

The Stratojet Newsletter

November 2009 Volume 31

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

Merry Christmas



*The B-47E **Pride Of The Adirondacks**, preserved at Plattsburgh AFB, has always been one of the better maintained and displayed Stratojet survivors. We have seen photos with Christmas lights and Santa Claus on this airplane but this shot taken in 2007 is especially nice. The display area is now called the **Clyde Lewis Park** and this was the first Christmas after it opened. 53-2385 was delivered to the 308th BW on 9 January 1956. In July 1959, it was transferred to the 380th BW and served there until it became a base display on 27 December 1965. The photo was taken by Michael Betts for Plattsburgh's **Press Republican** newspaper. Member Dale Wolfe delivered it to your editor. Dale was based at Plattsburgh and he was also copilot on the last B-47 flight on 17 June 1986.*

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XB-47 Restoration... continued from page 11

prevent rain and snow from entering the cockpit. Scraping and sanding of all latches and hooks on # 3, # 4 and # 5 engines cowling was completed.

November 12th - Latches and hinges on all 6 engines cowling have been primed and painted with red paint.

Approximately 27 hours of work were done on 46-066 during the month of November by Richard Redden, Bill Geibel, Rol Barger and Pete Troesch.

NOTE: A special thank you goes to Bill Geibel, Chanute Air Museum Restoration Coordinator, for operating the scissor lift at its maximum height of 16 feet and installing foam and caulking in numerous crevices and openings in the XB-47.

We will feature photos from the restoration in a future issue, ed.

Roll Call of Honor

Vincent J. Beebe passed away on 26 December 2008 in Orlando FL. He was A/C in 19th BW and earned two 1000 hour pins.

William K/ (Joe) Bush, Oklahoma City OK, passed away 5 October 2009. He flew B-29s in Korea, B-47s, and C-130s in Vietnam. When he retired in 1974 he had over 26 years in the Air Force and 7300 hours of flight time.

Gilbert Martinez, Albuquerque NM, passed away on 18 August 2009. He retired from the USAF after 26 years and flew B-47s, B-52s, and the SR-71 as navigator.

Bill Dunnington, Baytown, TX, passed away on 18 October 2009. Burial was at Lake Charles LA where Bill served in the 44th BW.

Important Reminders

- **Pay your dues for 2010** (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

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>

The Flight Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the base,
not an aircraft was flying to outer space.

The planes were parked on the ramp with care, in the hope that he would leave them there.
The airmen were nestled all snug in their sacks, while visions of pacesetters kept coming back.
And mom in her robe and I in my cap, had just settled down for a much needed nap.

When all of sudden there arose such a clatter, I grabbed the phone to see what was the matter!
"Oh no!" I cried and reached for my shirt.
"Merry Christmas, my love, they've called an alert!"

I left the house in somewhat of a hurry, and started the car with the usual flurry.
I rushed to the flight line,
and out to my plane with all those important things crammed in my brain.
The word had been given and not by St. Nick, that voice on the phone said,
"Better be quick!"

More rapid than eagles his air crews they came with orderly shouting and checking of names.
Now bomber, now tankers, now air crew and ground,
the ramp is alive with the power units' sound.

To radar, to cannon, to gear and munitions, the specialists check for proper conditions.

The air crews arriving all laden with gear, a last minute look that the Form 1 is clear.
I climbed up the ladder and into my chair, and fastened the straps that hold me there.
My observer and pilot are strapping in too, the interphone muffles the voice of my crew.
Check list complete! Ready on four!

A whine, then a rumble, and ear splitting roar!

Now five, now six, now three, two and one, everything's ready for the race to run.
I can't help but think that up there so far, He's watching the sky as he puffs his cigar.

And waiting out here for my take off time, I wonder if families like yours and mine,
will see SAC's Christmas trees up in the sky? With their hundreds of contrails blazing high.
Weaving a network of slivery gray,
is our "gift of security" on this blessed day!

Written by Mrs. Sybil Webber wife of Major Louis A. Webber of the 371st Bomber Squadron, December 21st, 1956
As a tribute to the Strategic Air Command crews who give the nations...
"A Gift of Security"

and

In Honor of those who bravely served in the United States Air Force and Strategic Air Command
Also to Jerry Pisha and his many years of dedicated service aboard Air Force One



Lest We Forget ~ B-47 Memorials Across America

Part I

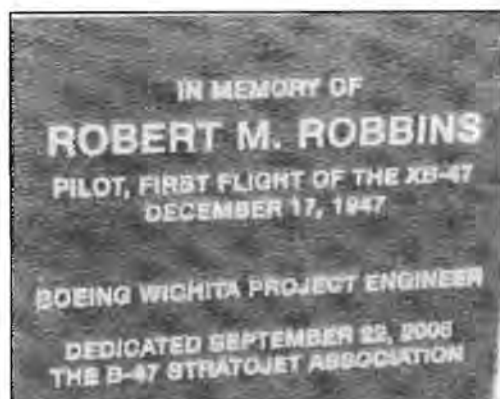
by Signumd Alexander

In September 1914, following the initial carnage on the Western front, Laurence Binyon wrote a poem entitled *For the Fallen*. "The Ode of Remembrance" is taken from that poem and is regularly recited at memorial services on days commemorating WW I, such as ANZAC Day, Remembrance Day, and Remembrance Sunday. The last line of the poem is "At the going down of the sun and in the morning, We will remember them." The line "Lest we forget" is often added to the end of the ode, which is repeated in response by those listening. To our B-47 comrades who are no longer with us, "lest we forget."

Author's note: The war we fought, the Cold War, did not involve actual combat, but it none-the-less was a war. None-the-less lives were lost, and in the end we won the Cold War. We succeeded in our mission "Peace Was Our Profession," no bombs were ever dropped.

McConnell AFB, Wichita KS

The 3520th Combat Training Wing memorial was dedicated on 8 October 1993. It is located in front of the McConnell AFB B-47 display at the base memorial park.



The memorial plaque to Bob Robbins is located at the B-47 display on the concrete stand on which the right outrigger rests. The plaque was dedicated at the 2006 Reunion with Bob's son and daughter.

National Museum Of The United States Air Force, Dayton OH



Don Cassiday and Dick Purdum at the dedication of the B-47 memorial on 24 September 2004.



Individual bricks at the base of the B-47 memorial. These help defray the cost of the memorial.



The reverse side of the B-47 memorial lists the Wings that flew the Stratojet.



The Strategic Air Command memorial was dedicated on 2 May 2008.

National Museum Of The United States Air Force... continued



The 55th SRW memorial consists of a black granite stone and four black granite benches. The center memorial was dedicated on 5 September 2003. The SAC insignia is engraved on the base.

*Below - The date of the dedication of the Armenian memorial is not known. It was funded by **Big Safari** which was the code name for Air Force reconnaissance programs. The C-130A was shot down over what was Soviet Armenia on 2 September 1958. The memorial in Armenia was dedicated in 1993. The Soviets returned some remains of six airmen after the shoot-down. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the remains of the remaining eleven crewmen were uncovered. They were returned to the United States and buried together in Arlington on 2 September 1998. A C-130 memorial was dedicated at the National Vigilance Park, Fort Mead MD on 2 September 1997.*



Benches At The National Museum Of The United States Air Force



The two sides of the 308th memorial dedicated in June 1994.



The bench of the 100th Bomb Group, the precursor of the 100th Bomb Wing.



The 100th Air Refueling Wing bench was dedicated on 19 October 2007.



307th Bomb Wing bench was dedicated on 12 May 1995.

[illegible]

The Strategic Air and Space Museum is located between Omaha and Lincoln. Money raised from brick sales on the memorial walk will be used to restore the Museum's B-47E which is the only Stratofortress bomber model under cover.

[illegible]

The B-47 memorial bench is located inside the museum.

~To Be Continued~

XB-47 Restoration Report

Pete Troesch and his crew continue chipping away at the restoration of the oldest Stratojet in existence, XB-47, 46-066, at the Chanute Air Museum. He keeps us informed with regular reports and the excerpts below will help you understand the kind of work they are doing and have done during 2009.

March - The navigator's work table was installed in the aircraft and undercoated on March 25th. It was necessary to remove a few pieces of hardware and these will be mounted on the table next month after a final coat of paint is applied. A piece of the old table will be taken to Lowe's Hardware to match the paint color. In April we will plan to search for and caulk leaks to prevent further deterioration of the aircraft interior.

April - On April 15th installation of the navigator's work table was completed. Vacuuming and cleaning of the navigator's position and interior of the aircraft nose was done.

On April 22nd the navigator's work table was given a final coat of paint. The original table color was matched to the color of the paint used on the new table. Plans to remove the two inverters to replace the plywood they are mounted on is temporarily postponed. Instead, work will be concentrated on securing or removing loose deteriorated wiring, tubing and cables that are safety hazards. Photographs will be taken before the above parts are secured or removed. All wiring, canon plugs, tubing and cables removed from the XB-47 will be labeled and stored in boxes at the Chanute Air Museum. Other plans include repairing, painting and stenciling the interior side of the cockpit entrance door.

The purpose of securing or removing the above mentioned hazardous items from the cockpit and repairing the door is to permit safe access for visitors to enter the cockpit to experience and appreciate the environment flight crews worked in during the Cold War era. The cockpit would only be open to visitors during special events scheduled by the Chanute Air Museum.

May-June - On May 20th Richard Redden and Pete Troesch installed the remaining hardware pieces on the new navigator's table.

On June 10th Richard and Pete provided a tour and explanation of the B-47's role during the Cold War to 19 high school age students enrolled in the Chanute Air Museum Air and Space Summer Camp. Work on the cockpit entrance door was continued.

July - On July 8th scrubbing and washing of the cowling on all 6 engines was started. Light sanding on the turbine wheel section of the cowling in preparation for painting of the red warning stripes was done.

On July 15th, Richard Redden and Pete Troesch assembled the Handbook of Erection and Maintenance Instructions. (T.O. 1-B-47A-2, dated 1 August, 1950) received from the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. This 607 page handbook will be helpful during our work on the XB-47. In addition, it will be an available resource for specific information needed by B-47 Stratojet Association members performing work on other B-47's.

On July 22nd, sand paper, paint thinner, masking tape and spray cans of paint were purchased to use for painting the red turbine wheel warning stripes on the engines cowling. Sanding, taping and painting of

the red stripes on the turbine wheel sections of the cowling on all six engines was completed. This work was performed by Richard, Pete and Bob Keller. Bob is a volunteer from Decatur, IL.

On July 29th, scrubbing and washing of the engine cowlings was continued. Scraping and sanding of the the outrigger gears and ground locks was started in preparation for painting. A total of approximately 48 hours of work was spent during the month of July on 46-066.

August - On August 5th, metal straps mounted on both *outrigger struts with the manufacturer's instruction plates* were removed. Using 2000 grit sandpaper for several hours, and sanding through at least four coats of paint, instructions on the plates were revealed. The instructions are as follows:

Plate #1: "WARNING WITH THE AIRPLANE ON JACKS MAKE SURE OUTRIGGER IS LOCKED DOWN BY CHECKING BOTH OUTRIGGER GEAR AND OUTRIGGER WARNING LIGHTS IN COCKPIT BEFORE LOWERING FROM JACKS"

Plate #2: "WARNING DISCONNECT TORSION LINKS ON OUTRIGGERS BEFORE PUSHING OR TOWING AIRPLANE BACKWARDS"

The metal straps will be repaired and painted. The four manufacturer's instruction plates mounted on the straps will be polished and painted with a clear protective coating before re-installation on the struts. Note: It would be interesting to know if these instruction plates are available and visible on other static display B-47's??

On August 26th, scraping and sanding of the left outrigger shock strut was started. Several visitors to the museum stopped by the XB-47 and time was spent informing them of the Stratojet's role during the Cold War. Approximately 26 hours of work was done on 46-066 during the month of August.

September - On September 2nd & 9th, scraping and sanding of both outrigger struts and ground safety locks were continued. Repair work on the cockpit entrance door was started.

On September 23rd, Major Scott Barbu, USAF, serving with the 183rd Fighter Wing of the Illinois Air National Guard in Springfield, IL, during his off duty hours, worked with Pete Troesch on the XB-47. They completed sanding and undercoating of both outrigger struts and ground safety locks.

On September 30th, a final coat of silver paint was applied to the right outrigger strut and red paint to the ground safety lock. A new piece of sheet metal was made to replace the severely damaged piece on the inside of the cockpit entrance door. Approximately 43 hours of work was completed on 46-066 during the month of September by Scott Barbu, Richard Redden and Pete Troesch.

October - On October 7th, a finish coat of silver paint was applied to the left outrigger strut and torsion link and a finish coat of red paint to the outrigger landing gear ground safety lock. Painting of both outrigger struts, torsion links and ground safety locks is now completed.

On October 14th, due to wind and rain, work efforts were limited to locating leaks around windows above and on the sides of the fuselage near the navigator's position and the cockpit canopy. Scraping and wire brushing of the left outrigger wheel was completed.

XB-47 Restoration ... continued on page 11

Bookshelf



Broken Arrow by Michael H. Maggelet and James C. Oskins is an interesting book that details the instances in which nuclear weapons were involved in aircraft accidents. The earliest is from February 13, 1950 (B-36) and the last is on September 19, 1980. Ten of these involve B-47s including two that are questionable. You will find the familiar ones: the jettisoned bomb off Savannah, the one released accidentally near Florence SC, and

the one at Lake Charles that destroyed a B-47 and the weapon on the ground in a fire. You may also learn some things you did not know about these frightening incidents. The authors have done some thorough research and duplicated many of the official reports for the reader's perusal. Photo reproduction is not particularly well done, some of it is actually the photocopies from the government reports. The book is softbound, 310 pages in length, and contains a bibliography and index. There is also interesting supplementary material on nuclear safety and the development of the nuclear core that armed the weapons. The major downside of the book is its cost, \$42.70. Available from Amazon.

In a similar vein is this book by Lt. Col. Derek Duke (USAF, Retired), **Chasing Loose Nukes**.



This is the story of the author and his associates as they have sought to find the Mk. 15 nuclear weapon dropped off Tybee Island near the mouth of the Savannah River by a B-47 after it collided with an F-86D. Several years back we featured the B-47 Aircraft Commander's story and he was very clear on his viewpoint on Duke's venture. He maintains that the weapon did not have the core installed and therefore could not

cause a nuclear explosion and he has the paperwork to back him up. The author of this book disagrees and has spent much time and money trying to find the bomb as well as informing the population of the danger. This is a curious book with much of it consisting of the reports from the Air Force Nuclear Weapons and Counterproliferation Agency and procedures of the Department of Defense on handling nuclear emergencies. There is also a listing of all nuclear explosions conducted by the U.S. from 1945-1963 although it adds nothing to his argument. The main text not only tells us of Duke's search but also covers the landscape of nuclear accidents involving aircraft and manages to do provide a fairly comprehensive history of the B-47 and the F-86. The book is softbound, 257 pages, and available from lulu.com at \$13.39 or it can be downloaded for \$99.

Supply Room

Items are available from George Brierley, 9071 St. John's Pkwy, Apt. 12, Niagra Falls, NY 14304. Make checks payable to the B-47 Stratojet Association. **Please ADD \$3.00 for shipping and handling**



Association Pin - \$10.00

1000 Hour Pin - \$25.00



Association Coaster (2) - \$2.50

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



Association Mouse Pad
\$3.00

Tote Bag from 2008 Reunion at Marietta (side pockets, carrying strap, Association logo)

\$10.00



Association T-Shirt With Pocket - \$17.00 (Size -M,L,XL)



Shirt Front



Shirt Back

XB-47 Restoration... continued from page 9

On October 21st, scraping, sanding, priming and a finish coat of red paint was applied to 10 latches and 11 hooks on # 6 engine cowlings.

On October 28th, correct alignment of the canopy latches and safety lock mechanisms was completed. This was done in preparation for caulking in November around the windows and canopy to eliminate water leaking into the cockpit. The caulking around the canopy will be temporary because the canopy has not been installed correctly, causing a 1 1/2" - 2" gap between the canopy rail and fuselage. It will need to be repositioned in the spring of 2010. Although we have the T.O. 1B-47A-2, Maintenance and Erection Manual, which will be helpful to install the canopy correctly, the guidance and direction by someone

having considerable experience with this sliding type canopy installation and removal would be extremely helpful and much appreciated.

Approximately 34 hours of work were done on 46-066 during the month of October by Richard Redden, Bill Geibel, Rol Barger, Scott Barbu and Pete Troesch.

November - November 4th - scraping and sanding of all latches and hooks of # 1 and # 2 engines cowlings was completed.

November 11th - Insulating foam and caulking was installed on the canopy, navigator's escape hatch and the canopy/fuselage closure to

XB-47 Restoration... continued on page 2

Application For Membership - The B-47 Stratojet Association

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

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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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

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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.
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RB-47E, 52-817, of the 91st SRW on the snow-covered ramp at Lockbourne AFB. The ground crew bore the brunt of such brutal conditions as they prepared the Stratojets for their next mission. This airplane was delivered to the 91st on 14 January 1955, went to the 90th SRW at Forbes AFB on 13 August 1957, and was modified to a QB-47E by Lockheed during the spring of 1960.

Photo: USAF

***Pay Your Dues For 2010 Today
2010 Reunion - 23-25 September - Omaha NE***