

# The Strato Jet

## Newsletter

Summer 2016 Volume 47

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



*This is one of the most unusually marked Stratojets we have seen. This is not a very sharp photo but it is the only shot we have ever seen of this bird. Does anyone recall having seen it at Wichita? It is TB-47B 51-2053 and we cannot find the aircraft record for it.*

*Photo: Boeing Historical Archive*

### ***From The President's Desk***

As a young college student, I majored in history primarily because it was the most fascinating thing I could think of studying. The more I learned of history, the more I realized how important it was that we study history and do our best to learn some of the lessons it can teach us.

Now, what's this got to do with the B-47 and our association? Well, for one thing, our association's purpose is "to preserve the heritage of the B-47." We would like people to know the lessons of history we learned as we manned the frontlines of the Cold War. Lessons such as "deterrence did work" and by remaining strong and professional, we precluded the nuclear catastrophe that faced our world back then should never be forgotten.

As an association, we do all we can to achieve that end. We support museums displaying the B-47 and we encourage anything that will re-enforce the effect of that heritage.

There is something else that we should all consider as individuals wanting to contribute to this goal.

I know that many are reluctant to "tell their story" because we don't want to "toot our own horns." And some even mistakenly think that what they did was not important. Both of these excuses are invalid. First, sharing your experiences, is not tooting your horn, it is writing the history of our era. As for whether it was important, remember, that whether you were a "second wiper" or an A/C, you were part of the team that collectively got the job done. One lesson SAC taught us was that we had to work together as a team if we were going to get the job done

With this in mind, I ask you whether you have shared your story with your family? How about your friends? Do they know the part you played in the Cold War? That's the one we won, remember? And, dare I suggest that you share your stories with the rest of us in the B-47 Association? We are eager to have you share your memories and experiences through the newsletter. One day, our newsletter will be a valuable archive of the facts of the B-47's role in winning the Cold War. You deserve to be in that archive!

Please do your part by sharing your history so others can learn.

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## ***Roll Call Of Honor***

**Donald J. Chase** of Omaha NE, 19 June 2015

**Lawrence H. Duval, Jr.** of Granbury TX, 18 March 2015

**Carl Gustafson** of Omaha NE, 26 September 2015

**Earl E. Koehler** of Mt. Carmel IL, 31 January 2016

**Thomas Lawrence** of Beaumont TX, 31 March 2016

**Cyrus B. McKernan** of New Castle NH, 30 September 2015

**Sidney F. Sweet** of Austin TX, 11 May 2016

**John C. Wattinger** of Schertz TX, 16 March 2016

**Thomas J. Wright** of Media PA, 3 July 2016



### **\*\*\*\*\*Attention All Snowbirds\*\*\*\*\***

If you have a winter or alternate address, please contact:  
Dick Curran/Secretary/Treasurer

Note: The United States Post Office will not forward our newsletter.

I can add a "Snowbird Address" to our database if you let me know.

If you move please send me your new address.

## ***Important Reminder***

- **Pay your dues for 2016** (the number on your mailing label indicates the year through which you are paid-up).
- **2016 Reunion - Washington DC area - 29 Sept-2 Oct**
- **Send stories, letters, memories, & photos to Editor, cmhs@sbcglobal.net, PO Box 1144, Brenham TX 77834**

*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. Opinions expressed in the articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the 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.

# 20th Anniversary Reunion - Washington DC

## 2016 Reunion Itinerary

### Wednesday September 28th

Arrival ~ 91st SRWA Members and Guests  
1800-1900 ~ B-47 Stratojet Association Board of Directors/  
Governors Dinner  
1900 ~ B-47 Stratojet Association Board of Directors/  
Governors Meeting

### Thursday September 29th

0900 -1030 ~ 91st SRWA Board Meeting ~ Luray Room  
1030 ~ 91st SRWA General Membership Meeting ~ Luray  
Room  
Arrival ~ B-47 Stratojet Association Members and Guests  
1300 ~ Registration Opens for Both B-47 & 91st SRWA in  
Lobby  
1800-1900 ~ Cocktails (Cash Bar) ~ Rivanna Room  
1900-2030 ~ Reception Dinner ~ Rivanna Room  
2030 ~ B-47 Stratojet Association Membership Meeting

### Friday September 30th

0830-1700 AF Memorial, Iwo Jima Memorial,  
Arlington National Cemetery, Lunch

### Saturday October 1st

0830- 1700 ~ Monuments Tour & Lunch  
0930-1530 ~ Mount Vernon Tour

### Sunday October 2nd

0930-1430 ~ Udvar-Hazy Air & Space Museum  
1800-1900 ~ Cocktails (Cash Bar) ~ Rivanna Room  
1900-2200 ~ Reunion Banquet & Program ~ Rivanna Room

### Monday October 3rd

Checkout



Memorials we will visit. From upper left, counter-clockwise: Arlington National Cemetery and the Arlington House, the Air Force Memorial, the Korean War Veteran's Memorial and the Iwo Jima Memorial with the Washington Monument in the background.



## ***Reunion Registration***

Registration Materials were mailed in early May so you should have received yours by now. If not, please contact Dick Curran at dickcurran@hotmail.com or 865-940-1020. Information can also be found on the Association website at [www.b-47.com](http://www.b-47.com) or the 91st website: [www.91stsrwa.com](http://www.91stsrwa.com).

Please note that hotel reservations must be made no later than 28 August, 2016 to ensure our group rate. Note that the special rate applies to 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion if you wish an extended stay.



*Reunion sites, clockwise from top: Westin Washington Dulles Hotel, National Air & Space Museum Udvar-Hazy facility, National WWII Memorial, Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, Mount Vernon, Enola Gay, interior of Udvar-Hazy.*



# The B-47 Design - A Brief History

by John Fredrickson

By mid-World War II, it was becoming increasingly evident to United States military leaders that jet propelled airplanes were essential to ensure future dominance in the skies. Germany was already fielding menacing modern weapon systems including the ME-262 jet fighter; the V-1, a ramjet-powered primitive cruise missile; and the V-2 liquid-fueled rocket. These and other revolutionary weapons were in the developmental/production pipeline but would arrive too few and too late to alter the outcome of the war.

Early work was already underway elsewhere (England, the U.S., and the USSR) to develop jet engines and design airframes which would best utilize them. The initial emphasis was fighter aircraft; but, the benefit of jet engines powering larger aircraft soon became evident.

Some have used the “chicken or egg” argument. Was the development of jet aircraft designs inhibited by the dearth of jet engines? Or, was jet engine evolution slowed by the absence of suitable airframes?

At least six American companies dabbled with the design for larger post-war jet-powered bomber/reconnaissance aircraft for Air Force service. Douglas was the first. The XB-42 Mixmaster was conceived to be a piston-powered airplane with fuselage mounted internal engines and center-line counter-rotating pusher propellers. Jet engines were substituted and the XB-43 Jetmaster was born; however, it soon became evident that simply swapping conventional piston power (attached to a propeller) for turbojet engines did not yield optimum performance. Two experimental versions were built but no production contract followed. (An XB-43 awaits restoration at the Smithsonian Institution.)

Starting in 1944, contracts were awarded to North American Aviation (NAA) and Convair to begin work on a four-engine design. Boeing Aircraft Company of Seattle and the Glenn L. Martin Company of Baltimore received contracts for a six-engine medium sized aircraft. All of the initial designs relied upon straight wings.

Designers struggled with several issues. Where should the engines be located? Some designs had engines mounted inside the fuselage or buried within the wings; however, analysis of wartime combat data revealed that engines

were likely to burst into flames when hit by hostile tracer (and other) rounds.

Bubble canopies modeled after fighter aircraft (e.g. the North American P-51 Mustang) were in vogue. Landing gear configuration was another vexing issue. High wings allowed wing spars to pass above the bomb bay. Thin wings provided aerodynamic efficiency and speed; however, both factors seriously complicated landing gear configuration. Furthermore, pressurization was needed for sustained operations at the desired altitudes (30,000 feet and higher).

The North American Aviation (NAA) B-45 Tornado was deemed “good enough” and rushed into production at the NAA Inglewood plant as an Iron Curtain began to descend on Europe. Bomber and reconnaissance versions built totaled 143 units. The B-45 entered squadron service in 1948 and accomplished a number of firsts, including first four-engine jet, first jet capable of delivering an atomic bomb, and first to aerial refuel. The Tornado survived for a time occupying a aerial reconnaissance niche. The last RB-45 was retired in 1959.

Convair was formed by the merger of Consolidated of San



*Consolidated XB-46*

Diego and Vultee Aircraft of Downey. Their entrant, the XB-46, was sleek but underpowered. Furthermore, the fuselage was too narrow to carry a nuclear weapon. Only a single example was built and the Air Force conducted evaluation found it unsuitable.

The six-engine Martin XB-48 bore a faint resemblance to the B-26 Marauder of World War II fame. It was considered a backup design in case the B-47 failed. First flight was on June 22, 1947 from Baltimore to the Navy test base commonly called Pax River (Naval Air Station, Patuxent River). Two prototypes were built, but again, no production contract followed.



*The B-47 Design....continued from previous page*

Meanwhile, Jack Northrop (1895-1981) was committed to the flying wing. Prototypes were built and tested in multiple sizes with both jet and conventional propulsion. The design was inherently unstable. All of the



*Northrop YB-49*

flying wings were cut up after the in-flight structural failure which killed Glen Edwards on June 5, 1948. The flying wing eventually reappeared with the B-2 bomber but only after the advent of computer-augmented flight controls.

Like the proverbial blind man groping an elephant, each of the companies (collectively and individually) was in the process of evaluation. A number of false starts and blind alleys were encountered in the quest for a large-airplane configuration which would best utilize jet engines. The engines themselves were unreliable and underpowered for the task at hand; however, the combination of private and governmental funding was yielding frequent incremental improvements.

George S. Schairer (1913-2004), a Boeing aerodynamicist, was invited into an U.S. Army sponsored team of



*This is an overhead view of Boeing Model 432 showing the fuselage-mounted jet engines with over-the-wing exhaust. This wind tunnel model still has straight wings but that would change after Shairer's letter reached Seattle.*



*Boeing's preeminent aerodynamicist, George S. Schairer*

Schairer's iconic letter from Germany is frequently mentioned in aviation lore; but, less frequently seen. Page 1 begins:

*Vökenrode, Germany  
5/10/45  
B. Cohn  
Boeing Airplane Co.  
Seattle, Wash USA*

*Dear Ben,*

*It is hard to believe that I am in Germany within a few miles of the front line. Everything is very quiet and I am living very normally in the middle of the forest.*

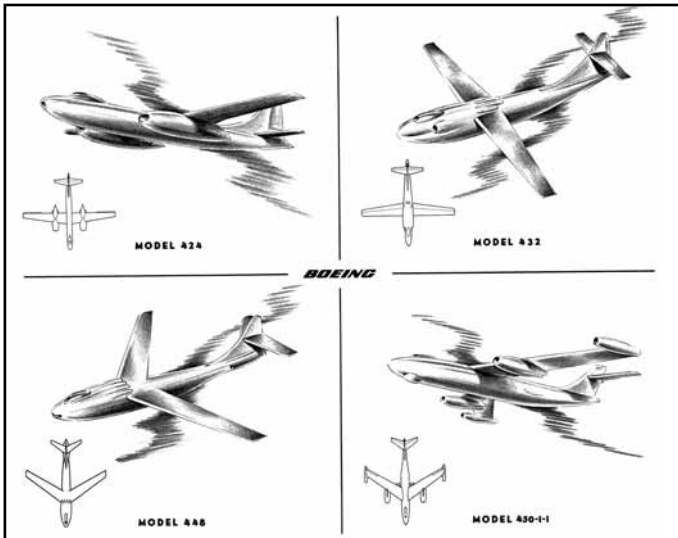
*We have excellent quarters including lights, hot water, heat, electric razors, etc.*

*We are seeing much of German aerodynamics. They are ahead of us in a few items, which I will mention...*

civilian experts to inspect secret Nazi aeronautical laboratories immediately after the fall of Germany in 1945. The B-47 precursor on the Boeing drawing boards at the time of his departure was god-awful. One version featured a B-29-type of tail. Other versions had air inlets and jet exhaust pipes sticking out of the body allowing the engines, mounted within the fuselage, to breathe.

*The B-47 Design....continued next page*

The B-47 Design...continued from previous page



*Different American engineers had proposed swept wings -- first in 1935 and separately in 1945 -- but the formulas and test data in the German files kindled a fire under aircraft designers (pod mounted engines under swept wings) which has yet to be extinguished. These are Boeing proposals.*

The Russians were on a parallel quest to gather up aerospace technology and the German engineers who mastered it. Back in Seattle, work stopped on the jet-powered medium bomber because of the jolting aeronautical engineering discoveries uncovered by the visitors to Vökenrode. The Boeing design team got themselves a blank sheet of paper and embarked on a revolutionary new approach.

New model numbers were assigned. Work on the design which became the B-47 was restarted. Wings swept at 35 degrees delivered both speed and aerodynamic efficiency. The innovative pods held the engines at a distance from the wing minimizing airflow disruption while simultaneously providing for ease of maintenance access and a margin of safety in the unlikely event of fire or disintegration.

The main landing gear dilemma was solved with a bicycle configuration with the main tires immediately forward and aft of the bomb-bay. Much smaller outrigger wheels extended from the inboard engine pods thus protecting the wing tips on the flexible anhedral (downward sloping) wings from striking the ground.

Wind tunnel evaluation confirmed the performance benefits. Only Boeing had a dedicated (company owned) wind tunnel at its exclusive disposal and this allowed the aerodynamicists to sprint forward with the re-design. The bomb bay was of sufficient size to accept the desired

weapons.

To help get a heavily loaded B-47 aloft, two methods were developed to cope with the anemic thrust delivered by the J-47 jet engines: Firstly, Rocket Assisted Takeoff (RATO) provided not only the extra kick needed to soar aloft under heavy load but also a memorable burst of flames and voluminous plumes of smoke. Several versions of RATO were tested. Witnessing a B-47 RATO takeoff close-up was a feast for the eyes but a challenge for the ears.

Secondly, a fleet of KC-97 tankers was built to top off the tanks, extend range, and replace fuel burned during takeoff and climb to altitude; however, the KC-97 (as compared to the B-47) flew low and slow. The B-47 needed to descend and decrease airspeed to accomplish in-flight refueling (IFR). USAF leadership was indifferent to the problem but Boeing took note and funded development of its own IFR solution – the Dash 80 prototype.

Two more innovations were needed because the B-47 landed fast. It was the first to incorporate anti-skid braking and a drag parachute slowed it immediately after touchdown.

The normal crew on a B-47 consisted of three: A pilot, copilot / gunner, and a navigator / bombardier. Only the pilot and copilot sat under the canopy. The interior space was confined and unappealing for anybody with claustrophobic tendencies.

Boeing Corporate Historian, Michael J. Lombardi stated, "Every large aircraft of today is a descendent of the B-47. On the 100 year anniversary of the Boeing Company, the B-47 (Model 450) is the most historically significant design because it was first to demonstrate two watershed innovations: Pod mounted jet engines hung beneath swept wings is the configuration that endures on both military and commercial models."

Other companies quickly seized upon the concept including Douglas Aircraft with the DC-8, Convair with the 880/990 series, USAF airlifters C-141 Starlifter, C-5 Galaxy, and C-17 Globemaster III -- plus all of the Airbus airliners.

Restarting the project caused the B-47 to be the last entrant into the competition. Two prototypes were developed in secret. They were not announced to the public

*The B-47 Design...continued on next page*

*The B-47 Design...continued from previous page*

until June 5, 1946. The B-47 was not fully fit for USAF operational service until 1951, or well after the B-45.

It took the combined resources of Boeing Wichita, Lockheed Corporation, and Douglas Aircraft to get 2,032 B-47s built. (Lockheed assembled 385 while Douglas contributed 274 to the total.) The B-47's peak year for shouldering the nuclear deterrent mission of the Strategic Air Command was 1957. Utilization as a medium bomber and reconnaissance platform waned thereafter as increasing numbers of B-52Ds rolled out of both Boeing Seattle and Wichita plants. (All B-52s after the "D" model were built exclusively at Wichita.)

Many of the best attributes of the B-47 were carried forward into the B-52. These included in-flight refueling, bicycle landing gear, a large bomb bay, ejection seats, anti-skid braking, a defensive tail gun, and drag parachutes for landing.

All B-45s and B-47s were built with a bubble-canopy as was the XB-52 and YB-52; however, SAC commander, General Curtis LeMay ordered tandem seating under the canopy abandoned on the B-52. The hot sun created excess heat while LeMay correctly observed that important non-verbal communication between pilot and copilot best occurs when seated side-by-side.

Some wonks describe the B-52 as the shipping container for the B-47. The SAC B-47 bomber mission ended in 1965. The Cold War B-47 (along with counterparts B-36 and B-58) was never called upon to deliver a single weapon in anger.

A few B-47s performed reconnaissance and weather services until 1969. Some were converted as target drones (QB-47). A few were assigned to various testing chores, including dropping the B-70 escape capsule. Most went for scrap at Davis-Monthan AFB near Tucson, Arizona while others were donated for public display. The weather has taken a serious toll on many of these.

*John Fredrickson was a senior manager when he retired from the Boeing Company after 36 years. He also served in the USAF/USAFR for over 20 years. He now volunteers in the Boeing Historical Archives and is a good friend of the B-47 Stratojet Association.*

*The photos and illustration for this article are courtesy of the Boeing Historical Archive.*

## *The Reluctant Mechanic*

### **THOSE PESKY FUEL BOOSTER PUMPS**

*By Wilton Strickland, LtCol, USAF (Ret)*

I was a B-47E maintenance crew chief in the 98th Bomb Wing at Lincoln AFB, NE, from Oct 57 to Mar 60, when I left to attend OCS.

During the 1959 Christmas holiday period, the entire unit "stood down" for a week or so - there was no flying, and no maintenance was performed on the aircraft during this time - everyone in the wing, except certain "essential" personnel was off duty for the entire several days. Temperature during this time was 0° to 10° F. When we returned to work, all of the airplanes were thoroughly "cold-soaked" - systems had not been operated for well over a week.

This caused rubber seals to shrink and become hard, leading to a special problem for the electrically-operated fuel booster pumps in the bottom of all the fuel tanks - a total of 28 of these pumps on the aircraft. The pumps were used to send fuel to the engines or to transfer fuel from tank to tank for weight and balance considerations and were notorious for leaking, even during normal day-to-day flying and maintenance conditions.

On the very cold January morning when we returned to work after the week or so off, all of us crew chiefs applied external power from the MD-3 power carts, started running the fuel booster pumps and checking them for leaks in the usual places. Almost immediately, there was a big backlog of B-47's awaiting towing to the refueling pits to be de-fueled to allow removing and replacing many fuel booster pumps. I found several of the pumps on my aircraft leaking, too, but I did not think it was enough to raise an alarm for mass pump replacements. I was by myself again that day and had no help for changing a bunch of pumps that I thought was likely unnecessary, anyway. I just continued to wipe the small bit of leakage away and kept running the pumps, hoping that the o-ring seals would warm up and seal themselves. I just kept quiet about any leakage and kept making the rounds to all of the pumps for several hours. Gradually the number of leaks began to diminish until I had no leaks at all. Most of the other aircraft in the unit were still being de-fueled and getting pumps replaced when I closed up and left at the end of the day. My aircraft had not moved from its parking space all day.

*The Reluctant...continued next page*



*The Reluctant...continued from previous page*

Twenty-five years later, on the very cold morning in 1985, when I heard a news report that the temperature at Cape Canaveral was significantly lower than that experienced by any shuttle launch before, I thought of those leaking

fuel pump O-ring seals on that cold January morning in 1960 and even said aloud to a couple of men with me, "Uh-oh, that could be trouble. They should not launch."

You know the rest of the story.

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## ***How to Destroy a 6-Engine Bomber With One Finger***

*By Dale F. Richardson, CMSgt USAF (ret)*

My first assignment out of Tech School was Clark AB, Philippines where I was assigned as an aircraft mechanic in the Aero Repair shop, 6200 FMS, from November 1966 to June 1980. After about eight months working swing shift at the AR shop, I had a chance to move over to the Crash Recovery Crew.

Clark only had one runway and most of the traffic going in and out of Vietnam and Thailand came through there. I think I heard that we were one of the busiest airports in the world at that time and when an aircraft became disabled on the runway or taxiways, it was our job to get things cleared up as quickly as possible as the inbound traffic would start stacking up and, if they had to wait more than 15-30 minutes, they'd start diverting to other bases.

At the time, there were three or four WB-47s stationed at Clark and one day in early 1968, one was returning from his mission and couldn't get the front body gear down. He circled around while the Fire Department foamed the runway, then did a wonderful job putting it down so gently that very little damage was done to the aircraft. Basically all that was skinned up was the radome and I think the outrigger landing gears were damaged somewhat.

We rolled out with all of our equipment to get him off the runway with me driving the "Big Bertha" 50 ton crane. Our plan was to back the crane in sideways, lift the nose up using the multi-strand "web" sling, back our flatbed trailer under the nose, lower the aircraft's nose down on the padded trailer, then strap it down and drive off with it. This whole process would only take about 20-30 minutes, start-to-finish.

Just as I was about to back the crane up, our full colonel DCM decided to step in and take charge. We had just gone through the process of having a new single-strand sling made up and he evidently remembered signing the paperwork approval. With this fresh in his mind, he told us that he wanted to put that new sling to use, plus he thought it would be faster if I just moved the crane around

to the front of the B-47, lift it up off the runway, and drive off with it like a tow truck. Now at the time, I was just a young 19-year old two-striper who had never gotten this close to an O-6 before and didn't quite know how to handle this. My shift leader, a three-striper, was in the same boat. I tried to tell the colonel that the single-strand sling wasn't designed for anything as heavy as the B-47 and to prevent more damage, we needed to use the multi-strand web sling.

Long story short, we lost the battle and started rigging things up the way he wanted. Once things were all set, I'm standing there with the corded remote control for the crane, not wanting to push the "up" button because I knew sure as hell that nothing good was going to come of this. Sensing my hesitation, the colonel starts yelling at me to get things going and gave me a direct order to push the button. Sure enough, the skinny padded cable bit into the fuselage like a tight rubber band around a fat lady's wrist. I could hear the groans of everyone else who was standing around watching just as helplessly as I was. With lots of loud crunching coming from the bomber's skin, up it came until I had it about level.



That done, I jumped in the crane's cab and started to slowly pull forward. The plan was for me to tow it off the side of the runway onto the grass and far enough away from the runway so they could get things back to normal.

*How To Destroy...continued next page*

*How To Destroy...continued from previous page*

Well, going forward was working just fine but the instant that I would try to turn, the crane would start to tip sideways due to the extreme vertical position of the boom. If it would have been any other type of aircraft, we could have run cables back to the main landing gear and use two tugs to provide the “pull” while I handled the “lift” part of it. Not having anything to hook onto, the colonel directed us to throw cables around the two inboard engine nacelles and hook them to the two large Euclid tugs that were out there to help.

Again, we tried to tell him that wasn't going to work too well but again, he knew better and told us to stop arguing and do as we were told.

Sure enough, as soon as the tugs started pulling, the steel cables cut through the pylon fairings like a hot knife through butter and darned near ripped the engines off. Seeing that wasn't working too well, the colonel directed us to throw the cables over the top of the wing, just inboard of the inboard engine pods and loop them back to form a big “slip-knot” connection on each side. By this time, we had all resigned ourselves to whatever fate was in store for us and did as told. Sure enough, the cables tightened up and cut their way through the trailing edge of the wing, all the way to the spar on each side.

Well, this finally worked and we got the aircraft off to the side, well away from the runway. Only problem was, we'd caused enough damage to the aircraft that it was decided to write it off, strip it down and salvage it right where it lay. I can just imagine what the pilot felt as he saw his beautiful job of landing gear-up with minimal damage turn into such a fiasco.

The only good thing that came out of this was; no one ever said a word to us about all the damage, and the DCM never again got in our way when we were at work. In the photo, you can see that we finally did use the multi-strand web sling while doing the salvage work. Had we used it and the flatbed like we wanted in the first place, that aircraft probably would have been back in the air in less than a week. Oh well, stuff happens, and that is how I destroyed a six-engined bomber with one finger.



## ***XB-47 46-066 Update***

*Pete Troesch shared this recent email from Mike Glenn who is heading the disassembly and moving project for 066 from Chanute to Edwards AFB.*

*“We (the Flight Test Historical Foundation) have contracted with Worldwide Aircraft Recovery, they are the ones that moved the C-130 out of Rantoul recently so are familiar with the layout and players.*

*The original plan was to tear down and prep for shipment in August, but they had a previous commitment from Randolph AFB that came thru so everything has moved to October.*

*Plan is for everyone, Worldwide and myself with another one of our guys, to be in place on 10 October. About 10 days is the estimate to disassemble and prep for shipping, then 5 to 7 days on the road with 7 truckloads, time is dependent on highway travel, routing, and permits allowed. Then reassembly of the big parts at Edwards and they will be finished by 15 November.*

*WWAR has moved five B47's previously. They have tooling, fixtures, and an engineered plan so that put them heads ahead of the other company who bid. They will remove the vertical and stab intact, they have a fixture made to lay the stab at a 35 degree angle so it transports over the road. They remove the aft fuselage at the production break aft of the rear wheel well and ship separately. Engines come off from bottom with some homemade fixtures that also act as shipping cradles. They lift the fuselage and remove the lower MLG struts, then set the fuselage onto fixtures that go into the struts, ship on those. Fuselage is about 6 inches off of ground and supported by original gear structure, can't get any better than that. Then they remove all of the sheet metal around the wing at the fuselage, and remove the wing in one piece and set onto a lowboy. They have an engineered plate, uses either steel plate or thick aluminum, goes onto upper and lower center wing box, and is drilled into place. Then the plates are removed and center wing box is cut down the middle, each wing shipped intact.*

*After transport, the plates are relocated onto the pre-drilled holes and bolted together then reinstalled onto the fuselage. Splice is strong enough to hold all 6 engines and support towing loads....*

*So you can see how I am going to spend my Oct/Nov.”*



Combat Crew, June 1964

# NOT BY THE BOOK

A B-47 WAS SCHEDULED TO FLY A NORMAL 50-8 TRAINING MISSION. AFTER A BRIEF DELAY, DUE TO ICE ON THE RUNWAY, A NORMAL TAKE-OFF WAS ACCOMPLISHED.



SHORTLY AFTER TAKEOFF THE CREW RECEIVED A REPORT THAT A PANEL WAS LOOSE ON TOP OF THE FUSELAGE, AFT OF THE CANOPY.

THE PILOT INSTRUCTED THE COPILOT TO INVESTIGATE THE CONDITION. HE REPORTED THAT A PORTION OF THE AIRCRAFT SKIN APPEARED TO BE PROTRUDING INTO THE SLIPSTREAM APPROXIMATELY TWO INCHES. THE COMMAND POST WAS INFORMED OF THE SITUATION AND THE CREW WAS INSTRUCTED TO CONTINUE THE MISSION.

DURING THE BOMBING PHASE OF THE MISSION, THE CREW RE-EXAMINED THE DAMAGED AREA AND INFORMED THE COMMAND POST THAT TWO PANELS WERE MISSING AND A TWO INCH SQUARE PIECE OF METAL WAS PROTRUDING INTO THE SLIPSTREAM.

THE COMMAND POST INSTRUCTED THE CREW TO RETURN TO BASE AND BURN OFF FUEL TO LANDING WEIGHT.

AT FIVE AND THREE-QUARTER MILES FROM TOUCHDOWN THE FINAL CONTROLLER ADVISED THE PILOT THE WIND WAS VARIABLE 520 DEGREES, 24 GUSTING TO 32 KNOTS. THIS GAVE HIM A 30 DEGREE CROSS WIND. A NORMAL APPROACH WAS MADE UNTIL REACHING PRECISION MINIMUM ALTITUDE.

AT THIS POINT THE AIRCRAFT APPEARED TO SINK IN A RIGHT WING-LOW, NOSE-HIGH ATTITUDE. THE WINGTIP CONTACTED THE SURFACE OF THE OVERRUN APPROXIMATELY 500 FEET SHORT OF THE RUNWAY.

THE AIRCRAFT THEN VEERED RIGHT, LEFT THE RUNWAY AND MADE TWO 90 DEGREE TURNS BEFORE COMING TO A STOP. THE CREW EGRESSED THE WRECKED BIRD WITHOUT INJURY.

**FINDINGS:** The primary cause of the accident was pilot factor in that the pilot failed to maintain adequate airspeed to control the aircraft for the gross weight and gusty wind condition. Contributing causes stem from not using tech data: the copilot did not monitor airspeed and warn the pilot

when he went below safe airspeed; and the item that started the whole affair—the crew chief failed to properly secure all backbone doors, as required by Dash Six Preflight Work Card 1-17, Item 5. Whatever your job, you must use the tech data provided.



# Buy A Brick ~ Preserve A Memory ~ Restore A B-47 Stratojet ~

The prime reason the B-47 Stratojet Association exists is to preserve the memory of the B-47. We are always on the lookout for ways to accomplish this objective. A few years ago, in cooperation with the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum, located halfway between Omaha and Lincoln Nebraska on IS 80, we came up with a plan to increase the funds for restoration of their B-47. This plan was to sell bricks with people's names and/or history on them.

Wouldn't you like have a permanent memorial for a loved one or even one for yourself plus the organization to which you were assigned? Well now you can for only \$500. This tax free amount will purchase a brick – with whatever you want engraved on it (three lines not to

exceed 16 characters per line). Now the good news to go with this - \$400 of this will go directly in to a specified account at the Strategic Air Command Museum to be used only for the restoration of the only Bomber model of a B-47 that is at an indoor facility.

The Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum has done a beautiful job restoring the cockpit area, no easy task, and they are now working on the exterior of the aircraft. It is a slow, labor intensive job that involves a great deal of elbow grease and lots of special expensive polishing materials.

We have sold 29 bricks so far – see attached picture. Not all bricks are in the picture because some of them were purchased this winter and are waiting for more favorable weather to be placed with the other B-47 Association bricks.

See the accompanying order blank on the next page for complete details.



*The Memorial Plaza at the Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum (inset) contains those brick given in honor of our members. You have the opportunity to have your own brick here or one donated in memory of a beloved colleague. The gift not only provides a memorial in the plaza but also supports the restoration of the Museum's B-47. Photo: Dick Purdum*



***Give the gift that lasts forever.  
Strategic Air & Space Museum  
On Interstate 80 between Lincoln & Omaha Nebraska  
Heritage Patio Walk Bricks***

Preserve history and pay tribute to a loved one. The Heritage Patio Walk is located in the front of the Strategic Air and Space Museum between the Thor and Blue Scout Missiles. The walk is created out of bricks each engraved with a tribute to an individual or group. The patio provides a resting spot for Museum guests. All of the bricks purchased by the B-47 Stratojet Association members will be grouped together. You can create this permanent remembrance for only \$500. One hundred dollars of this goes to create and place the brick in the walk and \$400 goes directly into the restoration fund for the restoration of the only B-47 bomber model left in the world that is in an indoor protected area. A receipt will be mailed to you. A gift card to the person(s) being honored will be sent upon request. Make all checks out to the B-47 Stratojet Association so that these funds will be placed directly into the restoration fund for the B-47. Won't you join us in this most worthwhile project? Please send your check for \$500 and this form to the B-47 Stratojet Association, to Dick Curran, Treasurer, 219 Charles Court, Dandridge, TN 37725-3333.

Your gift is 100% tax deductible and will help insure that future generations can view a real B-47 Bomber.

**Include the name you wish to appear on your brick.**

**I would like to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ brick(s) at \$500 per brick.**

**I would like my first brick to read:**

**(Maximum of 3 lines/16 characters on each line including spaces)**

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## B-47 Merchandise

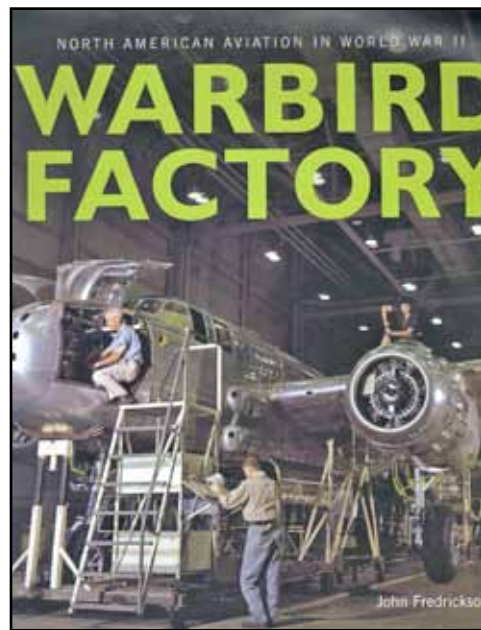
The internet has a remarkable array of B-47 products at a site called [cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com) and we encourage you to consider these if you are looking for B-47 items. The Association no longer stocks items and we suggest you take a look at this website. It has been recently updated with new products featuring the red/black “horn button.” Use the link below to go directly to the page with products featuring the Association logo:

<http://www.cafepress.com/b47stratojetassociation>

Searching the site using “b-47” will also bring up many other products featuring your favorite airplane.

## Publications

*Warbird Factory* by John Fredrickson has absolutely nothing about B-47s between its covers. However, it is a well-researched and developed photographic look at North American Aviation (NAA) in World War Two. In its 240 pages there are over 200



photos, many in color. The photos are accompanied by an authoritative text and well-written captions. You will find wonderful images of the AT-6, B-25 and P-51. There is also a short chapter on North American’s transition to the Cold War years with mention of the B-45, F-86, F-82 and even the L-17 Navion.

The book does a really good job of putting you into the NAA production facilities with shots of workers and their environment as well as images of the pilots and executives. There are interesting sidebars such as ‘The War-time Motorist’ and security and air raid protection pieces.

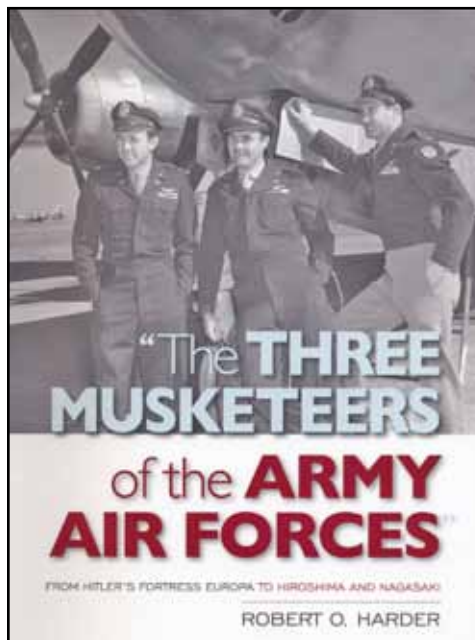
The material on the P-51 is extensive and well done. There is a chapter on Eisenhower’s B-25 and one on the NA-98X, a B-25 which had the more powerful R-2800 engine and crashed only twenty-five days after its first flight. The photos are accompanied in some cases by drawings and period ads, documents and other illustrations.

The book is a large hardbound production of Zenith Press and

sells for \$24.61 on Amazon.

John Fredrickson retired from the Boeing Company in 2011 after 36 years in various positions including flight test, international traffic and finance. He served more than 25 years of active and reserve duty with the USAF, retiring with the rank of senior master sergeant. He was assigned to the B-52 unit at U-Tapao during 1972-73. He has previously authored *Kansas City B-25 Factory*, and his latest, *Boeing*, in the *Images of Aviation Series*, is due to be published this summer. John is currently a volunteer at Boeing Historical Archives. By the time this newsletter is in the mail, he will be at Oshkosh soaking in the sights and sounds of aviation’s largest event.

The next book, *The Three Musketeers of the Army Air Forces* is one of the more unusual WWII books that this editor has read. It is the story of General Paul Tibbets (of Hiroshima fame but who also led the B-47 test project at Wichita known as *Wibac*), Tom Ferebee and Ted “Dutch” Van Kirk. Tibbets was the pilot of the *Enola Gay*, Ferebee was the bombardier and Van Kirk was the navigator. The three were dubbed the “three musketeers” when they flew B-17s in Europe. They would team up again in the 509th BW for the Hiroshima mission.



This is more than a biography. It describes each man separately but its strength lies in the analysis of their relationship that lasted for over 50 years. In so doing, the book digs into the history of the atomic bombings and how each man handled their “fame” both individually and together.

The book is well-written, well-researched and it breaks new ground. An appendix, “The Near-Catastrophic Nagasaki Mission” is worth the price of the book alone.

The author, Robert G. Harder, was a rated navigator and radar bombardier in B-52s with 145 combat missions over Vietnam. He is the author of an earlier book, *Flying From The Black Hole: The Navigator-Bombardiers of Vietnam*.

The book is \$39.95 from Amazon. There are 255 pages, an index, a bibliography and extensive notes. Highly recommended.





**Send Application and Check to:**

**B- 47 Stratojet Association**  
Dick Curran  
219 Charles Court  
Dandridge, TN 37725-3333

Tel. (865) 940-1020 e-mail: dickcurran@hotmail.com

(Last) \_\_\_\_\_ (First) \_\_\_\_\_ (Middle Initial) \_\_\_\_\_ (Highest Rank Achieved) \_\_\_\_\_

(Spouses First Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax:(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

B-47 Wings you served with and dates of service: \_\_\_\_\_

Air Crew or Ground Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Civilian Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Status: Active Duty \_\_\_\_\_ Retired, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Separated, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Veteran \_\_\_\_\_

Civilian, your relationship to the B-47: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other comments you may care to add: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual dues are \$15 a year payable every January. Send checks to: The B-47 Stratojet Association.**  
The Lifetime membership option is obtained by using the below table:

- under age 59 \$300
- age 60-64 \$250
- age 65-69 \$200
- age 70-74 \$150
- age 75-79 \$100
- age 80 or over \$50

Amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send application and check to:**  
**Dick Curran**  
**B- 47 Stratojet Association**  
**219 Charles Court**  
**Dandridge, TN 37725-3333**

**Web Site: <http://b-47.com>**

**If additional space is needed please use the back of this sheet.**

*B-47 Stratojet Association*  
219 Charles Court  
Dandridge, TN 37725-3333

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*RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED*



*53-1852, a B-47E built by Lockheed and delivered to the 509th BW at Walker AFB on 30 Sept. 1955. After IRAN at Kelly AFB it was delivered to the 96th BW at Dyess AFB on 16 Dec. 1957. It had the MILK BOTTLE mod at Sacramento and remained with the 96th until 7 March 1963 when it was delivered to the 310th BW at Schilling AFB. Last stop was the "Boneyard" on 10 Aug. 1964.*

*Photo: courtesy Boeing Historical Archive*

***2016 Reunion: Washington DC ~ 29 Sept-2 Oct***  
***See pages 3-4 For More Details***

