

The Stratojet Newsletter

April/July 2007 Volume 27

5 MAR 08 Received

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

B-47 Celebrates 60th Anniversary Of First Flight



17 December, 2007 marks the 60th Anniversary of the first flight of the B-47 Stratojet. On that date, Robert M. "Bob" Robbins and Scott Osler flew the new bomber from Boeing Field, Seattle, to Moses Lake WA. The XB-47, 46-065, shown on final approach for the first landing, had an almost flawless flight after the takeoff was delayed by weather. This airplane was the first of 2,042 Stratojets built by Boeing, Douglas, and Lockheed. It not only became the mainstay of Strategic Air Command during the 1950s but represented the basic design layout of

most large jet aircraft for the rest of the century and beyond. This photo was taken from the chase plane flown by Col. H. E. "Pete" Warden who was quoted by a local newspaper as saying, "the XB-47 is the airplane of the future... We reached a long way with the XB-47... but the post-flight conference made it evident that we achieved our goal." The flight came on the 44th anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first successful powered flight. The Stratojet is the same age as the United States Air Force which had been formally established on 18 September 1947.

Photo: USAF

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Roll Call of Honor

James E. O'Connor, of Grosse Point MI, passed away on 12 October, 2006.

Wallace "Wally" D. Horton passed away on 11 October 2007.

General Russell Dougherty (USAF Ret.) passed away on 7 September 2007. He had a long and varied career including a stint as Deputy Chief of Operations for the 303rd BW at Davis Monthan AFB. Later, he commanded the 2nd Air Force. On 1 August 1974 he became the eighth commander of Strategic Air Command. He retired 1 October 1977.

Brig. Gen. Paul W. Tibbets (USAF Ret.) passed away on 1 November 2007 (see article on page 5).

Col. Henry E. "Pete" Warden (USAF Ret.) passed away on 15 November 2007 (see article on page 4).

Joe Ochota, of Poulsbo WA, passed away in September 2007. Joe was a long-time and very enthusiastic supporter of the B-47 Association.

Important Reminders

- **Pay your dues for 2008** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- Send dues to Bob Griffiths, Treasurer.
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Bob Griffiths.
- Send newsletter articles, photos, news about members, etc. to Mike Habermehl, Editor. NOTE: new email address: cmhs@sbcglobal.net
- Invite a friend to join the Association.

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. 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.

Association Website - <http://www.b-47.com>

B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion In Marietta GA

25-27 September 2008

The next B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion is scheduled for late September of 2008. The location was chosen because of the great planning and warm reception by the local reunion committee. Headed by Bob Bowman, the committee has been hard at work for over a year making plans for a great program. The location is significant because many B-47s were built and many more modified at the Lockheed Marietta plant.

The reunion hotel is the beautiful Marietta Conference Center and Resort overlooking a golf course and nearby Kennesaw Mountain (site of a significant Civil War engagement).

The reunion will begin on the evening of 25 Septem-

ber with a buffet. On Friday the 26th there is a scheduled tour of the Lockheed Martin plant and flight line. Saturday's activities include the reunion symposium, optional tours and the banquet. Tour times and details will be posted later and, of course, there is always the possibility of tour details being changed.

A registration form will be mailed to all members in March and further details of the reunion will be in the April newsletter.



The newly constructed (as of 1954) delivery hangar and ramp at Lockheed Marietta. The manufacturer produced 386 B-47Es and 8 B-47Bs built from Boeing components. The plant also performed sixteen modification and/or IRAN programs from 1954 to 1963. Fourteen RB-47Es were modified into QB-47Es here and thirty-four B-47Es were converted to WB-47Es. The same plant had built B-29s during WWII as well as C-130s, C-141s, C-5s, and F-22s in later years. Lockheed Jetstars (C-140) were also constructed here.

Photo: Lockheed

Pete Warden Gone at 91



Pete Warden stands between Jesse Jacobs and Charlie Anderson during the symposium at the 2002 Reunion in Seattle.

Photo: Augustine Letto

Col. Henry E. "Pete Warden died on 15 November 2007 at the age of 91. He was born in Texas in 1915. His degree in aeronautical engineering came from Catholic University in the District of Columbia and this was followed by three more years at MIT. After being commissioned in the Army Air Corps in 1939 he was assigned to the 20th Pursuit Squadron at Moffett and Hamilton Fields.

In November 1940 he was sent with the unit to Nichols Field near Manila in the Philippine Islands. When the Japanese attacked Col. Warden remained behind to salvage P-40s, barely escaping capture. While test flying one of the P-40s he managed to shoot down a Japanese transport aircraft. When the Philippines fell, he escaped to Australia and continued to contribute to the war effort in the Pacific.

He was sent to Wright Field in June 1944 where he became the Chief of Bombardment Branch, Engineering Division. He was deeply involved in the B-36, B-47, and B-52 programs. The *B-52 Stratofortress Association News* called him the "midwife" who made the B-52 happen since it was Warden who suggested that the airplane have pure jets instead of the originally planned turboprops.

When the Air Force showed little interest in the B-47, it was Col. Warden who talked Maj. Gen. K. B. Wolf into stopping by Moses Lake to see it and then take a ride with Col. Guy Townsend. It is generally believed that the Stratojet was "sold" to the USAF on that day. B-47 Association President Sigmund Alexander wrote "Pete

was the Godfather of the B-47 and B-52. The country, the Air Force, Boeing, and Pratt and Whitney owe a debt of gratitude to Col. Henry E. "Pete" Warden, for it was his foresight and initiative which led to the B-47, the B-52, and J57 engine.

After leaving Wright Field he was an instructor at the Air War College, Chief of Air Warfare Systems Division at the Pentagon, Deputy Commander for Tests at the Air Force Missile Test Center, and finally with the Air Force Systems Command at Andrews AFB until his retirement in 1964.

After leaving active duty, Col. Warden was Corporate Director of Plans for North America Aviation. In 1970 he retired and moved to Columbus, Mississippi where he and his wife Joanna founded and ran the Warden Carden Elementary School for twenty-five years.

In 2002, Col. Warden attended the B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion in Seattle. He was a panelist at that year's symposium which honored B-47 pioneers. One of your editor's fondest memories of that week was standing with Pete under the wing of the Museum of Flight's B-29 and listening to him recount his escape from the Japanese in the Philippines.

Col. Warden was buried at the Friendship Cemetery in



Col. Warden examining the Museum of Flight's B-29 during the Seattle reunion. He had a million stories.

Paul Tibbets Dies at 92

Maintaining until his last breath that he only did his job, General Paul Tibbets passed away on 1 November 2007 at the age of 92. That "job" was flying the B-29 that dropped the first atomic bomb in the history of warfare. He also maintained that it saved many lives.

Paul Tibbets enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1937. He was in the air over Georgia in the Air Corp's new A-20 when he heard about Pearl Harbor. Nine months later he was leading B-17s on the first daylight raid against Germany. In late 1944 he was assigned to organize, train, and lead the 509th Composite Group to deliver the atomic bomb. On 6 August 1945 that bomb was dropped from his B-29, the *Enola Gay*, on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.

In July, 1950, Tibbets reported to Wichita, where he organized and led Project *Wibac*, a program to prove the B-47 at the operational level. The idea was for the project to wing out the new airplane. As problems were encountered those who could fix them (engineers, builders, and test pilots) were right across the runway. He led the project for three years until the Stratojet was in SAC service. When Col. Mike McCoy came to pick up the first B-47 for his wing, Tibbets checked him out.

After a stint with NATO, Gen. Tibbets was sent to command the 308th BW at Savannah GA in 1956. He was once again with the B-47. In 1959, he was assigned to command the 6th Air Division at MacDill AFB and promoted to Brigadier General. He retired from the USAF in 1966.

In 1976 Tibbets became president of Executive Jet Aviation Inc., an all-jet air-taxi company in Columbus OH. It was very successful and paved the way for many similar companies that exist today. He retired in 1986.

He was never far from the controversy that surrounded the bombing of Hiroshima because every year the media would seek him out for his story. It never changed. He just did his job and in so doing, saved many lives.

He was reunited with the B-29 for a while. Each year he would go to Harlingen and fly the left seat of the Confederate Air Force's B-29 *Fifi*. In 1976, your editor had the pleasure of riding behind him as "Fifi" made passes down the runway before the airshow crowd.

Fearing that a funeral or headstone would prompt protes-

tors, he asked that his ashes be scattered over the North Atlantic.



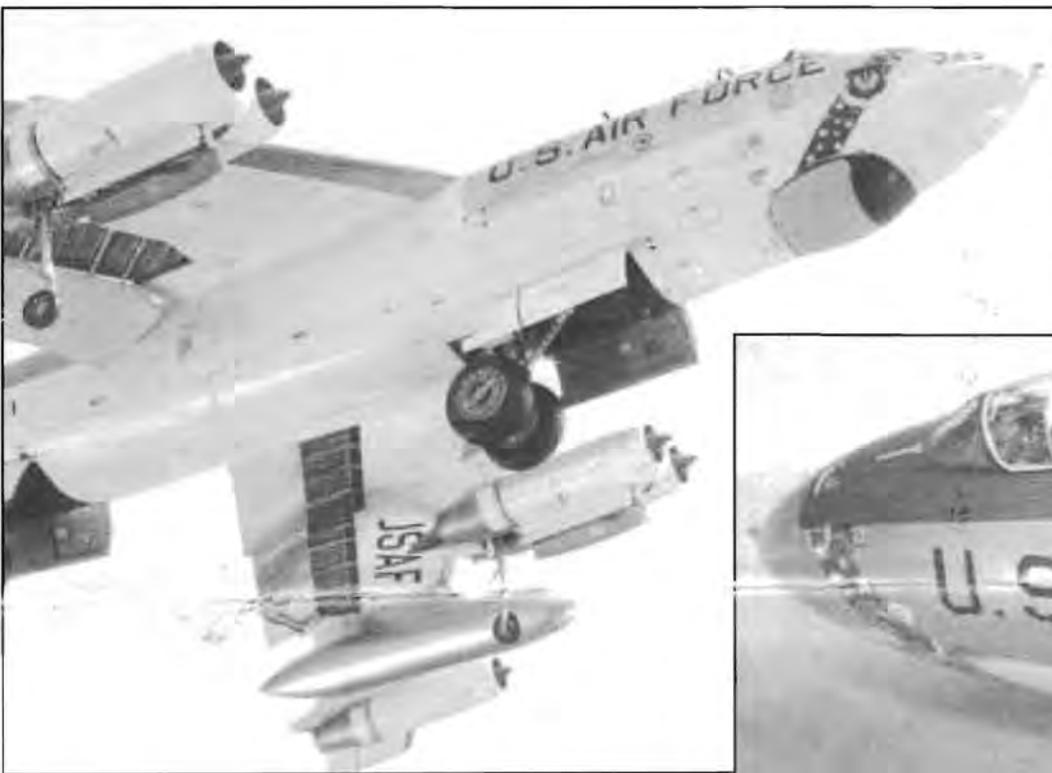
Paul Tibbets and fellow test pilots in front of a B-47A at Wichita. The proximity of Project Wibac and Boeing made possible close coordination in developing the new weapon system.

Photo: Boeing



Stratojets In Miniature

Many of our members have searched for scale models of the B-47 over the years and often found them difficult to find. Some creative individuals have built their own from scratch or even ordered custom-built ones. The models on this page represent both types. If you are looking for a model kit to build there are several out there now. Academy has a 1/144th scale kit of the B-47E. Hobbycraft has a RB-47H in 1/144th. Hasegawa has a 1/72 kit of the B-47E. Revell re-released one of its older kits some time back of the B-47E in 1/113th scale and it might be available. Custom-made models of wood have been available in the past from the gift shop of the Museum of The United States Air Force in Dayton as well as other retailers..



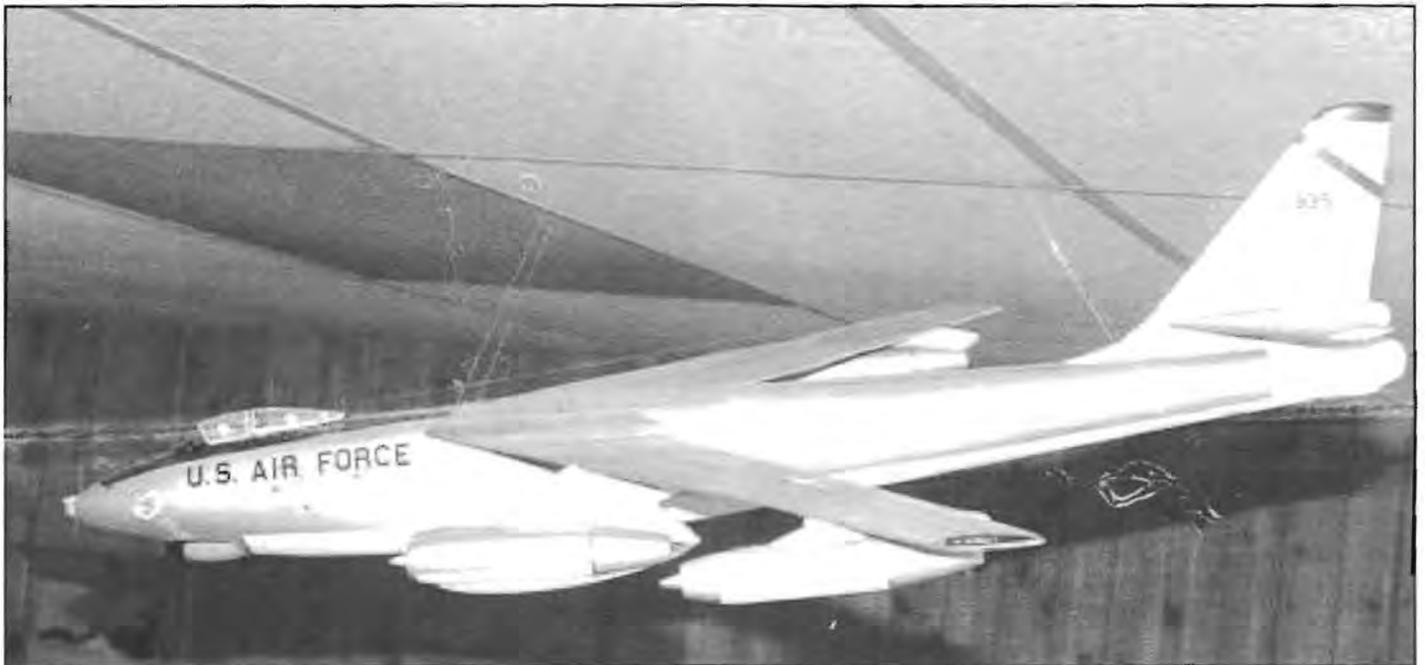
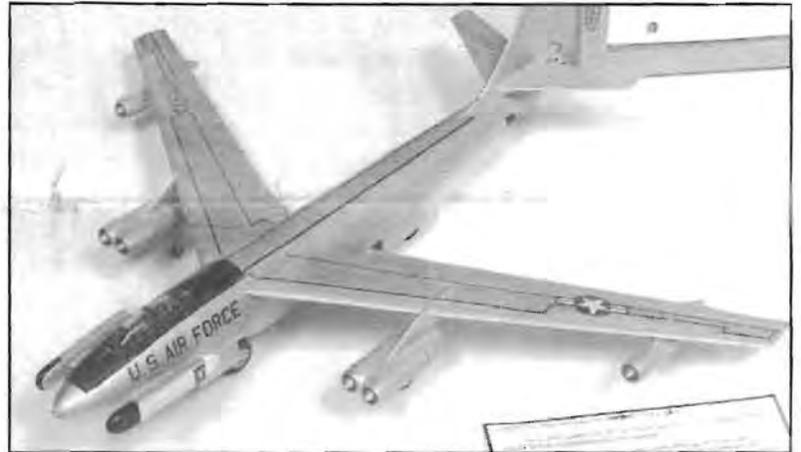
The model on this page was built by a modelling enthusiast in Japan, who sent the photos to Mark Natola. It is based on the Hasegawa 1/72 kit. The markings are very accurate.





These two models, the RB-47H above, and the EB-47E(TT) right, were displayed at the Wichita Reunion in 2006 by James Rodecap. If you look carefully you can see the "Silver King" pod on the lower fuselage of the RB-47H. The EB-47E(TT) "Tell Two" has the early antenna configuration. The models are backed-up with photos and a copy of the 55th SRW history *We See All*.

The model below was scratch-built by Vince Beilman. He developed the plans from a book published back in the '70s (**B-47 in Action**) and scaled it so he could use 5/8" dowels for the engines. It is made of balsa and about 21" long. He says the plans took about 40-50 hours to draw but he doesn't say how long it took to build. Completion was in 2005. Vince was in SAC from 1954 to 1965. He transitioned to the B-47 as navigator in 1956. He was with the 44th BW at Lake Charles AFB and then to the 98th BW at Lincoln AFB. His crew stayed together from 1956 until 1963. He retired in 1972.
 Photo: Vincent Beilman



Lunch In A Tanker



Many of you fellows have eaten box lunches in a KC-97 but here's your chance to eat from a whole different menu while dining in the portly old tanker. Solo's Restaurant in Colorado Springs CO has a former Texas Air Guard KC-97 (53-283) fitted out as a rather unique dining room. They have a full menu of salads, sandwiches, pastas, beef, seafood, and chicken. You have the choice of dining in the traditional dining room or the cabin of the tanker. The tables in the airplane are covered in aeronautical charts. Cockpit visits are allowed and much of the equipment is still there. The other dining areas feature many model airplanes and photographs. Yes, there is one of a B-47. Solo's is located by the Raddison Hotel at 1665 N. Newport Rd. at the northwest corner of the Colorado Springs airport. Check out the website at www.solorestaurant.com.

The B-47 and The F-86

The photo of the B-47 and F-86 in the July 2006 issue of the newsletter brought the following incident to mind for Paul Johnson of Salem OR.

Our crew flew a B-47 from Mountain Home AFB to Gowen Field ID for an Armed Forces Day display circa 1961. Crew S-02 was Major John Ewart (AC), Capt. Tom Gates (NB) and 1Lt. H. Paul Johnson (CP). We were assigned to the 1st BS of the 9th BW. The aircraft was a B-47E with a light fuel load of 33,000 lbs. carried in the three main tanks only. This gave a gross weight of about 119,000 lbs. On takeoff from Mountain Home, we did not use the water/alcohol injection. Arriving at Boise just 45 miles away, we made a low pass over the field at 390

The B-47 and ...continued on bottom page 9



XB-47 Progress At Chanute

Volunteers from the Association are making slow but steady progress on getting the #2 XB-47 ready for painting and enhanced preservation.. Pictured above are Pete Troesch, Richard Redden, and Jerry Palmer. It is unfortunate that this historically significant aircraft must be outside. The Stratojet Association is determined to do what we can to preserve it. If you can help with the work contact Pete at 309-662-1685 or patnpete@verizon.net.

Photo: via Pete Troesch

Whiteman Stratojet



Terry Bryant sent in these shots of the good looking Stratojet on display at Whiteman AFB. Unfortunately, security has restricted visitors' access to the old bird.

Photos: via Terry



**Give the gift that lasts forever.
Strategic Air & Space Museum
On Interstate 80 between Lincoln & Omaha Nebraska
Memorial Patio Walk Bricks**

Preserve history and pay tribute to a loved one. The memorial Patio Walk is located in the front of the Strategic Air and Space Museum between the Thor and Blue Scout Missiles. The walk is created out of bricks each engraved with a tribute to an individual or group. The patio provides a resting spot for Museum guests. All of the bricks purchased by the B-47 Stratojet Association members will be grouped together. You can create this permanent remembrance for only \$500. One hundred dollars of this goes to create and place the brick in the walk and \$400 goes directly into the restoration fund for the restoration of the only B-47 bomber model left in the world that is in an indoor protected area. A receipt will be mailed to you. A gift card to the person(s) being honored will be sent upon request. Make all checks out to the **B-47 Stratojet Association** so that these funds will be placed directly into the restoration fund for the B-47. Won't you join us in this most worthwhile project? Please send your check for \$500 and this form to **The B-47 Stratojet Association**, to:

Bob Griffiths, Treasurer, 303 Double Eagle Road, Burgaw NC 28425-8559

Your gift is 100% tax deductible and will help insure that future generations can view a real B-47 Bomber. Include the name you wish to appear on your brick.

I would like to purchase _____ brick(s) at \$500 per brick.

I would like my first brick to read:
(Maximum of 3 lines/16 characters on each line including spaces)

The B-47 and...continued from page 8

knots IAS and landed.

When it came time to return to Mountain Home in the afternoon, we lined up on runway 28 Left with an F-86 from the Idaho Air National Guard lined up on runway 28 Right. The plan was for the B-47 to takeoff followed by the F-86 which would make a fighter pass on the B-47. The field elevation at Boise is 2,858 feet. As we passed through about 4,000 feet with the gear and flaps up, John

activated the water/alcohol injection. The water injection lasted 74 seconds by which time we were passing 14,000 feet in a chandelle-type maneuver with a rather chagrined F-86 many thousands of feet below us in a cloud of black smoke.

We didn't often get the opportunity to demonstrate the light gross weight performance of the B-47. At least on that day, we had our chance to show off some of the remarkable capabilities of the aircraft even if we did cheat just a little with the water/alcohol injection.

Bookshelf

We call your attention to a new novel written about the Cold War that features the B-47. The promotional literature says that *Noble Cause* cleverly weaves the intriguing narrative of a young Strategic Air Command jet bomber crew caught up in a shrewd scheme to deceive the enemy during the harrowing days of the Cold War. We have not had the opportunity to review it but Maj. General William G. Maclaren, Jr. (USAF Ret.) writes, "In this exciting thriller, novelist Robert McCartan, an acknowledged military expert of the Cold War days, has opened the records of U.S. -- Soviet jousting for supremacy



of the skies surrounding the Soviet borders. The highly trained crews of the Strategic Air Command showed their mettle as they were harassed and attacked while gathering intelligence vital to American security. McCartan's own experiences underlie the events in *Noble Cause*, lending great authenticity to his tale. It is a page-turner right from the beginning, and the pace never lets up." The book is available for \$18.00 (includes S & H). Make check payable to: Robert McCartan and mail to: R. McCartan 4729 E. Sunrise Dr., #144 Tucson, AZ 85718. Email address is: rmccartan@aol.com (Please note NOBLE CAUSE on Subject line).

The December issue (Vol. 40 No.12) of *Aircraft Illustrated*, a British magazine, has a fine article on the Strategic Air Command. It is a brief review of SAC history that features some really nice color photography with the B-47 being featured in seven of the photos (including my favorite, a head-on shot of a B-47E in a steep bank over Kansas). The eight page piece also features a small sidebar about "SAC On Film" and lists the following movies which most of you have seen: *Strategic Air Command* (1955) with Jimmy Stewart and beautiful B-36 and B-47 photography, *Bombers B-52* (1957) with Karl Malden, *Dr. Strangelove* (1963) with Peter Sellers, and *A Gathering of Eagles* (1964) with Rock Hudson. The magazine is available from www.aircraftillustrated.com. Click on "back issues" then "2007 back issues" and then on the issue cover.

Supply Room

Items are available from George Brierley, 5342 6th Place South, Gulfport, FL 33707. Make checks payable to the B-47 Stratojet Association.



Association Pin - \$10.00



1000 Hour Pin - \$25.00



Association Coaster (2) - \$2.50
SPECIAL - 6 2006 Reunion Wine Glasses/6 Coasters - \$20.00

Mug - Association "Horn Button" emblem on reverse side - \$10.00



Note Pad with Pen - \$4.00

B-47 Commemorative Medal - \$10.00



Medal - Front



Association Mouse Pad - \$3.00



Medal - Back



Shirt Front



Shirt Back



Association T-Shirt (above) - \$15.00
With Pocket - \$17.00 (give size)

Association Cap (Blue) - \$10.00



The XB-47 being towed during tests in 1947. One only needs to see the airplane with its contemporaries to realize what a huge leap forward this was in the history of aviation. Though the photo is small, there are three DC-4s, two AT-6s, and a BT-13 to be seen in the background. Due to the foresight of people like Bill Cook, Bob Withington, and George Shairer of Boeing, and Pete Warden of the USAF, this brilliant new airplane became the mainstay of the nuclear fleet during the 1950s and early 1960s. It also became the pattern for large jet aircraft far into the future.

Photo: Boeing

Application For Membership - The B-47 Stratojet Association

New Member
 Renewal (Fill in Name only, and address data if changed)

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth (for life members): _____

Military - Your Position In The Air Force: _____

Bomb Wing(s) You Served With:

BW from _____	to _____
BW from _____	to _____
BW from _____	to _____

Civilian - Position/Job _____ Company: _____

From _____ to _____

Comments: _____

Dues

One Year: \$15.00

Life Memberships

Age	Dues
59 & under	\$300
60-64	\$250
65-69	\$200
70-74	\$150
75-79	\$100
80 & up	\$ 50

Dues are payable each January.

Payments and this form should be mailed to:

Bob Griffiths, Treasurer/B-47 Stratojet Assn.,
 303 Double Eagle Road
 Burgaw, NC 28425-8559

~This form may be copied to avoid cutting newsletter~

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The first XB-47, 46-065, over snow-covered countryside on its way to establishing a speed record (3 hours, 46 min. at average ground speed of 607 mph) from Moses Lake WA to Washington DC, 8 February 1949. Photo: USAF-

Pay Your Dues For 2008 Today
2008 Reunion - 25-27 September - Marietta GA