



The Stratojet Newsletter

July 2012 Volume 38

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

See You In Tucson, 1-3 November 2012

Reunion Agenda, page 5



These photos are painful to see. The guillotine smashes through the fuselage of RB-47E 52-727. The airplane was delivered to the 90th SRW at Forbes AFB on 25 June 1954. It went through modernization at Douglas Tulsa in the *Oil Town* (1955) and *Black Beauty* (1957) programs and had the upper longeron mod in the *Rose Bud* program (1960). On 19 December 1957, 727 was transferred to the 70th SRW at Little Rock AFB and served there until being sent to storage on 22 September 1961 at Davis-Monthan AFB. The RB-47Es were the first Stratojets sent to storage in large numbers and the first to be salvaged (or reclaimed). Once the machinery and smelters started attacking the B-47 fleet it was gone in fairly short order, even though it seemed that all of Tucson was covered by Stratojets in the mid-1960s. When we visit the boneyard during this year's reunion, there will be many airplanes but alas, no B-47s except for the one at the Pima Air Museum. Fortunately for the world, the B-47 did her job and kept the peace for the first decade and a half of the Cold War. Bombers will never again be built in those numbers and we will never see the likes of those days again. Come to Tucson and relive the memories.

Photo: USAF

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Roll Call of Honor

Ronald D. Blenis, Melbourne FL, passed 25 May 2012.

Darrell K. Calkins, Ft. Meyers FL, no date.

Arthur L. Cross, Panama City FL, no date.

Joe L. Franz, Nashville TN, passed away 10 May 2011.

James H. Grady, London AR, passed away 15 April 2012

Audrey C. Phenev, Castle Rock CO, died 4 May 2011.

Robert B. Witzel, Wichita KS, died 18 Feb 2011.

John Wojahn, Sedro Woolley WA, died Feb 2012.

Back Issue Newsletters

Our very capable webmaster, Jim Diamond, has now posted all of the "old" newsletters on the b-47.com website. For those of you wanting to complete a set or are looking for a particular issue, check it out. They are all there in pdf format. Some back issues are available from the editor in limited supply. Not all are available.

Important Reminders

- **Pay your dues for 2012** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- Send dues to address at bottom of page 11.
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Dick Curran.
- Send newsletter articles, photos, news about members, etc. to Mike Habermehl, Editor.
- Plan on attending the Reunion in Tucson, 1-3 November.

Invite a friend to join!

The B-47 Stratojet Newsletter is published three times each year. It is intended solely for the enjoyment, camaraderie, and enlightenment of the membership of the B-47 Stratojet Association. Requests to use or reprint any portion of the contents should be directed to the Editor. Contributions of material to the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor, B-47 Stratojet Newsletter, P. O. Box 1144, Brenham, TX 77834-1144, cmhs@sbcglobal.net.

Association Website - <http://www.b-47.com>

***Text On This Page Restricted To Members Of
The B-47 Stratojet Association***

*Minutes of
The B-47 Stratojet Association
Board of Governor's Meeting,
Wichita, KS, 28 June 2012*



Left to right, Jim Diamond, "Alex" Alexander, Mike Habermehl, Dick Purdum, Andy Labosky work on Association business for the upcoming years.

The President commended the officers of the B-47 Association for the outstanding work performed by them over the years. The President also wanted to recognize the noble character of the membership and their loyalty to the Association.

The Officers and Board Members approved the selection of Richard Curran as the new Secretary/Treasurer replacing Bob Griffiths. The Officers and Board would like to express their thanks to Bob for his outstanding service. The change of office will take place at the convenience of Bob Griffiths. Alex will notify both Dick and Bob of the action taken. The finances of the Association will be closely monitored by the officers of the association, as the only income earned presently is from dues paying members, profits from reunions, and BX sales. Lifetime memberships are yielding low or zero interest. Fortunately the Association has a capital reserve to draw on. The Newsletter Editor will provide those present at the meeting with the annual cost for publishing and mailing the newsletter. It was agreed that an electronic newsletter will become the principle means to distribute the newsletter; this will result in a considerable saving in printing and mailing costs. Those who do not have e-mail or desire a hard copy will continue to receive the newsletter by mail. Mike and Jim will work out the details involving posting of the newsletter on the website and sending out the letter in PDF form to the membership. An acrylic plaque will be presented to Bill Clark and David Hitchcock in recognition of their service to the association.

Andy Labosky proposed giving a number of B-47 hats and

T-shirts to Pete Troesch and crew, in recognition for their work on the XB-47. The proposal was approved. Dick Purdum will contact George Brierley and make arrangements to have the hats and T-shirts sent to Pete.

Dick Purdum attended the SAC reunion. Three hundred people attended. It was a good program and Peaches Jensen was recognized for her efforts in making the SAC memorial a reality. Dick will send Mike Habermehl pictures of Peaches for the newsletter.

The Strategic Air and Space Museum is

having trouble attracting visitors and has reduced the staff to cut costs. Andy suggested putting a plug for the museum in the newsletter and web page, it was agreed to by those present.

The 40th BW will hold a reunion in September. The 40th may dissolve as a result of declining membership, and may ask to merge with the B-47 Association. Approval was given to accept the members of the 40th BW to the B-47 Association. It was agreed that the Association would honor 40th BW lifetime members as Association lifetime members. Jim Diamond will provide the Association with results of the September 40th BW meeting.

Andy Labosky donated a number of B-47 items to the Strategic and Space Museum. Dick Purdum will deliver the items to the museum and consult the museum staff as to whether they would be amenable to the addition of another display case for B-47 memorabilia.

The Executive Committee agreed to the creation of two new Association Officers; Chaplain: Mike Habermehl and Webmaster: Jim Diamond. The Executive Committee has changed the membership of the Board of Governors. Ken Tollin, John Daily, and Wen Painter are no longer members of the Board and are now emeritus. The Executive Committee wishes to thank them for their past service. New members of the Board are Gus Letto and Bob Griffiths.

It was agreed that the B-47 accidents will be posted on the web site with a disclaimer.

Dan Cassidy has agreed to assume the position of Vice President of the Association. *(continued next page)*

Dick Purdum will make an inquiry to the B-52 Association of the possibility of merging with them if the B-47 Association is not viable at some distant future date.

Dick Purdum will create a bar graph of funds on hand and funds needed to restore the SAC Museum B-47

Dick Purdum will furnish attendance numbers to the various reunions.

Dick Purdum will coordinate with Bill Clark regarding the number of rooms contracted for and when they can be released back to the hotel if the number of attendees contracted for is not being met. The Officers will ask Bill to as to whether the

performance of the Reunion Brat was satisfactory and whether she should be used for the next reunion.

Eglin/Destin was selected to be the site of the next reunion if an onsite coordinator be found. Fall back: Washington, DC.

Approval was given to put the Dash-1 on the web site.

Approval was given to Jim Daimond to sell 16x21 framed B-47 pictures as a fund raiser.

Sigmund "Alex" Alexander
President

REUNION AGENDA

Thursday November 1st

2:00pm ~ Registration and Hospitality Room Opens

3:00pm-5:00pm ~ Board Meeting

5:30pm-7:00pm Hospitality/Happy Hour

7:00pm-9:00pm ~ Reception Dinner/ Mexican Buffet

Live Mariachi Band!!!

Friday November 2nd

6:00am -- 9:30am ~ Hot Am

American Breakfast Buffet~Cactus Rose Restaurant

9:00am ~ Hospitality Room Opens

9:00am-4:00pm ~ Pima Air & Space Museum/Boneyard

(optional tour)

Transportation departs from the DoubleTree/Hilton/Reid Park Hotel & travels through the Boneyard and the outdoor areas of the Air Museum, Docent on board.

Open Evening

Saturday November 3rd

6:00am -- 9:30am ~ Hot American Breakfast Buffet~ Cactus Rose Restaurant

9:00am ~ Hospitality Room Opens

9:00am-9:45am ~ Business Meeting

10:00am – 11:45 am Crew Chiefs/A&E Open Forum (all welcome)

Dr. Dave Neel, A3C –B-47's SAC, CDR USN (ret), AEDO, NAVAIR/USN

10:00am-4:00pm ~ Sonora Desert Museum

(Optional Tour-some walking required)

Transportation departs from Hotel

1:00 pm ~ B-47 Power Point Presentation by Sigmund "Alex" Alexander followed by open forum/discussion (all welcome)

Evening Events

5:30pm - 6:30pm ~ Cocktails

6:30pm-8:00pm ~ Evening sit-down Dinner Honor/Color Guard, Invocation

Speaker: Jim Obenauf

9:00pm - 11:30pm ~ Dance ~ Live Entertainment by the Big Band Sextet

Sunday November 4th

6:00am -- 9:30am ~ Hot American Breakfast Buffet~ Cactus Rose Restaurant

Checkout

Broken Arrow

The time, about December 1956. The place, Homestead Air Force Base, Florida. The problem, a visit by the Strategic Air Command (SAC) Inspector General (IG) and his team to the 379th Bomb Wing for an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). It was our first ORI, as we had just gone operational, or “Combat Ready,” on 15 November. SAC, in that era, always looked at its wings soon after they declared “Combat Ready,” just to make sure.

The Wing was equipped with the world’s first swept-wing, six engine bomber, the B-47. It was a beauty, one of the cleanest airplanes ever built. We had three squadrons, with 15 B-47s per squadron.

My crew, N-16, was the last crew formed in the 524th Bomb Squadron. N-15 had been formed, but for some reason, disbanded. Fifteen crews had to become combat ready before the squadron could be combat ready. Therefore, with only about five weeks remaining for upgrade to R-16, we were on an almost impossible schedule. Other crews were actually planning our next mission and briefing us for it as soon as we landed from a training mission. We had our final check ride on the night of 14 November 1956, and the Wing Commander declared the wing “Combat Ready” the next day, the magic target date of 15 November.

Very shortly thereafter came the ORI with the accompanying IG team.

This being before Sputnik, we had something like 36 hours to “generate” the force, load fuel and training weapons to the configuration required for the specific combat sortie assigned to each airplane in the SAC strike plan. Maintenance personnel did all this and then the flight crews “preflighted,” or ran all required preflight checks right up to engine start to insure the airplanes were ready for their missions.

The B-47 had a three man crew: pilot, copilot, and radar-navigator/bombardier. Besides myself, a Major at the time, Crew R-16 consisted of copilot, Captain Don Smith and navigator, 1st Lieutenant Joe Bunting.

Upon completion of our preflight, we returned to the squadron ready room. As we walked from the crew transport vehicle to the front door, our Squadron Commander, Major Joe Bailey and another Major emerged from the door and blocked the walk. Major Bailey intro-

duced the other Major as a member of the SAC IG team and pointedly asked me to explain to him what “BROKEN ARROW” was.

If you don’t know what a BROKEN ARROW is, it is vital to the story that you find out here. This was, and is, the code word for any accident involving a nuclear weapon. A most important code word in SAC.

I had never heard of it! Having had the flying schedule necessary to meet our readiness date, my crew had not yet had all the ground school required to make us “SAC troops.” None of us had ever been in SAC before and didn’t yet speak the SAC language too well.

There was no doubt in my mind that it was something I should know all about, and that Joe Bailey had steered the IG team troop to me specifically because he expected me to impress him for the good of the wing, and especially the credit to the squadron and Joe Bailey! Since admitting I didn’t know would obviously do the exact opposite of the desired outcome, I decided to go for broke and bluff my way through.

So, as seriously as I could, I said, “Of course, everybody knows that. It’s on TV on Tuesday night right after the Yogi Bear cartoon show. It is about Cochise, the Apache Chief, and an Indian agent who tried to befriend him. It’s set in Arizona Territory, and it stars Michael Ansara and John Lupton.” This was all true.

My Squadron Command’s jaw sagged so that he had to catch his ever present cigar to keep it from falling, and the IG Major went into an uncontrollable fit of laughter and walked away, stopping every few steps to look back and shake his head in disbelief. Making jokes with, and poking fun at the SAC IG team just wasn’t done.

Joe Bailey looked at me for a minute, shaking his head in disbelief and without saying a word, walked away. My crew and I went into the ready room, where I found some of the old SAC heads and asked them what the hell a BROKEN ARROW was. When they told me I had no trouble figuring out the reactions I had just triggered. My crew then proceeded to “break up” all the assembled crews with our tale of what had happened.

The IG team Major never mentioned the incident in his report, and Major Joe Bailey never let me forget it. He never believed me when I insisted I really didn’t know.

Lt. Gen. Ray Sitton USAF (ret.)

Another IG Story

Years ago, a SAC maintenance type related the following story. Does anyone know about this incident or similar ones.? The editor would like to hear from you.

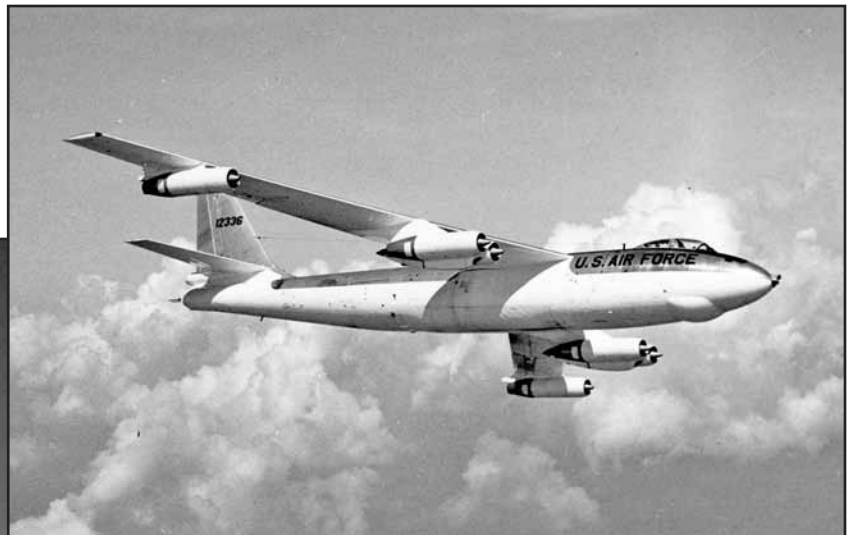
The white anti-radiation paint was a familiar sight on all SAC B-47 bombers. It was a very expensive, highly-developed paint, but it would not adhere well to the magnesium bomb bay doors. In the mid-1950s, the Inspector General (IG) was due to inspect the aircraft of a wing based in Florida. In order to hide the peeling paint of his bombers, the wing commander sent his men to the local Sears and Roebuck store with instructions to buy the required quantity of white paint. The "store-bought" paint actually adhered better than the special stuff and the IG personally congratulated the C.O. on the appearance of his airplanes!



NOSIRREE!! NOT ME! ... YOU ASK HIM IF IT'S LIT OR NOT!!

*Cartoon above from **Bombers, Boomers and Buttons** by Bill Hughes.*

The later anti-radiation paint pattern in the photo below is contrasted with the early pattern in the right photo that covered much more airplane.



Museum News

Report From Pete Troesch and Crew

Chanute Air Museum XB-47 Stratojet Progress Report
(May 1, 2012 - August 1, 2012)

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

The floor panel behind and to the right of the copilot's station was made at the Chanute Air Museum by volunteers working on the XB-47. The original panel was missing from the airplane. The missing panel was noted and reported on the initial inspection completed in 2007 by the volunteer team.

Work on the exterior cockpit entrance door was completed during this three month period. In 2010 metal rivets were installed in over 100 holes that had been drilled in the door and surrounding areas. The reason(s) for the necessity to drill so many holes while the aircraft belonged to the Chanute AFB are unknown.

May 30th - Sanded fuel caps on the fuselage to prepare for painting the color red over the existing gray color paint. Measured and penciled the borders for the caution stripes on the JATO sections of the fuselage. A photo of 46-0066 showed location of the stripes. In addition, raised paint lines of the stripes were found in the area of the JATO covered ports on the fuselage.

June 20th - Continued penciling caution stripe borders on the JATO sections of the fuselage. Began sanding star and bars on the fuselage in preparation for painting.

July 11th - Exterior entrance door to the the XB-47 was painted to match existing gray paint on the aircraft. Continued sanding on the star and bars on right side of the fuselage. Penciled lines on JATO section of the fuselage. Completed installation of the floor panel in the cockpit at the copilot position.

August 1st - Painted cockpit entrance door handle. Sanded and prepared JATO section for painting caution stripes on the fuselage.

Approximately 55 hours of work were performed during this 3 month period on the XB-47 by Rol Barger, Bob Benuska, Trevor Leach, Richard Redden, Bob Surber and

Pete Troesch.

It should be noted that due to the extremely hot weather we have been experiencing in the Midwest, the number of work days and hours worked are significantly fewer than the May through July period of previous years. It is hoped that if we get cooler weather, the next three months will be more productive.

Pete and his crew do a great job and his reports remind us of just how tedious the job of preservation can be. We deeply appreciate their dedication and work to rehabilitate this historically significant airplane. ed.

The editor recently saw a photo of 46-0066 sitting on the ramp at Chanute in what may have the mid to late 50s, It appeared that a wing tank was mounted on the right wing (but not the left). As far as we know neither of the XB-47s ever flew with wing tanks. Do any of you know anything about this? Was it just part of the training program there?

53-2280 Finds A New Home

NB-47E 53-2280 has sat out in the elements at Dayton for many years. It once held a place of honor in the Museum of The USAF but was booted out when the RB-47H was restored and placed on display. Many museums had coveted the Stratojet but none was able to afford the necessary disassembly and move.

Finally, word comes that the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque NM is bringing the airplane into its collection. It will still be out in the elements but at least that will be mostly dry, desert air. The bird was being taken apart in late summer and was expected at the Museum by late September. If you drive to the Reunion from east of Albuquerque you might want to stop by and check it out. It is a good museum with really interesting artifacts.

53-2280 was a testbed that performed some rather significant work for the aerospace industry. The most important of those roles was to prove the feasibility of fly-by-wire systems and she performed quite admirably. The airplane and those tests are referenced in most of the fly-by-wire literature. 53-2280 had replaced 53-6244 in the museum. The latter aircraft did not make the trip from the old museum location and met her fate on the fire dump (a travesty!). It was the only B-47 bomber version ever displayed at the museum. Thank goodness 2280 did not meet the same fate!

Kansas Air Museum Stratojet Damaged

The WB-47E (51-2387) in the collection of the Kansas Air Museum was damaged in tornadoes that struck Wichita last April. Although at least one of their aircraft was destroyed, most of the outside aircraft suffered only some scrapes and dings.

The Stratojet lost its canopy, had a bent forward main gear door, scraped a wing tip and had significant damage to the left outboard pod and the vertical fin. Most of the repair work will be of the sheet metal variety and we understand that a canopy has been located. The airplane still needs outrigger gear. Any of you guys have any in the garage?



Above, open cockpit Stratojet. The tornado ripped the canopy right off. Wright ADC actually did some tests with a flying B-47 in this configuration but I don't think this was what they had in mind. Below, the outboard pod suffered considerable damage. There was also some bent metal on the fin.



This B-47 was moved from Oklahoma City several years ago after sitting on pylons at the State Fairground for many years. 51-2387 was delivered to the 68th BW on 7 December 1953. It went to the 341st in February 1956 and then to the 2nd BW in August of 1958. In early 1960, she became a trainer assigned to the 4347th CCTW. In April of 1963, 2387 was sent to Lockheed Marietta for modification to the WB-47E configuration and eventual assignment to the MATS. She was retired to the fairground in the early 1970s.

Ode To The B-47

Ralph Bleiler penned this little verse in memory of the airplane he crewed up in Plattsburgh. He says he wrote it more years ago than he cares to remember but we're glad he kept it and shared it with all of us. Enjoy! ed.

B-47E 53-2123

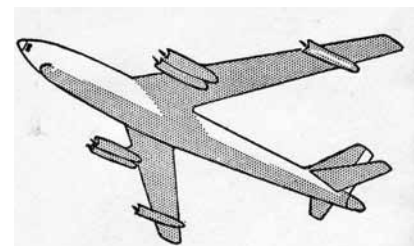
By Ralph W. Bleiler

Lifted as a feather,
By the hand of God.
She soared majestically,
To protect our sod.

Throughout the Cold War,
She flexed her might.
And in the end,
Never had to fight.

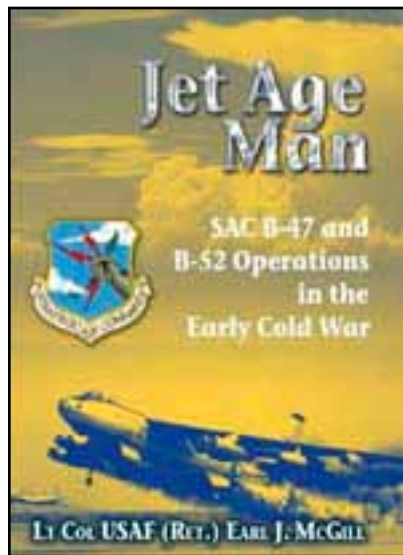
Her glory lay,
Not in damage done.
But greater yet,
In the peace she won.

She is gone now,
Bye and bye.
Deep in my heart,
She still soars high.



Bookshelf

The latest reading material for B-47 fans is a book by one of our members, Earl McGill. **Jet Age Man** is subtitled "SAC B-47 and B-52 Operations in the Early Cold War." The book is to be available in September and Earl is planning on being at the Tucson Reunion. Go ahead and get your copy and bring it along so he can sign it for you. The paragraph below is taken from pre-release material. Price is \$36.46 from Amazon (at least today it is).



..[JAM] takes place in the Cold War trenches of the Strategic Air Command. It is about those who served and the many who died, told by someone who, as a young man, literally held the fate of all mankind within reach of a switch. More particularly, this is a story of

man's interaction with two bombers that changed the course of political history, and were perhaps the most influential aircraft in the annals of aircraft development. The author piloted and instructed in both the B-47 and the B-52, starting out as a copilot in the B-47, then aircraft commander and finally, instructor pilot in both aircraft. Jet Age Man chronicles his fifteen-year relationship with the B-47 and the aircraft the B-47 became, the B-52 - a bomber still in service today



Earl McGill sent this shot of 53-2104 taking off from Davis-Monthan on its way to Pueblo CO for display in the air museum there. As noted in the last issue it was the last Stratojet to fly out of the boneyard.

Supply Room

Items are available from George Brierley, 3661 Packard Rd., Niagra Falls, NY 14303. Make checks payable to the B-47 Stratojet Association. **Please ADD \$3.00 for shipping and handling**



Association Pin - \$10.00

2008 Reunion Coin
\$10.00



Association Coaster (2) - \$2.50

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



Association Mouse Pad
\$3.00

Cap (Blue)
\$10.00



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

\$10.00



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



Shirt Front



Shirt Back

Reunion Golf

Directly across the street from our hotel is Reid Park containing two regulation length golf courses and relatively flat and favorable to senior play.

Contact: <http://www.tucsoncitygolf.com/> Phone 520.791.4161, 600 S. Alvernon Way, Tucson, AZ, 85711

Courses are:
 Dell Urich (South Course) White Tees 6121 yards, Rating 67.4, Slope 115
 Randolph (North Course) White Tees 6436 yards, Rating 70.0, Slope 122

There are numerous other very challenging courses in the area. If so inclined "google" Tucson golf for more information.

Application For Membership - The B-47 Stratojet Association

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

Name: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Date of Birth (for life members): _____

Military - Your Position In The Air Force: _____

Bomb Wing(s) You Served With:

_____ BW from _____ to _____
 _____ BW from _____ to _____
 _____ BW from _____ to _____

Civilian - Position/Job _____ Company: _____
 From _____ to _____

Comments: _____

Dues

One Year: \$15.00

Life Memberships

Age	Dues
59 & under	\$300
60-64	\$250
65-69	\$200
70-74	\$150
75-79	\$100
80 & up	\$ 50

Dues are payable each January.

Payments and this form should be mailed to:

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

B-47 Stratojet Association
P. O. Box 1144
Brenham, TX
77834-1144

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#84



*This watercolor artwork was the first image of the B-47 to appear on the cover of **Combat Crew** magazine. It was created by 1st Lt. J. N. Morin of the Combat Crew staff and appeared on the August 1951 issue cover.*