



The Stratojet Newsletter

Spring 2015 Volume 43

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



At least 10 B-47s are lined up at the Lockheed plant in Marietta GA for modification. Note the first one has the early style sliding canopy while the second one has the later clamshell. Unfortunately we cannot identify the airplanes or their units because the tail numbers are not visible.

Photo: Lockheed Georgia

From The President's Desk

If you are like me, you occasionally wonder whether anyone appreciates what we in SAC and the B-47 did for this country. I have the good fortune to almost weekly be reminded that there are folks out there who understand our part in keeping the country free.

I have the good fortune to be a volunteer docent at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson. Thousands of people visit the museum each year from all over the world. As you probably know we have an EB-47E on display. Very often I'm asked "what did you fly?" and I proudly tell them my airplane was the B-47. Invariably, people are impressed and remark about fond memories of seeing the B-47 fly and recall its beauty. More often than not, I am thanked for my service.

What is really thrilling is when someone says, "Oh I worked on the B-47" or "I flew them too." That inevitably leads to several minutes of reminiscing and proud moments for us each.

The other day, I had a unique experience. A young man approached and it was obvious that he had had some severe problems. His head was badly scarred and his speech was halting. He asked if I had flown, and I told him it was the B-47. He brightened and said "Wow! You are a real hero." I demurred the hero business and said I was just doing my job and enjoying it. His response was "But you kept our freedom." I confess that I was stunned and thanked him profusely for his appreciation.

I hope that each of you experience this appreciation that is out there. It certainly helps make our lives all the more meaningful.

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Roll Call Of Honor

Edison F. Arnold of Wenatchee WA, 23 October 2012

Harold F. Beery of Billings MT, 16 March 2015

Otto N. (Cappy) Bie of Indian Rocks Beach FL, 29 March 2015

William J. Bury of Cardiff CA, 24 April 2015

Ronald R. Day of Littleton CO, 25 December 2014

Alan N. Dekker of Columbus OH, 10 February 2015

Wesley L. Hennis of Ellenton FL, 15 July 2013

James B. Myers of Albuquerque NM, 10 March 2015

Rodney C. Nackerman of Lake Orion MI, 1 February 2015

Charles E. Nicholson of Tulsa OK, 23 March 2009

Donald B. O'Connell of Port St. Lucie FL, 25 September 2014

Mahlon E. Padgett of Charlotte NC, 1 September 2014

Manuel F. Perez of Kansas City MO, 9 January 2015

Theodore P. Rogers of Mesa AZ, 22 November 2014

Robert W. Schritter of Mary Esther FL, 19 January 2015

Gerald W. Swisher of Ft. Worth TX, 29 January 2015

Glen E. Trimble of Wichita KS, 22 September 2007

Jerry C. Westhafer of Greensburg IN, 17 September 2010

Important Reminder

- **Pay your dues for 2015** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).

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@sbeglobal.net.

Welcome New Members!!!

James T. Alvey, Solomons MD

John F. Bassett, Odessa TX

Wade A. Buchanan, Torrington WY

Richard G. Clark, Roseville CA

Thomas W. Franco, Reading PA

Curtis G. Green, Garland TX

Wade L. Haniball, LaCanada CA

Thomas A. Kane, Bedford MA

Richard M. Kidwell, Green Valley AZ

Stephen D. Leazer, 29 Palms CA

Raymond T. Manietta, Coal City IL

William R. McCallister, Griffin GA

Earl L. Swain, Euless TX

was a picture of SEAL divers working underwater on the “arming mechanism” of the bomb. Two scuba diving tourists located the bomb and SEALs disarmed and recovered it. I was naturally excited to learn of “closure” on this long standing mystery.

However, a close look at the picture raised skepticism. My memory may not be perfect, but it didn’t look like any bomb I remembered. I shared the article with our Board and they were also skeptical. I returned the article to the retired AF general who sent it and expressed our collective disbelief. Shortly thereafter, I received an apology from him in which he explained that he had checked it out with the SNOPEs website and learned that it was completely false. He also cited a line from the magazine’s editorial page explaining that the contents of the magazine were “entertainment and not to be considered news.”

I did a “double-take.” News as entertainment? What that really means is “we make up stories as we choose and print them as news.” This strikes me as a wild and dangerous concept. Then it occurred to me that a major network commentator recently falsified “news” of a combat experience. It was a short step to begin thinking of all the other “news” we receive daily and wonder whether it is being put forth to “entertain” us or inform us.

This issue hits pretty close to home when you realize that an international “news” magazine has published a false story about an event in the history of one of our colleagues, our airplane and our mission.

If you had heard of this “recovery” be assured it didn’t take place. A major mystery of the Cold War remains unsolved.

Don Cassidy, President

The Savannah Bomb-Again!

On 5 February 1958, B-47B 51-2349, Aircraft Commander (Association Member) Howard Richardson, collided with an F-86 near Savannah GA. In subsequent actions, Major Richardson earned the Distinguished Flying Cross jettisoning the nuclear weapon near the mouth of the Savannah River and then saving the lives of his crew by safely landing the aircraft.

A jettisoned weapon naturally caused great concern and maximum efforts were launched to recover it from the water. Through the years there have been renewed efforts to locate the bomb and Howard and his crew were occasionally approached by the media for assistance in telling the story. Despite all the effort, the bomb has never been located.

You can imagine the surprise some of us felt when an Air Force friend forwarded an article from a German News magazine announcing that the weapon had finally been recovered. There



A “Raven’s” Story

This series of stories are dedicated to the Officers and Airmen of the 301st Bomb Wing; 32nd, 352nd, 352rd and 419th Bomb Squadrons. The only wing in SAC to operate a fully functional EB-47E “Raven Manned” Electronic Warfare offensive jamming system!

The EB-47E was a special breed of cat that some of us were assigned to. Here’s what the “Web” has to say about it:

“The initial EB-47 conversion featured a set of 16 jammers in a removable cradle stored in the bomb bay, plus radar warning receivers and chaff dispensers. These were known as “Phase IV” or “Blue Cradle” EB-47Es. The more advanced “Phase V” EB-47E featured a pressurized module that was stowed in the bomb bay, with 13 jammers under control of two “Crows” or “Ravens”, one was an Officer and one was an NCO, (both being black birds, it was a reference to “black ops”, meaning classified operations). While the Phase IV jammer system was “broad-band”, blanketing a wide range of frequencies in hopes of jamming radars operating somewhere within that range, the Phase V jammer system could be selectively tuned to specific radar frequencies by the Crows, permitting much higher jammer power on the frequencies that did the most good. A radar jammer tends to announce its presence and location by the radio signals it emits, and EB-47E crews were perfectly aware that they were unlikely to return from an operational mission into the USSR. If they could cover for B-47 bombers, however, it would be worth the sacrifice. About 40 B-47Es were converted to EB-47Es that could not carry bombs, but did retain the tail turret”

I was lucky to be assigned as one of those EWOs in the capsule. Having joined the USAF in 1958, after Basic Training at Lackland, I was off to Electronics School at Keesler AFB. Electronic Counter Measures Technician School was 6 months long after which, I reported to the 301st Bomb Wing at Lockbourne AFB. I was a crew member trainee in the 32nd Bomb Squadron when my NCOIC took me into a hangar for my first up-close look at a B-47. I was very impressed. At school we were told what equipment we would be operating but we weren’t told about the operating environment, or the mission.

Well once the NCOIC showed me the crawlway and the “Capsule” my one and only “wise crack” was “what no windows”. That got me a two hour tour of duty walking around the big maintenance hangars. Thoroughly chastised, I was allowed to finish my familiarization tour.

I was given some manuals to study, all marked “TOP SECRET” which could only be read in the Operations office. After several months I qualified as a full time crew member and the fun began. Remember, everything we did was supposed to be SECRET. As a S/SGT I tried to go to the flight kitchen and order two inflight lunches for myself and the Officer (Raven-1) but the “cookie” knew the B-47 was a three man airplane. Until our 1st Sgt. had a “Heart to Heart” with the dining hall NCOIC this was always a circus.

Of course, as the junior birdman in the aircraft I was responsible for the “Honey Pail” in our capsule. It had to be emptied and cleaned after each flight. Did you ever try to slide a porta-john down that tiny crawlway?

I stayed in the 32nd BS until June of 1964 when our last bird went to the Boneyard. Since SAC was only accepting officers for EWO’s in B-52’s, I got out. Strange thing though, the B-52 used the same electronics we did, since the threat was still the same. I learned then not to try and decipher SAC’s logic.

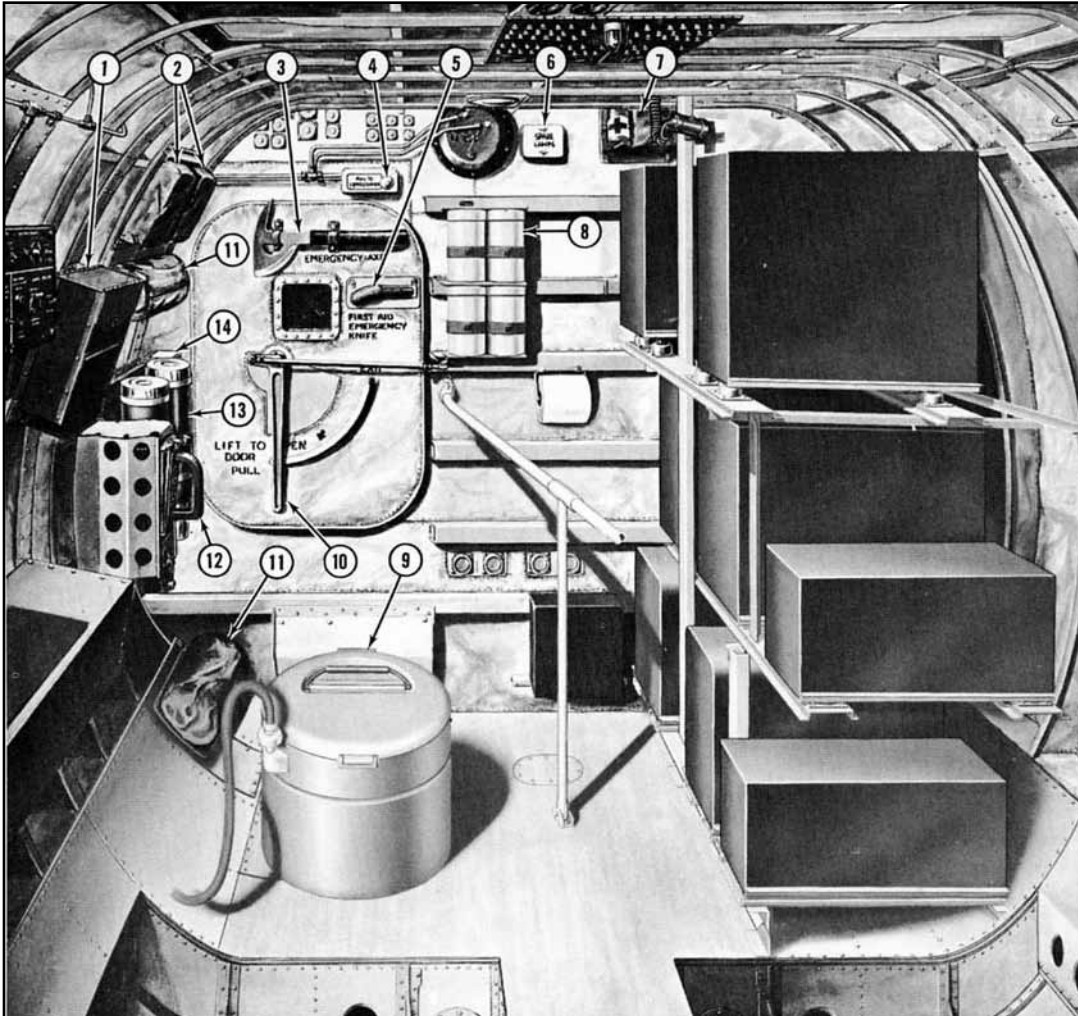
Dick Curran



For take offs and landings, the “Ravens” sat on the “steps” below and alongside the pilot and copilot.

Photos: Dick Curran

A "Raven" Story...cont.



Left, The interior of the Electronics Warfare capsule in the EB-47E. (from the dash one). This is the view facing forward with the entrance door from the crawlway in the upper left. The round object below the door is the "honey bucket" referenced by the author. Ejection seats were mounted over the openings in the floor (barely visible at the bottom) and faced rearward. It was not a place for claustrophobics. Above, the narrow crawlway that connected the cockpit with the capsule.

The Last Operational B-47s Wore Navy Blue

At its peak in 1959, there were over 1,500 B-47s assigned to SAC, but by the end of 1967 they had all been retired. A small number of weather B-47s continued to fly with MATS until 1969 when they too were retired. An RB-47H was bailed (i.e. loaned) to Autonetics and used as an avionics test bed until it was retired in 1976. However, after 1969 the only operational B-47s were assigned to the Navy. The acquisition of the B-47 by the Navy was not planned, but came after the Navy flew a Douglas/Tulsa modified EB-47E for ECM testing and training.

In 1957, Bell Laboratories contracted with Douglas/Tulsa to modify an Army (bailed) B-47 to test the vulnerability and the capability of the Nike Air Defense system to counter ECM. The aircraft was modified with a variety of ECM equipment, and in 1961 another B-47 was obtained to perform similar tests. The Navy borrowed these aircraft

when they were not used by the Army. The Navy was so pleased with the EB-47E that they acquired the two aircraft when the Army concluded its tests. The aircraft were designated Surface Missile System aircraft. The Air Force serial number 52-4100 was changed to Navy serial number 24100, and 52-4120 became 24120. The original managing agency was the Naval Ordnance and Surface Missile Systems. The primary mission of the aircraft was R&D aimed at improving shipboard and airborne radars. A secondary objective was that of ship crew training. Later NAVELEX, Navy Electronics Systems Command, assumed responsibility for the aircraft while FEWSG, Fleet Electronic Warfare Support Group, scheduled the aircraft.

Both of these aircraft were originally Blue Cradle aircraft

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assigned to the 376th BW at Lockbourne AFB, Ohio. These aircraft were heavily modified; the wing tanks were removed and replaced with large ECM pods. A forward-looking antenna pod was installed on each wing between the wing root and the inboard engine pylon. The aircraft were further equipped with standard ECM sets, one-of-a-kind equipment, improved communications, radar, addi-

carried a large variety of equipment developed for a specific R&D or training program.

The Navy contracted with Douglas to operate and maintain these aircraft. There were twelve crewmembers assigned to fly the Navy B-47s, who were nicknamed "The Over The Hill Gang" since they were mostly retired ex-Air Force B-47 crew members. In the Air Force Blue



SMS-4 was originally EB-47E 52-412 and served with the 376th BW at Lockbourne AFB. It was modified to the Blue Cradle configuration by Douglas Tulsa in 1954. Photo: McDonnell Douglas

tional navigational equipment, ECM receivers, upgraded chaff dispensers, an enlarged electrical system and various antennas installed all over the aircraft. At various times it

Cradle aircraft, the copilot operated what was essentially an automatic ECM jamming system. However, the variety and uniqueness of equipment on the SMS aircraft dictated that a Navigator /Electronics Warfare Officer operate it. Missions were flown from various Navy bases on the East and West coasts; Hickam AFB, Hawaii; Puerto Rico; and even Crete. David Hall, an SMS aircraft commander,

stated that they had to avoid operating the equipment if Russian intelligence trawlers were in the area to preclude them from gaining intelligence regarding the ECM capability of the fleet. As the programs progressed, specialized equipment and tactics were developed to simulate Russian capabilities and tactics, and to challenge naval ships with techniques other than those used by the Russians.

Near the end of its service with the Navy in 1977, the EB-47Es were sent to the Patuxent Naval Air Station, MD where they were assigned

to a composite squadron that included both A-4s and EA-4s. The mission of the squadron was to simulate air-



SMS-3 (formerly 52-410) and SMS-3 sit on the ramp at Pt. Mugu in May 1971. Both carry ECM pods on the wing tank pylons. Photo: Habermehl Collection



Soviet TU-16 shadows the U.S. Fleet.

Photo: via Sigmund Alexander



The two EB-47Es in formation with two A-4s during their days of simulating missile attacks on the fleet.

Photo: via Sigmund Alexander



The Kelt missile mounted on a Soviet bomber.

Photo: Sigmund Alexander

to-surface anti-ship attacks on the fleet. These would have been carried out in a war by Soviet Naval Aviation TU-16 Badgers and TU-95 Bears. The main targets of the missiles were American aircraft carriers. The EB-47E simulated the Russian bombers while the EA-4s simulated the launched missiles (Kelts). The radar on the EB-47E was not standard radar, but may have been modified to simulate the Russian YeN Puff Ball guidance radars. The EA-4s had two radars, one was a radar altimeter and the other was modified to simulate that of the terminal radar guidance of the missiles. The missiles in service at the time were AS-2 with radar guidance and the AS-5 Kelt with inertial and active radar guidance. Both missiles were supersonic, had a 200km range, and were capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads. The exercises that the EB-47Es and EA-4s carried out included three attack profiles: a long range standoff attack with the missile flying a high-

low profile; a close-in low attack with the missile flying a low profile; and a stand-off attack with the missile flying a low profile that terminated with a climb that ended with a diving attack on the target. These exercises were a fitting end to the long career of the EB-47Es with the Navy

Their retirement of the EB-47E was dictated by a lack of spares, airframe fatigue, and the need for a larger airframe. Though the Air Force had built over 2,000 B-47s, these were quickly scrapped following their retirement in 1966/67. When the Air Force began scrapping the Stratojets, the Navy made arrangements for a large stock of operational spares, including canned engines. These were sent to Douglas/Tulsa for storage and eventual use on the two Navy EB-47Es. Two airframes were also set aside at Davis-Monthan for spare parts. However, no one ever envisioned that the B-47 would continue to serve for another ten years, and eventually the two bone-yard aircraft were stripped clean. With no other aircraft available, substitute spares had to be found. In some cases new subcontractors had to be found to make parts, since many of the original B-47 sub-contractors had gone out of business. Douglas' stock of spares and the bone-yard airframes were close to being depleted when the Navy finally decided to retire the aircraft.

In the end, aircraft fatigue forced the retirement of these two venerable aircraft. Following the Milk Bottle modification program, the life of the B-47 wing was projected at 5,000 hours. By 1976 the two Navy EB-47Es had logged over 9,000 hours and after consultation with the Air Force and Boeing, NAVAIR wanted to immediately ground the aircraft. However, the immediate grounding of the B-47

Strategic Air and Space Museum

On June 1st, Dick Purdum and I had a very pleasant meeting with General Michael McGinnis, Executive Director of the Strategic Air & Space Museum near Omaha. The purpose of the meeting was to strengthen the Association's ties with the museum and check on the progress of the restoration of the B-47 on display there. Gen McGinnis is very appreciative of the Association's support in the past and looks forward to working with us in the future.

We saw what has been accomplished on the restoration to date and they are doing a terrific job. Those portions of the plane that have been finished look like it had just come out of the factory. Progress is slow because of the difficulty involved in moving the airplane into the restoration hangar. They have had to work on it "in place" among the exhibits and this has slowed them down but has not affected the quality of the work at all.



Association President Don Cassiday and SASM Museum Executive Director General Michael McGinnis standing in front of the SR-71 at the Museum's entrance. Photo: Dick Purdum

It was also nice to see that the B-47 Memorial Bricks have been relocated into a special section of the memorial plaza and all are grouped together. We can thank Dick Purdum for monitoring this project. I'd also remind you that memorial bricks are available. The Association has a deal that members who contribute \$500 will be charged \$100



Some of our members check out the memorial bricks at the SASM during the 2010 Reunion. The bricks have now been relocated to a better spot in this plaza and grouped together.

for the brick and the remaining dollars will be applied to the costs of restoration.

Gen McGinnis also showed us how the vote to change the name of the museum was going. Many of you have probably cast your ballot. It appears very likely that when the name is changed "SAC" will be restored to the title. Overall, the museum has some wonderful exhibits that will take you back to your days in SAC and bring fond memories of our service to the nation.

Special Kudos go to Dick Purdum who is our "On Scene Commander" when it comes to the SAC museum. He's been staying on top of things and the museum looks to him for input on the B-47 and our Association.

Don Cassiday



Our B-47E at SASM; still in restoration.

Photo: Editor

Give the gift that lasts forever.
Strategic Air & Space Museum
On Interstate 80 between Lincoln & Omaha Nebraska

Heritage Patio Walk Bricks

Preserve history and pay tribute to a loved one. The Heritage 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 Dick Curran, Treasurer, 219 Charles Court, Dandridge, TN 37725-3333. 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)



~You may copy this form if you do not wish to cut your newsletter~

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EB-47E 52-410 (Navy 24100, NUCAR 3) is shown being handed over to the crew at Pease AFB on 20 December 1977. McDonnell Douglas crew (l to r): David L. Hall, pilot; Ron N. Tuttle, co-pilot; Travis N. Blount, navigator. Although delivered in Navy/McD colors it would soon be in proper SAC markings with the 509th BW badge for display. After the base closed (1990) it was moved to Ellsworth AFB where it was eventually parted out and scrapped.

Photo: USAF

would have had a serious negative impact on Navy R&D and training. NAVAIR reluctantly agreed to a program that would allow the aircraft to fly another 600 hours or remain in service for another year. To ensure that the B-47s were safe, all 3,000 bolt holes from the wing roots to the inboard engine pylons had to be visually inspected and then further tested with dye penetrants or by electro fluxing. If any cracks were found, these holes were to be reamed and matching diameter bolts installed. When both of these aircraft were retired, each airframe had close to 10,000 hours on it. This was double what the projected life expectancy was following the Milk Bottle wing modification program. It is also a testimony to the outstanding maintenance, which was performed on the aircraft by McDonnell Douglas/ Tulsa from 1964-77.

The end of the line came on 1 October 1977 when NUCAR 4, 24120, was flown to Dyess AFB, TX by M/G H. E. Harris, SAC Chief of Staff and Rob Tuttle, instructor pilot. In his earlier years General Harris had been the commander of Dyess when B-47s were stationed there. This aircraft is now on display at the Dyess Linear Air Park and has the 96th BW insignia on the starboard side of the nose. On December 20, 24100, was flown to Pease AFB, NH in December with David Hall, the aircraft commander; Rob Tuttle, copilot; and Travis Blount, navigator/ electronic warfare officer. David Hall is a retired Air Force LtC, who amassed 4,836 hours in the B-47. Total airframe time on the aircraft was 9,991.5 hours. This aircraft became a gate guard at Pease AFB, New Hampshire with

the insignia of the 509th Bomb Wing on the right hand side of the nose. The 509th was the successor of the 509th Composite Group that dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This aircraft remained at Pease until the base was closed in 1990, when it was dismantled, and sent to the South Dakota Air and Space Museum at Box Elder (adjacent to Ellsworth AFB) where it languished until 1999. In that year, its major components were removed and sent to the Air Force Museum to restore an RB-47H. What remained of the aircraft was probably scrapped.

*Col. Sigmund "Alex" Alexander USAF (Ret.)
Past President, B-47 Stratojet Association*



The other EB-47E, 52-412, (Navy 24120, NUCAR) is seen here in Tulsa before departing for Dyess AFB on 1 October 1977. M/G Harris is seen waving from the cockpit. The airplane is still on display at the base.

Photo: McDonnell Douglas

Nouasseur Photos



Photos showing the last days at Nouasseur. Upper left, last B-47 flight out; upper right, Berbers in front of DC hangar; Lower right, last Dallas Hut going down; Center, last crew, from 384th BW, Little Rock AFB, headed to Greenham Common; Lower left, another Berber, with transportation.

Photos: via Sigmund Alexander



B-47E. "The Jet Streamers," lands at Hanscom AFB, Bedford MA on 25 January 1957, after setting a record from March AFB CA with a 3 hr. 46 min. flight. Pilot was Major Mont Smith.

Photo: United Press

Chanute Air Museum XB-47 Stratojet Quarterly Report (January 1, 2014 – March 31, 2014)

The following work activities were performed on the XB-47 (Tail # 46-0066) during the past three months.

March 19th - The replacement plywood shelf located to the left of the copilot's station was partially installed.

March 26th – Installation of the new plywood shelf was completed. The hardware, clamps and electrical cables were reinstalled. The general area was cleaned of debris.

Approximately 12 hours of work were performed during this Quarter by Richard Redden and Pete Troesch. Work activities were again extremely limited during the past three months due to very cold weather and numerous and heavy snow storms.

Pete Troesch

Saving The XB-47

A couple of months back, we received word that the Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum would be closing at the end of this year (2015). The Museum is located on the former Chanute AFB in Rantoul, IL. This is a wonderful museum, located in and around Grissom Hall which provided training for Minuteman Missile maintenance training up until the base's closure in 1993. The city, or Village, of Rantoul owns the facility and can no longer afford to provide space and utilities for the Museum without significantly raising the rent, which the Museum cannot bear.

This closure will be a big loss for the aviation community as a whole, but it is particularly significant for the B-47 contingent. The Chanute Museum has displayed the second XB-47 (46-0066) since it opened in 1994. For many years it sat outside on the base slowly deteriorating by exposure to the elements. Several years ago the airplane was moved over to the ramp area in front of Grissom Hall and a group of our members began the slow process of arresting its demise and restoring its appearance and equipment. As noted in the article above, Pete Troesch and crew have been faithful in their labors to keep the XB-47 as a viable display.

There were two XB-47s built at Seattle. The first (46-065) flew

This photo (right) shows the original shelf in its deteriorated state. The photo below shows the new shelf as it appeared when installed in



the XB-47. The guys do really good work and we appreciate it! They are a dedicated group.

*Photos:
PeteTroesch*

on December 17, 1947 and pioneered the Stratojet family as well as most every swept-wing jet aircraft that came afterward. 46-066 flew eight months later (21 July 1948) and joined the small test fleet. Both aircraft were flown extensively but soon served their purpose in proving the revolutionary concepts incorporated into the airframe. The USAF eventually cut 065 up and mounted the fuselage on a trailer for recruiting purposes. 066 was sent to Chanute AFB to be used as a maintenance trainer. Some of you may remember seeing her there in your early Air Force days.

By all measures the XB-47 should be in the National Air & Space Museum (NASM), a part of the Smithsonian Museum organization. It is that significant! However, the most important task at the present is to preserve her at any location. The airplane belongs to the National Museum of the USAF (NMUSAF) and they will have final say as to the location. There have been a number of suggestions for homes for the XB but it will require a major investment to dismantle and move it.

Your letter to the Director of the NMUSAF might be helpful. Or, if you have connections with a capable museum that could provide a good home, you might start the ball rolling there. If you know anyone who could sway the powers-that-be at the NASM please contact them. The mission of the B-47 Stratojet Association is to preserve the legacy of our airplane and the XB is an essential part of that history.

Editor

Boeing Wind Tunnel Blows Strong for Nearly 70 Years

*By Eric Olson & Mike Lombardi
The Boeing Company*

On Dec. 17, 1947, the 44th anniversary of the Wright brothers' historic first flight of a powered aircraft at Kitty Hawk, N.C., another flight took place at Seattle's Boeing Field that ranks as one of the most important in aviation. Boeing's B-47 Stratojet bomber flew for the first time that day -- and changed the shape of jet aircraft.

The B-47 was America's, and arguably the world's, first large swept-wing jet. Seemingly forgotten in history, the Stratojet's revolutionary design was the first to pair swept wings with jet engines suspended from the wings in podded nacelles. Discovered in the Boeing High Speed Wind Tunnel in 1945, this basic design is still the model for all jets built today by Boeing, Airbus, and others.

For Boeing, the journey to become the pioneer of large swept-wing jets began in April 1939 when the company hired famed test pilot Edmund T. "Eddie" Allen to head its new Flight and Research organization. A respected scientist, Allen was accorded the freedom to do whatever was necessary to advance Boeing's flight research efforts -- and that included building a private wind tunnel. At the time, aircraft manufacturers did not have their own wind tunnels and the fierce competition to use the few operated by NACA (forerunner of NASA) and a handful of universities resulted in Boeing falling behind the competition.

Allen championed the idea of a company-owned wind tunnel, capable of near-transonic (approaching the speed of sound) speeds. The estimated cost of \$1 million represented a huge risk for Boeing at the time. But it also was a great opportunity and in August 1941 Boeing President, Phil Johnson authorized construction of a high-speed wind tunnel capable of speeds of Mach .9 (625 mph, or 1,000 kilometers per hour).

The B-47 was the first full design tested in the new wind tunnel. The swept-wing concept had first come to Boeing in May 1945 by way of a letter sent from Germany by the company's leading aerodynamicist, George Schairer, who was serving on Air Force Gen. "Hap" Arnold's Scientific Advisory Group. That group was tasked with securing

German aircraft and rocket research.

Boeing engineers subsequently saw dramatic results during wind tunnel tests of Schairer's swept-wing data, but they also discovered that the wings had to remain "clean" to achieve the high-speed benefits. And this presented a problem since the standard design for multi-engine airplanes at the time was to mount the engines on the wings. As he puzzled over the problem during a train ride back from Wright Field, Ohio (today known as Wright-Patterson AFB), Boeing Chief Engineer Ed Wells came up with the idea of engine pods mounted off the wings. The concept was tested in the Boeing wind tunnel by mounting model engine nacelles on the end of a pole (the "broomstick" test) and moving the nacelles around the wing until the optimal position was discovered -- forward and below the wing.

These discoveries all came together in the Boeing wind tunnel as the optimal design for a subsonic jet -- and resulted in the revolutionary XB-47 that rolled out of Boeing Plant 2 in September 1947 -- only two years after Schairer sent his note from Germany.

Just as building their own low-speed wind tunnel was critical to the success of the Wright brothers, so too was the wind tunnel key to success for Boeing and the B-47. Improved over the years, the now-transonic wind tunnel has tested some of the best-known airplanes in aviation history and continues its work today with jets such as the 737 MAX. Boeing was fortunate that a leader arrived at the right time to set a course for success by not only pioneering the organization that continues today as Boeing Test & Evaluation, but also insisting the company build its own wind tunnel. The Edmund T. Allen Memorial Aeronautical Laboratories are named in his honor.



*Boeing engineers test their new airplane in the company wind tunnel.
Photo: Boeing*

This One Got Away



The photo above shows the remains of EB-47E 52-410 as it appeared when auctioned for salvage on 4 April 2015. This is the airplane that had flown for the USAF and the Navy and was once displayed at Pease AFB (see article beginning page 5). After the Pease closure the airplane was dismantled and moved to Ellsworth AFB for the future South Dakota Air and Space Museum which was never able to restore it for display. The airframe eventually became a donor for the RB-47H restoration at the National Museum of the USAF. This one is gone forever as the auction required the components to be completely destroyed. The photo is an illustration of why we are concerned about the preservation of existing B-47s, especially the XB-47 at the present moment (see article on page 12). This one was destroyed, one was wiped out on the fire dump at Wright-Patterson AFB, and another languishes in the desert at Edwards AFB. We understand that preservation is difficult and expensive, but some museums have not been good stewards of the important symbols of the Cold War (which you won) and the years you sacrificed for the freedom of this country.

B-47 Merchandise

The internet has a remarkable array of B-47 products at a site called [cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com) and we encourage you to consider these if you are looking for B-47 items. The Association no longer stocks items and we suggest you take a look at this website. Use this link to go directly to the page with products featuring the Association logo:

www.cafepress.com/dd/76848703

Searching the site using “b-47” will also bring up many other products featuring your favorite airplane.

Publications

A new book/magazine from Key Publishing, *Cold War Warriors*, has a nice article on B-47 Reflex operations. It is a “Special Flypast Publication.” The piece runs 10 pages and has some nice color photos and drawings. There are also some tables that detail bases and aircraft inventories. If you can no longer find it at Barnes & Noble, try online at:

<http://shop.keypublishing.com>

Then click on “Books” and in the search box that appears type “Cold War Warriors.” By the way, the cover shown below is the American edition with the F-100. The one

on the website is the British edition showing the English Electric Lightning. The contents are the same.





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) _____

(Spouses First Name) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: (____) _____ Fax:(____) _____ E-mail: _____

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 59 \$300
age 60-64 \$250
age 65-69 \$200
age 70-74 \$150
age 75-79 \$100
age 80 or over \$50

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Send application and check to:

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

Web Site: <http://b-47.com>

If additional space is needed please use the back of this sheet.

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B-47E 51-7082 of the 380th BW at Plattsburg AFB seen here in 1957. This aircraft was destroyed in a mid-air collision with an F-102 over Canada on 17 December 1959. It served first with the 22nd BW, March AFB after being delivered by Boeing Wichita in September of 1953. It moved to the 380th in January 1956 and then to the 384th BW at Little Rock AFB in June of 1958. The Stratojet was with the 384th at the time of the crash.

Photo: Domke/Habermehl Collection

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