

# Videmus Omnia

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



NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2021



### 55<sup>TH</sup> WING REUNION and COMPASS CALL 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY “The OLD PUEBLO ROUND-UP & RENDEZVOUS”



*Submitted by Val Dugie, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association Reunion Chair*

**13-17 October 2021 in Tucson, Arizona**

The **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association Reunion** team has completed the COVID extended 2-year planning for the Old Pueblo Round-Up and Rendezvous. Pending any COVID lock-down it is a go! We will gather in Tucson, Arizona to celebrate a major event in the Wing's history - the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the EC-130 COMPASS Call and its upcoming transition to the EC-37B; a completely new aircraft. Supporting this anniversary celebration, the **55<sup>th</sup> Electronic Combat Group (55 ECG)** has planned several events to highlight this auspicious event – an ECG Open House, EC-130 and RC-135 aircraft static display, and COMPASS Call Golf Tournament, culminating with the Anniversary and Reunion Banquet at the Pima Air and Space Museum hanger amid several historic aircraft.

Experience a bit of the history and flavor of this unique southwestern desert city which began in 1700 with the arrival of Jesuit Missionaries:

- Presidio San Agustín Del Tucson and Old Town Pueblo market/shops...Spanish military outpost established in 1775
- Pima Air and Space Museum, the world's largest non-government funded aerospace museum featuring nearly 300 aircraft with four hangers housing the museum's true gems, and home to Arizona's Aviation Hall of Fame
- Sonoita AZ Wineries, just south of Tucson you will visit the region vineyards first planted in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century by Franciscan missionaries. This half-day trip will take you to the oldest American Viticulture Area (AVA) region in the state.

An opportunity to get together with old friends and “crewmates”, renew contacts, meet the new “crewdogs”, and just celebrate the ability to get together once again....

- Fully stocked (beverages and snacks) Hospitality Room with room to sit back, relax, and reminisce
- **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** Welcome Reception
- **55<sup>th</sup> Wing/CC** All Call and Welcome Buffet, meet the new **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, Col Kristen “KT” Thompson**; get the latest from the Wing's Group Commanders (**Col John Litecky, 55OpsGp/CC** and **Col George “Chewey” Cundiff, 55ECGp/CC**) mission briefs and operations summary for the past year.

Events schedule:

Wed, 13 Oct	Thurs, 14 Oct	Fri, 15 Oct	Sat, 16 oct	Sun, 17 oct
Travel / Arrival day	Travel / Arrival day	55ECG Open House	COMPASS Call 40th Anniversary Golf Tourney	General Departure / hotel check-out
55WG Assn BoD Meeting	Registration Open Hospitality Room Open	Pima Air & Space Museum	Presidio San Agustin & Old Town	
	55WG Association Welcome Reception	55WG/CC All Call & Welcome Buffet Dinner	40th Anniversary & Reunion Dinner	
		55WG Association Gen Membership Meeting		

Please see the detailed Anniversary and Reunion schedule of events and registration info included along with the hotel registration information inside the newsletter. Travel days are planned for 13 - 14 Oct with the initial events kicking off on Thursday evening, 14 Oct.



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).

The Sheraton room rate starts at \$125/night, includes hot breakfast in the Global Restaurant, and is good for 3-days prior/post our planned event dates for those looking for a short vacation in the local Tucson area. Hotel block rooms are available to local Tucson area attendees as well. For the Reunion/Anniversary, electronic registration is available through the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** homepage for credit card payments or you can mail your registration by check.... **please see specific details in the separate registration package.**

**Important items/dates to note for event registration and hotel reservations:**

- **Reunion registration payment MUST** be received by **20 September 2021** and includes all hotel planned events, meals, Saturday evening Reunion dinner with transportation to/from hotel, and Hospitality Room access
- Individual tour/event registration items include bus transportation to/from the hotel to location (except Golf Tourney planned for carpool) departing from the Sheraton Hotel
- Local Tucson attendees/registrants can register for daily Hospitality Room access and hotel scheduled events (**55<sup>th</sup> Wing Assn Welcome Reception, 55<sup>th</sup> Wing/CC All Call and Welcome Buffet** (see **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** Webpage for local Tucson area registration)
- A \$15 per person registration cancellation fee will apply to all cancellations received within 30 days (20 September 2021) of the event. **Cancellations received within 10 days of the event (3 October 2021) will be non-refundable...see cancellation instructions/details on the attached registration form**
- **Hotel reservations MUST** be received before **20 September 2021** with remaining rooms returned to the hotel after that date

All in all, we have a very memorable reunion planned for the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association**, and for the entire **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** to celebrate the COMPASS Call's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the delivery of the first electronic attack EC-130H platform in 1981. The ECG and local **Association** residents look forward to welcoming all **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** past and current members, friends, supporters, and families to Tucson and the desert southwest...a real Round-Up and Rendezvous for everyone as we start to return to a post pandemic environment.

**Make your plans now for the first reunion in two and half years.**

We look forward to seeing all of you there....*Bienvenidos al Tucson!*

COMPASS Call JAMS!

The sun never sets on the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth!*



## SPY V'S PREZGRAM

*Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* alums and spouses:

As the summer sun continues to shine on us, I am ever mindful of our motto, "The Sun Never Sets on the *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*"—whether in orbital relationship, geographical distance or time passage.

In a few brief months, we've experienced an historic **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Change of Command from **Colonel Gavin Marks** to **Colonel "KT" Thompson** conducted on Offutt's Parade Field. Other Changes of Command included two groups (Medical and Support) and a dozen or so squadrons. As mentioned in the May edition, we also saw the **Colonel Chili Howard** (Vice **Wing** Commander) "return home" to Offutt.

With the addition of several new commanders throughout the **Wing** (including **55<sup>th</sup> Electronic Combat Group (ECG)** squadrons at Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ), there has also been a corresponding revolving door of VIP visitors including the Commander of Air Combat Command (ACC), **General Mark Kelly** + staff, and the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, **CMSgt JoAnne Bass**.

All this, while still recovering from the historic 2019 flood, some lifting of the "COVID-fog" and deployed Lincoln ops due to the Offutt runway reconstruction.

What ties this flurry of activities to our **Association** you may ask? In a word: HISTORY! Several ceremonies, receptions and visitation events took place in "our" (**55<sup>th</sup> Wing/55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association**) **Riggs 55<sup>th</sup> Wing** HQ Bldg. (Bldg. 500) museum area—which continues to expand exhibits from various AF specialties, units and more.

Eighty+ years of heritage and success is definitely difficult to quantify—no matter room size; but "we" are trying. In fact, one of the recent editions is an engraved granite bench (twin to the one the **Association** dedicated in 2019 at the SAC Museum)—paid for by designated-donations submitted through our **Association**.



The highlight of this newsletter, though, is our upcoming Tucson Reunion being orchestrated by **Val Dugie**. Please review the details Val provides in this VO edition for schedule, costs and registration, and make plans to attend.

Significantly, the **55<sup>th</sup> ECG** at D-M is truly "rolling out the red carpet" for our attendees.



As you might imagine, following the nearly three years passed since the last Rendezvous, there will be many friends to meet, business needs to resolve (e.g., BoD officer elections, etc.), information galore and wonderful sights to behold.

I hope to see you there.

*Videmus Omnia,*

*Spy V*

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55<sup>TH</sup> WING WELCOMES A NEW COMMANDER

*By 55th Wing Public Affairs*

*Published 22 June 2021*

*(Edited and added material by Moore)*



LtGeneral Timothy Haugh, 16th Air Force commander, passes the 55th Wing guidon to Colonel Kristen Thompson, incoming commander, during the 55th Wing change of command ceremony at Offutt AFB, NE, on 22 June 2021.

55<sup>th</sup> Wing Command Chief Bryan Tuman was the guidon bearer.

*(Photo by Charles J. Haymond, 55th Wing Public Affairs.)*

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The *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth*, the largest wing in Air Combat Command and the second largest in the Air Force, welcomed a new commander during a ceremony 22 June 2021.

Colonel Kristen Thompson assumed command of the 55th Wing from Colonel Gavin Marks during the time-honored military ceremony on the historic parade grounds of Fort Crook.

“The 55th Wing is gaining a world-class leader and commander today,” said LtGen. Haugh, 16th Air Force (Air Forces Cyber) commander, the presiding official.

Col. Thompson arrives at Offutt from Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, where she served as the 380th Expeditionary Operations Group commander for the past year.

“I look forward to Kristen’s leadership as she takes command, and I can’t wait to watch the incredible Airmen of the 55th Wing continue to advance the future of warfighting within the Air Force and the Joint Force,” General Haugh said.

The new commander earned her commission from the US Air Force Academy in 2001. She is a command pilot with more than 3,800 flying hours, including more than 700 combat hours,

She is the first female to serve as commander of the **55th Wing**.

“To the men and women of the *Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth*, I’m so excited for this new challenge,” Thompson said. “I’m big on relationships and it’s how I lead and how I plan to do business.”

Over her 20-year career, Col. Thompson served the Office of the Secretary of Defense as military assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. She also commanded the 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron at Tinker AFB, OK, and served as a speechwriter in the Secretary of the Air Force’s Executive Action Group.

“I am super-pumped to be part of a mission set that is undoubtedly the gem of the Air Force,” she said. “It is not lost on me that the **55th Wing** is spread across the world. The reach, professionalism, determination and discipline that this **Wing** possesses and crushes daily are remarkable.”

“I remember saying two years and eight days ago that (taking command) would be the honor of my life, and I was right,” he said. “This experience has been surreal, exhilarating, exhausting, life fulfilling, and I cannot believe that it is coming to a close, Marks said.

Haugh awarded Marks the Legion of Merit during the ceremony for his leadership of the **Wing** through COVID-19, the runway replacement and flood recovery efforts over the past two years.

“(Gavin) definitely left his mark on the **55th Wing**,” Haugh said. “He harnessed the ingenuity of the Airmen in the **Wing** to deliver exceptional outcomes to the nation.”

Marks departed Offutt for the Pentagon, where he will lead the Executive Action Group for the Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

Over 300 personnel attended the event in near perfect weather. Among the several dignitaries were **Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts**, **US Strategic Command Chief of Staff Rear Admiral William Wheeler**, **Nebraska Air National Guard Commander BrigGeneral Daryl Bohac**, **State Senator Rita Sanders**, **Bellevue Mayor Rusty Hike**, **Plattsmouth Mayor Paul Lampert**.

President Joe Spivey represented the **Association**, as did past-president **Jim Thomas** and former wing commander **Steve Stevens**.



## **55TH WING ASSN HOSTS NEW COMMANDER AND VICE**

Renewing a tradition initiated by then-**Association** president **Bill Ernst** in 1997, a cadre of **Association** members hosted a welcome and get acquainted dinner with the newest commander of the *Fightin’ Fifty’ Fifth*, **Colonel Kristen Thompson**. She was the 14<sup>th</sup> commander so greeted.

Also invited was **Colonel Mark Howard**, Vice Commander, a former crewdog himself with prior duty with the **Wing**, here since July.

The event was held 1800 hours 16 August at the Spezia Italian steak house on 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.

After some social time, mix and mingle, when Col. Thompson got to meet some of the “Old Guard”, President Spivey emceed the festivities and began with opening remarks and introductions.

**Mike Hoskins** noted that the date of this event coincided with the first **55** days of Col. Thompson’s tenure, and marked the date **55** years ago from when the **Wing** moved from Forbes to Offutt.

It officially began with Col. Thompson and former **Wing** commanders **BGen (Ret)/Congressman Don Bacon** and **Col.(Ret) Steve Stevens** when were invited to ring the **55th** ceremonial bell.



L-R Col. Thompson, Steven, Bacon.

There was a round-robin of the attendees giving short resume's of their careers before the excellent dinners were enjoyed.

President Spivey presented Col. Thompson with a copy of the *We See All* Cold War pictorial history. She then addressed the group, and among other things, noted how impressed she was with the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association**, and expressed her appreciation for the evening's activity.



All Photos by Moore

Among the two dozen attending were some out of towners here on business, (of course). In addition to Bacon and Stevens, **Association** Board of Directors Vice President Ricky McMahon, Treasurer Michael Cook, Mo Krishna, Don Kelly, Jim Maloney, Ham Kennedy, Paul Jeanes, Val Dugie, and Max Moore were there.

Other members at the occasion were **Dick Purdum** (last commander of the 3902<sup>nd</sup> Air Base Wing at Offutt), Mike Hoskins, **Dave Heininger**, **Dave Wolfe**, **Denny Haun**, **Ben Ungerman**, **Jeff Johnson**, **Chris Canada**, **Brian Humphrey**, and **55th Wing Historian John McQueney**.

*(As a side-bar, the chain was broken during Colonel Marks's tenure due to the COVID and myriad other circumstances that kept his schedule from being anything but normal. So we just never got him to dinner).*

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## VIRTUAL REALITY TRAINING ASSISTS 55<sup>TH</sup> CREWS

The **55th** Operations Group crews at Offutt are using new virtual reality (VR) equipment sent from the 16th Air Force to help them maintain their RC-135 training requirements.

Since Offutt's runway is currently under construction and students need to travel back and forth to Lincoln, the 338th Combat Crew Training Squadron is relying on the VR equipment not only for training, but also to save time and fuel.

“We are doing split operations at Lincoln, so it is more difficult to get students there,” said **Col. John Litecky**, **55th** Ops Group commander. “They have about a one-and-a-half-hour bus ride each way, so this is saving us that time alone.”

Before the VR system, students would have to power up an aircraft on the ground, or spend time in the air to understand the system they are now learning on the new equipment. This system will save approximately \$4 million a year in fuel alone.

“We are able to prioritize the aircraft and use it to the maximum extent possible, while the students are doing all their prep work on the ground getting it ready for a chance to see the systems virtually before they actually see it in the aircraft,” Litecky said. “We are able to see the reduced amount of time on the aircraft in order for the students to become familiar with the system.”

The VR system allows the students to know where safety equipment is located on the aircraft and gives them the opportunity to handle the equipment virtually. The students are able to interact with everything, including items they would not normally be allowed to touch.

“It is insane; it is awesome,” said **Senior Airman Ryan Benson**, 338th CTS airborne cryptologic language analyst student. “It saves a trip to Lincoln at the benefit of being able to view the system in a way I can do my job.”

Litecky believes the VR system will continue its success as the program grows and improves. “I think overall, the program is a great benefit to the **Wing** and the group,” Litecky said. “We are on the cusp of seeing what it can do for us and there is a lot more opportunity that we will be able to see savings in the future as we continue to develop the program.”

Contributed by **Daniel L. Jenson**, Contractor, 15 July 2021.



## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS DIRECTORY**

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**Other Members of the Board of Directors:**

**Bill Ernst, Jim Thomas, Errol Hoberman, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Don Kelly, Paul Jeanes, Val Dugie, Bill McKechnie. Active Duty Representative: Colonel David Priesman.**

**Appointed Ass't Membership Chair**

**Jon Adams**

13704 Wallace Drive  
Plattsmouth, NE 68048  
E-mail: jonathan.adams.1979@gmail.com

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**TREASURER'S REPORT**



As of 26 July 2021, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$54,590.

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 2024 (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 413 members in good standing as of 20 August 2021, compared with 429 on 18 May 2021. Unfortunately, too many dues and members do expire. New members and renewals keep coming in, but recruiting is a never ending need to keep the **Association** viable.



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

Fifty **55<sup>th</sup> 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

**There are members whose dues lapsed 31 December 2020 who are receiving this package so they will have the information about the reunion, It is also a hopeful gesture that many, if not all, will return to the fold.**

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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 usually 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](mailto:volvomo@gmail.com), or drop him a note at the address noted in the directory on page 7 to get an update on your membership status.

***Address your concerns to Mo. The newsletter editor is not responsible for the membership dues date.***

*When in doubt, send money. It will be credited toward future years.*

**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 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 page 17 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.

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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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*The one thing that unites all human beings, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status, or ethnic background, is that deep down, we all believe we are above average drivers. **Dave Barry**, Humorist*

# ASSOCIATION WEB SITE

## 55wa.org

The **55wa.org** recently revamped web site is operating smoothly and securely. A search box is provided to look for a name rather than scrolling through long lists on the TAPS, or dues date pages.

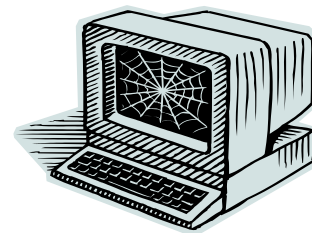
You can view the **55<sup>th</sup>** Cold War Memorial page in the Heritage section and find the location of your (or any other) patio brick.

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

**Jim Maloney**, the Web Guy.

*(Jimbo has announced his intention to 'retire' as webmaster as soon as a replacement steps forward; but so far, the response has been underwhelming.*

*Gotta be some teckie wizard out there willing to do the job. Just coordinate with Jimbo to see what the hand-off entails. jim@maloney.com)*



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## LETTERS AND STUFF

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Thank you for a wonderful newsletter. I enjoy the newsletters providing an occasional memory of the past.

I was sorry to hear about the blue spruce at the USAF Museum (*being removed*).

Just a comment about Mrs. **Alice Riggs**, she was an amazing leader and a great example to the wives. She was a beautiful lady and had the kindness and concern that we all needed.

I am from Dayton, Ohio, and my husband **Tom** died in April 2005 (*He was an RC-135 navigator at Offutt 1966-70.*)

**Kate McKinney**, Dayton, OH.

*(From an e-mail 4 June 2021.)*

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Hi Max,

Thanks for the latest **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** newsletter.

Very informative, AS USUAL!!

Miss my **55<sup>th</sup>** friends. Hey, you guys (*Assn*) are the best.

Respectfully,

**Greg Power**, The Villages, FL

MajGen, USAF (retired). Former **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Commander, Feb 2000-Aug 2002

*(From an e-mail 6 June 2021.)*

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Max, thanks for the great work you do in putting together the newsletter.

It is great to see all of the work that is being done by the current and former **55th** people in keeping the history alive.

Many kudos to those working to save items from Bldg 497. I have many memories of the 343rd/38th/IN squadron halls, the briefing rooms, schoolhouse, and all of the folks who were a part of it.

The newsletter also gives me hope that the mission of the **55th** is being carried along with good people.

Wish I could say the same for other parts of the DoD.

You know you have been gone for a while when you recognize more names in the TAPS than in the other columns.

Great article on 664 and the crew. I had been gone from the 24<sup>th</sup> SRS for a couple of years by then. Spent several months in Greenville with **Jim Cartmill** and **Don Redmon** and 664 installing the ATS. We no sooner got back to Eielson with the plane than we left for Hickam and a BOA deployment. Stayed for several weeks but never flew.

Good thing was that we knew by about noon each day if we were going to be tasked or not. Might have resulted in a lot of beach time at the Hale Koa.

With the exception of riding with crews on RC-135 V/W deployments, I stayed with the two plane fleets (RC-135S-663 and 664, and RC-135U-847 and 849).

Even including time spent on "the rock" the 6th/**55th** gave me the best memories of my life, and maintenance gave me a new appreciation for how hard others worked to keep the **55th** in the air

I still hear from some of what were then "kids" I had in the 343rd, makes me happy.

My best to all of the members of the **Association**, both past and present.

I hope to make the reunion in Tucson.

**Mark W. Smith**, Chinook, WA (*Former 343<sup>rd</sup> SRS commander, Feb 1987-Oct 1988; Assistant DCM, Oct 1988-May 1990.*)

*(From an e-mail 8 June 2021)*

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Pictured Left to right: **Bob Cook**, **Rob Simmon**, **Gary Schuetzner**, **Jerry Slotemaker**, and **Bob Smillie**. They were linguists 1967-69 and flew tail numbers 841-849. Gathered here at Lincoln Airport **55<sup>th</sup>** area.

*(Photo and info contributed by **Mark Schenck**. 3 June 2021.)*

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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](mailto:MaxMoore55@aol.com), preferably; or mail to the address in the Directory on page 8. 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.*

*We thank them all. Keep it up!*

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*(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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## **EC-135C RESTORATION JUNE 2021 UPDATE**

At 1022 hours on 17 June 2021, **Mr. Cannon**, President/CEO of the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum, made a post on the Museum’s Facebook site that may be useful to those interested in the restoration of EC-135C aircraft 38049.

Mr. Cannon’s “Statement from the President and CEO of the Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum regarding the EC-135 049” provides the Museum’s plans for finishing the restoration of 049 and preparing to exhibit the aircraft.

It provides updates to the restoration of 049 by both emails and Facebook posting. Mr. Cannon’s statement is attached to the email and persons receiving the email post may post their comments/feedback to Mr. Cannon’s statement using the email address on the Museum’s website. See: <https://sacmuseum.org/staff-directory/>

It posts the EC-135C updates to several Facebook sites and did not include Mr. Cannon’s statement in these Facebook posts. Instead, please visit the Museum’s Facebook site to read the Statement and to make any comments/feedback directly to the Museum. The Museum’s Facebook site is at:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=strategic%20air%20command%20%26%20aerospace%20museum>

The Museum still needs more members interested in preserving the history of SAC. More funds are needed to prepare exhibits that will tell the public about the significant contributions of the SAC ABNCP to winning the Cold War, and to tell the story of the persons assigned to fly on or support the ABNCP. Funds are also needed to establish a fund for future maintenance of 049 and its exhibits.

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

Your 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](https://SACMuseum.org/donate).

**Please specify that the donation is for the EC-135C project.**

The Museum still needs all the assistance it can get to prepare exhibits of a professional quality commensurate with the importance of the SAC ABNCP’s position in SAC history.

**Henry N. (Hank) Carriger**, Boerne, TX

*(Late note: The aircraft was rolled from the restoration area into Hangar B for static display the last week in July.)*

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# T A P S



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**AARON, Jane E.**, 69, 24 May 2021, Lakeville, IN; wife of **Dan**. A native Hoosier, **Janey** earned a nursing degree, but chose to raise a family and worked for Indiana Bell for several years.

**BOWKER, Jean**, 95, November 2020, Portland, OR; wife of **Bill** for 73 years who survives her. He was an RB-47 aircraft commander in the **55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW)** at Forbes AFB, KS, in the late 1950s until 1963.

**DAWES, Tom**, 100 last May, 15 June 2021, Pultneyville, NY; wife **Lorraine**. He earned his navigator wings thru Aviation Cadets in 1942. During WWII he flew 22 combat missions in B-24s in the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He separated in 1945 and remained in the Reserves. Recalled to active duty in June 1950, Tom was assigned to the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** as an RB-50 navigator at Ramey AFB, PR. He then moved with the **Wing** to Forbes, and flew the RB-47 until 1964. Tom retired in 1969 after a tour as the 301<sup>st</sup> Aviation Electronics Maintenance Squadron commander at Lockbourne AFB, OH. He was an **Association** member for decades.

**FORD, Phillip J.**, 78, 28 May 2021, McGregor, TX; married to **Kristen** for 52 years. A native Texan, commissioned thru AF OTS in 1967. Phil's first assignment after pilot training was to the 343rd at Offutt AFB, NE, as an RC-135 pilot in September 1970 to December 1972. After numerous assignments, positions and schools, including January 1989 when he assumed the duties of Inspector General and Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations for Headquarters Strategic Air Command, Offutt AFB, NE, until May 1990, In February 1994, the General returned to US Strategic Command as the Director for Operations and Logistics until March 1996.



He then was assigned as the commander of Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB, LA. His last assignment was Deputy Commander of US Strategic Command at Offutt. He retired as a LtGeneral in June 2000. He was inducted into the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Hall of Fame** earlier that year.

Upon retirement from the Air Force, General Ford became the General Manager/CEO of the Brazos River Authority from April 2001 to April 2018. He made a lasting impression on the water industry in Texas serving on numerous boards, and as President of the Texas Water Conservation Association.

**HORNOR, Edward G. (Pops)**, 77, 29 July 2021; Port Angeles, WA; wife **Annie**. Pops was born in West Virginia, an Army Air Corps 'brat'. Joining the Air Force in 1966, he was a B-52 navigator before going to pilot training. Pops served in the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** as an RC-135 pilot/instructor/evaluator in the 1970s-80s. He served a remote at Osan, South Korea, had a staff tour at RAF Mildenhall, retiring in 1989.

**HICKS, Frank L**, 91, 12 June 2021, Bellevue, NE. Frank served in the US Army during the Korean War, then went to AF Aviation Cadets earning his pilot wings. He was assigned to the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Forbes in August 1955 as an RB-47 co-pilot. After ten years there he transitioned to RC-135s and was an AC in the 82nd SRS at Kadena AB, Okinawa and Offutt AFB, NE.

**MCCLEAN, John (Mac) N.**, 74, 13 May 2021, The Villages, FL.; wife of 50 years, **Patricia**. A New York native, Mac enlisted in the USAF at 18 and served four years as a GCI controller in Germany and Alaska. After graduating from Manhattan College, he earned an AF commission thru OTS and went to pilot training. He flew

B-52s during most of his career. He served as the vice commander of the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing**, June 2000-August 2002, when he retired.

**MILLEN, Billy**, 86, 20 April 2020; North Carolina; wife of 60 years, **Kathy**. He was a crew chief on RB-47s at Forbes, 1953-1957, with the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW**.

**POTTER, Eliot H. (Pete)**, 99, 13 April 2021, Topeka, KS; married to **Treva**. Pete was a three war veteran. After graduating as a navigator from Army Air Corps aviation cadets in 1942, he flew 53 combat missions in B-25s from North Africa over Italy. He later went thru pilot training and flew 55 bombing missions in B-29s over Korea from Japan.

During the Cold War he was assigned to Roswell, NM, in B-36s. Pete came to the **55<sup>th</sup>** in the early 1960s, flew the RB-47 and served as **55<sup>th</sup>** OMS commander before retiring in 1965. He served as Chief of Staff for the Kansas Secretary of State for several years. He and Treva were Birthday Ball regulars. Easily spotted: ramrod tall with his gray flat top, he was the guest cake cutter twice.

**RACINE, Joseph C.**, 84, 11 July 2021, Waterloo, IL; wife, **Mary**. An Illinois native, Joe was an RB-47 copilot in the 343rd at Forbes in the early 1960s. He separated for a long career with American Airlines. He always relished his time in the **55<sup>th</sup>**, maintained many of those friendships, and was proud of his Cold War service. He kept his **Association** membership for decades. He and Mary attended the occasional Birthday Ball and reunion.

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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. For the second issue in a row, **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 **55<sup>th</sup>** 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 55<sup>th</sup> - 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 **55<sup>th</sup>** 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.

\* \* \* \* \*

*When you are dead, you do not know you are dead.  
The pain and sorrow are felt by others.  
It is the same when you are stupid.*

# ASSOCIATION BX

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The **Association BX** is currently undergoing a management change and will be fully open before the Tucson Reunion. Former manager, **Bill Sargent**, has relocated from the local area. The new BX manager, **Denny Haun** (Hall of Fame/former BoD member), is in the planning stages to determine stock inventories, required items, designs and desired memorabilia. Stand by for our GRAND RE-OPENING soon!

**NOTE: The BX section is no longer displayed on the Association web site.**

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## 55<sup>TH</sup> FASHION PINS

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

Gents and ladies, the pin holiday stocking stuffer.

*(Shown actual size)*

The **Association** does **not** But, as a service for those them and **you can purchase**

Send order requests to 2454, or fax to (402) 293-5873 to order the pins. **Costs are \$9 for the pin and \$4 for shipping.**



makes a great birthday or anniversary accessory gift, or Classy but not expensive.

sell these pins and receives **no** money from the sales. who wish to possess same: Erwin's Jewelers, offers **directly from the store.**

223 W. Mission Ave, Bellevue, NE; or call: (402) 291-

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

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## WHO SHOT WHAT

Graphics from Clip Art, and organization and public web sites. Photos not previously attributed: Phil Ford from family; **55<sup>th</sup>** bench, **55<sup>th</sup>** pin by Moore.

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## YEARN TO REUNITE

"I now know why people who have (served their country) **yearn to reunite**. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with others who once acted at their best; who suffered and sacrificed.

I did not pick these men and women. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no others. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life.

They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another.

As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades. Such good people."

*Author Unknown.*





# Videmus Omnia



**55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association, Inc.**  
(Formerly – 55<sup>th</sup> 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 55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates of Service)



Are you a current or former member of the **55th Wing**? \_\_\_\_\_

When were you a member of the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Dates of Service)



Which 55th Unit(s) were you a member? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you on active duty? \_\_\_\_ If so, with what unit? \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_

What is your present occupation? \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form with dues, if applicable  
**(\$20 per year or \$55 for 3 years)\***

to:  
**55<sup>TH</sup> WING ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**P.O. BOX 13165**  
**OFFUTT AFB, NE 68113**

\* Note – Expiration date of **NEW MEMBERS** only joining after 1 Oct extended to 31 Dec of following year  
\*\* Note – Dues expiration date – 31 December  
\*\*\*Note - Questions? **Contact Mohan Krishna, Membership Chairman, at [volvomo@gmail.com](mailto:volvomo@gmail.com), or at the above mailing address,.**

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