



The Statojet Newsletter

Summer 2015 Volume 44

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



From The President's Desk

I hung my uniform up more than 35 years ago. You might think it was time to lose interest in what our successors in AF blue are doing to the force we took such pride in. Most of you have read of the immense controversy over our new weapon systems and abandoning old ones. I served at the Pentagon as we brought in airplanes like the A-10, F-15 and F-16 which have been incredibly successful over the thirty years since. I naturally look askance when they talk of retiring and replacing them. But I realize today's defense world is hugely different than ours. Strategic Bombardment for example, hardly resembles that which we knew although at least some of us long for the clear-cut mission and commitment we experienced during the Cold War.

When I get particularly down in the dumps over what "they" are doing to my Air Force, I remember what my Dad told me many years ago. He said "Son, old folks have always felt the world was going to hell in a handbasket but somehow we manage to get through it." Being an amateur historian, I could recite a large number of examples of this phenomenon.

When I get another e-mail from a buddy telling me that, as the song goes "The force is shot to hell," I try to take it with a grain of salt and remember that the fellows wearing Air Force blue today are just as dedicated to defending our nation as you and I were. They're probably a whole lot better educated than we were and merit our faith in them. Let's give them credit for that commitment and cheer them on.

On a more mundane subject, Dick Curran, our Secretary/Treasurer, has been working hard with the arrangements for our 2016 reunion in Washington DC. It promises to be one of our best ever and I hope each and every one of you is making plans now to attend and enjoy. See you in Washington.

Don Cassidy

B-47 Stratojet Association Officers

President - Don Cassidy
1402 West Downer, Aurora, IL 60506
630-859-1922
colcass@sbcglobal.net

Vice President - Bob Griffiths
303 Double Eagle Road, Burgaw, NC 28425-8559
910-300-3015
bobnsara@ec.rr.com

Secretary/Treasurer - Dick Curran
219 Charles Court
Dandridge TN 37725-3333
865-940-1020
dickcurran@hotmail.com

Membership Chairman - Dick Purdum
13310 South 26th Ave., Bellevue, NE 68123-1909
402-291-5247
DickPurdum@cox.net

Newsletter Editor & Chaplain - Mike Habermehl
P. O. Box 1144, Brenham, TX 77834-1144
979-836-9427
cmhs@sbcglobal.net

Board of Governors

Sigmund Alexander, Ex-Officio President
12110 Los Cerdos Dr., San Antonio, TX 78233-5361
210-653-5361
sigmundalexander@sbcglobal.net

Andy Labosky
707 Briarwood Rd., Derby, KS 67037-2114
316-788-5277
andrew.labosky@sbcglobal.net

Augustine (Gus) Letto
12307 Crested Moss Road NE
Albuquerque, NM 87122-4306
505-821-8740
lettog@att.net

Lester (Bud) Brakowiecki
8228 Crossoak Way, Orangeville CA 95662-2946
916-723-0797
len.brackett35@charter.net

Errol S. Hoberman
6441 Avenida De Galvez, Navarre FL 32566-8911
850-939-5231
sac-ewo@att.net

Dan Diamond, Web Master
508 Miller Drive, Belton MO 64012-2927
816-838-3142
dandiamond@live.com

Website: B-47.com

Roll Call Of Honor

Lloyd D. Archer of Warner Robins GA, 27 December 2014

Gene Bunch of El Dorado Hills CA, 1 January 2015

William J. Bury of Cardiff CA, 24 April 2015

Paul J. Christensen of Las Vegas NV, 8 March 2015

John R. Cosbey of Willowbrook IL, 1 May 2015

Jack D. Earle of Odessa TX, 28 February 2014

Darwin Goehring of Paragould AR, 1 December 2013

John P. (Jack) Lee of Shreveport LA, 18 November 2014

James L. Neff of Marietta GA, 21 June 2015

Pasquale A. Nolleti of Aberdeen MD, 8 December 2013

John O'Neill, Sr. of Wichita KS, 30 June 2015

Terry B. Puccini of Kerrville TX, 22 February 2015

Donal B. Shea of Bow NH, 3 September 2014

Don Ulring of San Antonio TX, 1 October 2014

Virgil Vess of Charlottesville VA, 13 March 2015

Freeman J. Weedman of La Vista NE, 3 December 2013

Important Reminder

- **Pay your dues for 2015** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- 2016 Reunion - Washington DC area
- Send stories, letters, memories, & photos to Editor, cmhs@sbcglobal.net, PO Box 1144, Brenham TX 77834

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Fitz Fulton, A B-47 and A Thunderstorm

*Fitzhugh L. "Fitz" Fulton passed away 4 February 2015 at the age of 89. He was a long-time test-pilot who amassed over 16,000 hours in many different types of airplanes: B-47, B-52, B-58, XB-43, XB-70, YF-12 and others. He served 23 years in the Army Air Corps/USAF flying 200 missions in the Berlin Airlift and 55 combat missions in Korea in the B-26. He graduated from the USAF Test Pilot's School in 1952. In 1966, Fitz went to work for NASA as a test pilot and his duties included flying the Boeing 747 that carried the Space Shuttle **Enterprise** for its early test flights. The following piece was excerpted from an article on the Web by Robert L. Mosley.*

One late summer afternoon in 1961 he (Fitz, ed.) and I were at Carswell AFB in Ft Worth, Texas and were going back to Edwards AFB, Calif. that night in an old B-47, six engine jet bomber, we used there at the Flight Test Center. At that time, that particular plane had had its bomb bay doors removed which gave it the appearance that there was only half of an airplane thru the midsection of the plane. We were using it, at the Test Center, to drop the prototypes of the B-70 bomber ejection seats to see how the parachutes on the seats performed prior to the seats actually being installed in the B-70. The seats wouldn't quite fit in the B-47 bombay with the doors closed but they would fit with the doors removed so that is what they had done, i.e., they had removed the bombay doors. With the doors removed the plane rumbled and buffeted when it flew and they had limited its airspeed to 250 knots indicated but when you got it up to around 37,000 feet you had a true airspeed of close to 400 knots so it was OK to use for a cross country flight if you needed it. It just grumbled about it.

I have no recollection of what Fitz and I were doing at Ft. Worth but when we were getting ready to come back to Edwards that evening, we checked the weather and it was an awful forecast; terrible thunderstorms, severe turbulence, and up to one inch hail on the route of flight. I said, "Fitz, let's just wait and go in the morning because with the 2 hour time difference we can leave at 7 AM in the morning and be home by 8 AM Edwards time and no one will ever know the difference". He said, "No, we are going and we can contact Star Gazer" for radar vectors around the thunderstorms". Star Gazer was some kind of military (I think) rinky dink radar system they had in operation around the country at that time that was supposed to help in situations like this but my experience with Star Gazer had always been bad. Now, it was only Fitz and I aboard that six engine jet bomber. The plane had a good radar set in it, but it was controlled from the Navigator/Bombardier position up in the nose but we had no Navigator/Bombardier up there to operate it.

So, off we go. The B-47 had a fighter type cockpit and canopy. He was in command of the plane but I was in the front seat and he was in the back seat. I guess he had flown it out to Texas and I was flying it back. We were about 30 minutes out and we got into just what had been forecast. We called Star Gazer and, just like the other times I had needed them, there was no reply (when you really needed them, the atmospheric conditions were always so bad that you couldn't make contact).

We were all over the sky. Sitting out there in a fighter type canopy, I wasn't missing a thing; lightning, hail and EXTREME turbulence. I had my seat belt cinched down as tight as I could get it and it took both hands to control the wheel. Even then I had my right elbow stuffed up under the side of the canopy ledge to keep my arms from flopping. It was so rough that I could not take my hands off of the control column. So, it was left to Fitz who was in the back seat, to work the 6 throttles. We were easily anywhere between 4000 feet above our assigned altitude to 4000 below it.

Once that slick B-47 started down hill it would go through altitude like you wouldn't believe, but just as bad or worse was that it would get up near the stall point just as fast going uphill because we were trying to hold 250 knots and thus you did not have to lose very much airspeed on those uphill excursions before stall became a concern. But, like I said, going down hill, 250 knots was just a number we passed thru. I don't remember what speed we may have hit but I became concerned as to what those downhill runs were doing to the fuselage. They had limited the indicated airspeed on that thing to 250 knots for some reason. So, besides wondering if we were even going to maintain control of the old girl, I was wondering if that thing might not just break into two parts. It was under these conditions that Fitz, worrying about a midair collision, since we were not maintaining our assigned altitude, said, "I think we should let someone know where we are". Now Fitz was my boss but my answer was, "Hell Fitz I wouldn't worry about that, there are no other damn fools up here but you and I" and I sincerely meant it.

Obviously we made it. In later years I read this account of the adventure to Fitz and he conceded that he remembered it well ---just the way I told it. He did not go so far, however, as to say it was an error in judgment on our part. He didn't have to.

Bob Mosley

...See photo of the Stratojet they were flying on page 6

A Story Of A B-47 Co-Pilot

My basic pilot training was in the T-33 at Bryan AB TX during 1955. The academic program seemed easy but for some reason my grades fell in the middle of the class, probably from lack of study. Even with the average academic grades, my flight commander, Maj. Lintene, was impressed with my flying abilities and assured me of an F-86 assignment upon graduation, with one requirement, I must sign for an extra year of service above the minimum requirement. Apparently that was to make it profitable for the Air Force to let me live fire in advanced training. At that point a month still remained before graduation. I told him that my father had just suffered from a heart attack and that since I was needed at home, I had to decline the F-86 assignment.

A week later he offered me an instructor pilot position in the wing upon graduating as he knew my home was within a few hours drive from Bryan. The next day he brought the Wing Commander, Col. Gunn, to operations to meet/welcome me as a new member of the wing when I graduated. Later in the conversation Col. Gunn mentioned that I would be required to sign that extra year in order to attend instructor pilot school. My response was the same as before and Col. Gunn became noticeably angry. In fact his exact words were, "I will send you to SAC as a personnel officer and you will never fly another airplane." Upon graduation, that is exactly what he did.

In September I reported for duty at Mountain Home AFB ID and while reporting in, the First Sargent asked if I knew what my duty assignment was. I stated that I was a personnel officer and did not know what one's duty was. He laughed and stated that I would be one of the first pilots to fly the B-47 and NOT be triple-rated. Almost immediately I was sent to Wichita AFB for co-pilot training in the B-47.

Upon returning to Mountain Home I was assigned to the ready crew of Capt. Willard Clark and Capt. Bob Millett. Capt. Clark was a fairly new aircraft commander and obviously not familiar with all the regulations. For instance, he would permit me to make a couple of touch-and-go landings after each mission (which only IPs could do).

I had made some 40 or 50 T&Gs when the obviously upset Ops. Officer, Maj Chisholm, called us into his office. During his outburst for disobeying regulations Capt. Clark stated that I was pretty good from the back seat and would put me up against some IPs in the back seat. Maj. Chisholm took him up on that and had an IP fly with me to

see what I could do.

After that flight, not only did I have to fly with my crew, but was required to fly co-pilot for most of the staff pilots in the wing. One flight of remembrance was with a Major that was in charge of the simulator. After the normal mission planning and briefing, L/C Weir (our Sqd. CO) invited me into his office to state that this Major doesn't fly very often and that I should watch him really close. I thought this was a rather strange thing to say to a 2/Lt. Everything was okay during the night flight until he entered the pattern. He cut the base leg short and overflew the tower twice. At that point I told him that I needed a night landing and would like to try one (all a lie). He stated, "I have heard about your flying and if I don't get it down on the third one you can have it." He got it down. Sometime later, after flying with the staff pilots, I received a spot promotion to 1/Lt.

Maj. Chisholm just never seemed to warm up to a wise-acre 1/Lt since he was from the old brown shoe era. I started to plan how to move on to greener pastures. Soon a volunteer assignment came in for a full B-47 crew to go into B-52 training at Castle AFB. I jumped at the chance but my crew did not want to go. I approached a radar navigator, Capt. Holmes, and he immediately said "yes." No aircraft commander seemed to want a B-52 assignment. Then I thought of Maj Frank Willard who was away at some school. That was the answer. I volunteered Maj. Willard which made up a full crew. He sure was surprised when he returned from school and found an assignment to the B-52.

The three of us reported to Castle where we picked up the remainder of a crew. After Castle we were assigned to Fairchild AFB in the summer of 1957. Being a mostly B-47 crew assigned to a B-36 wing that was receiving B-52s, made us the bottom of the operations officer's list. We received all the Friday night late flights and early Monday morning flights. Our wing commander was killed on T/O when the elevator trim was wired backwards and Col. Hillman was assigned as commander. He liked our crew immediately and flew with us often. He flew as aircraft commander with Maj. Willard in the bunk or IP seat.

In early 1958 Fairchild was tasked to send six bombers to compete in the RAF Bombing Competition out of Brize Norton. The wing staff wanted only previous B-36 crews to compete but Col. Hillman insisted that our crew would compete. In May of 1958 we lead the flight of six over

Canada, Greenland, Ireland and into Brize, unrefueled.

Each crew flew three night missions, competing against a host of Valiant and Victor aircraft. They had Doppler and we did not. We won the over-all crew trophies and returned to Fairchild with spot promotions all around (me to Capt.). In October we competed in the SAC Bombing Competition and won over-all crew again. Although no crew had ever won two international competitions (especially in one year) General Powers thought he should not give double spot promotions for fear of what the Army and Navy would think. Instead he awarded us all a Distinguished Flying Cross.

Besides the two spot promotions I received and a DFC, I was also recognized as the youngest pilot to every fly the B-47 and, at that time, the youngest to fly the B-52. Another pilot has challenged me as being the youngest pilot in the B-47 and, at this point I am not certain, but SAC did pick me, so that's that.

Carl Fleece, Lt. Col. USAF/Ret.



Free World's Top Crew

Fairchild air force base's top overall crew for the entire strategic air command is shown above upon learning they scored top points in the 10th annual competition in California. They were scheduled to return home today. Left to right are Capt. Earl E. Fleece, 23, pilot, N6718 Stevens; Maj. Donald L. Holmes, 34, radar observer, W2219 Houston; Capt. Ray A. Elliott, 40, aircraft commander, 8705 Sycamore, Fairchild village; Capt. Leonard J. Siegert, 25, navigator, W3118 Bismark; Capt. Roland R. Fox, 26, electronic counter measures operator, N6616 Post, and M/Sgt. Howard A. Most, 30, tail gunner, 9028 Carolina, Fairchild village. (AP wirephoto.)

SAC Is Back!

On June 25, 2015, an announcement was made by the former Strategic Air & Space Museum that it's new name will be the **Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum**. After months seeking input from museum visitors, community groups and leaders and online, the sentiment was overwhelmingly (92%) in favor of bringing back "SAC" as part of the name.

Throughout the entire process, the museum received thousands of votes and comments. "The Museum staff and Board of Directors agree it is important to pay tribute to SAC's history for generations of Americans here in Nebraska and from outside our local communities," said Dr. Michael McGinnis. "In addition, we are an air and space museum that offers guests and youth STEM educational experiences related to the physics of air and space flight. The new



name reflects the Museum's vision to offer guests the opportunity to learn about the history of Strategic Air Command and to experience the science of air and space flight."

The Museum's status as a non-profit entity will not change. Once legal work is completed to officially change its name, the Museum will begin replacing signage and develop a new website. The Museum is currently planning

to unveil the Museum's new logo sometime in Spring 2016.

Yes!!!

Fitz...continued from page 3



The JB-47E that Fitz Fulton and Bob Mosley flew into the thunderstorm on their way back to Edwards AFB from Carswell AFB. The flight obviously made a lasting impression on both of them!

Photo:

Welcome New Members!

Arthur B. Aslesen, Pomona CA

Elmer A. Billips, Charlotte NC

Thomas W. Franco, Reading PA

Carl J. Genova, Henderson NV

Don (Knut) R. Knutson, Phoenix AZ

Don Krahel, St. Clairsville OH

Herbert L. Lewis, Vacaville CA



A Peculiar Deployment

Most of us remember the Cuban Missile Crisis and the tension it brought to us in the world of the B-47. Our crew was on alert at Forbes AFB when President Kennedy announced on TV that the Russians were playing fast and loose with their missiles. Our natural assumption was that we'd be joined by the rest of the wing and remain on alert for some time. Little did we know.

Before the day was over, our crew was relieved of alert duty and sent home to pack for a deployment. A short time before the missile crisis, SAC had begun exploring deploying its forces to various bases and airports around the country. This was to complicate the enemy's targeting problem by giving them more targets to hit than just the normal number of SAC bases. A few crews from our wing were actually deployed to places like New Orleans to test the concept. But, to our knowledge no decision had been made to that point.

We were told that, in keeping with this new plan, our crew and two others would be going to Andrews AFB to stand alert. A short distance out of the national capitol, it appeared to us that we were being deployed into a major target area but as good SAC crewmen, we didn't question the issue.

Our wives, however, were less than pleased with our deployment orders which required that we take a Class A uniform and have our flight suits clean and pressed. Yes, pressed! Anyone who's ever worn a flight suit recognizes the futility of pressing them, but it was an order and by golly, our wives did the job for us.

Early the next morning we were on our way to Andrews AFB with a sketchy idea of what was going to be involved. We landed from the south and in doing so, overflowed the Andrews Airways antenna farm. Directly south of the runway, it was a huge field of antennas that controlled much of our national communications in those days. Shortly after landing we got on the phone to our control room and pointed out that, in the event of a takeoff to the south, we'd normally be dropping our ATO racks right in the middle of the antenna farm. We also suggested that the area to the north was heavily built up and also unsuitable for dropping ATO racks. Shortly thereafter, we were advised that racks should be retained until we got to the Chesapeake Bay and dropped there. Interestingly, nothing was said about the extra fuel such a maneuver would require and its potential impact on our mission.

We were soon settled into barracks which had been made available near the flightline and we were briefed on the ground rules of pulling alert at Andrews. First, since the flightline was not as secure as a SAC base we had to maintain certain top secret documents on our person and that meant we had to remain armed at all times. We were informed that we could dress in our flight suits as we would while on alert back home but that if we wanted to visit the Officers Club, we had to be in Class A uniforms – still armed of course. Finally, we were told that, unlike the rest of SAC, we just might have some practice alerts.

Sure enough, we were soon treated to the klaxon and a dash for our airplanes. It was like any other alert except that there was a large staff car in the wings observing our dash. When we finished the alert we were treated to a crew formation in front of the airplane. We and our crew chiefs stood at attention as General LeMay, then Chief of Staff, drove by to observe us. During the week or so that we were there, this became a fairly common occurrence. Occasionally, the general would be accompanied by "suits" who we assumed were congressmen. Clearly our unstated mission was to be shown off to the guys that paid the bills.

In our spare time, though, we had the fun of watching Andrews AFB personnel practice for the President's takeoff and arrival. It seems that President Kennedy had just received a new model of Air Force One. The new bird had the president's quarters in the end opposite its predecessor. This small detail required innumerable dry runs with Marine One delivering a mock president who ran up the stairs before they closed the bird and taxied off. Soon, they turned around and delivered the stand-in back to Marine One. Over and over, they did this for our amusement and it made the days pass more quickly. When we thought of not having to put up with such folderol, we were pleased to have a "real mission" with a "real" airplane.

Of course we watched the crisis play out on TV and heaved a huge sigh of relief when we were told we could return to Forbes and "normal" duty. Our "after action reports" were consistent in suggesting that there really were better places to stand alert than Andrews. Since there were no more "Missile Crises" we never knew if they took our suggestions to heart.

Don Cassidy

A Tale Of Three Noses

At last year's reunion in Ft. Walton Beach we spent a very cool morning touring the Air Force Armament Museum next to Eglin AFB. The centerpiece for the aircraft collection (as far as we were concerned) was RB-47H 53-4296. It is always good to see a Stratojet preserved but this airplane has an unusual appearance and an even more unusual history. A lot of folks wonder about this recce platform with the "bomber nose."

53-4296 started down the assembly line at Boeing's Wichita plant on 7 June 1955. It rolled out on 16 June 1955 and was delivered to the 55th SRW at Forbes on 16 September of that same year. It served faithfully for the next fifteen years from operating locations around the world. The 55th moved to Offutt in the Spring of 1967 and 4296 followed until it was delivered to the "Boneyard" on a snowy (in Omaha at least) 29 December 1967.

That's when things started getting weird. After the airplane reached Tucson it received a new lease on life. 4296 was selected as a testbed airframe for avionics research by



The RB-47H taxiing at LAX with its new nose.

Photo: Habermehl Collection.

the Autonetics Division of Rockwell International and it would be based at Los Angeles International Airport.

The next time we see the old girl she has had a nose job. The Rockwell folks grafted an F-111 radome



Above, 4296 is bid farewell by officers of the 55th SRW at Offutt AFB on 29 December 1967. It arrived at Davis-Monthan AFB (below) later that day but it wasn't destined for storage. Right, the unusual nose profile after the airplane was altered for tests by Rockwell.

Photos: USAF



on the nose and equipped her with a sophisticated suite of advanced electronics. She carried antenna pods out where the drop tanks once were and she picked up a number of other antennas on her belly.

4296 served well for the next 10 years when she was once again retired. Her new home would be the Air Force Armaments Museum but it seemed no one wanted her with that “needle nose.”

There was a need for a donor aircraft and, by that time, B-47 airframes were getting few and far between including those in Museums. One was found, however, and

B-47E 51-5251 was the lucky airplane.

5251 was delivered to the 301st BW at Barksdale AFB on 31 July 1953 from the factory in Wichita. In August 1955 it was reassigned to the 97th BW at Biggs AFB in El Paso. After IRAN at Lockheed Marietta the next station was Plattsburg with the 380th BW. After cycling through the “Arrowhead” program at Tulsa the next stop was at the 321st BW, McCoy AFB. The last assignment was with the 384th BW at Little Rock before heading to Davis Monthan in July 1964.

Unlike most of the airframes at D-M, 5251 got a reprieve when it's nose was selected to be grafted onto 4296. The section of fuselage was separated from the donor and flown by USAF transport to it's new home on the pointy end of an RB-47H.

So, the next time you see 53-4296 you are looking at a B-47E (depending at which end you start), a much altered avionics testbed, and an RB-47H. It sorta reminds you of Johnny Cash's old Cadillac song, “One Piece At A Time” doesn't it?

Editor

A Tale.....continued on page 10



Left, the nose from 51-5251 on a trailer ready for a flight from Richards-Gebaur AFB to Eglin. Below, the old girl is seen in the weeds at Eglin looking a little worse for wear. The new nose has been added (its third nose) and a lot of the access doors and panels are open.



A Tale...continued from Page 9



Above, close-up of the nose shows the faint reminder of the past, "5251" is barely visible. The airplane was externally restored and is well-preserved even if it is in the harsh coastal climate. Right, Raimonde Aubrey with 53-4296 at the 2014 Reunion. This view shows the final configuration of the airplane. The black paint on the nose is evidently an attempt to remind us of the RB-47H's original look. We do appreciate the Air Force Armament Museum giving it a good home

Photos: Habermehl Collection



Chanute Air Museum XB-47 Stratojet 2nd Qtr. Report

April 1, 2015 – June 30, 2015

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

April 1st – Star and bars in the insignia on the left side of the fuselage were painted white.

April 15th – Background of the insignia on the left side of the fuselage was painted blue.

April 29th – Touch up of the newly painted star and bars insignia was completed. Inserted screws in the new floor panel in the cockpit located on the right side of the Copilot's station. Identified and tagged 6 brake assemblies of the XB-47 that were found in a room adjoining the hangar.

June 3rd – Served as tour guides, provided information and answered questions concerning the XB-47 for 13 air-

craft restoration volunteers from the Yankee Air Museum in Belleville, MI.

Approximately 36 hours of work were performed during this quarter by Bob Benuska, Richard Redden and Pete Troesch.

NOTE: Due to the upcoming closure of the Octave Chanute Air Museum in December, we will not undertake any major projects in our preservation work on the XB-47. However, we will continue and complete work of smaller projects with the hope the Stratojet will be relocated to another museum. Relocation would give visitors the opportunity in the future to view and appreciate the historical significance of this aircraft and its contribution to aviation.

Pete Troesch

...See photos of XB-47 crew's work on the next page



XB-47 Has A New Home

The Air Force Flight Test Museum (AFFTM) at Edwards AFB has announced that it will be the new home for the XB-47 46-066. The news was greeted by great relief from those who were afraid the airplane would be salvaged after the Chanute Museum closes at the end of the year.

The airplane is still not out of the woods, however. The AFFTM must still move the airplane to Edwards. That is a long and expensive move although other preserved B-47s have been moved over the years. The WB-47E that was once at the New England Air Museum in Connecticut was moved to Hill AFB. The RB-47H that now resides at the National Museum of the United States Air Force was moved from Salina KS and fully restored. EB-47E 52-410

was moved from Pease AFB to a site just off Ellsworth AFB for a museum that never put it back together. It eventually became a donor for the NMUSAF RB-47H. The WB-47E that was on poles at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds was moved to the Kansas Aviation Museum in Wichita. Most recently, the JB-47E that had once been the NMUSAF display aircraft and then allowed to languish in the elements was moved to National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque NM.

The AFFTM estimates that it will take about \$100,000 for the move if they get a lot of volunteer labor and equipment. They are up against a deadline and have been told that the XB must be moved by 31 December 2015. They are seeking donations to help with the move and we know they be would happy to hear from our members who will help.



We recently received a request from John Manias for help in locating folks who knew his dad. John E. Manias was a navigator in the 98th BW at Lincoln AFB and flew with the crew of Horace Benson, pilot, and Bob Hathcock, copilot. John also remembers that one of his dad's close friends was Bill Polhemus, a fellow navigator. His dad passed away this year and John is hoping to write a book on his life in SAC. If you can help him with his project contact him at:

*John G. Manias
8640 167th Lane NW
Ramsey, MN 55303
763-427-4800
animalhouse53@msn.com*

The photo was sent by John showing the "City of Lincoln," a B-47E, but we cannot determine the serial number. The crew includes his dad.

Newsletter Feedback

We received unusually strong feedback from the Spring Newsletter and we want to share some of these with you.

That Was One Of Our Birds...

As a life member of the B-47 Stratojet Association, everything stops at my house when the Newsletter arrives until I have read it through, cover to cover. It is extremely rare to read an article or see a picture concerning the 384th Bomb Wing or Little Rock AFB. Imagine my surprise to see on page 11 of the Spring 2015, Volume 43, a photograph of a flight crew from the 384th leaving Nouasseur going to Greenham Common! The date isn't given, but I am certain that this happened a year or two before I joined the wing.

I had graduated from Pilot Training in class 58-O in June of 1958. I was in the top 10% of my class and got my choice assignment to Day Fighters, the F-86/F-100, pipeline to an assignment in Germany. Well, when I finished F-86 Transition and Fighter Gunnery at Williams AFB, Chandler AZ, General Curtis LeMay sucked up my entire class and the next three classes of fighter pilots and put us in the back seat of B-47s! I went from Williams AFB to Stead AFB for Winter Survival Training and on to McConnell AFB for B-47 Ground School. Then I was sent to the 70th Wing at Little Rock AFB for the flying part of the B-47 training. I then was assigned to the 384th Bomb Wing. This was July of 1959. I was married August 11, 1959.

This brings me to the back cover of this Spring issue. Low and behold! A photograph of B-47 51-7082! This airplane came to the 384th in June of 1958, the month I graduated from pilot training! The caption under the picture says this airplane was destroyed by a mid-air collision with a F-102 over Canada 17 December 1959. I know something about this collision!

The copilot on that flight was a good friend, Ted Adams. He had just recently married also, and his crew had recently become Combat Ready.

Ted and his wife, Hylan, lived only a block from my wife and I in Capehart housing at Little Rock AFB. One evening, we all four went to a dog breeder and we each bought a dachshund puppy. Ted and Hylan bought the runt of the litter, a little black female that they named DVdog. They talked the breeder down from \$50 to \$35. Sonja and I chose the pick of the litter, a brown male that we named Rusty, but we had to pay the full \$100.

When the collision occurred, we heard that at least two of the four men in 51-7082 had successfully bailed out, but they were in a remote part of Canada in the winter at night. No one knew who had made it out safely. Hylan was really distraught because both of her parents had recently died in an aircraft accident!

After four days, they finally recovered the AC and copilot from the forest in Canada and brought them back home to Little Rock. I got to talk with Ted. He said when the F-102 broke off his attack on the #2 B-47, it collided with their tail section because they were out of position! Ted had been facing aft manning the fire control system. His AC instantly jettisoned the canopy and ejected! Ted attempted to turn his seat around to the front, but it jammed half-way around. The B-47 was in a flat spin, so Ted unstrapped from the seat and pushed his way up and out. He landed on his stomach on the fuselage just aft of the cockpit. He did a hard push-up, and jerked his D-ring. His chute opened, he swung once, and he landed beside the burning B-47.

Ted requested to get out, and he was released. He, Hylan and DVdog moved home to New York city. Later, in 1960, Hylan and DVdog were on board the American Airlines Lockheed Electra that ran into a flock of seagulls on takeoff and crashed in the bay killing all on board! I have lost contact with Ted. I don't know whatever happened to him!

I later upgraded to AC, got my own crew, and eventually upgraded to Lead Crew. I remained at Little Rock AFB until July of 1964, and then transferred to Pease AFB and the 509th Bomb Wing. When they phased out the B-47s at Pease, I went to C-141s at Dover AFB for one year. Then I got paid vacation to SEA! I flew B-66s with the 355th TAC Fighter Wing out of Takhli Royal Thai AFB in Thailand. We flew up to North Vietnam supporting the F-105s with electronic jamming. When I finished that year, I went to C-9As at Scott AFB, and I flew Medical Air Evac for seven years until I retired in January 1975.

I went to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth TX and pastored three different churches until 1999. Then I moved to Bradenton FL and began flying as a missionary pilot to Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahama Islands until I lost my medical. Now I am fully retired, teach a Sunday School class and play with grandkids, and great grandkids!

Art McAninch

Savannah...

After reading the article about his having to jettison his weapon back in 1958, Association member Howard Richardson called to suggest that a significant point be clarified. The Mark 15 weapon Howard was forced to jettison as a result of a mid-air collision was not armed for nuclear burst. Howard still has the receipt for the weapon he received and it was in a safe, non-nuclear condition. No danger of a nuclear burst ever existed. Howard stated that "if it had been nuclear I wouldn't have dropped it."

Don Cassidy

Savannah and EB-47Es

I happened to be stationed at Hunter AFB when the incident occurred. And since I spent a lot of my free time out on the

water, I was quite familiar with the water from the mouth of the river and the surrounding waterways. So when I saw, a number of months ago when the article announcing the discovery of the bomb was making the rounds on the internet, I naturally read the article with great interest. But then I saw the photo presuming to show a diver near the front of the so-called bomb. Two things were immediately suspicious. No. 1, you can't begin to see that far in the muddy waters of the Savannah River. You would be lucky to see 2 feet! And No. 2, The nose of the bomb didn't look like any nuclear bomb I ever saw. So I was highly skeptical of the announcement. At first, I did nothing to try and verify, but finally just for the heck of it, I checked out Snopes and lo and behold...they did indeed have a response that indicated the story was false. I'm convinced the bomb is buried in mud; not in the river at all. There were miles and miles of very deep mud in that area which is probably why the weapon was never found and never will be found by a casual swimmer.

Just a note regarding the location of EW birds in SAC. For a short time, perhaps it was during an interim period when SAC hadn't made up its mind about how to deploy the B-47 with the ECM pod, we had a squadron of B-47's equipped with the pod inserted in the bomb bay there at Hunter AFB. (This was in the 50's when we had two combat wings of B-47's there at Hunter. In short, there was a lot of planes out on the ramp when both wings were there and not deployed overseas.) I was assigned, as a co-pilot, to that squadron for a short time...perhaps a few months...and like the article states, the two ECM crewmembers would sit on the steps near the co-pilot and pilot for takeoff and landing and then crawl through the tunnel back to their stations in the pod once we were airborne and at a safe altitude. As a crewmember, I was interested in what the rest of the crew did. So I got a chance to crawl back to the pod and look at their accommodations. I was impressed with all the gear they had at their disposal. But the pod was not a good place to be if you were in any way, claustrophobic! I do recall going to the training sessions we had regarding tactical deployment. That is, we studied routing and what we would do when we got within

effective range of the radars of interest. And, if I recall correctly, our tactic was to establish a racetrack pattern in stand-off mode, in order to provide maximum effect that would allow our bombers to penetrate the outer defenses. Obviously, since this was more than 60 years ago, my memory could be faulty. I presume the classification of those old war orders is no longer relevant since the plane no longer exists in the Air Force inventory.

Joe Waldroff

XB-47



Just got the Stratojet Newsletter and noticed the article on the XB-47 at Chanute AFB. I was at Chanute to attend a class called Aircraft Electrical Repairmen. Our class photo was in front of XB-47, tail number 46-0066! I am on the front row, fourth from the left (have glasses on).

After graduation I was sent Forbes AFB to work with RB-47E's. I enjoyed working on the B-47.

Hope the plane gets saved.

William Shay

ATO Memories

A question about ATO use on RB-47Es prompted a discussion between your Association President, Board Member Gus Letto and this editor, and the result was several stories that need to be in print.

First, Gus remembers this take-off when he was on RB-47Es in the 26th SRW out of Lockbourne AFB.

On our first rocket takeoff, we were directed to fly to Lake Erie and drop our rack on an uninhabited bird sanctuary on an island in the lake. We approached very low and as we crossed the beach we spotted a pleasure craft near the beach and he shouldn't have been in the area. We

aborted the drop and turned back to the beach just as the boat was departing with all speed. That must have been a sight for the guy, enjoying a peaceful day on the lake and here comes a six-engine jet at 500 feet headed straight for him. We made the drop on the second pass. That was the first and last time I ever dropped an ATO rack. On all the subsequent missions, we brought the racks back home with us. On our EWO mission we were to drop the rack as soon as the bottles were burned out and we were clear of the field boundary. No thought was given as to who or what might be in the drop zone. If someone got killed by a falling rack, it just meant that they would die 15 minutes earlier than everyone else near the base.

ATO...continued on page 14

ATO...continued from page 13

Now, this from Don Cassidy.

I recall one of our practice ATO takeoffs. We fired the ATO (we had 30 bottles) and it gave you a great boost, then we were to fly over to Smoky Hill Bomb Range where we were supposed to drop the rack. Ours hung up for some reason and after two tries the tower had us bring it in a "little closer" so they could put the binoculars on the latches on the racks. We did that twice and on the second go, I got out of my seat and stood up so I could really get leverage on the release. That did it but the tower came back with "That did it, it's released. Oooh oooh, it's heading right toward us." The trajectory of that thing was wild and it ended up hitting the ground twenty or thirty yards from the tower.

The following was found in the oral history archive at the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell AFB. Author is unknown.

We got rolling down the runway and I fired the ATO, and the IP looked over his shoulder and said, "I've got smoke," and I said, "I've got no kick in the ass." But by then we were beyond refusal. And the other wind commander, a very good friend of mine, was in the tower that night, and all he saw as I went down the runway was the smoke and a little glitter, and he knew the ATO hadn't fired properly because there wasn't the stream of fire coming out of it. I had a bunch of bad bottles. And he saw me disappear onto the overrun and he saw the dust coming up off the end of the runway. He just shut his eyes, and then, he opened them and he could still see the airplane flying out there about fifteen feet off the desert. I had gotten it in the air in the overrun out through the desert and gotten clear enough to get the gear up. And when the desert rose, I was able to climb about just as much as the ground was rising. And I was forever on top of that ground watching the sagebrush go by until finally we were able to pick up enough air speed to work up the flaps and get on our way. That was enough for him. He left the tower, went home, had three drinks and went to bed, and said, "I'll never watch another night take-off as long as I live."



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

The October 2015 issue of *Flight Journal* has an interesting piece on early SAC days and the transition into the B-47. Author Walt Boyne does a good job of describing those times and he even confesses some early sins committed in his copilot days. In describing the Unit Simulated Combat Mission (USCM) he writes of some of the thoughts that went through their minds. "I can remember distinctly the sobering thought that while our mission might be successful, we might return to find Castle Air Force Base--and our families--destroyed. We had no idea of Soviet capability, but knew for sure that the Tupolev Tu-4s could get through our defenses on one-way missions, if nothing else."

<http://www.flightjournal.com>





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B- 47 Stratojet Association

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Any other comments you may care to add: _____

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B-47E 5 3-2167 served almost its entire career with the 2nd BW. It was delivered on 26 October 1956 from the Douglas plant in Tulsa. In February 1963 it was transferred to the 98th BW at Lincoln and then in October 1965 she was sent to the 9th SAW at Mountain Home before heading for the boneyard in February 1966

Photo: Habermehl Collection

2016 Reunion: Washington DC

