



The Stratojet Newsletter

August 2004 Volume 20

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



The National Museum of The United States Air Force was the site of the Friday night banquet at the 2004 B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion. An outstanding meal was served with a backdrop of vintage warbirds. The Wright-Patterson AFB band "Soaring Winds" performed with a delightful selection of instrumental and vocal arrangements appropriate to the setting and audience.

photo: Gus Letto

From The President's Desk

The 2004 reunion, at Dayton Ohio, had 322 people that had a super time for three days. The weather was perfect all three days of the reunion. The first day, Thursday 23 September was a day for visiting with friends that we had not seen for years. It was also a time for making new B-47 friends.

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President...*continued from page 1*

There was lots of memorabilia to look at in the hospitality room as well as snacks and the beverage of your choice. That evening we had a delicious buffet at the Holiday Inn North.

The next day on Friday we dedicated our B-47 memorial to all who flew, maintained and/or supported the B-47. My special thanks go to Don Cassiday for making sure that the memorial was completed and placed in the memorial gardens at the USAF Museum. Not only that, but Don designed a beautiful and meaningful monument that is one of the nicest in the entire garden. As you will note in the pictures of this newsletter it is highlighted with a huge Strategic Air Command Crest on the front of the monument with a B-47 flying low level. On the backside of the monument all of the former B-47 Wings are listed. We had excellent support from Wright-Patterson AFB in that they supplied us with the honor guard and bugler to play taps at the end of the dedication ceremony. I presented our monument to the Director of the USAF Museum Maj/Gen. Charles Metcalf (USAF Ret.) on behalf of all the B-47 people that had served with this trend setting aircraft.

Friday evening from 1730 to 1930 the cockpit of the USAF Museum's RB-47 was opened up for us to tour. Some of our members seemed to have a little more difficulty climbing the ladder, to enter the cockpit, than they did 40-50 years ago. Some mentioned that the cockpit entryway had shrunk over the years. Our special thanks go to the Museum volunteers that manned the B-47 for this cockpit tour. Promptly at 1930 we sat down under the wing of a B-52 for another delicious meal catered by the Hope Hotel (named for Bob Hope). The National Anthem was sung by a young lady from the Wright-Patterson AFB Band. After dinner we were treated to the music of the Wright-Patterson AFB band. This included a full complement of musicians and singers as well. After dinner the Museum remained open, just for us till 2200.

Saturday was a day to either tour Dayton and visit historic Waynesville Ohio, or attend the symposiums at the hotel. Those that went on the tour were treated

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to an Amish lunch with all of the trimmings and a chance to shop and tour Waynesville. Those that stayed at the hotel heard first hand experiences about the B-47. The first speaker, Ken Tollin, was one of the first crew chiefs on one of the first B-47's to hit the flight line at MacDill AFB, Florida at the 306th Bombardment Wing. He told of many humorous as well as serious things that were encountered with the first B-47's. Our second speaker was Hal Austin who told us about his harrowing flight across Russia with MIG-17's putting several cannon holes in his RB-47. Our third speaker, Bill Simmons told us about "three today in Tampa Bay." He experienced an immediate bailout right after takeoff in a B-47 that was rolling uncontrollably. The afternoon session was led off by

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President...continued from page 2

Al Depres who told us about his crash landing in a weapons storage area at Eielson AFB, Alaska. He was awarded the Airman's Medal for saving the life of his Aircraft Commander that was trapped in the burning wreckage, and the Cheney award for bravery not involving combat. Our final speaker, Dale Wolf, led us through the last flight of a B-47 from China Lake, California to Castle AFB, California in 1986. Right from the point of takeoff they started losing equipment starting with the interphone and airspeed. Then it was flight controls that started to fail. They got the aircraft down OK and this aircraft can be seen today at the Castle AFB Museum.

To finish off the afternoon we had a General Membership meeting. A financial report was presented to the those present. Membership figures were discussed. It was voted, by the attending membership, that our next reunion would be sometime in 2006 at Wichita Kansas – the site where the majority of the B-47s were built. The membership then voted to have Don Cassiday to be the new President of the B-47 Stratojet Association. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

The reunion was capped off with a banquet at the Holiday Inn. Don Cassiday gave an excellent after dinner speech. This was followed by an act of four female singers and then dancing for everyone.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to have served as your president for the last two years and vice-president prior to that. I will continue to do what I can to support the B-47 Stratojet Association as the membership chairman. In this latter capacity I will need your help to keep our membership numbers up so that we can remain a viable organization. I ask you to give your full support to our next president, Don Cassiday. He has worked most diligently as our Association treasurer since our inception and I know he will do a great job as the President as well. You have a strong Board of Directors and Association Officers that will continue to project a positive image and perpetuate the memory of the greatest aircraft to ever grace the skies.

Roll Call Of Honor

George Birdsong - passed away at home on 9 July 2004.

Art Indermuehle - passed away while playing golf in Colorado Springs on 10 May 2004.

Warren Davies - passed away; no details.

John Sorenson - passed away on 4 March 2004.

Mayday

My step-father, **Cecil L. Davis**, passed away last Saturday (17 July). Dad logged over 1000 hrs in B-47s. I believe his rank was Captain, and he was a bombardier/Navigator. He retired a Major in 1965, I believe. Dad left a leather zipper case full of documents, as well as many wonderful B-47 photos, both of the airplane and the crew he served with. He flew in B-24s in Italy, moved on to B-29s, then B-47s and B-52s toward the end of his career. He loved the B-47 most of all, and fondly called it "my beautiful airplane." He proudly wore his B-47 1000 hr pin on his lapel. I have just begun going through the leather case; there are many, many things. I would like to make contact with anyone who flew with him, or knew him. I miss him very much and don't want him to be forgotten. He was my hero. Contact Scott Bundy at sbundy01@comcast.net.

George Schairer, B-47 Engineer

George Schairer, who retired as vice-president of research and development of Boeing, passed away on 28 October 2004 in Kirkland WA of complications from Alzheimer's. Schairer was on a team of scientists and engineers who scoured Germany for technology near the end of WWII. After finding wind tunnel research documents, he wrote the now famous letter to his colleagues back in Seattle that led them to redesign the XB-47 with swept-wings. As they say, "the rest is history." Boeing hired Schairer in 1939 after graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His leadership led to Boeing's high speed wind tunnel. He was a recipient of the Daniel Guggenheim Medal.

DAYTON ~ 2004



Check-in at the Holiday Inn with Judy & Lorraine.



The Hospitality Room (above & below) always had a crowd.



One of the buffet lines at Thursday's banquet; the dessert table is below.



The hospitality room had plenty of photos and memorabilia.



Dave Nicholson, Gus Letto renew old friendships from 26th SRW days.



Wen Painter, George & Shirley Brierly



Jim & Peggy Rebsch, Lorraine Purdum, Ann & Bill Simmons



Don Cassidy and Dick Purdum unveil the memorial under a beautiful Ohio sky. The monument sits on the east side of the garden.



Wright-Patterson AFB supplied the color guard.



This section of the crowd was dominated by the red hats of the 367th Bomb Sqd.



Lou Malucci and daughter, Dorelle.



Certificates were presented to those who had made substantial contributions to the monument.



Gen. Metcalf accepted the memorial on behalf of the museum.



Larry Morrison of Dodds Monuments, stands next to the memorial he created for us.



The panoramic camera that took a beautiful photo of everyone at the dedication.



One of the bricks around the mounument base.



The dedication ceremony was an impressive affair as we remembered those gone before.



The "Soaring Winds" performed in front of the C-124.



The interior of the RB-47H looking aft from the navigator's station.



Museum volunteers graciously opened the cockpit of the RB-47H. The restoration is very well done. Here Bob Griffiths, new B-47 Association treasurer, descends the ladder just as nimbly as he did years ago.



The line for the cockpit was long and slow but worth the wait.



Dick Purdum with some of the "Soaring Winds" vocalists.



Outgoing President Dick Purdum and Incoming President Don Cassiday show a well coordinated effort in conducting the Association business meeting.



An optional outing featured lunch at an Amish restaurant in Waynesville, Ohio.



Symposium speakers, Ken Tollin, Bill Simmons, Al Depres, Dale Wolf, and Hal Austin entertained and informed the crowd with stories of their service days. The two sessions featured photos and videos as well as a time for questions and answers.



Don Cassiday presents Lorraine and Dick Purdum with a token of appreciation for their hard work for the Association and the planning and staging of an excellent reunion.



Jim Robinson and his crew share a table at the Saturday banquet.



Hangar flying at its best, with old friends and good friends!

Twas a Dark and Stormy Night

This story was actually sent by two of our members. The basic story line is the same although their memories sometimes deviated on the details. With their permission, the editor combined them into a single article, one that is entirely appropriate for this winter issue of the Newsletter. Editor

Andy Labosky's article on Water Injection (Vol. 17) reminded us of one of the lighter moments of our days in SAC and the B-47. It was in February of 1959 at Schilling AFB in Salina, Kansas. A fairly large gaggle was planned for the 40th Bomb Wing but Kansas weather did the mission in. Freezing rain turning to snow and visibility about ten feet past the end of your nose forced SAC to do the unthinkable and cancel.

Unfortunately, the aircraft had all been fueled and loaded with water alcohol. The low temperatures forecast for that night demanded that water alcohol be "burned off" rather than left in the tanks overnight. Naturally, that was a co-pilot's job (remember, guys?). The procedure was simply for the co-pilot and crew chief to start engines, let them idle a while, then stand on the brakes, run the engines up to about full power and kick the water switch on. A minute and a half later, with the water burned off, shut down was accomplished and we could button up the airplane and go home for a hot toddy.

One of our crews had a navigator (remembered by one of the authors as a co-pilot) who shall go unnamed other than by his nickname, "Fog." Fog had a bright idea. His lovely new Pontiac convertible was covered with ice and it occurred to him that a minute or two behind their airplane while the engines were at idle would de-ice his car nicely. This was all coordinated with the co-pilot to insure that he wouldn't go to full power till Fog was clear of the area.

Engines started, Pontiac deiced, everything worked beautifully until Fog tried to drive out of the line of fire. The same warming effect that had deiced his car so well had caused the snow to turn into a sheet of ice and Fog was stuck and couldn't move. Realizing the danger, he jumped out and, unfortunately, turned the car and lights off. As he was trudging toward the airplane to obtain help, the co-pilot, eager to get the

whole thing over, asked the crew chief if Fog's car was clear. The crew chief, looking back and seeing no lights, assumed the area was clear and advised the pilot who ran the engines up and fired the water.

The co-pilot left the plane with the procedure accomplished and saw a person sitting in the convertible, face and clothing blackened, with the top gone from the car. He asked this person if he saw Lt. Fog anywhere. The person answered, "Fog here sir." Luckily only Lt. Fog's pride was hurt. He decided he might as well retract the remaining top supporting ribs into the car as well.

Upon leaving the flight line, the pilot and Lt. Fog were stopped by the guard at the flight line gate. He requested ID and questioned the operating of a vehicle with no top in a blizzard condition. You all may guess what the answers were. Lt. Fog (who was a graduate engineer) was later heard to mutter, "If it had worked I would have been a genius." ANOTHER EINSTEIN!

*Ted Wilkens
Euclid OH*

*Don Cassiday
Aurora IL*



This is not Kansas in the winter of 1959, but it is a snowy and icy ramp. The aircraft is a WB-47E (51-2402) of Det 1 53rd WRS and the location is Eielson AFB AK during the winter of 1963.

Photo: James Viers

The new official name of the Air Force Museum is now **The National Museum of the United States Air Force.**

A Gift From St. Nick

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the blue
Not a SAC crew was flying, except you-know-who!
Six runs we had made with infinite care,
In hopes that the seventh would fill our last square.
The crew was all snoring, as though home in their beds,
Whilst visions of oak leaves danced through their heads.
The aircraft commander (the withered old elf),
Whose delusions of grandeur made me laugh to myself
Was contentedly stretched in a long winter's sleep,
Whilst from the co-jockey we heard not a peep.
Twenty seconds to go—I've sure got the knack,
Everything's perfect—it looks like a shack!
When out of the Stab Unit there arose such a clatter
That I sprang from my seat: "What the hell is the matter?"
The gimbals were bending, the yoke shook like jelly;
And I got a sick feeling in my fat little belly.
Stark terror had seized me as I tried not to hear
The gnashing and grinding of each little gear.
With tone just turned on and the PDI spinning,
My troubles, I feared, were only beginning.
I tore open the door of the SAU rack,
The smoke rose in curls—'twas all charred and black!
My mouth opened wide as I saw all that smoke,
And I knew in a moment that something was broke.
I picked up my manual and read on page six,
For symptoms like this there can be no fix.
The scope was all flooded with blood, sweat, and tears,
And I felt like the last of the bombardiers.
The cross-hairs had vanished; it was all I could take.
I wept as the tone broke, and prayed for a break.
I fudged on my airspeed and hedged on my heading.
And I shook while awaiting that score I was dreading.
Then RBS called: "Your tone-break we got;
We'd suggest you start plowing—the farm that you have
bought!
Your bomb, O Senior, she don't fall like she order.
She's hitting, I theenk, kinda south of ze border!"
I almost ejected when they sent back the score:
"You've had it," called Bomb Plot, "you need six more."
The AC awoke screaming: "Well, let's get to work;
I've already missed dinner and I'm hungry" (the jerk).
Then from out of the night came a beautiful sound:
"Stand by on that score—a mistake has been found.
Since this is the season of peace and good cheer,
We have a new scorer who came by reindeer,
He has dolls for the girls—for each boy, a bat,
But for you my friend, one bomb in the hat!"
Then these words we did hear whilst departing the site:
"Merry Christmas, you all, and to all a good flight!"

by Lt. Col Harold Korger, Maj. Gilbert D'Andrea, and Capt. Harold Hayes,
with apologies to Clement C. Moore. Originally published in the December
1959 issue of *Combat Crew* magaz



More Reunion Photos



Jim Fraser (white hat), B-47 test pilot for Boeing, and wife, Susan, await the dedication ceremony.



James Villa & Bobbie Karsteter try one of the museum's cockpits.



Saturday night's entertainment was "The Rolling Tones."

Photo Credits

Thanks to the following members for sharing their reunion photos with us: Gus Letto, Alex Alexander, Jim Rusher, Lou Malucci, and Dick Purdum. Bob Zambenini's photos can be seen on the Association's website at <http://www.b-47.com>.

Supply Room

Items are available from George Brierley, 5342 6th Place South, Gulfport, FL 33707. Make checks payable to the B-47 Stratojet Association.

Association T-Shirt	\$15	Pewter B-47 tie pin	\$5
Association Pin	\$10	1,000 hour pin	\$25
Association Patch	\$5	3,500 hour pin	\$25
Association mouse pad	\$3		
Association Mug (new design)	\$10	B-47 Commorative medal	\$10
		B-47 Stationery	\$13
		(25 sheets/25 envelopes)	

Application For Membership - The B-47 Stratojet Association

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:

Mark Natola, Secretary/B-47 Stratojet Assn.,
23 Oak Ridge Rd.
W. Lebanon, NH 03784.

- This form may be copied to avoid cutting newsletter -

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This snowy scene was captured in December 1977, when the last operational B-47 (EB-47E, 52-410) was retired. It is being delivered to Pease AFB for display by the 509th BW. It was flown by a McDonnell Douglas crew and the pilot was Association member David Hall.

Photo: USAF

~2005 Dues Are Due In January~

~2006 Reunion - Wichita KS~