



# *The Stratojet Newsletter*

November 2011 Volume 36

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



*Many of you spent long winter days and nights on the ramp with the B-47 but this shot shows a thoroughly chilled Stratojet inside a hangar at Eglin AFB. The climate-controlled environment was used to test the systems to make sure they were up to the conditions the airplane would encounter. Operational cold weather tests were done in Alaska.*

*Photo: USAF*

## ***My Christmas Story*** *by David D. Dillon*

It was December 1952 and I had recently returned from the 98<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing at Yokota AFB, Japan. I had been assigned to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadron, 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Wing at March AFB, Riverside CA and was on TDY to Amarillo AFB TX to attend B-47 mechanics school.

The school was closing for two weeks at Christmas, therefore, we had to leave. The Air Force gave us a choice of getting a round trip “hop” back to March AFB or travel elsewhere on our own. In other words, no “hop.”

My fiancée, Phyllis Havens lived in Glendale CA and it would have been great to spend Christmas with her and her mom, but I hadn’t been home to see my own mom in Red Bank NJ for almost two years. Phyllis and I talked it over and it was decided I should head east.

I was in my Air Force uniform and this was during the Korean War, therefore hitchhiking was a reasonable option. I checked at Base Operations to see if there was any air traffic heading east. There wasn’t, so I hit Route 66 with my thumb out.

*Christmas...continued on page 9*

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## *Roll Call of Honor*

**Richard N. Broughton**, Ormand Beach FL, died 17 Oct. 2011.

**Norman A. Degenhardt**, East Tawas MI, died 19 Dec 2011.

**Robt C. Drebelbis**, San Antonio TX, died 16 September 2009.

**Carroll Duncan**, Spring Hill FL, passed away 5 Mar 2010.

**A.F. Goodwyn**, Tarboro NC, died 17 November 2011.

**Joseph T. Hatten**, Spokane WA, passed away 18 Dec 2011.

**Bob Leuchtmann**, The Woodlands TX, passed away 15 June 2010.

**Walter Satcher**, Birmingham, AL, died 11 August 2009.

**Lloyd W. Schneider**, Elk River, MN died 5 Sept 2011.

**Donald L. Sunberg**, Longmont CO, 30 April 2010.

**Guy M. Townsend III**, Mercer Island WA, passed away 28 March 2011.

## *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 Bob Griffiths, Treasurer.
- Send address, email, & telephone corrections to Bob Griffiths.
- 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>**

## *Directory Corrections*

*This page contains material restricted to the members of the B-47 Stratojet Association. The full text is available in the print edition.*

## *Legendary Test Pilot Guy Townsend Goes West*

Guy M. Townsend III BG/USAF (Ret), 90, passed away on 28 March 2011. He was the first Air Force pilot to fly the XB-47 and was widely credited with actually selling the airplane to the USAF after taking Gen. K. B. Wolfe for a memorable ride in the first Stratojet at Moses Lake. He was also credited with the idea for the brake chute that became a normal part of B-47 operations (an idea that came from his B-17 days in WWII). Born and raised in Mississippi and Texas, he attended Texas A&M before joining the Army Air Corps in the early days of WWII. He flew 450 missions in B-17s and B-29s before returning home to a 29 year career in the Air Force.

During that career, he was the first military pilot to fly the B-50, B-47, B-52 and the "Dash 80" prototype of the KC-135. He was co-pilot for the first flight of

the B-52. His flight test career included leading the B-47 and B-52 programs and later the C-5, XB-70, and B-1 programs. In 1955 he was assigned to the 97th Bomb Wing at Castle AFB as Deputy Director of Material. Townsend was next assigned to SAC Headquarters, Offutt AFB as Chief of the Requirement Division.

Retiring from the Air Force in 1970, Gen. Townsend worked for the Boeing Company for the next 16 years as head of the Supersonic Transport division. When that project was cancelled, he was later involved with the E-4, the YC-14, and the B-2.

He still flew after retiring from Boeing in 1986 and he regularly flew floatplanes on fishing trips, aerobatic biplanes, and a variety of other general aviation aircraft. Failing health caused him to give up flying in 2007.

Gen. Townsend was on our panel of B-47 pioneers when the Association met for its 3rd reunion in Seattle in 2002. He informed and entertained with many stories from the early days of B-47 development and operations. With his passing and that of Jim Fraser (Newsletter # 35), the pioneers of the first days of the B-47 are now gone. We shall never see their likes again.

*A young Guy Townsend (left) visits with Boeing Test Pilot Bob Robbins before another test flight. Townsend (below) with his USAF test crew in mid-1948.*

*Photos: Boeing*





# GET HOME-IT IS

SAKE SUTTER



A B-47 CREW WAS SCHEDULED FOR AN 1800 TAKE OFF TO RETURN HOME FROM A REFLEX TDY. THEY AROSE AT 0830. ALTHOUGH THE MISSION WAS SCHEDULED TO BE A LONG ONE WITH A FUEL STOP ENROUTE.



THE FIRST LEG OF THE MISSION WAS CONDUCTED IN A FLIGHT OF FIVE AND WAS UNEVENTFUL WITH AN ACTUAL GCA AT THE REFUELING BASE.



THE CP REMAINED AT THE AIRCRAFT TO SUPERVISE REFUELING WHILE THE AC AND NAV. WENT TO OPNS TO MAKE A FLIGHT PLAN AND CLEAR FOR THEIR HOME STATION. THEY HAD NOW BEEN ACTIVE FOR 17 HOURS AND WERE PLANNING TO GO AGAIN.



TWENTY FOUR HOURS AFTER GETTING UP THE PREVIOUS DAY, THE CREW TAXIED THEIR AIRCRAFT ONTO THE RUNWAY FOR TAKE OFF. THEY WERE NUMBER 2 IN THE 5 AIRCRAFT FLIGHT. THE WEATHER WAS 3 @, 8 @ 5 MILES IN RF WITH DOWNDRAFTS OFF THE END OF THE RUNWAY. IT WAS JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT.



THE TAKE OFF APPEARED NORMAL BUT RAPCON NEVER SAW THE AIRCRAFT ON ITS SCOPE. THE AC MADE A RADIO CHANNEL CHANGE WITHOUT TURNING OVER CONTROL TO THE CP. THE CP CAUTIONED THE AC TO "WATCH YOUR AIRSPEED." TWO MINUTES AND 3 MILES AFTER TAKE OFF THE B-47 CRASHED INTO THE ICE COVERED BAY. MIRACULOUSLY THE AC LIVED, THE OTHERS DID NOT.



WHY THE CREW ALLOWED THE AIRCRAFT TO DESCEND AFTER TAKE OFF IS UNKNOWN-- POOR COORDINATION?? POOR INSTRUMENT TECHNIQUE?? --- BACKSIDE OF POWER CURVE ?? IT PROVES THAT THE FATIGUED STATE OF THE CREW MADE IT UNABLE TO COPE WITH EXISTING CONDITIONS. THE AIRCRAFT WAS COMPLETELY AIRWORTHY UNTIL IMPACT.



## *The Tupolev TU-16 Badger*

by Sigmund "Alex" Alexander



*A US Navy F-14 keeps a watchful eye after intercepting two Badgers getting too close to American interests. Photo: Author*

Having flown in the B-47, I was always interested in the Soviet counterpart to the B-47, the TU-16 Badger. However, one can only compare these aircraft superficially as these two aircraft were developed during different time periods. The Soviet aircraft benefitted from the development of more powerful engines and a better understanding of high speed aerodynamics. Both aircraft were aerodynamically beautiful. On the ground, it's easier to appreciate the Badger's clean lines because of its high landing gear.

External differences are readily apparent: the Tupolev has a glass nose that probably housed an advanced version of the Soviet acquired B-29 Norden bombsight; thick wings housing two jet engines, pilots seated side by side, both dorsal and ventral gunner domes and barbets, and a manned tail gun.

Development of the TU-16 began in 1950, while that of the B-47 began in 1946. Aerodynamically it was able to capitalize on the thick wing like the B-52. However, it had its engines buried in the wing roots like the British "V" bombers, the Victor, Valiant, and Vulcan. The Mikulin PD-3MT engines provided 20,000 lbs of thrust; the thrust of this one engine provided more thrust than the three J-47-25s which provided a total of 15,600 lbs; with water-methanol injection this was increased to 21,600 lbs. However,

with only one engine on each side, the Badger could not afford to lose an engine one on takeoff. The take-off weight for the Badger was 150,000, while that for the B-47 was 230,000 lbs. The high takeoff weight for the B-47 necessitated the use of ATO bottles. The Mikulin engine is remarkable in that it produced 10,000 lbs. more of thrust than the J-57. The J-57 was the engine which powered the B-52, and it only produced 10,000 lbs. of thrust. Soviet engine development at the time was remarkable. The MiG-15s powered by Soviet copies of the Rolls-Royce Nene centrifugal engine outperformed the F-86 powered by a J-47. The bomb bays of both the TU-16 and the



*The TU-16 had a cockpit that featured a walk-through entry into the bombardier's compartment. The glazed nose was a feature of many Soviet designs, even some airliners.*

*Photo: Author*

B-47 were able to carry the largest hydrogen bombs then in existence. The Badger, with its tricycle landing gear, would have been easier to take off and land as compared to the bicycle landing gear of a B-47. The Badger's fuselage barbets were an anachronism, and were totally useless. One wonders why they were ever installed.

The original refueling system for the Tupolev bomber was unique; it was a wingtip-to wingtip probe and drogue. The tanker, a converted Badger, carried a hose and basket in the wing tip that was unreeled for refueling. The receiver Badger had a probe at the forward end of the wing tip to accommodate the basket. This was eventually replaced by a centerline refueling system.



*The Badger was a good looking airplane in the air and on the ground. Photo: Author*

The Badger was built in Kuibyshev, Voronezh, and Kazan. The first flight occurred in 1952 and the bombers began to be deployed in 1954. A total

of 1,507 aircraft were built from 1954-1962. There were a number of military variants and a civilian liner based on the Badger, the TU-104, was built. The TU-104 was not truly a commercially viable aircraft but a propaganda ploy to prove the superiority of the Communist system. The first version could only carry 50 passengers. Eventually 201 aircraft were built and the final version could carry as many as 117 passengers. It had a terrible accident rate. The military versions of the TU-16 included a nuclear/ conventional bomb carrier, tanker, maritime strike aircraft equipped with various types of air-to-surface missiles, both active and passive ECM aircraft, ELINT reconnaissance aircraft, and a drone carrier.

The Soviets exported the aircraft to Iraq, Indonesia, Egypt, and China. The Iraqi Badgers were destroyed during Desert Storm in 2003. Indonesia acquired a number of TU-16s that it planned to use against the Dutch in their quarrel with them over Papua. They were never used and the last one went out of service in 1970. Thirty Egyptian TU-16s were destroyed by the Israeli's during the Six Day War in 1967. However, Egypt acquired additional TU-16s, and the last one was finally retired in 2000. The Chinese accepted their first TU-16s in 1958 and then proceeded to build them under license as the H-6. An H-6 dropped the first Chinese thermo-

nuclear bomb on October 17, 1967. The Peoples Liberation Air Force, PLAF, is estimated to have 120 nuclear capable H-6s and the Navy 20 in a non-nuclear role.

The Soviet TU-16 dropped the first Soviet nuclear bomb, Sakharov's layer cake RDS-6, on August 12, 1953 and the fully developed nuclear bomb, the RDS-37, on Nov. 22, 1955. The TU-16's role as nuclear bomber was largely superseded by missiles. It was in the Badger's maritime strike role that the West most frequently came in contact with the TU-16s. The Soviet Naval Air Force, operating from the Kola Peninsula, was responsible for electronic reconnaissance, keeping track of US aircraft carriers, and in the event of war destroying them with air-to-surface missiles. Supposedly the Badger was used in Afghanistan, but is hard to imagine what kind of target it was used against. Possibly it was a Soviet version of Tora Bora. The venerable Badger was withdrawn from service in 1993, not long after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The differences between the B-47 and TU-16 were not that great. The differences lay in what they could and could not do in the event of war. If the curtain

*Badger....continued on page 8*



*The Soviets adopted an early wingtip-to-wingtip method of aerial refueling that is reminiscent of early procedures in the United States*

*Badger...continued from page 7*

went up, hundreds of B-47s would strike at the heart of the Soviet Union, and this is what their crews were trained to do. However, the TU-16s could not attack the United States in a similar fashion. The Soviets did not have the necessary tankers nor did they have the resources to train the great number of crews needed to accomplish the bombing of the United States. This is the reason why Khrushchev selected to build missiles over bombers. Both aircraft carried out their designated roles in an exemplary manner. As a final thought, I wondered how the TU-16 would have performed in the flying an Oil Burner Hangover route in the mid West during the summer.



**ATTENTION**

**ALL FORMER STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND VETERANS**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**31 MAY - 3 JUNE 2012**

**OMAHA, NEBRASKA**

**SAC MEMORIAL DEDICATION AND REUNION**

**20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY INACTIVATION OF SAC**

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**www.strategicairandspace.com**

*We've featured Jim Hoopaw articles several times in this newsletter. A while back he sent this photo and the following caption. We thought you might enjoy both. ed.*

From Dec 1959 until I retired 1 Jan 1986 I spent my career as a crewmember on B-47 and B-52 aircraft, B-52 Squadron Commander, Wing DCO and other positions practicing and planning the destruction of the Soviet Union through nuclear warfare. Hours of Chrome Dome flights, weeks of alert, hours of target study and many missed family events. **The good news is it didn't happen.** The attachment (photo) is for real, I finally made it to Red Square, not in a BUF, but I am wearing my B-52 Stratofortress Association cap. I guess we won that one.

*Jim Hoopaw*



*Christmas...continued from page 1*

I had great luck and arrived home in plenty of time for a wonderful visit with my mom and family. I was, however, a young man in love and I was really missing Phyllis. I asked Mom if she would be upset if I left earlier than planned? She was very understanding and gave me her blessing to leave.

I hitchhiked to Baltimore and spent the night with my cousin, Roger Wingerter. The next day he drove me to Andrews AFB where I lucked into a "hop" to Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton OH.

There, Base Operations informed me no flights were scheduled in or out, so again, I hit the highway. Other

than snow and a very scary ride with a drunk near Oklahoma City, luck was with me and I arrived in Glendale CA in time to spend a couple of days with Phyllis and her mom.

I then hitchhiked to March AFB and, with my fellow airmen, caught the "hop" back to Amarillo AFB TX.

B-47 school resumed and I had just finished a 6,000 mile odyssey. A bi-coastal Christmas with loved ones.

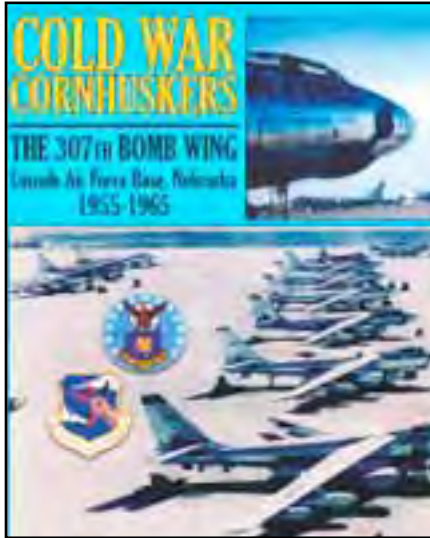
Oh yes, Phyllis and I were married in the Base Chapel at March AFB 30 June 1953. We recently celebrated 58 years.

*On 28 May 1957, this 380th BW crew (Plattsburgh AFB) won the General Electric Trophy by winning a non-stop race during the Paris Air Show. The route flown was Paris-Madrid-Rome-Paris and there were two other 380th aircraft as competition. The crew, from the 529th BS was composed of (below L to R) Capt. Robert E. Sheridan AC, 1st Lt J. L. Mombrea CP, Capt. Frank R. Beadle OBS, and Sgt. E. W. Smith, Crew Chief. The 2346 mile flight time was 4 hrs., 12 min, and 7 sec for an average speed of 558 mph. The aircraft was 51-2379. Photo at right is Sheridan and Beadle with USAF, GE and Air Show officials and the trophy.*



## Bookshelf

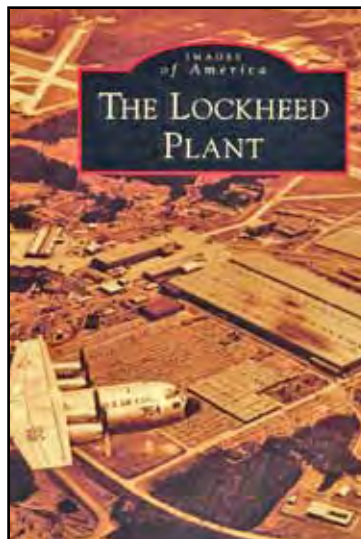
**Cold War Cornhuskers** by Mike Hill is a big and expensive book that tells the story of the 307th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB NE during the years 1955-1965. It is



somewhat unique in that it tells the story of the Cold War by relating the day-to-day history of the Wing. The book is full of over 300 photos that fill its 256 pages. It is hard-bound and large format (8.5 x 11) and was published in May of 2011 by Schiffer. This company has a history of publishing expensive

books that are not always well edited. However, they are often labors of love, as this one is, and usually contain material that you cannot find in print anywhere else. Those of you who were with the 307th will almost certainly want a copy as will those of us who enjoy anything that features our favorite airplane. The book is available from Amazon although you will not get a break in the price. You will get free shipping, however! The price is \$69.99.

Several issue back (No. 30) we reviewed a book about the early years of the aircraft plant at Marietta GA, **The Bell Bomber Plant**. This new volume picks up the story and carries it forward from 1951 when Lockheed took over control of Government Plant No. 6 to refurbish B-29s and then, soon after, to build B-47s. The 128 pages softbound book is typical of the "Images of America" series with



## Supply Room

Items are available from George Brierley, 3661 Packard Rd., Niagara 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

*Bookshelf...continued from page 10*

many photos and short informative captions. About 10 pages and 16 photos document the B-47 days. It is always interesting to see B-47s and C-130s being built together. Oddly, there is nothing about the many B-47 modification programs of the 1950s and 60s. This is the same plant we toured at the 2008 Reunion in Marietta. The author is Joe Kirby and the publisher is Arcadia Publishing with a date of 2011. The cost is \$16.49 from Amazon.

## B-47 Stratojet Association 2012 Reunion

**1-3 November - Tucson**

Details To Follow  
In  
Next Newsletter  
&

Separate Mailing of Registration Materials

### Application For Membership - The B-47 Stratojet Association

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\_\_\_\_\_ Renewal (Fill in Name only, and address data if changed)

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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
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70-74	\$150
75-79	\$100
80 & up	\$ 50

**Dues are payable each January.**

Payments and this form should be mailed to:

Bob Griffiths, Treasurer/B-47 Stratojet Assn.  
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*The first Stratojet, XB-47 46-065, streaks across the snow covered landscape of the northern U.S. on its record setting flight from Moses Lake WA to Andrews AFB on 8 February 1949.. Time was 3 hours, 46 minutes, avg. speed 607.8, an unofficial record.. The crew was Majors Russell Schlee and Joe Howell, Air Force test pilots. Photo: Boeing*

***Next Reunion ~ 1-3 November 2012 ~ Tucson AZ  
Pay Your Dues For 2012 Today!***