

## *B-47 Stratojet Association*

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To the membership:

It is with great sadness that I am announcing that Charlie Brown, the founder and driving force behind the B-47 Stratojet Association has passed away. Charlie, who entered the hospital in October, succumbed to complications following surgery on Thursday, December 5. A memorial service was held on Tuesday, December 10th, and graveside services, with full military honors, were held on Wednesday, December 12, at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, Texas. I am sure that I speak for everyone in the Association in extending our condolences to his wife and family.

I thought that I would take this opportunity to pass along some additional information, and to ask for assistance.

Last September, I was contacted by Charlie, and asked to work along with George Sewell and Ed Jedrzewski as part of the newly formed "B-47 History Team." Having, done similar work in the past, I quickly agreed to lend a hand. Since that time, I have taken on the task of updating the membership database, and in conjunction with Publicity Chairman Bob Dennison, I am now acting as a contact person for this group. Although Bob and I are both eager to work towards Charlie's goal of preserving the memory of the B-47, and the men who flew and maintained it, we realize that we can not do this job alone. Anyone interested in contributing some of their time should contact either Bob or myself for more information.

Since Charlie had been organizing the upcoming meeting in Tucson, AZ by himself, it has been decided to postpone this gathering until further notice. Any one interested in organizing a future meeting should contact one of us with details.

Now for some record keeping. Many of you may have noticed that the envelope that this newsletter arrived in has either an abbreviated, or an incomplete address. This is due in part to the limitations of the computer program that was used to create the original mailing list. Since we want the new database to be one hundred percent accurate, I would like to ask you all to take a moment to review your mailing label. If you find any errors, please be sure to send your corrections to me.

Last Fall, Charlie's daughter Becky began working on a B-47 Stratojet Association license plate, which Charlie was planning to make available to our members. Unfortunately, Becky had not completed this project before her dad passed away. I have recently received word from Becky that the art work for the license plate has been finished. If there are enough people interested in purchasing one, Becky will contact a manufacturer for a cost estimate. You can check out a black and white illustration of the license plate at the end of this letter.

Last week, I was contacted by a BBC television producer who is working on two shows about B-47 operations in England during the 1950s. These programs will deal with recent claims of nuclear contamination following a pair of B-47 accidents at RAF Lakenheath and RAF Greenham Common. If you are interested in being interviewed for these shows, I can provide you with more information.

Now, since we are in the early stages of organizing, I feel that this is the time to establish a comprehensive archive of B-47 related materials. This archive should include, unit histories, unit insignias, photographs, films, audio recordings, video recordings, magazine articles, unit patches, and any other items related to the Stratojet. All of this material will be gathered together, entered into the database, and will be made available to our members. I have already received several short stories from folks reminiscing about their experiences flying the B-47. Hopefully there will be enough room in the next newsletter to print one. Now, I would like to ask those of you with access to a video camera, or an audio tape recorder, to submit narratives of your own. Although no one expects Steven Spielberg quality, your personal stories will make a great addition to the archive. So, lets make some tapes!!!

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Before I forget, several 8mm home movies featuring the B-47 have surfaced recently. Since these films can be dubbed onto video tape, I would like to ask everyone with a shoe box full of old 8mm, Super 8, and 16 mm movies to allow us to borrow them. Your films will be copied and returned to you ASAP. If you want a VHS copy for yourself, let me know.

On another note, I have received several requests to make copies of our roster available to people outside of this group. I feel that this would set a bad precedent, so I have refused to make this information available. Any comments?

Since this is the holiday season, George Sewell has suggested that I ask all of you to pass along the addresses of any former B-47 crew mates you are still exchanging Christmas cards with. This would be a great way for us to make additional contacts, and expand our ranks. Good idea George!

#### Computer Corner:

In the weeks prior to our first mailing, several of us were in frequent contact using computer electronic mail ("e-mail"). We found e-mail to be a useful tool for communicating ideas and exchanging information. More recently, several new members have contacted the group by way of the Internet. So, I would like to ask all of you with an e-mail address, to contact me at [mark.natola@hitchcock.org](mailto:mark.natola@hitchcock.org). Your address will be added to our database, and if you desire, made available to others in this group. Please be assured that this information will not be disseminated outside of this organization!

Speaking of the Internet, I am sure that most of you have heard of the World Wide Web by now. This amazing technology has made it possible for anyone with a computer and a modem, to access thousands of computers located around the world. "Web sites", and "Home Pages" are among the most common places visited by folks surfing the Net. I would like to announce that we now have an official web site of our own. If you have access to Netscape, or a similar Web browser, check out: <http://www.hemi.com/~ghsewell/B-47/>. This site has been set up to provide contact information for people interested in our organization. Hopefully, additional sites will be up and operating soon.

With the roster of the B47 Stratojet Association now approaching 400 members, I feel that it is important for us to provide a common meeting ground for those who put so much of their lives into this aircraft. In addition, we need to welcome younger enthusiasts who may never have had an opportunity to see this magnificent aircraft take to the air. The fact that you have joined this Association demonstrates your own interest in keeping the memory of the B-47 alive. With your help, we will continue to work towards this goal.

Respectfully,

*Mark Natola*