



Newsletter

Winter 2016 Volume 48

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

From The President's Desk

We have had some great reunions over the past twenty years, but that we held in the Washington DC area last October was one of our very best. Dick Curran, our Secretary/Treasurer, planned and executed it in wonderful fashion and 160 of us enjoyed his efforts.

We had some wonderful tours of Arlington National Cemetery, the National Mall, Mt Vernon, and The Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum near Dulles. Sightseeing in our National Capital was great fun. Though, as always, the highlight of the reunion was the fellowship with dear old friends.

We were joined by the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association which held its reunion in conjunction with ours. Many of them were already B-47 Association members. Others we met for the first time and some have joined us. It was pleasant to talk about our experiences serving our nation in the B-47.



A highlight was the laying of a wreath at the magnificent Air Force Memorial on the fringe of Arlington Cemetery. General John Shaud, a member of our association and I laid the wreath with the assistance of a member of the Air Force Honor Guard and an Air Force Band bugler played taps. It was a fitting honor for the 478 men who gave their lives flying the B-47.

General Shaud also spoke at the final banquet and reminded us of the importance of our service and the pride we can take in it. Finally, we presented Lorraine Purdum, wife of Dick Purdum, our membership chair, with a letter from the SAC Museum advising her that the Association had made a significant contribution to their B-47 Restoration fund in appreciation for her tireless support of the Association, especially her production of SAC Shield mints for every reunion.

On the business side of the ledger, we made a few minor by-law changes for clarity and due to expenses, we gave ourselves the leeway to produce only two newsletters per year, if financially necessary. We will be holding our 2018 reunion in Omaha where our first was held. Dick Purdum is already planning the event and, Good Lord willing, I hope I'll see all of you there.

From The President...Continued on Page 14

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Roll Call Of Honor

Howard O. Cottrell of Poca WV, 19 May 2016

Arthur L. (Bud) Cross of Panama City FL, 8 July 2016

Elmer L. Earp of N. Myrtle Beach SC, 15 December 2014

Richard I. Grant of Euless TX, 5 August 2015

Ronald G. Harris of Beebe AR, 1 June 2016

Richard S. Lambert of Atlanta GA, 4 February 2015

Henry R. Laramie of Sedalia MO, 1 May 2016

Kenneth L. Lyon of Dallas TX, 31 August 2016

Don R. (Tiny) Malm of Austin TX, 1 September 2016

Charles J. Marino of Papillion NE, 23 July 2016

John J. O'Shaugnessy of Macon GA, 15 June 2016

Gerald R. (Jerry) Peacock of Peoria IL, 10 December 2016

Earl (Duke) Sparks of White Lake MI, 21 January 2016

*******Attention All Snowbirds*******

If you have a winter or alternate address, please contact:
Dick Curran/Secretary/Treasurer

Note: The United States Post Office will not forward our newsletter.

I can add a "Snowbird Address" to our database if you let me know.

If you move please send me your new address.

Important Reminder

- **Pay your dues for 2017** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- **2018 Reunion - Omaha NE - Date to be determined**
- **Send stories, letters, memories, & photos to Editor,** cmhs@sbcglobal.net, PO Box 1144, Brenham TX 77834

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@sbcglobal.net.

~20th Anniversary Reunion Scrapbook~

















Minutes of the Board of Governor's Meeting B-47 Stratojet Association 28 September 2016, Herndon VA

President: Don Cassiday, President – Bob Griffiths, Vice-President – Dick Curran, Secretary/Treasurer – Dick Purdum, Membership Chairman – Mike Habermehl, Newsletter Editor/Chaplain – Board of Governors: Lester “Bud” Brakowiecki, Errol Hoberman, Andy Labosky, Augustine “Gus” Letto

1. The Board of Governors meeting convened at 1830 hrs.
2. The Minutes of the 30 October 2014 Board of Governor's (BoG) Meeting held in Ft. Walton Beach FL were approved unanimously.
3. Reunion Briefing: Dick Curran briefed all plans for the 2016 reunion have been progressing smoothly. This was the first time we conducted a joint reunion, with the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association (91st SRWA). He further stated both the Reunion Brat and the staff of the Westin Dulles Hotel had done an outstanding job in setting up this reunion. Preregistration was currently at 160 members, spouses and guests.
4. Financial Report: Dick Curran briefed as of 9/28/16 the Association had \$26,867.25 in the checking account. This amount will be further reduced once all final bills for the reunion are paid.
5. Website: Dan Diamond is managing the Web Page in memory of his father, Jim Diamond. Currently all bills are paid. The software and license fee cost is about \$300.00 per year.
6. B-47 Newsletter: Mike Habermehl presented his views on the content and publication quality of the Newsletter, which the BoG found to be outstanding. We have been using the same publisher since 2003 and their quality has increased greatly over the years. The BoG discussed cost per edition and frequency, and by (BoG) vote, it was decided to produce the Newsletter twice a year at a minimum. The average cost to produce and mail the Newsletter is \$2.50 per copy, with an annual bulk mailing permit fee of \$215.00.
7. By-laws: Three (3) changes were submitted to modify the By-Laws.

Article V. Officers and Committees, paragraph C-4, the requirement for “a minimum of three (3) Newsletter Editions per year” was deleted.

Article V, Officers and Committees, paragraph D-3, was amended to read “Ex-Officio Members: All past presidents of the Association will be considered Ex-Officio members of the

Board of Governors and have full voting privileges.”

Article VI. Meetings, paragraph 2, was amended to read “Board of Governors (BoG) Meetings will be held during the Annual Reunion. During any odd number year(s) BoG meetings may be held if deemed necessary by the President. These meetings may be accomplished “electronically” if required.”

8. Membership Report: Dick Purdum briefed we have 822 total members, which is an increase of 41 since 30 October 2014. We gained 41 members from the 40th Bomb Wing Association but in the past two (2) years we lost 51 members who are deceased.

9. 2018 Stratojet Association Reunion: The BoG voted (unanimously) to hold our 2018 Reunion in Omaha NE during the month of September. Dick and Lorraine Purdum will be our hosts again. The exact date will be decided once all college football schedules have been published to ensure we have a decent hotel without being forced to pay a “premium weekend price” if we choose a football weekend.

10. Integration with other Veteran Organizations (i.e., SAC Bomb Wings): The BoG decided to keep our offer open to any other group wishing to join our Association. However, there are no plans for active recruitment of any other group(s).

11. Open discussion by BoG members: Dick Purdum made a motion, and it was seconded by Gus Letto, to dedicate a memorial brick at the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum to read: Mike Habermehl, Editor/Chaplain, B-47 Association. The motion was approved unanimously. Dick Curran was directed to send a check in the amount of \$500.00 to the SAC Museum as soon as possible.

12. 2017-2018 Membership Directory: The BoG authorized the publication of the Membership Directory in May 2017.

13. Errol Hoberman made a motion to grant Honorary Membership to Jack Kovacs of Fairborn OH. Errol explained that Jack has been a long-time docent at the USAF Museum and assisted in the restoration of the RB-47H on display there. He also ensures the weeds are removed from around the SAC, B-47 and other SAC-related memorials in the Museum's Memorial Garden. Motion seconded by Andy Labosky, Gus Letto and Dick Curran. The vote was unanimous.

14. Nomination of Officers: Andy Labosky made a motion to renew the current Officers of the Association for two (2) more years. It was seconded by Errol Hoberman. The vote was unanimous and, President Don Cassiday announced the re-appointment at the Bi-Annual Business Meeting on 29 September 2016. The membership concurred unanimously. The officers are: President – Don Cassiday, Vice-President – Bob Griffiths, Secretary/Treasurer – Dick Curran, Membership Chairman – Dick Purdum, Newsletter Editor/Chaplain – Mike Habermehl.

Minutes...continued on page 14

XB-47, 46-066, Update

46-066 was moved from Chanut in a five day trip and arrived at The Air Force Flight Test Museum, Edwards AFB on 19 September 2016. Our faithful Pete Troesch who labored many hours over the old bird watched carefully as his beloved Stratojet was disassembled by WorldWide Aircraft Recovery (world renown movers of large aircraft), lifted aboard trucks and carried away. Pete sent photos to keep us in the loop. We also have a few photos of the airplane after it arrived in California. Those were supplied by William Simone, who has written a fine article on the recovery effort. It was published in the January 2017 issue of *Warbirds International*.

We will be doing a major feature on the airplane and it's trip to the new home in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.



46-066 on display at the museum at Chanute. Photo: William Simone



Wing disassembly begins at Chanute. Photo: Pete Troesch



The vertical and horizontal stabilizers have been removed before the beginning of wing disassembly. Photo: Pete Troesch



The milk bottle bolts (on the left) and the pop bottle bolts (on the right) were removed from the wings before they could be lifted from the fuselage. Both of those bolts became infamous in B-47 history as they became the focus of numerous structural mods over the years.

Photo: Pete Troesch



066 arrives at Edwards AFB. This was quite a load and must have suprised many a motorist. We wonder how many of them knew what they were seeing?

Photo: Wiliam Simone

Three Martini Takeoff

By Lou Malucci

My crew, Blackie and Bill, following the end of the duty day, were at the bar having an after-work drink. This was not a routine we pursued on a regular basis. In fact, there were not very many opportunities since you spend one week each month on alert underground in a concrete shelter wearing your .38 pistol under your arm and six .38 bullets in your zippered pocket. Not to mention flying two or three 7 hour missions per week, landing at about 2 AM, home by about 3:30. But on this day we were in the mood and so stopped at the O' Club to have a Schlitz draft beer or two at happy hour prices.

We each had a couple when the operations officer, second in command of the squadron, Hamilton "Hambone" Gilbert walked into the bar and said he needed a crew to do a test on a B-47. On behalf of his crew, A/C Blackie protested that we had been drinking. We were far short of drunk but you did not perform in a high precision aircraft with a belly and brain full of alcohol. If something were to happen and there be indications of alcohol in the aftermath, careers would be in jeopardy.

However, Ham, whose skinflint frame, gaunt cheeks and dark shadowed eyes gave testimony to the caffeine and nicotine diet upon which he subsisted, was very persuasive. No job in the Air Force, let alone SAC, was more a pressure cooker than this responsibility. Now this bird could not go on alert as was scheduled without certification that its brakes were fully operable after some maintenance work on them. Informing SAC headquarters you were not able to fulfill your full complement of alert birds was like telling your wife you spent the night with some other woman.

So with great reluctance, Blackie, Bill and I motored out to the flight line, but instead of putting on our flight suits, parachutes and helmets, we preceded directly from the club in our shade 505, summer uniform with short sleeve shirts. However, sans pith helmet or swagger stick, now an optional part of the shade 505 uniform as were short pants and knee socks. The only equipment we took on board the plane was a simple headset, in lieu of the "brain-bucket," i.e. helmet.

We climbed the entrance ladder and began the engine start checklist. After all six were running at idle speed, we moved out of the chocks towards the 12,500 foot runway. We completed the before takeoff checklist after which Blackie released the brakes and advanced the throttles to takeoff power. After some relatively short distance, without warning, the plane unexpectedly lifted off the ground. The aircraft hadn't been refueled yet and with almost no fuel on board, takeoff speed was probably around 75 or 80 knots for a gross weight of about 78,000. We had inadvertently reached the takeoff speed for that weight and simply lifted off the runway.

Blackie immediately called for a closed traffic pattern and

entered the downwind leg and at the same time called the control tower requesting clearance for landing.

The tower operator replied that it wasn't aware of giving us clearance for take off. Blackie responded, "You didn't." And added, "We'll talk about it on the ground." The tower then gave clearance to land and we did.

What happened next is beyond recall but it would not take much imagination about the inquiry that followed and the subsequent embarrassment by all concerned. Fortunately, the navigator did not have to attend! Whew! The crew went on to excel so other than some red faces, there were no permanent repercussions. And perhaps yet another lesson learned after being on the brink of a career ending fiasco... or worse.

Lou Malucci is the author of a book, "B-47 Stratojet: Nuclear Deterrent to the Nuclear Threat of the Cold War."

Available at Amazon, Barnes and Noble and many museums, and from the author as well.

The Reluctant Mechanic

SWITCHED WHEEL BEARINGS

By Wilton Strickland, LtCol, USAF (Ret)

One day in '59 at Lincoln AFB, NE, before I was commissioned via OCS and while I was a maintenance crew chief on B-47E's, I saw lots of activity around the aft main landing gear of the aircraft parked next to mine on the ramp and began to hear lots of big-hammer banging on a wheel and tire assembly the gang/crew was trying to install. I had not seen it yet, but I already knew what the problem was. The wheel outer bearings are very slightly smaller in diameter than the inner bearings; the tire shop would sometimes accidentally interchange them, and there was no way that anybody was ever going to get the wheel to slip onto the axle with the smaller bearing on the inside. After hearing the banging for way too long, I decided to walk into a nearby hanger for a restroom break, and stopped by to "super-vise" the clowns trying to do the impossible.

I walked up and asked, "Anybody check the numbers on the bearings? You know the outer bearing is slightly smaller than the inner bearing, don't you? If the inner and outer bearings are switched, no amount of hammering will ever get the wheel on. With the bearings in their right positions, the wheel will slip right on."

Their reply was, "Oh, Strick, you're always worried about something; don't worry about it, we'll get it on."

The Reluctant...continued on page 14

From The President...Continued from page 1

I conclude by assuring you that, despite our obviously falling numbers, we remain committed to our mission of preserving the memory of our great airplane. I ask you all to do what you can do to further that mission. Let your family, friends and all know that you served the cause of freedom and that when you are gone you hope they won't forget and will do their part to sustain the freedom we passed to them.

Minutes...continued from page 11

Dick Curran made the motion to retain the same Board of Governors and it was seconded by Dick Purdum. The Board of Directors unanimously approved the Board of Governors for the next two (2) years: Lester "Bud" Brakowiecki, Errol Hoberman, Andy Labosky, Augustine "Gus" Letto, Sigmund "Alex" Alexander, Dan Diamond, Web Page Director).

15. Don Cassiday announced that General McGinnis of the SAC & Aerospace Museum had cooperated with the organization and provided a Letter of Appreciation for Lorraine Purdum expressing appreciation for her years of service to the Association and the \$400 contribution the Board sent to the SAC & Aerospace Museum in her honor.

16. The 2016 Board of Governors Meeting was concluded at 2100 hrs, 28 September 2016.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dick Curran
Secretary/Treasurer*

The Reluctant...continued from page 13

As I walked away, I said, "I'm not worried about it - just trying to remind you that you'll never get it on with the bearings switched."

'Bout 20 minutes later, I came walking back past the bunch of clowns and noticed that the wheel was in place, and they were "buttoning it up." I asked, "What'd you do?"

Reply: "Checked the bearing numbers; they were switched. 'Swapped 'em, and it slipped right on."

'Nuff said.



The only B-47 seen in the Udvar-Hazy National Air & Space Museum was on the back of this t-shirt, and that's a shame. While no one would argue that the Boeing Dash 80 (in the background) belongs, it was the B-47 that gave birth to that airplane with its swept-wings and under-wing podded engines. That great Museum will always be incomplete without a Stratojet!
Photo: Gus Letto

Special Thanks!

Reunion photographs for this issue of the Newsletter were provided by Gus Letto, Alex Alexander, Craig Dubishar, your editor and our official Reunion Photographer, Bill Koherly. Thank you, gentlemen!

Publications



Alfred J. (Joe) D'Amario has had a wonderful life in the air and in the USAF and he tells the story very well in his memoirs, ***Hangar Flying***. His path to the B-47 was unusual but he spent five years flying the bird. You will enjoy this humorous and wide-ranging history of a boy who wanted to fly from his very early days. He flew fighters in Korea and wound up as an IP in B-52s, punctuated by an ejection from a burning B-52 over Thule during a Chrome Dome mission. He ends the story with this, "But the Cold War we won. And I am proud, very proud that I was a part of that victory." The book is 271 pages in either soft (\$15.49) or hard cover (\$25.99). Available from Amazon or the author at ajdamario@yahoo.com.



Send Application and Check to:

B- 47 Stratojet Association

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(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:

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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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This early Boeing artwork, used in advertising, illustrates an XB-47 executing an ATO takeoff. The first Stratojets had internal racks for 18 bottles, before the split racks and "Horsecollar" racks were developed.
Photo: courtesy Boeing Historical Archive

~Renew Your Membership Today~

