



The Stratojet Newsletter

November 2013 Volume 40

For Those Who Designed, Built, Flew, Maintained and Loved the B-47



53-2280 now resides in the outside display park at the National Museum of Nuclear Science And History in Albuquerque NM. The aircraft is substantially together and awaits further restoration. Note various missile components in the background. The display area is also home to a B-29A, B-52B, and the weapons/fuel pod from a B-58.

Photo: Augustine Letto

Albuquerque Gets A Stratojet

After years of languishing in outside storage at the National Museum of The United States Air Force (NMUSAF), Stratojet 53-2280 has found a home at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History (NMNSH) in Albuquerque NM. Several other museums had attempted to acquire the airplane over the years but none had been able to seal the deal until the folks in New Mexico made it happen.

2280 had been the B-47 display at the NMUSAF until it was replaced by the RB-47H currently on display in 2003. Although it is a historically significant aircraft the old Stratojet had never served with SAC, instead going to Wright-Patterson as a test-bed when delivered in 1955. Although it was used in many testing programs its greatest contributions came as the main platform for a series of fly-by-wire test projects in 1967/69. This was in the days before the F-16 "Electric Jet" made such technology commonplace and 2280 proved the feasibility of the concept.

When the aircraft was retired it sat in the outside aircraft park (at NMUSAF) for many years until moved into the museum building. Although the Museum had painted it in SAC markings its true role was revealed by the lack of

Albuquerque...continued on page 4

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lettog@att.net

Roll Call Of Honor

Members no longer with us. We honor their service to this nation and extend our sympathies to their families.

Vincent J. Beebe, Belle Isle FL, 12/26/08

Donald W. Bowden, Dallas TX, 4/16/13

Harold C. Braly, Larkspur CO, 3/1/13

William Charlesworth, Grand Forks ND, 12/22/12

James H. Grady, London AR, 4/15/12

Kenneth G. Haertling, Arnold MO, 12/2/12

Kenneth A. Hammerberg, Ft. Walton Beach FL, 1/31/13

Joshua M. Hinson, Hazlehurst GA, 9/1/13

Rufus A. Livingston, W. End NC, 3/1/13

Willard W. Magee, Carroll OH, 1/1/08

John R. McKone, Hardyville VA, 10.31.13

Roll Call...continued on page 10

Important Reminders

- **Pay your dues for 2014** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- Send dues to address at bottom of page 11.
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Dick Curran.
- Send newsletter articles, photos, news about members, etc. to Mike Habermehl, Editor.
- Plan on attending the Reunion in Fort Walton Beach FL, 30 October - 2 November 2014.

The B-47 Stratojet Newsletter is published three times each year. It is intended solely for the enjoyment, camaraderie, and enlightenment of the membership of the B-47 Stratojet Association. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the Association. Requests to use or reprint any portion of the contents should be directed to the Editor. Contributions of material to the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor, B-47 Stratojet Newsletter, P. O. Box 1144, Brenham, TX 77834-1144, cmhs@sbcglobal.net.

B-47 Stratojet Reunion - 2014 - Ft. Walton Beach FL

30 October-2 November

Details Coming In Special Mailing This Spring

Further Information In Spring Newsletter

Mark Your Calendar!!!



SAC Reunion in May

The Strategic Air Command Reunion will be held at Sam's Town Casino & Hotel on the Shreveport riverfront. Registration for accommodations may be found at:

<http://www.samstownshreveport.com>

There will be golf, tours, plenty of food, and a memorial service at the 8th Air Force Museum at Barksdale AFB on Saturday (where they have a well-maintained B-47 on display).



Colonel John R. McKone, USAF(Ret)

Retired Colonel John R. McKone died 31 October 2013 in Kilmarnock VA at 81 years of age. He was born in Kansas City MO, graduated from Kansas State University in 1954 and served 28 years in the United States Air Force., retiring as the Commander of the 3902nd Air Base Wing, Offutt AFB NE. Colonel McKone (navigator) and Bruce Olmstead (co-pilot) became front page news after their RB-47H (343rd SRS, 55th SRW) was shot down over the Barents Sea by Soviet MiGs on 1 July 1960. They were the sole survivors and were placed in solitary confinement in Lubyanka Prison in Moscow for seven months. The two crewmen were released on 25 January 1961 and were met by President Kennedy when their airplane landed in Washington DC. The story of the flight, imprisonment and release were recounted in a book, *The Little Toy Dog*, published in 1962. Colonel McKone was a Mason, Rotarian, and Gideon. He was active in Spring Hill Baptist Church and the Boy Scouts of America. Interment was in Arlington National Cemetery.

Colonel McKone was our banquet speaker at the Marietta Reunion in 2008.

Albuquerque...continued from page 1

an optical bombsight. When the “H” model arrived 2280 was sent out to pasture across the field, alongside the restoration hangar.

The main obstacle to other museums acquiring the airplane was the cost of moving it. The nuclear museum raised the \$148,000 necessary for the move and the first pieces of airframe began arriving in August 2013. World-wide Aircraft Recovery was the company responsible for disassembly, transport, and reassembly. You can see from the photos that they did a very fine job.

The airplane will be on display in the elements, but in Albuquerque that is not the problem it might be in other

areas of the country. There are plans to paint the aircraft but that depends on funding (and the B-29 and B-52 are to be painted first). Museum personnel are enthusiastic about their new artifact and we encourage you to go by and see it when you are in the area. If you visited the “Atomic Museum” in the past when it was on the base you will be surprised and delighted by the modern facility they now occupy.

Your Association contributed funds to 2280’s move and we hope to see it in a place of honor for years to come. Members Gus Letto and William Guenther have been keeping a close eye on the progress, as well as encouraging the museum staff in their efforts. Gus has kept us supplied with photos as well.

Photos show (clockwise from right): William Guenther, wing panel before assembly, bird poop in forward wheel well, crawlway (looking from bombbay toward cockpit, SAC shield on nose, missing bombsight optics with modified nose profile, erection crew at work, fuselage as it appeared after removal from flat-bed trailer upon arrival.

Photos: Augustine Letto



SASM Update...

Dick Purdum brings us up-to-date on the Strategic Air and Space Museum (SASM) B-47 restoration:

They (SASM crew) stripped the majority of the fuselage and polished the aluminum and it looks like a shiny new dime – no small task plus a lot of supplies and elbow grease. It just glistens. The photos do not do it justice. They also painted the bomb bay doors and the gear doors – they really look sharp. The next step is to put it in the restoration hangar, which will not be an easy task. The B-47 was placed where it is now when it was moved from Offutt AFB and it had it's wings off at the time. The distance between the left wing and the B-52 is about 12 inches. They hope to deflate the struts on one of the two aircraft (B-52 & B-47) and inflate the strut on the other aircraft to be able to move the B-47 forward into the restoration hanger. They cannot paint the rest of the aircraft in its present position in the display hangar as paint would get on other aircraft and museum visitors. They removed the bomb bay and gear doors and took them into the restoration area to paint them.

We have all waited a long time to see this come to fruition and it looks like it is finally going to happen.

Thanks, Dick! He also sent the accompanying photos.



Dick also met this visitor at the Museum.

XB-47 Chanute Air Museum ~

Below is a summary of the "Progress Reports" sent to us by Pete Troesch. Pete and his crew have labored faithfully over the XB-47 for many years now and it is always inspiring to see the work they have done. The quarterly reports are sent to the Museum leadership and to the National Museum of The United States Air Force. 46-066 is a true national treasure and we appreciate the work of these members and the staff of the Chanute Air Museum.

January 1, 2013 – March 31, 2013 - Removed both the main and backup inverters from the aircraft. Began cleaning them. The inverters are now located in the museum workshop. Made template, fabricated plywood mounting platform and temporarily installed metal mounts for the inverters.

April 1, 2013 – June 30, 2013 - Removed the inverters from their mounting platform. Sanded and painted the platform and painted the metal mounting brackets. The inverters mounting platform was placed in the XB-47. Installation of the mounting platform and attachments was completed (see pix below right: *before* above, *after* below). The inverters were moved from the museum workshop back into the XB-47 cockpit. Cleaning in the general area of the mounting platform in the cockpit and touch up painting of the platform and support brackets was completed.

July 1, 2013 – September 30, 2013 - A metal cover was fabricated for one of the inverters. A pattern was not available as the original cover was missing. Inverters were permanently installed on the mounting platform. Began sanding star and bars insignia on right side of fuselage. Sanded, primed and painted left wing tip leading edge to simulate red navigation light (see below left: *before* above; *after* below). Continued sanding star and bars insignia on both sides of the fuselage. Completed sanding insignias on the fuselage. Construction began to replace a small plywood platform located inside the cockpit and to the left rear of the co-pilot's station. This small tablet size platform may have been used for writing and may be exclusive to the XB-47. Washed both sides of the fuselage in the areas of the insignias. Installed rivets in holes on top of the wings. Approximately 50 rivets had been removed for some unknown reason(s) before the Stratojet was transferred to the Chanute Air Museum. Continued work on removal of the small plywood platform in the cockpit. Areas on the fuselage were prepared for repainting the insignias. Continued work on the star and bars insignias on both sides of the fuselage. Areas on the insignia of the right side of the fuselage were masked. Primer and red overcoat paint was applied. Submitted request for purchase of Insignia Blue and Insignia White paint from Wicks Aircraft Supply. The area around the aircraft was swept and cleared of rocks and debris.



October 1, 2013 – December 31, 2013 - Removed the wooden shelf located to the left of the co-pilot's station. To utilize the shelf it would have been necessary for the co-pilot to rotate the seat 90 degrees. Received Insignia Blue and Insignia White paint from Wick's Aircraft Supply. Removal of debris around the area of the Stratojet was completed. Test painted Insignia White paint on the star and bars insignia on the left side of the fuselage. Fabricated a new plywood shelf and located numer-

ous nuts and bolts that will be needed to install the new shelf in the cockpit. Continued work including sanding and painting the replacement shelf. Placed hardware on the new plywood shelf and obtained all of the nuts and bolts needed to install the shelf in the cockpit when weather permits.

Approximately 91 hours of work were performed during this Quarter by Rol Barger, Bob Beneska, Carl Casella, Trevor Leach, Richard Redden, Bob Surber and Pete Troesch. Work activities were limited due to unusual cold weather and heavy snowfalls during the last quarter.



Cold War Era B-47 Stratojet Crash Site ~ Hurley, Wisconsin

From 1953 to 1964, the Air Force's 40th Bombardment Wing from Forbes Air Force Base out of Topeka, Kansas was tasked with flying low level missions over the area around and including Hurley, Wisconsin and Ironwood, Michigan. On February 24, 1961, a B-47 Stratojet disappeared from radar. Tragically, the aircraft had crashed in a densely wooded and swampy area ten miles south of Hurley, taking with it the lives of all four crewmen. Three months later, in May of 1961, a second flight also met a similar fate in the vicinity of the first crash, claiming two of the four crewmembers on board. The area of both crashes today is known by local residents, ATV and snowmobilers, hunters, and other outdoor enthusiasts, as the Hogs Back which is near the intersection of recreational trails 13 and 13c.

During my research into the history of the crash, I learned that in 2004, Greg Landretti and Bruce Jackson, local to the area, took the time to build a model of the aircraft and make a plaque, displaying both on a post near one of the crash sites. As you can imagine, by now, time, nature, and weather, have all taken their toll on the memorial and the crash site.

This past year, I had the opportunity to give a guided ATV ride to the members of the 724th Engineers NCO Club. As usual, I made the crash site and current memorial a stop during the ride. During the stop, I discussed my idea to create a more visible memorial site than what is currently there. After more discussion, it was agreed that we should do something to honor the Airmen who sacrificed so much for the defense of our country.

In September of 2013, I contacted the Iron County Forest Service and explained our idea, asking permission to take on the task of reconstructing the memorial site. I explained that we would like to create a more visible memorial site, complete with a sign, a handicap accessible ramp to a deck with seating, a path to the site, and reconditioning of the original memorial erected by Greg Landretti and Bruce Jackson. In October of 2013, several members of the NCO club returned to assist me and others in clearing the brush from the walking path to the current memorial, clean up trash, any debris found from the wreckage was placed around the current memorial and measurements were taken of the area for the plans. We anticipate finalizing the plans for the site and submitting a written proposal to Iron County Forest Service for approval by January 2014.

Weather permitting, we are anticipating a start date of spring 2014 to begin on the site with a projected completion date of June 2014. Our committee working on this project has been in touch with family members of the crews and the historical group from the 40th Bombardment Wing to which the airmen were assigned. They have expressed gratitude as well as support of this project and wish to attend a dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony planned for early July 2014.

As retirees and former service members of the Armed Forces, we recognize the value of keeping the memories alive of these brave men who sacrificed so much for the freedom of this country. And with keeping that memory alive, we are asking for your support. A project like this is in need of money, materials and helping hands.

If you would like to contribute to the cause through a donation of time, money, or materials, please contact us:

Curt Myers

Douglas O'Callaghan

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Tomahawk, WI 54487

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(715)966-5223

trails.tales@hotmail.com

doug.ocallaghan@DMA.STATE.WI.US

We encourage you to follow along with our progress of this project through e-mail or on our Facebook pages – The NCO Club and Trails and Tales Outdoor Adventures.

www.facebook.com/TheNCOClub

www.facebook.com/TrailsTalesOutdoorAdventures

***Comment:

We are in search of information on crewmen or families from B-47 crashes in Hurley WI in 1961 CPT James P Jarrett, LT Theodore M. Stalmach, LT Gary H Hanify, LT Charles F. Weise, CPT Frank Meade III (survived), LT Demosthenis N. Hariton and CPT John (Johnny) Hill (Hil) (survived). We are in contact with CPT Dale Rasmussen's family Thank you for any assistance provided as we are dedicating a crash site memorial on June 28th 2014 in Hurley WI for the crashes of both B-47s in 1961.



On 21 February, 1963, B-47E 52--563 of the 98th BW, Lincoln AFB went down just north of Comfrey MN. Four crew members lost their lives. Last year (the 50th anniversary) an appeal for funds to construct a memorial went out and the response was overwhelming. The photos provide wonderful testimony to this outstanding tribute site.

Well, ladies and gentlemen of the B-47 community, there just aren't words to truly say thank you for your support of the Comfrey, MN B-47 memorial project and its dedication on 14 July 2013. Our B-47 community was well represented by myself and four other USAF 60-19N Nav classmates of the Nav killed in this crash along with several of the surviving family members and friends of the other crew members lost in this tragedy. One would have had to be there to truly experience this deeply emotional event as many of us lost close B-47 classmates and friends during our B-47 tours. The loss of this USAF B-47 crew was also a very emotional memory for this small patriotic community of some 300 folks. Thanks to your more than

generous donations, their local American Legion Post #244 was able to raise the funds to erect one of the most personal and remarkable USAF memorials I have ever seen. Attached are the program brochure and photos of the memorial and its black marble benches recognizing the USAF and the B-47. The memorial is set in a small quiet park on the north side of the town where it will be included in the local Comfrey Community Days celebration every year for many many years to come. We owe you all and the Comfrey, MN American Legion post #244 a deep sense of gratitude and thanks for this awe inspiring B-47 memorial. May their souls rest in peace and may this memorial recall their sacrifice for many many decades to come.

From the families of the lost crew members and the entire Comfrey, MN community, I send you all a sincere thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making this memorial possible.

Lt. Col. Karol E. Franzyszen, USAF Retired, B-47 Bomb/Nav, Little Rock 1961-64 and Lincoln 1964-66, and USAF Nav Class 60-19N historian.



This photo is of the B-47 Helmet plaque with embedded wings, crew rank, dog tags, a SAC patch, a B-47 pewter tie tack, a 98th Bomb Wing patch lapel pin, and the proverbial nickle on the grass. It was donated by our Nav class 60-19N to the Comfrey American Legion Post #244 for their dedication and hard work erecting this memorial.

***To give this project a life of its own, we suggest that donations be sent to the Comfrey, MN B-47 Memorial Scholarship Fund, Commander American Legion Post #244, 37871 C0 Road 20, Comfrey, MN 56019.

All photos for this article are from Karol Franzyszen

Comfrey...continued next page

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Roll Call...continued from page 2

Thomas R. Mullen, Lubbock TX, 12/9/12

William L. Musladin, Sacramento CA, 3/24/12

Edward H. Osman, Tucson AZ, 2/2/13

Ronald N. Quist, Bellevue, NE, 1/26/13

Karl W. Schaefer, League City TX, 7/12/13

Ray B. Sitton, Pensacola FL, 8/16/13

James E. Smith, Lakewood WA, 5/31/12

Robert E. Vickers, Taos NM, 1/28/10

Charles E. Waysz, Moreno Valley CA, 8/29/12

Robert B. Wiley, Aurora CO, 5/4/13

Richard H. Wood, Mission Viejo CA, 5/1/12

Corrections

In the last Newsletter we listed JoAnn Eggert as having passed away on 07/01/08. The listing should have been for her husband Edward C. Eggert, Jr. Our apologies for the mistake!



BX

The former Association BX has closed. We refer you to cafepress.com for a large array of B-47-related items and we encourage you to consider these if you are looking for items to wear and/or display your Association affiliation.

The B-47 Flight Jacket is once again available. See the Association website at b-47.com for more information and an order form, or contact Dick Curran at the address on the *Newsletter* masthead (also on the membership application on page 11).

Publications

Air Classics magazine has published several B-47 related articles in recent issues. *Stratojet* was a three part history in the November (2013), December (2013) and January (2014) issues of *Air Classics*. Back issues are available from Challenge Publications at: Challenge Publications, Inc., Retail Order Department, 9509 Vassar Ave, Unit A, Chatsworth CA 91311-0883, or (818) 700-6868 ext. 15.

Some of you may be interested to know that reprints of B-47 flight manuals (Dash 1) are available from various sources. Sporty's Pilot Shop (sportys.com) lists one for \$15.99 (it is actually a B-47A manual). Periscope Films (periscopefilm.com) has two: one for the B-47A and a two volume set for the TB-47B (\$61.95). If you prefer the electronic format, several sources are available and you can print the pages you want. *Flight-manuals-on-cd.com* has a CD set on which you can get manuals for the B-47A, TB-47B, YDB-47E, B-47B & E, WB-47E, and The R-47H (RB-47H). This set sells for \$19.95 for one CD, \$33.95 for the set.



Lockheed-built B-47E 52-359 of the 9th BW, Mountain Home AFB, takes on fuel over the western desert.

Photo: USAF



Send Application and Check to

B-47 Stratojet Association
 Dick Curran
 219 Charles Court
 Dandridge, TN 37725-3333

Tel. (865) 940-1020 e-mail: dickcurran@hotmail.com

(Last) (First) (Middle Initial) (Highest Rank Achieved)

(Spouse's First Name) _____

Address: _____

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B-47 Wings you served with and dates of service: _____

Air Crew or Ground Position: _____ Civilian Position: _____

Status: Active Duty _____ Retired, when? _____ Separated, when? _____ Veteran _____

Civilian, your relationship to the B-47: _____

Current Occupation: _____

Any other comments you may care to add: _____

Annual dues are \$15 a year payable every January. Send checks to: The B-47 Stratojet Association.

The Lifetime membership option is obtained by using the below table:

under age 50	\$300
age 60-64	\$250
age 65-69	\$200
age 70-74	\$150
age 75-79	\$100
age 80 or over	\$50

Amount enclosed \$ _____

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*Easily the most colorful Stratojet ever, 51-2120 sits on the ramp at Scott AFB where it was based with the Airways and Air Communications Service (AACS). **Sweet Marie** was the name given to this B-47B and it was used to check the navigation aids used by military aircraft in North America. Although originally destined for the 379th BW, the airplane's assignment was changed to MATS on 19 June 1956.*

Photo: USAF

***Next Reunion ~ 30 October-2 November 2014 ~ Ft Walton Beach FL
Pay Your Dues For 2014 Today!***