



Recon Recorder

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER Maurice Cea - President

The September 2004 reunion is now a fond memory. Phil VanDuesen, Paul Kardian and Marty Quirk had a great agenda and did an outstanding job entertaining us. I know that Betty and I had a great time at the reunion getting together with our friends and visiting the scenic sights. We look forward to our next reunion, 23-27 August 2005 in Dayton.

The highlight of the reunion was meeting Lieutenants Chris Cass and Christian Prash from the 91st Space Wing. They gave us a wonderful briefing covering their missions and the local surroundings of Minot AFB, South Dakota. We look forward to a visit in Minot in the near future.

Our speaker Sam Halpert from the 91st Bomb Group gave us some insight during World War II.

At the reunion there was representation of the 91st Bomb Wing (WWII), the 91st Strategic Recon Squadron (Korea), the 91st Strat Recon Wing (Cold War) and the current 91st Space Wing.

With a glance into the future, plans are being formulated for our 2006 reunion to take place in Branson, Missouri with tentative dates of September 10 through the 14th, 2006. (Subject to change.)

We welcome our 23 new members:

- Tom Atwell Mike Boorman
- Fred Brennfleck John Corryn
- Charles Buchanan Col Harry Ford
- Glenn Garlick Allen Weddle
- Eugene Grace Bob Halleran

- Walter Hoerler (Life) Paul Goff
- Leslie Jackson Harry Mason
- John Lavin Dr. Richard Leighton
- John Moran Charles Simmons
- Chuck Stone John Urban
- Lawrence (Rich) Hoover
- Frank Himelright (Associate)
- Eileen A. Mitchell (Life Associate)

A few of the new ones attended the reunion and we will look forward to seeing them in Dayton and many more reunions to come.

Thoughts and Prayers: Gail Noonan, wife of past-President John Noonan lost her fight with lung cancer on December 18th. We also extend our thoughts and prayers to any other members who have had health problems this past year. God grant a speedy recovery to all and good health in 2005.

VP COMMENTS Jerry Haines

91SRWA 2005 REUNION

URGENT

The 2005 91SRWA reunion will be held 23-27 August at the Hope Hotel on Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Please get registered early. Our guaranteed rate and block of rooms expires 22 July. All the necessary information and a registration form are attached; please get it in **NOW**. I must have a good head count for making arrangements for buses, meals, etc.

With the reunion, Angie DeFelice is going to host a pig roast at his hunting lodge. It will be done as a daily outing with bus transportation being provided.

ADMINISTRATIVE "STUFF" Jim Bard - Secretary

About 10% of you have not paid your dues for 2004-06. Be sure to do it **TODAY**. Please include your service information; and insert the POC data of a person a few years younger than yourself (i.e., a son or daughter).

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Reunions will now be held each year. Although elections will be held only during even numbered year meetings other business will be discussed each year.

You are invited to submit topics to the Secretary.

FINANCES

Stan Kopala – Treasurer

We are financially sound. Our latest financial statement is available upon request. Here are the important Jul-Oct 04 figures:

Begin Chk Acct Balance	\$9,440.97
Income	8,822.55
Expenditures	(15,462.68)
Ending Chk Balance	2,800.84
Begin Escrow Balance	978.75
Escrow Additions	414.86
Ending Escrow Balance	1,393.61
Total Funds Available	\$4,194.45

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Highlights of the Business Meeting

1Lt. Christian Prash and 1Lt Chris Cass, representing the 91st Space Wing, presented a mission brief and then gave a pitch on the Minot AFB area. They encouraged us to consider Minot for a future reunion site. The briefings were well received and the association thanked the lieutenants for their participation in our reunion. (They did a lot of odd jobs.)

In the absence of the Treasurer (Stan Kopala), Moe Cea presented the latest financial information. The report was accepted as read.

Jim Bard presented minutes from the membership meeting of 21 April 2002; minutes from the special board meeting of 22 September 2002; and a report on the Amendment #3 balloting. A motion was made and seconded to accept all as read. It carried.

Moe Cea presented open old business – Consideration of annual meetings. After little discussion, there was a unanimous vote in favor of having a reunion each year.

The membership determined the next two reunion locations.

a. 2005 – It was decided that a return to Dayton, Ohio would be a good idea. Jerry Haines will be the organizer. Timing will be July to September. Most probable site – Hope Hotel, Wright-Paterson AFB.

b. 2006 – Two locations were suggested – Washington, DC and Branson, Missouri. Washington was rejected by vote. Branson was selected with a near unanimous vote (1 nay). Gene Harshman will be the organizer. Timing will be July – September.

Bob Glover made a motion that, to prevent confusion, the term of office for Officers and Directors shall be understood to run from the election in an even numbered year to the next even number year. After little discussion it was seconded and carried.

Elections – Jim Bard pointed out that there have been no resignations and no resume submitted. Moe Cea then offered the name of each current Officer and Director, one at a time, for a vote. All were reelected except one. It was determined

that the current Chaplain, Don Harrison, being delinquent in his dues, was not a member in good standing and is therefore removed from office. No one present at the meeting wanted to run for the Chaplain position – it is now vacant.

Paul Kardian made a motion to have a "91st SRW Military Challenge Coin" struck for our Association. Paul explained the concept and possible uses of the coin. After a short discussion, it was seconded and carried. Paul Kardian was appointed to chair the source and design committee. (See attached Motto Ballot.)

Memorabilia – Jim Bard announced that all memorabilia (shirts, hats, etc.) would be sent to Art Schocken. Art will be our single point of sales.

If you attended the meeting and see something missing, please let me know. Jim

Who attended

- 91st Space Wing - 2
- 91st Bomb Group - 2
- 91st SRW HQ Sq - 8
- 322nd SRS - 12
- 323rd SRS - 19
- 324th SRS - 12
- 91st SRS - 8
- 91st AEMS - 12
- B-45 Historian - 1
- American Legion - 2

91SRWA MAILING LIST

The updated list of association members is attached. Send me updates and corrections to any and all of the data; my address is on the list. If you have e-mail, send it to: jimbardjr@adelphia.net

Know someone on the attached "Non Member" roster? Write to them; better yet, get on the telephone right now and call; tell them to join us.

Our Family Tree News

91st Strat Recon Squadron
About a hundred members of the 91SRS (most served at Yokota) have been contacted. At least 33 have joined our association.

91st Bomb Group – WWII
Ruth and I attended their reunion 1-3 October 2004 in Washington. What a glorious visit we had with the "Greatest Generation."

For information contact:

Ed Gates, President 91BGMA
13311 16th Ave. Ct. S
Tacoma, WA 98444
Tel. 253-535-4246
gainmutual@yahoo.com

91st Space Wing

Wing Commander, Col. Dan Adams, arranged for interaction by sending a delegation to our reunion. We hope this is just the beginning.

Obituaries

September 13, 2004

Dear Mr. Bard,

I found a note you wrote to my mother, Rose Sell, regarding the upcoming reunion of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association. She commented that she and my dad (Wilber Sell (91st SRS)) would have attended this event were he still alive. She lamented that there would be no more such trips, but she was very proud that you invited her to be a life member of the organization.

My mom died suddenly and unexpectedly on Wednesday, September 1, 2004. After my dad died three years ago, mom moved from Pennsylvania, where they had lived together for 30 years, to Winchester, VA. She had an apartment of her own and became active in the Winchester Senior Center. She drove to appointments, shopping, and church. She was in good spirits and seemed in good health until Monday, August 30, when she was stricken with a heart attack.

I am proud to have been an "Air Force brat" and proud of my dad in his uniform and my mom, the very good military wife. I bet you didn't know that my mom was selected NCO Wife of the Year, or something like that, while dad was stationed at Yakota Air Base.

Just wanted to let you know of mom's passing. Thanks for honoring her during her life.

Regards,

Gloria Sell

29 June 2004



Recon Recorder

I am sorry to tell you, but my husband (Howard Harding (91st ARS)) passed away October 28, 2002.

Thank you,
Edrie Harding

Aug. 21, 04

Dear Jim,
A while ago I sent you a copy of the officers' roster of the 31/91st SRS stationed in Oki/Japan. Have you received this?

Dave Mullen (91st SRS/324th SRS)

Note: I advised Dave that I sent it to Jim Brennan. **Read on.**

Oct. 25, 04

Dear Mr. Bard,
This is to notify you that my husband, David Mullen, has recently passed away. He was a member of many Air Force associations & he especially enjoyed all the hanger flying at reunions. He was very proud to have been a pilot in the USAF.

Sincerely,
Penny Mullen

3 December 2004

Dear Stan,
Please accept this application for membership for Mrs. Eileen A. Mitchell – her husband Robert A. died on Nov. 9, 1950 at Johnson AB. He was a member at that time of the 31st SRS – Photo.

Thank you,
Harry Mason (91HQ & 91st PMS)

Editor Note: Shortly thereafter, the 31st SRS was absorbed by the 91st SRS. We include them in our field of membership. 1Lt Robert A Mitchell died as a result of enemy action over Korea. The 91SRWA made Eileen a Life Associate Member.

15 December

2004

Jim,
I am sorry to say I traced Alger Cronic to Florida, only to find out he passed away in 1992. He served in the 323rd.
May the Lord have mercy on his soul.

Ray Lendabarker (323rd SRS)

17 December 2004

Roy Carden, 91st SRS, passed away.

Information received from his daughter.

18 December 2004

Gail Noonan, wife of our past President, John, lost her fight with cancer. Gail will be sorely missed by family, friends, and the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association.

In Flanders Fields

By: Lt Colonel John McCrae, MD (1872-1918) Canadian Army

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

Letters & Feedback

19 Oct 04

Dear Stan,
I really appreciated receiving the lapel pin and the Associate Membership card to the 91st SRW Association. I will enjoy hearing news via the Recon Recorder. If possible, I would like to hear about the next reunion too.

Sincerely,
Patty Tennermann

Editor Note: Patty's letter was much longer, but for Stan and Alice.

Letters and Stories of
Historical Significance

16 July 04

Reference the section: "91st SRS / 16th PRS / 6091st SRS / 31st SRS / 91st PRS"
You left out the 10th Photo Tech Sqdn at Maguire.

Lionel Alderman
(16th PRS & Hq 91st SRW)

Jim,

Reference your Cold War Era article in the Recorder.

An ECM ground school was started at Keesler AFB in 1948. Graduates were assigned to the 324th SRS at reactivated McGuire AFB. In December 1948, I was in the second group to be assigned, arriving in October 1948. In December 1948, Major McGuire's father was guest of honor at the official renaming of the base. We had RB-29s, no RB-17s, just one old B-17 crate that was used for jammer training. In 1949, the 324th sent crews TDY to Fairbanks, Alaska (I was in one of the crews) to fly recon missions along the Russian coast. This was never mentioned in the paragraph. The 91st SRW did move to Barksdale in October 1949, still with RB-29s. We started an ECM school in the old bombsight building at Barksdale. If you check the Ft. Worth newspaper archives, you will see that a RB-29 of the 324th crashed there in August of 1950. The Wing went to Puerto Rico in late 1950 (with RB-29s.) While in Puerto Rico, the Wing transitioned into RB-50s. At the same time, a group of us were transferred to Keesler AFB to start a new ECM school. Ground school was in Wolf Hall. Flying training was done in converted C-54s - ten student positions and two instructor positions. Some of our graduates went to Carswell AFB to fly RB-36s. Others went to Lockbourne and to Minot AFB, North Dakota. That's where the RB-45s and RB-47s came in. I know I'm getting ancient, but my memory isn't that bad!

Paul R. Horton

A 1948 member of the 324th.

21 June 04

Jim,

Thanks for the history update on the "illustrious 91st."

In reviewing my copy of "OPERATION SANDSTONE" (no personal cameras allowed), also known as the story of Joint Task Force Seven, which occurred in the months of April and May of 1948. This was the testing of new atomic weapons at Eniwetok Atoll in the Marshall Islands. If my "old eyes" don't fail me I see pictures of B-17 drones, which were flown through the "mushroom" cloud, and they have the 91st markings on them. Also, B-29's, #986 (Lady Doris II) which I crewed as Radar Operator/Bombardier, #999 which later crashed in England, and C-54 (Loafing Lady) #627 were all of the 16th Photo Recon. Squadron.

Needless to say we were in a great and history-making WING and served with a great group of "professionals". True, there were a few "eight balls" (both commissioned and non.) but they didn't last long.

J. Gilbert (16th PRS/323rd SRS)

16 July 04

There is also data to substantiate, "Operation Alcan", photo work of the Russian coastline. I happened to be the Radar Operator on that project. With further reference to that, I was saddened to see Col. Greening's "passing". He was our official "send-off" and note-worthy verbiage regarding our extra personal equipment on-board AC# 661 as we prepared for "take-off" at McGuire.

Thanks for your efforts regarding the 91st Association

J. Gilbert (16th PRS/323rd SRS)

We sometimes thought that Sqdn. CO's were just figure heads whose main duty was to sign their name to papers after someone else did the work and not putting forth much effort on their own.

Let me tell you about another kind - one such officer-- Major Broughton, who was the CO of the 91st. PMS on Feb 11th.

1955. That was the morning that my first wife passed away in the LAFB hospital after giving birth to twin sons. One survived but his life was hanging by a thread and he was not expected to live.

The Chaplain called Major Broughton and within minutes the Major picked me up and drove me to every office I needed to contact to rush paperwork through to accomplish everything necessary for me to accompany my wife and son's body's to Lebanon PA for the funeral. Before I left I

made funeral arrangements for my surviving son in case he died while I was absent. I also gave the Major power of attorney to act on my behalf. Since the base hospital was not equipped to care for premature infants, my son would need to be transported to Children's Hospital in Columbus by ambulance in an incubator on oxygen. If the oxygen failed on the way there could be brain damage or death. The transport could not be done without my consent, so the POA made it possible for Major Broughton to act on my behalf. He told me later it was not an easy choice since either way could have been fatal.

To make a long story short he made the right choice and in my opinion he saved my son's life and then went to bat for me and convinced the Red Cross to pay the \$400.00 for the month he was in an incubator on oxygen. I might add that the Air Force Aid Society refused to help. I recall when I asked for the bill the clerk said, "It's paid, you have a great Commanding Officer."

Jeff will turn 50 next year and has not suffered any ill effects from his bad start in life. We owe this to the many, many prayers that went up for him and the Lord's guiding hand on Major Broughton. Of this I have no doubt.

About the only thing I know about the Major is that he told me once that he was from Minneapolis. If anyone remembers him and has any info as to what happened to him it would be nice to know. He is a true Hero.

This is not to say that there was not many others involved, but this is what he did.

Glenn Garlick S/Sgt. (91st FMS & PMS) LAFB 1953 thru 56

Editor Note: Lt. Col. Tom Broughton passed away November 1, 1993. Tom's widow, Imogene, resides in San Antonio, Texas.

16 July 04

Jim,

Thank you for your answer about our Missions. At the time we thought that it was just another mission except that it was for us to do. They were all interesting projects, and I learned a lot, also we were a good crew, and worked hard. After a Mission or in some cases before, speaking of cases, there was always cold beer on hand, I and some others on our crew were not drinkers, but we still had a few. We were a lot if trouble for our aircraft

commander. I think that he would like to lock us up until the mission, in fact one time he did; we were locked in a hanger with cots and security guards at the doors. But several cases of beer showed up, also some ice, and when our AC walked in we offered him a cold one. I think then that he gave up, we as a crew stayed together, and lived together; we never failed to perform our jobs, or let a mission or AC down. I think that we were being watched over, as nothing ever happened to us, and we were in harms way very often. Here I go rambling on, I hope that I can make it to the Convention, and meeting you and your wife.

Charles E. Buchanan

91st SRS

Though you might be interested in this Stars and Stripes Article. (Christmas 1950)

B-29 'Bombs' U.N. Front Line Troops With Christmas Gifts

Tokyo, Dec. 26. -(AP)

United Nations front line troops looked up from their Korean foxholes Christmas day and saw an American B-29 with yawning bomb bay doors.

The load that came tumbling down wasn't lethal. It was books, magazines, candy, cigars, cigarettes, and canned beer--a Christmas gift to the forward ground troops from the Ninety-first Photo Reconnaissance Squadron (91st SRS).

More than 3,000 individual items, weighing more than 1,000 pounds, were dropped to the troops. All were purchased by members of the squadron.

I was fortunate enough to be member of that squadron at that time. If I remember, we also dropped a load of goodies on Valentines Day in 1951.

Paul W. Goff (91st SRS)

Here's an interesting story from the 91st Bomb Group submitted by:
Frances Stuckey, 324th BS, 91st BG

"What was the POWs diet?"

I am writing in response to the e-mail regarding food for the POWs in Germany. I was a POW fifteen months at Barth, Germany, at Stalag Luft 1, South Compound. When I arrived there 1 March 1944, there was seldom a complaint about



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food. Every day the food wagon came to each barracks and each room was given its allotment of the bill of fare for that day. This cooked food came from the central kitchen in the compound. There was a large bowl of barley soup, which had about the consistency of gravy, rutabagas, potatoes, cabbage, and horsemeat. The first months we received a Red Cross box with food and cigarettes.

The barley soup was good with sugar, dried fruit and milk from the box. In my room of thirty men the parcels went into the communal pantry to be used by the cook who prepared our meals. Each man did get the five packs of cigarettes and the chocolate D Bar. Every day we were given dark bread, which when toasted and covered with margarine and jam was good.

Following the rules of the Geneva Convention we were given 1200 calories a day, the same for retired German people. As the war progressed the American and British fighters were knocking out the trains, which carried the German mail and our food packages. Some weeks we didn't get the food parcel. I did not see anyone in camp losing weight. There was plenty of energy to play football and soccer.

This and That

Commander John Michael Zelnik, Jr., son of our John (91st PRS) and Norma, retired from the Navy in November after 28 years service. Mike went up through the enlisted ranks, and then entered the Limit Duty Officer program. He was the first Security LDO promoted to the rank of Commander.

Frank Hayes (91st A&E) wrote:

Dear Jim, Josephine and I loved being with you and all of those fine 91st SRW folks, a Class Outfit and an honor for us. Following are stories I remember from the 91st. God Bless America,

Frank's "Stories From The 91SRW and Lockbourne AFB" is attached.

Jon Murray (324th SRS) wrote:

"Discovering the 91st Association brought back old memories, so I wrote them down." Jon's "The Cold War From The Ramp" is attached.

Chuck Stone (91st SRS) wrote:

Back in the year 2000, one of the much-appreciated contributors of valued (been there, done that) classified reconnaissance stories for our web site was Bill Welch. He served as an RB-29 crewmember during the transition of the organization from Okinawa to Yokota in the early Korean War period. Bill and I have had occasional contacts since that time, but I did not realize that he was doing some serious creative writing. I have had a preliminary look at his work, via the web-link in his initial announcement message, and am most impressed. I intend to order the printed book version of each of these publications for my own collection. I am passing Bill's publication announcement on to those of you who I believe may have a related interest.

Chuck Stone

<http://www.rb-29.net/>

The Announcement:

Hello all:

I have finally gotten my two novels put together and published on the WEB.

They are available for download as e-books, or may be obtained in paperback by ordering on-line.

You can take a look at a free sample on the web-site www.lulu.com/bwelchbooks

For Chuck: Please forward to all our recce

friends, my first public exposure in writing was on your web site. If any of you like, you may also rate these books. I would appreciate any feedback.

Bye for now,
Bill Welch (31st & 91st SRS)

William F. Welch

Editor's Note: If you do not have Internet access, and you like military fiction, you can write to Bill at:

BWELCHBOOKS

671 Hawthorne Dr.

Tiburon, CA 94920

VFW Magazine Connection

I mentioned before that the VFW Magazine ran an ad for us in April 2004. But, I may have failed to point out that they briefly mentioned the 91st SRW in an article in the May 2004 edition.

See "Cold War Casualties Cry Out for Commemoration." Speaking about the Memorial Gardens by the Cold War annex of the Air Force Museum, they state: "A granite monument honors the 91st SRW."

From Ruth Bard's Kitchen

Elvis' Pound Cake - Jim's favorite.

(This was also the king's favorite.)

Elvis Presley Whipping Cream Pound Cake

3 cups sugar
1/2 lb salt free softened butter
7 eggs, room temperature
3 cups cake flour, sifted twice
1 cup whipping cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
Butter and flour a 10-inch tube pan.
Thoroughly cream together sugar and butter.

Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Mix in half of the flour, then the whipping cream, then the other half of the flour.

Add vanilla.

Pour batter into prepared pan, set in preheated oven at 350 degrees. Bake one-hour, or more, until a sharp knife inserted in cake comes out clean.

Cool in pan five minutes.
Remove from pan and cool.
Thoroughly wrapped, this cake will
keep several days (if husband is kept
away).

Cream Cheese Macadamia Brownies
2 (1 oz.) squares unsweetened
chocolate
1/2-cup butter
1-cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4-cup flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2-cup macadamia nuts coarsely
chopped (May sub hazelnuts or
walnuts)
1 (3 oz.) pkg. cream cheese,
cut into 1/2 inch cubes
1 (6 oz.) pkg. Semisweet
chocolate pieces
Melt unsweetened chocolate and
butter in double boiler (or use heavy
saucepan and heat over very low
heat).
Remove from heat and stir in flour,
salt, and nuts until blended.
Turn into buttered 8-inch square pan.
Drop in cubes of cream cheese.
Bake at 325 degrees 35 to 40
minutes.
Quickly sprinkle semisweet chocolate
pieces all over top.
Return to oven 3 minutes.
Spread chocolate evenly over top.
Cool.
Cut into squares or bars.
Makes about 16 brownies.

Note of Thanks

We've received many donations of
money for the treasury (largest was
from Harry Mason); there have been
many hours of work performed for the
association (like from Paul & Nora
Kardian, Marty & Pauline Quirk and
Phil & Millie Van Deusen for the
reunion); but, there have been so
many individuals involved that I have
not been able to track all of the names.
You know who you are – The 91st
SRWA thanks you.

******IMPORTANT******

MEMBER DUES

If you have a black space next to
your name under "06," your dues
are delinquent. They were due prior

to 30 June 04 – if you haven't sent
it to Stan, do it TODAY. Be sure to
consider a Life Membership; we
now have nine. Who's next?

MEMORIES

Jim Brennan – Archivist

I am always searching for
photographs, documents, or even
handwritten memoirs related to the
91SRW; send them to me.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Position is vacant

If you or someone you know from
the 91SRW is ill, or if you hear of a
passing, please contact President
Cea ASAP.

MEMORABILIA

Art Schocken

I have memorabilia for sale. Sweat
shirts, polo shirts and hats. You
may contact me via e-mail, snail
mail, or telephone:
Polo Shirts - \$25 M, L, XL, 2X, 3X
Sweat shirts \$25 M, L, XL, 2X, 3X
Hats - \$8.50 - Blue or White
Postage of \$3 per shirt / hat. Hats
ordered with shirts are postage free.
I am working on the design for an
association necktie.

91st SRW ASSOCIATION

OFFICERS

President:

Maurice Cea
157 Green Valley Drive
Howard, OH 43028
Phone: 740-392-7750

Vice President:

Gerald A. Haines
2411 S. Tecumseh Road
Springfield, OH 45502
Phone: 937-325-9306

Secretary

James F. Bard, Jr.
3424 Nottingham Rd.
Westminster, MD 21157-8304
Phone: 410-549-1094

Treasurer:

Stanley E. Kopala
4999 Doral Ave
Columbus, OH 43213
Phone: 614-864-2171

Archivist:

James B. Brennan
110 South Station Street
Duxbury, MA 02332
Phone: 781-934-5894

Chaplain:

Vacant

Directors:

Don Furlong
557 Eagle Perch Place
Henderson, NV 89012-6197
Phone: 702-837-9375

Thomas I. Griggs, Jr.
47 Deerhaven Road
Lincoln, MA 01773-1809
Phone: 781-259-9340

John A. Tilley
17 Marywood Drive
Greenfield, IN 46140
Phone: 317-462-5630

Philip Van Deusen
50 Mansfield Grove Rd.
East Haven, CT. 06572
Phone: 203-468-2308

John P. Noonan
186 CR 1246
Linden, TX 75563-9738
Phone: 903-835-1014

Membership Numbers

58 Founding Members (2 PUFL)
105 Members (7 PUFL)
2 Associate Members
6 Life Associate Members
171 Active

91SRWA Statutory Agent

The 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association is incorporated as “Not For Profit” by the State of Ohio. The corporation’s Statutory Agent is: Carl D. Dawalt, 7059 Tall Timber Trail, Enon, OH 45323-1557.

MEMBERS’ NOTES

Members may submit short announcements and articles for inclusion in this section.

THE RECON RECORDER - Copyright [1 January 2005 by 91st SRW Association]

The “RECON RECORDER” is the official publication of the 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association. This newsletter is to keep our members informed about the organization, its activities, and pertinent related information.

Original recipients for their individual use may reproduce the Recon Recorder entirely or in part.

Editor/Publisher – Jim Bard

As the association’s Secretary, I solicit, accept and review items to publish. Send your input to: Jim Bard, 3424 Nottingham Road, Westminster, MD 21157-8304 or e-mail jimbardjr@adelphia.net

GOD BLESS AMERICA AND OUR WARRIORS IN HARM’S WAY.

(6)

STORIES FROM THE 91ST SRW AND LOCKBOURNE AFB, OHIO

Frank Hayes – 91st A&E

I'm certain many feel like I do. The 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing is where I learned to apply my knowledge and contribute to the success of an organization. We learned to appreciate good leadership and the self-satisfaction of taking part in something we knew was important. As a part of General Curtis E. LeMay's Strategic Air Command we had strong leadership and we were free to take all of the responsibility we were capable of. For those of us 18 to 20 years old, we didn't have to look far to find proven examples, those silent heroes who won WWII, old Sgts, 28 to 32 years old and old Lieutenants and Captains. The 91st was the "elite corps" of SAC and getting it re-equipped with new aircraft and combat ready was top priority. The Cold War was well underway and intelligence needed for foreign policy depended on photoreconnaissance. Everything was in secrecy. General LeMay came to Lockbourne every two weeks. We always met his plane to debrief his Navigator and Crew Chief but they never had a problem to report.

Our Wing C.O. was Colonel Joseph J. Preston, one of General LeMay's most trusted commanders. Under LeMay he had developed the Lead Crew concept, with a different crew specifically trained for each potential target. When LeMay was no longer allowed to fly B-17s out of England, it was Joe Preston, who as a Major led that big raid of 375 bombers on Wilhelmshaven and identified the target through holes in a near solid overcast. That was their first mission into Germany. Six B-17s had war correspondents on board. Walter Conkrite was on Preston's B-17. Andy Rooney was on another B-17. They had been briefed that the odds were 1 out of 6 and one correspondent did not come home.

I graduated from radar school at Keesler AFB in December 1951. Many of us assumed it was the beginning of WWII and we worked hard to make good grades. I even stopped smoking, trying to get my grades up. I arrived at Lockbourne the first of January 1952 when the 91st had KB-29 tankers and RB-45C Reconnaissance Aircraft. I was first trained on the KB-29s, some of which still had coal dust in the aft compartment from the Berlin Airlift. Our first big operation was "Fox Peter One," when KB-29s air-refueled 58 F-84Gs from the 31st SFW at Turner AFB, GA on a record non-stop flight to Japan.

The F-84G fighters flew up to Lockbourne and stayed overnight. At midnight we were on the ramp preflighting our KB-29 systems. This was called a Max Eff, (Maximum Effort) where everything had to go, no room for error. Next, the Crew Chiefs and Line Chiefs were making full power engine tests on each of the twenty B-29s. The sound, the smell and the sight were a life-changing experience for us new troops. At 0200 hours, the fully loaded KB-29s began their take offs, a sight to behold, with flames pouring out of the exhausts and each KB-29 taking the full length of the ten-thousand foot runway. The smell of 130/145-octane fuel and engine oil dominated the flight line long after the last KB-29 had gone. That was my first taste of a real flying operation and taking part in something I knew was important. About Five hours later, after daybreak, the jet fighters took off and caught up with the slower KB-29 tankers for their first air refueling. Fox Peter One was the first and longest non-stop flight by fighters crossing the Pacific. Fox Peter was the code name for Fighter Pacific. Code name Fox Able was for Fighter Atlantic crossings. Island hopping delivery flights of NATO F-84s were called High Flights.

Next, I was checked out on the RB-45C. Sadly, we lost three RB-45Cs. On a crosswind take off, an RB-45C lifted off and settled down on a pile of rock at the right hand edge of the runway. I'll never forget the sight of the black smoke from those 8,100 gallons of JP-4. It burned for

about four hours. Another RB-45C was lost on a local functional check flight and the third was lost on a night air-refueling mission over Arkansas, when a static electricity discharge between the KB-29 boom and the RB-45C receptacle resulted in an explosion. The navigator's only means of escape was out the door that opened in front of the two left hand engines.

I remember when we had work on Saturday, to make it impartial, the shop chiefs had a practice of bringing in the entire crew, and people could never plan for the weekend. Then came the introduction of 66-12 with time card accounting for each job and task, lots of paper work that seemed like a waste to GIs. Everyone was asked for suggestions to help make the system better. Finally, the word came down from General LeMay, who said, "lets stop changing the system and try to make it work." That's when we started getting weekends off.

When the 26th ARS was formed and received KC-97s, the 91st was directed to transfer personnel who were not needed. Since I was brand new, I was sent to the 26th. Those like me welcomed the chance to learn a new radar and a brand new airplane. That is about the time when Herb Osler and I teamed up. We got busy scrounging material to make mockups for new radar test benches and we checked out the radar systems on each of the new KC-97s. Our OIC, 2nd/Lt. Taylor, was the son of Army General Maxwell Taylor. Our shop OIC was Captain Borders, a fine officer. Our NCOIC was T/Sgt Larry LaFontaine, the finest military manager I've known. LaFontaine had been chief of the radar school that we had attended at Keesler. He ran a tight-ship and scholastically, all who attended that school was in his debt. The pressure was on and LaFontaine demanded the best from his instructors and students and he made it the best technical school in America. I always did best working for tough bosses like LaFontaine. You knew exactly what to expect.

Soon, Herb and I were on orders to attend a six-week advanced radar school at Keesler AFB. As soon as we returned to Lockbourne, we were sent back to Keesler for another twelve week advanced technical radar course. While at Keesler, we bumped into CWO Gideon from the 91st. He said the 91st was receiving new KC-97s and he sure would like to have us back in the 91st A&E. He said, "When you get back to Lockbourne, report into the 91st A&E and he would take care of the paper work" so that is what we did. We found 24 brand new KC-97s with radar systems that had never had a maintenance test. With 66-12 in effect, we carried a pad of blank work orders and wrote up any defect discovered. First we worked on the most important systems, the APX-6 IFF, the APS-42 search radar and the APN-69 beacon radar until all systems were operational. Next, we went to work on the LORAN and the radar altimeters. The last systems on our list were the APN-12 and APN-76 refueling radars, for which the 91st A&E had no test bench. We visited our old OIC, Captain Borders and asked if we could use his test bench at night and he agreed. Working with spares and systems from non-flyable KC-97s, by daylight the next morning we had operating systems installed and checked out on eleven flyable KC-97s.

One night about one a.m., I was awakened and taken to the KC-97 flight line. We had a "ramp queen" that had been awaiting parts for various systems. The Line Chief said that KC-97 had to be ready to fly and airborne before daylight. Then he added, "and don't ask me any questions." I got the message! I already knew which black-boxes needed replaced, so with a borrowed flashlight and tools, I went to a non-flyable KC-97, removed the needed black-boxes and within a couple of hours the old "ramp queen" was ready for the crew, who climbed onboard, cranked up and took off. Next morning, nobody seemed to notice the old "ramp queen" was missing. A North Korean MIG pilot had defected to South Korea and the MIG had been taken to Okinawa. They wanted Chuck Yeager to fly it and determine its best and worst flight characteristics. Our "ramp queen" took a load of the special Russian jet fuel to Okinawa for those MIG flight tests. After unloading the MIG fuel our 91st crew flew over to Japan for

some R&R, then came home. At Hickam AFB, U.S. Customs Agents found the KC-97 200 pounds overweight and were never able to determine the source of the extra weight. The four 1800 gallon air refueling tanks were sealed and off limits. Customs agents are pretty savvy and have been known to give a GI a break.

Two of the biggest problems were a shortage of ground power units and transportation. One of the people who most appreciated what we were doing was the 91st ARS Line Chief and we had won his confidence. The Refueling Squadron was down to two ground power units. To help us expedite our work, the Line Chief allowed us to use the APU on the KC-97. The other big problem was waiting for transportation between the KC-97 ramp and the A&E shop. This could involve a two-hour wait, and we always had heavy black boxes. The Line Chief gave me permission to drive my personal auto out to the KC-97 flight line. And I never broke the trust.

We were getting totally involved with the flying squadrons and we had fun. After morning roll call at the A&E Squadron and getting initial assignments, Herb and I went over to the KC-97 Squadron for coffee and donuts. There, we debriefed navigators and crew chiefs on the night flights. We knew the exact condition of every radar on every KC-97. We ran it like a business.

When we had "operator errors," we tracked down the Navigator and Pilot involved. We worked closely with Captains Lasky and Brown on operating procedures and soon became a prime source of information for Navigator and Pilot training. Our high-visibility was beginning to get the attention of our A&E Squadron C.O. Colonel Breeden. When he noticed some of our visitors were Lt. Colonels and Majors, he wanted to know what was going on. He found Herb and I were doing all of the radar work on the KC-97s and others were not learning. In September 1953, we deployed to Westover, MA with 11 KC-97s to refuel B-47s on a record non-stop flight from the U.K. to Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ. Both Herb and I could not go to Westover, so Herb stayed to cover operations at Lockbourne and the Colonel sent me to Westover, with Van Loon to help.

When I returned to Lockbourne the Colonel called us in and told us he was going to break up our team. One of us was going to Sidi Slimane and the other was going to school at Lowry AFB on the K-Series Bomb Nav Systems on the RB-47. I went to the school for four months and enjoyed the beauty of Denver, Colorado Springs and the Ski Resorts being built by former members of the 10th Mountain Division Troops, who had been trained in those Colorado Rockies. Eartha Kitt was popular; we admired the beauty of the Brown Palace Hotel. And we were warned to stay away from 18th and Laramie at night. Denver was the first place we enjoyed pizza and it was made with plenty of hot pepper. Back in Lockbourne, we found a pizza parlor had opened in Columbus and was looking for an Italian cook. We had an A&E technician named Vella from Malta who was looking for a job. We took Vella down to the Pizza Parlor and introduced him as Mr. Vella from a small town in Italy and he was hired without questions. Next, I taught him to drive and he bought a used Hudson. Almost every night somebody made a trip to Columbus and brought a load of those pizzas out to the barracks. They were delicious.

For Herb and those deployed to Sidi Slimane, some of the stories they came back with were unbelievable. The 91st was still flying the RB-47Bs at the time of this deployment. The two tail guns were operated by the Copilot who swung his seat around toward the aft. The mission required guns to be exercised on each flight. It was soon found that most of the guns were failing and jamming, with evidence of overheating. M/Sgt. Jack Taylor and his armament technicians accused the Copilots of holding the trigger until all of the ammunition was fired, all denied by the Copilots. CWO Gideon, the A&E maintenance officer was caught in the middle and when ordered to document an official Unsatisfactory Report, he wrote a UR on the

Copilots, creating a brief catastrophe, which led to a rapid solution to the problem. The 91st soon after received their new RB-47Es, with ejection seats and designed for photoreconnaissance.

After my return from Lowry, my new boss was M/Sgt Sam Stone, who had fought in the Spanish Civil War and a good guy to work for. I was soon assigned to an RB-47E detachment preparing for deployment to England with eight RB-47s. The detachment Commander was Colonel Joseph J. Preston. This was the first time RB-47Es deployed overseas and as with all SAC operations, security was tight. I was the only radar man from A&E. WE would be on RAF Fairford where our RB-47s would blend with a wing of B-47s from Davis-Monthan AFB, AZ whom we could call on for intermediate level repairs. The maintenance personnel went over on a SAC 2nd Support Squadron C-124 from Barksdale AFB. We stopped to refuel at Westover AFB, MA, and then landed at Lajes Field in the Azores Islands for an over-night stay. We thought we were going to RAF Greenham Common, but landed at RAF Fairford, three miles away. Not long after arriving at Fairford we had a harsh reminder about security. Enroute to Fairford, the Davis Monthan unit had stayed overnight at Loring AFB, Maine and the next morning the first two B-47s to takeoff crashed off the end of the runway. Our air-refueled RB-47Es were secure!

Our quarters were a group of WWII Neisen Huts, with shower and latrines in another building. Some evenings we walked down to the little town of Fairford, where there was small pub with older Englishmen playing darts. They were very nice to us and told stories about the war and the ancient church in Fairford, which had some of the most beautiful windows in England. During the war these windows were removed and buried. The church was said to have mysteries, with passageways that led to secret places. Nobody knew for sure how old the church was. For money we were issued MPC. It was nine years after the WWII and the effects of war were everywhere. Rationing was still in effect. When you wanted a bite to eat in town, you got toast and eggs. The Brits took a beating in WWII, but despite shortages and the absence of luxuries, they were jovial and pleasant. Most of the English workers we saw were boys and old men. With no city lights and every window covered with blinds, it was so dark on an overcast night that you could hardly find your way. Cars were driven at night with only parking lights, which were fitted with covers having a narrow horizontal slit that emitted light. It was April, the rainy season and at night the fog was dense, London style. Coming back from Swindon one night the fog was so thick that a S/Sgt got out and walked along in front, so the bus driver could stay in the road and not hit anything parked.

Some of our 91st people had got on three-day trips to Munich via C-47. At the end of April, when most everyone was waiting for payday, empty seats were available on a C-47 flight to Munich. My buddy had been assigned to Munich and said we should go. He said we would be staying in Air Force quarters and the \$5.50 I had was all I needed, and I could never be more thankful for that suggestion. Seeing the effects of war was a life-changing experience and after buying cuckoo clocks I still had a dollar when we returned to Fairford. One other thing we will remember was the inoperative cabin heater on that C-47 and the cold ride back to Fairford. Our orders read Furstenfeldbruck AB, but we landed at Nubiburg AB. We took a GI bus to Munich and used the electric streetcar to get around in Munich. The Americans were making work to help the German economy. Our GI bus had been made from a semi-trailer body and had two transmissions in series, but it worked. We had a small map, and if we got lost, we were told to ask "Wo ist der Bahnhof?" The German people were a pitiful sight, little hope, no smiles, no color and with bicycles the main mode of transportation. Half the streets were marked off with bicycles lanes. Only Americans, government people and businesses had cars. Downtown Munich had one-third of the buildings rebuilt, one-third had been torn down, awaiting construction and one-third were bombed out shells waiting to be torn down.

Government buildings, monuments and the Arch de Triumph had pockmarks from armor strikes. The wonderful Munich Museum was in good shape. But, the Germans had built a power plant in the center opening of the museum and that was totally demolished by a direct hit. Across from the museum was the American Service Club, the famous Artist's Club where Hitler enjoyed mixing with the artistic world. Each wall panel was adorned with large floor to ceiling paintings. Shortly after our return to Fairford, it was May Day and we were told under no uncertain terms should we go to Oxford Hyde Park in London, where big communist celebrations would be taking place.

Our RB-47Es were parked on hardstands, which had field phones installed at the edge. Herb Osler was with our KC-97s at Brize-Norton in East Anglia. Herb occasionally called me on the hardstand phones, but with the security there was not much we could talk about.

Ravens were everywhere and could be a problem if ingested in an engine, but they belonged to the Queen and could not be harmed. A couple of our RB-47Es had bird strikes. I met every returning flight and debriefed the navigator. The radar systems were in good condition and had few maintenance problems. IFF was one system in constant use and required some maintenance. The IFF was installed in the compartment immediately behind the aft main landing gear. Lt. Col. Frank Riggs 322nd Squadron C.O. asked me to check his IFF radar and told me he was about two thousand pounds short of fuel. When I opened that IFF radar compartment, we found out where his fuel had gone.

On May 8th, 1954 I was there to debrief Major Hal Austin after his historic mission down over the Kola Peninsula, from where Russian bombers could come over the North Pole to attack the U.S. and over which SAC B-47s would fly in retaliatory strikes on Russian targets. Of the three RB-47Es that took off that morning, two had returned and after sweating out Hal for 30 to 45 minutes, seeing his plane show up in the landing pattern was a great relief. I remember those holes and seeing Van Deusen race up the ladder to find out what happened. When Hal Austin climbed down the ladder, he looked up at those holes and said "the birds were flying a little high today." After running at full power with a trail of MIGs in pursuit and a fuel leak, Hal was low on fuel and radioed for a tanker. His KC-97 friend Captain Jim Rigley at Brize-Norton was monitoring the radio and recognized the voice of his friend Hal. Rigley got his crew on board his KC-97. After calling Detachment Hq. at Fairford for a rendezvous point, he left Herb Osler to monitor the phone. About the time Rigley got his four engines cranked up the rendezvous location message was received, "5,000 feet directly over the field" and Herb ran out to pass the information to Rigley. An RAF flight emergency was in progress and Rigley's request for take off clearance was denied. There was no way Rigley was going to be late refueling Hal's RB-47E, so taking matters in his own hands, he taxied to the runway and without a run-up, took off and minutes later hooked-up with Hal Austin's RB-47E. All of Hal's fuel gauges read EMPTY, just seconds before the six jet engines would have began shutting down. The next day, that highly classified film was in Lockbourne and the photos were on General LeMay's desk a day later. General LeMay took care of Captain Rigley's violations for taking off without a clearance. Getting that RB-47E back on the ground was some of the best teamwork of the 91st ARS. They saved the day! Intelligence gathered from this mission indicated no evidence of Russian bombers on the Kola Peninsula, but did reveal the existence of the new MIG-17, a match for the B-47. With the RB-47E obsolete for over flights, the long-wing Martin RB-57D-0 (Project Black Knight) of the 508th SRW at Turner AFB, GA would become the next best reconnaissance plane, followed by the highly successful Lockheed U-2 in 1956.

At SAC Hq. General LeMay awarded Hal Austin and crew with DFCs. LeMay said they deserved to be decorated with a silver star, but that required congressional approval which was

out of the question. That determination to guarantee mission success was typical in SAC and there are *thousands of Silent Heroes* known only to those within their small fraternity.

A couple of days later we were on our way home. Our SAC C-124 was not available, so one of the eleven Douglas C-74s at Brookley AFB, Mobile, AL was sent for us. We had a fuel stop at Prestwick, Scotland, where we bought things made in Scotland, argyle socks, cashmere sweaters, etc. Flying the great circle route across the North Atlantic, we got a good look at some very large icebergs. We stopped for fuel at Harmon AFB, Newfoundland and stayed over night. There were about 30 of us and one fellow had a paperback copy of "From Here To Eternity." He read a page, tore it off and passed it to the next man, who did likewise and by the time we touched down at Lockbourne, we had just finished the last pages of that book.

Strategic Reconnaissance is a risky business and the 91st SRW can be proud of a perfect safety record with the RB-47 and KC-97, not a single incident during my time at Lockbourne and we were constantly on guard for security. The most sensitive place on base was Recce Tech where photo interpreters worked. A familiar flight-line scene was camera shop NCOIC M/Sgt. George Hodder with his truckload of film magazines and camera shop technicians downloading and uploading magazines rain or shine. Samsonite in Denver designed protective fiberglass cases for transporting the cameras and magazines and proved to be indestructible during the Lockbourne rough handling tests. These cases became the industry standard for test equipment enclosures.

We had a KB-29 "Tanker From Bangor" stop at Lockbourne to refuel and after takeoff JP-4 fuel somehow got into the fuel feed system of the reciprocating engines. One by one they started losing engines. After the crew bailed out, the KB-29 made a perfect landing near Buckeye Lake. Herb and I got over there after dark and sure enough, we were looking at an intact KB-29 that had made a perfect belly landing. During the early 1980s I met retired CMS Sanders who had been the flight engineer on the famous "Tanker From Bangor." He worked for us on the A-10A project at Fairchild Republic. A few months ago, Captain George French, aircraft commander of that KB-29, e-mailed me regarding the 91st SMW and mentioned his experience at Lockbourne. I told him I was at Lockbourne and saw his KB-29 tanker at Buckeye Lake.

One cold rainy morning I was running operational tests on the K-Series bomb-nav radar system, which took an hour. On a cold day, the heat from all of the radar units up in the nose made the navigator's position a nice and toasty place. His seat, on the RB-47E, ejected downwards. During flight, the navigator was in charge of warming everyone's C-Ration on his amplifiers. After shutting down the radar, I climbed down the ladder and was almost overrun by the crew chief racing up the ladder to the fuel control panel. I descended the ladder as fast as possible and ran. I looked around and could see JP-4 fuel flowing like a waterfall from the compartment above the aft main landing gear, where the JATO bottles were installed. That was another day that we survived only through the grace of the God and our Mother's prayers.

I tell everyone that SAC made me what I am. I owe all of my success to what I learned at the 91st SRW and living by the principles of the SAC culture. I worked as a Philco techrep with two SAC units, the 506th SFW with the first F-84Fs at Tinker AFB and the 4080th SRW with the RB-57D and the U-2s at Del Rio, Texas. When I went to Republic with the F-105 I missed the SAC system of training, systems analyses, and standardization. For the lack of it, TAC paid dearly. My heart and soul goes back to SAC. Non-SAC people thought I was bit strange to like General LeMay.

Frank Hayes, 91st A&E Sqdn, Jan. 52 to Jan. 55

The Cold War From The Ramp
Jon Murray – 324th SRS
(Recollections of my USAF days)

My cold war started about mid February 1953. Standing outside a bus at Sampson AFB, on lake Geneva, upstate New York. “Don’t bring extra clothes” was the recruitment sergeant’s admonition. But the US Government’s supply of cold weather gear was all in Korea to rescue the beleaguered troops there. Us new troops had to wait. Damn it was cold! But, not as cold as Korea. I caught strep and went to the hospital. That's another story. We got our warmer gear slowly over the 2 months basic training period. The Korean War ended while I was in training.

USAF Basic training was probably no different than most, I guess. Lost my baby fat quickly. We marched, ran, had lectures, stood KP and all the rest. Held guard duty on the ice covered dock on the lake, protecting the base from Soviet invaders. Great icy blasts from the north created frozen spray on everything. Damn, it was really cold!

I finished basic in April, and selected an aircraft maintenance career path. My shipping orders were for Amarillo AFB. We were to fly MATS to Texas. Wow! The same MATS guys who did the amazing Berlin airlift. Got to Syracuse airport and met the Meteor Air Transport Service (MATS) plane, a charter DC-3. Bummer! I got to see America, from the air, close up, all day and half the night.

Texas! The first night there, I heard my future. A mysterious whine came across the airfield, rising and falling. The sound of J-33 engines in the test stands. It was the first time I had heard the sound of jet engines. I have been hearing them first hand ever since. Probably cost me the hearing in my left ear. School all summer in the hot Texas Panhandle. Dust devils swept right through the barracks just prior to inspection.

School was good. I learned that what I read in Air Trails magazines about model planes, applied to the real thing. I have always loved airplanes. Not piloting, but the machine itself. Started with a J-3 Cub on a dirt field near our farm. Three quarters of the way through jet fighter mechanics school on F-80s, F-84s and F-86s we got steered to Multi-jet Bombers - Boeing’s new B-47’s. Great choice, great plane! SAC was the place to serve. We had three choices after graduation. Lake Charles, LA, Riverside, CA., or Columbus, Ohio. God and the USAF training command chose Lockbourne AFB for me. They sealed my future on the spot. Off to Columbus, Ohio, with my career path and destiny laid out before me...

I got to Lockbourne in September 1953. The 324th Squadron’s, Korean veteran, eyeball painted, RB-45’s were just being phased out. I didn’t get my secret clearance to the ramp until after they had gone.

The sleek B-45 in my model magazines was a major inspiration for me to join the USAF.



We got the RB-47B models quickly and thus began a 3-1/2 year association with these large (Medium jet) bomber. They were the forerunner to today's, high altitude, multi-engine airliner. Our crews proved in action and deed, what the designers assumed. Hour after hour of high altitude flying was the future of all air travel. However, features like bicycle landing gear, water injection, drag chutes were proven but discarded, thankfully on future multi-jet aircraft. The crews who flew and maintained the B-47 reconfirmed Boeing aircraft's reliability, and resilience once and for all. All future jet travelers can thank the B-47, her designers and her crews. The 324th never lost a plane, during the 3-1/2 years I was there.

Not that the Stratojet couldn't trick a crew. The fuel load had to be constantly adjusted in flight, as the stall speed and Mach 1 approached each other with the diminishing fuel load. The co-pilot was juggling CG, Mach 1, fuel pumps and stall speed throughout most flights. One of my first experiences was a request by co-pilot for a load adjuster. I thought it was just a trick on the new guy, until a wise NCO straightened me out. I recently saw one of these slide rules for sale on E-Bay.

The swept wing feature on the bombers was an initial problem. A lateral roll developed at inopportune times that could and did put the flight crew in harms way. Little Henry, a yaw damper was designed, tested and installed to solve the problem. The fix came after a heavy price in life. When I arrive at Lockbourne in September 1953, an RB-47 hulk lay just off the south edge of the main runway. It was a victim of the yaw/roll problem on landing.

Basically the B-47 was a rather small bomb bay attached to a flying fuel tanker truck. Fuel cells, and more fuel cells, plus wing tanks and aerial refueling. They were thirsty birds and they leaked.

The guys who were of the right caliber soon learned the art of fuel cell removal, replacement and lacing in the hellhole.



I look back now on my first days at Lockbourne and shudder to think on what a clumsy farm boy I was. My first time parking a returning flight with the handheld flashlight wands, I fell down on my kister, on the rough ice. The plane commander slammed the brakes and a looming; 40-ton airplane came sliding toward me. I was scared, then embarrassed, but the pilot, although very upset, was forgiving.

That same winter, during snow removal, I went sliding down the back of the wing, over the flaps, into the power carts. Ouch! B-47 wing snow removal was tricky. Someone used a snow shovel that same day, to break off dozens of the little vortex generator tabs that populated the outer wing. On the early RB-47B's, each of these 1 inch square tabs had a heater wire to hook up. No one was happy with that repair job in the cold.

Beatle Bailey and Ed Balluff
in the snow.



Another occasion for clumsiness was the telescoping crew ladder. When towing the airplane someone would sit in the commander's seat and ride the brakes in case of emergency. The ladder was semi retracted to clear the towbar. Someone had to extend the ladder to let the brake rider down. One cold night everyone got in the tow tractor and left me stranded in the cockpit. After about 5 minutes I decided to climb down using the retracted ladder. Of course the ladder released with me on it and I was trapped. My weight on the lower rung was holding my fingers between 2 upper rungs. After me hollering loud enough the tractor sitters got me loose.

I worked a lot of post flight duty at Lockbourne. Midnights parking return long flights, towing, and refueling. We met many an exhausted crew, coming back after. 12 hour + missions. I can still hear the sound of the groaning, squealing multi-segmented Boeing brakes as the planes taxied back up the ramp. I remember post flight inspections in the cold. We used the ground heaters directing warm air into the forward wheel well where we took refuge from the cold flatland winds. Damn cold war! When the last plane was fueled, it was breakfast at Air Police mess hall. 3 or 4 fried eggs and toast all covered with SOS and lots of catsup. Lots of pepper in the SOS. GI gourmet food.



Lots of good memories, off duty. Good guys come to mind. Ed Balluff and his model planes, Wally Trimpop also flew models. "Beetle" Bailey. Don Pibula, Zechman. De May. Someone played a prank on Otis Skinner, came to his room dressed in a gorilla mask and woke him up. Otis leapt from bed and climbed the Venetian blind like a ladder.

Lockbourne was good duty. New barracks, fair chow, and a great little Midwest city to explore. You could explore the south end of Parsons Avenue with its dives and joints or the OSU College campus and the cute coeds. I found my future wife, Esther, at a YMCA sponsored square dance that the good Lord had directed us both to. We dated for 3 years while she finished nurses at Columbus' Grant Hospital, School of Nursing. We were married in 1956 and are best friends and sweethearts to this day.

We went on many double and triple dates with 324th guys. Stan Kopala and Phil Van Duesen took the Boyer twins to the Student Nurses Association Dance.



Bill Hockrine, John Savard, Joe Hornick and other 324th guys also dated some Grant Nurses. Talk about hardworking girls. The student nurses worked split shift, in study/work program, lived in a chaperoned dormitory, and had limited visiting hours and nights out. A lot, lot tougher than SAC, stateside duty. It's a wonder they had time for us. We are still in touch with many of these girls and attend the Class of 1956 reunions periodically.



Back on base we transitioned to the new RB-47E. Long nosed and sleeker than the "B" model, it is a great looking aircraft.

We had learning curves with the new features on the "E" model. New Canopy system, Ejection seats including a downward seat, and external rocket assist rack to name a few. On one "E" model check out flight, they lost a canopy on landing approach, possibly misinstalled. It was a high speed, open cockpit experience for the crew. Another flight crew lost the downward ejection seat hatch, leaving the navigator's feet dangling in space. He was less than pleased with that part of the mission. This hatch was misinstalled.

In about 1955, the national television show “Omnibus” was doing a full hour, live broadcast devoted to aviation. SAC command ordered the 324th to do a rocket assisted RB-47E take off, to be executed at precisely 5:59 PM on a Sunday for the live shot. Every thing went exactly as planned. We watched the TV show in the line shack. We saw our precisely timed, spectacular smoke trail take off, almost completely hidden by the final rolling credits on the TV screen.

Colonel Archer was mad as a wet hen. He swore never again to let the media near his planes. “Life” magazine did a photo piece, about the same time on the RB-47E. This was during President Eisenhower’s “Open Sky’s” initiative, but I believe it was the 322nd’s planes that were shown.

I have memories of SAC “Alerts” in the middle of the night. They were especially badly timed, just as we got off midnights. We had to go back to the flight line, draw the carbine, gas mask and other alert gear. We then stood around with pretend transport assignments and then stand down. I just about missed my own wedding because of a “LeMay” alert. I had a 5-day pass in hand on a Friday afternoon, when the siren went off. My parents from New York state were in town; the wedding rehearsal was scheduled that night. I took my pass to the main gate, but the AP’s said no go. I went back to the CO with my tale of woe. Was it “Major Hugh Marole?” I got extra Wing level signatures, and went back to main gate, still no go. In desperation, I went around to the back gate and managed to convince the AP there that the Cold War wasn’t going to be lost because I was getting married. He relented and I got to the rehearsal late. My dad thought I was having second thoughts and was backing out.

My short 3-½ year SAC career was mostly served at Lockbourne. I missed the 3-plane deployment to Fairford that Hal Austin’s mission made famous. We did have a 3-month TDY to Ben Guerir, Morocco in August to Oct 1956.

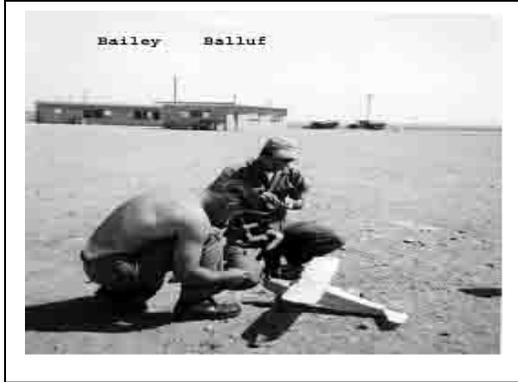
We rode on top of the cargo over to Africa on a C-124 Globemaster. I went up to the flight deck about halfway through the flight, and I swear the crew was all napping. The autopilot was the only one on duty.



When we flew back home to the states it was in a C-121 Constellation with rear facing seats. I crossed the Atlantic backwards, I tell the grandkids.

Ben Guerir was the hottest part of my cold war experience. Somehow included in the B-47 spare parts shipments to Africa, was a crated up used refrigerator and washing machine. These were installed in one of the plywood huts for cold drinks and cheap washdays. The washing machine had a tendency to leak oil and I believe loused up Sgt. Jose Leals white tee shirts. These appliances stayed behind in Africa at a small profit. To beat the heat we worked from 4:00 A.M. until it got too hot. 115 ° in the hut wasn’t unusual in August.

On cooler days (100 °) we built and flew models. "Beetle" Bailey's gas model plane flew into the weapons compound and was never seen again. No one went looking for it either. To many mean dogs and Air Police.



We took side trips too. I went up to Casablanca with Bill Hockrien. Went sight seeing around the city. Some Moroccan kid still has my Brownie camera. The SAC courier C-47 flight up and back was the roughest clear weather flight I ever experienced. Desert thermals bounced us all the way. We were trying to get to Germany but couldn't get a hop.

We also went on a side trip to the Atlantic seacoast town of Mazagan, Morocco. It was arranged by the Chaplin. It was kind of a loose affair, with a French guide, a Moroccan driver and 25 rowdy airmen. We invaded a refined French seaside resort hotel and pretty much upset the all the European old lady tourists. Came back to base full of cheap wine and song.



< Beautiful Ben Guerir

The squadron returned to Lockbourne in fall 1956, loaded with stuff. A Vespa scooter hanging in a bomb bay and a bicycle threaded in the aft electronics bay comes to mind. Camel saddle tables and other leather goods were found in a lot of SAC homes after the TDY.

Back in the states, these were my last days in the USAF. My days at Lockbourne laid the foundation for my career in aerospace. I really didn't appreciate what we (SAC) had accomplished at the time. Looking back today, I feel the duty was well spent; making sure that our Soviet friends didn't get too uppity with what nuclear power they had. It was the beginning of the end of the Iron Curtain. Our flight crews night and day were watching and recording the Russian military might, or lack of it, and was keeping our government planners correctly informed. It most certainly prevented disastrous miscalculations on our side and probably had the same effect on the other side. I am very proud to have had small part in SAC, the 91st SRW, and the 324th during my Cold War.

I was discharged from the service in February 1957. Esther and I headed to Miami, Florida, for warm weather and an A & P mechanics school on the G.I. Bill. Embry-Riddle School of Aviation then, now its Embry-Riddle University.

I graduated after a year and a half of school in Florida. We found no airline jobs at the warm weather fixed bases there, due to an untimely recession, so we headed north. I eventually landed a Flight line inspector's slot at the McDonnell Aircraft Company outside St. Louis, Mo. Started working on F3H Demons in 1958, also F-101 Voodoos, the No. 2 F4H Phantom. After a year I moved off the ramp to the inspection labs as Quality Assurance Tech.

In the ensuing 38 years in St. Louis, I worked as a Q.A. Planner/Test Programmer, Quality Engineer, Supervisor, and Manager and finally moved into Supplier Quality Assurance traveling the U.S evaluating suppliers. I worked on parts of Mercury, Gemini, Skylab, Space Shuttle, F-15, F-18, and AV-8B programs. I worked for McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft Company, the McDonnell-Douglas Missile Company (Harpoon, Tomahawk) and then back to the aircraft company. After retirement I double dipped as Contract Engineer on the JDAM smart bomb set for Boeing Aircraft Company. Looking back on all of this I realize how incredibly lucky I have been to personally witness a significant part of the 2nd half century of aerospace history. And it all started with my fateful USAF days and the RB-47 at Lockbourne.

A1C Jon Murray
AF 12433424
324th SRS



324th

BALLOT

The 91st Strategic Reconnaissance Wing Association is in the process of selecting and approving a motto appropriate to the organization. The motto will be etched onto the association's coin. Below is a list of suggested mottos submitted by members via e-mail; there is also a blank space for additional recommendations (you may write in only one). The Military Challenge Coin Committee will make the final selection - they need your input for guidance. Please indicate your top three favorites by marking them in descending order as 1, 2, and 3. The committee will use this information as part of their selection process.

- ___ Aerial Surveillance Was Our Mandate
- ___ Always Striving For Excellence
- ___ America's Flying Watchdogs
- ___ Anywhere-Anytime-We Will Be There-Always Ready
- ___ Cold War Heroes
- ___ Dare To Be There
- ___ Excellence In Flight And Maintenance
- ___ Eyes In The Sky
- ___ Eyes On The World
- ___ Global Watchdogs
- ___ Intelligence Is The Best Tool
- ___ MAX Effort Always
- ___ Mission Assigned-Mission Accomplished
- ___ No Mission Too Difficult
- ___ Patriotism-Pride-Brotherhood
- ___ Peace Through Knowledge
- ___ Preserving Freedom-Anywhere-Anytime-Anyplace
- ___ Proud Of The Past And Present
- ___ Ready And Able
- ___ SAC Trained CIA Information Gatherers
- ___ Vigilance For Freedom
- ___ You Can Run But You Can't Hide
- ___ Peace Was Our Profession
- ___ An Organization of Excellence
- ___ Silent Heroes
- ___ PRIDE IS FOREVER
- ___ You can't hide from the 91st
- ___ You thought we didn't know?
- ___ Vigilance = Knowledge = Freedom

(Write in)

Mail your completed ballot to: Paul Kardian
900 Palmer Rd., 2J
(See reverse for instructions.) Bronxville, NY 10708-3535

Or, you may send an e-mail to: boombear1@earthlink.net

You can use an envelope or fold in thirds so that the address appears on the outside; seal with tape; affix stamp.

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Bronxville, NY 10708-3535**

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