

The Stratojet Newsletter

Volume 9

November 2000

The Stratojet Reunion in Odessa

Two hundred and forty people attended the first B-47 reunion in Odessa, Texas from 12 to 15 October. Tiny and Ruth Ann Malm and Dick and Lorraine Purdum did an outstanding job in planning the event. Everything clicked from the initial check-in to the departure breakfast on Sunday. It was so profes sional I thought I was back in SAC.



Brigadier General "Reg." Urschler, USAF (Ret.) addresses the attendees at the banquet dinner. General Urschler flew the B-47 with the 55th SRW and is the owner of the P-51 "GunFighter" which he flies to air shows all over the country.

It was great renewing acquaintance that were made in Omaha in 1998. It was even nicer making new friends with all the first time attendees.

Ken Tollin, who served in the 306th BW, designed the Radisson Hotel where the reunion was held. He presently resides in Odessa. The reunion gave Ken a chance to get together with Bob Lamb and Rod Nackerman, all three had served to-gether in the 306th in the early fifties.

A spacious hospitality room well stocked with liquid refreshments and snacks served as the social center for the reunion. B-47 memorabilia was displayed and the VCR ran continuous B-47 tapes that were provided by Dick Purdum. Personal picture albums were shared with old and new acquaintances.

The only planned activity on Thursday was the Mexican buffet that was held both indoors and the patio. The food was excellent and those seated in doors were serenaded by a Mariachi band.

Tours to the various sights in Odessa were conducted on Friday. Transportation to the Confederate Air Force Museum was provided in the afternoon. Boeing test pilots, Bob Robbins, Jim Fisher, and Marv Michael gave presentations at the morning and afternoon seminars. These three test pilots held their audiences spell bound as they relayed their exploits.

The highlight of the reunion was the banquet that evening. After the pledge of allegiance and toast to fallen comrades Dick Purdum gave the invocation. Dick's invocation was short and meaningful. Dick's invocation follows: Thank you dear Lord for this chance to gather as free people and to see friends that we have been stationed with. As well as to make new friends. Bless the Boeing test pilots that had the courage to take that very first test flight in the B-47. Bless all of the Cold War Warriors present here tonight. This encompasses the whole spectrum of the B-47 operations from the maintainers, the crew

Cont. on col.1, pg.3

Corrections to the Newsletter

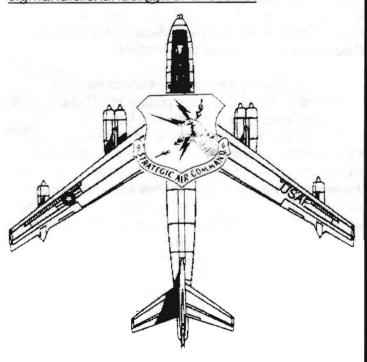
History of the 98th BW: The Amos crew was the top crew in the 1956 bombing competition. However, the Fairchild trophy was won by the 307th BW and not the 98th BW.

The Rod Nackerman, Bob Lamb, and Robert Bonser met at Bob's home and not in Branson, MO.

Assistance

Wanted: B-47 unit and other unique markings. There has been very little documented on the markings that were carried by B-47s over the years. In most instances, these were rather plain but all are worthy of being documented. Please share your memories of your unit markings, etc. A rough sketch would be very helpful. I will be happy to furnish a tail template to you for your sketch. Please contact: Mike Habermehl, P.O. Box 1144, Brenham, TX 77834-1144. mhaberm@tenet.edu

B-47 nose names and pictures I am looking for B-47 nose art. Names on the aircraft nose, the serial number of the aircraft, the unit, and any photos. Please send to Alex Alexander 12110 Los Cerdos Dr., San Antonio, TX 78233-5953. sigmund.alexander@worldnet.t.net



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Cont. from pg.1

chiefs, the cooks, the security members and so on. Bless all the wives as they bore the burden of maintaining the house hold and raising the kids as we were on 90 days deployments or home alert or reflex all over the world. Thank you for dedicated companies like Boeing that had the foresight to. take the gamble, and build the B-47 that allowed us to stem the tide of Soviet aggression by deterrence. General Curtiss E. LeMay once said the best way to never have to fight a war is to have the strongest military in the world. That is exactly what we had in the Strategic Air Command- the mightiest, most professional military force ever assembled in the world. Bless this food to the nourishment of our bodies so that we may be ever vigilant that our nation and its military remain strong and viable.

The guest speaker of the evening was B/G Regis "Reg" F.A. Urschler, USAF (Ret.) who gave a stirring address on what it means to be an American and patriotism. Reg is the son of immigrant parents who enlisted in the Air Force, became a pilot, has flown over 13,000 hours and rose to the rank of Brigadier General.

Following General Urschler's presentation, Alex Alexander presented plaques to Bob Robbins in recognition of having made the first flight in a B-47 and to M/G J.D. Moore, USAFR (Ret.) and Ltc. Dale Wolfe, USAF (Ret.) in recognition for making the last B-47 flight. Don Cassiday accepted a plaque in behalf of Mark Natola, who was not able to attend. The plaque was presented to Mark in recognition for his service to the B-47 Association. Plaques were also presented to Tiny and Ruth Ann Malm And dick and Lorraine Purdum in recognition for their work in planning the Odessa reunion. The membership also thanked the Malms and Purdums with a resounding show of appalls.

Following the presentations the attendees were serenaded by the singing of the *An, 2000.* It was a trip down nostalgia lane followed by vintage dance music.

Unfortunately that evening a cold front came through with low ceilings, chilling winds, and rain. It was not the best of weather for an air show. The next day the hardy among the attendees braved the weather to watch the air show. However, even they were forced to return to the

warmth of the hotel. There was a barbcue that evening in a tent at the field. Again the hardy elected to partake in it while others chose to eat in the hotel or nearby restaurants. However, nearly everyone was philosophical about the weather and did not let it dampen their spirits.

Following breakfast a business meeting was held. The minutes are found on page 3. The next reunion will be held in 2,002 in either Seattle or Wichita. The site will be determined by the Board of Governors when they meet in May. Again our thanks to the Malms and Purdums for a job well done.



Minutes from B-47 Association meeting 8 October 2000 Odessa, Texas

Dick Purdum introduced the President Alex Alexander.

The following is a summary of the results of the meeting:

1. All attendees expressed their thanks to the Malms and Purdums for all their hard work that made the reunion an outstanding success.

2. The president proposed expanding the Board of Governors of the Association by the addition of four additional members. Nominees were:

Jim Diamond, former B-47 ground crewman Wen Painter, former B-47 ground crewman Andy Labosky, former B-47 air crew member Mike Habermehl, B-47 Historian and archivist Nominees were unanimously approved.

- A board meeting will be held in Wichita in May 2000 to determine various policies regarding requests for financial assistance, future reunions, etc.
- 4. The President asked for nominees for the office of president. No nominees were presented. The President agreed to remain as President until the 2002 reunion at which time a new President will be selected.
- 5. Dick Purdum was nominated and unanimously approved as Vice President.
- 6. The President informed the attendees that he had assumed the editorship of the *B-47 Stratojet Newsletter*. Bob Loffredo and Mike Habermehl have agreed to serve as contributing editors and Stan Flentje will serve as associate editor.
- 7. The President expressed his desire to expand the size of the newsletter and to eventually produce it with color. In order to achieve this objective, the president proposed raising the annual dues to \$15. Following discussion on the merits of the proposal the proposal was approved.

8. The President requested approval to spend \$ 400 to obtain B-47 paper weights or adhesive embossed insignias. The request was unanimously approved.

- 9. The President requested that any member, who possesses any B-47 items of historical significance, send them to him. These items will be copied and added to the B-47 archives and the original items returned to sender.
- 10. The Board of Governors will discuss the possibility of creating a B-47 mobile exhibit that

could be shown at B-47 Wing reunions.

- 11. The President will discuss with the Secretary the possibility of putting the newsletter on the Web Site. Proposals to put the roster on the Web page were cancelled due to the problems related to privacy. There is a possibility that the roster could be put on the Internet.
- 12. A Hall of Fame column in the newsletter will be used to recognize the outstanding achievements of some of our members.
- 13. The Board of Governors in May will decide whether the next reunion be held in Seattle or Wichita.
- 14. Tiny Malm proposed that any profit from the reunion be split between the Confederate Air Force and the Association. The proposal was unanimously approved.

These minutes will be sent to the Board of Governors for their approval and comments.

Sigmund Alexander
President of the B-47 Stratojet Asn.

From the President

The Association continues to grow and so does the enthusiasm within the organization.

We a had a great reunion in Odessa thanks to the Malms and Purdums and initial planning for the 2002 reunion has begun. I require assistance in planning with regard to Seattle and Wichita. I need information regarding chatrering buses, hotels, sights, and activities that ladies would be interested in.

The board of governors was expanded to reflect the diversity of the organization and to develop future plans and policies.

I will be meeting with Jay Miller and Mike Habermehl later this month on publishing my book. I have completed a booklet on B-47 accidents and these are available for purchase, details can be found on page 9. Profits from sales will be donated to the organization.

If you have not done so, please pay your year 2000 dues. Dues for 2001 are due in January and will be \$15.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday

season

Alex

Aug. 2, 2000 Conneaut Courier

The War Years

Local vet recalls early 50s

The first operational B-47 was delivered to the 367th Bomb Squadron in the summer of 1951from the Boeing plant in Wichita, Kansas. The nucleus of ground crew (maintenance) was made up of senior N.C.O.'s out of B-17, B-24, and later B-29 outfits-most who had served in various WW II campaigns.

50-008 was the first B-47 delivered to the 367th Bomb Squadron that summer. The ground crew chief was Master Sgt. Buck Buchanan, the Asst. C/C was Staff Sgt. Vern Schrock and myself as the third man. The second B-47 delivered was 2087.

S/Sgt. Rod Nackerman served on the ground crew of 2087. Colonel Weeks was the Squadron Commander, he was later killed in the crash of 50-008. After the crash of 50-008, I was reassigned to # 12271.

S/Sgt. Robbie Robinson was the crew chief, I was the assistant C/C, and Sgt. Dan Jensen the third man. The flight crew of 12271 was Capt. C.G. Memminger, Aircraft Commander; Capt. B. Sigler, pilot; and Capt. Alex Siling, navigator-bombardier. Memminger was a "48" graduate of West Point and a fine officer. LTC. Griffin replaced LTC. Weeks as squadron commander after Weeks was killed, both were fine fair men.

All of the flight officers were handpicked to for the B-47 program. Crewmembers were dubbed "three headed monsters," since they were cross trained in all three crew positions.

Our squadron line chief was M/Sgt Koon and the flight chiefs were M/Sgts Hess and Popopalaus and Webber (Paddlefoot.) These were high quality NCOs and they provided very good leadership with a vast range of experience.

When the 367th received its authorized number of ships (15), the 368th and 369th received theirs. The 306th Bomb wing was fully equipped..

Lockbourne AFB at Columbus, Ohio was the second base to get B-47s and I do not know who followed Lockbourne. I failed to state that the 305th BW, our sister wing at MacDill AFB, was the second bomb wing to be equipped with B-47s.

The early model B's, did not have ejection seats and getting out of them was a real b

The later model Bs were equipped with ejection seats; the aircraft commander and copilot ejected upward and the navigator ejected downward from his position in the nose.

Our flight crews enjoyed "spot promotions" according to their proficiency-some going from captain to LTC. in a few months.

Senior NCOs, the nucleus,

were

sent TDY, temporary duty, to the Boeing plant in Wichita for familiarization training. New men like myself went through the A&E, armament and electronics, school at Wichita Falls, Texas and advanced J-47 engine training at Chanute, Illinois. Others were trained in specialized B-47 schools i.e. Mobile Training Detachments, MTDs, that updated us on the airframe at MacDill.

We worked seven days a week for the next eighteen months. Fly and fix, fly and fix sometimes working from 24 to 36 hours depending on how much maintenance your ship needed. We received help from other ground crews whose ships were flying or whose ships did not require maintenance.

In the summer of '52 the wing successfully flew a simulated war mission, "Skytry." In June of 1953, we went TDY to Fairford, England for three months. Speed records were broken and broken again, both going over and coming back.

The record was 5 hours and 20 minutes from Limestone, ME to England. The move to England was accomplished successfully without any difficulties. Being a new aircraft, even the older and wiser NCOs

Snaps of Reunion 2000





"Tiny' Malm looking over how the registration was progressing.



The co-hostesses of the reunion, Lorraine Purdum and Ruth Ann Malm



"The First and the Last" J D. Moore, the last pilot to fly the B-47; Dick Purdum, Association, Vice President;



Mary Lou Hegarty is enthralled with the trumpet playing of the Mariachis. In back of her is her husband Rod.



The Mexican Buffet



Stan Flentje, Mike Habermehl, Bev and Bob Nobbs, and Errol Hoberman



An almost forgotten art form



Boeing test pilots, Jim Fisher and Marv Michael



Tiny addressing the banquet



The "Andrew Sisters"



The morning symposium

ont. from pg. 5

final top secret clearances. We frequently subjected to attempted security penetration attempts by the security penetration teams. Your flight line pass with your picture had special coding symbols. If you blundered into areas your code did not cover, you got carted off to the Provost Marshal Office, the senior ranking military officer. Then the squadron commander had to come bail you out. Not good.

Gen. LeMay was the Commanderin-Chief of SAC and you never knew when his plush C-97 would land and shake up everything.

Along with all my fellow troops, we knew we were hot-shots, a balls to the wall outfit and maybe a bit egotistical. The B-47 was the hottest thing going and we knew it.

I played a small part in protecting the United States during the Cold War. However, I am proud of having served with the finest fighting force in the post World War II era. It was an honor to serve with such a fine group of officers and enlisted men. It was a job that helped preserve the peace.



L to R Rod Nackerman, Ken Tollin, Bob Lamb, and George Brierley are pictured here enjoying themselves in the hospitality room. Rod, Ken, and Bob all served in the 306th BW while George served with the 303rd BW. George is presently the BX Officer for the Association.

<u>B-47 Factoids</u> The first bomb wing to receive a B-47 was the 306th in 1951. The last production B-47 was built by Lockheed/ Georgia in 1956 and was delivered to the 100th BW, at Pease AFB, NH.

M/Sqt Harold 'Hap'Arnold, USAF(Ret.) died of a heart attack on October 2000. He served as a B-47 electronics specialist. Hap was of great assistance to the editor in researching the avionics on the B-47.

<u>Victor Neils Agathar</u> died in San Antonio on July 27. He was a project officer in the development of the B-29. After the war Agathar became a highly successful businessman. However, he never forgot the role he played in developing the B-29; and he paid for the restoration of the Confederate Air Force B-29, "Fifi," that was named after his wife. On August 7, the Confederate Air Force flew in a missing man formation over the memorial service to Agathar. The formation Included "Fifi" and four other C-45s, including one that Agathar donated to the CAF.

Lionel Alford died of cancer in Wichita on October 24, 2000. Mr. Alford was a veteran of World War II and Korea. After WW II Alford earned an engineering degree. Recalled to active duty in 1950, he flew 100 missions over Korea. Returning to the states he became a B-47 instructor at McConnell. Following his discharge from the Air Force in 1954, he went to work for Boeing rising to the position of senior Vice President in 1984. He was instrumental in keeping the Wichita facility open and expanding it. He is remembered for his many civic and charitable contributions to the



Lionel Alford, a veteran pilot who was inducted into the Kansas Aviation Hall of Fame in 1998, stands by a B-47 on display at McConnell Air Force Base.

Reunions

SAC Reunion The SAC reunion was held in Omaha from July 12-15 July. Some 750 people attended the event. Attendees registered on Wednesday and an ice breaker was held in the hospitality room that evening. Thursday was devoted to sports, tours of the Western Heritage Museum, the zoo, and the Stratcom Command Post. A dinner/cabaret show was held that evening. The SAC Symposium was held on Friday. Speakers included Generals Dougherty, Lawson, Peck, Adams, McCarthy and Jones. Robb Hoover presented a perspective on General LeMay while CMS McCoy, Reynolds, Parish, and Cook provided a perspective on SAC from the viewpoint of the Senior Enlisted Advisors. The evening ended with a barbecue dinner at the SAC Museum. Saturday began with a memorial service in the SAC Memorial Chapel. A luncheon was held for SAC Society members. That evening a finale reception and banquet was held in the museum. The guest speaker was Nebraska's Senator Chuck Hagel, a Vietnam veteran.

The reunion marked the end of the Society of SAC. General Leo Smith announced that the there was no longer a need for the Society since the museum is dedicated to preserving SAC's

heritage and educating future generations regarding it. Membership in the Society was transferred to that of the Museum. Editor's note: I am bewildered by the move. I don't believe the objective of the Museum and the Society were the same. However, It is a fait accompli without the approval of the membership.

100th BW Fifty eight members attended the 100th reunion that was held in conjunction with the SAC reunion. Everyone who attended the reunion had a grand time. Rod and Mary Lou Hegarty are commended for the great job they did. The next 100th reunion will be held in Portsmouth New Hampshire from Oct. 3 to 6 2002.

20th Bomb Sqd. There were 129 attendees at the reunion held in Shreveport, La from Oct.6-8. The 20th BS at Barksdale held an open house for the

attendees. The next reunion will be held at Barksdale AFB in October 2000.

509th BW reunion was held in San Antonio from Sept 20-24. There were 196 attendees. The next reunion will be held in St.Louis in 2002. The date will be determined later. 98th Group/ Wing Veterans Assn 215 veterans associated with the B-24, B-29, B-47, KC-97 and the Atlas held their reunion in Cherry Hill, NJ from Sept. 5-9. Tours were scheduled to the Amish country and the Independence National Park in Philadelphia. The next reunion will be held in Tucson in 2001.

384th Air Refueling Sqd. The twelfth biennial reunion was held at the Short Stay US Navy Recreational Area in Moncks Corner, SC. There were 75 attendees, the next reunion will be at Pope AFB in 2002.

<u>97th BW</u> There were one hundred of veterans from the B-29, B-50, and B-47- KC-97 eras at the reunion in Sacramento that was held from Sept. 28-30. The next reunion will be held in 2001 in Mesquite, Texas.

308th BW Falmouth, MA was the site of the reunion that was held Oct. 9-12. Fifty former embers of the 308th attended the reunion. The next reunion will be held in Savannah in 2002. 100th ARS 108 veterans of the 100th ARS attended their reunion in Portsmouth, NH from Sept. 22-24. The next reunion will be held in Colorado Springs, CO in 2002.

<u>55th SRW</u> The next reunion will be held at the Holiday Inn Oceanfront Melbourne, FL from May 17-20 2001. Check the Association web site, <u>55srwa.org</u> for details.

B-47 Legacy Society The Strategic Air Command Museum has established a B-47 Legacy Society to preserve the history of the B-47. Rod Hegarty and Dick Purdum will be part of the group working with the museum on how to implement the objective.

<u>B-47 Accident Booklet</u> Alex Alexander's compilation of B-47 accidents is available in a spiral bound booklet for \$7.00. Profits from the sale will be donated to the Association.

Hall of Fame

This is a new section designed to recognize the past accomplishments of our membership. Your nominations are welcomed. The nomination may be for a single act or for an an overall career achievement.

CMSGT Clinton Hughes, USAF (Ret.). Clint entered the Air Force in February 1952 and was assigned as a S/Sgt to the 100th BW in Jan. 1958. He was responsible for the aircraft of the 8th Air Force commander, General Sweeney whenever he visited either the 100th or 509th. Clint made Chief in 1968 with sixteen years of service. He had the honor of being the line chief at Andrews AFB for the celebration of the 25th anniversary Air Force. Clint retired to his farm in New Hampshire in January 1973 and returned to Texas in 1994 to take care of his aging mother. Clint is self effacing and considers himself to be just an old country boy. SAC was fortunate to have had both country and city boys like Clint devoted to serving their country during the Cold War.



Clint and his wife Betty at the reunion babquet.

Early Cold War Overflights, 1950-1956: A Symposium

A symposium devoted to early cold war overflights cosponsored by the Air Intelligence Agency, USAF/XOI, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and the National Reconnaissance Office will be held in Washington, DC on February 22-23, 2001. The symposium will be held at the Defense Intelligence Agency Auditorium, seating is limited to about 400 people. The symposium will recognize the accomplishments of of all those airmen in the Air Force, Navy and the Royal Air Force who were involved in reconnaissance over the Soviet Union and China, excluding those who flew the U-2. These included those who flew the Spitfire, RF-86A/F, RF-84, RF-80, RF-100, RB-45C, Canberra, RB-47B/E/H, RB-57A, and RB-57D-O.

Further information regarding the symposium may be obtained by contacting the symposium coordinator, R. Cargill Hall, the historian of the National Reconnaissance Office, at 1-703-808-1228 or by writing to: National Reconnaissance Office, Office of the Historian, 14675 Bee Road, Chantilly, Virginia, 20151-1715.

News from the Plains of Kansas

Scott M. Weir and Andy and Jo-Ann Labosky traveled to Topeka on 22 October to attend a meeting of the Kaw Valley Chapter of the Retired Officers Association. Certificates and letters of appreciation were presented to Scott M. Weir, Neil Wortman, and Kent Dederick (in absentia) during the meeting. On behalf of the Association I would like to again thank Scott, Neil, and Kent for their efforts in creating the memorial to the RB-47H crewmen killed on April 29, 1960.

Following the B-47 reunion Bob Robbins and his wife traveled to Wichita. It was old home week for Bob with Andy Labosky serving as his personal guide. Andy took Bob to the hangar where the B-29 restoration project is underway, arranged for tours of the Boeing production and aircraft modification lines and the the CAIDIA, Computer Aided Three Dimensional Interactive Application, engineering computer section. Aside from Andy's guided tours Bob visited with friends and other departments at Boeing. Before departing for Florida, Bob visited the memorial park at McConnell



The above plaque is on a stone monument in a small park in Topeka dedicated to Major Palm and his crewmen who were killed when they were shot down by a Russian fighter. In this holiday season remember them in your prayers. My thanks to Olga Hollis for the photo.

Gary Hoselton was involved in a serious car accident, was hospitalized, and unable to attend the reunion. Don Shea was also unable to attend because of an eye operation. We wish both a speedy recovery. Both Gary and Don donated their registration and activity fees to the Association. Our thanks to the both of them.

Photo to the Right: This is a rare photo of an RB-47E with APQ-56 side looking radar, SLR. The aircraft were assigned to the 4 SRS / 26 SRW at Lockbourne AFB. It is believed that 14 aircraft were converted to carry the APQ-56. possibly under a program code named Peter Pan. L to R: Maj. Harold Melbratten, AC; S/Sgt Dave McMunn, crew chief; and Norm Peter, copilot.

Photo: 1958 Dave Nicholson and Gus Letto.

Association Memorabilia

1. Association Pin	\$10.
2. Association Patch	\$ 5.
3. Association T-shirts	\$ 15.
4. Pewter airplane tie pin	\$ 5.
5. 1,000 hour pin	\$25.
6. B-47 Place mat /Mouse pad	\$ 3.
7. B-47 Golf Cap	\$12
8. Mugs	\$ 10
9. Reunion Golf Visor	\$7.
Engraved reunion wine glass	\$5
11. 3,500 hour pins	\$25

Checks should be made payable to the **B-47 Stratojet Association.** Postage and handling are included in all costs. Mail your orders to George







All previously ordered B-47 1,000 hour pins will be mailed to those who ordered them by Christmas.

George Brierley has arranged for the duplication of the video <u>"B-47 Last Flight 1986."</u> This is a ten minute video of M/G J.D. Moore and Ltc. Dale Wolfe's flight from China Lake to the Castle AFB Museum. Cost including shipping \$8,00.



The B-47 Stratojet Newsletter 23 Oak Ridge Road W. Lebanon, NH 03784

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Happy Holidays

Please pay your dues

The Cold War didn't just end, we won it!

