



# Videmus Omnia

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

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2022

### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*Fightin' Fifty-Fifth Faithful, Friends, Family and Followers*, once more, Nebraska's chill is in the air (is there really anything blocking the winds

between Siberia and the Great Plains?), leaves are turning and football abounds.

As the *Book of Ecclesiastes* reports and *The Byrds* sang, "...there is a season..." reminding us to pause, cherish our collective memories and now, account the happenings

since our last newsletter.

This Max-missive will reveal more; but, 2022 has already proved quite a year for our "alma mater" with even more events on the way. So, let's briefly recount some of their (OUR!) recent hits and what will be. We are cleared to the HOLD LINE!

- This June the **Wing** got three new Group Commanders/Colonels: Operations Group (**Bull Rachel**), Maintenance Group (**Kyle Clement**) and Communications Group (**Matt Hensley**). Additionally, the **Wing** later received a new **Command ChiefMSgt Melissa Royster**. To each, our heartiest WELCOME! Looking forward to working together!
- In August, 1<sup>st</sup> ACCS/NEACP/NAOC alums celebrated the mission's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- At a 7 September ceremony (while the **Wing** still operated from Lincoln due to the

runway reconstruction), the 45<sup>th</sup> RS's last small engine WC-135 CONSTANT PHOENIX ("Sniffer" #667) was retired and the squadron accepted its first big motor WC (#836).

- 30 September saw our *Fightin' Fifty-Fifth* celebrating Offutt's Runway Reopening with a ceremony marking the return of all **Wing** aircraft and personnel from Lincoln. This critical airfield reconstruction was 80 years in the making with your **Association** having three major event contributions: formalizing completion of our two-years-long Riggs Bldg. Museum project, hosting a Museum Open House (Riggs Bldg., 500) attended by approx. 100, and donating \$550 for ceremony activities.
- Delaying the **Wing's** USAF 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday (18 September 1947) celebration to coincide with the Runway Reopening celebration, there was a USAF Birthday Ball on 1 October. Though our primary interest is the **Wing** birthday (more on that later), your **Association** contributed \$550 toward the event's success and was lavishly praised by **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander, Colonel "KT" Thompson** for our legacy role

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With this taxiing behind us, what do we see in our takeoff role?

- Continuing a "new" tradition begun just last year, our **Association** will present a Veterans Day wreath on the unit's heritage monument in front of the Riggs Bldg. (500).
- Another "new" tradition begun in 2021 is a Holiday Reception between Christmas and

New Year's as an **Association** Open House at the Riggs Building Museum.

- **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Birthday Ball** (YES, the flame burns brightly!): TBD on/about **15 April 23** de-conflicting with Holy Week to maximize attendance, likely at the LaVista Conference Center.
- Prelude highlights:
  - **Heritage Week/Tales of the 55th**: Prior to the 2023 **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Birthday Ball led again by **Coach Mike Hoskins**.
  - Hall of Fame: Day, or so, prior to the 2023 **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Birthday Ball.
  - **Association** Award for Excellence Trophy presentation at the 2023 Ball.
- **2023 Reunion/Rendezvous**: More to follow, but TBD in Colorado Springs in the fall time frame. *(Gotta have one, Max note.)*
- Never resting, your Board of Directors' (BoD) on-going challenges ahead:
  - By Laws Rewrite/Update: BoD members structure including active-duty reps, regional focus, etc.
  - BoD Emeritus possibilities
  - Membership database to also cover web site requirements.
  - Filling 2023 BoD officer positions.

As always, this truly "...is a season..." of turning. Despite this, we know "The Sun Never Sets on the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth**".

*Videmus Omnia,  
Spy V*

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**Coach Hoskins** adds: We are looking forward to expanding the **Association's** handiwork in the Riggs Bldg (**55<sup>th</sup> HQ**) with even more **Wing** related displays.

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## **OFFUTT RUNWAY REOPENS – FLIGHT OPERATIONS RETURN**

At 1100 hours local, 30 September 22, after 19 months of deployed operations, the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth's** last aircraft departed Lincoln Airport. Each aircraft then recovered at Offutt landing in five-minute intervals until all returned safely home.

The last time a **Wing** aircraft had been at Offutt, the 80 years old runway was rated the worst in the Air Force! Now, the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** fleet returned to the USAF's newest runway!



*First return landing piloted by 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander Colonel Kristen Thompson.*

Key milestones from the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing's** time in Lincoln include: 579 continuous days operating from Lincoln, 1800+ sorties flown, 19,000 vehicle round ground-trips from Offutt to Lincoln. All support equipment and functions have now returned to Offutt as well.

The last flatbeds of support equipment departed Lincoln airport on 14 October and the **Wing's** Program Management Office (PMO) team conducted a facilities walk-through on 18 October.

Lincoln's Airport Authority (LAA) took possession of the facilities and will begin facilities reconstitution to be completed no later than 28 February 2023.

Lincoln-deployed **Wing** operations began on 1 March 2021. On 1 March 2023, the final Lincoln lease will expire, closing another historical chapter of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** legacy.

*(Article and photo by Runway Relocation PMO and Association member, Mark Scheck)*

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*Interesting tidbit: In the decades since the runway was originally built, the magnetic North Pole has shifted. Thus, the runway which was designated as 12-30 is now 13-31. Ta-da!*

*(Max note: Now many veteran aviators can look back and use this excuse for their bad landings and blame the 'seismic' shift.)*

*Also, that eight foot hump in the middle of the runway is gone. Yet another excuse. Ha!*

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## A PROSPECTIVE: A TIME TO CELEBRATE

The celebration/ceremony at Offutt on Friday, 30 September 2022 was open to anyone with base access, plus an invited assortment of local dignitaries.

Estimated crowd numbered well into the thousands: active duty, families, civilian employees, retirees, and community members of all ages and varieties.

On a near-perfect autumnal, bright, sunny, warm (and windy) day, the atmosphere was that of the annual base open house/air show, only on a more intimate and festive level.

There were family activities: a bouncy house, food trucks, security working dog demonstrations, vintage aircraft flyovers, etc., before and after the aircraft arrivals and ceremony.



*(Photo courtesy of Omaha World-Herald, photographer Chris Machian.)*

After the first two RCs landed and were parked east of the reviewing stand, the program began with featured speaker, Nebraska’s senior **Senator Deb Fischer** opening praise of the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing’s** outstanding performance and the event. She noted “Everyone knows the valuable role Offutt (and the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing**) plays.”

**Congressman (BGen) Don Bacon** (a former **55<sup>th</sup>** commander and an **Association** member) followed with his remark congratulating Team Offutt on a superior undertaking. He also noted the continuation of the **Wing’s** missions while working from Lincoln Airport over the past 19 months:

“I applaud the **Wing** for being able to make this work for 19 months while they put the runway together. It is at tremendous milestone for the **Fightin’ Fifty-Fifth**”, he said.

**General Mark Kelly**, commander, Air Combat Command, who flew in the RC with Colonel Thompson, spoke briefly to commend everyone for their hard work in rebuilding the runway, and their dedication to duty.

Colonel Thompson finished by saying “I want to thank (everyone) I’ve had the privilege to watch on this project from its inception. The (Project Management Office) team has been the perfect group to head this effort. They just kept hitting the milestones and plugging away, and it has been awesome to see.”

Then Colonel KT cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of the reviewing stand. The ribbon was held by twelve Team Offutt personnel who were selected due to their outstanding duty performance.



*(Photo courtesy of Jim Maloney.)*

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Several **Association** members were there, led by President Spivey, **Vice Pres Ricky McMahon** (in town on business, of course), former **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** commander and Hall of Famer, **Steve Stevens, John Cooper, John Johnson, Jim Maloney, Mark Scheck**, among many to whom I apologize for neglecting.

*(One man’s viewpoint, Max.)*

*(Quotes are from the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing home web site article, more or less.)*

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## OFFUTT’S AIR FORCE 75<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY BALL

Team Offutt celebrated the USAF’s 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with a gala ball at the Double Tree Hotel ballroom in Omaha. The **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** was the de facto host. although other Air Force units at Offutt sponsored the event. It was the largest formal social function of the year.

There was a reception before the ball hosted by **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Commander Colonel Kristen Thomson for several invited distinguished guests from the Offutt community.

Among those were: Congressman (BGen) Don Bacon and his wife **Angie**, Offutt Advisory Council President **John Hansen** and wife **Janet**, State Senator **Rita Sanders** and her husband **Rick**.

The **Association** was represented by Board member, Max Moore, who was also introduced as such at the ball.

The program began with the presentation of the colors, the National Anthem, an invocation, and introduction of the DVs. With Moore's intro, members of the **Association** were asked to stand and be recognized. *Hoo-rah!!*

Dinner was served to 750 of the assembled glitterati. After which Colonel Thompson spoke regarding the occasion. During her remarks she made a point of recognizing several people who were consistent contributors to the Offutt and the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association** President Spivey and Moore were among those mentioned. (*Blatantly self-serving. Guilty.*)

The evening wound up with those who cared to enjoying more socializing, and dancing to the USAF Heartland of America's *Raptor* group into the midnight hour.

*(The editor offers absolutely no excuse for not having any photos to accompany this article.)*



## 55<sup>th</sup> WING BIRTHDAY BALL TO RETURN 15 APRIL 2023

See Spy V Prezgram above.



## MEMORIAL DAY 2022

At the Omaha National Cemetery (ONC) Memorial Day service, in coordination with **John Johnson, Association** member and ONC volunteer, the **Association** paid for and presented the US Air Force wreath. **Michael Cook, Association** Treasurer, did the honors.

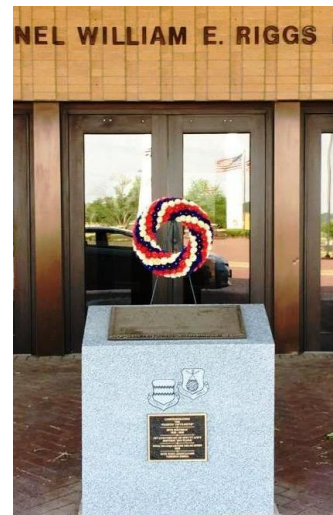
Nebraska winds provided the stiff, half-mast flag scene on a sunlit day in May.



At the SAC Memorial Chapel on Offutt, President Spivey represented the **Association** at the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing's** Memorial Day service. Keynote speaker was **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Vice Commander **Colonel "Chili" Howard**.

Following the service, Spy V placed a wreath at the **Association** monument in front of the Riggs Bldg, **55<sup>th</sup> Wing** Headquarters.

Both events were attended by several **Association** members.



*(All photos provided by Spy V.)*



## 55<sup>th</sup> WING RETIRES ONE JET, GETS A NEW ONE

The **55th Wing** at Offutt Air Force Base retired one aircraft and welcomed another.

During a ceremony at Lincoln Airport, Hangar 956, on Wednesday, 7 September 2022, a WC-135C aircraft, tail number 2667, was officially retired. It is the last of the old WC-135C fleet.

Also during the ceremony, the **55th Wing** welcomed a new WC-135R, tail number 4836.

The **55th Wing** stated that its WC fleet is an atmospheric collection supporting consumers on the national level. It is operated by the **55th Wing's** 45th Reconnaissance Squadron, and is in support of the Air Force Technical Application Center's 21st Surveillance Squadron, Det. 1, global mission.

The new WC-135R is the first of three to be delivered to the **Wing**. Two more are expected over the next 18 months.

*(By Jacob Comer, 6 September 2022.)*

*(Edited from a report by Omaha's WOW-T)*



## COMMUNICATIONS SQUADRON CHANGES

The Air Force recently transitioned the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** squadron once focused solely on communications into a unit dedicated to cyber defense, the latest tactical pivot mirroring the Air Force's broader changes to modernize the service.

The former **55<sup>th</sup> Communications Squadron** transitioned into the **55th Cyber Squadron** in September 2021.

The newly created squadron's mission transitioned from serving in a network of communications role to cyber defense. The mission change also means the unit now conducts cyber defense operations, not just IT

maintenance and aircraft communications infrastructure.

*(Article contributed by Association member,*

*Dan Jenson, 10 October 2022.)*



## 55<sup>th</sup> ELECTRONIC COMBAT GROUP'S NEW AIRCRAFT

The first EC-37B is in the final stages of mission system and external communications installation.

Before the end of the year, it should be painted and flight tests will formally start in the first quarter of the 2023 calendar year. The first few aircraft will be a Baseline 3 configuration.

Below is a picture of aircraft #3 that visited Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ, last August before it began modification with the mission equipment by the team in Waco, TX.



The EC-130H has been reset from deployments. They have received updates to the mission system and the Compass Call Mission Crew Simulator (CCMCS).

Additionally, they continue to expand on the Small Adaptive Bank of Electronic Resources (SABER) which is an open architecture based software defined radio capability that allows multiple independent quick reaction capabilities to run from one hardware kit using an application-type structure such as you have on your phone.

This will enable more rapid integration of new technologies as users do not have to change hardware, just the software on the kit.

Each year they expect to test additional capabilities and improve the simultaneous operations of the different capabilities. This is the precursor to the EC-37B Baseline 4 architecture that is designed around an open architecture framework

*(Contributed by Association member Phil Acquaro, former 55<sup>th</sup> ECG commander, 13 October 2022, Marana, AZ.)*

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## 55<sup>TH</sup> WING NON-KINETIC OPERATIONS

The 55<sup>th</sup> Wing continues to lead the way for joint service planning and execution of Non-Kinetic Operations.

Recently the Wing hosted the Non-Kinetic Operations Coordination Course (NKOCC), a course designed to bring together subject matter experts from EW, cyber, information operations, weather, space, and ISR, and help them integrate their capabilities to support planning and execution of combat operations within an Air Operations Center.

Normally hosted six times a year, this iteration of the course was the second one to include partners from the United Kingdom and the first to include all five US services.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, including comments from representatives of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force describing this as a unique course in “joint fires” that no one else in the DoD is currently offering.

After the success of the NKOCC, next year will bring an Information Warfare Planning Course focusing on integrating Information Warfare and Non-Kinetic Operations below the level of armed conflict. Students will focus on integrating all available information forces and methods in a plan to either avert or shape a conflict as required.

*(Contributed by Timothy Howerton,  
10 October 2022.)*



*NKO class photo. The Association hosted the group during the Runway Reopening Ceremony Open House, 30 September 2022.  
(Photo by Spy V.)*

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS DIRECTORY

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### Other Members of the Board of Directors:

**Bill Ernst, Jim Thomas, Fox Censullo, George Ross, Jim Maloney, Don Kelly, Paul Jeanes, Val Dugie, Bill McKechnie.**

**Active Duty Representative: Colonel David Priesman.**

**Appointed Ass't Membership Chair**

**Jon Adams**

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# COOK IHONORED BY HOME STATE

Colonel USAF (Ret) Michael J. Cook was inducted into the West Virginia Aviation Hall of Fame in a ceremony on 1 August 2022 at the Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, WV.

Colonel Cook was accompanied by his wife, Tina, daughter Linda, son Michael, and numerous relatives and friends at the event.

A 1969 graduate of the USAF Academy, he entered the active force and completed pilot training.

Twice assigned to the 55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing at Offutt, he served as an RC-135 crew commander, Chief of Stand/Eval, 38<sup>th</sup> SRS commander; Deputy Commander, Operations Group, and Director of Staff in Wing HQ.

Michael also had tours in various positions at Kadena AB, Japan; McConnell AFB, KS; Hellinikon AB, Greece; Riyadh AB, Saudi Arabia; and as Air Attaché at the American Embassy in Athens, Greece

He retired from the Air Force in 1999 after 30 years service.

Michael was inducted into the 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Hall of Fame in 2011.

He currently serves on the Association Board of Directors as Treasurer, and is employed as an instructor pilot in the Wing's combat crew training program. Michael also serves on the Nebraska Aeronautics Commission.

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

As of 17 October 2022, the treasury had an account balance (rounded) of \$49,100.

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 2026 (or more) are prorated and allocated through the ensuing years.

Although the Association is solvent, we have expenses, obligations, and bills to pay, such as the Birthday Ball, publishing this newsletter, the postage, and projects and donations on the burner.

We do have a budget.

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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 409 members in good standing as of 24 October 2022, compared with 395 on 13 May 2022.

138 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.

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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.

Dues are due in January of the calendar year after member's expire with a grace period through 31 March before going delinquent.

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 to 13704 Tregaron Drive, Bellevue, NE, 68123 to get an update on your membership status.

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**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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**When using the traditional US Postal Service to send in your due, your contact info, use the following address:**

*bb*

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

*When paying on-line use this site:*

*<https://55th-wing-association.square.site>*

*Please remember to e-mail your membership form (also on that site) to [volvomo@gmail.com](mailto:volvomo@gmail.com)*

*Sending Mo the PDF membership form is the best technique, but we will take your info however you send it!*

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**Please help us stay current.**

**There is a membership/information update form at the back of this newsletter, as well as our Square site:**

<https://55th-wingassociation.square.site>

**Please use that form any time you pay dues, and/or to report any address or other changes in your contact information.**

**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.**

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*The newsletter editor is not responsible for the membership dues date.*

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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; 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. Newbies often think they may be tapped for those sorts of things as often happen 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, flash e-mails, et al.)

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## **ASSOCIATION WEB PAGE SUSPENDED**

**Jim Maloney** has been our web designer, web store maintainer, web historian, and really, the everything Web Guy for many years. But, as of June of this year, he no longer performs those weighty services.

Our call for a web person replacement has not born any fruit.

While we still look for that person who sees the world in HTML or

Word Press, the **Association** BoD is investigating a transition to a membership web site to add functionality.





The transition has already been turbulent, but we hope to have a Board decision and that transition, not just our web site, but also our membership directory/experience and web store to a new platform with a cell phone app., and added features for reunion.

In the mean time, there is a *Facebook* page, (not **Association** maintained):

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2056651647835198>, and you can still do membership updates and payments at our Square page. <https://55th-wing-association.square.site>.

**Watch this space! The future of our web presence will be great!!**

*(Contributed by Mo Krishna, 16 October 2022.)*

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## COLD WAR MEMORIAL

Your **55<sup>th</sup> Strat Recon Wing Cold War Monument** remains in the care of **Association** member **Perry Peloquin** and his stalwart crew year round as seasonable weather allows.



*(From the front.)*

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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 7. We encourage and welcome any input.*

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*When events featuring **55<sup>th</sup> members** occur in **your area** (Florida, Texas, MD/VA/DC metroplexes, Denver/CSprings, California, Dayton, **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.)*



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## EC-135C RESTORATION EC- 135 #049

After six years and over 32,000 volunteer hours, the interior and exterior restoration of our EC-135 "Looking Glass", #63-8049 is nearly completed.

While there is still work being done on the wings and engines, the aircraft has been restored to its former glory and sits proudly in Hangar B at the Museum.

To learn more about the EC-135, visit: <https://www.sacmuseum.org/what-to-see/aircraft/ec-135-looking-glass/>

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Please visit the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum's Facebook site to read about updates, and to make any comments/feedback directly to the Museum. The Museum's Facebook site is located 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 in winning the Cold War, and to tell stories of the personnel assigned to fly on, or support, the ABNCP. Funds are also needed to establish an account for future maintenance of aircraft 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 on-line at: [SACMuseum.org/donate](https://SACMuseum.org/donate).

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

The Museum also 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.

*(From SAC and Aerospace Museum web page. Edited by Moore.)*

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## USE OF BOLD FACE TYPE IN TEXTS

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

**Emphasis** is one reason to draw extra attention to what is written, *Hello!* (*As are italics.*)

With proper names, as a general, but not an inviolate rule, when a name is used for the **first**

**time** in this newsletter, it is in **bold face**. After that, generally not. This is a fairly standard procedure for many commercial and organizational publications.

*Now you know. Max.*

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# TAPS



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**ALBERS, Robert**, 88, 3 April 2022, College Station, TX; wife, **Marlene**. Bob was an EWO instructor, stand/eval, in RB-47s with the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** at Forbes AFB, KS, 1957-1963. He was in RC-135s at Offutt in the early 1970s. He was on staff at Athens in 1977. After retiring from the Air Force, he spent many years in the Oceanography department at Texas A&M.

**HEIMARK, Nancy G.**, 85, 28 September 2022, Omaha, NE. She was the widow of **Bruce**, an RC navigator and **55<sup>th</sup>** staff officer circa 1970s. Nancy worked in the motel administration business for many years.

**HOFF, Richard**, 8X, 4 June 2022, Papillion, NE. The chief was a career boom operator in the 2ACCS at Offutt and also served on Casey O1's Command Crew for more than one CINSAC.

**KIRBIE, Montez**, 81, 27 July 2022, Merced, CA; married to **Darrell** for 59 years. He was an RC pilot and ops officer of the 343<sup>rd</sup> SRS at Offutt, and later, the vice commander of the wing at Castle AFB, CA. Montez was an accomplished piano player and teacher.

**MCCOY, James M.**, 91, 13 July 2022, Papillion, NE; married to **Kathy** ("**Mrs. Chief**") for 70 years, eight children and a large progeny. He was a member and supporter of the **Association** and a huge Husker fan. (*See tribute to follow.*)

**NICKERSON, Martha**, 93, 21 July 2022, San Antonio, TX; wife of **Ron** for 66 years. Ron was an RB and RC pilot with the **55<sup>th</sup>** at Forbes and Offutt, 1960s-1970s. He also served as the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** Deputy Commander of Operations. Martha graduated from Kansas St Teachers College and

taught high school. She then worked for the Kansas Board of Regents. Once she married Ron, Martha embarked on a life of service as an Air Force wife and mother.

**POWERS, Joan Marie**, 81, 5 June 2022, Fairfax Station, VA; wife of **Wolfgang Samuel**, married 33 years. Wolf was an EWO in RB-47s with the **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** at Forbes in the 1960s. Joan was an accomplished scholar and loved to travel.

**STEVENS, Suzanne**, 80, 15 July 2022, Pacific Junction, IA, 62 years married to **Steve**, the teen ager, aviation cadet romance. Steve was a KC/EC/RC pilot and former **55<sup>th</sup> SRW** commander (Nov 1982-Oct 1984), among other command and leadership positions. Suzanne was a native Texan who became the consummate Air Force wife. She was a mentor and role model for younger wives in every command assignment Steve had. Always active in Officers Wives Clubs. Suzanne was the matriarch to her family. She loved to travel, read, and to meet with her many friends.

**TURNER, Steve**, 74, 22 September 2022, Suffolk, VA. A UMass graduate, he was an EC/RC pilot at Offutt who commanded the 2 ACCS, then the 38<sup>th</sup> SRS. Had a tour at 2nd Air Forces recon center at Beale AFB, CA, retiring there in 1996. He then worked in the recon field for Northrop-Grumman and Analytical Science Corp.

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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 fourth issue in a row, **not one** is attributed to COVID-19.*

\* \* \* \* \*

**James M. McCoy** lived an extraordinary life on multiple fronts. Born in Creston, IA, he enlisted in the Air Force in 1951. He rose through the ranks and in 1979 was selected as the sixth Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the highest-ranking enlisted position in the service.



Upon his retirement from the Air Force in 1981, he joined Mutual of Omaha as vice president of military sales. He remained an active volunteer serving our country, mentoring countless

Airmen and veterans. He became the first former enlisted member to be president and chairman of the Air Force Association.

The Airman Leadership School at Offutt AFB is named after him. In 2021 he was awarded the Air Force Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

"CMSAF McCoy was a patriot of unparalleled honor and dignity," current **Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force JoAnne S. Bass** wrote in a letter to the Air Force community. She called him a "giant who elevated our Air Force and our Airmen. He will be deeply missed by all."

The Offutt AFB James M. McCoy Airman Leadership School mourned his passing but said his legacy will live on in the lives of Airmen past, present and future. In a Facebook post, the school said: "Chief McCoy, we will keep moving forward through the path you helped pave. Thank you for your leadership, we will take it from here."

Throughout his career he was blessed with the love of his life, his co-pilot and wife, Kathy.

Devout Catholics, they raised a family while serving on multiple bases across the world. No matter how busy the nomadic work life was in service to our country, Jim and Kathy made home life a priority.

As their eight children dispersed across the country and started their own lives as adults, a tradition began with regular family reunions. "Grandpa and Grandma" hosted these happy gatherings with food and fun. Jim and Kathy were front and center in the reunion photos wearing Nebraska red shirts.

Those reunions, guided by their love, kept the growing family close across the miles. The 2022 family reunion was scheduled to coincide with his 92nd birthday on July 30. He died 17 days short of his birthday in Papillion, NE.

In his memory, the family reunion was held as a Celebration of Life for a husband, father, airman and leader who will never be forgotten.

*(Edited from Omaha World Herald obituary  
24 September 2022.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

**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 which 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.*

\* \* \* \* \*

## 55TH WING MOTTO HISTORY

After the demise of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) in June 1992, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General Merrill McPeak, decreed that all former SAC organizations (wings, squadrons, etc.) would revert to number designations and emblems that, where possible, would reflect their World War II roots as fighter units.

The **55<sup>th</sup> Strategic Reconnaissance Wing (SRW)** became the generically designated **55<sup>th</sup> Wing**, and it eventually adopted as its emblem a variation of the WWII **55th Fighter Group's** emblem, the blue shield with red stripe in the center with yellow zigzags above and below the stripe. The lower scroll said simply, **55<sup>th</sup> Wing**.

Soon after assuming command of the **Wing**, **BGen (Sel) Greg Powers** was informed by **TSgt Robert Michel**, **Wing** Historian at the time, that the symbol did not meet Air Force heraldry specifications since "**55th Wing**" was never designated as the 'official' motto.

In order to rectify that oversight, three possible mottoes were considered:

"Pursuit to Defend," "**55th Wing**," and "**Videmus Omnia**." The first was the Fighter Group's but obviously did not reflect the modern **Wing**. The second was, well, dull.

The third was chosen for its historic, and still appropriate nature; thus, it was subsequently submitted through channels, and was approved in early 2000.

So, **Videmus Omnia** (*Latin for "We See All"*.) once again became the **official Wing** motto.

That should warm the hearts of **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** veterans everywhere.

**VIDEMUS OMNIA SEMPER!!**

(By Max Moore.)

(Originally published in the September 2000 issue of the *Videmus Omnia*. Now updated)

\* \* \* \* \*

## PRO-NUN-SEE-A-SHUN

During a social encounter at the *Tales* event in February 2003, a young second lieutenant (*are there any other kind?*) from the 338th CCTS, who professed to have survived four years as a student of *Latin*, informed this editor that the correct pronunciation of the **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth** wing motto is thus:

**Wi - DAY - moose Om-nee-ah**

He insisted the 'v' be pronounced as a 'w', with a soft 'i', and emphasis on the mid-syllable and a hard 'A'. Thus, for your edification, or whatever.

However, common usage and personal preference will likely prevail in the use of 'v', as in vigilant, valiant, victorious.

(Yes, this is a repeat item for those who didn't see it in previous issues of the *VO*, or for any new members. Max)

\* \* \* \* \*

## BIG SAFARI GATHERING 70th Anniversary Celebration

Friends, as previously announced, we celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the Big Safari Program.

Originally, we had planned on having the event in late September. 2022. However, because of a





late-breaking scheduling issue, we moved the celebration to the **20<sup>th</sup> of October.**

There was an early morning golf tournament, followed by an awards event, and then a 5:00 pm reception/dinner at the **Dayton Masonic Center.**

All the best,  
*Mike Meerman, President*



## ASSOCIATION BX

Major changes and additions have been made to the **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association "BX"**. Management is by **Dennis Haun**. He has established a new vendor and inventory of items for the membership.

The new inventory makes for great gifts for the upcoming holiday season, and other occasions for current and former **Fightin' Fifty-Fifth members.**

The BX now has available to **Association** membership the following items:

Long Sleeve **55<sup>th</sup> Association** ¼ Zip Pullovers  
White, Royal Blue, Red, Navy & Grey. (S-XXXL). Cost \$43 + \$6.50 Shipping (\$49.50).

Short Sleeve **55<sup>th</sup> Association** Polos  
White, Red, Royal Blue, Grey, Dark Navy. (S-XXXL). Cost \$40 + \$6.50 Shipping (\$46.50).

Long Sleeve **55<sup>th</sup> Association** Shirt  
Red, White, Navy Blue. (S-XXXL).  
Cost \$63 + \$6.50 Shipping (\$69.50).



*Long sleeve button down-shirt*



*Short sleeve polo*



*Long sleeve pullover*

### 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association Hats

Navy Blue, Red, Grey (Adjustable).  
Cost \$20 + \$6.50 Shipping (\$26.50).

### 55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association

Hot/Cold Tumblers Blue.  
Cost \$30 + \$6.50 Shipping (\$36.50)

*(Item photos by Haun)*

Members wishing to purchase any of the above listed items please contact:

Denny Haun, 918 Oxford Circle  
Papillion, NE, 68046

Please make checks for the full amount of purchase to: **55<sup>th</sup> Wing Association.**

*NOTE: Procedures are being developed to use the accounting system Square for future on-line payments. More to follow!*

**Questions/Comments please contact Denny Haun at papahaun@cox.net.**



## 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).



*(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, 68005, 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 former owner, the late **Frank Kumor**, was a long time member and ardent supporter of the **Association**. His daughter, **Rebecca Zurcher**, is now the proprietor.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MILITARY BRAT TERM ORIGIN

*The following article was excerpted/edited from an item by the president of the Air Force Association in a 2014 issue of Air Force Magazine. It may be a revelation for most of us who have used the term, but did know from whence it originated.*

Many of you may know that the term 'Brat' is a common reference to children of military members. **It is a term of endearment**, referring to a group who often endure hardships, frequently move, change schools, leave behind friends, put up with deployments, long absences of their parents, and sometimes inadequate government housing.

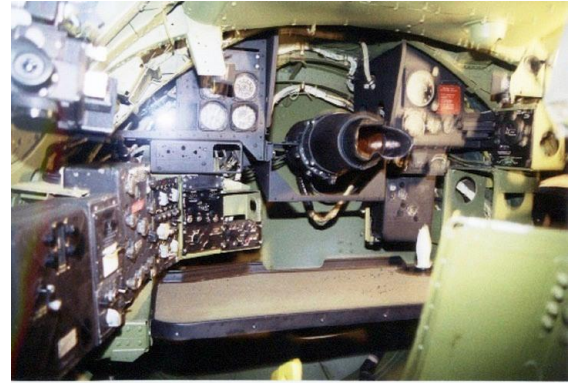
A researcher at the National Defense University found a book written in 1921 which described the origins of the term. It came, like many of our military traditions, from the British Army. It seems that when a member of the British Army was assigned abroad, and could take his family (mostly to India), the family went with the member in an administrative status entitled: BRAT, an acronym for: *British Regiment Attached Traveler*.

Over the years, it was altered to refer only to the children of the military member since the wives of the British Army objected to the term referring to them. (*Perhaps reminiscent of the term 'camp follower'?*)

The term not only stuck, but in many cases was adopted world-wide and used by specific services, Air Force brat, Army brat, etc.

\* \* \* \* \*

## RB-47H NAVIGATOR'S STATION



In the cramped nose of the aircraft from whence **55<sup>th</sup>** navs by-damn navigated over water and in polar areas before there were inertial and GPS systems. Maintained a ten mile corridor and stayed away from the bad guys.

*(One Moore blatantly self-serving item. Maxigator – crewdog at Forbes 1960-67, Yokota and Kadena, 1967-69, Offutt 1969-1978. Assigned to the 55<sup>th</sup> for 23 years.)*

\* \* \* \* \*



**Hoo-rah!!**



# 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, or at the above mailing address.**

