

* * * * *

(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. I have had a flat screen monitor and tailless mouse for quite some time.)



EAST COAST "CHAPTER"

East coast area alumni, including active duty, retirees, Pentagon habitués, and 'beltway bandits', have occasional social gatherings, COVID restrictions allowing. 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, e-mail Ricky McMahan 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.



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 from time to time, affectionately known as the **ROMEO** (Retired Old Men Eating Out) Breakfast Club, simply referred to as "The Breakfast", still gathers.

The group relocated to the food court in the Hy Vee Supermarket at the Shadow Lake shopping Center near 72nd Street in Papillion in June 2020.

Although the food and prices are good, the real draw is camaraderie and each other's company.

Tuesday show times beginning at 0700 to whenever people roll in. Session ends when the tales and BS level are saturated.

Attendance has varied in personnel and numbers over time due to COVID and winter, etc., and there were down days when the venue was closed, but with vaccines and Nebraska being more open, **things are getting back to the "new abnormal"**.

Many **55th** alums know of the meetings, so any out-of-towners who have been known to show face now need to be aware of the new location.

The photo below was taken 20 April by Max Moore.



Left side, front to back: Bob "Robey" Robeson, 'Deek' Brown, Kathy Saenz, Steve Stevens, John Tresmer. Right side front to back: Ham Kennedy, Carl Diver, Ron Strong, Roland Saenz. Those who left before or came in after the shot: Johnny Johnson, Jim Maloney, Dan Peterson, Jim Arbuckle.



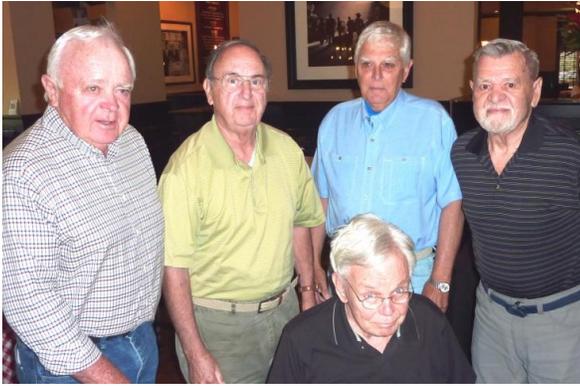
SAN ANTONIO LUNCH BUNCH

Our luncheons resumed in February, March and April. We are down to nine regulars and had four/five attend the past three months. There are some regulars with underlying health issues who are still hunkered down. Some just have scheduling conflicts.

We are continuing for the time being. We would be pleased to welcome other **55th** alums to our lunch.

We meet the second Thursday of the month and gather at Maggiano's, located in The Rim shopping center. It is located off I-10 just north of Loop 1604.

Easy to get to and most locals are familiar with this shopping area.



*Standing in back: Hank Dubuy, Charlie McBride, Stan Shackelford, Ron Nickerson.
Seated in front: Bill White.
(Text and photo provided by McBride, taken 8 April 2021.)*

To join this convivial group, contact McBride at cmcbride40@yahoo.com, Better yet, just show up.
Charlie McBride, San Antonio, TX
(E-mail 18 March 2021)

* * * * *

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?!?)

* * * * *

EC-135C RESTORATION 15 APRIL 2021

With all the excitement and attention building for the arrival of the F-117 “Nighthawk” this spring, there is even more anticipation for the conclusion of the restoration of the EC-135.

Restoration Manager, **Andy Beemer** and his team of volunteers have been pressing forward after a nearly lost year to COVID in 2020.

That added a year to the EC-135 project timeline and we’re operating at half capacity,” says

Beemer. “Work on this restoration is almost 95% all-volunteer labor.” The effort has been ramped up, though, and the final approach for the 049 is just ahead. To date, there have been 31,164.25 volunteer hours devoted to the EC-135.

The last six months were devoted to prepping, masking, priming, painting, detailing, and reassembling the exterior of the aircraft,” explains Beemer.

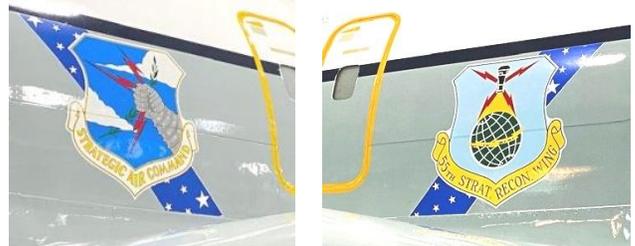


Museum photo before

For the next three months, Beemer’s team will continue detailing the aircraft with paint markings and decals, as well as reassembly of exterior antennas, doors, and other components. The restoration includes continued work on the right main landing gear.



After. Looks like the day it rolled out.



*Over wing left side Over wing right side
(Photos by **Chuck Karrick**, restoration volunteer.)*

The months of May and June will see the majority of the stenciling and sticker kit work.

Some of the detailed work includes: the SAC ribbon, US flag detail on the tail, USAF logo, the RF Radiation “stay out zone” markings along with a yellow stripe located on the belly of the aircraft.

Due to space restrictions in the main hall, when restoration is finished, the aircraft will be displayed without wings or engines.

So, the question remains...when will the 049 be completed?

“We hope to be done in July, says Beemer.”

* * * * *

The restoration of the interior of the EC-135C Aircraft 38049 has been completed for some time.

The permanent location for 049 in the Museum has not yet been determined. For a period after painting of 049 is complete, the aircraft will be closed with limited, special opportunities for guests to view and/or walk-through the aircraft.

The Museum is developing exhibits to be displayed outside the aircraft. Pending selection of a permanent location, the Museum does not have plans for interior exhibits.

This update includes pictures from 22 April 2021 through 7 May 2021. Many more pictures of the painting progress, and from day-one of the project, are posted to the following Facebook sites: SAC ACC (Strategic Air Command–Airborne Command and Control, LOOKING GLASS (SAC ABNCP), FANS OF STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND, and SAC VETERANS.

The Museum has posted a video to its website providing a virtual tour of the inside the aircraft. To view that amazing job, go to <https://sacmuseum.org/what-to-see/restoration/>, then click the **big red arrow for a two minute tour of 049. It is worth the time.**

The Museum has a continuing need for 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 online at: SACMuseum.org/donate.

Please specify that the donation is for the EC-135C restoration. The Museum still needs all the assistance it can get.

* * * * *

*(The first half of the update thru ‘says Beemer’ was copied from the Museum’s website at <https://sacmuseum.org/what-to-see/restoration/>. That and added text contributed by **Hank Carriger**, Boerne, TX, 10 April 2021. Edited by Moore.)*

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55TH WING GRAPHIC ARTIST RECEIVES DoD AWARD

Joshua Plueger, 55th Wing Public Affairs, was recognized as Department of Defense Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year. This is a repeat from last year, as well. Hoo-rah!!

The announcement was made by **Brigadier**

General Patrick S. Ryder, Director, Public Affairs, Department of the Air Force, on 26 April 2021.

This young man is more than just an artist. His body of work has been prevalent for several years designing logos, programs,

and posters for the **Wing** Birthday Balls; posters for Offutt Air Shows; an untold number of posters and publication covers for a multitude of significant **Wing** events.

One of his more permanent designs is the **Wing Warhawks** logo from 2018 under then **55th Wing Commander Colonel Michael Manion**, who deemed it the **Wing**’s nickname.

Some of his more recent work is on display throughout the Riggs Building, **55th Wing** HQ, stairwells, lobby, et al.

Josh is also an accomplished photographer and has written articles on the **Wing**’s heritage, one of which has been published in a past issue of the *Videmus Omnia*. Truly a multi-talented individual.



55TH WING PROTOCO GURU

Another *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* stalwart, workhorse, icon is **Mark D. Borytsky**.

At the 2015 **Wing** Birthday Ball, guest speaker former **55th Wing** Commander, then-**Major General Jack Shanahan**, recognized him and remarked that one can tell a person is well known when they are identified by one name.

“Ski”.

He retired from the Air Force as a master sergeant in 2003 after 22 years service.

Ski has been in **Wing** Protocol since 2003 as deputy chief, and he once served with our own then-Major Trish Seinwell when she was chief.

He has been Protocol Chief since 2006, when the position changed from military to a civilian, until the present.

All told his service on active duty and then in Protocol has been uninterrupted for 40 years!

The consummate Protocol professional whose expertise is renown throughout the DoD.

He can aptly be described as an institution.

Ski is an **Association** member, an ardent supporter, and has worked with **Association** presidents and Board members for decades.



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TAPS



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CHICK, Patrick M., Sr., 79, 24 March 2021, Bellevue, NE; wife of 59 years, **Judy**. “Chief Chick” was a career maintainer who served as the line NCOIC on the E4 at Offutt AFB, NE, from

1977 to 1982 when he retired. For the next 20 years, he was manager for the Transit Alert Service. Chief had a key and challenging role in servicing the display aircraft for 20 air shows at Offutt.

DIVER, Barbara Ann, 80, 18 February 2021, Bellevue, NE. A native of South Dakota, she was married to **Carl**, who served on the 2ACCS EC-135 battle staff at Offutt AFB, NE, for several years.

EVERLING, Thomas J., 87, 2 February 2021, Riverside, CA. Married 62 years to **Monica**. He served in the **55SRW** at Forbes AFB, KS, in the late 1950s as an EWO on RB47s. A strat recon pioneer who flew in Operation HOMERUN from Thule AB, Greenland, on overflight sorties of the northern Soviet Union in 1956. Tom left the **55th** in 1958 for pilot training, and in Vietnam he flew search and rescue missions. After the Air Force, he had a career in computer programming and technology.

FLOCK, Kathleen A., 77, 28 February 2021, Papillion, NE, wife of 56 years to **George (Ron)**, an RC-135 EWO in the **55th** at Offutt. Kathleen was a retired Special Ed teacher, a talented lady of many interests. A member of Lions Club International, she served as Governor and Council Chair for District 48.

JEANETTE, Joseph S., 89, 30 January 2021, Bellevue, NE; survived by **Alice**, his wife of 69 years. Joe flew combat missions during the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Later, he was a radio operator on EC-135 *Looking Glass* missions at Offutt, circa 1960s-70s. An avid golfer, he managed the Warrior 9 course on base for 25 years.

NELSON, Gary, 82, 22 February 2021, Plano, TX; wife of 60 years, **Karen**. He was a special ops EWO with the 343rd SRS in RCs at Offutt in the 1970s. He also had tours at Eielson AFB, AK and Kadena AB, Japan. Gary was a superior softball player and prodigious hitter on multiple squadron and church championship teams. After retirement from the Air Force, he worked for Watkin-Johnson Company, manufacturer of electronic systems and equipment.

PETERSON, Kathleen (Katie) D., 75, 27 January 2021, Bellevue, NE; married to **Dan** for 56 years. He was an RC-135 navigator at Offutt and Kadena in the 1970s, and the **first navigator** to command the **55th SRW** (May 1988-June 1990). Katie was the consummate Air Force wife and homemaker, multi-talented as an artist, sculptor

columnist, writer and poet. She was active in several artist organizations and her church.

STENSON, Steve, 8X, November 2020, Florida; a former RC navigator in the **55th** at Offutt and Kadena. (*Only information provided.*)

UMHOLTZ, Carol Marie, 79, 10 March 2021, Omaha, NE. Married to **Richard (Deacon)** for 57 years. He was a career maintainer, a crew and line chief in the **55th** for over 20 years at Forbes and Offutt. Carol ran a licensed day care center for several years and later worked as a computer programmer at Mutual of Omaha.

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*Please note that the cause of death is rarely stated in these issues even if known, except in unusual circumstances, such as accidents of various kinds. With the above group, **not one** is attributed to COVID-19.*

* * * * *

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.

* * * * *

TOM DAWES IS 100 YEARS YOUNG

Tom Dawes, LtCol USAF Retired, was born on 11 May 1921.

A New York native, he joined the US Army Aviation Cadet program in 1942, earning his navigator wings. During WWII he flew 22 combat missions in B-24s in the Mighty 8th Air Force. He separated in 1945 and remained in the Reserves.



Recalled to active duty in June 1950, Tom was assigned as to the **55th SRW** as an RB-50 navigator at Ramey AFB, PI. He then moved with the **Wing** to Forbes AFB, KS, and flew the RB-47 until 1964.

Tom retired in 1969 after a tour as the 301st Aviation Electronics Maintenance Squadron commander at Lockbourne AFB, OH. He has been an **Association** member for decades. He and **Lorraine** reside in Pultneyville, NY.

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REUNIONS

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55TH WING

REUNION/ROUND-UP

STATUS UPDATE

Submitted by Val Dugie, 55th Wing

Association Reunion Chair

13-17 October 2021 in Tucson, Arizona

(The Old Pueblo)

We have made real progress since the last newsletter. We signed the hotel contract on 2 April with the Sheraton Tucson Hotel & Suites. The hotel is getting the registration link set up and we will be

sending out the details to everyone as soon as we get it.

The Sheraton Tucson is a part of the Marriott Bonvoy affiliated hotels and features a recently renovated property in the center of Tucson at 5151 East Grant Road. General hotel info and description of services are available at the hotel's main website: Tucson, AZ Hotel Suites | Sheraton Tucson Hotel & Suites (marriott.com).



Our current agreement with the hotel includes breakfast during the Reunion with the rate available three days prior/post event for folks to plan for an extended vacation in the local Tucson area.

Event planning continues by The Reunion BRAT and now the focus of our efforts is welcoming folks to this historic southwestern desert city. As always, we'll keep everyone up to date on our progress as we get closer to October with more details to follow as they come available. Watch your e-mail and **55th Wing Association** website for registration details and links.

A full registration package with event costs, schedule, etc. will be forthcoming in July or August. But make your plans now for the first reunion in two and half years.

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Tucson!

* * * * *

82nd RS REUNION POSTPONED YET AGAIN

Due to the pandemic, the reunion previously planned for July 2020 and then postponed to 1-4 July 2021 is slipping once again.

Now looking at July 2022 with details TBD. Stay tuned.



2021 is 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
Macelhaney@comcast.net (10 April 2021.)*

* * * * *

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 negotiating with the host hotel.

A list of fantastic tours are being finalized with the selected contractor. There are options for tour packages.

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

The latest updated information can be found at **dfcsociety.org**. Click on **2021 DFC Reunion** in upper cluster for all the details on registration, events and more.



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ASSOCIATION BX

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NOTE: The BX section is no longer displayed on the Association web site. That section included the clothing items, book library, et al.

Instead, under the Haberdasher graphic, click on Bill Sargent's name, which accesses an e-mail. There you can make any orders, inquiries, etc. directly with him.

His full input will return for the reunion registration package.

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55TH FASHION PINS

The pins are sold to **Association** members all over the country. They are particularly evident at **55th** reunions and at official and social functions at and near Offutt (when held).

Gents and ladies, the pin makes a great birthday or anniversary accessory gift, or holiday stocking stuffer. Classy but not expensive.

(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, 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.**

The owner, the late **Frank Kumor** was a long time member and ardent supporter of the **Association.**



New Air Force Mission Statement, April 2021.

Graphic by Roario Gutierrez.



WHO SHOT WHAT

Graphics from Clip Art, and organization and public web sites. Photos not previously attributed: Plueger by Ryan Hansen; Ski, **55th** pin by Moore.

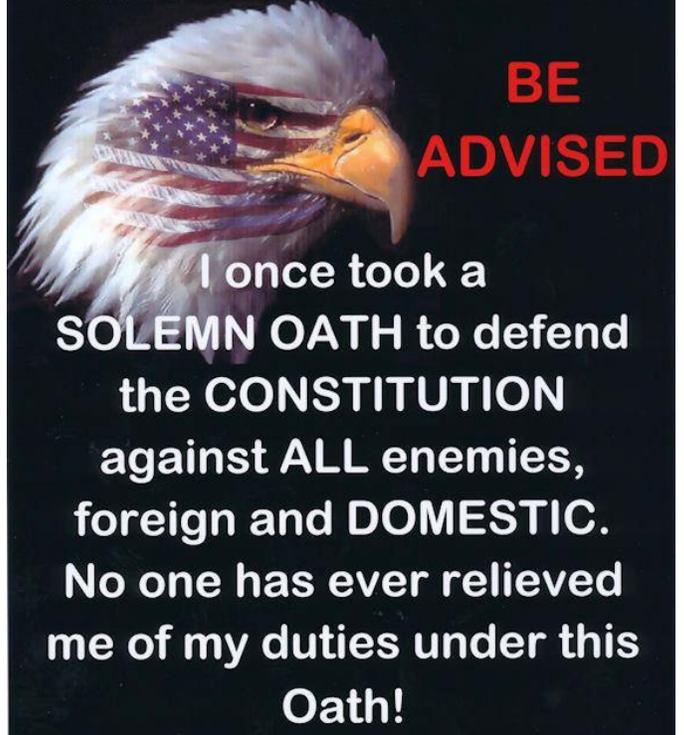
WIDELY AWARDED MEDAL UNOFFICIAL



PAIN IN THE ASS MEDAL
There is no limit to the number of oak leaf clusters awarded.



**I AM A UNITED STATES
MILITARY VETERAN**



LEFT OVERS



*Kim and Max January 2001 and April 2021
Hardly changed at all, huh?*



Kim S. speaks

Paul at the wall.



*Offutt aerial view looking north.
No aircraft. Empty ramp. Runway torn up.*



Worker bees: Krishna, Hartman, Haun.



*Riggs Bldg lobby west wall mural.
Dots indicate 55th operation locations.*



MajGen Rausch, Diane, and State Senator Sanders.

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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,.**

