



The Stratojet Newsletter

April 2005 Volume 21

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

From The President's Desk

2005 is well underway and Mike Habermehl, your newsletter editor has just reminded me that it's time for me to write a few lines as your new president. I just returned from a visit to Seattle where I visited the Museum of Flight. There are some very positive things happening there that will please members of the B-47 Stratojet Association and I want to share them with you.

First, those who visited the museum during our Seattle reunion will recall a WB-47E that was on display in a rather cluttered area to the south of the museum. That airplane has been refurbished and will soon be in a new display area just outside the museum.

Secondly, the March/April volume of the museum's magazine, *Aloft*, contains a very interesting article entitled, *A Demanding Beauty: The Stratojet and Me*, by David Wellman who flew with the 320th Bomb Wing. You can get a copy by writing to The Museum of Flight, 9494 East Marginal Way South, Seattle WA 98108. Their website is www.museumofflight.org.

Thirdly, it gives me pleasure to report that the museum's gift shop now carries some B-47 items. When we visited there a few years ago, I was surprised to find nothing pertaining to the B-47 in stock and I mentioned this to the store manager. When I was there recently, they had B-47 desk models, books and pins. Considering how important the Stratojet was to Boeing it seemed only fitting that the museum shop stock B-47 items.



A TB-47B "smoking" across the Kansas skies. Photo: Boeing

Andy Labosky and a committee of Wichitans have been working hard at planning our 2006 reunion to be held there in Wichita KS where so many B-47s were built and where so many of us learned to fly the bird. The dates have been set for 21 through 23 September 2006. We'll be staying at the Marriott which has given us some excellent prices and the fellows in Wichita have some great things planned for us. So, save those dates and join us in Wichita.

Finally, your association's board of directors will be meeting the third week of June and we welcome any inputs you would like us to consider. You can email me at colcass@sbcglobal.net or snail mail at 1402 West Downer, Aurora IL 60506 with your ideas.

I hope your year is off to as great a start as mine and I look forward to seeing all of you in Wichita in 2006.

Don Cassidy

B-47 Stratojet Association Board of Governors Officers

President - Don Cassiday
1402 West Downer
Aurora, IL 60506
630-859-1922
colcass@sbeglobal.net

Vice-President - Sigmund Alexander
12110 Los Cerdos Dr.
San Antonio, TX 78233
210-653-5361
Sigmund.Alexander@worldnet.att.net

Secretary - Mark Natola
23 Oak Ridge Road
W. Lebanon, NH 03784
603-643-3399
mark.natola@hitchcock.org

Treasurer - Bob Griffiths
11207 Thompson Avenue
Reistertown, MD 21136-5927
410-833-1481
bobnsara@comcast.net

Membership Chairman - Dick Purdum
13310 South 26th Ave.
Bellevue, NE 68123
402-291-4257
DickPurdum@cox.net

BX Officer - George Brierly
5342 6th Place South
Gulfport, FL 33707
727-321-1606
b47assn@together.net

Editor - Mike Habermehl
P. O. Box 1144
Brenham, TX 77834-1144
mikeh@brenhamisd.net

Association Website

www.b47.com



Board of Governors

James Diamond
898 NE Coronado St.
Lee's Summit, MO 64086-5529
816-524-9562
imjack@swbell.net

Wen Painter
P. O. Box 719
Mojave, CA 93502
661-824-2907
wpainter@antelecom.net

Andy Labosky
707 Briarwood Rd.
Derby, KS 67037-2114
316-788-5277
labov47@msn.com

Important Reminders

- Pay your dues for 2005
- Send dues to Mark Natola, Secretary
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Mark Natola.
- Send newsletter articles, photos, news, etc. to Mike Habermehl, Editor.
- Mark calendar for **21-23 September 2006** - Next Reunion

Roll Call of Honor

Charlie Anderson (Lt. Col. Ret) passed away. He was a B-47 test pilot at Wright Field and later with General Electric.

Burt Andrus (Col. Ret.), former CO of the 96th BW passed away.

George Birdsong (Col. Ret.), CO of the 367th BS, 306th BW died last year.

John M. Gill died of a heart attack on 4 September 2004.

John Irving (Lt. Col. Ret.) passed away on 30 March. He had been an aircraft commander with the 44th BS, 40th BW.

Sam Meyers (Col. Ret.), former RB-45/RB-47 aircraft commander passed away last year.

Douglas T. Nelson (Maj. Gen. Ret.) passed away on 7 February in Phoenix AZ, at 84 years of age. As a Major, he was one of the first B-47 aircraft commanders in the 367th BS of the 306th BW. He soon left for SAC Headquarters and was later a major figure in the development of the SR-71 and its operations at Beale AFB. He served as the Program Director for the B-1A from 1970-73, and was later Vice-Commander for the Aeronautical Systems Division. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery on 4 March.

Gail Noonan, wife of Maj. John Noonan (RB-47E aircraft commander) passed away.

From Sailor To B-47 Crew Chief

On 10 July 1957 at about 1330 hrs. I became the most junior seven-level Staff Sergeant in the entire United States Air Force, AFSC 43171E, Airplane General, four or more engines. I had strayed from my USN assignment at Quonset Point RI Naval Air Station, an AD2 (aircraft mechanic) in Carrier Air Group Seven, Fighter Squadron 73, and all set for another long carrier cruise, this time to the Mediterranean. Last time it was the Pacific on the USS Hornet for a year which made for a most unhappy wife. Ok, time to try something different, and off I went to the 445th Bomb Squadron (321st BW SAC) at Pinecastle AFB, Orlando, Florida.

Leaving the Boston AF Recruiting office I had no clue as to what I was in for. Some of you will remember that this was during the Eisenhower years when all of the services were underpaid and underfunded in everything from personnel to toilet paper. I was fortunate though that in my nine Navy years I had some of the very best technical training that the Navy had to offer, including a recent factory school on the new, powerful Wright J-65 axial flow engine (similar in many respects to the GE J-47).

Arrival at Pinecastle was uneventful except I had to wait almost a month for a security clearance before being allowed on the flightline, so I spent time reading the B-47 manuals and trying to figure out how to wear my new issue uniforms. Remember the Bermuda shorts and the bush jackets? Then, assigned to TSgt Harry, crew chief on DB-47E 52-0163, as his assistant, it became apparent just how woefully short-handed the whole Wing was on maintenance personnel. Ten hour days were pretty much the norm and weekends were no exception. It was a good learning experience and TSgt. Harry was the best of instructors. Also in the 445th there was an attitude of cooperation and camaraderie second to none, with some of the most knowledgeable and conscientious crew chiefs I have ever worked with. After about three weeks, TSgt. Harry came in one morning, announced he was headed for a new assignment in the Northwest, handed me the 781, and said "she's all yours, good luck." So that is how it started.

A couple of months after my "appointment," 163 and I departed Pinecastle to enjoy a six week deployment at Sidi Slimane, Morocco. The usual plan for our three airplane group included a night in-flight refueling near Bermuda and on to Sidi, total flying time about 10-12 hours as I recall. My AC made a smooth hook-up and the transfer began, but after only two or three minutes old 163 spit the nozzle out. We connected a couple more times with the same result, spit out. Having a pretty knowledge of the system and the circuitry, I asked the AC to hook up again and let me look at it and he agreed. I went forward to the refueling receptacle and with a flashlight saw a micro-switch that had failed to engage with the locking mechanism. I slipped a pencil point under it and sure enough it held. While still feeling good about this, I heard over the intercom, the AC rather urgently saying "I cannot disconnect!" I removed the pencil. Too heavy to land, but not enough fuel to continue, so the other two aircraft pressed on and we spent about two hours circling and burning fuel, then landed and refueled at Hamilton, at least a six hour delay. I never did mention the "pencil maneuver" to him or anyone.

On a later deployment to Sidi the klaxton alert horn sounded one afternoon in the sweltering mid-summer heat and sent us all scrambling for the airplane. Nothing really unusual about the alert itself, but this exercise always generated a certain urgency that we all felt, both air and ground crew alike. I guess nowadays they call it an adrenaline rush. Anyway one of the crew chiefs, SSgt. B.K. Lloyd, was in the shower. Coming out of the trailer door, one arm clutching fatigues and a towel in the other, barefoot and naked, he jumped on the moving alert truck. In the jump he lost his fatigues, but wrapped the towel around his mid-section and kept going. Well, B. K. was successful in making the alert and getting his B-47 launched. But in getting the MD-3 power cart out and away from the aircraft prior to taxi his bare feet caused him to fall and injure his left arm, which later was found to be broken. How many aircrews have the distinction of being given taxi directions by a naked crew

...continued on page 4

From Sailor...continued from page 3

chief with a broken arm, all in the line of duty? (Had old B.K. been a budding politician of this day, he probably would have gotten a basket-full of medals.)

Maintenance, airframe and engine-wise, I think the B-47 was the best engineered and constructed airplane of its day, and in my humble opinion there has not yet been a better looking airplane built. The maintenance manuals were well written and easily interpreted right down to the wrench twisting level. Maybe Boeing could have done a bit better design job with some of the ground support equipment, e.g., the fuel drop tank dolly was clumsy and awkward; a lengthy long drawn out backbreaking chore, and the drag chute install was another Herculean task, but nothing to really complain about.

The 321st Bomb Wing had the best group of pilots, mechanics, and support people that I was ever privileged to work with, ever and anywhere. We also understand how others may feel their outfit to have been the best, and our only difference is that the 321st really was.

*Harold Denmon (CMSgt. Ret.)
Cocoa, FL*

What Was The DB-47?

The DB-47 was an attempt by the USAF to develop a stand-off weapon that could destroy the target but preserve the aircrew. At the time it was developed there were still major problems with the B-47's range and its capability of reaching its target. In the early 1950s, Headquarters USAF contracted with Boeing to develop a Stratojet to carry the Bell GAM-63 Rascal air-launched ballistic missile (ALBM). Several prototypes and test-beds (YDB-47B and YDB-47E) were modified from standard airframes. In the EBB TIDE modification program during 1955/56, Boeing modified 30 B-47Bs into DB-47Bs that were assigned to the 321st Bomb Wing at Pinecastle AFB (later McCoy AFB). The program was not very successful and General LeMay never wanted the airplane. As might be expected, the Rascal extracted a severe performance penalty on the DB-47B. Not all airplanes received the full modification, but all of them were returned to standard bomber configuration after the program was cancelled in 1958. The most notable external feature of the DBs (besides the missile mounted on the fuselage) was the centerline air refueling doors in front of the windshield. B-47 test-beds would carry other missiles as well: GAM-72 Quail, GAM-67 Crossbow, BOLD ORION, and AQM-37A target drones.



DB-47B, 51-2168, of the 445th BS, 321st BW, makes a low pass over the Eglin AFB range in 1958 with a Bell GAM-63 Rascal missile on the fuselage pylon. The airplane carried the shield of the 321st on its nose.

Photo: USAF

Scrapbook



LAST B-47 TO DEPART — The last 306th Bomb Wing's B-47 left MacDill AFB Mar. 15. Crew members taking the plane to Davis-Monthan AFB are (l-r): Capt. C. L. Eskew, Co-pilot; Col Littleton C. Selden, pilot, 2nd vice-commander; and Lt. Col. Donald E. Bennett, navigator, 200th Chief of Intelligence. The crew-chief is unidentified.

Last B-47 to depart 306th BW. Submitted by Sigmund Alexander



In this mid-1950s photo, an unidentified public information officer interviews Hollywood actor Jimmy Stewart, who was then a colonel in the Air Force Reserve. Stewart, a pilot with 35 combat missions in Eighth Air Force B-24s in World War II, visited Barksdale three times to fly with the 301st Bomb Wing. Stewart's real-life reserve pilot training visits to Barksdale greatly increased the realism of his movie, Strategic Air Command. (Courtesy Eric Brock.)
 I was in this movie as a long range shot of marching troops while in Air Troop, Command of Lowry AFB, Colo, from Aug 53 to Mar 1954

VIA KEN OYER

• Col Jimmy Stewart at Barksdale AFB. Submitted by Ken Oyer



One of Barksdale's notable alumni is comedian George Carlin. He was at Barksdale in the 1950s, assigned to the 376th Bomb Wing's 30th Personnel and Administrative Maintenance Squadron. Carlin was probably called in just before his deployment. He had worked almost as long as he is allowed a CB duty. He worked just over a year as a pilot at the 306th Bomb Wing, then other duties including William Jack. In the 1950s came to a close, Carlin's days at Barksdale were over. The Air Force was not compatible with Carlin's career path, and he was eventually discharged in 1957. For his service with the 376th Bomb Wing, Carlin provided looks to his comedy. Local audiences laughed with Carlin when Carlin performed in the area. (Carlin later said that he was able to spend at least a few weeks working for Barksdale and was a great experience. Source: Robert J. New George Carlin.)

Airman 3rd Class (now comedian) George Carlin in his SAC days with the 376th BW at Barksdale AFB.

Submitted by Sigmund Alexander



Two photos from Goose Bay: 376th BW (above), 380th (below).

Photos: Al Fickensher



Once A Fighter Pilot...

This set of orders had to be a terrible mistake or someone's idea of a cruel joke. I was being taken out of my beloved F-86 and sent to the B-47 as a co-pilot via a six month Navigation-Bombing school. My dream of an Air Force career of looping, rolling, close formation, dog-fighting, strafing, bombing and pillaging was shattered. The only consolation was that several other Lieutenants were going to the SAC gates of hell with me.

When I arrived at Connally AFB for nav/bomb school and drove down to the flight line my spirits were somewhat lifted by the sight of F-94s and F-89s. Surely we would be flying those to maintain our pilot proficiency in jet aircraft. I wondered who the unlucky ones were that got to fly the B-25s. Maybe we used them for practice bombing, after all, they were bombers. The T-29s, I knew, were flying classrooms for navigation training. The depths of despair sank lower when they told us that we would be flying the B-25s as targets for practice radar intercepts. My attitude was not very good and when a '94 or '89 would do a roll or two in front of us after completing his intercept; it just poured acid into a festering wound.

We had class in learning to use the handheld sextant, the kind that you wound up like a clock, looked in the eyepiece, snapped the start lever, focused on the sun and listened to it growl for two minutes. The instructor had gone back into the classroom when a good looking WAF came walking down the street. Being a little bored, we told her that this was a photography class and had her posing on the steps of the building when the instructor returned. Star study class in the planetarium was a disaster. Right after lunch, it was dark and cool with nice comfortable reclining seats, a perfect place for a short nap. For some reason an unscheduled attitude adjustment class conducted by the school commander was fit into our tight schedule.

As I drove onto Dyess AFB there appeared a huge black smoke cloud rising from the area of the control tower. Thinking aircraft accident, I was surprised when I got to the flight line and saw all that smoke

was coming from the engines of B-47s taking-off and realized it was smoke from the water injection system.

I reported to duty with the 10th BS and promptly told everyone there had been a terrible mistake and that I shouldn't be here and probably would be transferred shortly, and they in turn told me how much I would like Dyess and the B-47. They were a jolly, friendly bunch and everyone was quite helpful in getting me settled in my new surroundings. I found out about survival school, bomb school, ground school with the Mobile Training Detachment, simulator periods and was issued all my flight gear and dash ones. I was introduced to mission planning that took most of the day, mission briefing and pre, pre-flights the day before the mission. Time flies when you are having fun.

One day one of the AC's told me to come with him and crew while they did a taxi test on a B-47. We did a complete exterior pre-flight before getting into the aircraft. For me, this was the first time to ever be in a B-47. I was sitting on the floor in the auxiliary crew position and listening on the interphone. Checklist and more checklist...won't they ever get this thing started? After what seemed ages they finally started taxiing for the south end of the runway. Once on the runway they held the brakes while the power came up, then released the brakes and we started rolling. I don't know how fast we were going when they started trying to slow down enough to make the turn-off at the north end of the runway. At the time the runway at Dyess was only 10,000 feet long, but the last 3,500 feet was being added and there was lots of construction equipment in that area. They couldn't get the aircraft slowed enough and rather than go into the construction equipment straight ahead, they took the aircraft off the right side of the runway. I couldn't see what was going on but it was rough and noisy and I remember thinking, "I knew I wasn't going to like bombers." Once we got stopped the order to evacuate came but I really didn't know how to get out. The AC was frantically pulling the fire switches, and I sensed real trouble and felt the need for a very rapid exit. After what seemed an eternity I finally got the pressure door and entry door open, saw ground

under the entry way and just dropped feet first to the ground. What I saw was unbelievable. Both inboard engine pods were nearly torn from the wing and resting on the ground, and the engine exhausts of the left pod were facing forward. Dense white smoke, like that from a charcoal grill just prior to combustion, was curling upward. This thing could blow any second so it was time to get away. About this time the emergency equipment arrived and started foaming everything down.

As a result of that accident and the subsequent hearing, my transition was delayed somewhat. One Friday afternoon at "happy hour" the Base Commander, whom I had met as a result of the hearings, asked how I liked Dyess and the B-47. I replied honestly that "I had joined the Air Force to fly jet fighters and you all took me out of those, sent me to nav/bomb school, then tried to kill me the first time I got in one of your bombers and now I'm not flying at all. I don't like Dyess and the B-47 one bit." The next morning we had a Squadron Commanders Call. I was sitting there when the Squadron Operations Officer motioned for me to come with him. In his office he asked what I had told the General last night. I told him and he replied, "Lt. Daniel, you had better like flying because you are going to think you have grown wings." Was he ever right!

I had a great AC, a former fighter pilot, and Nav/Bomb, a former New York policeman. There were 10 kids on the crew and I wasn't even married. We became a lead crew and by being the only bachelor Combat Ready Co-Pilot in the squadron, with nothing to do except polish my convertible, I got to fill in and fly with almost every crew in the squadron as well as with the Wing Commander on several occasions. I logged more flight time than any other pilot in the wing, and I guess they thought they were punishing me. By being on the flight schedule so much I escaped many additional duties like Refueling Officer and Airdrome Officer.

But, like the call of the "wild goose," the call of jet fighters never left me and when my tour of active duty was over I went to work for the airlines and joined the Reserves. Two weeks later, I was back in my F-86 and happy as a hog in a tub of slop. I continued to fly in the Reserves for 25 years but the biscuit wheels fell off the gravy train once more when the F-86 was replaced with the C-119 and then came the C-124.

*Gordon Daniel
Rotan, TX*

...more photographs on page 8



B-47E, 51-5233, came to rest off the Dyess runway. The aircraft was assigned to the 10th BS, 341st BW. Date was 24 November 1956.

Photo: USAF/author

Once a...continued from page 7



The entry door, with ladder extended, is open after Gordon Daniel and his crewmates abandoned the aircraft, now surrounded by emergency crew. Note the inboard nacelle with its aft end facing forward. Photo: USAF/author



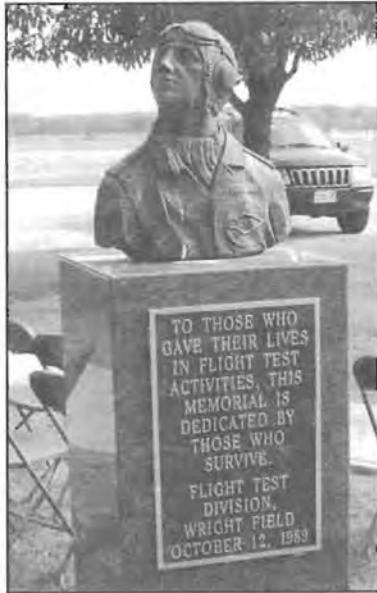
5233 was repaired and later served with the 308th, 2nd and 9th Bomb Wings, before returning to the 341st. It was reclaimed at Davis-Montahn AFB on 23 May 1961. Photo: USAF/author

More Reunion Photos ~ Dayton 2004



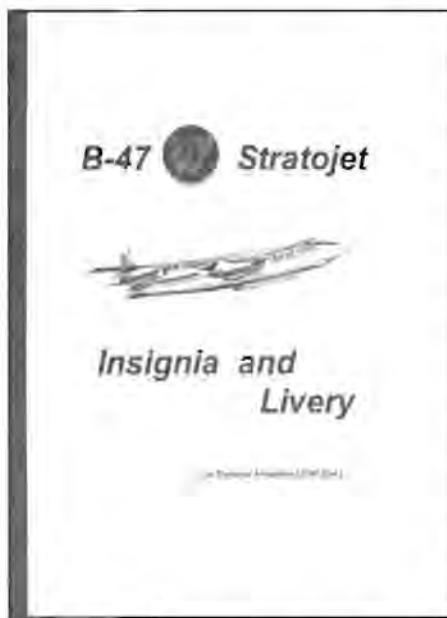
Special Thanks

The B-47 Stratojet Association would like to send special thanks to Tom Hatten who so generously donated B-47 prints for drawings at the reunion last September. The money raised was for the benefit of the Association. Tom has been a staunch supporter over the years, donating prints for the last two reunions.



Bookshelf

Our indefatigable Vice-President, Sigmund "Alex" Alexander has produced yet another book that will be of interest to Association members. *B-47 Stratojet Insignia and Livery* represents many hours of research that is a true labor of love. The book is privately printed, softbound and 90 pages in length. Alex has gathered the unit badges and patches of virtually every unit associated with the B-47 and printed them in color. The insignia are organized by Air Force, Air Division, and Wing. Almost every Bombing Squadron is represented along with Air Refueling Squadrons, and many of the maintenance units (OMS, FMS, A&ES, etc.). Other using commands such as ATC, MATS, AMC, AFSC, and APGC have entries. There are patches from the annual bombing/navigation/refueling competitions. He has even included images of the "horn buttons" from B-47 control wheels. The second part of the book is a collection of photographs and drawings illustrating the colors and markings of Stratojets in bombing, reconnaissance, weather, and testing roles. The ole B-47 wasn't the most colorful of warbirds, but some airplanes did carry nose art, names, and various amounts of day-glo orange. You will also find here



for the first time in print (at least to this editor's knowledge) a listing of the tail stripes and color for each SAC unit. A section of B-47 art concludes the publication. The book is available from the author at 12110 Los Cerdos Dr., San Antonio, TX 78233. Cost

is \$25.00 postage paid. Alex also has available his comprehensive history of the B-47 (\$30), a history of the 100th BW (\$25), the 100th ARS story (\$25), *Headquarters SAC Analysis of B-47 Accidents* (\$10

for print version, \$5 for CD, \$15 for both), *Disposition of B-47 Aircraft not sent to AMARC, 1953-1966* (\$10.00), and B-47s sent to MASDC, Davis-Monthan AFB (\$10).

Feenixx Publishing, Inc. has produced a poster featuring B-47 Stratojet Wings. It displays a drawing of the B-47, nia and a SAC Wing. poster is reproduced The pub- a poster for 36 & B-58, units with p a t c h e s . able feature USAF Stra-



the SAC insignia and a patch for each The 18"x24" beautifully in full color. lisher also has B-29/B-50, B-B-52, and B-1 the appropriate Others avail- a composite of tegic Bomb-

ers as well as drawings of individual SAC aircraft. Check out the website at <http://www.feenixx.com>. The posters sell for \$9.95 and can be purchased from Edugraphics.net at <http://www.edugraphics.net/gt2-aviation/gt212.htm>.

From The Editor

In response to Rod Baechtold's "Letter To The Editor" in last issue, Ray Butts reminds us that there were two wings at Hunter. The 2nd BW was composed of the 20th, 49th, 96th and 429th Bomb Squadrons. The 308th BW had the 373rd, 374th, 375th and the 425th. In 1959, the 2nd BW became a super wing.

Please keep sending those great stories to share with the membership. We need a constant supply of them, both long and short, as well as photographs. We'll take them in any format, just send them in.

Please check your mailing label to see if your dues are current. The number to the right of your name indicates the year through which you are paid.

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 (25 sheets/25 envelopes)	\$13

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~

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

Non Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Brenham, TX
77833
Permit No.
#84



This twilight shot of the Boeing Wichita ramp was taken during the height of production. The next B-47 Stratojet Association Reunion will be in Wichita on 21-23 September 2006. Stay tuned for further details.

Photo: Boeing

~Remember To Pay Your Dues For 2005~