

## *B-47 Stratojet Association*

Mark Natola, Secretary • RR3 Box 177 • Cornish, NH 03745 • (603) 675-6046 • mark.natola@hitchcock.org

March 31, 1997

To the Membership:

Well, three months have passed since the first newsletter hit the streets. Winter is now officially over (although I find this hard to believe as I watch the snow falling in my back yard), and a lot has happened since you last heard from me.

I want to begin by saying that the response to the first newsletter has been overwhelmingly positive. Telephone calls, letters, and e-mail, began pouring in almost overnight. Many of you, saddened by Charlie Brown's passing, contacted Bob Dennison and myself to discuss Charlie, and the future of our organization. Although many of us never had the opportunity to meet Lt. Colonel Brown, it seems as though everyone has a story to tell about him. As anyone who spoke to Charlie on the telephone can attest, his passion and enthusiasm for the B-47 were infectious. He will be missed!

Now for the official business. As many of you are aware, Major Bob Dennison has been serving as the interim director of the B-47 Stratojet Association since Charlie's death last year. Although he has worked very hard to keep the association on the right track, Bob is now stepping down to pursue other interests. I want to take this opportunity to thank him for a job well done.

I am pleased to announce that Colonel Sigmund "Alex" Alexander has agreed to serve as President until a formal election can be held. Alex, who was a navigator assigned to the 351st Bomb Squadron of the 100th Bomb Wing at Pease AFB, New Hampshire, served as the Chairman of the 1994 Navigator's reunion and more recently, the 1996 100th BW reunion. His first official act has been to seek an IRS tax exempt status for our organization. After obtaining that, Alex plans to register the organization as a corporation in the state of Texas. In addition, he and I have been busy putting together our "Constitution and By-Laws". Although we have already accomplished a great deal, there is still a lot to do. Another change that needs to be mentioned is the selection of Colonel Don Cassiday as our new Treasurer. Don, who flew with the 40th Bomb Wing, is a former bank Vice President and the Dean of a business school. He recently opened a bank account for the association, and he will be in charge of all financial matters. Finally, I have officially taken over the role of Secretary. As the Secretary, I will continue to maintain the roster and I will keep track of the business transacted by the group. With a full slate of officers in place, we are now in a position to become a truly active organization.

All of this financial talk leads me to my next subject. Back when this association was being formed, Charlie depended upon the generous donations of our members to offset his costs. Although we still have some money left in reserve, most of the donations received have been used to pay for the printing and mailing of membership forms and newsletters. Since our roster has swollen from a respectable 370 members at the beginning of the year, to our current level of more than 600, we can no longer expect to get by on donations alone. Alex, Don, Bob, and I, have agreed that we must begin collecting dues if this organization is to survive. After comparing the dues of several other groups, we have decided to ask for \$10.00 per year. I would like to request all of you who have not made a donation within the last year,

to please send a check made payable to "The B-47 Stratojet Association" to my address. All money received will be deposited directly into our new bank account.

Enclosed with this newsletter, you will find a copy of the revised membership information form. Due to the overwhelming response to my request for names in the last letter, it has not always been possible to send a membership form to everyone whose name we receive. If you have not filled out a membership form yet, please take a few minutes to do so now, and return the completed form to me. If you have already filled one out, consider passing this one on to a friend who may be interested in our group. If you are affiliated with another organization, feel free to make copies of the form and pass them out. Word of mouth has been the key to our success so far, and with your help, we will continue to grow. The aim of this Association is to have as wide a membership spectrum as possible, and not to be represented solely by men who flew the B-47. There are thousands of ex B-47 ground crewmen, crew members, designers, builders and others who are interested in the Stratojet. All of these folks are potential members of our organization.

As you may recall from the last newsletter, Becky Brown has designed a B-47 Stratojet Association license plate, which we hope to make available to our members. So far, I have received 50 requests for the plate. Unfortunately, I have been unable to send a personal reply to everyone who expressed an interest. So, in an attempt to bring you all up to date, Becky has contacted a manufacturer, and it is their feeling that we do not have enough orders to justify the expense of making the plates yet. She is now talking to another company, and if we are able to generate more of an interest, we may still be able to pull this off. In the mean time, I have asked her to consider working on a decal or bumper sticker based on her original design. Realizing that many of you live in states that require both front and rear tags on your vehicles, a decal may be a logical alternative. What do you think? By the way, I have received requests for B-47 baseball caps, pins, and tie tacks. Anyone interested?

Moving right along, we have now received four additional reels of B-47 related 8mm films. Several of the films are very well done, and it is my hope that as more come in, we can put together a video tape which we will make available to our members. Once again, I would like to request that everyone take a look for their old films, and if you find any, please pass them on. The subject does not have to be the B-47. In fact, scenes showing tankers, alert facilities, bunkers, air shows, various bases, and other aircraft from this period will make the tape more interesting. All films will be copied onto video tape, and returned ASAP.

On a related matter, I want to thank everyone who responded to my request for archival material in the last newsletter. I have received a number of newspaper and magazine articles, several unit patches (color photo copies), a handful of photographs, and a few interesting documents. For those of you with access to the World Wide Web, you can see some of the photographs on my new Web page located at: [nerd.dartmouth.edu/~man](http://nerd.dartmouth.edu/~man). The photographs are located in the Photo Gallery section. Please keep in mind that this page is a work in progress, and that the images may load a bit slowly until I get all of the bugs out. It is my plan to add additional material as it becomes available. Please let me know what you think.

For those of you planning to attend the upcoming Air Force Association 50th anniversary celebration in Las Vegas, I would like to suggest that you stop and pay Bob Dennison a visit at the B-47 Stratojet Association booth, located at Reunion Alley in Exhibition hall. Bob will be there answering questions

about our organization and recruiting new members. Anyone interested in lending a hand at the booth should contact Bob at (602) 974-8096 to make arrangements. By the way, if you are going to Las Vegas but have not made room reservations yet, word has it that the AFA still has a block of rooms available at the Riviera Hotel. You can contact the hotel directly for additional information.

I just received the April/May issue of Air & Space magazine, and I noticed an article on page 9 detailing the upcoming commemorative stamp set titled, "20 Classic American Aircraft." Among the 20 aircraft chosen by Air & Space founder Walter Boyne, is the B-47! The stamps go on sale at your local Post Office in July.

Since many of you continue to express an interest in getting together as a group, Colonel Alexander is now looking into the possibility of holding a meeting sometime in 1998. Although things are still up in the air, he has begun making preliminary plans. I will give you more details as they become available.

Over the last few months, Alex and I have sought the advice of a number of individuals. I would like to thank Colonel Bob Norton, President of the B-58 Hustler Association, Colonel Wayne C. Pittman, President of the B-52 Association, and Lt. Colonel Stanley Flentje, Secretary/Treasurer of the 98th Bomb Group Veterans Association for their support and encouragement.

In closing, I want to offer space in upcoming newsletters to any member who would like to contact others in the organization for the purpose of conducting research, or to find an old friend. Anyone interested should send a letter to me, and I will print them (space permitting) beginning with the next issue.

Respectfully,

*Mark Natale*