

# **SHORT BURSTS**

*Air Force Gunners Association*

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A Soldier's Christmas  
By [Michael Marks](#)

The embers glowed softly, and in their dim light,  
I gazed round the room and I cherished the sight;  
My wife was asleep, her head on my chest,  
My daughter beside me, angelic in rest.

Outside the snow fell, a blanket of white,  
Transforming the yard to a winter delight;  
The sparkling lights in the tree, I believe,  
Completed the magic that was Christmas Eve.

My eyelids were heavy, my breathing was deep,  
Secure and surrounded by love I would sleep  
In perfect contentment or so it would seem,  
So I slumbered, perhaps I started to dream.

The sound wasn't loud, and it wasn't too near,  
But I opened my eye when it tickled my ear;  
Perhaps just a cough, I didn't quite know,  
Then the sure sound of footsteps outside in the snow.

My soul gave a tremble, I struggled to hear,  
And I crept to the door just to see who was near;  
Standing out in the cold and the dark of the night,  
A lone figure stood, his face weary and tight.

A soldier, I puzzled, some twenty years old,  
Perhaps a Marine, huddled here in the cold;  
Alone in the dark, he looked up and smiled,  
Standing watch over me, and my wife and my child.

"What are you doing?" I asked without fear,  
"Come in this moment, it's freezing out here!  
Put down your pack, brush the snow from your sleeve,  
You should be at home on a cold Christmas Eve!"

For barely a moment I saw his eyes shift  
Away from the cold and the snow blown in drifts  
To the window that danced with a warm fire's light,  
Then he sighed and he said "It's really all right,

I'm out here by choice. I'm here every night.  
"It's my duty to stand at the front of the line  
That separates you from the darkest of times;  
No one had to ask or beg or implore me,  
I'm proud to stand here like my fathers before me.

"My Gramps died at 'Pearl' on a day in December,"  
Then he sighed, "That's a Christmas 'Gram' always re-  
members;  
My dad stood his watch in the jungles of 'Nam,  
And now it is my turn and so, here I am.

"I've not seen my own son in more than a while,  
But my wife sends me pictures, he's sure got her smile;"  
Then he bent and he carefully pulled from his bag,  
The red white and blue ... an American flag.

"I can live through the cold and the being alone  
Away from my family, my house and my home;  
I can stand at my post through the rain and the sleet,  
I can sleep in a foxhole with little to eat.

"I can carry the weight of killing another  
Or lay down my life with my sisters and brothers  
Who stand at the front against any and all,  
To insure for all time that this flag will not fall.

"So go back inside," he said, "harbor no fright,  
Your family is waiting and I'll be all right."

"But isn't there something I can do, at the least  
Give you money," I asked, "or prepare you a feast?  
It seems all too little for all that you've done,  
For being away from your wife and your son."

Then his eye welled a tear that held no regret,  
"Just tell us you love us, and never forget  
To fight for our rights back at home while we're gone,  
To stand your own watch, no matter how long.

"For when we come home, either standing or dead,  
To know you remember we fought and we bled  
Is payment enough, and with that we will trust  
That we mattered to you as you mattered to us."

[Michael Marks](#)  
December 7th, 2000

**WISHING YOU AND YOURS A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS....MAY ALL THE JOYS OF THIS SEASON BE WITH YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES....**

**WE SEND A SPECIAL PRAYER TO ALL OUR TROOPS WHERE EVER THEY ARE AND TO THEIR LOVED ONES THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON - KEEP THEM SAFE AND REUNITE ALL THOSE WHO ARE SEPERATED SOON.**

Your AFGA Officers: Larry, Ralph, Dan, Iggy, Chuck, Bob A., Frank, Neil and Bob M

## **AFGA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LARRY LEWANDOWSKI**



Hello Folks

Hopefully everyone has had a great summer. Here in the North Country it was pretty nice. Not too many hot days. As we enter the fall seasons we can look forward to the upcoming holidays. A time for remembering past family gatherings and friendships we have experienced in our lives.

Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas holidays will be here before we know it. Remember those who have passed on, give thanks for all the opportunities we have had to serve our country and to make the world a more peaceful place for all peoples across the world.

Our next Reunion is in Reno, Nevada in September of 2015. The particulars are being posted in this Short Bursts. I encourage all gunners and their families to try to attend. It is always a fun time to gather with old friends and to meet new friends. Many of us are getting “Long in the Tooth” as the old timers say, and two years makes a big difference between who we will meet again. So make sure to attend and encourage those gunners you know who are members and those who are not AFGA members to get with it and join our ranks.

We are still working on redoing our website and hopefully it will be finished in the near future. Some hang ups but nothing we can't overcome. Look for it!

Our deepest sympathies are extended to the family of our Vice President Rick Swain at his passing. Keep his family in your prayers.

Best wishes to all for the coming New Year.

C'est La Vie  
*Larry*

### ***A VETERAN'S TRIBUTE***

**Published on Aug 21, 2014**

After over 8 months of marathon+ days, Mike Ehredt's amazing personal tribute to over 6,550 fallen US Servicemen and women ended on Veterans Day, November 11, 2012, in Galveston, Texas, at 1:30 PM. In 2010, Mike ran from Astoria, OR, to Rockland, ME, and placed 4,424 flags, one every mile for every US soldier and Marine lost in Iraq. Then, in 2012, Mike placed the last of 2,140 flags, honoring those US soldiers and Marines who had died in Afghanistan.

Watch Video at: <http://www.projectamericarun.com/>



Throughout these two grueling runs, Mike remained true to the purpose of this monumental endeavor. His goals were simple, yet humbling: To personally honor each and every fallen American with a memorial mile and flag, and to remind the rest of us Americans that many men and women, and their families and friends, have made huge sacrifices on our behalf. He adamantly opposed the intrusion of any political or commercial agendas which would detract from his effort to Honor and Remember those who perished in these two conflicts.

What an amazing accomplishment ...contributed by Cease

## **AFGA VICE-PRESIDENT - RICK SWAIN**



Good day from North Central Ohio where the winter weather is supposed to be really cold and snowy this year but we will see.

Several changes going on in my personal life right now but not unlike many others of you and it got me thinking about the changes in our organizational staff. Our Editor is retiring from that job and another member is stepping up to take over. Bob has been an excellent editor and photographer for the AFGA, not unlike his military career, and is going to be missed. He has requested input for the quarterly addition of “Short Bursts” over the years and has received many but there are more of you out there who can tell stories and do so at every reunion but we need to get them recorded on paper and become part of the legacy that we all leave behind. They can be serious, funny or just a story you want to tell. But let’s get them written to make sure that that story gets in the archives because the Air Force in general, did not do a good job of preserving the Cold War, Korean, and Vietnam era history of those were members of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and the experiences we had especially the personal ones.

I remember hearing a story about Bob Matherly who was on a commercial flight going to a Gunners Reunion. Bob was wearing his “Gunners Association Vest” that has all of the colorful patches, pins and other memorabilia on it including all of his decorations in the miniature medal form. There was a young boy who was running up and down the aisle of the aircraft making noises and making a general spectacle of himself and would not listen to his mother about sitting down and being quiet. The cabin attendant told the boy that he should sit down and not disturb the other passengers and listen to his mother but he refused. So the copilot came back and talked to the boy about his conduct and there was no change. Next the Captain of the aircraft talked to him with the same response. Finally, Bob got up and ask the boy’s mother if he could try to get him to settle down a little and she gave her permission. Bob took the boy to the rear of the aircraft and spoke to the boy in a low voice for about thirty seconds of which no one else heard and the boy ran back to his seat, put on his seatbelt and was polite and quiet for the rest of the flight. After landing the Aircraft Captain asked Bob what he said to the boy that had such a chilling effect on him. Bob said that he told the boy that he was a retired Chief Master Sergeant Air Force Gunner and as such every time he flew that Airline, they permitted him to pick one passenger to toss out of the aircraft at altitude and he had not made his choice yet but the boy was high on the list to be the candidate.

Now I am not sure that is a true and accurate, but a story like that would be something that could be told and put into the archives of the Air Force Gunners Association.

To Bob, I hope you enjoyed your time as Editor and enjoy what we still write after you sign your last column. Best of everything from all of us,

Rick

**Editor’s comment:** Nice story, Rick but you and I know that it was not me sitting on the airplane, you just didn’t want to explain to all how the little boy got that the door open before he “accidentally” fell out. I only write about true items...ha ha. Thank you for the nice words though...and yes, I have enjoyed my times as Editor—only have the April and August SBs to finish up before the Reno reunion next year. I know Pete will do an outstanding job if elected...and the bar will be raised just that much more by him being the next Editor. Looking forward to helping him in anyway he may need it—but doubt that he will as he has that spirit and passion in him that made him a great gunner and which will push him to be an even better Editor than those who came before him. Bob

**FINAL FLY BY  
A FAREWELL TO A FRIEND**



**RICHARD LEE SWAIN**, 69, of Galion died Wednesday, October 15, 2014 at Galion Community Hospital.

Born April 1, 1945 in Ashland County, he was the son of the late Kenneth and Faith (Mackey) Swain. He married Coreen "Corkey" (Price) Swain on April 4, 1964 and she survives.

Richard retired from the [United States Air Force](#) after a 22 year career and then worked for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections for 16 years as a telecommunication manager.



He was a member of Galion Masonic Lodge 414 Free and Accepted Masons, American Legion Scarbrough Post 243 and Air Force Gunners Association. Richard was an amateur radio operator and a member of the American Radio Relay League (ARRL).

In addition to his wife he is survived by daughter Cori Swain and fiancé Phillip Crowder of Columbus; grandchildren Ayiana and Gunner; brothers John (Jo Ann) Swain and Kenneth (Helen) Swain and sisters Catherine (Denny) Easterday, Bonnie Anschutz and Karen (Paul) Lightfoot all of Galion.

The family will receive friends from 10 to 11 a.m. Tuesday, October 21, 2014 at Snyder Funeral Home Richardson Davis Chapel in Galion where services will be held at 11 a.m. with Pastor Seth Ellis officiating.

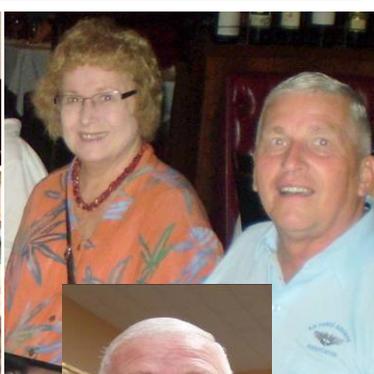
Full military honors will be conducted by the United States Air Force and Galion Crestline Veterans Military Funeral Detail.

Burial will be at Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery in Rittman.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Richard's grandchildren's college fund in care of the funeral home.

Snyder Funeral Home Richardson Davis Chapel in Galion is honored to serve the family of Richard Swain, and condolences may be made to them at [www.SnyderFuneralHomes.com](http://www.SnyderFuneralHomes.com).

RICK AND CORKEY PHOTOS FROM PAST REUNIONS  
IN REMEMBRANCE OF A VERY FINE FRIEND WHO WILL BE MISSED



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April 1, 1945—October 15, 2014  
**R.I.P.**

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### **AXIOMS FROM THE PAST - BASIC FLYING RULES.**

***'Try to stay in the middle of the air. Do not go near the edges of it. The edges of the air can be recognized by the appearance of ground, buildings, sea, and trees. It is much more difficult to fly***

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS - BOB MATHERLY



This edition was very hard to do is all I can say. I had just finished putting in Rick Swain's Vice President's comments into this December issue that early morning on the 15th of October when I received the news of his passing. We lost a good friend and member of our Association. With a heavy heart I decided to leave his last comments in as he had written and placed the Final Fly By page right along side it. We definitely feel the loss as I am sure the family does, even more so for them. Our prayers and condolences are offered but, still, the pain will remain with them for a long time. Rest in Peace, our friend, YOU DEFINITELY "MADE A DIFFERENCE" to all of us and are missed.

Getting this edition to the printers a wee bit late due to many factors, mostly mine, but we finally pulled the Reno Reunion plans together (or should I say John and Larry did) and the details are found in this edition of the Short Bursts. While many helped, I would like to say we owe Lorraine Johnson of Sparks, Nevada a very BIG Thank You for her efforts in hunting for a venue for the Ladies of this Association on Saturday morning while our Business Meeting is being conducted. She spent a lot of time looking around before finding what I think is the perfect fit for the morning entertainment. Both John and Larry agreed and the Shiloh Band and McAvoy Layne impersonations of Mark Twain will entertaining the women with a private rendition of their show "Home Means Nevada". Hope you all attend and enjoy it as much as we believe you will. Again, Thanks, Loraine—you did good!!

This edition is the largest one I have put out - a full 68 pages of many, many interesting articles that satisfy most for all of you while reading it. Several new venues appear including one that I hope to see more of in the coming issues sent in by Clyde Ketcham. His stories will sure bring back a lot of memories for the B-52 gunners regardless of how many hours flown in them. Entitled "B-52 TALL TAILS—COMMENCE FIRING", it contains short stories of his life while a B-52 gunner back in the 1960s and 1970s. Thanks, Clyde, all certainly will enjoy reading of your experiences. Bill Saka's contribution was appreciated also.

Pete Karjanis' news inputs help to bring us into the present world of the USAF to a certain extent and the varied news releases certainly keep us all up to date of the goings on within and around the Air Force. He will be nominated for the Editor's position at our 2015 Business Meeting and assume the roll immediately when the December 2015 Short Bursts rolls out under his guidance and efforts. Looking forward for this. In the meantime you will have to put up with me for 3 more issues before then so I have not quite finished the job started just a short 10 years ago. My how time really does fly.

We are working with LMB Media Group, a website designer company located in Santa Clara, Ca, in getting the new Gunner's Association Website built. It will be up and on line possibly by the time you receive this publication but if not, very soon after the 1st of the year. I am sure we will have some growing pains as we work our way though the new site so please bear with us. Anyone out there who would like to become a Web Master for the new site should contact our President, Larry Lewandowski and offer their assistance. Neil Richards remains our Web Master for now but is also hoping to get the help needed to take over and maintain the new site. He will not disappear as he also wears the hat of the BX Officer and will continue in that position if he chooses.

At our 2015 Business Meeting we will need to be voting for and selecting a new President and Vice President and for my replacement as Short Bursts Editor - would like ALL of the members to start considering who should be taking the reins of this fine organization for the next few years. Choose wisely and we will continue to be a viable association. It does take a dedicated group of Association Officers to keep this organization flying above the clouds....don't be bashful, if you are interested in ANY position on the Board you should put your name forth at this very important meeting.

As far as this issue goes, some of the newspaper articles sent in that contain photos—the quality of the photos is not great but I left them in as they do contribute to the written words. Some of the articles are quite old and well worth the effort that I took to put them in and I appreciate them being sent in. Thanks, Cease— your articles of the past were great.

I had one piece of paper that did not scan well so I could not publish it in this issue but believe that Louise Conder deserves a BIG THANK YOU for donating a B-36 model and a B-52 aircraft model to the Castle Air Museum. These models were part of the Bud Conder collection and she felt that they should be placed where folks could enjoy them as much as he did. We thank you for your thoughtful consideration in making these gifts to the Castle Air Museum.

**Well, this completes another December issue of the Short Bursts and the New Year is soon to be upon us. For all of you out there Jan and I hope the plus's exceed the minus's and that it was a good year overall for all. This is the time of year when families tend to gather together to celebrate these great holidays. We are so fortunate to be able to do so. Let us pause for a moment, though, and remember those special friends and loved ones we have left behind over these times and those who are now serving our great country wherever that may be for they are truly the ones who continue to defend our freedoms and all that we enjoy today. Our men and women currently serving certainly need our prayers and good wishes for their well being and safe return to their loved ones even as we enjoy our holidays at home. Jan and I wish all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We also wish you good cheer, good health, great friends and a great new year of adventures as we walk together through the days, weeks and months ahead. WE are indeed blessed to have this family of friends!!! Bob**

# MEMBERSHIP CORNER - CHUCK DEAN



WOW...Where did this year go? It really flew by fast. My family and I got to attend a lot of major golf tournaments this fall and even went to Scotland to cheer on the US Ryder Cup Team. What a great trip! As we all know, our next reunion is coming up soon so start planning to attend. Hope to we have the best attendance ever for a reunion.

Our active membership is still around 1000 members with the majority being Life Members.

In the last few weeks, we (Chief Matherly and I) have had a couple of inquiries from 130 Gunship gunners asking about joining "OUR" association. Maybe this is something the membership should address at our next reunion business meeting. Just throwing that out there!

We had two new members this quarter. It is important that we continue to actively solicit new members for OUR association. If you know of someone that was a gunner ask them if they are a member. If they are not, give them the Membership form out of your Short Bursts or have them get in touch with me. We need more of the younger gunners to join and attend OUR reunions.

Some of our membership issues are; accurate address information. Please remember if you are planning on moving (or have recently moved) make sure you make a note to inform me of your new address info so we can continue to keep in touch with you. You can send me an email with the update or if you don't have e-mail drop me a short note in the regular mail. Calling me directly is also an option. However, it is getting better!

**Please remember that the SB Subscription fees are in addition to your annual dues if you pay annually and are additional fees if you are a life member.** There still seems to be a little confusion on that point. If you have questions about the Subscription options give me or Bob a call or send me an email.

Annual members, I will continue to send Membership renewal notices on a monthly basis. The renewal notices typically go out towards the last week of the month prior to your due date. Please review the information on the notice for accuracy and provide any changes needed. Then, please return lower portion of the notice along with your check in the provided envelope. Also, sometimes your annual dues and SB subscription dates don't coincide, so you might get a renewal notice and a subscription card within a month or two.

**Please make sure you make your checks out to AFGA instead of a specific person.**

Let me apologize for our great US Postal Service. I know these past few months I haven't received some of your renewal checks. In order to save on mailing expenses I only forward checks on to our Finance Chairman once or twice a month so if you have sent a check recently either for annual dues or for the Short Bursts Subscription please allow for this time delay if you see that your check has not been processed through your Bank.

*Chuck*

## NEW MEMBERS

Name	City & State	Aircraft	Card Number
Robert Bogusky	St George Island, FL	B52	L4042
David Stockdale	Columbus, MS	B52	4047

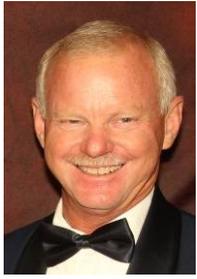
## Did you know?

1. Your shoes are the first thing people subconsciously notice about you. So wear nice shoes.
2. If you sit for more than 11 hours a day, there's a 50% chance you'll die within the next 3 years
3. There are at least 6 people in the world who look exactly like you. There's a 9% chance that you'll meet one of them in your lifetime.

Contributed by Liz Anderson—there will be more of these throughout this issue—enjoy. Bob

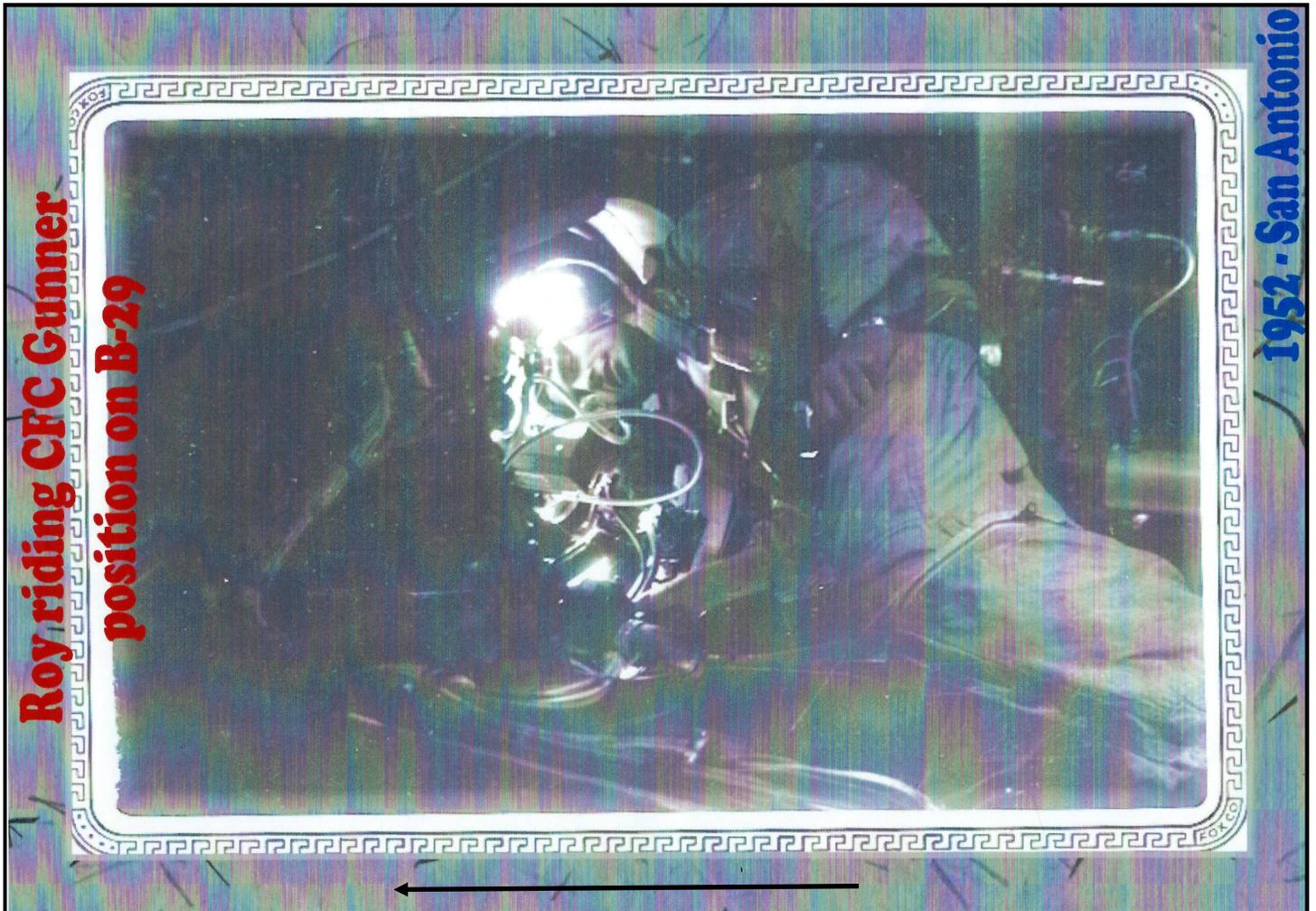
History of a B-29 gunner, Korean War

Roy Emberland



I met with Roy a few weeks ago at his home. He is the second gunner I've interviewed who are in their 80's. Even though Roy was in the service for a very short time, compared to those who spent twenty to thirty years in the service, he had an extensive amount of documentation covering his time in the service. As a B-29 gunner he explained to me how his fire control system (FCS) worked. Very different than the FCS that we in the B-52 operated. They had a specific position that operated the radar to detect the incoming enemy fighters. Then the radar operator would report to the various gunnery positions for them to sight in the enemy fighter. Roy's stories reminded me of many of the same things that all gunners, no matter when they served, experienced. I salute all gunners from every era. We are all brothers of the same stock.

**HISTORY OF A B-29 GUNNER, KOREAN WAR  
ROY EMBERLAND**



**HISTORY OF A B-29 GUNNER, KOREAN WAR  
ROY EMBERLAND**



**Kadena AFB, Okinawa  
B-29 Aircraft**



Our ship No. 824

Roy prior to mission over North Korea

Flew 26 missions (all night) over  
North Korea during the Korean War  
1952-53



Tail gunner position on B-29



Picture of myself in the  
tail gun in flight

All the B-29 Emberland photos provided by Roy Emberland to  
Historian Bob Ashley for this Short Bursts edition

## HISTORY OF A B-29 GUNNER, KOREAN WAR ROY EMBERLAND

Roy Emberland flew aboard B-29

Roy Emberland, 79 of Thousand Oaks CA, former rural Willmar resident and Air Force combat veteran recently took a flight from Camarillo, CA, on FIFI, a restored B-29 bomber. The 30 minute flight was the first time Roy had flown in a B-29 since flying combat missions over North Korea 60 years ago.

FIFI, the world's only flying B-29 bomber, is touring the United States, drawing large crowds of veterans and aircraft enthusiasts. The bomber's crew helped 10 paying passengers on board for the flight. Observers watched the giant plane start her engines, taxi and slowly lift off the runway.

Roy said the flight brought back a lot of memories, from the sound and vibration of the engines to the smell of aviation fuel.

Roy was a tail gunner, flying 26 night combat missions during 1952-53.

Roy's sister, Diane Vosika, from Willmar, showed up at the airport to surprise Roy. In addition, Roy's wife Sandy, daughter Laurie Minor and husband Steve watched Roy being interviewed by various news crews and recalling his memories of the B-29.

FIFI is scheduled to stop in Minneapolis between August 8-11.



**Roy and Diane**



**Roy in the Tail Gunner position**

**THIS AND THAT**  
**“ANCIENT HISTORY”**



**DEAD-EYES**— are the four men taking a good look at the type of radio controlled plane which they recently shot down at the Boardman, Oregon shooting range. The air-men, all of which are members of Captain Finagan's 325th BS crew, are from left to right: T/Sgt. Condor, who shot down three; A/ZC Becellio, one; S/Sgt. Carlson, one; and A/IC Walker, one. In shooting down six planes, the men set a new record for a Fairchild crew on a single mission at Boardman. USAF Photo



Watch out! That little black ball can sure move. A/IC Andrew Leeper, (left) of the 325th Bomb Squadron challenges S/Sgt. C. C. Walker, also of the 325th, to a fast moving game of handball. Handball is one of the more popular sports at the gym. (Photo by Leo)

**“THOSE WERE THE DAYS, MY FRIEND, WE THOUGHT THEY’D NEVER END.....**  
History submitted by none other than Cease Walker—no stories with them though (and no beard on anyone either).

Another historical article clipped from newspaper from long ago—Cease provided this article on B-52 bombing from the mid 1960s

The Army leader noted that artillery and tactical airpower so contributed to the victory but said the weight of ordnance delivered by these sources was small in comparison with the B-52 delivered bombs.

Credit must be given to the 3rd ADIV, he remarked, for breaking the back of the enemy and permitting the exploitation of the later ground link-up at very little cost to Allied Forces, leaving the enemy "fragmented,

of our scheme of warfare. "The professionalism of pilots, crew-members and support people has been remarkable. Your contribution has not only been important, it has been absolutely essential to the success of our efforts," he said.

"Khe Sanh . . . is a battle that was won by you, and subsequently exploited by the 1st Cavalry Division Airmobile of the United States Army and the Marines," he remarked.

Still speaking of the action at Khe Sanh early this year, he said, "I chose the code name 'Operation Niagara,' because I visualized your bombs falling like water over the famous falls in northern New York State, and that's exactly what happened: your bombs rained there like the water flowing over Niagara Falls."

General Westmoreland added that before the weather cleared and ground forces relieved Khe Sanh, "You had broken the back of the enemy." He said, "Without question the amount of firepower put on that piece of real estate exceeded anything that had been seen before in history by manyfold and the enemy was hurt. His back was broken by airpower."

He told the SAC men that the B-52s are a major element

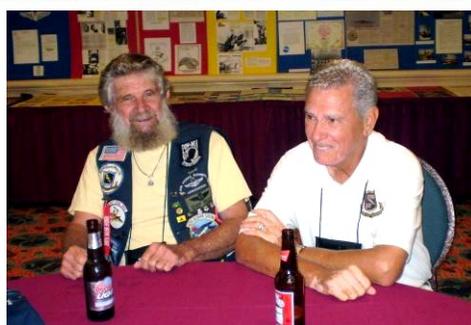
SAIGON—Gen. William C. Westmoreland recently told crews assigned to Strategic Air Command's Third Air Division that their B-52 Stratofortress crews had "broken the back" of the enemy at Khe Sanh.

The former commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command-Vietnam made the statement to the SAC crewman after a visit to Washington where he appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee in connection with his nomination to become the chief of staff, U.S. Army.

# General Westmoreland Hails B-52 Crewmen

defeated and demoralized." He termed the battle of Khe Sanh a "tremendous victory for us. Today our military position has never been stronger."

General Westmoreland concluded by saying, "I'll never forget the tremendous job done by the Third Air Division and the invaluable support given to my command during the last most four years."



Cease and Harry Orlando (just because, Harry) It's the company you know

## **AFGA NEWSREEL**

### **Pete Karjanis' Inputs of Current News**

The throaty growl of B-52s will soon return to Minot AFB, N.D., following the recent opening of a rebuilt runway at the Air Force Global Strike Command base. The Sept. 29 ribbon cutting ceremony ended a three-year, \$200 million project that included a new base operations building and control tower in addition to a complete replacement of the 57-year-old runway, states a [release](#). Reopening the runway will allow the 5th BW's Stratofortresses to return from their temporary home at Ellsworth AFB, S.D. A B-52 made a low pass over the new runway as part of the ceremony. Special guests at the ceremony were North Dakota's US Senators, John Hoeven and Heidi Heitkamp. Minot "plays an important role in our nation's defense and we want it to continue to play that role well into the future," said Hoeven, who serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee's military construction panel. Heitkamp stressed Minot's critical role in the strategic nuclear deterrence Triad, which she said, "keeps our country safe."

The nation must start a debate now on whether to maintain all three legs of the nuclear deterrent triad because the Navy will have to spend "several billion dollars over the next five years" preparing to build a replacement for the Ohio class strategic nuclear submarines, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said Sept. 30. That debate cannot wait until the Navy must start building the first of the new missile-carrying subs, Mabus told reporters in Washington, D.C. Mabus repeated his warning that if the Navy is forced to bear the total cost of building the new sea-based leg of the triad "it will break something." Buying one of the new "boomers," optimistically estimated to cost more than \$7 billion each, would consume half the normal shipbuilding budget for at least 12 years, leaving little to buy all the other ships the Navy needs, he said. "The 'boomers' are the most survivable leg of the triad," Mabus said. "This is a national mission. We've got to have this debate now." The Air Force provides the other two legs of the nuclear deterrent force—the land-based Minuteman III ICMBs and the nuclear-capable bombers.

Equipping the B-52 with new, long-range and faster—potentially hypersonic—standoff missiles would create a capability comparable to that of a nuclear submarine, Global Strike Command chief [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#) said Thursday. A bomber with cruise missiles that can reach the target in "hours or minutes" represents "a very cost-imposing strategy" on a nuclear adversary and would be a "significant deterrent," he said at a Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies event in Arlington, Va. It would also have the same striking power as a boomer sub, he said. The AGM-86 Air-Launched Cruise Missile, which now equips the B-52 force, was "supposed to last 10 years," but is still serving today and will be "another 10 years out." Wilson plugged for a long-range cruise missile replacement, which, especially if blessed with hypersonic speed, could breathe new life into the B-52, he said. Even without such a weapon, though, Wilson touted the B-52 as "too ... versatile" to retire, with the ability to employ more kinds of munitions than any other US platform. Wilson also noted that AFGSC has set up a "standoff missile application center" with the Navy to explore the synergies of various missiles like the Tomahawk, Conventional ALCM, Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, or JASSM, and the Miniature Air-Launched Decoy and its jamming variant, the MALD-J.

#### **New Home for Mighty Eighth HQ**

The 8th Air Force staff moved into a freshly renovated 77,000 square-foot headquarters building at Barksdale AFB, La., following a ribbon-cutting ceremony with community officials on base last week. "Our distinguished visitors represent our long-term relationship with Shreveport and Bossier City that makes the Eighth Air Force successful," said 8th AF boss Maj. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm, during the July 2 rededication of the building. The French colonial, revival-style building now houses the state-of-the-art 608th Air Operations Center as well as US Strategic Command's Task Force 204, which oversees strategic bombing and reconnaissance aircraft. Civil engineers began refurbishing the building, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, in 2010, reported local TV station KTAL News. The numbered air force, which oversees Air Force Global Strike Command's strategic bomber force, has made its home at Barksdale since 1975, according to the base release.

A perennial B-52 upgrade idea—[re-engining](#)—is being considered again, [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#), head of Air Force Global Strike Command, said Thursday. Speaking at an AFA-sponsored, Air Force breakfast in Arlington, Va., Wilson said plans call for the B-52 to remain in service until 2040 "and possibly beyond." Wilson told *Air Force Magazine* that he's been talking to engine contractors, who say a commercial motor for the B-52 "could save us 25-30 percent on fuel," but an even bigger payback could come from ripple effects in logistics and operations. Some new engines can "stay on-wing for 20 years" producing large savings on depot maintenance, and greater fuel efficiency translates to greater range, reducing the need for tankers, he said. An engine replacement might pay for itself by "the mid-'30s" but make even more sense because Wilson thinks the B-52 will serve longer than that. "We're flying them less," and racking up hours more slowly, he said. There's no money in the coming budget for new engines, but Wilson said he's exploring whether Congress would be willing to allow the Air Force to use some money earmarked for energy-saving upgrades at installations for the project. Right now, the money can't be used for aircraft modifications.

The 51-year-old B-52H needs a new radar, and Global Strike Command chief [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#) said Thursday he would be quite satisfied having the AN/APG-81, which equips the F-35 fighter, installed on the bomber. Speaking with reporters after an AFA-sponsored, Air Force breakfast in Arlington, Va., Wilson said the F-35 radar would be an "80 percent solution" to what the B-52 needs, but offers big operating cost benefits: by buying the AN/APG-81, the Air Force could increase the production run and further reduce unit costs on the radar. Also, as with potential re-engining of the B-52, Wilson said the radar would sharply reduce maintenance costs on the bomber, thus defraying the cost of the new capability. The longer the B-52 serves, the more savings would accrue, he said. The precedent for both upgrades is the KC-135 re-engining and digital upgrade, which has saved money and vastly extended the KC-135's service life, he said.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Clyde,  
been collecting your tales along the way off FB...hope you don't mind if I inject them into the Short Bursts over the next year or so...they sure do bring back a lot of memories....wonder if anyone remembers the dead rat in between the walls in mod 5 back in "71? We must have lived with that smell for months it seemed before they finally cleaned it out....Keep up the stories...they are definitely great!! Bob

I would be very happy to have to have Tall Tails injected into Short Bursts. I tell these stories for the younger gunners benefit and just maybe it will get the older men to let go with some really good doozees. The younger guys missed out for sure. I'm afraid the older men don't take time to check out FB. Commence Firing Take Care Clyde

Mr. Matherly,

After speaking with a few gunners on Facebook, I was pointed in your direction with a copy of an article I wrote for the Westover Patriot about a B-52 tail gunner named Michael O'Keefe. I'm not sure if you have covered the story of the crash on Elephant Mountain in '63 or TSgt O'Keefe, but I would love to submit it for your magazine Short Burst. I look forward to hearing from you.

I was born in '82. I'm stationed here at Westover and found O'Keefe story too interesting to let die off. Thank you so much for adding the story to short burst.

Regards,  
William Passmore

William's story of Michael O'Keefe follows on page 18 - 19 in this issue: Thank you very much, Michael for writing this story of one of our B-52 gunners who was lost during the cold war. His sacrifice, as well as all the others who perished in this crash, continues to be remembered due to the efforts of people like you. Bob

On Wed, Oct 15, 2014 at 7:06 PM, Arlie C. Griffis, Jr. <[130gunner@earthlink.net](mailto:130gunner@earthlink.net)> wrote:

Greeting...

Are AC-130H SPECTRE Aerial Gunners allowed to join The Air Force Gunner Association.. I was an Aerial Gunner for 14 years on the SPECTRE Gunship, and if SPECTRE gunners are allowed, I will pass the word to all my gunner friends...

Hope to hear from you soon...

Sincerely  
Arlie C. Griffis Jr.  
USAF Retired - Aerial Gunner - AC-130H SPECTRE Gunship

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Editor's reply to Arlie Griffis Jr. inquiry:

Thanks for the interest in our association, Arlie. Currently our by-laws restrict membership to only offensive bomber gunners. We are having a reunion next September where this subject will be brought up again. I would support a change to our by-laws to allow the gunship gunners to join but until then it is closed to all others. Sorry...we have several Spectre, and Spooky gunners who also are B-52 gunners who belong and they have discussed this before. I know the great contributions of your group and it not a reflection on them, just the way the Association started out and has remained closed to all but the bomber gunners since the inception of the Association back in 1985.

I am cc'ing this to our President Larry Lewandowski and other Officer Board members so that they can see the interest in allowing others to possibly join the Association but until that time, as I said, they all do not meet the criteria to join. Know this is not what you wanted to hear. We'll just have to wait and let the AFGA members decide next year in Reno.

Bob Matherly  
Short Bursts Editor

Remember the Ventures? An instrumental rock band from the 60's. Their biggest hit was "Wipeout", but their first hit was "Walk Don't Run". Their original 17 year old drummer left after 8 months to join the Air Force.

He came back for a reunion to play "Walk Don't Run" with them again. Guess what he is now? A 4-Star General!! General Babbitt was a drummer at one time for the Ventures. Came a long way from beating the drums....never know what one is going to do in life.

This is pretty cool..... it will make you smile.....

<http://www.stumptownblogger.com/2012/04/what-a-cool-video.html>

Sent in to me by a friend who worked at Lockheed with me. Thanks to Carl Jones we know the rest of the story now. Bob

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was present at the filming of the taxiing and take-off of the B36 for the scene for the movie *Strategic Air Command* starring Jimmy Stewart and a host of other good actors including June Allyson. This was filmed at Carswell AFB, TX in November 1953. This airplane was from the 26<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 11<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing (H), Carswell AFB and that can be determined by the red and white striped paint on the four jet intakes and the main landing gear door and the huge black triangle with a "U" in the middle of the triangle painted on the vertical stabilizer. I was in this squadron/wing and our crew [Echo 16] flew this airplane many times; it was a B36H and was virtually brand new at that time. Note the scenes "inside the aircraft" on take-off; sitting to the left of the flight engineer's panel, observing the T/O, is Jimmy Stewart. The external take off roll was shot from the nose of a B25 flown by the very famous stunt and race pilot, Paul Mantz and he trailed the B36 in the B25 through all of those beautiful cloud scenes after the T/O; Mantz was tucked up very close to the B36 during that T/O roll and after they were airborne Mantz had to slide the B25 off to the left to get out of the turbulence created by the B36. I was a gunner on B36s from 1952 to 1957 before going to the B52 program in 1957. Cheerz, Stan Allen

Comments from Stan's friends:

Cease Walker: AH YES, THOSE WERE THE DAYS... FAIRCHILD TO TOKYO TO GUAM, NONSTOP 34 HOURS 10 MINUTES... PRIOR TO LANDING, SHAVED, IRONED FLIGHT SUIT, NEW RED HAT AND DICKIE, PARACHUTE CORD LACES IN POLISHED BOOTS... FIRST B-36 LANDED AT ANDERSON, ALL KINDS BRASS, BIG WELCOME, TWO GI CANS FULL OF ICE AND SAN MIGUEL, TWO BEERS AND SGT'S , LEEPER AND I SOON LOST OUR SHARP GUNNER'S IMAGE...

GARY LEEPER: Stan and I served together at March AFB flying in B-52s'. He was a kind of worry wart character. Once while he was pulling nuclear ALERT duty , He had an appointment at the dental clinic. Just as they were about to administer novacaine the "HORN" blew. Stan flinched and the needle broke and was laying on his tongue. HE SWALLOWED IT!! . Ran to the aircraft and completed the exercise. He was scared to death!!! They did not take him off the duty for 3 more days. Meanwhile he would get x-rays daily showing where the needle was. 4th day while picking thru "YOU KNOW WHAT", HE PASSED THE THING! Everyone got a pretty good laugh at ole Stan's expense!

[CLICK ON THE URL BELOW TO SEE VIDEO— YOU MAY HAVE TO COPY IT INTO THE ADDRESS BLOCK](#)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGjyH2ulsCk>

Hi Bob,  
Thanks for all the hard work on getting my printed edition of 'Short Bursts' to Mocksville which is the 'Hooterville' of North Carolina. Your editors' comments about Spooky 21 was incomplete and the web has failed us again. The other B-52 Gunner shot down Christmas Eve 1965 in Laos was Darrel Hassenger and as he was not mentioned in the WWWeb story. I would like his name added for the correction as it was routine for the 'Spooky' crew to fly a fragged night mission into Laotian Airspace at night with two gunners.

There were lots of advantages for two senior SSGts. on the crew because of the very high work load in spotting targets with the Starlight Scope and 10X50 binoculars, setting fuses on Mark24 flares, and keeping three fast firing SUU11 mini-guns loaded. The B-52 Gunners could and did, do it all when some of the younger airman seemed to have a built in low gear and were unable to keep pace in a real battle on a HOT Target! God Bless them all for their contribution but I like to boast a little about the SAC Gunners.

SSgt. Gary (GUNZ) Heinz  
4th. Air Commando Sqd.  
Pleiku RVN 1965/66

Editor's comment: Thanks for the correction/update on the Spooky 21 story. Like to keep it as accurate as possible and updated information/corrections are always welcome. In this case, the story was copied from an original source and did not contain Darrel Hassenger's name at all. This update helps to make the story a bit more complete. Thanks for taking the time to send it in. Bob

# THIS AND THAT

## My Weekend with a Kamikaze Pilot

MY WEEKEND WITH A KAMIKAZE PILOT

By Erika Armstrong / Published: Jun 09, 2014



### Mike Kawato

"Erika, I'm sorry, but I'm stuck up here. The snowstorm is pounding away and all the roads are closed. You'll have to pick him up at the airport tomorrow and entertain him until I can get to Minneapolis."

"Dad, please, no way. I have a major research project due and I am working a 55-hour week at the airport. I don't even know this guy, what the heck am I going to do with this old geezer for a weekend?"

"He's interesting, just talk to him. I hope to be there by Sunday afternoon..." and with that, my dad hung up.

The "him" that he was talking about is Masijiro "Mike" Kawato, a WWII Japanese airman (Zero pilot to be exact), speculated to be the pilot that shot down Pappy Boyington. My dad had made friends with him during his research into recovering old warbirds in the Guadalcanal area. Mike and my dad, both pilots, hit it off and became lifelong friends. I was a twenty years old pilot the day I picked him up at the airport and began my mission of Entertainment Director for what I thought was a crazy kamikaze pilot. I drove up to baggage claim looking for a guy in full samurai gear with a kamikaze headband, and found instead; a demure, hysterically deadpan funny, polite, and reserved gentleman who didn't look like a he could squish a spider.

Twenty-five years later, I have learned the difference between kamikaze and fighter pilots, Shinto beliefs and war from my Marine dad. I have also learned, on my own, about being a pilot, human nature, integrity and honor. At the time, I couldn't understand why anyone would want to make friends with an enemy that had killed 19 American pilots. I just didn't realize the treasure that was sitting beside me while I groaned about what to do with him.

What do you do to entertain any pilot? Bring them to the air museum of course. I worked and flew out of Flying Cloud Airport southwest of Minneapolis, Minn. which held the Planes of Fame East Museum. I took for granted the old warbirds which routinely flew in and out of this field. Not just on display, but actual flying war birds. I made about \$5/hour working at Elliot Beechcraft and could hardly afford to pay for our admission into the museum, so I



was trying to namedrop and finagle my way in (yes, pilots are cheap and always looking for a discount) so I told the person at the counter that I worked on the field and that I was bringing Mike Kawato in to show him around. I was hoping they knew who he was, but the guy at the ticket counter couldn't care less about who either of us were. "\$18 for two adults please." I rolled my eyes and took him in.

We strolled through the main hangar and oohed and awed at the gorgeous airplanes, and as we turned the corner, there, in full glass display, was an exhibit about Masijiro "Mike" Kawato. Mike got there before me and said, "Oh, look! Me! That's me!" Inside was a black and white photo of a 18-year-old Japanese kid with a leather helmet and deer-in-the-headlights expression. At the top of the display, it said: "WWII Japanese fighter ace, Masajiro Kawato." There were also iconic images of Japanese pilots, a kamikaze headband, and a flight suit which the pilots wore. One of the museum volunteers overheard our discovery conversation and finally made the connection with the case I was pleading at the ticket counter: We had an actual enemy pilot in our presence. Phone calls were made, volunteers scurried, and soon Bob Pond, avid aviation collector and owner of the museum, strode in and asked Mike to come sit with him for a few minutes. When any two pilots sit down and tell stories, it tends to draw in more fliers and within moments, there were at least a dozen pilots (many [veterans](#)) sitting at the table with Mike, firing questions at him.

## **THIS AND THAT**

### **My Weekend with a Kamikaze Pilot (cont)**

Mike's English was broken and choppy, but I think he understood more than he ever let on. He had a twinkle in his eye as he answered the questions the way he wanted to, rather than answer the question. I also realized that Mike had no qualms with capitalism and explained to the men in the room that most of their questions could be answered in his book, which was titled (tongue in cheek towards "Pappy" Boyington's book, "Baa Baa Black Sheep") "Bye, Bye, Blacksheep" and was available for sale.



As I sat and watched the spectacle, I didn't know that Mike had 17 bullet wounds in his body. I didn't know that he had been downed five times and that during his fifth down he had meant it to be a suicide crash into an American destroyer. He was steered off course from return fire which ripped one of his wings and cartwheeled him into the ocean rather than hit the destroyer. Honor and perceived failure made him choose death rather than be captured by the Americans, so he fired his pistol into his right temple, only to find that the gun was empty. He reloaded and tried again. This time, the gun fired, but it only grazed his skull and knocked him unconscious. He drifted for three days and finally hid out on a nearby island for three months. He was eventually picked up by Americans and taken to a P.O.W. hospital in Australia. During this time, back in Japan, he was declared dead and a funeral was held in his honor. Three and a half years after leaving for war, Kawato came back home and got to visit the altar where his funeral was held.

Since Mike was talking to warbird enthusiasts that day, he didn't mention to them that in 1976 he had flown his single-engine Piper Comanche nonstop from Tokyo to California – more than 5,000 miles in 35 hours and 15 minutes. Instead, he gave them riveting accounts of aerial combat between his Japanese Zero and American F4U Corsairs. He recounted watching an unusual sight of an F4U Corsair chasing a Zero and right behind him, another F4U being chased by a Zero. The lead Zero burst into flames and then moments later, the F4U went down in flames. Watching this from 6,000 feet above the ocean, Kawato dove and joined the battle by lining up behind the second F4U that was chasing a Zero. At 1,000 feet above the ocean, Kawato hit his target. The American pilot was forced to bail out of his disabled aircraft. It was later confirmed/rumored that the American pilot was Pappy Boyington. Yes, there has been debate about this, but we will let the story ride as told.

My dad eventually made it through the snowstorm and met up with Mike and me for dinner at the end of our second day. They teased each other about who would get the cute waitress (both men were divorced), how each must be a horrible pilot, and the thread that all pilots hold that weaves their passion of the sky together. Both men acknowledged what soldiers and pilots had to do in war and both honored the sacrifice of all those young lives, on both sides, lost to disagreement. Watching these two men, with the wisdom of age and the experience of life, find mutual respect despite culturally different backgrounds, taught me a lesson that became crisper as I moved through my own life. I have learned that enemies are often in that position by circumstance and that our enemies often bring out the best in us.

In 2008, Mike passed away at the age of 76. Cancer was his ultimate enemy and the employees at Starbucks on Dash Point Rd in Federal Way, Wash. probably didn't know they were serving coffee to a former enemy. All they knew is that he came in several times a week with his best friend, was always polite, said "thank you" constantly, and smiled the knowing smile of someone who had faced death, repeatedly, and lived to talk about it, repeatedly.

*Erika Armstrong has spent the last twenty-five years in aviation. From FBO front desk to the captain's seat of a Boeing 727, she's seen it all. If you have any comments or questions, she can be reached at [Erika@achickinthecockpit.com](mailto:Erika@achickinthecockpit.com).*

Read more at <http://www.flyingmag.com/pilots-places/pilots-adventures-more/my-weekend-kamikaze-pilot#ml5vSMO6Pjhhi2Ff.99>



### **AXIOMS FROM THE PAST—STILL CURRENT**

The three most common military aviation expressions (or famous last words) are: 'Did you feel that?' 'What's that noise?' and 'Oh S \_ \_ \_'

## **AFGA NEWSREEL**

### ***Pete Karjanis' Inputs of Current News***

Innovations and improvements in sensors and connectivity will help leverage Air Force Global Strike Command's bomber force for decades to come, said AFGSC boss [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#) on Thursday during a Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies event in Arlington, Va. Wilson said the command must leverage its existing capabilities in new ways, by making investments, that have outsized combat effects. For example, by studying Air Force Special Operations Command acquisition practices, AFGSC was able to conceive, build, and field a [new AESA radar-equipped pod](#) for the B-52 in under five months, Wilson noted. For the B-2, Wilson said a key priority is the Defensive Management System modernization effort, which will swap out older electronics components, such as passive antennas and older line replaceable unit components that are running into spare part availability issues. By completing the DMS, the B-2 fleet will be better connected and have better situational awareness for crews and commanders.

B-52s and B-1Bs recently conducted the first integrated standoff weapons exercise to share tactics, techniques and procedures and to improve their capabilities to employ the long-range munitions. Superfortresses from the 23rd Bomb Squadron at Minot AFB, N.D., and Lancers from the 34th Bomb Squadron flew a total of 15 missions out of the 34th BS's home at Ellsworth AFB, S.D., using the nearby Powder River Training Complex. "The overall goal was to learn from each other in how we use our standoff weapons to determine the most effective way to employ these weapons with each other," Capt. Christopher McConnell, a 28th Operations Support Squadron wing weapons officer, said in an Air Force [release](#). "The standoff weapon capability of our aircraft is a critical asset for us to have," said Capt. Joseph Manglitz, a 23rd BS B-52 pilot. Standoff weapons allow aircraft to strike targets from outside an adversary's air defenses. The Air Force employs the AGM-154 Joint Standoff Weapon, with a 73-mile range, and the AGM-158 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile, with a range up to 500 miles. McConnell said they hope to make the integrated exercise a regular event for the bomber community.

A B-52 bomber from the 96th Bomb Squadron flew a 15.5-hour, non-stop mission in support of US Southern Command's [annual PANA-MAX exercise](#) in which participants practice defending the Panama Canal. The bomber, with an augmented crew of seven for the special intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance mission, flew on Aug. 11 from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., to Central America and then recovered on the following day at Barksdale AFB, La., the bomber's home station, according to a [release](#). The Barksdale crew provided intelligence to SOUTHCOM personnel conducting the mostly simulated exercise to safeguard the strategically and economically vital canal. The crew practiced a mission not normally associated with the bomber. "The B-52 can be modified with additional equipment that allows it to be an especially valuable ISR platform because of its ability to conduct long-range surveillance flights," said Lt. Col. Robert Bender, Current Operations Branch chief for Air Force Global Strike Command. The mission also provided the aircrew experience in operating in a different geographic area, said Capt. Jonathan Morse, one of the mission commanders. It also made SOUTHCOM "better aware of our capabilities and confident they can call upon our B-52s when in need," said Morse.

[Col. Kristin Goodwin](#) took command of the 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, La., on Aug. 1 becoming the first woman to command an Air Force bomber wing, according to an Air Force Global Strike Command [release](#). Goodwin is a command pilot with 2,725 hours in C-130 Compass Call, B-2 Spirit, and other aircraft. Goodwin, who previously served as vice commander of the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman AFB, Mo., is now responsible for providing B-52H Stratofortress aircraft, aircrew, and associated support personnel and resources to conduct global bomber operational tasking. Officiating at the Aug. 1 command change, [Maj. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm](#), 8th Air Force commander, said: "Make no mistake, Kristin knows airpower. She has advocated long-range combat airpower in many circles. There is no doubt the B-52 will see the results of those efforts in coming years." After assuming command, Goodwin told the assembled 2nd BW airmen: "I am honored to lead and be a part of this mission and to take command of one of the most historic bomb wings in the Air Force." The command change came on the 20th anniversary of the 47-hour globe circling flight by a 2nd BW B-52 that was the first ever to drop bombs during a circumnavigation mission.

The Air Force closed the long-running obstacle course at Basic Military Training in favor of a new course that offers similar challenges, but puts more emphasis on team work and leadership skills. The new leadership reaction course became fully operational in late September, integrating into Basic Expeditionary Airmen's Training Week (BEAST) at JBSA-Lackland, Texas, according to an Oct. 12 release. The old obstacle course, which was built at Lackland in November 1942, closed late last month and has been replaced by the new course as part of an effort to consolidate all like training at BEAST. The effort also seeks to condense the overall length of the BMT process while reinforcing the Air Force's core values. The new course is approximately 1.3 miles long and emphasizes teamwork—a change from the old course—and problem-solving skills. Airmen also complete the course in a Kevlar vest and helmet and with their M-16s in tow, to make it more realistic. "The new course adds many more scenarios which will require them to use skills like self-aid (and) buddy care, CPR, wingmanship, and teamwork," said TSgt. Richard Harding, a 319th Training Support Squadron military training instructor and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the obstacle course. "They get to apply foundational expeditionary skills training like tactical formation movements, low and high crawling, basic defense, force protection conditions, and weapon fighting techniques. Basically, they will be applying everything they learned in BMT."

**AFGA NEWSREEL**  
**A FORGOTTEN COLD WAR ERA WARRIOR**

## Westover'S Forgotten Sky Sentry

By TSgt William Passmore

*"He is representative of the young men on whom we depend for national survival. There can be no greater responsibility, for the only alternative is loss of our freedom. "*

*Colonel O. F. Lassiter, Commander, 99th Bombardment Wing*



There is a book about the Strategic Air Command (SAC) that has long since been out of print. Published in 1959 by Arnold Brophy, *Sky Sentry; A SAC Crewman in Service* follows an Airman by the name of Michael Francis Patrick O'Keefe from the onset of his enlistment to his last assignment with the 345<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Squadron at Westover Air Force Base. The book was part human-interest story and part propaganda written to increase recruitment in the already popular SAC. Looking throughout the book, it is easy to see that most of the photos are staged by a professional photographer and have a dramatic Hollywood touch to them. The quotes are wholly optimistic about being a part of SAC and read as if a public relations team wrote them. Reading the quotes feels slightly out of place for the vernacular of "real" Airmen. However, there is something more to *Sky Sentry*. It offers a small glimpse into the forgotten life

of an Airman from a bygone era. The book is heartbreaking to read if you know the story of TSgt Michael O'Keefe and the role he played in the history of the base.

In the late 1950's, SAC was on the minds of most Americans. Jimmy Stewart had made the command famous with the film *Strategic Air Command* in 1955 and a segment on the TV show *Lux Playhouse* called *Cowboy Five-Seven* in 1959, which was filmed at Westover. The threat of nuclear war from the communist Soviet Union gripped the American psyche with fears of atomic destruction. The only thing standing between the United States and the Soviet

Union, with their arsenal of nuclear weapons, were the brave Airmen of SAC who positioned themselves as America's nuclear deterrent with their fleet of B-52s, B-47s, and B-36s. Two-thirds of the SAC fleet was on alert at all times with a payload of nuclear weapons. These aircrews would have the ability to be airborne within fifteen minutes of the klaxon sounding to deliver their nuclear payloads to strategic targets within Soviet-Sino territories. On these crews, O'Keefe would make a name for himself as the best tail gunner in SAC.

A native of Bronx, New York, Michael decided to follow in both his brother's footsteps and enlisted in the Air Force on September 21, 1955. "I wanted a chance to go to a technical school and learn a skill," Mike would say. He graduated from basic training at Sampson Air Force Base, Geneva, New York and attended Basic Electronics School at Lowry AFB, Colorado where he finished first in his class. At the time, SAC was the pinnacle of the Air Force command structure and O'Keefe wanted to become a part of it more than anything else. After technical school, he was assigned to the 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing at Fairchild AFB as a tail gunner on RB-36 "Peacemaker" intercontinental bombers. He would complete 517 flying hours on the RB-36 before being retrained to become a tail gunner on the new B-52 Stratofortress that replaced the B-36.

The 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing relocated to Westover Air Force Base on September 4, 1956 and transitioning from B-36s to B-52Cs. Michael arrived at Westover after completing a ten-week B-52 combat crew training course at Castle AFB, California where he learned to operate the new radar system for the tail guns. After his training was completed, he was assigned to an aircrew and would begin to serve on the nation's front lines of the Cold War as a combat crewman.

The remainder of the book highlights his duties as part of the flight crew and the role that he and other aircrews played in the defense of the nation. In just four years, Mike was the best tail gunner in SAC. During this time Michael O'Keefe was the face of the enlisted corps and the embodiment of what the Air Force desired from each of its Airmen. Throughout his enlistment he would go on to be featured in various Air Force campaigns and videos, such as *Scramble!* in 1960. The promotional video showcased the alert crews and how they responded to the klaxon.

The ending of the book is extremely positive. TSgt O'Keefe reenlists for six more years and intends to continue, "as long as Uncle Sam will let him". He feels that being a SAC sky sentry is the best job in the military and he'd never trade it for the world. In one of the last paragraphs of the book, Mike is excited about the introduction of the newer B-52 models, as the gunner position will be relocated from the rear section to the forward section of the aircraft with the rest of the crew. "It's going to be wonderful to see other pretty faces around you in the aircraft," he said with a grin. Sadly, he would never experience flying in the new gunner position on the updated B-52s.



**AFGA NEWSREEL**  
**A FORGOTTEN COLD WAR ERA WARRIOR (CONT)**

TSgt Michael O'Keefe's story would shortly end four years after *Sky Sentry* was published. On January 23 1963, Mike had returned from his father's funeral when he was assigned as the tail gunner on a B-52C with the call sign Frosh-10. Intelligence had discovered that Soviet air defenses could shoot down aircraft flying at high altitudes. To combat this, SAC devised a new strategy; fly low and fast under enemy radar to infiltrate the Soviet Union undetected. The B-52 was not designed for such flying and testing would have to be conducted to determine the bomber's capabilities. Frosh-10 would be the first mission on the east coast where the new low-level terrain avoidance techniques would be applied. Because of the mission's importance, the crew was handpicked and TSgt O'Keefe was the obvious choice as tail gunner.

On January 24 at 2:52 PM, while making its first low-level run in the vicinity of Elephant Mountain, Maine, violent winds coming off the mountains made flying at 500 feet above the terrain too dangerous and the mission was aborted. The B-52C began to climb to avoid the extreme turbulence when its vertical stabilizer sheared off, making the massive bomber impossible to control. Frosh-10 went into an uncontrollable 40-degree downward right turn and slammed into Elephant Mountain. Out of the nine crew members, three were able to successfully eject before the impact, but only two survived. TSgt Michael O'Keefe was found in the only identifiable portion of the aircraft's fuselage, his tail gunner section. Michael's mother was presented the United States flag at his funeral from the same Color Guard that performed for his father's funeral eleven days before the flight of Frosh-10.

The remains of Westover's downed B-52C are still in the same position they came to rest at on that January afternoon. The section where Mike's body was found now has a stone monument placed beside it listing the names of the crew. Visitors to the site leave American flags of various sizes throughout the debris to honor the sacrifices of those who lost their lives there. The wreckage sits alone with a minimal sign that briefly tells the story of how the grotesquely twisted and indistinguishable bits and pieces of the bomber came to be in the Maine woods. It's unfortunate that the only reminder of such a historical event in Westover's history is 281 miles away from the base.

The Strategic Air Command and its fleet of B-52s and KC-135s have long since departed Westover. The base is now a shadow of its former self and the reservists who are stationed here might not be aware of the base's rich history and importance. Looking around the base at its various offices and work places, it would seem that the history of the base was reset in 1974 when it became the nation's first Air Reserve Base. The last artifacts of SAC were hauled away to a landfill when the 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Wing left. The only things that remained are a few thick books containing old copies of the base newspaper, *The Westover Flyer*. Those books now reside on a shelf in the historian's office. Like the metal that is sitting on Elephant Mountain, the memory of TSgt Michael O'Keefe and those who have come before us slowly erodes away.

Many THANKS to William Passmore 2 for this follow up on the Elephant Mountain crash (details of the Elephant Mountain crash were in April 2013 Short Bursts issue). We appreciate his efforts in keeping Michael O'Keefe's memory alive. Bob

The book "*Sky Sentry; A SAC Crewman in Service*" containing a more detailed account of the Michael O'Keefe story and is available at [www.abe.com](http://www.abe.com) or on Amazon to mention a couple of sources.

## **THE B-29MR TAIL GUNNER HAD AN AWESOME ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

By Bill Gaddes

The Strategic Air Command's first nuclear bomber capable of the range necessary to deliver the weapon to Soviet targets was the B-29MR (Modified Receiver). This aircraft was devoid of turrets and machine guns, except for the tail turret. The B-29MR could be refueled by a "hose and drogue" system developed by the British. The refueling process was cumbersome, slow, and fraught with danger. SAC had about 100 each of these aircraft.

The tail gunner was responsible for operating the winch and cable system, used to "snare" the refueling hose deployed by the KB-29J. When the cable and the hose were attached, the tail gunner was required to reel in the hose. It would then be attached by the scanners, and the transfer of high octane aviation fuel could begin. During this process, the hose and cable could be subject to moderate to violent "whipping". The tail gunner required inordinate skill, and had to make a decision requiring release of the cable/hose connection; and possible abort of the mission.

The B-50A "Lucky Lady II" was refueled in this manner a total of five times in the first non-stop flight around the world in 94 hours and one minute. Tragically, the fifth and final refueling off Hawaii saw the tragic loss of the KB-29J, and the death of its crew. The tail gunner on "Lucky Lady II" never left the tail turret, riding around the world backwards. How did he complete these five refueling iterations in a flawless manner? We gunners are made of some tough stuff.

Thanks for the input, Bill—always appreciate your interesting inputs. Bob

**2015 AFGA REUNION  
RENO, NEVADA  
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015**



**PEPPERMILL  
RENO**



We have an exceptional agenda in store for you at our upcoming event. It's been designed to ensure your time at the event is not only productive, but enjoyable. We look forward to hosting you and your colleagues!

For more information on the Peppermill Reno, please [Click Here](#) or copy/type in the following web address:

**<http://www.visitpeppermill.com/> For reservations on-line:**

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Peppermill Resort Spa Casino  
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Reno, NV 89502

**Phone: (775) 826-2121 / (800) 282-2444 FOR RESERVATIONS (USE GROUP CODE: LAFGA15)**

**REUNION DATES: 10—13 SEPTEMBER 2015** (Officers should arrive on 9 September for morning meeting on 10 Sept)

We are now accepting hotel reservations for your upcoming event. Through this website (below) you can book, modify or cancel your hotel reservations at any time and receive updated information about the event. We look forward to seeing you! [https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome\\_ei\\_new&eventID=11180213&fromResdesk=true](https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=11180213&fromResdesk=true)

The Peppermill is conveniently located two miles from the Reno Tahoe International Airport. We provide complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport:

**Airport to Peppermill**

The shuttle departs from the airport every half hour from 4:15am -11:45pm. Pick up is at the North exit of the Baggage Claim area.

**Peppermill to Airport**

The shuttle departs from the Peppermill every half hour from 4am - 11:30pm. Pick up is at the valet area outside the Hotel Lobby.

**2015 AFGA REUNION  
RENO, NEVADA  
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015**

## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

### **THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015**

0900 – 1700(9:00 – 5:00 PM) - Registration  
0900 – 2300(9:00 – 11:00 PM) - Hospitality Room Opens

### **FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2015**

0915(9:15 AM) – Load and Depart for Virginia City  
1430(2:30 PM) – Return from Virginia City  
0900(9:00 AM) – Hospitality Room Opens  
1730(5:30 PM) – Load Buses & Depart for Reno Tour with Banquet Dinner at the National Automobile Museum  
2200(10:00 PM) – Return from National Automobile Museum

### **SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2015**

0900 - 1200(9:00 AM – 12:00 PM) – AFGA Business Meeting  
0830(8:30 AM) – Ladies Tour ??????  
1230(12:30 PM) – Ladies Return  
1430 - 1630(2:30 PM – 4:30) – Picture taking for reunion book  
1700(5:00 PM) – Cocktail Hour—(“**BOYS IN BLUE**” photo to be taken early before Banquet starts—be prepared)  
1800 - 2100(6:00 PM – 9:00 PM) – AFGA Banquet

### **SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2015**

0800(8:00 AM) – AFGA Memorial Service at Hotel  
0900(09:00 AM) – Tour Truckee - Donner  
1500(3:00 PM) – Return from Truckee - Donner tour  
1800(6:00 PM) – Meal and Open Mike  
Open Mike will include wearing of any military uniform or any part of a military uniform.

**ALL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

### **PEPPERMILL SIDE NOTES**

**RV SITE INFORMATION FOR THOSE LOOKING TO BRING AN RV—CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE FOR LISTINGS IN THE RENO AREA: <http://www.visitrenotahoe.com/reno-tahoe/accommodations?command=rv%20park> (Hotel does not allow overnight stays—check in at hotel to let them know you are parking only while attending a reunion and not “staying” in the motor home/camper).**

**Peppermill ships & receive boxes via UPS and FedEx. All UPS and FedEx same day shipments must be communicated with the staff and packages should be at the Bell Desk or Business Center by 9:00am, Monday-Friday. There is no UPS and FedEx pick up on Saturday and Sunday. UPS and FedEx will not deliver on Saturday unless specified on their package, and do not deliver on Sundays. Package pick hours at the Bell Desk: 9am - 7pm (Mon-Sun). You must show a tracking number to retrieve your package.**

**2015 AFGA REUNION  
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015  
REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**

PLEASE CHECK ALL APPROPRIATE BOXES

NAME:				NAME FOR BADGE:				
ADDRESS:				CITY:		STATE:		ZIP:
TELEPHONE # ( )				TYPE A/C FLOWN:				
E-MAIL :				DO YOU HAVE ANY DISABILITY OR DIETARY NEEDS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION? <input type="checkbox"/>				
				YES IF SO, PROVIDE COMMENTS ON BACK.				
REGISTRATION & BANQUET/OPEN MIKE <input type="checkbox"/>	BANQUET MENU CIRCLE ONE (CHOICES BELOW)	VIRGINIA CITY TOUR (FRIDAY AM) <input type="checkbox"/>	RENO AUTO MUSEUM TOUR (FRIDAY PM) <input type="checkbox"/>	LADIES MORNING SHOW (SATURDAY) <input type="checkbox"/>	DONNER TRUCKEE TOUR (Sunday) <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING BANQUET ONLY (SATURDAY PM) SEE NOTE B V <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING OPEN MIKE ONLY (SUNDAY PM) SEE NOTE BELOW <input type="checkbox"/>	SUB TOTAL ACROSS
\$130.00	1 2 3 4	\$45.00	\$80.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$

NAME:				NAME FOR BADGE:				
ADDRESS:				CITY:		STATE:		ZIP:
TELEPHONE # ( )				TYPE A/C FLOWN:				
E-MAIL :				DO YOU HAVE ANY DISABILITY OR DIETARY NEEDS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION? <input type="checkbox"/>				
				YES IF SO, PROVIDE COMMENTS ON BACK.				
REGISTRATION & BANQUET/OPEN MIKE <input type="checkbox"/>	BANQUET MENU CIRCLE ONE (CHOICES BELOW)	VIRGINIA CITY TOUR (FRIDAY AM) <input type="checkbox"/>	RENO AUTO MUSEUM TOUR (FRIDAY PM) <input type="checkbox"/>	LADIES MORNING SHOW (SATURDAY) <input type="checkbox"/>	DONNER TRUCKEE TOUR (Sunday) <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING BANQUET ONLY (SATURDAY PM) SEE NOTE B V <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING OPEN MIKE ONLY (SUNDAY PM) SEE NOTE BELOW <input type="checkbox"/>	SUB TOTAL ACROSS
\$130.00	1 2 3 4	\$45.00	\$80.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$

**NOTE: Registration fee of \$130 includes, Banquet and Open Mike Meals . If you are "Not Registered", a fee WILL BE ASSESSED for Banquet and Open Mike**

- 1 = PORK CHOP SAVANNAH
- 2 = ALASKAN HALIBUT
- 3 = BREAST OF CHICKEN NEPTUNE
- 4 = VEGETARIAN

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM AND SEND CHECK MADE OUT TO AFGA  
NO LATER THAN 15 JUL 2015 TO:

DAN DANISH  
9550 HAVILAND CT  
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78251  
210-520-1517

GRAND TOTAL FROM BOXES ABOVE  
\$

PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BELOW THAT WE MAY NEED TO KNOW THAT WILL REQUIRE OUR SPECIAL ATTENTION IN REFERENCE TO YOUR DIETARY NEEDS OR DISABILITIES.

**2015 AFGA REUNION  
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015  
REUNION TOUR INFORMATION**

**VIRGINIA CITY TOUR**

**Friday, 11 September  
9:15 am—2:30 pm**

“Relive the Old West, be a Pioneer for a Day” Your Ambassador will set the mood for the day, by sharing the history of the Great Bonanza Trail, and the gold-seekers who blazed the first trails for the white man into the area. Proceeding to Virginia City, the exciting history of Virginia City, Nevada, will begin to unfold. Once the richest place on earth, you will hear of the many “rags to riches”, and “riches to rags” tales. The gold and silver discoveries had a tremendous impact on the whole country - as an example, did you realize that Nevada was made a state because the Union needed Virginia City’s riches to finance their Civil War effort? Everyone needs some time to explore their particular interests. Optional individual activities would include mansion tours, a ride on the historic Virginia -Truckee Railroad, or merely exploring the old-time shops and gambling halls still in operation. Your Tahoe Ambassador will be with your group throughout the day, not only to share their knowledge of the area, but to ensure that all the activities run smoothly, that your clients have someone along to answer all their questions, but more importantly, to make sure a “good time is had by all”.

**Price \$45**

**RENO AUTO MUSEUM:**

**Friday, 11 September  
5:30pm—10:00 pm**

Enjoy a night of fun and entertainment while you dine on a sumptuous dinner buffet at the **National Automobile Museum** located in Reno. Experience more than 200 eye-popping cars with authentic street scenes and sounds. The facades bring displays to life; hardware store, and a movie theatre, which accompany artifacts from each era as you explore the museum at your own pace. A dinner buffet will be enjoyed by all as you experience this nationally recognized auto museum.

**Price \$80**



**LADIES PRIVATE MORNING SHOW— “HOME MEANS NEVADA”**

**Saturday, 12 September  
(8:30 AM seating) 9:00 am—10:30 am**



“Home Means Nevada” is an up-beat, humorous 1 1/2 hour story of Nevada as told by Mark Twain (McAvoy Layne-Nevada’s top Twain impersonator)) with music that gives Twain’s words wings from Shiloh Band (Julie & Mark). The Shiloh Band is a fun and lively pair from Northern Nevada and when coupled with “Mark Twain” have put together a very entertaining and enjoyable show. Tim Gorelangton and Julie Machado play folk, country, ballads, blues, and bluegrass on guitar and bass. They enjoy playing just the right songs to get you in the mood and make you feel right at home. A special part of the show is an impersonation of Mark Twain by McAvoy Lane who gives a bit of Nevada history along with music & songs by Shiloh Band and has been quite a hit with local groups. Show times run around 1:30 hours and will held in the Hospitality Room at the Peppermill for those attending. Believe all will enjoy the morning with them.

**2015 AFGA REUNION**  
**SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015**  
**REUNION TOUR INFORMATION**

**DONNER - TRUCKEE TOUR**

**Sunday, 13 September**

**9:00 am—3:00 pm**

As a crossroads of Western History, the Donner - Truckee area is rich in pioneer lore. For untold centuries, the Indians camped along the forested shores of Donner Lake and the high flat of Martis Plateau. This was the route of westward-bound emigrants who struggled with their wagons over the rugged Sierra passes. Chinese coolies blasted tunnels through the granite mountains as Irishmen laid down the miles of iron rails for the Transcontinental Railroad in the late 1860's. Originally called Coburn's Station, the town of Truckee was a "hell on wheels" railroad town in 1868. Little has changed since the turn of the century. Truckee still has the atmosphere of yesterday with the amenities of today. The community is still called the "Ghost Town which didn't Die". Your Reno Ambassador will relate the excitement of Old Truckee and the area to your guests. A visit will also be made to Donner Memorial Historic Park and its fine museum. It was here during the winter of 1846-47 that members of the famous westward-bound "Donner Party" played out their tragic rendezvous with destiny.

**Price \$40**

**EARLY SAC GUNNER DUTY**  
**"Hose and Drogue" Air Refueling**

**THE B-29MR TAIL GUNNER HAD AN AWESOME ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

By Bill Gaddes

The Strategic Air Command's first nuclear bomber capable of the range necessary to deliver the weapon to Soviet targets was the B-29MR (Modified Receiver). This aircraft was devoid of turrets and machine guns, except for the tail turret. The B-29MR could be refueled by a "hose and drogue" system developed by the British. The refueling process was cumbersome, slow, and fraught with danger. SAC had about 100 each of these aircraft.

The tail gunner was responsible for operating the winch and cable system, used to "snare" the refueling hose deployed by the KB-29J. When the cable and the hose were attached, the tail gunner was required to reel in the hose. It would then be attached by the scanners, and the transfer of high octane aviation fuel could begin. During this process, the hose and cable could be subject to moderate to violent "whipping". The tail gunner required inordinate skill, and had to make a decision requiring release of the cable/hose connection; and possible abort of the mission.

A little back ground history of the flight:

The B-50A "Lucky Lady II" was refueled in this manner a total of five times in the first non-stop flight around the world in 94 hours and one minute. Tragically, the fifth and final refueling off Hawaii saw the tragic loss of the KB-29J, and the death of its crew. The tail gunner on "Lucky Lady II" never left the tail turret, riding around the world backwards. How did he complete these five refueling iterations in a flawless manner? We gunners are made of some tough stuff.

The aircraft started its round-the-world trip with a crew of 14 under the command of Capt. James Gallagher at 12:21 PM on February 26, 1949, from Carswell Air Force Base near Fort Worth, Texas, heading east over the Atlantic Ocean.

After flying 23,452 mi (37,742 km), the aircraft passed the control tower back at Carswell AFB on March 2 at 10:22 AM, marking the end of the circumnavigation, and landed there at 10:31 AM after having been in the air for 94 hours and one minute, landing two minutes before the estimated time of arrival calculated at take-off.

En route, the aircraft was refueled four times by KB-29M Superfortresses, near Lajes Air Force Base in the Azores, Dhahran Airfield in Saudi Arabia, Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines, and Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii, using the soon-to-be obsolete grappled-line looped-hose technique.

The aircraft flew at altitudes between 10,000 to 20,000 ft (3,000 to 6,100 m) and completed the trip around the world at an average ground speed of 249 mph (401 km/h; 216 kn).

# B-52 Burgers and Brew Visit Lunch Stop—Inver Grove Heights, MN

## STARTERS

- **PICKLE CHIPS** 5.99  
Battered pickle chips w/ ranch.
- **REAL CHEESE CURDS** 7.99  
w/ ranch.
- **ONION RINGS** 6.49  
w/ seasoned sour cream.

1639 Bishop Ave. Inver Grove Heights, MN  
651-451-3838

### BOMBER BITES

Marinated Teriyaki bites served w/ (Thai Cream Cheese).  
CHICKEN 5.99  
STEAK 16.99

- **NACHOS** 10.99  
A HUGE portion of tortilla chips, tomatoes, black olives, green onions, jalapenos and choice of nacho or shredded cheese. w/ sour cream and salsa.  
*Add Chicken, Beef, Chorizo or Guacamole for 1.25*
- **BAJA FISH TACOS** 8.99  
2 breaded tilapia tacos served on a soft flour tortilla. Served with queso fresco, spicy sour cream, lettuce and pico de gallo. Don't like fish? Sub **CHICKEN** w/ slice of tomatoillo.
- **POUTINE** 9.29  
A Canadian Favorite, 802 style! Fries, cheese curds, and beef gravy topped with green onion. Add pulled pork for 2.99
- **DEEP SHORT RIBS** 9.99  
Four beef ribs smothered in our own Mississippi BBQ sauce.

## SLIDERS

- **ORIGINAL SLIDERS** 8.99  
3 of our tasty mini cheeseburgers served w/ mayo.
- **BBQ PORK SLIDERS** 8.99  
3 BBQ pulled pork sliders.
- **SALMON SLIDERS** 10.99  
3 Lemon pepper salmon glazed in our spicy mustard sauce. Topped w/ fresh red cabbage.

- **BUFFALO SHRIMP** 8.99  
Beer battered buffalo shrimp. w/ bleu cheese & celery.
- **BBQ BACON SHRIMP** 8.99  
Smothered shrimp wrapped with bacon and brushed Mississippi BBQ sauce.
- **BUFFALO CHX DIP** 7.99  
Melted cheeses, diced chicken and buffalo sauce w/ tortilla chips. *Add CHICKEN for*
- **CHX TENDERS** 8.99  
w/ ranch & BBQ.
- **JALAPENO POPPERS** 8.99  
Made from scratch! Served w/ marinara side.

### CHX WINGS BONE-IN OR BONELESS 8.99

Honey BBQ • Thai Peanut • South Korean BBQ  
Buffalo • Sweet Thai Chili • Teriyaki

### BYO QUESADILLA 8.29

Our signature flatbread quesadilla (fill or CHICKEN) with sliced cheese, served w/ homemade salsa and 3 ingredients of your choice:  
BLACK BEANS • JALAPENO • TOMATO • BLACK OLIVE • ONION  
GREEN PEPPER • RED PEPPER • MUSHROOM • BROCCOLI • ROASTED CORN

## FLATBREAD

- **CHX CAESAR** 8.99  
Diced chicken, fresh romaine, parmesan cheese and Caesar dressing.
- **BUFFALO CHX** 8.99  
Diced chicken, buffalo sauce, bleu cheese crumbles, green onions and mozzarella cheese.  
**Supreme**  
Pepperoni, black olives, fresh jalapeno, mushroom, Italian sausage, crushed red pepper, red onion, serrano, mozzarella and parmesan cheese.
- **BRUSCHETTA** 8.99  
Diced tomatoes and fresh basil in a balsamic glaze, topped with mozzarella cheese and brushed with garlic butter.
- **THAI PEANUT** 8.99  
Diced chicken, roasted red pepper, sliced carrots, mandarin oranges, green onions, mozzarella and sweet Thai peanut sauce.

## SALAD & SOUP

- **SOUP OF THE DAY** ..... 3.99
- **CHICKEN WILD RICE CHILI** ..... 4.49  
(C) 3.49 (B) 4.49
- **SIDE SALAD** ..... 3.99
- **CAESAR SALAD** 8.99  
Romaine lettuce, tomatoes, parmesan cheese and Caesar dressing.  
ADD Steak 3.99  
Chx 4.49  
Shrimp 3.49
- **SOUTHWEST CHIPOTLE LIME** 8.99  
Rotisserie chicken, jicama, arugula, roasted red pepper, roasted corn, black beans, tortilla strips, lime, sriracha and chipotle lime vinaigrette.
- **SESAME CHX** 8.99  
Spring mix lettuce tossed in balsamic vinaigrette, topped with mandarin oranges, wonton strips, cucumbers, sliced chicken and roasted sesame seeds.
- **APPLE CRANBERRY SALAD** 8.99  
Green apple, dried cranberries, spicy walnuts, bleu cheese crumbles, served on a bed of romaine and spring mix with french dressing. Add Chicken or grilled salmon.
- **CRISPY BUFFALO CHX** 8.99  
Romaine lettuce tossed in bleu cheese dressing topped with bacon, spicy celery, bleu cheese crumbles, fresh cracked pepper & served with grilled chicken or boneless wings, tossed in buffalo sauce.
- **ASIAN CASHW CHICKEN SALAD** 8.99  
Diced teriyaki chicken, cashew, broccoli, pea pods, red onion, red pepper, cabbage. Served on romaine lettuce and asian noodles.
- **CHEF SALAD** 8.99  
Ham, turkey, bacon, swiss cheese, black olives, banana peppers, diced tomatoes, and avocado on a bed of romaine lettuce.
- **COCONUT SHRIMP SALAD** 8.99  
Coconut crusted shrimp, oranges, pecans, red and green onion, red pepper, Thai sweet chili dressing on romaine lettuce.

All Specialty Salads 10.99

## Lunch Specials

(AVAILABLE MONDAY THRU FRIDAY UNTIL 3PM)

### LUNCH BURGER

Half pound, hand-pattied and seasoned with our house blend recipe. Topped with cheese. Served with fries. Lettuce, tomato and onion available

6.52

ADD \$1.00 for any of our SPECIALTY Burgers (Excludes La Frieda, Bavarian, Pastrami, Mac N Cheese, Bar-food and Mini M.O.A.B.)

### ADD GARLIC FRIES FOR FREE \*\*\*

### SOUP N SALAD

Cup of home made soup and delicious house salad

6.99

### SUB WATTLE FRIES FOR \$0.99

### HALF DELI SANDWICH N SOUP

Ham, turkey, or roast beef on wheat or sourdough bread with lettuce, tomato, raw onion and mayo. Served with a cup of soup.

6.99

### HALF PANINI N CUP OF SOUP

Pick any "Dressed to Perfection" Danini and a cup of soup.

6.99

### LUNCH CHICKEN ALFREDO

Chicken tossed with house alfredo sauce, broccoli and Served over fettuccini noodles. Garnished with fresh parmesan cheese. Served with a slice of focaccia bread.

6.99

### LUNCH CHICKEN PESTO TORTELLINI

Diced chicken and cheese tortellini tossed in pesto alfredo sauce. Garnished with fresh parmesan cheese. Served with a slice of focaccia bread.

6.99

### CHICKEN CLUB

Grilled, tender chicken breast topped with bacon, lettuce, tomato, and cranberry mayo on sourdough bread.

6.99

**B52 BURGERS AND BREW**  
B52BURGERSANDBREW.COM

(Lunch specials not available with any discounts, coupons, or gift certificates "Dine in only")

**Brandon Bramscher** 651.451.3838  
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 b52burgersandbrew.com  
 B-52 Burgers and Brew  
 5639 Bishop Ave • Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

While back in Minnesota in September visiting with Jan's family around the area, we (four of us) managed to stop in at the B-52 Burgers and Brew just south of Minneapolis in Inver Grove Heights off hwy 52 (where the name originated as there is no "formal connection" to the bomber). They said they get lots of B-52 crew guys in to check the place out. I wore my B-52 hat in and was instantly a hit with them. The place is a great sports bar and restaurant combined. Did not see any photos of a B-52 while there and I suggested they ought to put up one or two anyway to give it more "authenticity" as truly a B-52 place and not just named after the highway out front. Good food and drinks. Put a sampling of the menu on top of this page. Met Brandon, one of the partners, who came over and visited with us for a few minutes. I did point out that the B-52 in the logo above needed external fuel tanks (NO NOT THOSE—the ones that are not there) which drew a laugh...said EVERY one who was associated with the B-52 that had been in there told him that. Good place to stop and have a meal. The website does have some tee shirts and a hat or two if you care to check it out. Bob

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## WWII VETERAN STORY A TRUE AMERICAN HERO

### A Wonderful Life: Jimmy Stewart, Actor and B-24 Bomber Pilot

While others served at home, Stewart put his life on the line during combat missions over Germany

When America entered World War II, Hollywood patriotically stepped forward to help in the war effort. Studios sent their movie stars across the country on war bond drives. It produced patriotic movies, cartoons, and other films and documentaries. Stars participated in USO shows abroad; a number of stars enlisted. Almost all were slotted into roles that capitalized on their fame and kept them far from combat. But one who rejected this “easy way out” of service to their country and successfully fought for duty that put him into harm’s way was B-24 bomber pilot Capt. Jimmy Stewart, who



Lt. Gen. Valin, Chief of Staff, French Air Force, awards the Croix De Guerre with Palm to Col. Jimmy Stewart for exceptional services in the liberation of France. U.S. Air Force photo

arrived in England on Nov. 23, 1943. When he returned to the States in September 1945, Col. Jimmy Stewart was a bona fide hero. On his chest was the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, and the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, among other decorations. What makes his service even more remarkable is that this actor, who won the Academy Award in February 1941, enlisted the following month (March 22) before the country entered the war and after he had been rejected by his local draft board because he was under weight.

**“It may sound corny, but what’s wrong with wanting to fight for your country? Why are people reluctant to use the word patriotism?” – Jimmy Stewart**

Entering the Army at age 32, Stewart was significantly older than other cadets. Because of his maturity, educational background, and particularly because he was a licensed private and commercial pilot with more than 300 hours flying time, Stewart’s request to be assigned to the Army Air Corps was accepted and he proceeded straight into pilot

training. On Jan. 19, 1942, he successfully passed the pilot training program and was commissioned second lieutenant.

Over the next year, Stewart completed additional pilot courses, qualifying as a twin-engine and four-engine bomber pilot and as instructor in both types of aircraft. It was at the graduation ceremonies following qualification as a B-17 pilot in February 1943 that Stewart received a shock. Unlike everyone else in his class who received combat assignments, 1st Lt. Stewart was classified “static personnel” and assigned to the 29th Training Group at Gowen Field near Boise, Idaho, where, in accordance to that hold order in his personnel folder, he would remain as an instructor for the duration of the war.



Maj. Jimmy Stewart confers with a B-24 crew member. Stewart became known as a lucky pilot for always bringing his crew home safely. U.S. Air Force photo

Stewart swallowed his disappointment and went about his duties like a good soldier, receiving a promotion to captain. Several months later he became alarmed over a rumor that claimed he would be taken off flying status and assigned to make training films and sell war bonds. Stewart promptly went to his commanding officer and pleaded for a combat pilot command. At this point, Stewart had more than 3,000 hours of flying time and had proved himself a respected and popular leader. Hours later, Stewart found himself going into combat.

As the war continued, Stewart gained ever more responsibility, rising in rank and serving as executive officer, operations officer, chief of staff, and wing commander. On March 29, 1945, he was promoted to colonel. A little over a month later, the war in Europe was over. Eighth Air Force Com-

mander Gen. Jimmy Doolittle later wrote that, “If the war had gone on another month, Jimmy would have become a group commander, which was the most important job in the Air Force.”

Stewart’s service in uniform didn’t stop with the end of World War II. Instead, it turned into a second career that lasted 27 years and promotion to brigadier general in 1959. Stewart led a glamorous life before and after the war. Yet, whenever questioned about the 22 months that he spent in the European theater of operations, he said that experience was “much greater” than all his years in the acting profession.



Lt. Jimmy Stewart and Maj. Clark Gable—Hollywood contributed many stars to the war effort. U.S. Air Force photo.

## **WWII VETERAN'S STORY**

### **WWII POW RECEIVES LONG OVERDUE MEDAL**

**Union Grove** — Dale Ellington was a prisoner of war during World War II, but for almost seven decades the U.S. military didn't consider him a POW.

It was a long time to wait, but judging by the smile as bright as the shiny Prisoner of War Medal pinned to his black fleece jacket on Sunday at the Veterans Home at Union Grove, Ellington was thankful for the belated recognition.

"It's about time," said Ellington, 91.

Ellington was on his fifth mission as a waist gunner on a B-17 crew when the bomber was hit by German anti-aircraft flak on April 13, 1944. With the plane's fuel tanks damaged and control cables severed, the crew couldn't make it back to the home base in England, so the pilot turned toward neutral Switzerland.

Because Switzerland was not an enemy combatant, downed allied airmen such as Ellington were housed in resort towns far from the country's borders. Switzerland was obligated to detain Allied troops, while soldiers and airmen were obligated to escape to return to their units.

Which is exactly what Ellington did.

When he heard American forces were close to the French-Swiss border, Ellington walked away from the remote town in the Alps where he had been detained for five months.

Dressed in civilian clothing, he got as far as what he thought was the French border. But an alert Swiss soldier arrested him.

Because he tried to escape, Ellington was now considered a common criminal under Swiss law, which deemed him a foreigner who committed a crime under military jurisdiction — of trying to return to his bomber unit. That meant Ellington was not considered a prisoner of war because the Swiss government during World War II did not afford internees the protections of the 1929 Geneva Convention for humane treatment of POWs, said Maj. Dwight Mears, a history professor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Ellington was sentenced to serve 75 days at Wauwilermoos prison, whose commandant was a Nazi sympathizer later convicted of war crimes for the horrible treatment of prisoners like Ellington.

"It was terrible. We had one bath in five weeks," recalled Ellington, who graduated from South Division High School in 1940 and worked as a mail clerk at The Milwaukee Journal before joining the Army Air Force.

Prisoners slept on lice-infested straw in poorly heated barracks. Latrines were filthy slit trenches. Skin boils, lice and dysentery affected most of the prisoners because no soap or warm water was provided for hygiene, according to War Crimes Office reports. And many of the prisoners lost weight from the skimpy food portions. Ellington said he lost 30 pounds. Ironically, Ellington and other American troops probably would have gotten better treatment in German POW camps run by the Luftwaffe, said Mears, whose grandfather was one of 161 downed U.S. airmen imprisoned at Wauwilermoos.

When the number of Americans sentenced to Wauwilermoos began growing, the U.S. government asked the Swiss repeatedly to release them or treat them more humanely, but initially Switzerland refused. But by December 1944, Swiss authorities relented and released Ellington and other American troops to heavily fortified hotels.

Shortly after that, Ellington managed to escape Switzerland and return to his Army Air Force unit. When he came home to Wisconsin, he testified about his treatment for a war crimes tribunal.

And then he got on with his life.

**WWII VETERAN'S STORY**  
**WWII POW RECEIVES LONG OVERDUE MEDAL (CONT)**

He married his wife, Rose, in July 1945. They were classmates at South Division High School, and she had read in the newspaper that he was missing in action, assuming that meant he was killed. So she was startled to see him walking on a downtown Milwaukee street. Rose called out to him. They chatted. Three months later they got married.

They raised two sons. Dale sold printing presses, bought and ran a motel and later opened an office supply store, D.C. Ellington Co.

Like many World War II veterans, he didn't talk much about his experience and rarely spoke about Wauwilermoos prison.

"When he came back he was sworn to secrecy. I would ask him and he would say, 'The war is over, I'm done with it.' He never applied for POW benefits," said Rose Ellington. Mears didn't think it was right that American prisoners of Wauwilermoos were not eligible to get POW benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs or to receive the POW Medal. So he worked through military channels and Congress, and after a decade of effort, the government decided this year that Wauwilermoos prisoners deserved the POW Medal. Only 12 of the 161 American prisoners of Wauwilermoos are still alive.

And so on Sunday afternoon at the Veterans Home in Union Grove where Ellington lives, a ceremony was held for an American patriot who wanted to return to the war so much that he tried to escape twice.

When he was wheeled into the dining room filled with family, friends and fellow veterans, everyone stood. Ellington returned salutes from the New Berlin VFW honor guard.



**Dale Ellington fights back tears as his wife, Rose, pins his Prisoner of War Medal to his jacket on Sunday at the Veterans Home in Union Grove. Because he was held in a Swiss prison, Ellington didn't receive his medal for nearly 70 years.**

A flutist played the national anthem, Dave Chappell, a Vietnam veteran and friend of Ellington's, read a short summary of Ellington's war record, and a chocolate cake adorned with an American flag and "Congratulations Dale!" was sliced.

Wearing a U.S. Army Air Corps hat, Ellington cried as his tearful wife pinned on his POW Medal.

Looking at the well-wishers, Ellington said simply: **"Thank you"**.

By [Meg Jones](#) of the *Wisconsin Journal Sentinel*  
 Dec. 8, 2013

**THIS AND THAT—NEW MEDAL TO BE AWARDED**



The Air Force last week announced the criteria for the new **Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal**, which Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James approved in late May in an effort to acknowledge and help retain high-caliber airmen in the nuclear mission. Airmen who were assigned, deployed, or mobilized on a nuclear mission to a wing, center, or below for 120 consecutive days or 179 nonconsecutive days are eligible to receive the award, retroactive to Dec. 27, 1991, according to a release. "This service medal provides a clearly visible way to recognize the dedication and professionalism of our airmen who are the guardians of our nation's nuclear deterrence. Because of our success, often times nuclear deterrence operations can be overlooked as a critical function," said Col. Zannis Pappas, the missile operations career field manager. "The medal acknowledges the special challenges faced by those airmen charged with supporting the nuclear enterprise and will be a point of pride by all who wear it." The medal is expected to be available in March 2015. Nominations for current airmen are to be processed through the normal chain of command. Retired or separated airmen and families of deceased airmen can submit requests to the Air Force Personnel Center, states the release.

***THIS AND THAT  
B-52 SAC BASES***

Altus	13 Dec 57-23 Jul 68	KI Sawyer	1 Jun 61-19 Nov 94
Amarillo	20 Feb 60-25 Mar 68	Kinchloe	1 Aug 61-30 Sept 77
Andersen	Apr 64-Present	Larson	1 Jun 60-25 Jun 66
Barksdale	1 Aug 58-Present	Loring	16 Jun 56-Nov 93
Beale	18 Jan 60-30 Sept 76	March	16 Sept 63-9 Nov 82
Bergstrom	15 Jan 59-2 Oct 66	Mather	1 Jul 58-Jul 89
Biggs	27 Jun 59-25 Jun 66	McCoy	1 Sept 61-1 Jul 74
Blytheville	10 Jan 60-6 Mar 92	Minot	16 Jul 61-Present
Carswell	10 Dec 57-Jan 93	Pease	23 Mar 66-19 Nov 69
Castle	29 Jun 55- 3 May 94	Plattsburgh	19 Jun 66-5 Jan 71
ClintonSherman	1 Mar 59-31 Dec 69	Ramey	14 Aug 59-30 Jun 71
Columbus	15 Jun 59-2 Jul 69	Robins	1 May 60-1 Oct 83
Dow	15 Feb 60-25 Apr 68	SeymourJohnson	17 Jul 59-<30 Sept 82
Dyess	23 Dec 63-18 Jan 85	Sheppard	15 Jan 60-2 Apr 66
Eglin	17 Jun 59-25 Jun 65	Travis	1 Oct 59-25 Jul 68
Ellsworth	14 Jun 57-11 Mar 86	Turner	1 Jul 59-25 Mar 67
Fairchild	26 Mar 57-25 May 94	U-Tapao	Apr 7-30 Sept 75
Glasgow	1 Apr 61-25 Jun 68	Walker	10 Dec 57-25 Jan 67
Grand Forks	1 Jan 62-4 Dec 86	Westover	8 Dec 56-31 Mar 74
Griffis	15 Oct 59-15 Nov 94	WrightPatterson	1 Jun 60-30 Sept 75
Homestead	10 Feb 62-25 Jul 68	Wurtsmith	9 May 61-15 Dec 92
Kadena	Jan 68-Sept 70		

***B-52 GUNNER TALL TAILS  
CLYDE KETCHAM 'S - "COMMENCE FIRING"***

Clyde Ketcham:

Hey Steve Thornton. During the boring hr's going and coming back to Guam I would spell the pilot and get some stick time. The co-pilot would trim the ship up and turn the auto pilot off. I got pretty good at maintaining heading and altitude. I could keep it within 5 degrees plus or minus in heading, 200ft. plus or minus in altitude. The co-pilot tells the nav. who was a private pilot that I could out fly him. The co-pilot and I had this plan to get the nav. to buy us a case of beer if I kept the plane within the parameters and he couldn't. Then he had to buy the beer. So he takes the bet hook line and sinker. I really did stay within the limits for 5 minutes. I hop back into my seat and the nav comes up and gets in the pilots seat. He tells the co-pilot to trim her up again for him. What he did not know was before the CP trimmed the plane up I ran the turret to the left and I let him go for about 4 minutes then I let the turret go streamline and away we go all over the sky. He went back down stairs talking to himself. He could not believe that I had cleaned his plow. This went on for several missions and he paid off every time. Finally I told him I could not take any more beer from him. Right before we went home for our 28 day break we told him what we had done to him and at first he was pissed but being a good guy he came around and said I knew I couldn't be that bad. Bill Baltazar was the nav. He is a very good man (Editor's note: you will find more of these "story casings" laying around on the pages through

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Hi Bob,

Here's the info I promised a year ago. But, first things first. Enclosed is my check for the hard copy of the Shortburst. Since I do not now and never have owned a computer, iPad, iPod, Xbox, Play Station, Wii, Smartphone, iPhone even a cell phone, I need the hard copy. I learned how to read in the 2<sup>no</sup> grade and still can, as long as I can find my glasses. Oh, I can hear you Bob, "What's the matter Saska, can't you keep up with the times?" Sure I can. I choose not to, my bow to technology is a 72" Flat Screen HD television and an AT&T landline with three remote phones. I am still amazed I can sit on my patio and talk on the phone without one of those curly cords snaked through the doggy door.

The reason I stay dark is that I'm seldom away from home more than a couple hours. I go to the VFW, Legion, and a local Honky-Tonk to listen to lies I've heard before and try to tell bigger ones that they've heard before. I believe that nothing in the world can happen during those couple of hours that I need to know or could do anything about. If it's a home problem my wife knows where I am and I can be home in 5 minutes. NSA cannot find me!

Full disclosure is my wife, Louise, has all those gadgets. I bought them for her. The iPad might have been a mistake; she is on that thing a lot (every day for hours). So, if I need to know something I just ask her. That's the same thing I did 25 years ago before she had all those toys. I don't know if you ever met her if she is not MENSA she is very close. She finished a BA and two Masters in less than 6 years while working full time in the Air Force as a Spook (Intel). Fantastic memory, not always a good thing for me. She really likes Cease Walker and she married me. Just goes to prove not all super intelligent people are smart.

Second item is the picture I enclosed of all the March Gunners, the photo is circa 1963. Most of the Gunners in the photo were from Castle AFB and the 330th BS. The 330th was deactivated and we were sent to March AFB as the 2nd BS, 22n Bomb Wing. The only person in there I have constant contact with is Ron Pokoyski. I had not seen him in over 20 years until he drove into my driveway. He stayed with me for a few weeks while looking for a place to settle. We were watching Sunday NFL football and decided to test our skill at picking winners against the spread, with a nominal wager of course. We have continued that process over the last 20 plus years (including the 7 years Pokoyski lived in Panama). He is currently living in Florida. Just talked to him last week as the new season started, either he cheats or he is a lot better at picking winners because I know I have paid for his new pick-up and probably the down payment on his house in Florida.

Don't know if you know Ron but he was one of the best drinkers I ever saw. He would twist off the cap off a fifth of Jim Beam and throw it away 'cause he wouldn't need the cap again. He was in and out of rehab until he finally quit. He has been clean and sober for 30 plus years. He even gave up his 3 pack a day smoking habit. Maybe that's the reason he's so good at picking winners, he made himself a winner.

Two others in that photo had a profound effect on my AF career. Mitchell H. Bowles and George Poole. Had it not been for them I am sure our Commander, Lt Col Frank Sheehan would never have allowed me to re-enlist. The story why is too long to write but if you want the rest of the story, buy me a six pack and I'll tell you. Don't know about George but Mitch has been gone several years and I can reveal his middle name, it was Herschel. Why he swore me to secrecy-I will never know. I thought it was a great 1st or 2<sup>nd</sup> name. Another in that photo is Gary Lisenbee, he introduced me to his sister and I married her. Another profound effect on my career.

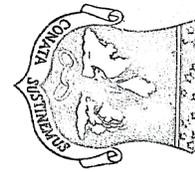
The third item is the list of Castle AFB Gunners. It is circa 1975. I've sent you a copy of the original and a redacted copy just in case you might want to publish it in the ShortBurst. I'm sure there are others who have a wife with a different name. The original might help in recruiting or solve a mystery or two. The only gunner on that roster I have contact with is Ron Ottenad. He lives a couple of miles away. We see each other often but not as much as we once did. We would get together a couple times a week at the NCO club on Randolph APB. Since I am no longer a member, I don't go there anymore. I was a member for 50 years before I resigned. Back in my day you had to be a SSgt to join, now anybody can get in; there's no Stag Bar, you can't smoke, cuss or fart. The music is overpowering and beer is \$3.00. I can walk across the parking lot to the package store and get a case for \$15.00. The food was only passable and the service was always poor. I can't speak for other clubs, this is about Randolph's club. Everything here has seemed to have gone PC. At my age I don't need it. I thought I'd miss the camaraderie, but I don't. Maybe the Marine Corp still has it but it doesn't seem to exist in the modern Air Force.

The poem by Charley Cox, just thought I'd pass it along. I read it at all the graduations of the Prep School I taught at Castle AFB. I even read it at my graduation from SNCO Academy. I was the emcee. CMSAF Bob Gaylor was there and thanked me. He said he and Chief Cox were good friends.

Just a final question. Where were you and Menard when you wore bush jacket and shorts with ***Black Socks?*** Were you in SAC? I know there was always a SAC Sup 1 to APR 35-10. Black Socks really? That uniform was standard fare in the P.I. My memory says my knee highs were khaki just like the shorts. But that was over 50 years ago and I could be wrong-but I doubt it!

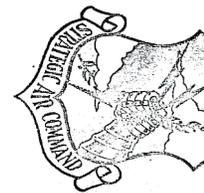
Take care Bob and I'll see you in Reno, Bill Saska (Editor's note: Great letter...appreciate the inserts along with it....did not use Castle crew roster this time — just ran out of room...may put the Castle crew roster in next issue, Charley Cox poem on next page and March Gunners on page 56. I wore the 505 shorts, long khaki socks (not black) and bush jacket while attending NCO Prep school, 1963 at Beale AFB Bob)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



### THE ROLE OF THE NCO

CMSgt Charles D. Cox  
Chief, Military Training Department  
SAC NCO ACADEMY



EVERY GREAT LEADER, IN THE BATTLE HE PLANS, DEPENDS ON HIS MEN FOR THE FIGHT. FOR THE GOAL IS NOT REACHED BY STRATEGY ALONE, BUT BY THE CREW WHO MUST MAKE THE FLIGHT.

THE LEADER AND MEN ARE BOUND LIKE A CHAIN, TO PULL TOGETHER WITH STRENGTH. LET ONE FORGET, OR DO NOT HIS PART, AND HE CAUSES A WEAKENED LINK.

IF A LINK ON THE END MIGHT SOMEHOW BEND, THERE ARE STILL TWO TOGETHER FOR FORCE; BUT IF THE ONE IN THE CENTER SHOULD WEAKEN OR SPLINTER, THERE WOULD BE NOT A CHAIN, OF COURSE.

THE OFFICER ABOVE HAS HIS JOB TO DO, AS WELL AS THE AIRMAN BELOW; BUT THE STRENGTH OF THE CHAIN IS OURS TO MAINTAIN, THAT'S THE ROLE OF THE NCO.

WHAT A CHALLENGE IT IS TO BE IN THE MIDDLE, AND FEEL THE TUG FROM EACH END; BUT THE CHALLENGE WE GREET AND EACH GOAL WE MEET, WITH CONCERN FOR BOTH MISSION AND MEN.

IF, IN MY LIFE, THE TIME CAME AGAIN AS TO WHICH CHOICE I MIGHT MAKE, THERE IS NO DOUBT FOR ME WHAT MY ROLE WOULD BE, THE ROLL OF THE NONCOM I'D TAKE.

A ROLE WITHOUT GLORY, OR GLAMOR, OR FAME, AND RARELY THE CHANCE TO BOAST; BUT WE NEED NOT THESE THINGS, IN TIMES LIKE THESE, WHEN IT'S PEACE THAT MATTERS THE MOST.

THERE ARE OTHERS WHO LEAD THE OPPOSING FORCES, WITH CONQUEST AS THEIR GREAT OBSESSION; BUT THE NOBLEST OF ROLES IS SUPPORTING ALL OF THOSE, WHO CLAIM "PEACE AS THEIR PROFESSION."

CMSGT Charles Cox Poem sent with Bill Saska's letter on previous page.

Bob,

Wow! I figured the jammer was jamming the fighter frequencies, an actual radar jammer as radar was being perfected right after it was developed, the textbook definition of countermeasures. THANKS! Glad I sent the initial article to you! (SSgt Atkinson's obit)

Pete Karjanis  
ASC2 Training  
405.582.8832

**From:** DeFelice, Pete [<mailto:DeFelice@mpat.org>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 23, 2014 4:09 PM  
**To:** Karjanis, Peter W  
**Subject:** FW: [External] WWII B-17G EW/Gunner, Brought Home  
B-17 Spot Jammer info and pix

See: <https://sites.google.com/site/8thafhsmn/pictures/don-mcintyre-waist-gunner>

During the air war in Europe the Germans developed a radar assisted anti-aircraft battery. This allowed them to shoot at the planes above the cloud cover. In response the B-17 Squadrons deployed a radar jamming device called "spot jammer" to jam enemy radar. It consists of three transmitters and one receiver. As the receiver locates a radar signal, a transmitter will jam it. A spot jammer can jam up to three radar signals at one time. The spot jammer operator was specially trained to recognize the enemy radar signals and counter them. See B-17 Spot Jamming equipment in a photo on our sister 486th Bomb Group's web site. Also see the article The Story of Magic Carpet (scroll to radar Directed Anti-Aircraft Guns) by our sister 351st Bomb Group's web site.

[http://www.398th.org/Research/398th\\_FAQ.html](http://www.398th.org/Research/398th_FAQ.html)

Regards,  
**Mr. Pete DeFelice, GS-13  
Multinational Exercise Planner  
US Pacific Command J71**

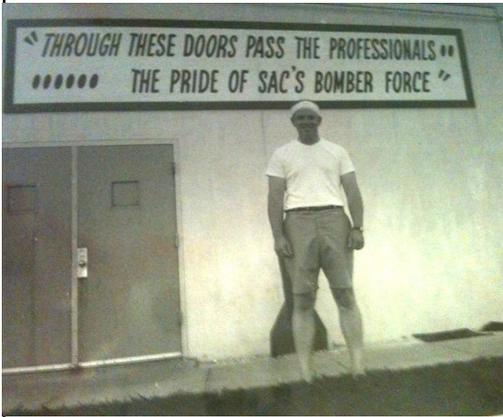
Added information sent along with the notice of SSgt Gerald V. Atkinson's obit found in Final Fly By. Bob



This is a view of the aft bulkhead of the radio compartment. The cranks on the wall are to manually crank down the landing gear and the wing flaps. The top three units are transmitters used to jam enemy radar. The bottom unit is a receiver that detected the radar signal. Once a signal was picked up, one transmitter was used to jam that signal as others were received and jammed simultaneously. Each operator was capable of jamming three signals at the same time. (photo courtesy of J. Jason Day son grandson of James R. Day, spot jammer, 750th, via Scott Morrell).

**B-52 GUNNER TALL TAILS  
CLYDE KETCHAM 'S - "COMMENCE FIRING"**

Clyde Ketcham



This is me after a taxi crew mishap. While on taxi crew I made a slight miscalculation. After the plane was loaded with bombs & fuel the tugs could not move it up some of the taxi ways. The 2 pilots and gunner would move planes around for the ground crews with the 4 inboard engines. So on this dark night we were moving this loaded buff to another revetment. All the gunner did was to make sure the pilots didn't run over anything like power carts, parked bread trucks and such. We taxi up to a vacant pad and I tell the pilots I'm going to get out by way of the right rear gear well because the ground crew wouldn't give the gunner a stand until we were fully parked. They clear me off intercom. When I get to the well the engines are still running so I just wait sitting there on the crawlway with my legs dangling. In every unguarded moment an accident happens. Assumptions are the mother of all screw ups and I hear the engines rev up. Here's my screw up. I assume

they are purging the engines for shut down and I lean over and grab the ledge with my hands and swing down. I'm 6 ft tall but that still leaves my feet about a ft. off the cement. To my horror we start to taxi again with me holding on to that ledge by my finger tips. I held on for as long as I could but we just kept going so I let go and my feet never touched the ground. The jet blast was so strong it caused me to do a back flip and land on the hardest part of me, my head. When the cob webs cleared all I can smell is exhaust and I see my plane a quarter mile up the ramp getting ready to be parked. My head is bleeding like a stuffed hog and I run up to the plane and the 2 pilots are sitting on the bus all pissed off wondering what's taking me so long. When I got on the bus they damn near fainted when they took a load of me. They could just see the paper work for my little miscalculation. Nothing much was said

Clyde Ketcham

In about 1964 Gen. Wade the 2nd AF CO dreamed up a contest for B52 crews called the EWO Knowledge bowl fashioned after the GE Knowledge bowl that was on tv in those days. Any how while on alert crews would compete against each other to see which could answer the most questions correctly with a little buzzer and all. The vault weenies would ask a question and who ever hit the buzzer first got a shot at answering the question. My crew beat out all of the crews at Altus including stand board. All the bases in 2nd AF went through the same process. Next all the winning crews went to Barksdale for the super bowl. We won that also. I was the only airman there in this super bowl. At a banquet after winning I was the only A1C in the joint with all these 4 Stars. I was very lucky to be on a crew like these five Capt's. All I did was answer a couple E&E questions. Here is the best part of the story. After getting back home the very next promotion cycle I made E5. Then the crew made select. But before we made select I got married and I tried to get a house on base and was told we were # 44 on the waiting list. After making select I got a spot E6. So in 6 mo's I went from E4 to E6 and got a wife and a house on base. Believe me it was nothing other than being at the right place at the right time. Now I'm going to tell on myself. I was E6 for 15 months then SAC lost all the spot promotions. So I went back to E5 but when and if I made E6 I would have 15 months time in grade on my peers. In 68 after coming back from Arc Light with a young wife and two young sons I got out. The very next promotion I was on the E6 list. Life is just a series of choices.

Clyde Ketcham

Yesterday I told about my EWO KNOWLEDGE BOWL contest. All the crews that won at the base level got to go to England for a week. So we were taken on a base C-47 to Barksdale. This plane was one that Dale Dillahunty kept the engines running fine before he became a gunner. So we take this ride on the Douglas sub sonic bug smasher and get put on a C-97 for the ride to Jolly Old England. It was a 18 flight spread over two days with a stop in N.E. Canada. This C-97 used so much oil that a few 55 gallon drums of oil were strapped to the cabin floor right between the wings and periodically the crew chief would drain 5 gallons of oil from the drums into a filler tube on the each side of the cabin. We made it just fine and had a great time. In London Bobby Russell from Bergstrom was in the same room with me at the enlisted men's hotel. Have any of you ever refueled behind a KC-97 ? We refueled about 18 ft. to start, but the tanker had to go into a shallow dive with balls to the wall to get enough speed for us to be able to hold on to the boom. It seemed to me that we were so nose high I could see the ground over top of the hem. sight. That was a long time ago so that last part is in the fog of war stories.

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - IGGY CRUZ



Came across the following article written by DR. Thomas L. Butts. Thought you would enjoy.

### **Christmas Depression      By: Dr. Thomas L. Butts**

It comes as no surprise to perceptive people that Christmas is not a happy season for everyone. I cannot remember a Christmas in the 60 years I've been a minister in which someone did not confidentially say to me: "I hate Christmas. I wish it was over." When I was an active minister, I reserved as much time as possible in December for talking and visiting with people who suffered "Christmas blues" People who hate Christmas nearly always feel guilty for feeling like that even though it is obvious their feeling do not arise from rejection of the real meaning of the season.

After the death of a loved one, the first time a holiday, anniversary, birthday or any other significant event comes around, sadness accompanies it. People who have experienced a death in the family, or a divorce (which is like a death), usually find the first Christmas without their spouse or dear one of almost unbearable sadness. And such sadness or depression is not limited to that first Christmas alone, the holidays can trigger feelings of loss for years.

Books do not resolve problems, but there are some books about loss and grief that can help us get through the season,. Let me mention two. Before her death in August of 2004 , Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross and her colleague and friend, David Kessler, wrote two very helpful books, both of which can be read with great benefit by those who have experienced loss and those who will experience loss, which includes everybody. The books are entitled Life Lessons and On Grief and Grieving

More complicated than seasonal grief after death and divorce is Christmas blues of people who have no identifiable or socially acceptable reason for their feelings. They suffer silently, or attribute their feelings to something other than the real reason. There is often something very non-specific about Christmas blues. One person said: "At Christmas something in you gets so lonely for – I don't know what exactly, but it is something you don't mind so much not having at other times.

Until recently Christmas depression and other negative Christmas feelings were 'closet' problems. Seldom would anyone openly admit they hated to see the season come or that they always got depressed, or drank so much, or felt cheated by a season that promised so much and gave so little. I am not sure who 'blew the cover' on this great American embarrassment. But now that you know there are other people who feel this way, perhaps you can face up to your own feeling with more courage and less shame – and sham.

Children in our culture get a heavy dose of unrealistic magical wonder and expectation about Christmas which is encouraged and reinforced by the commercial establishment. From the earliest age children are the recipients of 'free' gifts from a magical character from the North Pole who not only know exactly where they live and what they want, but who strangely knows exactly what size they wear and who is able to deliver the goods to every kid in the world between 9PM on Christmas eve and 5:30AM on Christmas Day One of the earliest grief/loss experiences of a child is the death of the Santa Clause myth. Some children know the truth long before they admit it, and even then the blow is softened by the fact that the free gifts keep coming even though the magic is gone.

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - IGGY CRUZ

Since we are taught at such a young age that Christmas is a very happy time of magic and wonder unaccompanied by conflict, bills and responsibility, unconsciously we still expect Christmas to be like that. Christmas is disappointing and depressing to many grownups because it does not live up to unconscious childhood expectations. The fact that we are adults does not lessen our disappointment; it only makes it more difficult to express.

Christmas often causes conflicts because when families get together, feelings are intense and people are more sensitive than usual. Many family fights break out at Christmas. People are together who have not been together for a long time, and they have changed from how you remember them.

They are not 'themselves', as we remember them. We are each displaced from our daily routine. All in all, it creates a perfect climate for people to be nervous, and irritable.

What can we do to get ourselves in tune with the reason for the season and put more joy into Christmas? What can we do to minimize conflict, sadness and our own unrealistic, childish expectations? We all know enough to create our own set of solutions. Why don't we work on that?.

He mentions for us to create our own solutions but we all know that God is the solution for any problems and that he will never let us go thru any hardships that we can't handle and will always be with us.

**Wishing all of you a Healthy and Merry Christmas from the CRUZ family.**

Iggy

## FINAL FLY BY



**Radica A. (Hulsebusch) DWYER**, 80, died Monday, 10/06/2014, in Omaha. Born 1/17/1934 in Pender, NB and grew up in Lyons. She married Edward V. Dwyer on 6/15/1956 in Fremont; they lived in Lincoln for 38 years where they were members of St. Joseph's Catholic Church. She was an active member of the Legion of Mary. She retired from Nebraska Agricultural Statistical Service.

She is survived by her husband, Edward; daughter, Kathy (David) Volkman; son, Dan (Denise) Dwyer; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial: 10 a.m. Friday, 10/10, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 1940 South 77th Street with Father Jonathan Haschke. Rosary: 6 p.m. Thursday at Butherus, Maser & Love Funeral Home, 4040 A Street. Burial: Lincoln Memorial Park. Visitation after 12 noon Wednesday at funeral home. Memorials to Pink Sisters, 1040 South Cotner Blvd., Lincoln, NE 68510

Sent in by Liz Anderson



**Melvin Edwin Hay**, 79, passed away Oct. 12, 2014. He was born Dec. 6, 1934 in Estes Park, CO. He served as a tail gunner in the Air Force during Vietnam. He is survived by his son, Charles Hay of Converse; his daughter, Dana Wilson of Oregon; six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

**U.S. AIR FORCE** (Notice of Melvin Hay's passing sent in by Don Owens)

## FINAL FLY BY



**MALCOLM G. SMITH - MARCH 17, 1919 - AUGUST 25, 2014**

Malcolm G. Smith, was born March 17, 1919 to Isabelle and Malcolm David Smith in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He passed away on August 25, 2014 with his loving family by his side. Malcolm lived 95 years, an accomplishment in itself, but he achieved so much more. He arrived at Castle AFB in 1964 and ultimately made Atwater his home. After a 27 year active duty career with the [United States Air Force](#), he retired in 1969. He was then employed by Farmer's Insurance where he worked for the next 12 years in Security and Coding.

Malcolm, aka "Sarge", was a Senior Master Sergeant at retirement and was a decorated [veteran](#) of [World War II](#), Korea and Vietnam. He was always proud of his military service and continued to support the military until his death. Malcolm was a tail gunner on a B-24 Liberator during WWII and he received the Distinguished Flying Cross as well as the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal, American Theater Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal and as anyone who knew him would expect, the Good Conduct Medal. The air crews he helped protect managed to accomplish their bombing missions and more than a few times they barely made it back to the safety of Allied territory.

Malcolm is survived by his bride of 67 years; Patsy L. Smith. They have two daughters; Kathryn G. Gibbs (Rodman) and Elizabeth M. Sanford (Michael), four granddaughters; Amy M. Stout, Lindsey M. Coberley (Aaron), Lauren M. Hicks (Blair), Melissa A. Gibbs as well as 5 beloved great grandchildren. Malcolm is preceded in death by his parents and his brother Douglas Smith.

Malcolm was an avid boater and probably traveled over every inch of Lake McClure. He loved to pull skiers and tubers, not to mention the deadly "red sled". Malcolm loved to travel with Patsy in their motor homes. He enjoyed outdoor activities especially when it included his family. At any family get together he brought joy to the occasion and would be the life of the party. Malcolm worked hard, playing hard and was always proud of his home and his family.

There will be a viewing for friends at Wilson Family Funeral Chapel on Thursday, September 4, 2014 from 4-8PM. Malcolm will be laid to rest with full military honors at San Joaquin Valley National Cemetery on September 5, 2014 at 2:30 PM. Malcolm wished that in lieu of flowers donations be made to the [Air Force Aid Society](#).



**Sickonic, Robert J.** Robert J. Sickonic, 76, of Whitehall, made his final flight to be with Jesus, surrounded by his family, Wednesday evening, August 20, 2014, in his home. He was the husband of Jean B. (Santee) Sickonic since Oct 26, 1968. Born in Northampton, he was a son of the late Joseph A. and Helen R. (Farkas) Siekonik. Robert worked as a electrical technician for the LaFarge Cement Corp., Cementon, Whitehall Twp., for 24 years, retiring in 2000. Previously, he served 20 years in the [US Air Force](#), veteran of Vietnam, achieving rank of MSgt. Robert was a member of Calvary Wesleyan Church, Bethlehem, serving as



trustee, and on the building committee. He was member and past commander of the [VFW](#) Post #4714, Northampton, and member of TriBoro Sportsman Assn, Northampton. Survivors: wife; daughter, Kathleen Spear of WA; sons, Daniel and wife Caroline of Palmerton, John "Jack" and wife Denise of Northampton, James and fiancée Mariann Saas of Allentown; 9 grandchildren; 2 great-granddaughters; sisters, Patricia Guttman of Cincinnati, OH, Priscilla wife of Ronald Koch of Allen Twp.; brothers, Richard and wife Linda, Joseph and wife Debra, all of Northampton; nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by brother-in-law, John Guttman. Services: 10:00 AM, Monday, Calvary Wesleyan Church, 1414 Penna Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18018. Call, 7-8:30 PM, Sunday, Schisler Funeral Home, 2119 Washington Avenue, Northampton, PA 18067, and 9-10:00 AM, Monday in church. Interment W/ Military Honors, St. Andrew's Catholic Cemetery, Grove Street, N. Catasauqua. Online Condolences: [www.schislerfuneralhomes.com](http://www.schislerfuneralhomes.com) Contributions: In lieu of flowers, VFW Post #4714 or Northampton Area Veterans Memorial, both C/O Funeral Home.

*Published in Morning Call from Aug. 22 to Aug. 23, 2014*

**FINAL FLY BY**



Gracie and Mack at the Spokane Reunion.

Mrs. **Gracie Ann Gill O'Quinn**, 72, of Walterboro entered into eternal rest Saturday, December 21, 2013. She was the wife of Cleveland McRay O'Quinn.

Funeral services will be conducted 2 o'clock Monday, December 23, 2013, at Black Creek Baptist Church, 4931 Black Creek Road, Walterboro. The Reverend Scott Hanna officiating. Interment will follow in the Church Cemetery. Visitation will begin at 1 o'clock Monday at the church.

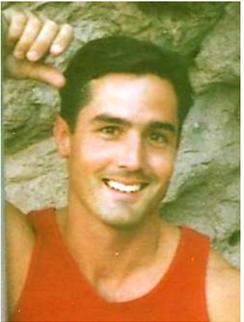


Mrs. O'Quinn was born March 29, 1941 in Colleton County. She was a daughter of the late James T. Gill and Wilton Blocker Gill. She was a member of Black Creek Baptist Church where she held many positions through the years. She was a retired bank service manager. She was a member of WIRE and was an active volunteer with the Beaufort Marine Institute. She was a graduate of the last class from Hendersonville High School.

Surviving in addition to her husband are her children, James K. O'Quinn and his wife MyLinda, Frank A. O'Quinn and his wife Kelley, and Brian P. O'Quinn all of Walterboro, one sister, Kathryn G. Walker and her husband Bernard of Walterboro, two grandchildren, Jared A. O'Quinn and Ryan M. O'Quinn and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by a sister, Mary G. Rhode.

In lieu of flowers, memorials made be made to Black Creek Baptist Church in care of Joyce Stynchcomb, 1837 Edward Road, Walterboro, SC 29488.

Mack O'Quinn lost both his wife and son over a very short period of time last December. Mack called and informed us of it just a month or so ago as he also was combating a health issue (which he has overcome). Our hearts go out to him and his family and this indeed was a very hard period in his life. Keep him in your prayers. Time will help to heal the sorrow ... the loss takes much longer but the sun WILL shine again for you. Bob



Mr. **Brian Phillip O'Quinn, 46**, of Walterboro, entered into rest Tuesday morning, December 31, 2013.

Funeral services were conducted 12 noon Saturday, January 4, 2014, at Black Creek Baptist Church, 4931 Black Creek Road, Walterboro. The Reverend Scott Hanna officiating. Interment with military honors will follow in the Church Cemetery

Born July 6, 1967, while his father was stationed in Puerto Rico, he was a son of Mr. Cleveland McRay O'Quinn and the late Mrs. Gracie Ann Gill O'Quinn. Brian, a graduate of Walterboro High School - Class of 1985, served our country faithfully in the United States Air Force. During his time in the military, he served in many capacities to include a Combat Arms Instructor at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada and a Desert Warfare Trainer, and was also involved in Military Operations Support for Iraq in Kuwait. Brian had achieved the rank of Sergeant prior to a traumatic brain injury in 2001

which led to his medical discharge from the service. Prior to his entry into the armed forces, he was in law enforcement having worked for the Walterboro City Police Department and also Beaufort County Sheriff's Department. Brian was a free spirit who loved life and was an outdoors enthusiast, He was involved in triathlons sports and events and among his many pastimes were running, bicycling, and mountain climbing. He was an accomplished photographer and also in earlier years had been a lifeguard and Martial Arts Instructor.

Surviving in addition to his father of Walterboro are: two brothers, James K. O'Quinn and his wife MyLinda and Frank A. O'Quinn and his wife Kelley all of Walterboro; and two nephews, Jared A. O'Quinn and Ryan M. O'Quinn. He is also survived by many aunts, uncles, and cousins as well and many devoted caregivers who become dear trusted friends over the past fourteen years of his life.



**FRANK J. NOWAK** – Age 90 - August 1923 - July 4, 2014. A very proud former AAF/USAF S/Sgt Frank J. Nowak, veteran of WWII and Korea. He flew 35 missions over Germany as a B-17 gunner and another 35 missions in the Korean War. Beloved Husband of the late Dolores Nowak nee Zavala  
Loving Brother of Cecelia (the late John) Krizek, the late Chester (the late Eleanore), Lorraine (the Late Walter) Sava.  
Dear Brother –in-law of Bob Zavala, Proud Uncle of many nieces, great nieces, nephews and great nephews.

Burial in Resurrection Catholic Cemetery, Justice, IL

“REMEMBER HIM IN YOUR PRAYERS”.

Notice sent in by his brother-in-law, Bob Zavala

## FINAL FLY BY



**HULBURT (Burt) DWYER**, Chief Master Sergeant U.S.A.F. (Retired) born in 1931, a resident of Wetumpka, AL, Died Thursday, September 4, 2014.

Visitation will be held Saturday, Sept 6, 2014 at St Bede's Parrish, Montgomery AL, from 9:00 – 11:00 AM with Funeral Services to begin at 11:00 AM.

He put in a gallant fight against cancer. He is beginning his last flight to eternity. In 1950 Burt was an Air Force Aerial Gunner and flew as a Tail Gunner on B-29 Bombers in Korea. He participated in the Atomic bomb tests in Nevada in 1952/53. He later flew KB-29, KC-97 and KC-135 Air Tankers as a Boom Operator. He flew KC-135 in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War where he was awarded a Bronze Star. He retired from the Air Force with more than 28 years of service in 1978 from Gunter Air Force Base. He then worked for the Air Force commissary service until 1997 when he retired for a second time. He continued to stay occupied with temporary positions until a major heart attack convinced him to retire completely to gardening in June 2002. He was a member of the Disabled

American Veterans, Air Force Gunners Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, National Association of Uniformed Service, and the National Rifle Association.

Mr. Dwyer is preceded in death by his parents Hurlburt & Anna Dwyer.

He is survived by his wife, Sandra; daughters, Tammy Lasorba (Tony) Terry Richards, Tracy Conners and grandchildren, Nathan, Tina, Tabatha, Jamie, Steven, Kay Leigh, Joshua, Ben and several great-grandchildren; Brother, Jeffery (Karen) Dwyer of Las Vegas, NV; sister, Ruth Harrell of Reno, NV and his many friends.

(Sent in by his wife, Sandra Dwyer)



**Sidney J Penman** was born in Williston, North Dakota on July 30th, 1925 to Sid and Velma. He graduated from Rathdrum High School in 1943. He passed away on June 10, 2014 in Post Falls, ID.

He joined the Army Air Corp on September 21st, 1943 and was stationed in Sudbury, England with the 486th Bomb Group. He flew his first 31 missions over Germany and his 32nd and last mission over occupied France, all in the ball turret of a B-17. He was discharged as a Sergeant in November 1945.

Sid enjoyed spending time in the outdoors, camping and hunting with his family and friends, especially on the St. Joe. Sid shot a bull moose in 1989, the very first year a drawing was offered in the State of Idaho.



One of the highlights of his later years was being a part of the first Honor Flights to Washington DC in 2004.

He is survived by sister-in-law Virginia Penman of Post Falls, Niece Berdene Penman Brunko (Steve) of Twin Lakes, Nephews Steve Penman of Wasilla, Alaska and Jeff Penman (Christy) of Wenatchee, Washington. Great Nephew Bryce Brunko of Twin Lakes and Great Niece Lauren Brunko of Coeur d'Alene.

INFO PROVIDED BY MEMBERSHIP OFFICER CHUCK DEAN

Sid is preceded in death by his parents, Sid and Velma Penman, brother Richard "Dick" Penman and Nephew Richard "Rick" Penman. At his request, no services will be held.



**Burton Francis Blakely** was born on November 6, 1929 in Chicago, Illinois. He passed away at his home in Coupeville on January 12, 2014, surrounded by his loving family, following a two year battle with lung cancer. Burt served our country valiantly for twenty years in the U. S. Air Force and was a veteran of the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crises and Combat Alert Missions during the Cold War. Burt served as an aerial gunner on B-29's, B-36's and B-52's. He ended his honorable military career in 1968 at Castle Air Force Base in California, his last duty station.

Burt was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle and friend. He enjoyed numerous activities he shared with his children and in doing so, blessing them with wonderful memories of camping, crabbing, hunting, fishing and the challenge of poker. He enjoyed gardening and was proud of his annual tomato garden. Burt taught his family to be independent and self-sufficient.

Burt shared his commitment to the church, serving the Lord and his devotion to "Our Lady of Guadalupe" with his family. His example and commitment to the Lord will be passed down through the generations to his descendants.

He is survived by his beautiful wife of 63 years, as well as seven children and their spouses, 19 grandchildren and 5 grandchildren.

The family would like to thank friends in the community, especially the "coffee group" and St. Mary Catholic Church, Dr. Lycksell and his staff and Hospice for the overwhelming support, love and compassion shown to Burt and his family during his long illness. Anyone wishing to make a remembrance in his name may do so to GIFTS FROM THE HEART, P.O. Box 155, Coupeville, WA 98239.

(Sent in by Cease Walker)

## **FINAL FLY BY LAST ENOLA GAY CREWMEMBER**



(CNN) -- Nearly 69 years ago, **Theodore "Dutch" Van Kirk** navigated a U.S. B-29 Superfortress called the Enola Gay over Hiroshima, Japan, on a sunny August day. Once over its target, the Enola Gay unloaded the first atomic bomb dropped in war.

A single bomb blast killed some 140,000 people and helped end World War II -- and pushed the world suddenly into the nuclear era.

On Monday, Van Kirk died of natural causes at the Park Springs retirement community in Stone Mountain, Georgia, according to his eldest daughter Vicki Tri-

plett. He was 93.

His death means there are now no surviving members of the Enola Gay's crew who, by doing their jobs, became an early and integral part in the ongoing narrative over nuclear weapons.

While in the U.S. military, Van Kirk flew dozens of missions in Europe and North Africa. Yet the history books will largely remember him and others aboard that B-29 for the morning of August 6, 1945.

By then, Van Kirk had flown about 15 missions out of England and about 10 more out of North Africa. He then returned to the United States with new orders, training "primarily to make the rapid turn and running away from the bomb," Van Kirk recalled decades later to CNN.

They dropped the bomb dubbed "Little Boy" around 8:15 a.m.

"You didn't see anything except a bright flash and the airplane," Van Kirk recalled. "You saw a white cloud hanging over the city. You saw the -- underneath the cloud the entire city was just entirely covered with smoke and dust, and it looked like a pot of boiling oil down there."

His first thought when the bomb fell was "'God, I'm glad it worked ... Number two, the thoughts were, 'This war is over.' And that was good. That was good.'"

Three days later, another atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered soon after that, ending the bloody war in the Pacific and, in so doing, preventing a U.S. land invasion.

It also set the stage for what would become known as the Cold War -- a nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and United States that would go on for decades -- as well as concerns about developing nuclear weaponry that persist in places like North Korea and Iran to this day.

Tom Van Kirk told CNN on Tuesday that his father "felt no regrets about" the Hiroshima mission. At the same time, he said "Dutch" Van Kirk's life was much more than that.

After the war, Van Kirk left the military, got his master's degree in chemical engineering at Bucknell University, then had a long career working for DuPont. He retired in 1985 -- a decade after his wife's death -- and remained active, eventually settling in Georgia near one of his daughters.

He will be buried in Northumberland -- the central Pennsylvania city in which he was born -- alongside his wife, Tom Van Kirk said. Together, the couple had four children, seven grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

"We treasure the fact that we had my dad for 93½ years," said Tom Van Kirk. "He was a great father."

Dear Friends, We just had a call from Wally Hartzell that Wayne passed away at 2:30 this morning (Monday, October 20, 2014 ). As you know he has battled his Diabetes for a long time and the amputation of one leg and the surgery on the other. He got an infection in the leg that had recent surgery. He will be cremated and buried next to his mom (Donna) but the burial will be private as to Wayne's wishes.

**WAYNE A. HARTZELL** - He was born September 27, 1961 at Cordell, Oklahoma, a son of Wallace "Wally" A. and Donna J. (Shinn) Hartzell. Wayne's father was in the service and he grew up in Oklahoma, California, Texas and Kansas. He attended the Stark High school and graduated from Erie. He then attended the Neosho County Community College and later began employment at St. Paul Furniture at Erie. Later he moved to Chanute and began working at Hi-Lo Tables. He was employed there until becoming disabled with Diabetes in 1999. He was preceded in death by his mother, Donna Hartzell.

Can you imagine losing your wife and son within 6 months? We are heart broken for our friend as he has had such a burden to bare. Please keep Wally in your prayers as his heart is broken. Andy and Liz

## FINAL FLY BY Remembered

Defense Department forensic scientists identified the remains of two airmen who had been missing in action since World War II, [announced](#) the Pentagon. DOD officials returned the remains of **SSgt. Robert E. Howard, 21**, of Moravia, Iowa, and **SSgt. David R. Kittredge, 22**, of Oneida, Wis., to their families for burial with full military honors. Howard's remains were interred on July 19 in Moulton, Iowa, while Kittredge's remains were buried on Aug. 13, in Green Bay, Wis., according to the Aug. 20 release. Additional remains that DOD could not individually identify will be buried as a group in a single casket at a future date at Arlington National Cemetery. Howard and Kittredge were in a B-26B Marauder shot down on April 16, 1945, during a bombing raid on Wittenberg, Germany. After a German national reported finding possible human remains in 2012, a US accounting team excavated the site and recovered human remains, personal effects, and aircraft wreckage. The forensic scientists used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools such as mitochondrial DNA and dental comparisons to identify the two airmen.

Sent in by Pete Karjanis



**Staff Sgt. Gerald V. Atkinson**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 358th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, was lost April 10, 1945, north of Berlin. He was accounted for June 20, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors Aug. 16, 2014, in Chattahoochee, Fla.

(KIA-POW) - On 10 April 1945 mission #357 to Oranienburg, Germany in B-17G #44-8427 Henn's Revenge (358BS) VK-E. An unexpected attack by six to eight ME-262s was encountered just after departing the target. 303rd Gunners claimed two destroyed. Henn's Revenge was hit by the attacking Me-262s coming in on the tail. It burst into flames between the #3 and #4 engines, held course for a few seconds, peeled up, slid over and down to the right, through the formation, apparently out of control. Henn's Revenge exploded at 2,000 feet and broke up into two main parts and crashed in the small Gross Glasaow Lake between Gross Schonebeck and Liebenwalde 20 km northeast of the target Oranienburg and about 28 km north-northwest of Berlin. A wing and engines fell in the upper part of the lake and the tail and part of the fuselage came down in the lower part of the lake. The wreckage could be seen 50 to 150 feet from the shore.

UPDATE: Due to the efforts of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO), located near Washington, D.C., **S/Sgt Atkinson's remains** were recovered and identified by DNA testing. He was officially accounted for June 20, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors Aug. 16, 2014, in the Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Chattahoochee, Gadsden County, Florida.  
(Article provided by Pete Karjanis)



**A FORMER GUNNER:** I read an OBIT for the subject colonel in our Indianapolis Star Newspaper a week or so ago. His obit is quite lengthy so I am not going to give you all the information from it but I will give you the highlights of his USAF career; this officer and fighter pilot was known as a *one-man air force* during the Korean and Vietnam Wars and his awards/decorations indicate he indeed lived up to that moniker.

**Colonel James H. Kasler** was born in 1926 in South Bend, IN and served in USAAF during WWII as a B29 tail-gunner flying missions over Japan. At the end of WWII he went to college on his GI Bill and received a commission in USAF. He went through pilot and advanced fighter training just time to fly 100 combat missions in the F86E in the 335<sup>th</sup> Fighter-Interceptor Squadron of the 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Wing during the Korean War; he scored six confirmed MiG15 kills becoming USAF's 15<sup>th</sup> JET ace. In August 1966 *Time Magazine* labeled Colonel Kasler "the hottest pilot" in Vietnam and he was called a one-man air force. He was shot down over North Vietnam while trying to protect his wingman, who was shot down just prior to him being hit. His right leg was shattered during ejection and he was immediately captured and endured unspeakable torture from Aug66 until his release Mar73.

In both of those wars he flew a combined total of 198 missions. In his career Colonel Kasler received a total 76 awards for valor and service; he was awarded the Air Force Cross three times (the nation's second highest award for valor (only the Medal of Honor is higher), he was awarded the Silver Star two times (the nation's 3<sup>rd</sup> highest award for valor), he received the Legion of Merit, nine awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, two Bronze Stars with V device, two Purple Hearts and eleven Air Medals. Colonel Kasler's biography was written by Perry D. Luckett and Charles L. Byler and is entitled *Tempered Steel*. Colonel Kasler's Korean War aerial battles were highlighted in the History Channel series *Dog Fights*. He was also the subject of numerous other books about air warriors.

He was quite a warrior was he not? I had never heard of him before I read his obit in the *Indianapolis Star*. (*He passed away on 14 April 2014*).

Cheerz, Stan Allen

EDITOR added: One of the United States military's most decorated warriors, Colonel James Helms Kasler (USAF Retired) passed away in West Palm Beach, Florida on April 24. Born May 2, 1926 in South Bend, Indiana, James Kasler, husband, father, and quintessential American patriot, is the only person to be awarded the Air Force Cross three times. Thanks for remembering him, Stan. Bob

## FINAL FLY BY



**EDWARD J. LUDWIG**— Major USAF retired, passed away October 21, 2014. He was born in Brooklyn, NY April 19, 1922 and was raised in Queens, NY. He graduated from the Academy of Aeronautics in 1942 as an aircraft and engine mechanic. Edward married his beloved wife, Zoya W. Pigg in 1946; she preceded him in death in 1995. They met at Mitchell Field, NY while both were serving in the US Army Air Force. As an NCO, Edward was a B-17 Engineer/Gunner stationed with the 8th Air Force in England during WWII, and flew as a flight engineer on B-29 missions in Korea. He also served with a special operations squadron during the Vietnam conflict. In 1952 he was commissioned as an aircraft performance officer and served in that capacity at DMAFB with the 303rd Bomb Wing from 1958 to 1963. He retired in 1970 with 28 years of service while stationed at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. Eleven of those years, 1952 to 1963, were in a commissioned status. Edward then worked for Flying Tigers Airline for 19 years in Anchorage, AK returning to Tucson in 1989. Upon returning from Japan in 1968, he settled his family in Tucson as this was to be his retirement home. In July 1996, Edward married Keiko Sakurai, who was born

and raised in Hokkaido, Sapporo, Japan, entering the United States in 1951 and becoming a US citizen in 1956. He is survived by his second wife, Keiko; daughters, Nancy Coady and Patricia Barbuto (Dom); sons, Raymond and Brian (Mei-Lei); seven grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; six nieces; three nephews; cousin, Bob, and his beloved dog Miko. Among his rewards and decorations are the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal W/9 OLC, Presidential Unit Citation W/1 OLC, American Campaign, Korean Presidential Citation. He is a member of TROA, Air Force Association, 8AF Historical Society, 15th AF Association, 379th BG WWII Association, 303rd BW Association, 98th BG/Wing Association, 90th SRW Association, Air Force Gunners Association and Society of the Strategic Air Command. A visitation will be held on Monday, October 27, 2014 from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at EAST LAWN PALMS MORTUARY. Funeral services to be held on Tuesday, October 28, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. with interment to follow at East Lawn Palms Mortuary and Cemetery.

Published in the Arizona Daily Star on Oct. 26, 2014

## FINAL FLY BY Remembered

### Airman Missing From WWII Accounted For



On Aug 6th, 2014, the Department of Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced that the remains of U.S. Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Gerald V. Atkinson, 21, of Ramer, Ala., lost during World War II, have been identified and are being returned to his family for burial with full military honors on Aug. 16th, Chattahoochee, Fla.

On April 10, 1945, Atkinson and eight other crew members aboard a B-17G, were assigned to the 303rd Bombardment Group (Heavy). Atkinson was assigned as a spot jammer aboard the aircraft that departed Molesworth, England on a bombing mission over Oranienburg, Germany. During the mission the aircraft crashed and Atkinson was reported missing.

Atkinson's aircraft, along with 38 other aircraft from the 303rd Bombardment Group, were flying in a formation as part of a major allied bombing operation against targets in Germany. After successfully dropping their ordnance, Atkinson's aircraft was attacked by six to eight German ME-262 jets.

The aircraft crashed into the Groß Glasow Lake near Groß Schonebeck, Germany. Of the crew of nine, only one crewmember survived. In 1946 and 1947, German nationals recovered remains from Groß Glasow Lake believed to be the remains of American airmen and they were buried as un-

knowns in a local community cemetery.

In August 1947, the remains were exhumed by the U.S. Army Graves Registration Command (AGRC) and reinterred as unknowns in Nueville en Condroz, Belgium.

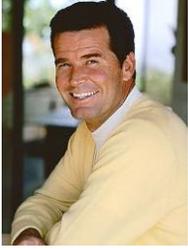
In December 1948, the remains were again exhumed for possible identification and it was determined the remains were members of Atkinson's crew; however, the AGRC could not conclusively establish individual identifications and the unidentified remains were reinterred as unknowns in the Brittany American Cemetery and Memorial in St. James, France in November 1951.

In 2012, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) re-examined the AGRC's records and concluded that the possibility of identification of the unknown remains now exist. To identify Atkinson's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and mitochondrial DNA, which matched Atkinson's cousin.

Thank you for your service, sir. May you rest in peace. May your family finally find comfort and peace.

~~AFGA member Pete Carruth submitted story of Atkinson's recovery and return. Thanks, Pete, your input is always welcome.~~  
Bob

## FINAL FLY BY Remembered



**JAMES GARNER—APRIL 7, 1928—JULY 19, 2014.** It is with heavy heart that I tell you that one of the last Hollywood veterans of WWII has died. During WWII he joined the US Merchant Marines. After WWII he joined the army national Guard and 14 months in Korea in the [5th Regimental Combat Team](#). He was wounded twice, first in the face and hand from shrapnel fire from a mortar round, and second on April 23, 1951 in the buttocks from friendly fire from U.S. fighter jets as he dove headfirst into a foxhole. Garner was awarded the Purple Heart in Korea for the first injury. For the second wound, he received a second Purple Heart (eligibility requirement: "As the result of friendly fire while actively engaging the enemy"), although Garner received the medal in 1983, 32 years after his injury. He is one on a long list of actors from that era where actors appreciated the fact that they lived in the greatest country in the world. He will be sorely miss

### TAPS

**Day is done ... Gone the sun ... From the lakes From the hills ...  
From the sky ... All is well .. Safely rest . God is nigh ...**

**Fading light ... Dims the sight .. And a star Gems the sky...  
Gleaming bright ... From afar ... Drawing nigh Falls the night ..**

**Thanks and praise ... For our days ... Neath the sun . Neath the  
stars... Neath the sky ... As we go ... This we know ... God is nigh ..**

### LESSONS OF LIFE - The Magic Bank Account

Imagine that you had won the following \*PRIZE\* in a contest: Each morning your bank would deposit \$86,400 in your private account for your use. However, this prize has rules. The set of rules:

1. Everything that you didn't spend during each day would be taken away from you.
2. You may not simply transfer money into some other account.
3. You may only spend it.
4. Each morning upon awakening, the bank opens your account with another \$86,400 for that day.
5. The bank can end the game without warning; at any time it can say, "Game Over!". It can close the account and you will not receive a new one.

What would you personally do?

You would buy anything and everything you wanted right? Not only for yourself, but for all the people you love and care for. Even for people you don't know, because you couldn't possibly spend it all on yourself, right?

You would try to spend every penny, and use it all, because you knew it would be replenished in the morning, right?

ACTUALLY, This GAME is REAL ...Shocked ??? YES!

Each of us is already a winner of this \*PRIZE\*. We just can't seem to see it.

**The PRIZE is \*TIME\***

1. Each morning we awaken to receive 86,400 seconds as a gift of life.
  2. And when we go to sleep at night, any remaining time is not credited to us.
  3. What we haven't used up that day is forever lost.
  4. Yesterday is forever gone.
  5. Each morning the account is refilled, but the bank can dissolve your account at any time without warning...
- So, what will you do with your 86,400 seconds?

**Those seconds are worth so much more than the same amount in dollars. Think about it and remember to enjoy every second of your life, because time races by so much quicker than you think.**

## FINAL FLY BY Remembered

By Christopher Weber

LOS ANGELES (AP) — **LOUIS ZAPERINI**, an Olympic distance runner and World War II veteran who survived 47 days on a raft in the Pacific after his bomber crashed, then endured two years in Japanese prison camps, has died. He was 97.

Zamperini's death was confirmed by Universal Pictures studio spokesman Michael Moses. A family statement released early Thursday said Zamperini had been suffering from pneumonia.

Zamperini is the subject of Laura Hillenbrand's best-selling book "Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption," which is being made into a movie directed by Angelina Jolie and is scheduled for a December release by Universal.

"After a 40-day long battle for his life, he peacefully passed away in the presence of his entire family, leaving behind a legacy that has touched so many lives," the family statement said. "His indomitable courage and fighting spirit were never more apparent than in these last days."

"It is a loss impossible to describe," Jolie said in a statement. "We are all so grateful for how enriched our lives are for having known him. We will miss him terribly."

A high school and University of Southern California track star, Zamperini competed in the 5,000-meter run at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. He finished eighth but caught attention by running the final lap in 56 seconds.

In World War II, he was a bombardier on a U.S. Army Air Forces bomber that crashed in the Pacific Ocean during a reconnaissance mission. He and one of the other surviving crew members drifted for 47 days on a raft in shark-infested waters before being captured by Japanese forces. He spent more than two years as a prisoner of war, surviving torture.

In May, Zamperini was named grand marshal of the 2015 Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, which next New Year's Day will feature the theme "Inspiring Stories."

In accepting the honor, Zamperini, wearing a USC cap, recalled that Hillenbrand, in researching the book, asked to interview his friends from college and the Army.

"And now after the book was finished all of my college buddies are dead, all of my war buddies are dead. It's sad to realize that you've lost all your friends," he said. "But I think I made up for it. I made a new friend — Angelina Jolie. And the gal really loves me, she hugs me and kisses me, so I can't complain."

He was a guest of Jolie last year when she was presented with the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Zamperini was born Jan. 26, 1917, in the western New York city of Olean. A group in Olean is raising funds to place a granite marker in Zamperini's honor in War Veterans Park in August.

He was just two years old when his parents moved the family to Southern California, where he lived for the rest of his life. Zamperini Field, a city-owned public airport in Torrance, is named in his honor. A stadium at Torrance High School and the entrance plaza at USC's track and field stadium both bear his name.

Defense Department forensic scientists identified the remains of seven airmen who had been missing in action since April 10, 1944, when enemy forces shot down their B-24D Liberator over Madang, New Guinea, announced the Pentagon. They are: Army Air Forces **1st Lt. William D. Bernier**, 28, of Augusta, Mont.; **1st Lt. Bryant E. Poulsen**, 22, of Salt Lake City; 1st Lt. **Herbert V. Young Jr.**, 23, of Clarkdale, Ariz.; **TSgt. Charles L. Johnston**, 20, of Pittsburgh; **TSgt. Hugh F. Moore**, 36, of Elkton, Md.; **SSgt. John E. Copeland**, 21, of Dearing, Kan.; and **Sgt. Charles A. Gardner**, 32, of San Francisco. Defense officials are returning the airmen's remains to their families for burial with full military honors, according to DOD's Oct. 31 release. Bernier's interment took place on Sept. 19 in his hometown. Young's burial happened in Prescott, Ariz., on Oct. 15. Moore is scheduled for burial on Nov. 11 in his hometown. The other airmen will be buried at dates and locations still to be determined, states the release. In 2001, a US-led team located the B-24D's wreckage. This led to the recovery of human remains and material evidence that enabled the identifications. Remembrance from Pete Karjanis

## NEW SERVICE MEDAL - FOLLOW UP

Week of October 20, 2014

The Air Force has released nomination criteria for the new Nuclear Deterrence Operations Service Medal. Service members may be awarded the new medal if they were assigned, deployed or mobilized to a wing, center or below in support of the nuclear enterprise for 120 consecutive days or 179 nonconsecutive days. Eligibility for the medal is retroactive to Dec. 27, 1991. Nominations for currently serving Airmen will be processed through their respective chain of command. Retired or separated Airmen and family members of deceased Airmen can submit a request submitted to the Air Force Personnel Center recognition section for validation. For more information and full eligibility criteria, visit the myPers website. Guard, Reserve, retired and separated Airmen and their family members may contact the Air Reserve Personnel Center at 800-525-0102 for assistance.

**AFGA NEWS REEL  
60TH ANNIVERSARY**



[John Peterson](#) 60th anniversary of Boeing Field, our 2nd pass they asked us to go as slow as possible, and the B-17 rolled over the crest in the picture and flew wingtip to wingtip with us over the runway. Same Buff (580184) we crash landed in about 5 months later at Fairchild. Tore off right wing tank and a big portion of wing. Lt.Col. Barfoot kept us from cartwheeling!

***AXIOMS FROM THE PAST—STILL CURRENT***



**NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN  
A SALUTE TO THOSE FALLEN**

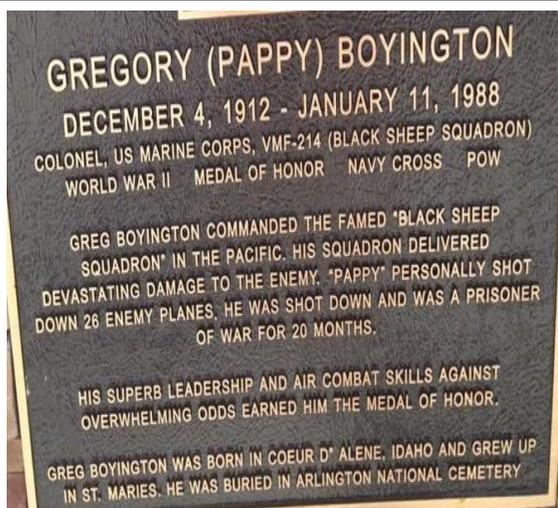
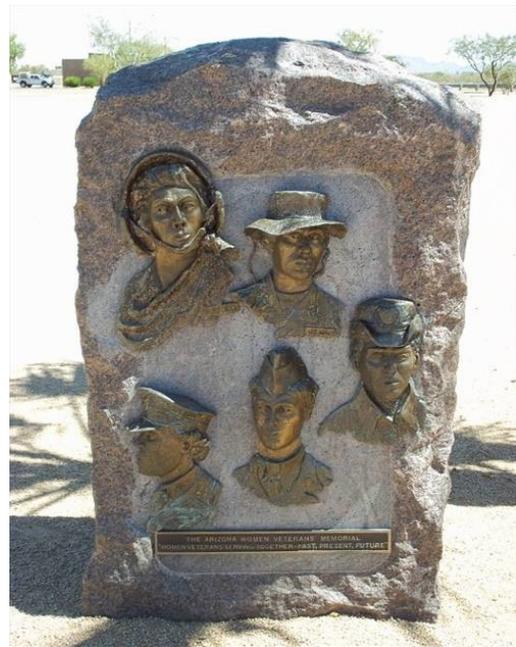
A large poignant memorial to the women who served in the military over the years. Located along a short sidewalk lined with many memorials, this large and striking memorial honors all the women who have served in the military in every capacity. The memorial consists of a large sculpted monument and a nearby plaque with lyrics written by a famed local Vietnam veteran poet and blues singer, Sarge Lintecum. Memorial located in VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK, SACATON, AZ

**INVISIBLE SOLDIER**

You can tell her by the twinkle in her eye,  
At parades when the flag marches by.  
She served our country and she served it very well.  
Some have even served a tour or two in Hell.  
She suffered hardship and never ceased to care.  
It gave us strength just to know that she was there.  
She was a leader, you could tell by the rank she wore,  
But she became the invisible soldier after the war.  
She can march, she can fly, and she can sail.  
She proved that bravery isn't exclusive of the male.  
She did every job she was asked and more,  
But she became the invisible soldier after the war.  
Now, it is finally time to right a wrong.  
Honor our sister soldier; hear her song.  
It's very clear that she's a patriot to the core.  
Don't let her be the invisible soldier anymore.

(WORDS THAT ARE ON THE PLAQUE AT RIGHT)

Goggle to go to the website:  
The Arizona Women Veterans' Memorial - Invisible Soldier



**B-52 GUNNER TALL TAILS**  
**CLYDE KETCHAM 'S - "COMMENCE FIRING"**

53 yrs ago I was at Stead AF base going through survival training. It's funny the things I remember. #1 is 29 ways to plant your enemy's gonads up to his throat. #2 was the box. When they jammed me into that wooden wall locker I was about to lose it so I pushed back against the door and it felt like I could break it open if I wanted to so I just went to sleep. #3 is when they opened up the door and my legs wouldn't work. When I started to get feeling back I tried to stand up and that was a mistake. I looked like I was doing the funky chicken. #4 is out in Plumas Nat. Forest and being so hungry I could have eaten the south end of a north bound menstruating skunk. #5 is the pemmican bars. It reminded me of Pa. Dutch Scrabble. When they slaughter hogs and after they get all the good stuff from the hogs everything left was thrown in to a big cauldron and boiled until it became this thick grey nasty looking stuff that is poured into brick like molds and when it cools down you have scrabble Unlike pemmican you had to refrigerate this stuff. My mom would cut off a big slab and throw it in a frying pan. It had so much grease in it you didn't have to coat the pan. Like pemmican this stuff had enough gunk in it that it would clog up a elephants arteries. I loved pemmican because it tasted like scrabble. Everybody in my flight hated it and threw it away. I glommed onto everything they tossed away. #6 is the two days we were on the loose and I was at the top of a ridge walking across a field of basketball size rocks. I could not find a level spot to put my boots on. Man was I tired. Then out of the darkness I hear this guy on the top of the next ridge over who starts singing a popular song of the time called Crying. I just started laughing. This singer was a pro. All the Ivans were down in the valley floor. riding in jeeps with spot lights After the entertainment I pressed on trying to find some water. I hear this little trickle sound and I start to crawl on all fours through the brush to find the source. It was just a little run off but enough to fill my canteen. I thought about putting in the halazone pills in the canteen but then I said screw it and took a slug.

I can't remember the gunners name but he showed up at Altus from KI on alert I remember spending a lot of time in the library at night listening to the WW2 men talking about adventures they had in the day. What an education I got. The KI gunner tells us about a time his crew got to take a B52 up into Canada to be a static display at a air show. He said they had a great time with these Canadian F100 pilots and after many barley pops had been consumed a challenge was made by his pilot that the H model could out climb the F100. This base is not to far away from KI so they had just enough fuel to get home. The next day as they taxi out for T/O at the end of the runway sits 4 F100,s. The B52 gets around them and takes off with the fighter's in tow. After gear and flaps are out of the way he starts to climb out real slow and eases the air brakes to 6 and just gives all the power he can give it to keep it at this gentle climb. The F100s are about to stall out at this speed trying to stay behind the B52. Shortly he fire walls the throttles, drops the air brakes pulls the nose way up and they are off to KI. The fighters didn't know what had happened to them. They were had and never did catch up until the B52 was letting down at into KI. The Canadian Voodoo was unable to cast a spell on that Buff.

Those 101 pictures remind me about the time while at March we had gone up to this little bombing range by Yakima WA. and we had a few practice smoke bombs to drop. This range was nothing but desert with a big bulls eye to aim at. Down at Matarorda one time when we released the bombs I ran my optics down and there was a whole herd of cattle right in the target. Seems like a rancher had leased that part of the island to graze his herd. Maybe he thought we were a lousy shot. That day we gave them a good scare. Back to Yakima we climb up to altitude and went towards the San. Fran. bay area. A little way up the coast was a F101 base and we were scheduled for FIE with these 101s. We were out over the drink at 46.000 ft just orbiting around waiting on them to get to our alt. Finally I see there contrails coming up. I guess they were pretty heavy with fuel and we were very light. Here they come right up the tail and when we broke into this hairy ass turn for a second I thought we were going to stall out but we didn't and they did. We actually turned inside of them. Did it 2 times to them. After that no more tail attacks. They would come in low and zoom up at us from the sides or nose. I was happy for once that I didn't hear the splash word during my part of the show.

We had a I.P. in the sq. at Altus that was a wild man. He was giving my new copilot a prestandboard check ride and when we got back to Altus it is about ten o'clock at night with a couple of taxi backs to do No more touch & go's. Any how we land and taxi all the way back to the north end of the runway. They are just about to take the active and a tanker lands in front them and go's to the south end and instead off using the taxi way this joker does a 180 on the runway and heads right back north. So Maj. Ernest says watch this and he rolls on to the runway and stops and tells the tower on the roll for T/O. I could not see this but the tower is yelling on guard, the tanker was flashing his landing lights like there is no tomorrow. So finally he gets back to the tower and says did I say on we are on the roll, sorry I meant ready for T/O. Then he says on interphone I guess I taught that ass hole lesson in taxi etiquette.

Thanks, Clyde - enjoyed your FB stories and copied a few of them in this issue for all to see.....Bob

## INTERESTING WEBSITES

### WEBSITES TO VISIT:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/dE-vOscpiNc> video of the earth rising above the moon rim – from the moon. Beautiful!  
<http://www.nmusafvirtualtour.com/media/041/B-52D%20Tail%20Gunner.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8k9Si28k0Fk&app=desktop> 11 year old boy's salute Normandy – 70 years later

[http://www.alternatewars.com/Bomb\\_Loading/Bomb\\_Guide.htm](http://www.alternatewars.com/Bomb_Loading/Bomb_Guide.htm) 1<sup>st</sup> Atom Bomb assembly/loading

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxqNYeiyyHA> **History of the B-52 Stratofortress Bomber**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPztwXRO7uc&app=desktop> Bone yard documentary

### REUNION INFO:

<http://reno.com/peppermill-resort-spa-casino/>

[www.roadshowsreno.com](http://www.roadshowsreno.com) – Annual motorcycle event in Reno

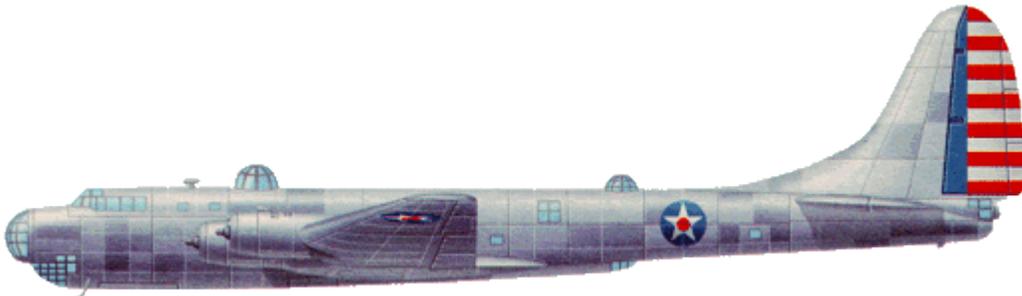
[www.reno.com](http://www.reno.com) - general events around Reno

<http://oldafsarge.blogspot.com/2014/01/the-friday-flyby-31-january.html> B-24 history

<http://www.warbirdinformationexchange.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=52966> Ulithi Atoll buildup – must watch

<http://www.warbirdinformationexchange.org/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=52966&sid=4f80dd82492163cd6b7e218acaed6ba7&start=15> More history on follow up of the Ulithi atoll – more current on-goings

[http://www.aviastar.org/air/usa/douglas\\_b-19.php?p=1](http://www.aviastar.org/air/usa/douglas_b-19.php?p=1) Experimental (XBLR-2) bomber by Douglas



<http://www.flightjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Four-Down.pdf?746277&02a977> Amazing story of a Navy F9F fighter pilot shooting down 4 Mig 15s in one encounter – and the Navy hushed it up.

[http://www.dhc-2.com/Monthan\\_Memories.html](http://www.dhc-2.com/Monthan_Memories.html) Davis-Monthan 1968 photos – 2 pages

<http://www.warhistoryonline.com/about-us> WWII War History

<https://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/eqEkPjUbmIA?rel=0> Father giving daughter away at wedding –WATCH!

[http://christianliving101.org/Site/pdf\\_files/Captured\\_The%20Pacific%20and%20Adjacent%20Theaters%20in%20WWII\\_Plog\\_World%20news%20photogra.pdf](http://christianliving101.org/Site/pdf_files/Captured_The%20Pacific%20and%20Adjacent%20Theaters%20in%20WWII_Plog_World%20news%20photogra.pdf) WWII in the PACIFIC....Very good photos

<http://www.pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/b-24/44-41465.html> B-24L – Royal Flush story worth reading(plus many more aircraft stories by type aircraft and tail number – good history site

For those interested in Vietnam War history 'Tom Mangan ([Tmangan@tjmtechnicalwriting.com](mailto:Tmangan@tjmtechnicalwriting.com)) offers the following concerning the Vietnam Veterans Memorial:

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends!

I am pleased to share these 3 attachments with you that I recently received in the mail. I know that you will view them as testimonies of all your contributions, support and encouragement for our efforts to provide a touch of home to our wonderful Freedom Fighters! The last 3 months saw the largest shipment in the last 7 years (5356 pounds)! Within that total was a ton of almonds, a ton of candy, a pallet of dried apples, several hundred boxes of Girl Scout Cookies and other miscellaneous items. We are processing a ton of 3 tons presently and are awaiting a pallet of dried apples as well as the possibility of some dried peaches. We will also be receiving many thousands of boxes of Girl Scout Cookies this month from our wonderful friends of Operation Care and Comfort in San Jose. None of this would be possible without your wonderful support and many friends in the local area and throughout this great land of ours! As you can see we will be very busy in the coming months and I will be busy as well in the fund raising department. We are fortunate to have received a grant of \$2,000 from the Elks National Foundation for troop packages and Veterans Services/activities.

As you can see we will be busy in the coming months and I will be busy as well in the fund raising department. We are fortunate to have received a grant of \$2,000 from the Elks National Foundation for troop packages and Veterans Services/activities and have the support of Merced Elks Lodge Bingo Charities (from our regular Bingo every Tuesday) our Bingo Players that regularly contribute a portion of their winnings to the Troops. It really is a community effort that I enjoy so much and have the opportunity to meet so many wonderful people that believe as I do that we need to continue with our prayers and support "UNTIL THEY ALL COME HOME"!

Blessings,

Ernie Conner, MSgt, USAF (retired)  
 Chairman, Merced Elks 1240 Support the Troops Campaign  
 209-988-2276 (cell)  
 209-357-3764



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
 COMMANDING OFFICER  
 USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD49)  
 FPO AP 96685-1737

1000  
 LSD 49/006  
 January 2, 2014

Mr. Ernie Conner, MSgt, USAF, (retired)  
 Chairman, Merced Elks Support the Troops Campaign  
 Merced Elks Lodge #1240  
 3166 Station Ave  
 Atwater, CA 95301

Dear Mr. Conner:

SUBJECT: EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR CARE PACKAGES

On behalf of the Sailors and Marines onboard USS HARPERS FERRY please accept our sincere thanks for the generous care packages Merced Elks Lodge #1240 has provided for our morale, welfare, and recreation.

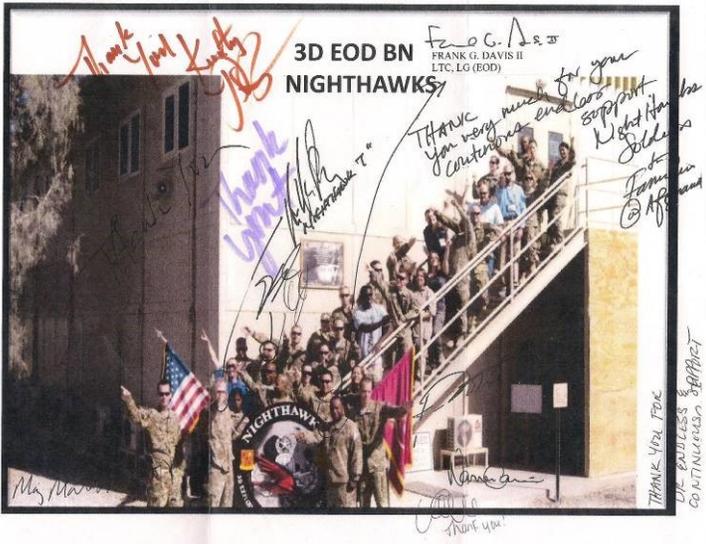
Please extend our thanks to your partners who have contributed to these morale-boosting care packages: Spycher Brothers Nut Company of Turlock, CA; Hunter Farms of Atwater, CA; Northern Merced Hulling Association of Ballico, CA; Bella Viva Orchards; and Operation Care and Comfort of San Jose, CA.

Such expressions of care and support are certainly appreciated and contribute to the overall positive morale of the ship.

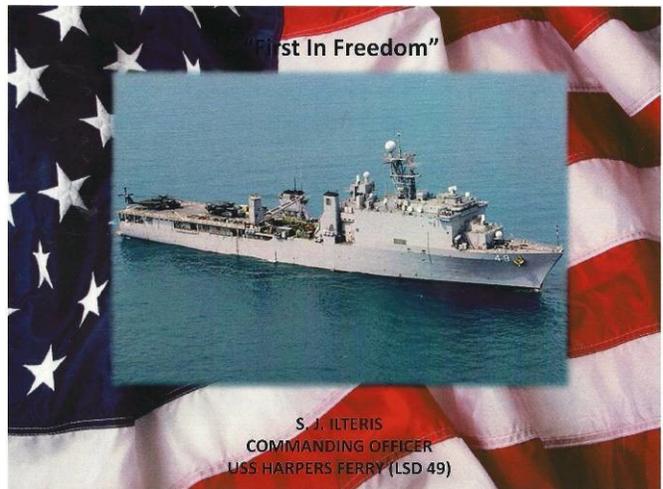
As a further expression of our gratitude, please accept this picture of our ship. Know that your generous donations and show of support has bolstered the morale of the men and women of the USS HARPERS FERRY.

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*  
 S. J. ILTERIS  
 Commanding Officer



Letter received from AFGA Member Ernie Conner regarding the on-going gift collections being sent overseas to those veterans who are serving overseas. Many Thanks, Ernie, for your efforts in their regard. Bob



S. J. ILTERIS  
 COMMANDING OFFICER  
 USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49)

**B-52 GUNNER TALL TALES**  
**CLYDE KETCHAM 'S - "COMMENCE FIRING"**

One nice winter day my crew blasts down the runway at Minot headed for the polar region north of Alaska to be the aggressor and to give ADC somebody to intercept. As usual the fighters call splash from 60 miles away. No attacks to me. I guess they knew who the gunner was. All the attacks were at high altitude. Not as much fun as going down LL. When we started on our way home the nav. was going to use grid navigation so at the start of nav. leg the RN gives the Nav a good fix up north of Fairbanks then turns his radar to standby. So for about the first hour everything went honky dory and every body drifted into lala land except the CP & Nav. I come to when I hear the CP ask the Nav if we are close to our planned course because he can't get a hold of center to give a position report and none of the nav aids will lock on and It's a complete undercast below. Next I hear the BNS radar ant. thumping away. Then the next conversation sounded like the call of the lost tribe The Fug Ga Wes. Where the fug are we. The RN tells the Nav he cant see any thing on his radar that matches his map. He does say all he can see is a big lake out in front and about that time we get a call on guard asking aircraft on the 090 degree radial of the Vancouver VOR say your call sign. The gig was up and the Cannuks violated us. The big lake was the Straight of Geo. west of Vancouver. The Nav's equipment had precessed ever so slightly to the right and he didn't catch it and we were over 600 miles off course. When we did get back to Minot you know who was waiting on us. The two pilots and the nav team got a free of charge tanker ride to Omaha that afternoon and it wasn't pretty. First chance the pilot had, he got out and became a MD. The first chrome domes went east , then north as far as you dare and then west to north of Alaska then you would take a couple little short turns west then east and then south to go down the west coast. But the turn Nav gave the pilots was more west than south and guess where they were headed. They were out of VHF range and I guess they were not paying much attention to the HF radio. Fighters were launched to get them turned around. SAC wasn't thrilled with this screw up either.

During the early 60,s there wasn't enough spaces in the Christmas tree for the tankers. The tanker were in a row right in front of the control tower. In those days the tankers had a fuel/air starter on #2 engine for alert starts. Somebody got the bright idea to overhaul these starters at the base level instead of sending them off for repair. One day an alert bird was having a fuel/air starter replaced. The alert crew assigned to this plane go out with the fixer uppers and they replace the damn thing. When a engine start was tried it blew up sending chunks of metal all over the joint. One chunk went into the nacel shearing the big fuel line and in a couple seconds the wing was on fire. The two pilots jump out and run to the bird right next to them. It was just pure luck that the inferno was at the end of the line. The alert guards and the ground crew head for the hills. The pilots get this next plane fired up and attempts to taxi and the plane would not move No ground crew, no pulled chocks. The two of them look at each other and here comes burning fuel on the ground right towards them and in a last ditch effort they fire wall the engines and it moved a little but still would not budge so they pull the throttles back and the plane rolled back a little and they fire wall the engines again and this time they jumped the stoppers. These guys were heroes. It took forever to put the fire out and it was only 100 ft away from the fire house. The jumper bird was given a clean bill of health and flew 3 training missions when some young airman spotted a crack ln the main wing spar. Engineer from Tinker came and checked crack and okayed a one time flight to Tinker for repairs. and could only be flown in smooth air between Altus and OKC. Kind of sounds like those D models with cracked spars. The fix was to measure crack and stop drill the ends and clear it for flight. I wonder if a cracked wing was the cause when that crew lost its' left wing in a turn right after T/O.

All of us have run into real characters in the AF. Here comes Warren W Waddems. You never knew what would come out of his mouth. No one escaped his barbs no matter what rank they were. To everyone he was WWW. He enlisted into the Navy during WW2 and served in the submarine service in the Pacific. Any how his sub is sent on patrol and they survived by limping back to Pearl Harbor. It was going to take a long time to repair that sub so he was assigned to another boat and off he goes on another patrol with the same results. When he gets back he finds out that the sub he was on was lost. No rest for the weary and again he is transferred to a third boat and off he goes on a third patrol and they limped into home port. So he is told that #2 sub was lost also. By now he is looked upon as a Jonah by everyone. On #3 sub it was rumored he was about to be moved to another sub and the crew had a melt down. He didn't get transferred. The war was over and he went home to Ky. Along comes Korea and he joins the AF. He flew on B36's and then to B52's. I was an E2 and I was surprised how he jabbed every body but the jabs were funny to everyone except the target of the jab. One time we are sitting in the library and one guy say's it is his birthday and WWW say's mine was last week and my wife gave me some sex and a shirt and they both were too big, no mercy. One time he lost intercom. and no matter what he did he could not get the attention of his crew. So the two pilots hear this voice on the air calling Ft. Worth Center with their call sign. Center answered the call and the voice asks center to relay to the cockpit that the aft cabin commander has lost intercom if they give a damn. Another time Altus was surrounded by big thunder storms and after a few attempts to land the command post tells them to go to Amarillo and they are getting thrown all over the place when the copilot says this is cool we are going to Amarillo. From the rear they hear, If you don't get us out of here we will be going PCS to Arlington. He was a one of a kind.

## **WW II VETERAN'S STORY** **S/SGT GERALD McDOWELL—A GUNNER'S TALE**

### **Bessingbourn, England, December 1, 1943**

The B17 *Flying Fortress* waited at the runway threshold, the brakes straining to contain the stallion at the gate, her four engines fully throttled. The roar and vibration seemed to the occupants, the very edge of hell. The B17's name? *Hell's Belle*. Along with the crew, the B17 carried eight thousand pounds of armament: eight 500 pound mega bombs; twenty 100 pound incendiary bombs; plus thirteen Browning 50 cal. machine guns along with 13,000 rounds. Between the ammunition and a high altitude oxygen system, the aircraft was a bomb itself. A stray bullet or errant flak could vaporize the airplane instantly. Lt. Guinn released the brakes. The *Flying Fortress* galloped forward, down the center line, leaping into the sky. For Staff Sergeant Gerald E. McDowell, this would be his eighth mission. Now airborne, he settled into his tail gunnery position. First he crawled on all fours twelve feet back through the narrow fuselage, and then eased himself into a seat no larger than a bicycle's. To qualify for a gunnery post, air corpsmen had to weigh 170 lbs. or less and stand no taller than 5' 10". Even at this, the spot was tight, a hard place to fight from, but even harder to die in. The ride was cold, windy, with temperatures hovering at -55 degrees. An electric suit, boots, and gloves were helpful, just enough to stay sharp for combat. At this altitude the metal surfaces were covered in frost. He fired several rounds from the Brownings, enough to clear the frozen condensation. All was ready.

### **S/Sgt. Gerald McDowell's Air Corps wings**

Alone, isolated, Jerry had only his thoughts. He now realized the war was bigger than he understood, the responsibility greater than he envisioned. Many people forever unknown to him made this airplane fly, and yet, he was the



hero. How strange, he didn't feel like one. All Americans were the heroes he thought. Everyone relied on everyone else. This was not just a soldier's war, it was a war for humanity, requiring each American citizen's full involvement. It was a war against time, against aggression, to defend the most sacred possession of all - freedom. Honor drove them forward. Love gave them courage. But fear was unavoidable. For Staff Sergeant McDowell, the months of training seemed years away. Could it have only been last summer...

### **Tyndall Field, Florida, July 1943**

Sworn into the military on January 8, 1943, Jerry McDowell could have never foreseen how he would fit into this war effort. During basic training his perfect scores on the rifle range impressed more than his DI. Having grown up with guns, the ease of target shooting was natural. In a brief nightmarish moment, he worried his perfection would qualify him as a sniper. This was a different war, new challenges breed new talent. His skill earned him a spot at Tyndall Field, home to aircraft gunnery training. There he flourished. In airborne situations he could also hit his targets, but this time they were moving. He received one of the highest marksmanship scores in his class. On one occasion he even severed the target tow cable with a perfect shot. By autumn, he was chosen for training with a select fighter crew on a B17. Very soon they arrived in England. Disembarking from their plane, the corpsmen were greeted with these words: **Boy, are we glad to see this. We lost sixty [B17's] yesterday.** The war extended its hand to him; he grasped it firmly and returned the shake.

### ***Put out my hand, and touched the face of God***

One never needed a navigator to announce when the mission target was near. All one need do is look for the blackened sky ahead. Flak, that endless shower of spinning shrapnel, could reduce a squadron quickly, its sharp metal fragments cutting airplane and human skin alike. Leverkusen was their target today. Located in Germany's Ruhr Valley, this industrial center was vital to the German war machine, and, for this reason, protection was particularly strong. *Hell's Belle* entered the fracas with a strategic disadvantage. Her position in the flight formation was low, outside, and last, a spot aviators called *Purple Heart Corner*. It was here bombers were most susceptible to attack. As the squadron neared the flak field, the B17 formation tightened. It was their best defense, along with their Brownings, against what lay ahead on the other side - the Luftwaffe's aces, flying Messerschmidts and Fokkers. B17

**WW II VETERAN'S STORY**  
**S/SGT GERALD McDOWELL—A GUNNER'S TALE (Cont)**

crews called them the Flying Circus, so named for the acrobatic show they displayed right before their attack. It was an aerial dance, filled with steps of tweaks and cockiness, emboldening a sans hubris attitude the unconquerable suffer upon the world. But their days were numbered. Within weeks the legendary P51 Mustangs would step in, replacing the B17's dance partner, a partner who moved in step, not against it. For the present, it was fortress versus fighter.

**Hell's Belle, B17 Flying Fortress**

And then, they engaged. The speed and agility of



the Germans were tremendous. The Luftwaffe swooped in among the B17's, firing nonstop while the turret gunners returned salvos. The scene was surreal. Bombers dropping their loads as gunners desperately tried to lock on targets. Thousands of tracer bullets filled the sky, many bouncing off the armored surfaces of the airplanes. Jerry watched the approaching Fokker in his sight then pulled the trigger. The window to score was small; it was like catching a lightning bolt in your bare hands. The moment flashed by, much too quickly for the mind to grasp. Then his heart raced. Had his bullets hit the mark, or was it just a trick of the eye? He was almost sure of it. The fighter seemed to evaporate before him, far from the eyes of corroboration. As the battle raged on, the words kept repeating in his mind...we lost sixty B17's yesterday.

**Things that go bump in the flight**

Pencil sketch - Jerry McDowell, by D.B. Batch, January 13, 1945, Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria

A tremendous jolt knocked Jerry against the bulkhead followed by a loud vibration shivering through the plane. Then from the intercom he heard *We're hit! We're hit!. We're going down.* The first and second engines on the left wing had been destroyed along with the cockpit where shells and machine gun fire had blown away the instrument panel and glass windows. The plane started to drop into a death spiral. Remarkably, pilot Guinn and co-pilot Fallek were unscathed, although trapped in their seats. Lt. Guinn announced if anyone wanted to parachute out he would try to level the plane briefly. Not one crew member moved. They intended to ride **Hell's Belle** all the way into Hell. Down, down, they dove, gaining speed in excess of 400 miles-per-hour. From 27,000 feet, they had several minutes to prepare. Jerry crawled forward from his tail position and was surprised to find fellow crew members simply standing idly, not panicking nor even reaching for their parachutes. Except for the howling wind, there was a calmness in the crew. Their missions together had built not just camaraderie, but trust, respect, reliance on one another, forged from the heat of battles shared. An overcast cloud layer was below them as the earth approached. And still the men waited, looking out the windows, nonchalantly accepting the obvious. The obvious wasn't to be. The Captain said **Prepare for a crash landing.** The men assembled midship, each assuming the emergency position. Clearing the overcast, the pilots were 1,500 feet above the ground. *That's it!* yelled the Captain, when he saw an open field. The pilots aimed for the clearing. Adrenaline replaced lost hydraulic fluid. Using the remains of the instrument panel for support, they braced their feet upon it and pulled the yokes back with all their strength. At 200 feet the nose rose and the wings leveled, putting tremendous G forces on the airframe. But the plane held together, thanks to those unknown Americans working tirelessly for these warriors. The Flying Fortress smacked the ground at 200 miles-per-hour, bouncing upward, again returning to the ground and scraping along a plowed field until the forward momentum ceased. Incredibly the plane was



intact with all crew members alive.

**WW II VETERAN'S STORY**  
**S/SGT GERALD McDOWELL—A GUNNER'S TALE (Cont)**

### Ten Little Indians all in a line

Prisoner of War

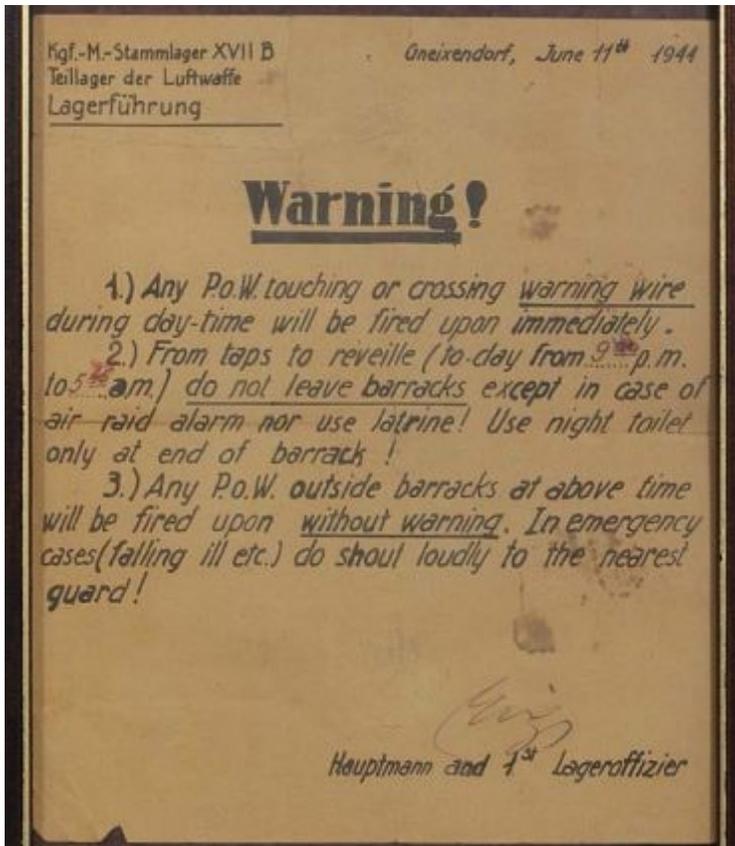
Stalag 17, Germany

Like escaped animals from a traveling zoo, the men scattered into the countryside. A B17 in a beet field attracts more than cows. The locals quickly seized the moment and organized search teams to flush out the intruders. Some carried shotguns; others nooses. Survival training taught the Americans to surrender to the military or police if possible, as the citizenry preferred alternative methods for dealing with villains. Within hours, days, the crew was reassembled one by one and placed in custody of the Luftwaffe. A mutual respect among aviators exists, regardless of political boundaries, a fraternity of flyers. Although interrogation was intense, torture was out of the question. Eventually the crew was shipped to an ex-concentration camp in Krems, Austria, 40 miles north of Vienna. There they stepped through the gate and into history. For the next eighteen months their home would be Stalag 17, along with 4,600 additional downed airmen, and 26,000 Europeans caught on the wrong side of the war. It was here Jerry learned from his top turret gunner, Harold Wingate, he had indeed shot down the ME 109 moments before their fall from the sky. The score earned him the Air Medal for Meritorious Achievement.

### Last one out turn off the plight

#### Stalag 17 German leaflet, June 11, 1944

Survival is the number one priority for a POW. Fighting extreme cold, dampness, and miniscule toilet facilities was just the beginning. Electricity existed but few light bulbs. A barracks designed for 240 men held 400. Frigid showers, on concrete floors, did little to wash away the lice and fleas. Rats were aplenty but friendlier than guards. Food was insufferable and insufficient. Red Cross parcels were scant, often withheld by the Germans. Each day's menu included rutabaga soup topped with floating white cabbage worms. Black bread contained sawdust and mold. Periodic spuds, salmon, or corned beef appeared, with raisins and prunes, and one cup of hot water, period. The D-bar, a heavy chocolate candy bar was bitcoin currency, along with American cigarettes, popular among all internees, normally included in Red Cross shipments. One's health was constantly at risk, the smallest infection could kill you, that is if the dysentery didn't. But the *Kriegsgefangenen* survived. Contraband crystal radio sets obtained through trading with the Europeans, kept the POW's spirit alive. In early 1945, Russian troops advanced towards the stalag, and the German guards headed west with the American POW's. It was a cruel 281 mile journey, with the men exposed to weather day and night. As camp discipline waned, so too did prisoner control. The Americans looted the camp's administrative office, throwing much in bonfires. It was here Jerry discovered his Stalag 17B photo ID file sheet. One month later the airmen walked straight into the US Army. Their ordeal was over.

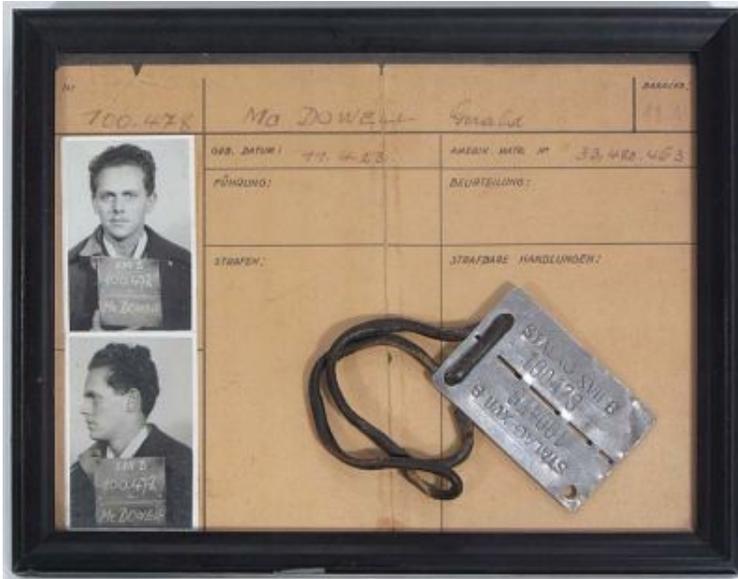


**'When one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power left to get you to the scene of the crash.'** - Multi-Engine Training Manual

**WW II VETERAN'S STORY**  
**S/SGT GERALD McDOWELL—A GUNNER'S TALE (Cont)**

**Breathing Free**

**Stalag 17 Prisoner Registration with matching German dog tags**



Jerry McDowell returned to the states and married Frances Griffiths Tyson, widow of William Tyson. Their marriage lasted until 2002 when Jerry passed away. Frances died in early 2014. Remarkable lives. Remarkable times. It is another example of the greatest generation. For risking and losing their lives in defense of our country, they asked for nothing in return. Just homes, loved ones, which they also earned themselves. They were the greatest generation for more than simply a war record.. World War II claimed many lives, the cost incomprehensible. As we mourn the dead, we celebrate the living with an indebted thank you for preserving world peace and guaranteeing freedom for all Americans. The next chapter is being written as we breathe. Will the denouement be as successful? It is a question for the Oracle at Delphi, but, as always, weigh the answer, carefully.

Editor's note: Came across this copy righted story in the Brown Brother's Auction website. Very well done.....Bob

**More Did you know?**

4. Sleeping without a pillow reduces back pain and keeps your spine stronger.
5. A person's height is determined by their father, and their weight is determined by their mother.
6. If a part of your body "falls asleep", you can almost always "wake it up" by shaking your head.
7. There are three things the human brain cannot resist noticing: food, attractive people and danger.
8. Right-handed people tend to chew food on their right side
9. Putting dry tea bags in gym bags or smelly shoes will absorb the unpleasant odor.
10. According to Albert Einstein, if honey bees were to disappear from earth, humans would be dead within 4 years.
11. There are so many kinds of apples, that if you ate a new one everyday, it would take over 20 years to try them all.
12. You can survive without eating for weeks, but you will only live 11 days without sleeping.
13. People who laugh a lot are healthier than those who don't.
14. Laziness and inactivity kills just as many people as smoking.
15. A human brain has a capacity to store 5 times as much information as Wikipedia.
16. Our brain uses the same amount of power as a 10-watt light bulb!!
17. Our body gives enough heat in 30 mins to boil 1.5 liters of water!!
18. The Ovum egg is the largest cell and the sperm is the smallest cell!!
19. Stomach acid is strong enough to dissolve razor blades!!

AFGA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ RANK: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

WIFE'S FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

I WAS A GUNNER ON: B \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU A NEW MEMBER? YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_ IF "NO" - CARD #: \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED ARE MY DUES (CIRCLE ONE): LIFE: \$100.00 ANNUAL: \$15.00

SHORT BURSTS SUBSCRIPTION (SUBSCRIPTION REQUIRED TO RECEIVE HARD COPY):  
ANNUAL \$15: \_\_\_\_\_ 3 YEARS \$45: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO: CHUCK DEAN, 473 McMAHAN MILL RD, PIEDMONT, SC 29673-9596  
PHONE: (864) 947-4613

**POET'S CORNER**

**If I Could Make It Snow for Christmas**

**A MILITARY TRIBUTE**

If I could make it snow for Christmas  
I'd lay a blanket of pure white  
Then I'd scatter diamonds on it  
To reflect the starry light

And inside there'd be a fire  
Warmth would spread throughout the  
house

The tree would be a glimmer  
With memories hung on every bow

Chorus:

And you would be right here with me  
As in Christmas's ago  
We'd laugh again like long lost friends  
If I could make it snow

If I could make it snow for Christmas  
Time would seem to just stand still  
The sight of you would be the present  
That would make my dreams fulfilled

We'd make each moment last forever  
Till they all had slipped away  
And when the night became the morning  
There'd be another Christmas day

**AFGA NEWSREEL**  
*More From Pete Karjanis' Inputs of Current News*

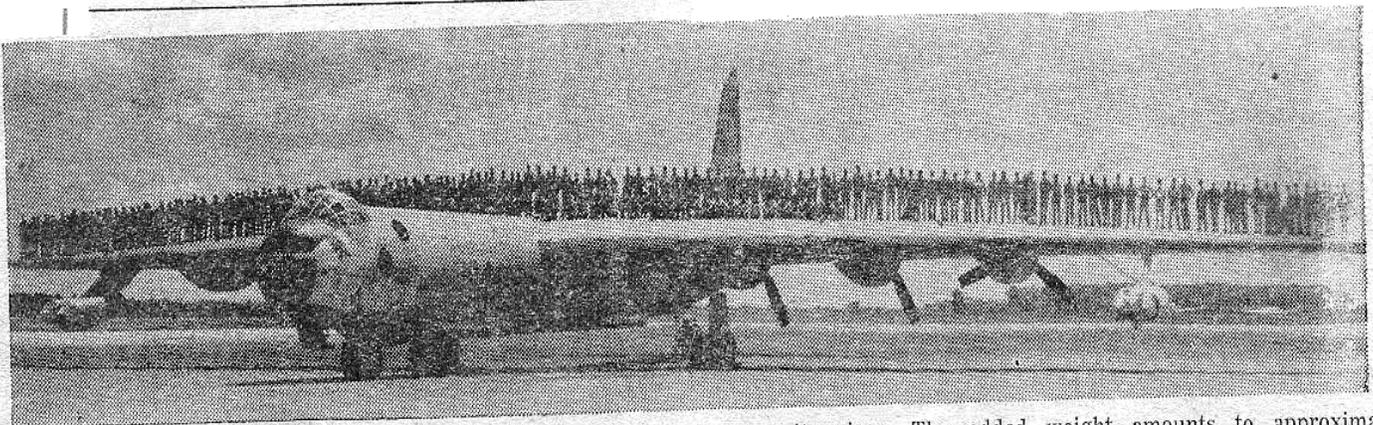
Officials with the [Yankee Air Museum](#), east of Ypsilanti, Mich., are one step closer to obtaining a portion of the old Willow Run bomber plant for the museum's new home, [reported](#) the *Ann Arbor News*. Demolition of the plant, which manufactured B-24 bombers during World War II, is underway at Willow Run Airport, but 150,000 square feet of the old facility will be left for the museum to move into, said Michael Montgomery, a museum fundraising consultant, in the Aug. 13 report. "Our expectation is that in September, we'll close on the purchase of our part of the plant," he said. Museum officials signed a purchase agreement in June for the land, but are still raising money to cover the costs. They have already raised more than \$7 million of the \$8 million fundraising goal, according to the museum's "Save the Bomber Plant" [webpage](#). "Classrooms, auditoriums, exhibits, and other parts of the museum will still need funding," said Montgomery. The museum's current home is a 47,000 square-foot facility near the airport. (See [Foundation Fights to Save Historic Bomber Plant](#).)

The flight line at Barksdale AFB, La., reverberated with a series of explosions as 10 B-52s from the 2nd Bomb Wing used starter cartridges filled with gunpowder for rapid engine starts during a minimum-interval takeoff exercise. Using the explosive charges, instead of the usual electrical starter carts, enabled aircrews to get airborne more quickly upon receiving an alert notice during the Aug. 14 event, states Barksdale's [release](#). MITO exercises were common during the Cold War when Strategic Air Command bombers had to be ready for rapid takeoffs during a threatened Soviet nuclear attack. The goal is to get the bombers airborne within 15 minutes of an alert call, according to the release. "We are practicing for a real-world event. If something were to happen, this is how Barksdale would respond," said SrA. Mitchell Dexter of the 96th Aircraft Maintenance Unit aircraft power plant section. "The MITO proves the teamwork between both the aircrews and ground crews is solid," said Col. David Foote, 2nd Maintenance Group commander. "This allows Barksdale to provide nuclear deterrence, giving our allies the assurance that we have the capability needed to deter our adversaries," he said.

B-52 bombers are flying long-range sorties in support of NATO naval forces during Exercise Noble Justification in the Atlantic and Mediterranean this month, US Strategic Command announced. "The B-52s will perform two long-range sorties from the continental United States to the US European Command area of operations and back," STRATCOM spokesman Maj. Martin O'Donnell told *Air Force Magazine* on Oct. 22. "The participation of US bombers ... was specifically requested by NATO leadership," STRATCOM commander Adm. Cecil Haney stated in a command [release](#). "It is important that we continue to train our strategic bomber force in a variety of joint environments, to ensure we remain proficient in key skill sets," Haney added. Air Force [B-2s and B-52s deployed](#) for exercises in Europe, staging from RAF Fairford, England, earlier this summer. Europe-based KC-135s and F-16s are also taking part in the 13,000-strong international exercise, which runs Oct. 13-26.

**THIS AND THAT**  
**MORE FROM CEASE—"ANCIENT HISTORY"**

SPOKANE BOMBER VIEWS      Friday, Sept. 3, 1954



**HUSKY BIRD**—would be a good description of this men on its wings. The added weight amounts to approximately B-36, for it is supporting a total of 210 41,500 pounds—a lot of beef! USAF Photo

## THIS AND THAT GUNNERS FROM YESTERYEAR



Bill Saska sent in this photo of the 2nd Bomb Squadron gunners stationed in the 22nd BW at March AFB circa 1963. Most of the Gunners in the photo were from Castle AFB and the 330th BS. Read his full letter in this edition of the Short Bursts. Bob

**INTERESTING U.S. HISTORY  
WHO WAS FIRST PRESIDENT?**

I suspect George Washington was your first guess.

After all, who else comes to mind?

For you who may like history....or are curious - think back to your history books. The United States declared its independence in 1776, yet George Washington did not take Office until April 30, 1789.

So, who was running the country during these initial years of our young country? Interestingly, and little known, it was the first eight U. S. Presidents. In fact, the first President of the United States was one John Hanson. I can hear you now - John who? John Hanson, was the first President of the United States.

John Hanson, first President of the United States. Sounds strange, doesn't it? In fact, a U.S. stamp was made in his honor, indicating that he was the President of the Continental Congress <http://usstampgallery.com/view.php?id=1f927f440f0d4981ebc6b80725f69a0fcd4bd15c>. Check out this link for even more information: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Hanson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Hanson).

The new country was actually formed on March 1, 1781, with the adoption of The Articles of Confederation. This document was actually proposed on June 11, 1776, but not agreed upon by Congress until November 15, 1777. Maryland refused to sign this document until Virginia and New York ceded their western lands (Maryland was afraid that these states would gain too much power in the new government from such large amounts of land).

Once the signing took place in 1781, a President was needed to run the country. John Hanson was chosen unanimously by Congress (which included George Washington). In fact, all the other potential candidates refused to run against him, as he was a major player in the revolution and an extremely influential member of Congress.

As the first President, Hanson had quite the shoes to fill. No one had ever been President and the role was poorly defined. His actions in office would set precedent for all future Presidents. He took office just as the Revolutionary War ended. Almost immediately, the troops demanded to be paid. As would be expected after any long war, there were no funds to meet the salaries. As a result, the soldiers threatened to overthrow the new government and put Washington on the throne as a monarch.

All the members of Congress ran for their lives, leaving Hanson as the only guy left running the government. He somehow managed to calm the troops down and hold the country together. If he had failed, the government would have fallen almost immediately and everyone would have been bowing to King Washington.

Hanson, as President, ordered all foreign troops off American soil, as well as the removal of all foreign flags. This was quite the feat, considering the fact that so many European countries had a stake in the United States since the days following Columbus.

Hanson established the Great Seal of the United States, which all Presidents have since been required to use on all official documents.

***INTERESTING U.S. HISTORY  
WHO WAS FIRST PRESIDENT? (Cont)***

Lastly, he declared that the fourth Thursday of every November was to be Thanksgiving Day, which is still true today.

The Articles of Confederation allowed a President to serve only a one-year term during any three-year period. Compare what Hanson accomplished in such little time with our government today. Seven other presidents were elected after him:

1. John Hanson (1781-82)
2. Elias Boudinot (1782-83)
3. Thomas Mifflin (1783-84)
4. Richard Henry Lee (1784-85)
5. John Hancock (1785-86)
6. Nathan Gorman (1786-87)
7. Arthur St. Clair (1787-88)
8. Cyrus Griffin (1788-89)

...all prior to George Washington taking office.

So what happened? Why don't we hear about the first eight presidents?

It's quite simple - The Articles of Confederation didn't work well. The individual states had too much power and nothing could be agreed upon. A new doctrine needed to be written - something we know as the Constitution.

And that leads us to the end of our story.

George Washington definitely was not the first President of the United States. He was the first President of the United States under the Constitution we follow today. (Just depends upon how you view the country's beginning)...one was President of the Continental Congress and one was President of the United States)

And the first eight Presidents have been forgotten in history.

**YOU HAVE TO BE A LOVER OF HISTORY TO APPRECIATE THIS!!**

There you are - another lesson in U.S. History, and you may have learned something new today.

Two things you need to do every day

- 1) Learn something new
- 2) Start your day with something you enjoy

Forwarded to me by Dale Dillahunty

***MORE BASIC FLYING RULES***

It's always a good idea to keep the pointy end going forward as much as possible.

Good judgment comes from experience. Unfortunately, the experience usually comes from bad judgment.

Mankind has a perfect record in aviation; we never left one up there!

Death is just nature's way of telling you to watch your airspeed.

# **AFGA EXCHANGE OFFICER - NEIL RICHARDS**



FROM THE EXCHANGE OFFICER

(Neil Richards) [BXOfficer@gunners.net](mailto:BXOfficer@gunners.net)

A new large (Approx 8-1/2" x 11") Gunners patch suitable for the back of a jacket or vest is being considered by the BX. We have already received nearly 25 pre-orders, but need near 40 for us to break even and not deplete the AFGA treasury. The cost for the patch is \$39.00 plus \$3.00 postage.

The BX is now accepting payment through PayPal and will no longer invoice a fee for using it. When paying by PayPal, be sure to use the "[BXOfficer@gunners.net](mailto:BXOfficer@gunners.net)" as the payment destination. For your information we have dropped the proposal to accept credit cards due to fees that would cause us to lose money due to low sales volumes.



**Red/white/blue B-52 cap - \$15 (ck availability with Neil) #16A**



**Magnetic Bumper Sticker \$9 (a few left yet (3-4) ) size: 8"X 3 7/8" #29**

**Gunner Beer Mug—\$40— price includes shipping #28**



## **AFGA WEBMASTER - NEIL RICHARDS**



FROM THE WEBMASTER

(Neil Richards) [Webmaster@gunners.net](mailto:Webmaster@gunners.net)

The web site redesign is in its early stages. A company has been selected for the redesign and the BX Officer and other AFGA Officers are coordinating on the new site's design.

We also experienced a critical problem at the end of October. Our domain name, <http://www.gunners.net> had expired and made the site inaccessible. Renewal of the domain name was made difficult because some private access information was not made available to the current webmaster and the original registrant was not available. The result of this was an unforeseen outage of our website.

**Editor's note:** The new website is in works, as Neil mentions. We have a HOME PAGE draft with tabs for all of the items we wish to have on it...still working on that. There is no data yet behind the tabs although I have sent a sample SB to him for him to insert into the Short Bursts tab similar to what we do now. Once we get this basic new home page and attachment tabs worked out, we can begin to fill in the data. The BX will still accept Pay Pal and the order pages will be there very much what we have on the existing site. Let's hope it is up and at least viewable for all to see by the time you read this. If not, it won't be much longer before that happens. Keep your fingers crossed. Bob



# AFGA EXCHANGE

ITEM #	SIZE/COLOR	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	QTY	POSTAGE	TOTAL \$
13		<b>BASEBALL CAP</b> – AFGA, Navy Blue, White (Note new price)	\$15.00			
14		<b>BASEBALL CAP</b> – White, Camouflaged B-52 <b>CLEARANCE</b>	<b>\$9.00</b>			
15		<b>BASEBALL CAP</b> – White, "C'est La Vie" emblem	\$13.00			
16		<b>BASEBALL CAP</b> – White, B-52 Gunner emblem	\$13.00			
16A		<b>Baseball Cap, B-52 front silhouette (Circle choice)</b> <b>Black Body w/Silver embroidery</b> <b>Red Body w/Silver embroidery</b> <b>Blue Body w/Silver embroidery</b> <b>Blue Body w/Black embroidery</b>	\$15.00			
16B		<b>Baseball cap, 80s style, Gunners Emblem vertical red stripes w/white text</b>	\$16.00			
		<b>DECALS (circle choice)</b>				
		<b><u>B-52 SAC Bulldog (3 per order)</u></b>	3/\$1.00			
		<b><u>AFGA "Biplane"</u></b>	\$1.00			
		<b><u>AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION"</u></b> inside rear window application - wide)	\$1.00			
17		<b><u>USAF Enlisted Chevrons</u></b> (set of 4 per sheet, Current USAF Style)				
		MSgt/SMSGt/SMSGt-1 <sup>st</sup> Sgt	\$1.00			
		<b><u>"Son of a Gunner" (NEW)</u></b>				
		Small – 4-1/2"	\$3.00			
		Large – 6-1/2"	\$5.00			
		<b>LARGE DECALS – 8" x 10-1/2"</b>				
		<b><u>B-52 SAC Bulldog</u></b>	ALL \$7.00			
		White Background Exterior				
		White Background Interior				
		Clear Background Exterior				
		<b><u>AFGA</u></b>	ALL \$7.00			
		White Background Exterior				
		White Background Interior				
18		<b>REPLICA OF ORIGINAL GUNNER'S WINGS</b> 2 3/4" wide	\$8.50			
19		<b>MEMBERSHIP LAPEL PIN</b> Miniature AFGA Gunner Wings	\$7.00			
20		<b>GUNNER WINGS LAPEL PIN</b> Same as #20 without AFGA Logo	\$7.00			

# AFGA EXCHANGE

21	<b>PATCHES</b> – Circle below B-52 Gunner's Patch (#1) AFGA Patch (#2) Served with Distinction (#3) End of Era--Aerial Gunner Patch (#4) Air Force Gunner's Association (#6) B-36 patch (#7) <u>B-52 Gunner's Patch (#8)</u> Son of a Gunner Patch	\$5.00          <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> \$7.50			
21A	<b>Large Gunners's Patch, 12" x *-1/2"</b>	\$39.00			
22	<b>PATCHES:</b> 200 Mission B-52D Vietnam 100 Mission B-52 Vietnam (awaiting delivery) Strategic Air Command, California, Louisiana., Texas	\$5.00 \$9.00  \$5.00			
23	<b>PATCHES:</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> Air Force (WWII round) 15 <sup>th</sup> Air Force (WWII round)	\$5.00			
25	<b>GOLF BALL/SLEEVE</b> (3 balls per sleeve)	\$3.00			
27	<b>COFFEE MUGS</b> – B52D Design, plus: SAC Crest "Someone over 30 You Can Trust" "Peace The Old fashioned Way"	\$9.00			
28	<b>Gunners Beer Mug</b> , ceramic, 32oz. SAC Bulldog emblem one side, SAC emblem on reverse. (Priority Mail Included)	\$40.00		<b>INCLUDED</b>	
29	<b>Magnetic Sticker</b> – "PROUD TO HAVE SERVED – FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"	\$9.00			
30	<b>BOOK</b> – "C'est La Gar" by Pete Larsen	\$20.00			
31	<b>KNEE/SEAT PAD</b> – 1" foam rubber, Blue w/AFGA logo	\$2.50			
32	<b>LAPEL PINS, PEWTER</b> – Circle Choice B-17, B-24, B-25, B-52 (Max order one of each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small (17.24.25.26 only)</li> <li>• Large (including B-52)</li> </ul>	\$4.00 \$7.00			
34	<b>LAPEL PIN, AFGA Reunion</b> (Circle Choice) 2003 (Tucson), 2005 (Charleston) 2009 (Spokane), 2011 (Orlando)	\$4.00			
35	<b>SAC BULLDOG LAPEL PIN 1"</b>	\$5.00			
36	<b>LAPEL PIN, AFGA Round</b> - ¾ inch Silver wings with blue background	\$4.00			
37	<b>LAPEL PIN, AFGA B-52 Gunner</b> with aircraft silhouette and wings (1" wide by ¾" tall)	\$5.00			
38	<b>AFGA "Biplane" Round 1-1/2" Pin</b>	\$5.00			
39	<b>LAPEL PIN, Bulldog "Angel"</b>	\$7.00			
40	<b>Audio Recording Disc</b> – Linebacker II, Opal 03, 26 Dec, 1972 Specify DVD/MP3, CD/MP3 or CD Audio	\$7.00			
41	<b>Gunners Wings License Plate</b>	\$17.00			

# AFGA EXCHANGE

42	SAC Bulldog Banner, vinyl, 20" x 24" with grommets at ach corner	\$25.00			
43	SAC Bulldog Shield printed on 1/8" backboard, 20"x 20" Sculptured edges	\$25.00			

Jackets, Shirts, Mugs = \$11.00 ea Each additional Jacket, Shirt or mug= \$2.00 ea Hats = \$6.00, each additional \$2.00 Small Flat Goods (Wings, Pins, Patches, Decals, etc) = \$3.00 Belt Buckles = \$6.00 1 <sup>st</sup> Item, plus \$2.00 each additional Item All other Goods = \$3.00 1 <sup>st</sup> Item, plus \$1.00 each additional Item (if in doubt or with large orders, call/email for an estimate)	(Priority Mail) (Priority Mail) (Priority Mail) (1 <sup>st</sup> Class Parcel) (Priority Mail)	SUBTOTAL  SHIPPING CHARGES  TOTAL	   
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1. Please include your phone # and **email address**.
2. Make all checks payable to **AFGA**.
3. Send all correspondence to:

Neil Richards  
 AFGA Exchange Officer  
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 Jupiter, FL 33478-6821  
 Phone [561] 799-6999  
 Email: [bxofficer@gunners.net](mailto:bxofficer@gunners.net)

EMAIL ADDRESS:

\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

Date

## GUNNER STORIES - COMMENCE FIRING

### Jim Lyle

Here is one for Clydes book. I'm almost ashamed to tell, this is the first time it's been told. At CCTS I was a eating machine, 115 lbs soaking wet. While at Shilling gunnery school I was called into the Base C/O office. He wanted to see if he thought I could be heavy enough to come down in a parachute. Now back to CCTS I think Bud Ganzer was my instructor, or maybe Jug Butt Whatley, Only survivor of 65 DaNang accident. I ordered 3 IF meals for the flight. Had the blue garbage bag I had been told to take in case of an accident. During eng start, and taxi out I had consumed one meal. T/O and climb out, then a tank, yeah you guessed it. Got rid of that one, blue bag and tied a knot. Now nav leg, another box lunch, then L/L , again the blue bag with a knot. Well still not having learned a lesson, on the way back to do pattern work another lunch. All this time the instructor keeps asking if I am ok, oh yea, no problem. Well in the pattern out comes the blue bag again, only this time no material for a knot. Well I'm holding the bag with my left hand and untying my rt boot , cut a bit of the lace off with the handy dandy survival knife and tie the bag up. I had another blue laundry bag, and started putting the lunch boxes with the offending blue bag into them. No way I'm getting off the plane and let anyone know I barfed. No sooner than I had started to open the door ,but the inst was there. He took my trash bag and I got out.

### Kevin Keenan

Riding the wave of the "peeing in the tail compartment" stories: I figured all was safe and smooth on a nav leg, and decided to have a peaceful whiz. I slid the seat back to have plenty of room, got out the USAF - issued receptacle, and commenced the flow. Just as I was going good, I got a call on interphone for a cabin pressure check. Well, the seat was too far back to reach the foot switch for the interphone and the push-to-talk switch on the cord had slipped to someplace un-findable. As I frantically searched for it, I knew what was coming. My A/C's favorite method for waking up a suspected sleeping gunner was the quick tapdance on the rudder pedals, which all Tall-Tail gunners know would beat you almost senseless against the sides of the canopy. Sure enough, before I could stop the healthy flow I had going, the tapdance arrived. Needless to say, the tail compartment was like a car wash for a few seconds. Of course, my crew thought

**BOB'S BITS**  
*Gunner Miscellaneous*



Lynn Chase



Pete Karjanis' Harley



Pete Karjanis



Pete Karjanis—Front plate



Bob Dick Jr.



Richard Finn Ostman



Art Gebbia—Bike



Art Gebbia—Truck



Gary Heinz—Truck



Harry Tolmich—THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND



Harry Tolmich—Acura



Harry (Lois) Tolmich—Pickup



Harry Tolmich—Corvett

**WWII VETERAN'S STORY**  
**Hit The Silk**

Nelson B. Brode Jr. was a tail gunner on a B-17 bomber in 1942 and 1943. His nephew, Glendale resident John Post, offers Brode's story: "This is it Boys, Hit the Silk."

Brode was in Port Moresby, New Guinea, during World War II, and participated in 42 bombing missions. This is from Brode's journal:

"After our furlough in the wide open town of Sydney, we were anxious to get back into the air and get into a scrap with a few (Japanese). Had we known what was in store for us on this very mission, we would not have been so eager."

It was Brode's 26th mission. The crew was to bomb the Japanese base of Gasmata, take some photographs and head up the coast looking for Japanese ships.

As the plane closed in on its target, the big bomb-bay doors were opened.

"The ack-ack and pom-poms were filling the sky around us already, and we could hear the big shells rumble on the outside of our ship as we turned on course," Brode wrote.

The plane jerked violently and turned up on one wing. A side gunner reported a large hole in the wing.

"It sure seemed that they had our number, and just about the same instant we heard the words, 'Bombs away,' " Brode wrote in his journal. "The plane gave another violent jump in the other direction and Number Three engine coughed, spit out a long stream of black smoke and then stopped dead."

The plane dived and the electrical system quit working, but then the Flying Fortress leveled out.

About 10 minutes later, Brode saw some specks coming from behind. They were 12 Japanese fighters.

The Zeros formed into three groups of four planes, and they attacked the B-17 in waves, riddling it with bullets.

"We knew only too well that right now, the chances were 100 to 1 against us, but the ship kept flying, and the boys kept shooting, and a prayer was going out with each bullet," Brode wrote.

Then the Zeros pulled away, likely returning to base because their fuel was low.

Miraculously, despite the B-17 being nearly shot to pieces, not one member of the crew was hit. But there was no way the plane would make it back to Port Moresby. The navigator set a course for Buna.

"But very soon, we found ourselves over the north coast of New Guinea, with an 8,000-foot ridge between us and Buna, and we were at only 4,500 feet and going lower all the time," Brode wrote.

The men prepared to jump.

"This is it boys. Hit the silk," came the command.

Brode jumped, and as he and eight other crew members floated to earth, he saw their B-17 crash into the jungle below.

The men found each other and began to hike toward the ocean. After some hard jungle hiking, they found a stream to drink water from and to fill their canteens.

A native came upon the men and agreed to return with others to lead them to the "white man's flying village."

The following morning, seven natives led the crew to a road, where they encountered an Australian soldier driving a truck.

The crew was returned to Port Moresby in a C-47. They had been gone 56 hours.

"Our friends in the squadron gave us a royal welcome, and we picked up where we had left off two and a half days before," Brode wrote. "One more complete mission, but a rugged one."

- David Madrid

<http://www.azcentral.com/news/article>

['Hit the silk': Tail gunner's harrowing story of B-17 combat](http://www.azcentral.com/specials/special40/.../0408gl-lpservicestory08Z5.ht..)

[archive.azcentral.com/specials/special40/.../0408gl-lpservicestory08Z5.ht..](http://www.azcentral.com/specials/special40/.../0408gl-lpservicestory08Z5.ht..)

## **THIS AND THAT**

### **10 FACINATING FACTS ABOUT OUR FLAG**



On the 200th birthday of the “Star-Spangled Banner, September 14, 2014 ,” here are 10 fascinating facts about Stars and Stripes that may surprise you!

The United States’ national anthem’s birthday is officially on Saturday, but here are a few tidbits about our flag’s heritage to get your ready for the big anniversary.

Francis Scott Key wrote his poem about the British bombardment of Fort McHenry in Baltimore on September 13, 1814. Within days, the poem became very popular and it was eventually set to music. In 1931, the “Star-Spangled Banner” became the first official national anthem for the United States.

#### **1. The flag predates the Constitution.**

The flag was authorized by the Continental Congress on June 14, 1777. The motion read, “Resolved that the flag of the thirteen United States be 13 stripes alternate red and white: that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.” The Constitution was written 10 years after that and ratified in 1789.

#### **2. What’s the deal with Betsy Ross?**

Historians are still debating Betsy’s role in designing the first flag, but she recounted that she was asked to sew the flag by her fellow churchgoer, George Washington. Ross had also

done some seamstress work for Washington. You can read the debates online, but here’s what the historic marker in front of her house says: “Credited with making the first stars and stripes flag, Ross was a successful upholsterer. She produced flags for the government for over 50 years. As a skilled artisan, Ross represents the many women who supported their families during the Revolution and early Republic.”

#### **3. What exactly is a vexillologist?**

A vexillologist is a flag expert. It’s a relatively new word, coming into use in 1959. According to the North American Vexillological Association, there are currently no degrees offered on the subject.

#### **4. Who approves design changes in the flag?**

Congress and the president have ordered design changes in the past to accommodate the addition of new states. President James Monroe and Congress agreed in 1818 that there should be 13 stripes as well as one star for each state in the Union.

#### **5. Who decides the rules for flag etiquette?**

It’s in the federal code as [Chapter 1 of Title 4](#). The law also includes the approved text of the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **6. Where outside the United States can you see the flag continuously 24 hours a day?**

There are five American flags flying on the moon, thanks to the Apollo astronauts. You may not be able to see markings on them, though; they have mostly likely turned white over the years.

#### **7. Which flag had the snake on it?**

You’ve probably seen the yellow flag with a coiled rattlesnake and the motto “Don’t Tread On Me.” This is the Gadsden flag, named after its designer, General Christopher Gadsden. The flag was used in the Revolutionary War. There are other variations of the flag with rattlesnakes and versions of the motto. Benjamin Franklin was one of the originators of the snake as an American political symbol, in a famous [1754 political cartoon](#).

#### **8. Where was the first flag flown outside the U.S. in a military action?**

It was first flown over the shores of Tripoli. The Marines were involved in military actions against the Barbary pirates and after they hit the shore, they raised the Stars and Stripes. After the Battle of Derne in 1805, the flag was raised on foreign soil for the first time after a battle.

#### **9. What is Francis Scott Key’s flag connection?**

Key witnessed the American flag flying after a British attack on Fort McHenry in Baltimore in 1814, while he was a guest on a British ship as he negotiated for the return of American prisoners. His experience inspired him to write a poem, “Defence of Fort McHenry.” After it was published, Key matched it up with music from a popular British tune, which eventually became “The Star-Spangled Banner,” our national anthem. By the way, if “vexillology” wasn’t enough fun, here’s another one: the act of adding new lyrics to an existing song is called “contrafactum.”

#### **10. What’s the biggest American flag?**

It’s so big you can’t fly it, but [the “Superflag”](#) conceived of by the late Thomas Demski measures 505 by 225 feet and weighs 3,000 pounds. It takes 600 people to unfurl. Each star is 17 feet high. Bonus fact: The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia has its own giant American flag on display in its Grand Hall Overlook, surrounded by the flags of all the U.S. states and territories and with the iconic Independence

**LINEBACKER II - DECEMBER 1972  
BLYTHEVILLE AFB MEMORIAL - REMEMBERING**



I think it is lost on most Americans that the first time a B-52 was used in actually live combat was in Vietnam and it was the only time a B-52 was lost to enemy fire or surface to air missiles fired from ground launchers in North Vietnam.

**Fifteen B-52s were lost during the 1972 Linebacker II Christmas bombings and three of those B-52s originated from the 97th Bombardment Wing assigned to [Blytheville Air Force Base](#); B 52G 58-0201 "Charcoal 1" went down on the 18th, B 52G 58-0198 "Olive 1" and B 52G 58-0169 "Tan 3" were shot down on the 21st. Airmen from the 97th Bombardment Wing lost their lives and their photos appear on the lonely memorial at their abandoned base in Blytheville; Lt Col Keith R Heggen was in "Olive1", (now buried at Arlington Nat'l Cemetery) Lt Col Donald L Rissi, 1st LT Robert J Thomas and Msgt Walter L Ferguson were in "Charcoal 1" Major Bobby A Kirby, Capt Randall J Craddock, Capt George B Lockhart, Capt Ronald D Perry and 1st Lt Charles E Darr were in "Tan 3". These three 97th BW aircraft were stationed and flown out of Anderson AFB, Guam, as part of the 72nd Strategic Wing (Provisional).**

My concern is there will come a time when this memorial we be forgotten, abandoned, and the desire to maintain it will no longer be there. Linebacker II brought Vietnam to an end, the death of these brave airmen saved lives, both boots on the ground, and those in the air because if Vietnam hadn't ended it and it continued there would have been more Americans killed. I think this site should come under the US Park Service and our Federal Government owes a duty to these Airmen and their families and all the crewmen of the 97th who flew those Linebacker II missions to protected and maintained this site for all times. These Airmen gave their lives so surely we can give a few pennies of our tax money to see their sacrifice is never forgotten. The old Base Hospital could likely be recovered and turned into a museum dedicated to the Linebacker II missions at little costs and local volunteers would likely man the place.

I remember the stories told by the returning TDY airmen because Linebacker II wasn't just about the air crews. Thousands of family's were impacted as airmen of all ranks were sent to Guam to support the 97th assets assigned to the 72nd Strategic Wing. Some of the stories were about how difficult these long and dangerous missions were for the air crews and I think that is worthy of remembrance. What these brave crews did was no less important that what the Tokyo Raiders did, they put their lives on the line, some lives were lost but a war was ended because of their sacrifice so we owe them all a great debt that we must now pay.

Behind this base memorial is the old Base Hospital building which could be rehabilitated and dedicated to a museum about the Linebacker II mission and to these airmen who gave their lives for our nation. I am sure there are plenty of retired veterans and their families who will be willing to volunteer their time to help fun such a facility and this could help boost the local economy so support for the local chamber of commerce would likely be easy to secure. Once the old Hospital building was rehabilitated I am sure it would be a good location for the annual Eaker Blytheville Air Force Base Reunion so this is a win win for many.

While the ideal establishment would be a federal protection, the Arkansas State Parks might be the best option as Northeast Arkansas had few State Parks, the State Parks has a couple of War Memorials like Prairie Grove in Washington Co, and Arkansas has a decided state sales tax earmarked for the establishment and care of its State Parks. I think the 97th Bombardment Wing three decade long mission deserves to be remembered and certainly these men whose memorial stands on the old base today deserve to have their sacrifice remembered.

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Source: Comments from Rick O'Kelley: This memorial may soon be gone. With the closure of the base and a run down empty hospital building behind it seems that it too will be a "forgotten monument". Lots of folks are fighting to do the right thing but not much has transpired from those who are in power and could ensure that the ground it stands on is either dedicated and protected or it is moved to a place of honor near the city and treated with the honor as it should be. Check out Rick O'Kelley's Face Book other comments about this—he is on a mission to protect and preserve this memorial.. <http://james.okelley.org/BlythevilleAFB.htm>



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